

Reds Gain Full Control Of Laos

Bangkok

The Pathet Lao seized complete power in Laos yesterday, forced the abdication of king Savang Vatthana and abolished the 19-month-old coalition government of neutralist premier prince Souvanna Phouma.

The action ending the 600-year-old monarchy in the buddhist kingdom brought all of Laos, North and South Vietnam and Cambodia under Communist domination.

An official radio Vientiane broadcast, monitored in Bangkok, announced that the Neo Lao Hak Sat (People's Central Committee) had accepted the abdication of the 68-year-old king, fired Souvanna and is appointing a new government to be known as People's Democratic Republic of Laos.

In a news conference broadcast from the Laotian capital of Vientiane and monitored in Bangkok, the Pathet Lao said the "red" Prince Souphanouvong would be president of the new republic. It

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said Kaysone Phomvihane, a member of the Pathet Lao politburo, would be prime minister.

Sisana Sisan, named as information minister of the new Pathet Lao government, told the news conference that King Savang had been given the title of "supreme adviser to the president" and the neutralist leader of the coalition government, Prince Souvanna Phouma, had been named "adviser to the government."

Both posts were believed to be mere titles with no real function in the communist government. Sisana said Souphanouvong, 64, the half-brother of the 73-year-old Souvanna, had proposed the appointments.

The whereabouts of the king and Souvanna, 74, were not disclosed. In recent weeks, Souvanna has been in the royal capital of Luang Prabang with the king.

The Communist takeover was not unexpected. Rumors here and in Vientiane had said the king was being forced to abdicate. Several members of the royal family and the families of some former neutralist and rightist leaders already had fled to Thailand.

Cambodia was the first of the Indochinese states to fall to Communist forces, when the Khmer Rouge captured Phnom Penh last April 17.

On April 30, the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong captured Saigon, the capital of South Vietnam.

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