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Laotian Pact Signed; Guns Will Go Silent

VIENTIANE, Laos (AP) — The warring Laotian factions today signed a cease-fire agreement scheduled to take effect at noon Thursday, or 11 p.m. CST tonight.

The terms are similar to those of the 1962 Geneva Accord, which stopped the fighting in Laos for a time but brought no lasting peace.

In addition to the cease-fire, Interior Minister Pheng Phongsavan said the agreement calls for:

—Formation of a provisional government of national union, with half the cabinet posts going to rightist and neutralist non-Communists and half to the Communist Pathet Lao. Prince Souvanna Phouma, the 72-year-old neutralist premier who has headed the government since 1962, is expected to retain the post.

—Formation of a mixed political council to organize elections.

—Release of all prisoners and withdrawal of all foreign troops within 90 days. Some 300 U.S. airmen are listed as missing after being shot down in Laos, but the North Vietnamese have given the U.S. government the names of only seven American servicemen and two civilians held prisoner in Laos.

—Supervision of the agreement by the same three-nation International Control Commission that was unable to supervise the 1962 agreement. It is

made up of Canada, neutralist India and Communist Poland.

PHENG ALSO said Vientiane, the administrative capital, and Luang Prabang, the royal capital, would be neutralized to guarantee the security of the government.

The agreement was signed after weeks of negotiations over the power of the Communists in a new coalition regime.

Interior Minister Pheng Phongsavan signed for the government, and Phoumi Vongvichit, secretary-general of the Pathet Lao's political arm, signed for the Communists. The signing took place at Prince Souvanna's villa in Vientiane amid the popping of champagne corks and cries of "bravo" from foreign diplomats.