



STATEMENT BY

H.R.H. Prince SOULIVONG SAVANG of LAOS

February 27, 1998

Senate Russell Office Building, Washington D.C.

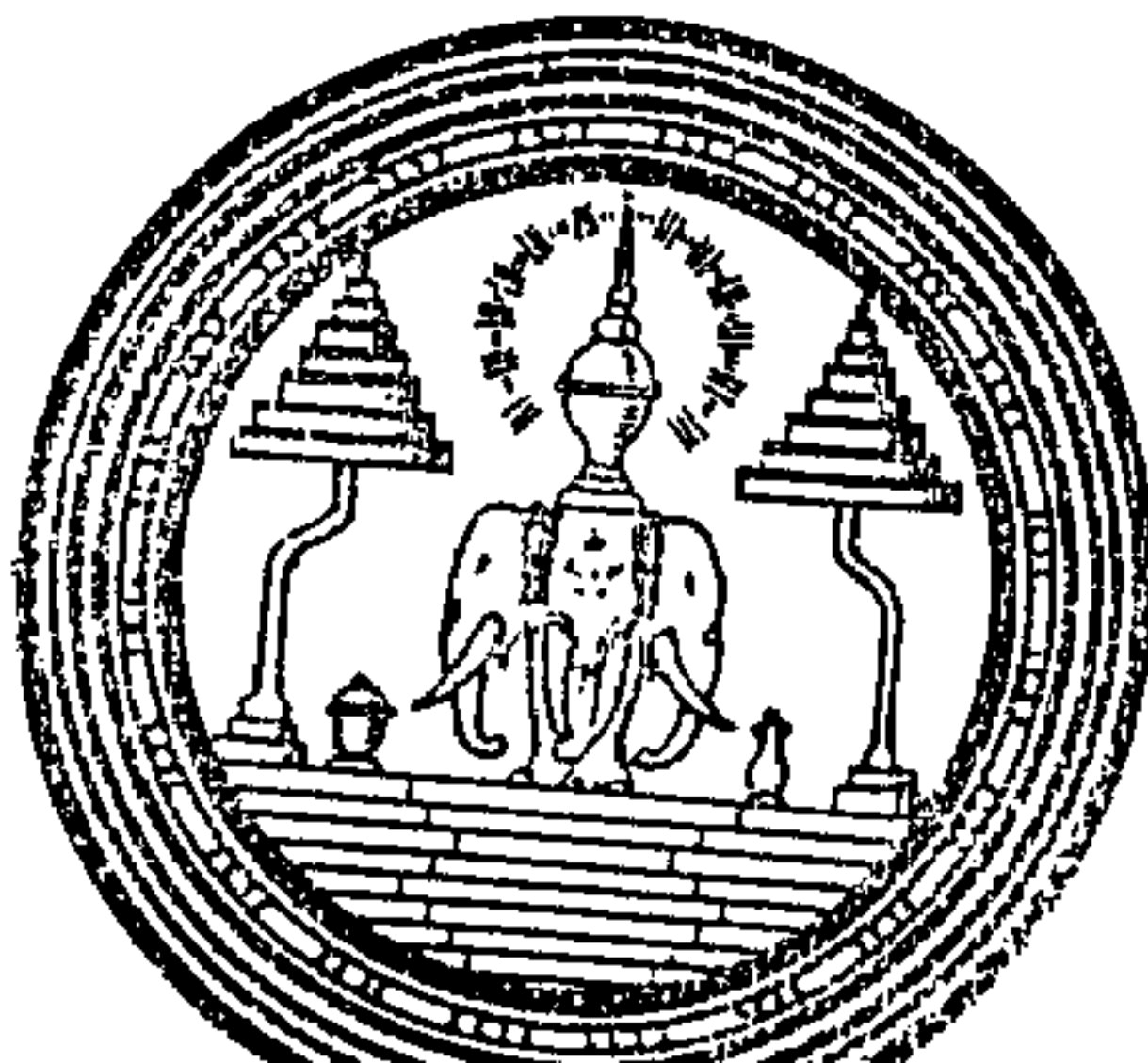
As heir to the throne of Kingdom of Laos, I want to affirm to the members of the Senate and the House of Representatives of the United States, my deep and unequivocal commitment to the principles and practices of democracy. Living as a refugee in France now for many years and visiting the United States, I have contrasted the benefits to the peoples of those countries resulting from democratic government under the rule of law to the sufferings and poverty my people of Laos have experienced since 1975 under an arbitrary and tyrannous government.

I aspire, should I be given the opportunity to fulfill the destiny given me as the eldest grandson of the last King of Laos and to meet my late father's expectations of me, to emulate the best of constitutional monarchy which I have observed on Thailand, in England and in Japan. Laos, like Thailand, has a Theravada Buddhist culture and society.

I seek nothing more for the peoples of my homeland than an end to suffering and poverty, good education, peace, freedom and expression and religion, all other basic human rights and the opportunity to share in happiness and prosperity. To these ends have I devoted my thoughts and abilities.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Soulivong Savang'.

Prince Soulivong SAVANG





STATEMENT BY

The Prince Regent of LAOS

H.R.H. Prince SAURYAVONG SAVANG

February 27, 1998, Senate Russell Office Building, Washington D.C.

On this occasion where the assistance of the greatest deliberative body of democracy in the world, the United States Congress, is requested on behalf of the suffering peoples of Laos, I can affirm on behalf of the Lao Royal Family Lane Xang White Parasol that we are firmly committed to both constitutional democracy and helping overcome the wounds of so many decades of war and misrule in our homeland.

So many families in Laos and my own family have suffered. My father, the King, and my mother, the Queen, were illegally dethroned by the Communists in 1975, in violation of solemn international agreements which the Communists had negotiated and then signed. My father and mother were taken to concentration camps and have never been heard from.

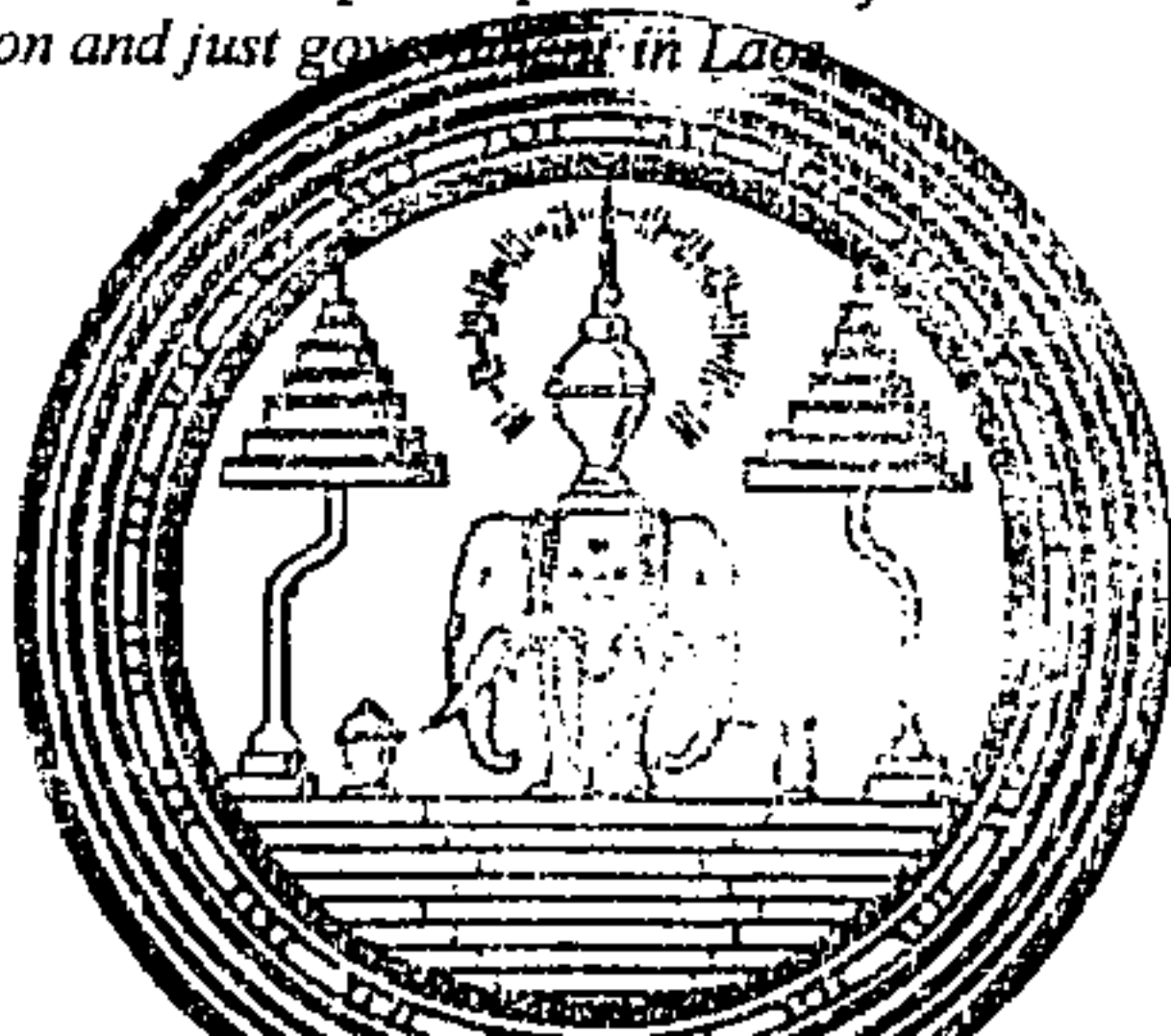
Similarly, my elder brother, the Crown Prince, and many others members of the Royal Family, were taken away by the Communists and has never been heard of.

Yet, we in The Royal Family Lane Xang White Parasol are prepared to put the past behind us and work on behalf of just reconciliation for peace, legitimate government, constitutional monarchy and democracy under the 1954 and 1962 international accords and agreements on Laos.

Over the past many years we have convened several conferences and gatherings of Lao leaders and influential persons to discuss and propose widely acceptable principles upon which peace and democracy can be restored to Laos. The last conference was held at Seattle, Washington, U.S.A, on September 6-7, 1997, with more than three hundred representatives from all over the world.

We are prepared to play our part and only call upon the Communists in Laos to acknowledge their obligations under international law and participate in talks for the restoration of peace, democracy, national reconciliation and just government in Laos.

Prince Sauriyavong SAVANG



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proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 429, S. Res. 240.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 240) expressing the sense of the Senate with respect to democracy and human rights in the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution which had been reported from the Committee on Foreign Relations with amendments.

(The parts of the resolution intended to be stricken are shown in boldface brackets and the parts of the resolution intended to be inserted are shown in italic.)

S. RES. 240

Whereas in 1975, the Pathet Lao party supplanted the existing Lao government and the Lao Royal Family, and established a "people's democratic republic", in violation of the 1962 Declaration on the Neutrality of Laos and its Protocol, as well as the 1973 Vientiane Agreement on Laos;

Whereas since the 1975 overthrow of the existing Lao government, Laos has been under the sole control of the Lao People's Democratic Party;

Whereas the present Lao Constitution provides for human rights protection for the Lao people, and Laos is a signatory to international agreements on civil and political rights;

Whereas Laos has become a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, which calls for the creation of open societies in each of its member states by the year 2020;

Whereas despite that, the State Department's "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1997" notes that the government has only slowly eased restrictions on basic freedoms and begun codification of implementing legislation for rights articulated in the Lao Constitution, and continues to significantly restrict the freedoms of speech, assembly, and religion; and

Whereas on January 30, 1998, the Lao government arrested and detained forty-four individuals at a Bible study meeting in Vientiane and on March 25 sentenced thirteen Christians from the group to prison terms of three to five years for "creating divisions among the people, undermining the government, and accepting foreign funds to promote religion"; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the Senate that the present government of Laos should—

(1) respect international norms of human rights and democratic freedoms for the Lao people, and fully honor its commitments to those norms and freedoms as embodied in its constitution and international agreements, and in the 1962 Declaration on the Neutrality of Laos and its Protocol and the 1973 Vientiane Agreement on Laos;

(2) issue a public statement specifically reaffirming its commitment to protecting religious freedom and other basic human rights; [and]

(3) fully institute a process of democracy, human rights, and openly-contested free and fair elections in Laos, and ensure specifically that the National Assembly elections—currently scheduled for 2002—are openly contested[.]; and

(4) allow access for international human rights monitors, including the International Committee of the Red Cross to Lao prisons, and to all regions of the country to investigate allegations of human rights abuses, including those against the Hmong people, when requested.

EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE
SENATE WITH RESPECT TO DE-
MOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS
IN THE LAO PEOPLE'S DEMO-
CRATIC REPUBLIC

Mr. CAMPELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate