

Laotian Reiterates Hope For Indochina Cease-Fire

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By FLORA LEWIS OCT 25 1972

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PARIS, Oct. 24 — Prince Souvanna Phouma, the Premier of Laos, said today that he remained optimistic about an Indochina cease-fire in the near future.

"There is no reason for Thieu not to accept," the Prince said in an interview here. "His position is assured," he went on, until the next elections are held in South Vietnam.

The Premier arrived in Paris Sunday after meeting in Vientiane, the Laotian capital, with William H. Sullivan, a Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs. Mr. Sullivan accompanied Henry A. Kissinger, national security, in his last round of peace talks with the North Vietnamese in Paris, and in many of the meetings Mr. Kissinger held with President Nguyen Van Thieu in Saigon.

Prince Souvanna Phouma said he was aware of the speech made today by President Thieu, which was widely taken as a rejection of the terms Mr. Kissinger had negotiated with the North Vietnamese.

But the Laotian Premier apparently did not interpret the speech as an indication that Saigon was presenting an insuperable obstacle to early agreement.

3-Component Plan 'Diluted'

He said it was true that Mr. Thieu had refused the idea of a government of three components in which the present Saigon administration would share power equally with the Vietcong and neutralists.

"But the three-component plan has been very much diluted," the Prince said. "It is no longer the proposal which the Vietcong had two months ago. It is much more fluid, and Thieu could remain in position until elections."

Prince Souvanna Phouma plans to leave for New York and Washington tomorrow, returning to Paris on Saturday.

"There are many things I cannot disclose now," he said, "but events can develop in the next four days and then I can turn."

Earlier, at a news conference, the Premier said: "I think we are on the eve of a cease-fire but this is not a certainty." He implied that his optimism was based on his analysis of publicly available information.

Private Knowledge Hinted

But after the news conference he indicated that he had considerable private knowledge of the latest developments and was just being discreet before the television cameras.

Laos is an important element in any cease-fire agreement, since she has long served as a major route for the passage of North Vietnamese manpower and matériel to the battlefields of the South. President Thieu has insisted that any cease-fire

must apply to Laos and Cambodia as well as to Vietnam.

Negotiations began a week ago in Vientiane between Premier Souvanna Phouma's representatives and delegates of the Communist Pathet Lao for a cease-fire in Laos. An aide to the Premier said they had not yet gotten beyond questions of procedure to substantive issues.

Nonetheless, the Prince has also expressed optimism because for the first time the Communists have dropped their demands for a halt in the bombing of North Vietnamese supply trails before engaging in substantive talks.

U.S. Assailed by Pathet Lao

By MALCOLM W. BROWNE

Special to The New York Times

VIENTIANE, Laos, Oct. 24—

A delegation from the Pathet Lao told the Laotian Government here today that American influence in Laos must be eliminated before serious negotiations to end the decade-old civil war can bear fruit.

Representatives of the two sides met at the Education Ministry here for the second time since the current round of negotiations began last week.

Outside the conference room there was a relaxed and utmost friendly atmosphere among the delegates of the two sides, but it was apparent neither expected major developments soon.

The head of the 10 member Pathet Lao group, Gen. Phoune Sipraseuth, delivered a long speech mainly devoted to denouncing the American presence in Laos.

U. S. Report Is Reported

Asserting that the United States Embassy was Vientiane's real government, General Phoune quoted extensively from a report dated Aug. 3, 1971, by a Senate subcommittee headed by Stewart Symington. He quoted the report as saying that "the Government of the Kingdom of Laos depends almost totally on us, perhaps more than any other government in the world."

Asked later whether the talks here had not acquired a special impetus as a result of parallel talks regarding Vietnam, the Pathet Lao spokesman said that current speculation of an imminent peace settlement in Indochina was mostly rumor.

Members of the two delegates said in private that there was almost no chance of a significant breakthrough in the Laotian talks unless a meeting took place between the highest leaders of the two sides—Prince Souvanna Phouma, and his half brother, Phine Souphanouvong, the head of the Pathet Lao.

Prince Souphanouvong has not left the Communist-held area to visit Vientiane in years. Prince Souvanna Phouma, currently making his annual trip abroad, is not expected back here for several weeks.