To: Mr. Keith E. Adamson, Public Affairs Officer

From: Larry Daks

Subject: Pathet Lao Textbooks; Observations and Recommendations of New Publications for Pathet Lao Controlled and Contested Areas.

Recently a number of Pathet Lao school-books were picked up by Mr. Ernest Kuhn, USAID RD, in Houa Phan province. There are seven different titles. Two are Lao readers for P. 1 and 2, three are Lao math books for P. 1, 2 and 3, there is one Meo (Lao Soung) reader and Meo math book. The Meo books are printed in Lao script but the language is Meo. I have looked at these books, along with some USAID produced RLG textbooks, in order to describe them and make recommendations for new program items.

These books have color covers but inside all illustrations are in black and white the exception of the Meo math book which has a few color foldouts. They are labeled as being printed by the Central Education Division, National Patriotic Liberation Front, at the NLMX printing center. They are published in quantities of between ten and fifty thousand and some of Lao books have prices marked on them that range from eighteen to twenty-five kip. Some of the books were printed in 1964 others in 1966. The fact that the abacus is featured prominently in two of the math books, with illustrations and instructions on how to use it, indicates China as the source. (Neither the Vietnamese nor the Laotians use the abacus.)

The two Lao readers contain a series of fables, stories and poems that get progressively difficult. Few of the stories are over one page long. Many of the stories are quite specific containing the names of particular villages, rivers, mountains or actual people. (The RLG readers are far less specific.) The stories stress unity, cooperation, pride in accomplishments, self-help and resistance against the enemy. They are very well written. Book 2 has more "hard-core" propaganda than Book 1.

The following list contains some summaries, translations and comments on some of the articles in these readers (complete translation of table of contents also attached):
1. Lao Reader 1, Article 1 - "My School" - A child describes his thatched roof school (with illustration).

In these stories all progress is proudly acknowledged. The standard of accomplishment is not something that is seemingly unreachable, like that of Thailand, France or the United States. Other stories proclaim the virtues of growing vegetables, killing pests, building roads etc.

2. Lao Reader, Article 4 - "Helping A Friend" - A boy forgets to bring a pencil to school. A schoolmate breaks his in half and gives it to him.

3. Lao Reader 1, Article 15 - "A Cluster of Ants Seize the Victim" - One ant sees a dead worm. He tries to take it away but is not strong enough. He then calls many ants, they help each other and it is very easy.

4. Lao Reader 1, Article 20 - "Cleverness" - A ball falls down a hole. A boy tells his friends to put water in the hole and the ball floats to the top.

5. Lao Reader 1, Article 24 - "Red Ants" - Ants are loyal to each other. They fight together against any attacks on their home and won't stop until victory is achieved. Everyone is afraid of them.

6. Lao Reader 1, Article 33 - "Along The Mekong River" - First hand description of what a person sees from his village along the Mekong.

7. Lao Reader 1, Article 34 - "Seeing The Soldiers Off" - Many people surround them, give them a bag, wish them a great victory and really praise these brave soldiers of ours. The soldiers leave, they turn around and wave their hands and cloths saying goodbye" (with illustration.)

C. Lao Reader 1, Article 78 - "Laboring"

"A shortage of farmers, Hunger, There is no waiting Buildings, houses, stores If we lack Independence I knew I am still little When I am bigger I will be able A shortage of food Not enough to eat. Laborers build! We live because of whom? soldiers who love the nation Who will defend it? Helping with work I will concentrate on studies. A worker building the nation, to labor."
9. Lao Reader 2, Article 4 - "Our Country"

"Lao is our country. It is a rich and beautiful country. There is fish in the river and rice in the fields. In the forests there are large valuable trees. In the ground are precious stones, silver and other minerals.

The American Imperialists want to take our natural wealth and make us their slaves. We love our country. We love our native land. We absolutely will not allow ourselves to be their slaves. We will preserve our native land. We will preserve our race and fight bravely for our land."

10. Lao Reader 2, Article 11 - "Bounkhong and Leopo"

"Bounkhong and Leopo study at the same desk at school. Bounkhong is a lowland Lao, Leopo is Lao Soung. They are very close friends.

One day when school was closed they went to the forest for firewood. Upon reaching the forest they heard the birds singing loudly. Bounkhong asked, "Little birds, 'What are you saying'? The bird answered, 'We are speaking about why you two love each other so much!'. They answered together, 'Birds, we love each other because we are young Lao living in the same country.' The little birds sang together 'admirable, admirable!'.

11. Lao Reader 2, Article 57 - "My Temple" - (for those who think the P.L. do not respect or make a pretense of respecting Buddhism)

"In my village There is a temple and pavilion. people go to listen to the sermon. The reading and expounding of the story of Gautama Buddha as Vessantara, They go in a procession unexpectedly. The priest gives a sermon. I am touched. evil I listen along with the elders. I don't say anything nor play chasing after another.

12. Lao Reader 2, Article 80 - "The Water-wheel" - Supported by a simple illustration.

"In my village there is a large stream which runs continuously."
When the time for the dry season crop comes my father makes a water wheel to get the water into the fields. This water wheel is circular just like the wheel of an oxcart. He attaches cylinders to the wheel in order to pick up the water. When the water flows the wheel turns. It is very interesting. It runs continuously. Watch the water quickly flow from the cylinders into the aqueduct and then run out to the field. Farmers in some areas like to make water wheels for a dry season crop or when there is little rain.

13. Lao Reader 2. Article 107 - "Soldiers Harvest Rice Helping the people"

"Waking up early in the morning, Khamsing went with his mother to harvest rice. Upon reaching the field, they saw two soldiers helping harvest. They harvested quickly and sang entertainingly at the same time. One part of their song went:

Our soldiers fight bravely.
At the same time they produce good results.
Serving the nation.
Protesting independence --- permanent peace!

The girls harvesting rice along side of them thought this was fun and they sang along with them. The sound echoed through the fields and this made it more fun. Khamsing listened, liked it and sang, "Please sing more. I really like to listen!"

14. Lao Reader 2, Article 108 - "Our Country"

Our country is called Laos.
It is long and wide, as far as the eye can see.
The Mekong River flows.
There are beautiful, clean islands.
Our nation is great!
Our children were born to help.
Help develop the nation.
So that it is glorious in the future.
Don't stand still! Those who are real Laotian.
It is time to build peace.
Work together to suppress the aggressors.
The evil spirits, the giant imperialists,
Must be driven from Laos."
15. Lao Reader 2, Article 110 - "The Eight Brave Warriors"

"On the 18th, the month of the dragon, 1961, a company of the lackey soldiers of America came to make a military sweep of Ban Haad Sieo. In this village there were just eight of our soldiers. They did not let them destroy the houses and property of the people. These eight warriors divided their duties, absolutely repelling the enemy. Even though the enemy fired loud machine guns these soldiers laid and waited for the enemy to come close and then they fired their guns simultaneously. When the enemy was surprise attacked they fled and scattered. When we stopped firing they attacked again. They tried to advance four times but were caught by our soldiers each time. Finally they fled.

The people of Ban Haad Sieo highly lauded the spirit of the eight brave Pathet Lao warriors."

16. Lao Reader 2, Article 111 - "Sythong, The Bravest Warrior In The Nation" - The story of a soldier who fought the French and was given an award in 1956 (with picture).

17. Lao Reader 2, Article 112 - "The Celebration of the Liberation of Sam Neua"

"When they heard the news about the liberation of Sam Neua, people all over the province, --priests, young and old, boys and girls, various ethnic groups,---living nearby came to celebrate the day of liberation at the athletic field in the middle of town. After that Prince SOUNPANHNAVONG, Chairman of the Central Committee of the Neo Lao Hak Zat, spoke. Then the representatives of the people in Houa Phanh province gave their opinions. The people praised the victory and completely supported the policy of the Central Committee of the NLHZ. In addition, they clapped their hands simultaneously and shouted slogans enthusiastically. At night there was a play by the army and a shadow play. The program ended very late.

After being liberated the people of Sam Neua felt very happy they had escaped the oppression of those who hunt colonies. Now they have created a beautiful new life."

18. Lao Reader 2, Article 11 - "Young People United In Struggle"

"We are young people, Newly emergent, clear thinking. At the same time intelligent and serious. It is very fortunate,
That we build along a peaceful path,
We are neutral in the most correct way.
Don't kill or oppress anybody.
However, we struggle
Against the devils,
Who aggress against our land and infiltrate and destroy.
Externally and internally build!
Join together, fight! fight!
To gain genuine independence."

19. Lao Reader 2, Article 11 - "Chasing Out the Enemy With One Gun"-Story taken from a P.L. newspaper about French soldiers who were frightened away by one gun.

20. Lao Reader 2, Article 115-"Shooting Down An Enemy Plane"-
The shooting down of an American plane for repeated violations by this and other planes of the cease fire agreement of March 5, 1961.

21. Lao Reader 2, Article 116-"Two Flint-lock Guns"-The story of how two men with flint-lock guns stopped a French boat.

22. Lao Reader 2, Article 117-"Letter of Thao Ounkham To A Soldier In Company K"

"Beloved and respected Deth,

Since you left my village we have thought about you a great deal. When we go to places you used to go to act out plays, we act out similar ones about your victories. The POW's are very frightened, but we are just and do not hurt them in any way.

Beloved brother, my parents say that in a short time you will return. Now you are performing your duties. We are waiting for you. When are you going to return? Come quickly, we miss you very much.

Missing you,
Ounkham"

23. Lao Reader 2, Article 119-"Soldiers And People Are Like Fish And Water"
"In the area of Muong Sone, on the days when our soldiers are free, they help the people farm no matter how tired they are. When they help the people they feel relieved. When the people see the soldiers helping them with their work they arrange a very friendly greeting. An elder asks, "If we didn't have you boys who would take care of the country enable us to be happy and make a living in peace?" A soldier answers, "That's right father. We children have duty of protecting the nation's peace and, by the same token, you people have the duty to care for and develop the army." Therefore, the soldiers and the people can be compared to fish and water. They are inseparable."

24. Lao Reader 2, Article 120 - "Helping the People Exterminate Grasshoppers" - Through the co-operation of soldiers grasshoppers plaguing rice fields are killed.

The Pathet Lao mathematics books, P. 1, 2 and 3, are also used as vehicles for propaganda. It is interesting that the numerals in these books (and those in all others) are Arabic. Lao numerals are not used at all, whether it be for the math problems themselves, dates or pagination. The RLG texts use Lao numerals.

Many of the math problems stress self-help. Students, farmers and business-men are all depicted doing things for their communities. (e.g. Lao Math Book 3, Problem 234, "The people in Ban Say Sy Neu repaired the road from the temple to the well, a length of about 450 meters. The people of Ban Tay repaired the road from the well to the main highway, 550 meters. How many meters from the temple to the main road? How many kilometers?")

On page 125 of Lao Math Book 2 we get our first taste of "hard-core" propaganda. There is an illustration of people marching, arms outstretched, carrying a sign that reads "America leave". This illustrates problem 92 which reads, "Young people march in protest against America. They march five to a row. There are nine rows and two people marching in front. How many people in this group?"

Following are some additional samples of propaganda used in the P.L. math books. All of these are from Lao Math Book 3.

1. Problem 286 - "The people took two boats to transport one hundred soldiers across the river . . ."
2. Problem 390 - "In the second month of 1961 students from Xieng Khouang divided into three wings and marched protesting American infiltration into Laos. . ."

3. Problem 476 - "Write the amounts in the following sentences in numerals:

Laos received independence on October twelve, nineteen hundred and forty-five."

4. Problem 517 - "Write the amounts in the following sentences in numerals:

a.) The Soviet Union reduced the number of their soldiers by one thousand eight hundred and forty. As for America they increased their forces from two million eight hundred and fourteen thousand to two million eight hundred and forty thousand. . ."

5. Problem 587 - "In 1960 the people of Laos in many provinces met to denounce and protest the infiltration by America. (From the chart below) Calculate the number of people at these meetings. How many men? Women. . ."

6. Problem 689 - "The people of Vientiane province met in a number of places to sign a protest against America so that they will not infiltrate into Laos. In Borikhane there were 3,500 signatures, Tourakhoem 5,215, Vang Vieng 2,760. On the average how many people signed in each district?" The Neo (Lao Soung) textbooks are written in Lao script but the language is Neo. At the front of the reader are pictures of P.L. leaders --- Souphannavong, Faydam, Sithone and Kaysone. Interspersed among the stories are color foldouts, captioned in Lao as well as Neo, with slogans like "All the Lao people unite to repel Imperialist America". Another illustration that shows Neo reading these texts is captioned "Because of the kindness the MLHIX our ethnic Lao Soung people have a written language". The Neo reader also has pictures of Souphannavong and Faydam talking with Lao Soung people.

I cannot comment on any of the language in the Neo math book because it is all in Neo. However, from the illustrations it seems obvious that there is even more "anti-enemy" propaganda in this book than in the Lao language edition.
ATTACHMENT No. I.

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