

CIA's Laos Band Revolts

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Vientiane

A group of guerrillas once bankrolled by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency has rebelled in Laos, seizing a province capital and demanding, among other things, the legalization of opium growing.

The former mercenaries, trained and paid by the CIA during the war in Laos, marched on Ban Houei Sai Tuesday. They seized the province capital's airport

and government buildings.

U.S. embassy officials said yesterday that 20 Americans in Ban Houei Sai, 210 miles northwest of Vientiane, were safe despite the rebellion.

Government sources said the rebels — two companies of the CIA-financed special guerrilla unit — captured the province's governor and other local officials and apparently seized the town without bloodshed.

The sources said government troops pulled out of Ban Houei Sai when the 160 rebels began marching on the provincial capital.

The rightist faction in the Laotian coalition government accused its pro-communist Pathet Lao partners of taking part in the uprising.

"We regard this incident as serious," a rightist spokesman said after conferring with Pathet Lao

members of the joint commission to implement the peace agreement.

Government sources said the rebels demanded dissolution of the national assembly, implementation of the peace accord, neutralization of Ban Houei Sai, repeal of anti-opium laws and adoption of an 18-point Pathet Lao program.

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