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New Attacks by Hanoi Feared by Lao Military

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VIENTIANE — A heavy assault by North Vietnamese troops on the Bolovens Plateau in South Laos and the discovery of new enemy equipment in Vientiane Province indicates Hanoi is preparing new attacks on Laos, high-ranking Lao military officials say.

More than 600 North Vietnamese troops in new green uniforms and canvas boots assaulted Ban Houei Sai a Lao position 12 miles north of the Bolovens town of Pak Song early Saturday morning.

The Lao troops, forewarned by intelligence reports, were dug in, waiting with barbed wire defenses, machine guns and 3.5 rockets.

The Reds opened fire with 100 mortar rounds, Lao sources said, then rushed the position with infantry and what looked like three armored personnel carriers.

The Lao defenders opened up a hail fire, and forced the enemy back.

American officers the following morning counted 151 Hanoi dead, 36 of them caught on the wire, and 15 lying beyond the wire.

Allied aircraft later attacked Red troops digging fox holes near Ban Houei Sai, causing further casualties.

Communist gunners today also fired more than 100 rounds into Site 22, a joint U.S.-Lao position on the east half of Bolovens.

Military sources believe the weekend fighting is the beginning of a Hanoi effort to control all of the Bolovens Plateau. They plan to use the plateau as a major sanctuary for the Cambodia-South Vietnam fighting.

The plateau, covered by forest, is 50 miles from Cambodia and South Vietnam.

The attack on Ban Houei Sai followed Lao reports of 8,000 North Vietnamese troops moving toward the plateau from Sar-

avane the provincial capital the Reds took in May

Ban Houei Sai, in the dip of a rolling plateau, is part of the defense for Pak Song. The fall of Pak Song would give the Communists the west half of the plateau.

Hanoi also is providing its Pathet Lao allies with new Chinese-made equipment. Lao troops found two new Chinese command radios and a generator Friday when they captured what they believe was the Red headquarters in Vientiane Province. Gen. Thong Litt Chokbengboun, the second in command at Vientiane, showed reporters the generator. In perfect condition, it retained its original coat of varnish and Chinese lettering on its sides.