

Negotiators in Laos Continue To Haggle Over Details of Truce

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VIENTIANE, Laos, Feb. 12— is the idea that both of the Representatives of the Laotian rival governments will continue to function despite the Government in Vientiane and the Communist-led Pathet Lao establishment of a mixed political council to reconcile their differences.

were still haggling over details of an imminent Laotian cease-fire settlement today. It appeared certain that the cease-fire would go into effect before the end of the week, but a high Government source said it could take years to reach a political settlement.

The main outlines of the cease-fire agreement, various well-informed sources said, include the following elements:

¶The cease-fire in Laos will be exactly like that in South Vietnam. Both sides will remain in place, creating a "leopard spot" pattern of control zones.

¶A mixed political council will be brought into being, including representatives of the two sides, to work on the broad question of a future political settlement, including ultimate reunification of the country under a single coalition government. However, Vientiane and the Pathet Lao have not attempted to work out the composition of a future coalition government, or even to discuss who its Premier would be.

¶Peace-keeping surveillance will again be entrusted to the existing three-nation International Control Commission, consisting of India, Canada and Poland. The whole peace agreement will be modeled as closely as possible on the one that was reached at Geneva on Laos in 1962, but which broke down within a few years.

U.S. Signature Demanded

Among the "four or five minor problems" reportedly remaining to be resolved before a cease-fire is the Pathet Lao's insistence that a Laotian cease-fire accord be signed not only by the Vientiane Government but also by Thailand and the United States.

Both Thailand and the United States have played major roles in support of Vientiane's forces during the long war. Vientiane argues, however, that if these two countries were to be brought into the settlement it would be necessary to have the signatures of China and North Vietnam as well.

Another problem involves the official name of the Vientiane Government. The Pathet Lao insists that the Government here is illegal and controls only Vientiane itself, and therefore should be called "the rightist Vientiane party."

These points are being discussed in private meetings between the chief Pathet Lao representative here, Phoumi Vongvichit, and the Vientiane Interior Minister, Pheng Phongsavan.

The apparent decision by the Pathet Lao side to give up its insistence that a cease-fire go into effect only after a comprehensive political settlement is reached would seem to be a major concession on the part of the Communists.

Another apparently major concession by the Communists

On the other hand, the Pathet Lao forces and their North Vietnamese allies have seized important parts of Laos in heavy fighting during the last several weeks and a cease-fire in place will give the Vientiane regime an area significantly smaller than it controlled before the offensive began.

The military situation, particularly in southern Laos has grown grim for Vientiane's forces, which were routed from Pak Song and Muong Phalane, among other towns, late last week. There were reports that substantial Vientiane units had scattered in the face of Communist advances in various areas.

Rumors circulated today that a cease-fire agreement would be signed tomorrow, but in fact high sources said that final agreement had not been reached and that a signing date had still not been fixed.

The regular, semipublic weekly negotiating meeting of the two sides was still scheduled to take place tomorrow morning, and such a meeting would not be held if a settlement had been achieved.

Premier Flies to See King

On Saturday, the Laotian Premier, Prince Souvanna Phouma, flew from here to Luang Prabang, the royal capital, to inform King Savang Vatthana of the current state of the negotiations. Prince Souvanna Phouma presumably took to the King a draft of the broad outlines of a cease-fire agreement.

Also on Saturday, a DC-3 transport plane belonging to the French military attaché here became the first plane to fly directly between Vientiane and the de facto Pathet Lao capital, SamNeua, in many years. The flight, on which two Pathet Lao officials were passengers, was described as a survey trip to determine the condition of the SamNeua landing strip and the safety conditions for future flights.

Today, a four-engine Soviet transport plane arrived to be placed at the disposition of negotiators traveling to and from SamNeua.

Prince Souvanna Phouma himself has predicted that a cease-fire would go into effect by Thursday at the latest.

U.S. Says Raids Continue

HONOLULU, Feb. 12 (AP)—United States aircraft, including B-52 bombers, continued operations over Laos today at the request of the Laotian Government, the United States Pacific Command said.

The one-sentence statement made no mention of air operations over Cambodia. A command spokesman said that there had been no operations over that country.

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