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## Laos CIA

### Troops

### In Retreat

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VIENTIANE (Laos) — (AP) — A Laotian guerrilla operation around the Plain of Jars has been called off after North Vietnamese counterattacks mounted in strength, informed sources here said today.

Several thousand Laotian and Meo tribal guerrillas directed by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency were said to be in "full retreat" from the southern edge of the Plain of Jars back to Long Cheng base, 20 miles to the southwest.

The operation was launched in secrecy a month ago. The North Vietnamese at first responded only with mortar and artillery fire but last week launched several strong ground attacks routing Laotian forces from at least three hilltop positions, military sources said.

"The idea was to hit the enemy from the rear but we had to divide our forces and then lost the element of surprise," one analyst said.