

Laotians Sign Their 'Coalition' Peace Pact

Vientiane, Laos

The Communist-led Pathet Lao and the Laotian government in Vientiane today formally signed an agreement to create a coalition government that will be charged with mediating the wounds of 20 years of intermittent civil war.

The 28-paragraph agreement will, if all goes well, result in the installation of

the third coalition government in Laos' recent history.

It probably will take office late next month.

The main points of the agreement include the following:

- The formation of a provisional government of national union, headed by Prince Souvanna Phouma.

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Ministries will be equally divided between the two sides, with the current Vientiane government having a slight edge with finance, interior and defense; the Pathet Lao side will have the foreign affairs ministry.

- The formation of a national political consultative council to advise the government on elections and other matters. Here the Pathet Lao has an organizational advantage.

- Neutralization of the cities of Vientiane, the administrative capital, and Luang Prabang, the royal capital of King Savang Vatthana. Each side will station troops and policemen in the two capitals.

- Withdrawal of all foreign troops and advisers within 60 days of the formation of the new government.

- Demarcation of the current cease-fire line with 27 "hot points," where the two armies are to avoid confrontations.

Laos's two previous attempts at coalition — in 1957 and in 1962 — were the victims of official American hostility, cold war rivalries and the deepening Vietnam war, which annexed Laos as a battlefield.

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