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QUESTION OF PEACE, STABILITY AND
CO-OPERATION IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA

SECURITY COUNCIL
Thirty-seventh year

Letter dated 21 October 1982 from the Permanent Representative of
Thailand to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On behalf of the Permanent Missions to the United Nations of the five member countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), I have the honour to transmit herewith a memorandum in reference to the circulation by the Permanent Representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to the United Nations of a letter dated 15 September 1982 from the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Lao People's Democratic Republic that had been addressed to the Foreign Ministers of the ASEAN member countries (A/37/477).

I should be grateful if this note and its enclosure could be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 20 and 35, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) M. L. Birabhongse KASEMSRI
Permanent Representative

ANNEX

ASEAN Memorandum

With reference to the circulation as General Assembly document A/37/477 by the Permanent Representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to the United Nations of a letter dated 15 September 1982 that had been addressed to the ASEAN Foreign Ministers by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the ASEAN countries wish to convey the following observations:-

1. The root cause of tension in South-East Asia is the continued presence of foreign forces in Kampuchea. General Assembly resolutions 34/22, 35/6 and 36/5 continue to be ignored, and 200,000 Vietnamese troops remain in Kampuchea, thus denying to the people of that country the right to determine their own destiny.

2. The proposals contained in the Laotian letter with regard to the Kampuchean problem upon closer examination appear designed merely to entrench Viet Nam's presence and to further its objective of bringing about a fait accompli in Kampuchea.

3. The claim of partial withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Kampuchea has not been substantiated. The relevant United Nations resolutions call for a complete and total withdrawal of foreign forces from Kampuchea. A partial troop withdrawal by Viet Nam would have been welcomed as a move in the right direction if it had been linked to an assurance that all Vietnamese troops would eventually be withdrawn from Kampuchea in accordance with the Declaration of the International Conference on Kampuchea.

4. The Vietnamese proposal for a demilitarized or safety zone along the Thai-Kampuchean border is an imposition on Thailand which is not a party to the conflict in Kampuchea and would lead to further displacement of refugees along the Thai-Kampuchean border who are dependent upon international humanitarian relief assistance and who retain the hope of returning safely to their homes.

5. As regards the limited international conference on South-East Asia proposed by Viet Nam and restated

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by the Laotian Foreign Minister, it should be noted that Viet Nam and Laos refused to participate in the International Conference on Kampuchea which was convened at UN Headquarters and was attended by over 90 countries. The Declaration of the International Conference on Kampuchea offers a balanced, reasonable and practical framework for a just and comprehensive settlement of the Kampuchean problem. As full Member States of the United Nations, Viet Nam and Laos should find no difficulty in participating in the United Nations negotiating framework that has been established by the International Conference on Kampuchea.

6. In his letter to the ASEAN Foreign Ministers, the Laotian Foreign Minister made reference to the 1961-62 Geneva Agreements on the Neutrality of Laos and the 1973 Paris Agreement on Viet Nam. Subsequent developments related to those agreements have made it necessary to broaden the basis for any international settlement reached on the Kampuchean issue in order to ensure its efficacy and durability.

7. Moreover, the proposal has thus far failed to make clear what specific issues would be discussed at such a limited international conference. On the one hand, Viet Nam has always regarded the Kampuchean situation as an internal issue of concern only to the Heng Samrin regime which it installed and maintains in power. On the other hand, Vietnamese authorities have stressed their preoccupation with the alleged Chinese threat against that regime and the Indochinese countries.

8. That is why the other countries of South-East Asia and the international community have insisted that the two essential elements of total withdrawal of foreign forces from Kampuchea and the right of the Kampuchean people to determine their own destiny must be the focus of any international conference related to South-East Asia. The convening of a limited international conference on South-East Asia suggests that the Situation in Kampuchea would be submerged in a morass of unrelated matters. Such a limited international conference would thus only serve to legitimize continued Vietnamese military occupation of Kampuchea, draw the ASEAN countries into a confrontation with those whom Viet Nam perceives to be a threat, and in effect prolong the suffering of the Kampuchean people.

9. It is noteworthy that the Ad Hoc Committee

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established by the International Conference on Kampuchea to assist the Conference in the pursuit of a comprehensive political settlement of the conflict in Kampuchea has held several meetings and undertaken missions to a number of countries this year in accordance with its mandate.

10. The United Nations Secretary-General has also issued a Report on the Situation in Kampuchea (A/37/496) wherein his good offices over the past year in contributing towards a negotiated settlement are outlined.

11. These on-going international efforts have been valuable contributions toward a just and peaceful solution of the Kampuchean problem. These international efforts should not be diminished or undermined, but should elicit the full support and cooperation of all concerned.

12. The Declaration of 17 July 1981 of the International Conference on Kampuchea provides a balanced, reasonable and practical framework for a just and comprehensive solution of the Kampuchean problem taking fully into account the legitimate security concerns of all States in the region. The Declaration urges negotiations that would lead to a free, independent, non-aligned and neutral Kampuchea that would not pose a threat to or be used against the security, sovereignty and territorial integrity of other States, especially those sharing a common border with it.

13. The ASEAN countries have also repeatedly stated that once the Kampuchean problem is solved, all States in the region could proceed further on the establishment of a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN) in South-East Asia free from any form or manner of interference by outside powers, which would create the conditions for lasting peace, stability and co-operation in the whole region.

14. The ASEAN countries share the belief expressed by the Secretary-General in his Report on the Situation in Kampuchea that over the last three years, it has become increasingly clear that the problems of the region cannot be solved by military means. They also share his conviction that there is no alternative to a negotiated settlement based on the fundamental principles of the U.N. Charter, which the General Assembly has successively reaffirmed in its relevant resolutions.

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15. The ASEAN countries have made sustained efforts to contribute to a peaceful, negotiated settlement of the Kampuchean conflict. They have maintained and promoted channels of communication with all the countries involved, including Laos and Viet Nam.

16. The ASEAN countries earnestly urge all parties concerned to be prepared to engage in serious and substantive negotiations within the United Nations framework for a just and durable settlement of the Kampuchean problem.
