

## Laos Premier Backs Negotiator Criticized as Giving Too Much

NYTimes

MAR 3 1973

Special to The New York Times

VIENTIANE, Laos, March 2.—Prince Souvanna Phouma, Premier of Laos, publicly went to the defense of his chief peace negotiator today in the face of Cabinet charges that the Vientiane Government conceded too much to the Communists to obtain a peace accord.

The Prince issued a statement assuming complete personal responsibility for the negotiations and agreement and supporting his chief negotiator, Pheng Phongsavan.

Mr. Pheng Phongsavan, who is Interior Minister in Prince Souvanna Phouma's Cabinet, "has been the object of violent criticism and even threats" since signing the agreement with the Communist-led

Pathet Lao last week, the Premier's statement said.

Prince Souvanna Phouma and Mr. Pheng Phongsavan are members of the Neutralist party. The right-wing and some Neutralist Cabinet members have denounced the accord with the Communists. And during the last few days right-wing politicians have been speculating openly that Mr. Pheng Phongsavan reached agreement on Communist terms in order to replace Prince Souvanna Phouma as Premier with Communist support.

Meetings between various subcommittees of the Vientiane Government and the Pathet Lao continued today, but it was understood that only procedural matters were discussed, with no progress on substantial issues.