

Freed Yank POW Blasts U.S. Role

Sam Neua, Laos

Emmet James Kay, who is believed to be the last American prisoner of war in Indochina, severely criticized the American role in Southeast Asia yesterday after his release here by the Pathet Lao, who had held him prisoner more than 16 months.

Kay said he regretted having participated in the Laotian conflict in his capacity as a pilot for the Continental Air Service, which was used in Laos by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency.

In an interview, Kay, 48, said he had doubts about how the American authorities would receive him after the many pacifist state-

ments which he made during his detention but said he was not afraid.

"I believe that I have made many enemies in the last 16 months. They know now what I think about the war which the United States has conducted in Vietnam, Laos and even in Cambodia since 1969. If my way of thinking displeases them now, too bad," Kay said.

He was brought to the small, new airport nine miles outside Samneua in a Soviet command car. He entered the airport surrounded by unarmed soldiers who appeared to be his friends. Kay sat down and spoke calmly, in a low voice, weighing his words.

His remarks seemed more like an indictment than a statement. He frequently mentioned the late President John Kennedy, the Nixon administration and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and cited examples of what he called violations of the peace agreements and "unjustifiable intervention" during the last 20 years.

"Now I have all my life to regret what I did in signing the contract with Continental . . . I became conscious of my error when I arrived in Samneua and got to know these men and became friends with them," he said.

"Thanks to them I will do everything I can for them when I arrive in the United States for the cause of peace," Kay said.

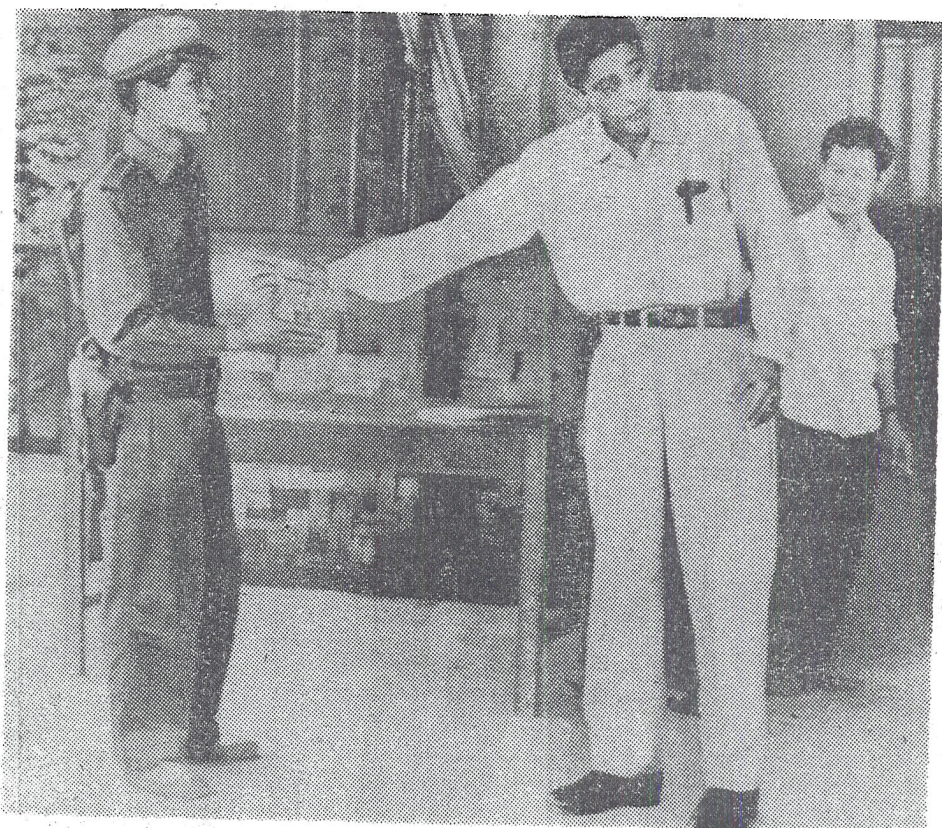
"I transported lots of arms and also bombs. I was an indirect accomplice in assassinations. You could even say that I was directly guilty of assassinations because a lot of aotians are dead because of that . . . that meaning Americandollars," he said with a grimace.

He said he received between \$2000 and \$3500 per month from Continental Air Service.

He said he was guilty but because of a system of American intervention which began well before Presidents Nixon, Johnson and Kennedy. The Americans were helping the French, he said, and the situation got worse without the American people becoming aware of it.

"Remember 1945. The Nazi war criminals were tried for what they did. Why shouldn't the United States be tried?"

These were spontaneous replies from a former pilot who voluntarily signed a



AP Wirephoto

Emmet Kay shook hands with one of his captors in the Pathet Lao stronghold of Sam Neua before starting the flight that eventually took him to the Philippines.

contract with a company used by the ICA, and they led to a question which he answered less calmly:

"No, I was not brain-washed."

He said that the first few months of his imprisonment were hard because the guards were suspicious of him.

"After, it was totally different. I have made magnificent friends here. . . . Perhaps I will never have friends like them because they respected me because I respected them. If I go back to Hawaii it is because it is my country and I have a wife and two children that I

want to see," he said.

He insisted that he was an American and that he never considered himself a spy in the pay of the CIA. He said he had been "deceived" and that now he understood.

Kay was flown from Sam Neua to the Laotian capital of Vientiane, where he was reunited with his wife, and then to Clark Air Base in the Philippines.

Kay, 47, was the first prisoner released in a long delayed exchange between the U.S. — backed Vientiane government and the pro-Communist Pathet Lao. The two sides, now joined in a coalition government, are to

exchange 350 Laotian, Vietnamese and Thai starting today.

Maurice Gralnik, political-military officer of the U.S. embassy in Vientiane, who escorted Kay and his wife, said an Air Force flight surgeon checked Kay on the trip to the Philippines and pronounced him looking fit.

Regarding the possibility of other American prisoners, Gralnik said Kay had been told by his Pathet Lao captors that when they found the sites of other plane crashes, they had buried the bodies and had taken no prisoners.

Agence France-Presse