



UNITED NATIONS  
SECURITY  
COUNCIL



Distr.  
GENERAL

S/7126  
9 February 1966  
ENGLISH  
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

LETTER DATED 7 FEBRUARY 1966 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF CAMBODIA  
ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to refer to the letter of 24 January 1966 from the Acting Permanent Representative of Thailand addressed to you (S/7098), forwarding a communiqué dated 22 January 1966 from the Office of the Prime Minister of Thailand.

At the direction of my Government, I have the honour to bring to your attention, for the information of the members of the Security Council, the following communiqué of the Ministry of Information dated 25 January 1966:

"With shameless cynicism the Bangkok authorities have called upon the services of the Thai Press to spread a grossly false and totally improbable version of the incident instigated by the Thai armed forces on 21 January near our frontier defence post of CHHNE KHSACH in the Province of Koh Kong. According to Bangkok, as reported in an AFP dispatch dated 22 January, 'an exchange of fire between Cambodian soldiers and Thai marines took place last Friday on the frontier between the two countries, near the Thai village of HAT LEK, in the Province of Trad.... The Cambodian soldiers approached the village by sea, on board four ships, and opened fire. The Thai frontier police by heavy firing succeeded in driving off the Cambodian vessels, while Thai reconnaissance aircraft flew over the spot but did not take part in the action...'. "

"The Ministry of Information categorically denies these allegations which bear no relation to the facts. The incident in question, which was initiated by the Thai armed forces, began and developed in entirely different circumstances. Moreover, the Khmer Press Agency has already related the circumstances in its report of 23 January, which the Ministry deems it necessary to reproduce in full, as follows:

'According to the first information that we received, on 21 January 1966 at approximately 3 p.m. about one hundred soldiers of the Thai armed forces in several columns infiltrated our territory in the direction of our provincial guard post of CHHNE KHSACH (Province of Koh Kong) situated on the coast, approximately 800 metres from the frontier.

'Approximately 400 metres inside our territory, the enemy came up against our outpost soldiers.

'However, supported by fire from heavy weapons in the Thai post of HAT LEK, the enemy advanced to within 200 metres of our post of CHHNE KHSACH.

'Our support troops, having been alerted, proceeded immediately to the spot. The engagement lasted until 6.15 p.m. when the enemy withdrew towards its territory, still under the protection of fire from heavy weapons in the Thai post of HAT LEK. The firing continued until 6.45 p.m.

'We had one provincial guard slightly wounded by mortar shell fragments.

'The losses of those who committed the aggression against us are not yet known.'

"To this incomplete information, the Ministry of Information is in a position to add the following supplementary details as of 24 January:

"(1) Throughout the night of 21-22 January, the Thais again began firing intermittently from their post of HAT LEK on our defence positions around our post of CHHNE KHSACH.

"(2) Day-time, 22 January: At 11.45 a.m. firing from HAT LEK on our post of CHHNE KHSACH and on the village of PHNOM CHAM YEAM, situated to the south of the post, resumed. There was very heavy fire from 75-mm cannon and from mortars, supported by the guns from two war ships.

"At 1.45 p.m. there was further firing in the same circumstances, on the same objectives and on our defence positions, which was not interrupted until 4 p.m.

"(3) Day-time, 23 January: While their war ships cruised before HAT LEK, the Thais brought up substantial reinforcements in men and matériel.

"(4) 24 January: At approximately 2.30 p.m. the number of Thai war ships before HAT LEK increased to three.

"At approximately 4.20 p.m., four Thai jet aircraft flew repeatedly over Khèmarak-Phouminville, the capital of Koh Kong Province. During the night of 24-25 January, at approximately 8 p.m., shell fire was directed against our ship No. E.313, which arrived in support on 23 January in the evening in the waters of CHHNE KHSACH.

"Our losses, as of 23 January, are:

"two persons wounded by shell fragments (one provincial guard and one soldier;

"two barracks at the CHHNE KHSACH post and one house belonging to an inhabitant of CHAM YEAM damaged by shells.

"The Ministry of Information wishes to recall that this fresh Thai act of aggression is the third against our post of CHHNE KHSACH in the space of some weeks. One of the two preceding attacks took place during the night of 16-17 November 1965, and the other on 2 January 1966. In both cases the aggressors had been driven back with losses. Both times too they believed that they could take the liberty of feigning innocence, but their hypocritical attitude can no longer deceive anyone. Indeed, it is easy to establish in the present case that Bangkok with astonishing speed - as early as 22 January, that is, less than twenty-four hours after the start of the incident - disseminated its false and fantastic version of the events which occurred on the 21st and that we, for our part, did not report the facts until well thereafter, when the circumstances of the aggression were known in detail. Bangkok's haste proves that the new Thai attack against our post of CHHNE KHSACH had been, once again, carefully premeditated. However, it did not, even so, catch our frontier defence forces off their guard.

"Note should also be taken of another detail, which likewise demolishes the scenario invented by Bangkok. According to the Thai version cited above, Thai aircraft are said to have surprised the Cambodians in the act of opening fire from their ships, and yet they did not intervene. If these Cambodian ships went away immediately - as is asserted by Thailand - one may well ask why the attack of 21 January lasted from 3 p.m. to 6.15 p.m., why the Thais continued to fire throughout the night, and why further firing occurred on 22, 23 and 24 January, and, lastly, why our post of CHHNE KHSACH and a house in the PHUM of CHAM YEAM suffered damage.

"The Ministry of Information, therefore, is compelled to point out that whenever Thai aggression against any place whatsoever in our territory has ended in bitter failure, Bangkok's propaganda hastens to invent an alleged act of aggression by the Khmer armed forces, with the obvious aim of camouflaging the defeat it has suffered and, even more, of concealing the intentional character of each act of aggression directed against our territory. This unvarying scenario has just been brought forward again in the present case.

"The Bangkok authorities who organize such acts of aggression, therefore, bear full responsibility for them whatever may be their inventions in which they do not shrink from any improbability in an effort to reverse the roles of the parties."

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On 29 January, His Excellency Mr. Bindra, the Chairman of the ICC, accompanied by the Polish representative to the ICC, the military attachés of France, the United Kingdom, Australia, Indonesia, the Philippines and Laos, the representatives of the Press and the correspondents of international press services, together with several diplomats, including the Chargé d'Affaires a.i. of the United Kingdom, visited the site where the Thai aggressions took place.

The foreign observers were able to see for themselves the remains recovered (shell fragments, etc.) and the damage sustained by several village houses, and they also saw distinctly at different places the characteristic traces left in the village by incendiary shells.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this communication circulated as a Security Council document.

Accept, Sir, etc.

(Signed) HUOT SAMBATH  
Permanent Representative of Cambodia

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