

Laotian Leader, on Way to U.S., Is Hopeful of a Peace Settlement

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PARIS, Oct. 22 (Agence France Presse)—The Laotian Premier Prince Souvanna Phouma, flew into Paris today on his way to the United States and said he was optimistic about the chances of peace in Laos and throughout Indochina.

The Prince told newsmen that the problem could be "settled quickly, if one is to believe the newspapers—they are generally well informed."

He added that he had been briefed on the Paris peace negotiations at a long meeting in Vientiane Friday, with a United States deputy assistant secretary of state, William H. Sullivan. Mr. Sullivan is assisting Henry A. Kissinger, President Nixon's national security adviser, in his talks in Saigon with President Nguyen Van Thieu.

The Laotian leader, who is due to fly to the United States Tuesday, indicated that he planned to meet Mr. Kissinger and Secretary-General Waldheim of the United Nations during his stay.

He said that he would return to Paris later in the week for talks with French leaders, that would include discussion on revising the 1953 agreements between Laos and France. Such a revision would not affect in any way "the excellent relations" between the two nations, he added.

Turning to the internal situation in Laos, the Premier said that it seemed to him that Laotian negotiations for a peace

settlement had "begun well" because the Pathet Lao side was no longer making an end to allied bombing a precondition for agreement.

Asked about his personal plans, Prince Souvanna Phouma said that he hoped to be able to retire in about two years after having "succeeded, for the third time, in restoring Laotian unity."

Speaking of the Laotian peace negotiations, he added: "I have put the train on the rails so I hope that all will soon be smoothed out."