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SECURITY COUNCIL

Forty-second year

Letter dated 24 November 1987 from the Permanent Representative  
of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to the United Nations  
addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government and further to my letter and that of the Permanent Representative of Thailand dated respectively 15 and 29 October 1987 (A/42/663-S/19212 and A/42/709-S/19248), I have the honour to draw your attention to the following additional information:

1. With regard to the three Lao villages in Sayaboury Province, it is well known that on 6 June 1984, the extreme right-wing Thai military authorities sent their troops to attack and occupy the three Lao villages which come under the Province of Sayaboury. Under strong pressure exercised by both Thai public opinion and the international community and out of fear of losing votes in the election for non-permanent members of the Security Council, the Government of Thailand had to withdraw its troops from the three villages. However, it ordered them to occupy deliberately important positions in the areas surrounding the three villages inside Lao territory and, what is worse, to this day persists in its refusal to recognize Lao sovereignty over those three villages.

In the press release dated 4 September 1987 from its Ministry of Foreign Affairs, circulated as an official United Nations document at the request of its Permanent Representative to the Organization, the Thai Government vainly sought to

deceive both Thai and world public opinion by alleging that the treaties of 1904 and 1907 between France and Thailand, then called Siam, stipulated in general terms that the watershed was the boundary line and that, in the case of the three villages, the maps drawn up by the Siamese-French Joint Boundary Committee did not provide sufficient details. Assuming the right to interpret international law as it wished and unashamedly to violate its obligations in that connection, the Thai side, in the negotiations with the Lao side, went so far as to praise excessively the validity of its own map established by means of its so-called modern techniques. The real state of affairs is completely different. It is undeniable that the Franco-Siamese treaties of 1904 and 1907 stipulate that the watershed serves as a boundary and it is equally indisputable that, according to the maps drawn up by the Siamese-French Joint Boundary Committee, the three villages lie well inside Lao territory. It is therefore clear that the Thai arguments are completely false and have nothing but propaganda value. Such a contention, based on a legal misinterpretation, is very clear proof of the Thai Government's desire to flout the universally recognized principle of international law, in accordance with which the boundaries inherited from the colonial era are inviolable.

2. With regard to the Lao-Thai frontier incidents around the district of Botène in the Lao Province of Sayaboury last August, the Thai military authorities sent their troops clandestinely into Lao territory in the neighbourhood of the district of Botène, Sayaboury Province, to protect a Thai private company engaged in the illegal felling of Lao timber. Armed clashes subsequently occurred between Thai and Lao troops. Taking advantage of such incidents, the Thai military authorities sent several battalions of their troops as reinforcements to occupy the area of Phou Kong Deun inside Lao territory. In order to create favourable conditions for future military activities in other parts of the region and deceive Thai public opinion, the Thai military authorities, making use of their press, compiled all sorts of stories intended to discredit the Lao People's Democratic Republic. For example, they claimed that Lao soldiers had entered Thai territory and engaged in provocative acts, that the Lao side was wrongly interpreting the demarcation of the frontier line in this region or, even more strangely, that Lao soldiers had occupied the Thai village of Bane Lom Kao, etc.

The current situation in this region remains tense. Thai troops have subjected the following points in Lao territory to bombardment by their heavy artillery. On 3 November last, from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m., Thai troops fired more than a hundred shells at hill 1428 to the west of the district of Botène. At 11 a.m. on the following day, the Thai soldiery launched a fresh attack on this hill. Exercising their right to self-defence in conformity with the relevant provisions of international law and of the United Nations Charter, Lao soldiers repelled the unprovoked Thai attack. On 5 November, Thai troops again fired more than 100 shells at hill 1428, in the neighbourhood of Phou Kong Deun and Phou Vieng Lay.

It is clear that such border incidents in this region of the Botène district are the result of Thailand's contempt for the principle in accordance with which the boundaries inherited from the colonial era are inviolable. My Government affirms with strong conviction that the boundary line in this region can in no case be the subject of controversy. The provisions of the Protocol annexed to the Treaty of 1907 which lay down in black and white that the borderline on the Luangprabang coast leaves Mekong in the south at the mouth of the Nam Huong and

follows the thalweg of this river to its source at Phou Khac Mieng. The Protocol speaks of Nam Huong (not Nam Huong Nga) which it considers as part of the borderline. Thus the Government of Thailand, hoping to distort the truth, uses the hypocritical and tendentious argument alleging that the borderline lies along Nam Huong and Nam Huong Nga. Such efforts will not deceive anyone and indeed will only reveal the true expansionist aims of their authors.

In view of this indisputable fact, my Government cannot admit that the two problems which have arisen in this same region for the same motives can be considered as closed. They must be resolved by negotiations between the two parties, Laos and Thailand, in accordance with the recognized principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations and in keeping with the spirit and letter of the 1979 Lao-Thai joint communiqués. In the sincere desire to restore good-neighbourly relations with Thailand, the Government of Laos renews the appeal made by its Minister for Foreign Affairs, His Excellency Phoun Sipaseuth at the present session of the General Assembly that the Government of Thailand should decide as soon as possible to resume negotiations with the Lao side, as we had proposed.

I should be grateful if you would arrange for the text of this letter to be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 24, 42, 72, 129 and 138, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Kithong VONGSAY  
Permanent Representative of the  
Lao People's Democratic Republic

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