Cambodia: The Prospects for a UN-Controlled Solution

Laura Summers

Follow this and additional works at: https://digital.car.chula.ac.th/arv

Part of the Asian Studies Commons

Recommended Citation
DOI: 10.58837/CHULA.ARV.5.1.4
Available at: https://digital.car.chula.ac.th/arv/vol5/iss1/4
Cambodia: The Prospects for a UN-Controlled Solution

Laura Summers

Since the beginning of 1990, mass media reports have raised expectations of an imminent un-arranged resolution of the conflict in Cambodia. Such expectations are not well founded for at least two reasons: First, and fundamentally, the struggles for power and hegemony which gave rise to the fighting have not been resolved. No national or international consensus has been reached, for example, on who will or should govern Cambodia or on the mechanisms and procedures to be employed in restoring lawful government to Cambodia. In addition, the question of Cambodia’s future alignment in world and regional affairs remains unresolved. Although economic concerns are gradually dislodging ideological concerns in the developmental outlook of both Vietnam and the ASEAN countries, Vietnam continues to oppose the neutralisation of Cambodia, which is a condition for the normalising of its economic and diplomatic relations with capitalist South-East Asia, Japan, the US and the EC. In the absence of clear understandings and agreements on issues such as these, it is unrealistic to expect the conflict can be resolved.

Secondly, and bearing in mind continuing conflict over key political issues, it must be stressed that the momentum behind the idea of a mediating role for the UN comes from western powers, principally Australia and the US, and not from any of the belligerents or from the communist powers whose arms fuel the fighting (1) While these powers
and the United Nations organisation have immense prestige and influence, their ability in this instance to influence Vietnam, the Cambodian parties, China and the USSR is clearly limited. Moreover, it is perhaps essential to recall that the United Nations is an international organisation; it lacks the authority and coercive powers of a supranational governing authority. Before UN observer groups or peace-keeping forces can be dispatched to trouble spots, they must have clear mandates, collectively and firmly agreed by all concerned parties to the dispute. Speaking to the Paris International Conference on Cambodia, UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar took great care to stress that peace-keeping mechanisms, in particular, could not be imposed "under any circumstances." (2) Currently, no progress has been made towards securing agreement on mandates. Although all parties to the Cambodian conflict have agreed in principle to a UN role in a settlement, diplomatic debate— and bargaining— over the nature, scale and duration of the UN role looks set to continue into the long-term. Indeed, this essay attempts to show how recent international advocacy of a possible UN role has been incorporated into longstanding strategies designed, on the one hand, to secure Cambodia's independence from Vietnam, and on the other, to secure international acceptance of the Vietnamese-imposed, Heng Samrin-Hun Sen administration. An examination of the positions taken by the two opposing sides reveals not only their incompatible expectations of a possible UN role but also the continuing, underlying intractability of the conflict.

For the three parties in the resistance coalition who together make up the National Government of Cambodia (NGC), the war in Cambodia stems from Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia in late 1978 and the unlawful imposition of a client government in Phnom Penh in early 1979. (3) Judging Vietnam's invasion to be a violation of the UN charter, the United Nations General Assembly UNGA) agreed in 1979 to continue to recognise the displaced Democratic Kampuchea government. Subsequently, and especially after the formation of the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea(CGDK) in 1982, the (UNGA) continued to lend significant political support to the resistance cause in annual resolutions calling for the withdrawal of all (unnamed) "foreign
forces” from Cambodia. The resolutions have also repeatedly called for a political settlement which would permit the Cambodian people to exercise their national right to choose democratically their own government. In the UN arena, Vietnam has refrained from offering a formal defence for its invasion and has failed to comply with UNGA resolutions in the spirit intended. This has encouraged the three resistance parties, who represent mutually hostile ideological orientations, to unite around and to build their diplomatic case upon Cambodia’s rights to independence in international law. They have accordingly, steadily advocated a large UN role in a political settlement with Vietnam and with the Vietnamese-backed Kampuchean People’s Revolutionary Party (KPRP) in Phnom Penh. An 8-point proposal issued by the coalition in 1986 was the first official Cambodian appeal for direct UN involvement in Cambodia (4).

Although the primary objectives of the resistance coalition are to restore independence and legal government to Cambodia, each of the NGC parties has separate, additional expectations for the possible UN role. Prince Sihanouk, informally the leader of the royalist FUN—CINPEC as well as President (head of state) in the NGC, hopes a UN-arranged settlement will lead to recognition of Cambodia as a neutral state, a foreign policy goal which he failed to achieve in the 1960s. NGC Prime Minister Son Sann, leader of the KPNLF, has expressed hopes for international guarantees of civil and human rights for Cambodians, a concern arising partly from the harrowing experience of the urban, middle class during the revolution of the 1970’s and partly from the KPNLF’s ideological anti-communism. The radically nationalist Democratic Kampuchea party (PDK/Khmer Rouge), in contrast, sees permanent political support from the UN community and Asean countries as the only effective guarantee of Cambodia’s long-term survival as a nation state. In view of PDK dominance on the battlefield and the attempts of the Vietnam KPRP side to stereotype as well as to exclude the movement from negotiations, its strategic outlook merits examination in some detail.

Since 1985, the PDK has accepted that the resistance armies which field a maximum of about 70,000 troops, cannot secure a decisive military victory over the larger, better equipped combined forces of
Vietnam and Phnom Penh. This realisation was undoubtedly ideologically difficult for the movement in view of its earlier semi-Maoist, seminativist conviction that a comparatively small force of Khmers possessing "correct" revolutionary morality and recruited from the poor peasant classes would be able to defend the country or even to defeat the Peoples Army of Vietnam (PAVN). Ideas such as these suffered a near fatal blow in 1979. Nevertheless, they do not appear to have been set aside until the battlefield setbacks of the 1984-85 dry season. Because the Vietnamese threat to the survival of the Khmer nation, state and culture was seen to be more serious than ever before, a new national security policy was urgently required. Thus, and in an attempt to signal the party's willingness to commit Cambodia to a strategic alliance with the Asean countries in perpetuity, the PDK national cadres conference of 1985 adopted a new political programme calling for a multiparty parliamentary constitutional order and a liberal market economy. Thus, the liberal forms were embraced not because they were seen as desirable in their own right but because economic, political and cultural integration with the Asean sphere would countervail less attractive forms of penetration from Vietnam. (5) Pol Pot's 1985 decision to retire from public duties, giving up his post as Commander-in-Chief of the NADK, represented an additional although possibly conditional signal of the party's retreat from its radical past. In yet another tactical and strategic gesture, the PDK agreed in February 1990 to a proposal from Prince Sihanouk to change the name of the resistance government from Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK) to National Government of Cambodia NGC). From a PDK perspective, the formal suppression of its lingering legal claim to state power was likely accepted as necessary for transcending ("dismantling") both the CGDK and the Phnom Penh state frameworks, clearing the way for a political settlement (6).

Since 1986, all of the NGC parties have been seeking an interim, four-party coalition government or supreme ruling body as part of a political settlement, but the PDK appears to be the only party to have clear plans for transforming the coalition's legal and military power into an electoral mandate. For example, it seeks a UN-supervised withdrawal of all remaining Vietnamese forces in Cambodia and the UN-
supervised disarming and regrouping of all four Cambodian armies followed by UN-supervised elections. This sequence of events would serve to inform Cambodian voters that the Hun Sen-led State of Cambodia (SOC) administration which has been formed by the Heng Samrin-led KPRP could no longer beckon Vietnamese power and could no longer command the status respect or deference, which is associated with state power in Khmer political culture. With no party possessing an a priori claim to state power, including exclusive control of state jobs, the peasant-based PDK expects the nationalist parties can together outpoll the “Vietnamese puppets” (i.e. the KPRP) in national election. (7)

On the other side, and between December 1978-1989, Vietnam and the Heng Samrin party in Phnom Penh strenuously opposed UN involvement in Cambodia. In Hanoi, it is well understood that a UN sponsored settlement in Cambodia is incompatible with Vietnam’s central foreign policy objective: hegemonial control of Cambodia’s state and economic development as a form of managerial leverage over social, economic and political developments in southern Vietnam. For Vietnam to agree to an “enhanced UN role” of the kind sought by the five permanent members of the UNSC or envisaged in the Australian plan would require a radical reassessment of its socialist developmental objectives and a revised outlook on political realities in southern Vietnam as well as in Cambodia. There is no evidence that such a reassessment is underway. On the contrary, reports quoting Vietnamese party sources who say Cambodia “is no longer” an issue indicate debate has been quashed. (8)

Nevertheless, and in response to diplomatic urging from the USSR and Australia, Vietnam quietly agreed in January 1990 that the UN might be able to contribute to a settlement in Cambodia. Significantly, in his address to the International Meeting on Cambodia in Jakarta in February, Vietnam’s Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach praised the Australian initiative for laying aside earlier diplomatic proposals calling for powersharing and the dismantling of the Hun Sen state apparatus. According to Thach, only two “fundamental and long-term issues” had to be addressed by the world community in a
settlement: the need for the UN to assume responsibility for organising national elections and the need for the UN to respect “Cambodia’s independence, neutrality, unity and sovereignty.” The Vietnamese requirements amounted to veiled insistence that the UN work *with* the KPRP while organising elections thereby awarding *de facto* recognition to the SOC. To emphasize the continuing, strong opposition of Hanoi and the KPRP to the use of UN peacekeeping forces or to any large UN role in the administration of the country, Thach also dismissed many possible precedents for a UN role in Cambodia as irrelevant. This was because, astonishingly, as Thach put it, Cambodia “is an independent and sovereign state.” While begging the central political questions in the conflict, he also erroneously claimed there had been no need for and therefore no UN military presence in Nambia! (9)

Clearly, Vietnam is unlikely ever to concede in any formal declaration or treaty that its 1978 invasion and 11½-year occupation are violations of Cambodia’s sovereignty or that the regime it has fostered lacks sovereign legitimacy. In Jakarta, Thach expressed the inflexible Vietnamese position in highly coded terms by declaring he would not sign any agreement “legalising the genocidal Pol Pot clique.” Thus, Vietnamese acceptance *in principle* of a possible UN role has been accompanied not only by renewed insistence upon the legitimacy of the SOC in preference to any form of coalition government but also by agenda-baiting, insistence upon the possible return of a “genocidal” regime and attempts to provoke the PDK into playing an apparently unaccommodating role in negotiations. (10) In separate but related efforts to bait public opinion about the UN’s proper role, the KPRP Prime Minister, Hun Sen, has been telling interviewers that the UN cannot control the “Khmer Rouge” (i.e. the Democratic Kampuchea party or PDK) and that the UN lacks the capacity to administer Cambodia on its own. The assertions provide a pretextual basis for claiming the anti-“Khmer Rouge” KPRP army and administration should be preserved and reinforced by the UN rather than replaced as a matter of functional necessity. (11) These attempts to coax western governments into a quick low-cost, anti-“Khmer Rouge” marriage of convenience coincided with mounting pressure from American business circles for the normalisation of economic relations with Vietnam and Cambodia. (12)
Inside Cambodia, less subtlety has been employed in the handling of the shift in communist policy towards the UN confirming that it is purely tactical. From the beginning of January 1990, KPRP leaders abruptly ceased making ritual criticisms of the UN for its alleged political bias on the Cambodian question. By the end of the month, the state-controlled media informed Cambodians that the UN would be welcome "to assist" the State of Cambodia in its search for peace. (13) This sudden, unexpected embrace of the UN was reportedly welcomed by the war-weary Cambodian public giving rise to unrealistic expectations of a rapid peace and of international reconstruction aid. Not wanting popular expectations to force the hand of the party, Hun Sen quickly stressed the UN role would be restricted to organising national elections and monitoring "international" agreements. These, he specified, were agreements which might be reached within the framework of a ceasefire involving the ending of arms deliveries to the NGC parties and the withdrawal of Vietnamese forces. Hun Sen's statements portentously overlooked the dubious right of the KPRP state apparatus to remain in place while the UN organised elections and supervised implementation of the possible "international" agreements. In the international diplomatic arena, however, the illegitimate status and diplomatic isolation of the SOC is the KPRP's central preoccupation.

In an attempted riposte to renewed NGC demands for a transitional, all party government and to the Australian-UNSC permanent five proposals suggesting that the NGC and the SOC administrations should both stand aside to make way for a temporary UN administration of Cambodia, Hun Sen proposed that a temporary UN administration might instead work with both governments in their separate territorial zones. Such an approach would award partial de facto recognition to the SOC signalling a retreat from the UNGA policy of awarding exclusive recognition to Cambodia's last lawfully constituted government until the will of the Cambodian nation can once again be freely expressed in self-determining acts. Reacting swiftly against the move to promote a "two-Cambodias policy, Prince Sihanouk denounced Hun Sen's attempt "to partition Cambodia", thereby invoking Khmer fears of loss of land and stigmatising Hun Sen's manoeuvre as dangerously anti-national. Wanting above all else to repress Khmer nation-
alism with the spectre of the "Khmer Rouge" and to deny Prince Sihanouk easy nationalist rallying points, Hun Sen has dropped the idea of two administrative zones. (14)

On yet another tack, Hun Sen has firmly rejected proposals for the introduction of peace-keeping forces in Cambodia or the disarming of the KPRP army. A UN peacekeeping force, especially a force as large as 6,000 as once sought by the NGC, would inevitably deprive the Cambodian People's Armed Forces (CPAF) army, of sovereign duties thereby visibly undermining the credibility of KPRP claims to state power. Even more serious, from the KPRP's point of view, the disarming and demobilisation of the CPAF by the UN forces along with the other party armies, would communicate unmistakable international rejection of the KPRP claims to sovereign legitimacy, claims which Nguyen Co Thach and Hun Sen still strenuously promote. In an attempt to ensure that any UN forces which might be sent to Cambodia would function in a restricted advisory role, bolstering rather than undermining the semblance of state power currently wielded by his army, ministries and party, Hun Sen has steadily insisted that any UN presence be small in scale, limited in duration and accountable to State of Cambodia (SOC) authorities. He undoubtedly knows UN peace-keeping forces and observer groups are bound by the UN charter to be accountable to the Security Council only. Nevertheless, the repetition of demands specifying what "must" happen or concerning the alleged needs or wishes of "the Cambodian people" allow him to reassure the KPRP political bureau that no political concessions are being made on the diplomatic front. With the same hectoring discourse, the Cambodian public is steadily enjoined to remember that with or without the UN presence, power resides with the KPRP. (15)

Diplomatic and domestic manoeuvres such as these obscure the continuing conditional nature of the communist KPRP's willingness to permit a UN role in a settlement. The party's longstanding hardline position, reiterated periodically by secretary Heng Samrin, is that the UN may play a role if Cambodia's seat in the General assembly is declared vacant and if the UN "does not side with any party". (16) Although the KPRP has prudently refrained from attempts to secure UN recognition
in its own right, implicitly acknowledging that it has no legal claim, it has steadily advocated denying the seat to the "Khmer Rouge", a calculated slight of the NGC as a legal or a political entity. Declaring an unoccupied seat "vacant" is without precedent in UN procedures and such a move in this instance would represent a substantial challenge to existing international norms governing the need for all states to respect the sovereign rights of others by refraining from aggression or the use of force in bilateral disputes. The "empty seat" campaign has nevertheless attracted the support of human rights activists who appear unaware of the realpolitik motives of Vietnam or of the ominous historical implications for all small or medium sized states striving to secure their rights in a hierarchal world order. These activists appear sincerely to believe the "Khmer Rough" are morally disqualified from representing "the Cambodian people" who are perceived only as "victims" of an alleged "genocide" in the 1970's. Although it is certainly morally and politically just to feel compassion for Cambodians, the human rights issues attaching to the conflict are substantially more complex than this. If Vietnam and its Cambodian allies can credibly claim to have freed Cambodians from the grasp of a destructive regime, for their own reasons of state, bien entendu, it is no less true that the successor occupation regime has usurped and continues to deny basic human rights to Cambodia's citizens while at the same time repolarizing Cambodia's politics and regional politics as well. (17)

The Vietnamese and KPRP effort to seize moral high ground on the UN recognition issue reflects use of a Marxist-Leninist tactic of isolating and neutralising opponents, whether national or international. The effort to isolate the "Khmer Rouge" politically serves several purposes in the multifaceted KPRP drive to consolidate its theft of state power. In the national political arena, it provides a superficially sacral, absolutist basis for denying radical nationalists any role in the process of "national (sic) reconciliation". Isolating the most powerful enemy of Vietnamese hegemonial domination on the basis of its past domestic policy failures is also a means of dividing and derailing the national resistance as a whole. It places great pressure on Prince Sihanouk and NGC Prime Minister Son Sann, in particular, to abandon tainted allies in favour of supposedly less tainted ones. The KPRP's Marxist
assumption is that the nationalist/collaborationist cleavage which has been wrought by Vietnam's invasion and occupation can be bridged and then remoulded into a broad class alliance against the peasant-based PDK. The assumption was always large since the flames of Cambodian nationalism have been fanned in twenty years of war. But mindful of the backward linkages of Vietnamese-KPRP propaganda to important international human rights constituencies, Sihanouk and Son Sann have carefully, repeatedly refused either to apologise for past PDK crimes and policies or to change sides. Most important of all, and to convey their sense of what is fundamentally important and in dispute in Cambodia, they have repeatedly defended the PDK as a party of genuine patriots. (18) Thus, attempts to break up the nationalist resistance coalition and to isolate the "Khmer Rouge" have failed. And perhaps decisively. While some support may have been drawn to the KPRP, as a force opposed to the increasingly remote evils and miseries of the past, this support is likely less important or firm than support garnered via traditional means within family, school and administrative networks. To the extent that the KPRP has secured a national political base, bearing in mind that the party was hastily organised following the Vietnamese invasion at a time when communism had virtually ceased to be an acceptable national ideology, that base is none other than the SOC state apparatus. From the perspective of party politics, Hun Sen's efforts to avoid the dismantling of the SOC may be tantamount to averting the disintegration of the KPRP. (19)

In recent months, significantly, the tactic of isolating and neutralising enemies has been increasingly employed as a defensive measure, in response to clear disaffection from the SOC administration. Some of the discontent stems from the regime's perceived anti-national character. For many years, Cambodians have freely expressed their hostility towards planned or spontaneous Vietnamese immigration to Cambodia. Rightly or wrongly, the SOC is widely believed to have made territorial concessions to Vietnam and is perceived in any case to be incapable of controlling spontaneous major encroachments from the densely populated areas of Vietnam which straddle the lower Mekong and Bassac frontiers. There is, moreover, corruption at all levels of the SOC administration and government, promoted partly by a rapid
transfer of state capital into the hands of party cadres and urban dwellers in the process of economic liberalisation. The rapid enrichment of officials has coincided with inflation, the result of war spending, the early exhaustion of 1986-1990 five-year plan credits loaned or granted by the USSR and its allies in the CMEA and inadequate revenue from taxes. (20) There is also resentment focusing on the new military draft law introduced in March 1990. Tacitly conceding the general scale of economic, administrative and episodically, social disorder, KPRP leaders cite “continuing” foreign interference in Cambodia’s affairs as the source of disorder. Predictably, the major share of blame is apportioned to China. The US is also targeted as a major enemy because of its alleged co-operation with China in reviving the “genocidal regime”.

As proof of the allegations that the US is supporting the return of “the genocidal regime” (rather than a nationalist resistance struggle against a foreign occupation and its “puppet regime”), Hun Sen pointed in January to the capture of some NADK (PDK) soldiers armed with M-16 rifles. The rifles were allegedly manufactured in the US, allegedly given by the US to the royalist NAIC which then allegedly sold some of the weapons to their Khmer Rouge allies. (21) The disorder which is publically characterised as an unwarranted plague on the KPRP state is further blamed on unnamed negotiating partners who are said to have failed to keep unspecified “promises”. Such remarks are an allusion to a presumptuous linkage between the unilateral and unsupervised Vietnamese troop withdrawals of recent years, especially the unilaterally proclaimed “total” withdrawal of Vietnamese forces in September 1989 and an end to external arms shipments to the resistance parties. Vietnam and the KPRP have repeatedly claimed to have secured acceptance of a linkage between withdrawals and arms cut offs at the Jakarta Informal Meetings. In reality, the Asean countries—for it is they who are unnamed—made no “promises” or not of the sort vaguely hinted and then unfulfilled. In fact, the Asean countries have conditionally accepted linkage between internationally supervised Vietnamese troop withdrawals and an internationally supervised cessation of arms aid to the resistance but only within the framework of a comprehensive political settlement of the conflict, a condition willfully ignored by Hanoi and the KPRP because it denies KPRP claims to sovereign legitimacy.
It is doubtful if KPRP attempts to defuse domestic discontent by targeting foreign enemies have much effect of Cambodians. In contrast to the politicized American and British aid workers who have responded to such appeals by producing an impressive number of books, films, urgent reports and newspaper articles urging support for the SOC (or the "Cambodian people"), most Cambodians are probably not at all inclined to rally to the failing SOC cause. From the national, cultural perspective which is more fully informed by the moral, universalist dramas of epic shadow theatre than by international power politics, the lesson that is received in the public consciousness is that nobody respects the SOC—not "the King" (Sihanouk) or the Vietnamese or other important forces and countries—as they would certainly do if it truly possessed power. From such a perspective, there is an aura of tragic surrealism surrounding bald KPRP demands for the exclusion of the apparently universalistically supported NGC from Cambodia's UN seat. (22)

In one such attempt to demonstrate mightily to Cambodians that he can deal with powerful forces of all kinds (while capitalising on the success of anti-"Khmer Rouge" campaigning in the west), Hun Sen has recently proposed that the two contending Cambodian governments (NB: not the four parties) should together establish an extra-governmental Supreme National Council (SNC) which would be recognized by and hold Cambodia's seat at the United Nations during a transitional political period. By proposing representation on a two-governmental rather than a four-party basis, Hun Sen seeks to secure a dominant 50 per cent role for the communist KPRP and thereby to overcome the legal obstacles to direct recognition of the Vietnamese backed regime. The proposal is also a device for sidestepping demands for any form of interim government, especially a four-party coalition in which the PDK and the KPRP alongside the FUNCINPEC and KPNLF would have equal, 25% shares of power. This form of representation which is premised on the existence of four armies and four contending ideological tendencies is Cambodian politics, would award the three anti-Vietnamese, nationalist parties potential dominance, especially in the realm of foreign policy. The origins of Hun Sen's idea for an extra-governmental body can be traced to a 1987 KPRP proposal for
a symbolic National Reconciliation Council. (23) This Soviet-inspired name for the proposed council was dropped by Hun Sen in mid-1989 after Prince Sihanouk pronounced it "unworkable" and dismissed it as a device for consolidating ill-begotten power by means of obstructing reconciliation among Cambodians.

Hun Sen's slightly reformulated and rechristened "Supreme National Council" idea has been taken up by the Chatichai Choonhavan government of Thailand. Buoyed by bullish and expansionist business interests desiring markets and raw materials, Chatichai's entourage has sought to broker a rapid, pragmatic settlement in Cambodia since early 1989. Mistaking the proposed SNC as an open-ended framework for a Thai style, Cambodian elite consensus on ending the war (following the end of the Vietnamese occupation) rather than a Vietnamese-KPRP bid for a settlement excluding or marginalising the PDK and for UN recognition of a pro-Vietnamese hegemonial regime, Thai efforts have come to little. (24)

For quite different legal and administrative reasons, the SNC idea is also broadly accepted by the Australians, the UNSC permanent five and the Office of the UN Secretary-General. But while the SNC envisaged by regional outsiders would have semi-executive powers during a period of temporary UN administration and UN military control, overseeing a one-two year long transition to a new constitutional framework, the Vietnamese-Hun Sen-Chatichai SNC would be a political holding company possessing symbolic powers comparable to those of a constitutional monarch. It would preside over the structure already in place in Phnom Penh. Significantly, Hun Sen regularly suggests Prince Sihanouk should chair the SNC. Just as regularly, the Prince declines the proposed honour remaining concerned to obtain a constitutional order which will secure an end to the fighting and which more closely reflects the current distribution of power and influence in Khmer society. In Sihanouk's view, a settlement must necessarily be based on the four parties and include the PDK, in particular. (25)

Although Prince Sihanouk will nevertheless, certainly continue his informal talks with Hun Sen concerning both the powers and composition of a supreme sovereign authority, it is unlikely that he or any of the resistance parties will ever agree to proposals which deprive the
NGC of the UN seat and, at the same time, establish a constitutional basis for KPRP dominance in postwar Cambodia. Equally, and also in view of the deepening conflict between orthodox Marxists and pragmatic power seeking groups inside the KPRP, Hun Sen will almost certainly continue to advance rapidly shifting formulas for a settlement which attempt inter alia to secure the dominance and legitimacy of his administration, to marginalise its most powerful opponents, the PDK, and to circumscribe the future role of Prince Sihanouk. As of mid-1990, there is no evidence of the KPRP being concerned, more modestly with merely ensuring its survival as a national party. (26)

The unresolved Hun Sen-Sihanouk debate over the basis of representation in a supreme authority, especially whether the council will have equal representation from two governments or equal representation from four Cambodian parties, is central not only to the competition for power and representation among the Cambodian parties. It is crucial also for determining whether Vietnam and Vietnamese communism will retain hegemonic dominance in Cambodia. The essentially uncompromising initiatives of the KPRP and sustained NGC rejection of them are likely to be misunderstood. In a world largely unaware of and unsympathetic towards Cambodian national aspirations, the elusiveness of a settlement will most likely be taken as evidence of an imagined inability of Cambodians, and perhaps the nationalist parties, in particular, to make peace. Indeed, in anticipation of the failure of the international community to understand how they are both structuring perceptions and obstructing the peace process, Vietnamese and KPRP officials are already anticipating the holding of national elections on a unilateral basis. According to KPRP spokesmen, the elections will be organised either by the end of 1990 or in early 1991 “at the latest”. The elections are to be held “with or without a political settlement”, and according to Hun Sen, there may also be a “need” to have elections even in advance of a ceasefire. (27) Thus, the diplomacy of Vietnam and of the KPRP is a diplomacy of feint and attrition. Barring diplomatic capitulation to the SOC from the world community or the equally unlikely defeat of the resistance armies on the battlefield, the Vietnamese -KPRP position also amounts to a policy of prolonging the war indefinitely and engaging in economic
brinkmanship. Such a grim and profoundly undemocratic future appears to have been sensed. Since May 1990, Cambodians have for the first time become boat people and have begun to arrive in large numbers in countries of first asylum. International aid personnel working in Phnom Penh confirm there is fear that “The UN will never come”.

This analysis of the Cambodian conflict has focused on the struggle for state power between the Cambodian resistance parties, on the one side, and Vietnam and the Vietnamese fostered KPRP, on the other, and on the way the two “sides” have responded to international proposals for a UN mediated settlement. Throughout, the conflict has been depicted as an essentially nationalist struggle against Vietnamese aggression and colonial occupation (1978-1989) and Vietnamese hegeemonial domination via the unlawfully imposed KPRP state administration. The expectations of the two sides concerning a settlement diverge sharply on all the fundamental issues including the proposed UN role. Assuming there are no important changes in current international factors affecting pursuit of the war, a settlement requires that one side or the other makes a major concession concerning Cambodia’s postwar constitutional order and future alignment or that both sides submit to a UN-controlled solution involving free and self-determining national elections. Resolution of the basic constitutional dispute has not been resolved on the battlefield and is not likely to be so resolved in the near future because of continuing, partly sureptitious Vietnamese refereeing of developments there. It has been assumed in this analysis that CPV evaluations of the situation in Cambodia are closely linked to assessments of what is essential for ensuring continuing communist party control of southern Vietnam. Thus, a Vietnamese retreat from a policy of hegemony over Cambodia depends on decisions to embrace political reforms in Vietnam itself. These are not currently in prospect.

The lack of resolution of the Cambodian conflict has been conditioned also by the pursuit of radically opposed or contradictory objectives on the part of China and the USSR and some international mediators. For example, securing a peace that will endure is almost certainly incompatible with western moral urges to exclude the PDK
from a settlement or to award them a "reduced" role. Moreover, it can be argued that securing peace in Cambodia is the greater moral imperative. Similarly, securing a lasting peace in Cambodia is almost certainly incompatible with desires in some western capitals to ensure a dominant role for the externally conceived "noncommunist" parties, i.e. the royalist FUNCINPEC and the republican KPNLF parties or with the idea that the "liberalising" communist KPRP can be persuaded to promote political reforms of the sort which are being rejected in Vietnam and Laos. Of the three allied communist parties, the KPRP would run the greatest risk of being voted out of power. The confusion of national and foreign ideological preferences with what is necessary for a settlement in Cambodia also applies to expectations about the contributions of China and the USSR to the peace process.

There is a strong presumption in the western media that for the sake of peace in Cambodia, both China and the USSR ought to cut off arms supplies and ought to "pressure" their respective allies to reach a settlement. Although the holding of discussions on Cambodia among the UNSC permanent five represents an informal commitment from China and the USSR (as well as the other three powers) to do what they can to reduce hostilities, it is arguably unrealistic to expect any of the big five to abandon or to subordinate vested bilateral interests or to modify ideological outlooks in isolation from shifts in attitude or policy elsewhere. In this instance, the stakes and costs of China and the USSR are also highly unequal. China's military aid to the resistance parties reflects a policy of supporting Khmer nationalism in all its forms and as a means of preserving the pre-1979 Southeast Asian state order. Although China's relations with its Soviet and South-East Asian neighbours have greatly improved in recent years thereby reducing China's worry about a large and hostile Vietnamese-dominated bloc on its southern border, China's aid to the Cambodian resistance parties will almost certainly continue until Vietnam and the KPRP agree to (1) a UN-supervised withdrawal of Vietnamese forces from Cambodia and (2) to the holding of UN-organised and UN-supervised elections there. These are in China's view, and Prince Sihanouk's view, the minimum necessary conditions for ensuring the re-emergence of a non-Vietnamese controlled, neutral Cambodian state. Soviet
interests, by contrast, lack an enduring geographical imperative while its costs, in terms of military and other aid to Phnom Penh, are disproportionately high. Indeed, as European crises have deepened and as superpower detente has expanded, Soviet aid to Phnom Penh and to Vietnam has become increasingly subject to economic (and theoretical) constraints. Nevertheless, Soviet aid looks likely to continue in the short term so as to support the difficult transformations expected of allies deemed worthy and, more elusively, so as to support processes of regional conflict resolution and national reconciliation which the Soviets understand to be long, complex and contingent. Thus, while peace and a government of reconciliation are clearly envisaged as the "promise" of Cambodia's future, the immediate tasks of the USSR are to encourage both local and global trends which will secure the most favourable of outcomes for its socialist allies and for global peace. (28)

The determination of the Vietnam-KPRP side to secure victories in the face of historic defeat, the determination of the NGC side to secure the return of political independence and the competing foreign policy objectives of engaged external powers have each contributed in different measures to the prolongation of crisis in Cambodia. Talks about a possible settlement may well continue into the near future because for quite different reasons arising from their diplomatic strategies, all of the belligerent parties as well as most potential mediators continue to desire them. In the absence of willingness on the Vietnam-KPRP side to offer meaningful concessions to the resistance and the reluctance of some international mediators and potential aid donors to integrate fully the PDK into the transitional arrangements, the talks will almost certainly fail. Vietnam, in particular, has shown no willingness to abandon its hereto-fore unsuccessful attempt to reshape the South-East Asian state order or to promise to refrain from the use of PAVN as a praetorian guard on Khmer battlefields. While Vietnam's national interests assessed in realpolitik terms might be well-served by the internationally guaranteed neutralisation of Cambodia, the CPV's revolutionary ambitions, and the survival of the communist monopoly on power in Vietnam may not be. It must be concluded, therefore and sadly, that the prospects for peace in Cambodia or a UN-controlled, fair political settlement are not yet very bright. (29)
NOTES

1. Since November 1989, Australia has been seeking support for the idea of a temporary UN administration in Cambodia and the holding of free elections. Various possibilities for military control mechanisms, civil administration, international guarantees and costs are outlined in Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Cambodia: an Australian Peace Proposal*. Canberra: Government Publishing Service, 1990. 155 pg. Since January 1990, the US has promoted informal meetings among the five permanent members of the UN Security Council in an effort to identify areas of agreement and disagreement among the major powers. The hope is that a settlement can be encouraged by means of concerted external action. The talks of the "Perm Five" are private but statements identifying points of agreement are issued following each meeting, e.g. "Summary of Conclusions of the Meeting of Five Permanent Members of the Security Council on the Cambodian Problem" Paris, 15-16 January 1990 (mimeograph), 2pg.


3. The parties in the resistance coalition are the royalist National United Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful and Co-operative Cambodia, known by its French language acronym, FUNCINPEC; the anti-communist Khmer People’s National Liberation Front or KPNLF and the radical nationalist party of Democratic Kampuchea (PDK) also known as the "Khmer Rouge". This term is a perjorative dating from the cold war of the 1950’s. In recent years, it has been used in loose reference to the former Communist Party of Kampuchea led by Pol Pot or to the policies and practices of the 1975-78 regime established by the CPK or to the post-CPK movement. In this essay, PDK will usually be used in reference to the current movement; "Khmer Rouge" (in quotes) will be used to designate the eponymous political tendency invoked in Vietnamese and KPRP propaganda and echoed in some western commentary. Each of the resistance parties has its own army and military command. The armies are (respectively): the National Army of Independent Cambodia (NAIC) which was known as the ANS or Sihanoukian National Army until early 1989; the KPNLAF, the armed forces of the KPNLF and the National Army of Democratic Kampuchea (NADK).
4. Specifically, the 8-point proposal of 17 March 1986 calls for UN "observer groups" to supervise withdrawals, to supervise free elections and to protect Cambodia's neutrality by a presence lasting "two or three years". This language recalls but does not reproduce exactly the call for a UN "peace-keeping observer group" made by the UN-sponsored International Conference on Kampuchea of 1981. In contemporary speeches, Prince Sihanouk and CGDK Prime Minister Son Sann assumed the "observer groups" would be "blue-helmet" willingness to have peace-keeping forces was resolved in mid-1988 when the party published proposals calling for a large peace-keeping force (see references in Note 6 below). The 8-point proposal was issued in pamphlet form in several languages by the (then) Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchean Ministry of Foreign Affairs. French language translation is available in the appendix of Marie Alexandrine Martin, Le Mal Cambodgien. Paris, Hachette, 1989. p. 276.

5. Details of the debate at the 1985 conference and some aspects of the party's strategic thinking were freely discussed by Khieu Sampan and Son Sen, President and Vice President respectively of the PDK, in interviews conducted by the author on the Cambodian-Thai border 27-28 July 1987.

7. In interviews in March following his return to Cambodia, Prince Sihanouk informed reporters that the Khmer Rouge (PDK) were “no longer” afraid of elections. He claimed NADK troops were distributing rice and clothing to villagers “as if they were preparing for eventual elections”. He also predicted, “...if elections are held in Cambodia, the Khmer Rouge will win more votes than people expect,...” and estimated the PDK potential at well over one third of the parliamentary seats. see “Sihanouk says K. Rouge have more supporters”, Bangkok Post, 9 March 1990; “Sihanouk Sees Thailand as Peacemaker in War”, FBIS-EAS, 6 March 1990, pp.44-5 and “Khmer Rouge Appears to Gain Ground”, International Herald Tribune, 3 July 1990 containing a comment from Prince Ranariddh, Commander-in Chief of the NAIC , who claims the NADK are delivering “truckloads of supplies” to peasants including textiles, medicines and videotapes.

8 These interpretations and assumptions about Vietnamese foreign policy aims are overstated in the interests of brevity and clarity. Vietnam’s intervention in Cambodia and long-term intentions have not received the critical scholarly attention they require. Based on a reading of official texts related to development issues, it is clear enough that the underlying preoccupation in Vietnamese Marxist and nationalist thinking is the constantly shifting but always precarious position of communist rule in southern Vietnam (and increasingly in all of Vietnam). Current debates about the economic reform process reveal concern that further economic liberalisation will exacerbate the already wide economic disparities which exist between the North and the South and also a worry that rapid or extremely unbalanced sectoral growth may generate a political backlash against the communist monopoly of political power. Some close observers have described the Vietnamese leadership as “haunted” by the possibility of wide, profound popular upheavals of the sort which have surfaced in heavily endebted Poland in the past decade. Thus, a supportive government or, at a minimum, a non-hostile, co-operative government in Phnom Penh, is judged essential not only for securing Vietnam’s national defence but also for securing the future of its socialist revolution. A similar developmental approach is employed by Beresford who stresses the importance in Vietnamese foreign policy of a perceived “need to defend revolutionary achievements at home”.

Her interpretation of Vietnam's intervention adheres closely to official explanations which insist upon the theoretically, strategically and militarily "defensive" character of the invasion and occupation. Significantly, however, Beresford has no doubt that Vietnam fully intends to consolidate the socialist regime imposed in Phnom Penh. Offering general guidance on Vietnamese foreign policy behaviour, she argues that no "concessions" can be expected from Vietnam on its fundamental aims and that diplomatic flexibility on lesser matters depends upon an advantageous balance in Vietnam's favour in at least two of the following domains: military, diplomatic, political. Thus, even an avowedly sympathetic account prefigures enduring direct Vietnamese control and hegemony in Cambodia. See M. Beresford, *Vietnam: Politics, Economics and Society*. London: Pinter Publishers, 1988, pp. 190-208.


10. Substantial progress toward agreement on the broad dimensions of a UN role was made in the initial stages of the Jakarta informal meeting but Vietnam then insisted upon inserting a reference to "genocide" into a proposed final declaration of accord. The PDK delegation was subsequently unable to accept the document which it otherwise generally favoured. Although Vietnam and the KPRP delegation are known to have been opposed to several provisions of the proposed agreement, they voted to accept the document knowing it would fail to secure unanimous support and seeking a pretext for attacking the "Khmer Rouge" afterwards for having employed a "veto" at the meeting. For an authoritative account based on Asean diplomatic sources, see "Cambodia talks end without an agreement on record", *The Nation* (Bangkok), 4 March 1990. Hun Sen was later asked why his delegation insisted on inserting the word "genocide". Avoiding any mention of Provisions providing for a large UN role, Hun Sen responded, "The word genocide want the word included,...(we) want effective measures taken to prevent the return of the genocidal regime. If 'genocide' is not included, there will be no measures taken to prevent the Pol Potists' return." *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 7 June 1990, p. 30.

12. US business interest was tweaked in 1988-9 by Vietnam’s decision to award several large oil exploration contracts to European companies and by reports late in 1989 stressing Vietnam’s need for massive infrastructure investment. Thai business penetration of Indochina has also had an important demonstration effect. See “Economic policy towards Indochina to be flexible”, *Bangkok Post*, 23 December 1989 and “US businessmen begin campaign on VN sanctions”, *Ibid*, 30 June 1990.

13. See the cautiously worded statement of Chea Sim, Chairman of the SOC National Assembly in SWB, 2 February 1990, p.A 3/ 3. The policy switch was endorsed immediately by the Foreign Ministry of Laos, clearly a partner in the planned shift. The Laotian statement bluntly insists that in response to the new thinking in Indochina, the UN was obliged to adopt a “neutral and unbiased” position either by offering Cambodia’s UN seat to a national council, as proposed by Hun Sen, or by leaving Cambodia’s UN seat vacant. See SWB, 3 February 1990, P.A3/5.

14. Hun Sen’s proposal was advanced at a news conference in Phnom Penh on 24 January 1990. See “Hun Sen Explains View of Australian Peace Plan” (AFP), FBIS-EAS, 24 January 1990, p.28; “Hun Sen backs UN role in Cambodia”, *The Guardian*, 25 January 1990 and “Phnom-Penh accepte des administrations paralleles avant des elections” *Le Monde*, 26 Janvier 1990. Sihanouk’s response, ” Hun Sen propose une partition de facto du cambodge au seul profit de son régime et contre les intérêts vitaux du Cambodge” was faxed from his Beijing office to FUNCINPEC offices on January 28th. A radio interview with Son Sann (who had just completed talks with Sihanouk) on the joint FUNCINPEC- KPNLF radio station conveyed the nationalist position to Cambodia. Son Sann stated : “How big was our country in the past? A lot of it has been lost because of internal conflicts. Now, do
we want to split the country even further? Although these people reply that this will only be temporary, I say it should not occur, even temporarily. We should preserve Cambodia's integrity and sovereignty...we should not divide Cambodia into two, three or any number of parts...". For the complete text, see SWB, 5 February 1990, pp. A3/3-4.

15. For an example of the manner in which Hun Sen has explicitly rejected a UN peacekeeping force, see "AFP Interviews Hun Sen on Settlement Prospects," FBIS – EAS, 8 February 1990, 31-2. Hun Sen is here reported as saying the UN "would take part in" supervising a cease-fire, a Vietnamese troop withdrawal and a halt in foreign aid to all parties as well as organising and supervising elections. UN peacekeeping forces were "not necessary", he added, because Cambodia’s problems were essentially political problems; the military situation was not "grave".

16. See Hun Sen's national day speech of January 6th, FBIS-EAS, 9 January 1990, p. 41 and the report of Hun Sen’s January meeting Australia’s emissary Michael Costello, FBIS—EAS, 8 January 1990, p. 42 which reports that Hun Sen’s response to proposals for a temporary UN administration was to insist on the preservation of his state administration and on the expulsion of the (then) CGDK from Cambodia’s UN seat.

17. On regional politics, see Yoneji Kuoyanagi, "The Kampuchean Conflict and ASEAN: A View from the Final Stage" *Japan Review of International Affairs* Vol. 3. No. 1 (Spring / Summer 1989) pp. 57 - 81. There is no consensus among scholars on either the "genocide" issue or human rights questions. The vast majority of unnatural deaths during the 1975-78 period, estimated in the hundreds of thousands, are linked to collectivisation and efforts by local cadres to impose discipline, often in the absence of clear policies and guidance from central authorities. A large number of people, estimated in the tens of thousands lost their lives in the border war with Vietnam (1977-78) and inner party purges (1976-78). There is no documentary or other evidence to indicate a positive intent on the part of the CPK leadership to exterminate whole ethnic communities although a high proportion of Vietnamese were deported to Vietnam soon after the revolutionaries took power and a high proportion of middle class Chinese merchants
perished in the party's class struggles. That the revolution was extremely radical and extremely violent in both its communist and peasantist thrusts, there can be no doubt but the case for genocide has not been convincingly made and on the basis of currently available evidence, can be seriously doubted. For a different view, see "Pol Pot forces must stand trial", The Nation (Bangkok), 7 May 1990 being a statement by the historian Ben Kiernan. In recent years, the Cambodian emigre press has been alarmed by the failure of western liberals to notice that Cambodian rights are threatened by both "tigers and crocodiles"; the general view is that national rights to self-determination are the necessary precondition for greater attention to individual rights and to a resolution of problems related to the rights abuses in the 1970s. For some discussion along these lines, see "Khmer-Information" (Munich), Nr. 20 (April 1990), pp. 13-7.

18. For examples of KPRP targeting and pressuring of Sihanouk, see FBIS-EAS, 28 March 1990, pp. 41-2 citing Hun Sen's denunciation of Prince Sihanouk as "another first-hand criminal of the genocidal policy..." or Vietnam's radio comment which compares the settlement to "an express train taking off and (leaving) Mr. Sihanouk...standing on the platform." SWB, 16 May 1990. In reply, Sihanouk has pointed out, "The Khmer Rouge have done harm to our Father land and our people by their senseless, ideological sectarianism and their cruelty. Their crimes are unforgiveable. But it is necessary to recognise that at the present time, they are more and more actively aided and supported by Cambodians inside Cambodia who see in them the only "weapon" capable of saving Cambodia from Vietnamisation and preventing the disappearance of a Khmer land in the long term...What Westerners and other anti-Khmer Rouge people in the free world do not know about or do not wish to know about is the rapidly evolving outlook of the Cambodian people...who are giving more and more support to the Khmer Rouge movement and awarding it an increasingly dominant role in the national community, even on a moral level (not to mention the military level)..." (translation from French). See "L' Etat du cambodge" de Hun Sen survivra-t-il longtemps? " 28 janvier 1990, pp. 5-6 and passim. Similarly, in an appeal issued by the office of the NGC Prime Minister on 23 April 1990 following reports that some European states might withdraw their support for the NGC at the UN because of PDK
participation in the coalition, Son Sann argued that a refusal to support the NGC is not a means of acting against the "Khmer Rouge" but an act opposing (the interests of) the entire Khmer people. After noting the legal and historical implications of treating with the Vietnamese backed regime, the appeal concludes, "As far as the Khmer Rouge are concerned, we believe that it is up to the victimised Cambodian people to decide their fate in a democratic and self-determining way and not up to foreigners to decide upon their sentence. The priority of the moment is the struggle for the liberation of Cambodia from Vietnamese occupation."

19. Following Sihanouk's rejection of parallel administrations, the KPRP hosted a meeting of Indochinese deputy foreign ministers in order to prepare for the Jakarta informal meeting. A communique from the meeting stated that any future UN activities in Cambodia had to be carried out "in a spirit of total respect for Cambodia's independence and sovereignty" and that internal problems had to be settled by "representatives" of the two governments in Cambodia. A Vietnamese statement a few days later asserted that the UN could not "dissolve the two existing governments" because they were necessary for preserving law and order. See SWB, 13 February 1990 and 16 February 1990.

20. Reliable data on economic conditions in Cambodia are difficult to obtain. For the most comprehensive up to date reporting, see The Economist Intelligence Unit, Country Profile - Indochina: Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, 1990-91, pp. 50-67 and the EIU, Country Report: Indochina (quarterly).


22. In contrast to this intricate, richly played and envisaged local drama, the images projected to western audiences in films such as John Pilger's, "Cambodia: Year 10", broadcast in Europe on 31 October 1989 and ABC News Peter Jennings Reporting "From the Killing fields", broadcast in the US on 26 April 1990, conflate events over two decades and insert them into Euro-American historical frameworks. Major elements and actors in the Cambodian morality play such as the Vietnamese occupation, the Hun Sen state and Khmer nationalism are made invisible.
23. See “Policy Statement on National Reconciliation” and “PRK Issues Statement on Cambodian Solution” which revises it in FBIS-EAS, 27 August 1990, pp. 16-17 and 8 October 1987, pp.18-9 respectively. In keeping with the Soviet model, Sihanouk was urged to play a role in the “leading organ” at successive rounds of informal talks with Hun Sen beginning with the first meeting in France in December 1987.

24. An informed overview of the shifts in style and content of Thai policy towards Cambodia is Zhu Zhenming, “Thailand’s Policy Towards Cambodia: From Kriangsak to Chatichai”, Indochina Report, No. 29, April-June 1990. Chatichai’s principal contributions to the diplomatic process were to arrange informal talks between Sihanouk and Hun Sen in Bankok in February 1990 and talks among the four parties in Tokyo in June 1990. Both talks resulted in the issuing of communiques largely authored by the Thais. The communiques were signed somewhat reluctantly by Prince Sihanouk, out of deference to the Thai mediators. Partly for that reason, the communiques have not had much effect other than to alienate gradually the three resistance parties from Thai government policy. Out of concern that Chatichai’s ineffective diplomacy or declining support for the resistance would undermine Asean’s united position in the conflict, President Suharto of Indonesia asked Chatichai in July to allow Indonesia to resume its traditional role as Asean’s lead country on the Cambodian question. For a critical Thai press assessment which asserts that Bangkok’s “peace lovers” are intent upon “auctioning off” Cambodia to a group of Thai capitalists, see “Chavalit’s last job in Tokyo”, Bangkok Post, 17 June 1990 (a translation from the Thai language newspaper Khao Pises).

25. Sihanouk’s position dates from the issuing of the 8-point proposal in 1986. In the first joint Sihanouk-Hun Sen communique issued in Paris in December 1987, Sihanouk succeeded in securing Hun Sen’s agreement to the participation of his coalition partners in informal talks. Talks including all four parties were not arranged, however, until the Jakarta informal meetings and the Paris International Conference in July 1989. As recently as January 1990, Sihanouk argued that Vietnamese refusal to allow the PDK to participate in the peace process on an equal footing with the other parties was “forcing the Khmer Rouge to continue fighting indefinitely.” The Nation (Bangkok), 5 Jan-
uary 1990. At the Tokyo talks in June 1990, Japanese and Thai negotiators with support from the Hun Sen delegation submitted to the four parties a large number of specific proposals concerning a ceasefire and political arrangements which had not been submitted to any of the parties in advance. Because the proposals fell outside of their "mandate", the PDK delegation withdrew from the meeting. At the same time, the mediators proposed to name Sihanouk as the chairman of a Supreme National Council comprised of equal numbers of representatives from the two governments. Although Sihanouk had assured his hosts that he would sign a communique in advance of the meeting in a private capacity (i.e. not as Head of State in the NGC), the Prince also refused to sign the proffered communique until references to his chairmanship of the Council and to his role as Head of State in the NGC were removed. Since April 1990, Sihanouk has signalled willingness to accept unequal representation of the four parties in an interim SNC or governmental authority but, crucially, formation of such a council remains conditional in his view upon Vietnamese-KPRP acceptance of a comprehensive agreement involving peacekeeping forces, disarmament of all four party armies and a substantial UN administering authority. See "New Sihanouk Plan for Cambodia", The Nation (Bangkok), 10 April 1990. Following rejection of this plan by Hun Sen, Sihanouk gave his support to the PDK proposal of June 29th (see Note 6) which calls for an equal role for each of the four parties.

26. A reporter working for the Associated Press who recently completed a five-week tour of northern Cambodia with NAIC forces met and interviewed an NADK (Khmer Rouge) commander in the Angkor Wat area of Siem Reap province. The commander complained, "Sometimes I think Hun Sen is stupid: you know we don't need to negotiate with him now...(and)...If they don't compromise, they will lose everything. At this rate the war will be over by the end of the year."

From Nate Thayer, "Resistance routs P. Penh troops in countryside", Bangkok Post, 17 July 1990. The commander's comments are consistent with a general view in the Bangkok intelligence community that the three resistance armies, but especially the NADK, have made substantial gains in recent months. In some strategic regions, the KPRP government has responded by evacuating civilians in an effort to deny the
advancing armies a civilian support base. Bearing in mind the linkages between the military, diplomatic and political in the communist strategy, the movements have been used as a backdrop for renewed cries about the return of the "Khmer Rouge".

27. For specific comments by Hun Sen, Chea Sim and Hor Nam Hong, see the reports of Robert Pear, *International Herald Tribune*, 8 and 9 January 1990; "Chea Sim Receives Delegation", FBIS-EAS, 16 April 1990, p.31 "Hun Sen ends visit to Thailand” SWB, 5 May 1990, p. A3/2; "Phnom Penh Starts Campaign to ‘Sweeten’ image", FBIS-EAS, 7 May 1990, p.34 and "Government Said Ready for UN Role in Elections” FBIS-EAS, 24 May 1990, pp.40-1. See also the text of the message of SOC President Heng Samrin to Violetta Chamorro of Nicaragua congratulating her “on the brilliant victory that you won in the recent free and fait elections” and his affirmation that while the SOC might be flexible on some matters, it would not allow “other nations or international organizations”, (i.e. the UN) to control Cambodia’s territory. See FBIS-EAS, 1 May 1990 and 22 May 1990 (respectively).


29. This paper was completed at the end of July 1990 just as the US announced that it would no longer support recognition of the NGC at the United Nations and that it would engage in talks with Vietnam in order to hasten a settlement in Cambodia. The US policy shift is reportedly motivated by a concern to prevent the “Khmer Rouge” from returning to power by military means and a desire to create conditions for the holding of elections in Cambodia. If the arguments advanced above have any merit, and assuming that Chinese and Asean support
for the Cambodian resistance can only remain strong, the change in US policy looks certain to produce outcomes which the US claims it does not want, specifically, **increased** diplomatic resistance from Vietnam and the KPRP to a meaningful UN role, an escalation of the resistance war which may lead to renewed Vietnamese military intervention and intensified "brinkmanship" on the part of the KPRP linked to more insistent demands for aid, de facto recognition and acceptance of elections organised within the SOC constitutional framework in the presence of a standing army and large security forces. Rather than hastening a settlement, the US retreat from a position of support for Asian nationalism and Cambodian independence could disrupt the peace process irrevocably.