

Military Advisor Mission 959 and Its International Duties in Laos in 1959-1975 Period

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Abstract: During the anti-US resistance war, at the request of the Lao Party and the State, the Party and the State of Vietnam and the Vietnam People's Army, together with the volunteer soldiers, sent Military Advisor Mission 959 to Laos to undertake international duties. After 16 years of operations (1959-1975), closely upholding the Party's guidelines and the spirit of international solidarity, especially President Ho Chi Minh's thought that "helping friends is helping oneself," the mission overcame all difficulties and hardships to actively help Laos fulfil the people's national democratic revolution, upholding the spirit of international proletarian impartiality, making important contributions to the building and strengthening of the alliance-in-combat and special solidarity between Vietnam and Laos.

Keywords: Military advisor, volunteer soldiers, Vietnam, Laos.

Subject classification: History

1. Introduction

Vietnam and Laos are neighbouring countries with similarities in geography, economy, politics, culture, society, and a shared historical destiny. Therefore, the people and armed forces of the two countries have long been united to fight common enemies. As time went by, their solidarity-in-combat has become increasingly stronger and peaked in the anti-US resistance war for national salvation as Military Advisor Mission 959 (MAM 959) was sent to Laos to perform international duties.

From the inception of the unit in 1959 to the accomplishment of the international duties in Laos in 1975, basing itself on the agreements and treaties signed by the two Parties and States, and militaries of Vietnam and Laos, relying on the real situations of the revolution, MAM 959 helped the Lao revolution with the most fundamental and core issues of the resistance war. Accordingly, from 1959 to 1968, the mission supported Laos to turn the "Special War" strategy gradually into a failure. In the 1969-1973 period, it enhanced its operations to help the country turn the "Enhanced

Special War” strategy into a defeat. And, in the final phase of the anti-US resistance war from 1973 to 1975, MAM 959 provided advice for the Lao revolutionary forces to take over power by applying the “three strategic blows” and the “struggle in the legal front,” giving birth to the Lao People’s Democratic Republic on 2 December 1975, going down in the history of the two peoples of Vietnam and Laos as a remarkable milestone.

2. Establishment and provision of assistance for Lao Revolution to foil the US “Special War” strategy (1959-1968)

Upon replacing France, from 1959 onwards, the US implemented the “Special War” strategy in Laos, severely hindering the struggle for national salvation of the Lao people. Facing that situation, and promoting the solidarity-in-combat honed from previous years, the Vietnamese Party and State and the Vietnam People’s Army established the military advisor force to help the Lao revolution. On 12 September 1959, MAM 959 was formed, responsible for sending military advisors to Laos to help the Lao revolution, providing material assistance and directly commanding Vietnamese units of volunteer soldiers operating in Sam Neua, Xiengkhouang and Vientiane². This was a very important decision, demonstrating the strategic vision of the Vietnamese Party and State and the Vietnam People’s Army in leading the Vietnamese military forces to help Laos and strengthening the Vietnam-Laos alliance-in-combat in the anti-US resistance war.

In the face of the rapid developments in Laos after the US launched the “Special War” strategy, in early 1960, the Central Committee of the Lao People’s Party and the High Command of the Pathet Lao Army stationed in Vietnam moved to Lam Son (Thanh Hoa province) and was prepared to manoeuvre back to Laos. At the request of Laos, the General Headquarters of the Vietnam People’s Army sent MAM 959 to the country. As from then, all the guidelines and policies of the Party and the General Military Commission (now Central Military Commission) of Vietnam related to the Lao revolution were implemented via MAM 959. The mission was since then responsible to the Party Central Committee and the Vietnamese and Lao revolutions for preserving and developing the alliance-in-combat between the two countries to a new height.

Upon returning to Laos, on 5 May 1960, the Central Committee of the Lao People’s Party held a meeting discussing the general election and the orientation for the struggle in Laos in the new period. A major issue of particular attention of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Lao People’s Party then was to find a way to set Prince Souphanouvong, and central-level cadres of Neo Lao Hak Xat (Lao Patriotic Front), imprisoned at Phone Kheng Prison in Vientiane, free. Then, on the night of 23 May and the early morning of 24 May 1960, at the order of the Permanent Committee of the Central Committee of the Lao People’s Party, the Provincial Party Committee of Vientiane directed its inner-city agencies to take the Prince and imprisoned cadres out of the prison back to the revolutionary base safely. At the request of Laos and under the direction of General

Vo Nguyen Giap, MAM 959 prepared forces to help them sail through the aggressive search and rummage of the enemy and land safely in the revolutionary base. On this event, General Vo Nguyen Giap wrote, "The rescue of President (Prince) Souphanouvong is a special feat of arms, typical of the brotherly friendship between the peoples of Vietnam and Laos" [10, p.781]. The feat of arms was also a decisive victory of the Lao revolution, helping heighten the prestige and influence of the Lao Party and the armed forces with the assistance of the Vietnam People's Army provided via MAM 959.

On 9 July 1961, the Central Committees of the Lao People's Party and the Vietnamese Labour Party held talks, rolling out five nuclear principles for the relations between the two countries: *Firstly*, the Lao revolution is led by the Lao people, and the Lao People's Party leads the revolutionary cause of Laos; *Secondly*, the relationship between the two parties must be based on equality, solidarity, respect for each other's sovereignty, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, resolutely fighting against the mindset of "a big country", and against the narrow-minded nationalist thought, against the phenomena that one side does the jobs for the other, or one side leans too much on the other, and against acts that cause harms to the solidarity and consensus between the two parties and the friendship between the two peoples; *Thirdly*, the two parties help each other and learn from each one's experience. Vietnam's Labour Party wholeheartedly supports and welcomes criticism from the Lao People's Party while the latter takes full advantage of the support of the former;

Fourthly, the Lao Party directly keeps in touch with communist and workers' parties in the world. If necessary, and upon the request of the Central Committee of the Lao Party, the Central Committee of the Vietnamese Party recommends the Lao Party to communist and workers' parties in the world; *Fifthly*, as the relationship between the two governments took roots from the interests of the Lao revolution, the two parties agreed to take advantage of Phuma and other progressive forces to isolate the US and pro-American forces.

Basing themselves on the above principles and applying them to the real situations of the Lao revolution, MAM 959 set out seven mottos for its advisory work: *Firstly*, the mission was to display honesty and activeness in building solidarity with Laos, staying humble to learn, listen, study and respect opinions of Laos. *Secondly*, all work must be done by Laos and assistance must be provided based on the views of Laos. *Thirdly*, during the provision of assistance for the Lao revolution, it was necessary for the mission to regularly and closely uphold the spirit of constantly improving self-reliance, self-resilience and self-control for Laos. *Fourthly*, when carrying out the advisory work, the mission must be able to distinguish its work from Laos' internal affairs. Issues related to the unit's advisory work must be done in a very devoted and enthusiastic manner, while those related to the policies of Laos must be suggested to the Lao side that it request for instructions from its (i.e. Lao) higher levels; MAM 959 was not allowed to do things on the issues by itself. The mission must absolutely not intervene in Laos' internal affairs. If requested by the Lao side, the unit

was only allowed to show Vietnam's experience. *Fifthly*, as for the Lao Government and armed forces, principles such as equality, solidarity, mutual respect and non-interference in each other's internal affairs must be followed appropriately. Conduct of advisors must be in line with regulations, with warm sentiments but not simple and easy-going, and acts that would cause harms to the nation's prestige must be avoided. *Sixthly*, all work must be done by the Lao side in a proactive manner, and Vietnam shall only give lessons learnt from its experience as references for Laos. All opinions of Vietnam suggested to the Lao side must be made after being discussed collectively, carefully considered and stated in an organised manner. *Seventhly*, the support for Laos must be done effectively with the satisfaction of the Lao people and cadres [11, pp.10-11]. These are important mottos that MAM 959 always followed properly during its operations in Laos, providing substantial and effective support for the Lao revolution.

With the development in all aspects, at the end of 1961, the situation of the Lao battlefield was increasingly more favourable for the Lao revolution. To change the situation, in early 1962, the US and Lao right-wing forces manoeuvred troops to Luang Namtha (Upper Laos) and strengthened the bandit forces and raiders to attack the liberated areas. To stop the enemy's renewed military activities, MAM 959 proposed to Laos to promote military operations in the Spring-Summer of 1962 to first destroy the Lao right-wing troops, which encroached on Luang Namtha, to facilitate the struggle in the diplomatic front. Accordingly, the Luang Namtha

Campaign ran from 2 to 12 May 1962. After the victorious campaign, on 23 July 1962, the International Agreement on the Neutrality of Laos was signed. By affirming the basic principles of the Geneva Accords in 1954 on Indochina, the International Agreement on the Neutrality of Laos of 1962 condemned the US' intervention in Laos and raised specific tasks to help Laos secure peace and neutrality and build an independent, united, democratic and prosperous Laos.

After the signing of the agreement, most of the personnel of MAM 959 retreated to Vietnam, leaving just a small number of advisors working with the Lao Central Military Commission. However, when Laos held the *Second Entire Army Emulation Congress* in Houaphanh in September 1963, despite the small number of personnel, MAM 959 tried its best, considering the work of the Lao revolution its own, regardless of day and night, helping the preparations for and organisation of the Congress with a great deal of work, thereby contributing to the success of the Congress, creating a new momentum for the Lao revolution in the anti-US resistance war for national salvation.

In July 1963, as the Laos revolution was fiercely contested, the Politburos of the Vietnamese Labour Party and the Lao People's Party met to discuss the solutions for the development of the Lao revolution³. After the meeting, on 7 August 1963, the Central Committee of the Lao Party asked that the Central Committee of the Vietnamese Party send more advisors to Laos to help the country in all aspects from policy-making to the organisation of implementation of the guidelines and policies. Accordingly, from the end of 1963

to early 1964, more than 2,000 officers at all levels of the Vietnam People's Army, most of whom had earlier served as advisors in Laos and retreated to Vietnam in 1962, were added to MAM 959.

In 1965, the situation in Indochina saw new developments. That was also the year Vietnam and Laos coordinated smoothly on all fronts. The delegations of the two countries attending the Indochinese People's Conference held in Phnom Penh from 1 to 9 March 1965 agreed on a *Resolution on the Lao Issue*, affirming that the tension in Laos was caused by the US, strongly condemning the latter and pro-American forces for conducting air raids on Laos' liberated areas, demanding that the US end its use of Lao territory to attack the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and end its provocative acts against and invasion of Vietnam.

In 1966, the situation in Laos was more closely connected to the situation in southern Vietnam. To draw the lessons learnt to enhance the effectiveness of the Lao revolution in the new period, on 4 August 1966, the Party Committee of Military Advisor Mission 959 conducted the review of the implementation of the Politburo's Resolution on Laos. The revision showed that, after supporting the Lao armed forces to disseminate the national and ethnic policies, conquering the bandit forces, in the dry season of 1964-1965, the Party Committee of MAM 959 helped the Central Committee of the Lao People's Party define some fundamental issues in the armed struggle and building of armed forces nationwide and the thorough application of major principles and the view of the people's war and the people's armed forces in practice in Laos. In addition, the

Party Committee also provided in-depth assistance to the Pathet Lao Army in organising political rectification and consolidation of party cells...

After the revision of the implementation of the Politburo's Resolution on Laos, MAM 959, along with volunteer soldier units and Vietnamese military advisors in Laos, strongly continued its operations. As a result, more progress was made in destroying the right-wing Lao forces in the dry season of 1966 compared to that in the dry season of 1964-1965, as shown in the number and scale of battles which destroyed more enemy troops and in the effectiveness of the combat-in-movement tactics applied in the Lao battlefield. This achievement helped the liberated areas constantly expand, placing the enemy into a passive state and the US "Special War" strategy in Laos at the risk of being foiled. For that feat-of-arms, on 19 April 1967, General Vo Nguyen Giap sent a compliment letter to officers and soldiers of MAM 959, which read, "You comrades have overcome difficulties, endured hardships, and made many achievements... Your achievements have contributed significantly to strengthening the forces for the southern [Vietnamese] and Lao battlefields, and to the victory of the Vietnamese armed forces and people. In the new period, the Central Military Commission requires that you comrades raise your vigilance, resolutely foil all plots of the enemy, and stay highly determined to strengthen internal and international solidarity, enhance responsibility, strictly observe the Party's policies, bring achievements into play, and complete assigned tasks and plans..." [16, pp.1-2].

As for the Lao side, after the outstanding development of the armed forces, from 20

to 30 July 1967, the Central Military Commission and the Lao High Command held the *Entire Army Conference for Political and Military Officers* in Sam Neua, assessing the strengths and shortcomings of the armed forces, defining directions and rolling out tasks for military operations in the time that followed, especially in the dry season of 1967-1968. To meet the requirements of developing the armed forces during the period of countering the “special war” strategy, the delegates at the conference decided to rename the Pathet Lao Army’s to the Lao People’s Liberation Army commanded by Comrade Khamtai Siphandon.

The success of the conference marked a new development in the Lao revolution. After the conference, delegates returned to their localities and units and continued the fight against the “Special War” strategy of the US. In that urgent situation, MAM 959 sent many advisor teams together with officials of the three agencies of Laos, namely the General Staff, the General Political Department, and the General Department of Logistics, to units and helped them study the situation in the battlefield, forecast situations, prepare combat options and build combat-ready forces.

For the enemy, despite consecutive defeats in the dry season of 1965-1966, from August 1967, urged by the US, the Lao right-wing forces attacked and encroached on Nam Bac, a densely-populated land strategically located along the Nam Ou River in Luang Prabang province. On 12 January 1968, the Laos-Vietnam coalition forces attacked Nam Bac and defeated the enemy after ten days, breaking down the strategic base and the

plan to attack the liberated areas of the Lao right-wing forces, contributing importantly to the change in force balance in favour of the Lao revolution. By the end of 1968, both the “Localised War” strategy in Vietnam and the “Special War” strategy in Laos of the US went completely foiled. At this point, MAM 959 completed a period of operations, which was full of hardship yet also full of glorious achievements, contributing to bringing the Vietnam-Laos alliance-in-combat to a new phase.

3. Promoting operations to support Lao Revolution in foiling the US “Enhanced Special War” strategy (1969-1973)

In early 1969, R.Nixon was elected US President. He introduced the Nixon Doctrine. On implementing the doctrine, in parallel with conducting the “Vietnamisation” strategy in South Vietnam, the US carried out the strategy of “Enhanced Special War” in Laos with many new schemes and tricks, posing the toughest challenges to the resistance war of the Lao people.

During thtime period, the operations of MAM 959 continued to focus on two main tasks of helping the Lao revolution developing its armed forces and promoting the people’s war posture against the US. Accordingly, in July 1969, the mission helped Laos successfully organise the *Entire Army Conference on Military Affairs* in Viengxay (Houaphanh) looking into combat tactics of the armed forces to meet the requirements of combat in the new period.

On the enemy’s side, at the end of July 1969, the US and the Laotian right-wing forces opened Operation Cu Kiet to the

Plain of Jars, Xiengkhouang⁴. It was a big operation, typical of the Nixon Doctrine in Laos, in the formula of Lao right-wing troops together with Thai troops, maximum American logistic supplies and US Air Force fire support.

In the face of the plots and tricks of the US in Operation Cu Kiet, MAM 959 quickly sent personnel to assist Lao grassroot-level units together with Lao officials. In addition, all advisors at the Plain of Jars Military Region, the Xiengkhouang provincial Military Command and MAM 959 were sent to the battlefields, joining Lao forces in reorganising units, building up the determination to fight and defeat the escalated activities of the US in the “Enhanced Special War” strategy.

To defeat Operation Cu Kiet, restore, and expand the liberated area of the Plain of Jars while creating a new balance and power for the Lao revolution, Vietnam and Laos jointly opened the *Toan Thang (Total Victory) Campaign*. At the end of September 1969, in Khe Tri (Ky Son district, Nghe An province), the Campaign Command passed down the missions to participating units. To firmly grasp the coordination in combat, MAM 959 sent its officials to the conference together with Lao senior officials. The mission then assigned officers to Lao units to help make careful preparations in all aspects, from holding party committee, party cell and chain-of-command meetings to thoroughly informing the purposes and requirements, the motto and missions of the campaign to the units, the reconnaissance of the battles, the development of combat plans, the adjustment of troop strength, the supplement of material and weapons, building up the spirit of determination, and launching the

emulation movements in combat. During the course of the campaign, MAM 959 both stayed close to the Lao fighting units in the front and helped the people in the rear. Comrade Khamtai Siphandon acknowledged the devotion and bravery of the Vietnamese military advisors, the Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Lao People’s Liberation Army, as shown at the summary conference of the campaign, as follows: “...Whenever we are in need, Vietnamese military advisors are readily available” [8, p.313].

In 1971, in order to withdraw troops to defuse public opinion and ease the booming anti-war movement in the United States and create a favourable strategic situation for the US and the Saigon Government in the Indochinese theatre, the US decided to open three major operations, namely Operation Lam Son 719 along the Road No. 9 in Southern Laos, an operation manoeuvring troops from Tay Ninh and Loc Ninh to attack areas of Kampong Cham and Kratie in Northeastern Cambodia, and an operation in which forces from the Central Highlands were moved to raid the border areas of the three countries (Attapeu of Laos).

In the face of that new conspiracy, Vietnam decided to launch a counter-attack campaign in the Road No. 9 area to defeat the US Operation Lam Son 719⁵. As for Laos, MAM 959 proposed to the High Command of the country with a plan to coordinate with the Vietnamese armed forces and people to defeat the operation in the Central and Lower Laos. At the same time, when the campaign took place, in coordination with the forces of the Road No. 9 Campaign, the mission’s advisors in Lao provinces and military regions helped Lao units implement the directive of the

High Command of the Lao People's Liberation Army on stepping up the combat against the right-wing forces, contributing to the victory of the campaign.

As the Lao revolution saw favourable developments, from 3 February to 6 June 1972, the Second National Congress of the Lao People's Party was held, setting out various new directions for the Lao revolution. The congress decided to rename the Party to the "Lao People's Revolutionary Party". After the congress, the Lao People's Revolutionary Party conducted the third time of party revamping, in which the revamping in the military was slated for the beginning of the rainy season of 1972. Accordingly, MAM 959 assisted the General Political Department to cooperate closely with Lao information and education agencies to compile documents realising the Resolution of the Second Party Congress with in-depth focus on military tasks of the armed forces and clearing negative phenomena, improving troops morale in combat, promoting the responsibility of the leadership of units, and building up the determination to complete the tasks in the new revolutionary period. After the revamping, the revolutionary enlightenment of cadres and party members was heightened, and training and combat readiness emulation movements were waged excitingly in the entire army.

While the Lao People's Liberation Army implemented the Party revamping, in the Plain of Jars, Xiengkhouang, the Lao right-wing forces stepped up activities. The enemy intended to gather forces to capture the plain in the rainy season of 1972 to create a bargaining chip during negotiation

with the Lao revolution. Dealing with this situation, based on the proposal of MAM 959, on 1 April 1972, Vietnam and Laos jointly opened the Plain of Jars Campaign (20 May - 15 November 1972). During this important campaign, the mission and the volunteer forces brought into full play their bravery in combat, overcame difficulties, and stayed united with the Lao armed forces to gain victory, further tightening the close-knit alliance-in-combat between the two parties, the two peoples, and the two militaries in the last phase of the anti-US resistance war.

Thanks to great victories in all aspects of the Lao revolution, after the signing, on 27 January 1973, of the Paris Peace Accords - the Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam, on 21 February 1973, the US was forced to sign the Vientiane Agreement on the restoration of peace and national harmony in Laos. That was a great, comprehensive, all-round, and strategic victory of the Lao revolution and also "a strategic failure of the US not only in the Lao and Indochinese theatres but also a failure of its global strategy" [15, p.482].

4. Support for Laos in the struggle to reach final victory in the anti-US resistance war (1973-1975)

After the signing of the Vientiane Agreement, MAM 959 directly reported to the Lao Central Military Commission and High Command on the advisory work. Accordingly, the mission completed its tasks to help the Lao revolution develop and take care of its activities. Its achievements were highly appreciated by the Lao Central

Military Committee and High Command and considered a symbol of the special solidarity between Vietnam and Laos.

After the completion of the assistance to the Lao revolution to foil the US “Special War” and “Enhanced Special War” strategies, in the new revolutionary period, the Politburos of the Central Committee of the People’s Revolutionary Party of Laos and the Central Committee of the Vietnamese Labour Party discussed the orientation for the development of the two countries’ revolutions. The two sides agreed to withdraw most of the Vietnamese advisors of MAM 959, leaving only about 100 advisors in Laos. The mission no longer maintained an organisational system that provided assistance for Laos from the grassroots to the central levels, retaining only some research divisions to help the Lao Central Military Commission and the High Command of the Lao Army with basic issues of guidelines and policies as well as provide support for the implementation of the policies and general advisory lessons.

To provide more effective and substantial support for the Lao revolution in the new period, at the end of September 1974, the Party Committee of MAM 959 organised a conference to review the 15-year implementation of the advisory work in support of the Lao revolution (1959-1974). The conference emphasised that Vietnam’s support for the Lao revolution was all-round and fundamental, helping Laos in both force-building and combat for the immediate and long term purposes. The Lao side should actively study and raise ideas, while Vietnam would provide comments, in order to implement the teachings of President Ho Chi Minh that read, “[We

need to] Help the Lao revolution so that Laos do the job itself” and “Helping Laos is both an international mission and our own revolutionary one, and that must be based on comradeship, brotherliness, and impartial and wholeheartedly support” [14, p.5].

In 1975, the uprising movement to take over power in Laos rose highly, especially after the victory of the Cambodian revolution (17 April 1975) and that of the Vietnamese revolution (30 April 1975). On 5 May 1975, the Politburo of the Lao People’s Revolutionary Party’s Central Committee held an expanded meeting and decided to launch the national campaign calling on the people nationwide to rise up in arms with the three-area disposition (liberated area, area temporarily controlled by the enemy and neutral area) and the three-strategic attacks (political struggle, military struggle and mass uprising) combined with the “legal struggle,” simultaneously attacking to take over the power and set up the revolutionary government at the earliest. On implementing that policy, a number of the Politburo members were sent to different directions to lead the struggle to take over the power promptly. In the face of the important new task, at the request of Laos, despite having a limited number of advisors, MAM 959, leaving only a small number of cadres at the office to monitor the daily situation and conduct study and make proposals concerning the general direction, assigned the rest to accompany Lao Politburo members and members of the Lao Party’s Central Committee in consolidating the forces and disseminating the Politburo’s resolutions on all fronts, and to prepare for open offensive operations to destroy the enemy and support the people to gain power.

The Lao revolution saw favourable developments then, and the condition for the liberation of the country was ripe. Closely grasping the situation, MAM 959 made a number of recommendations on some important issues to General Secretary Kaysone Phomvihane. On that basis, on 7 May 1975, the Standing Committee of the Lao Party's Politburo convened an urgent meeting and decided to mobilise the entire armed forces in all directions to quickly capture areas under the enemy's control and to support the uprising of the masses, the mutiny of the right-wing soldiers, and to take over the power on the spot [7, p.221].

In early June 1975, as proposed by MAM 959, the Politburo of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party met and unanimously concluded that the time was ripe for Laos to reach the final victory. The offensive by three strategic blows and the struggle in the legal front should be accelerated for the revolutionary forces to gain power as soon as possible [8, p.42]. After the meeting, General Secretary Kaysone Phomvihane and Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Lao People's Liberation Army Khamtai Siphandon met the leadership of MAM 959 in person and informed them about the policy of the Central Committee of the Party, asking MAM 959 to urgently help Laos in dealing with some pressing issues, such as the policies for the takeover of the liberated areas, especially cities and urban areas, by the total removal of the enemy's military and police forces, re-education and rehabilitation of the latter's officers as well as the reception, management and preservation of weapons, materials, and depots and war equipment of the right-wing forces. At that critical time of the Lao revolution, advisors of the mission worked

regardless of day and night, trying their best to complete the tasks entrusted by Lao leaders.

By the end of June 1975, employing three strategic blows combined with the struggle in the legal front, the Lao revolution had taken over power and established the revolutionary governments in 13 provinces and four cities, including six provinces, entirely run by the people. The other provinces were, formally, run by the coalition government, but, led by the Lao People's Revolutionary Party. That victory was the basis for the Politburo of the Party to issue the appeal on 18 September 1975, calling on the whole people to cast votes for the members to people's councils at all levels. From 21 to 23 November 1975, Lao people elected members of people's councils and administrative committees at all levels, making the election a success.

After the success of the election, on 1 December 1975, the Lao People's National Congress was convened in Vientiane. The day after, the Lao People's Democratic Republic was born, marking the complete victory of the anti-US resistance war of the Lao people. MAM 959 successfully fulfilled its international missions, turning over a new page in the history of the special relationship between Vietnam and Laos.

5. Conclusion

From 1959 to 1975, at the request of the Party and the State of Laos, Vietnam's Party and State and the Vietnam People's Army established MAM 959 to undertake the international missions in Laos. The mission was regularly consolidated and strengthened in all aspects depending on the requirements, tasks and developments of the Lao revolution.

On that basis, thoroughly imbued with the Party's guideline of international solidarity and the strategic thought of President Ho Chi Minh of "helping friends is helping ourselves," the mission focused on helping build the Lao revolutionary armed forces, which were getting increasingly stronger and more developed. It also supported the Lao revolution in creating and developing a strong people's war disposition, gradually foiling war strategies of the US and gaining the final victory in the national democratic revolution of Lao people.

The achievements gained by MAM 959 during the implementation of the international missions in Laos have left good feelings in the hearts of the Lao people and served as a remarkable milestone of solidarity in the special Vietnam-Laos alliance-in-combat. In the new revolutionary period, in the context of complicated and unpredictable developments of international and regional situations, together with comprehensively promoting potential and advantages, the creative application of operational experience of the mission during the anti-US resistance war is particularly important. That is contributing to the building and strong defense of the socialist fatherland of each country and ever-fostering their special relations in line with the legitimate aspirations of the people of the two countries!

Notes

¹Translated by Nguyen Thu Hung.

² Major General Le Chuong, Member of Vietnam's Working Group on Lao Affairs in charge of the Vietnamese cadre delegation, was appointed the

Chief and Secretary of Military Advisor Mission 959. Mr. Le Tien Phuc, military official, and Mr. Dinh Van Khanh and Mr. Mai Van Quang... (civil officials) were members of the Party Committee of MAM 959.

³ Attending the meeting were First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Vietnamese Labour Party Le Duan and General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party Kaysone Phomvihane.

⁴ During the operation, the US used from 100 to 150 participating aircraft a day, directly providing fire support for the Lao right-wing troops, conducting bombardments that were focusing on destroying liberated areas in the Plain of Jars and Sam Neua. Wherever the Lao right-wing troops went, they burnt down everything and killed everyone, causing great human and property losses to the people of Muang Pek and Muang Khun.

⁵ On 4 February 1971, the Command of the Road 9 - Southern Laos Campaign was established, commanded by Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the Vietnam People's Army Le Trong Tan with Deputy Director of the General Political Department Le Quang Dao as the Political Commissar. The Politburo of the Vietnam Labour Party Central Committee appointed Politburo member, Deputy Secretary of the Central Military Commission and Chief of the General Staff, Senior Lieutenant General Van Tien Dung, the representative of the Central Military Commission and the General Headquarters at the front.

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