

## From the same author

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Michael Vickery

## Cambodia: A Political Survey



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## Cambodia : A Political Survey<sup>1</sup> Michael Vickery

### Introduction

Since the last election in 2003, and in particular during 2005-2006, Cambodian stability has been threatened by unprincipled political figures who enjoy support from extreme right-wing U.S. entities such as the International Republican Institute (IRI), financed in part by USAID and backed by influential U.S. senators, including John McCain, all attempting to fan the flames of Cambodian-Vietnamese hostility; and I think a new publication, with additional detail, of this study of the so-called 'Cambodian Peace Process' and its results, may be a useful contribution to understanding the background of Cambodia's present situation<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> This is an expansion of a much shorter version, concerned solely with the 1993 election, published by The Department of Political and Social Change, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, The Australian National University, 1994.

<sup>2</sup> Senator John McCain is on the board of directors of the IRI. Those who may have forgotten the IRI, whose action in Cambodia in 1993 is noted below, p. 67, or who assume its activities are innocuous, should note that early in 2006 the *New York Times* (29 January 2006), published a special report, "Democracy Undone: Mixed Signals Help Tilt Haiti Toward Chaos", by Walt Bogdanich and Jenny Nordberg, blaming the IRI for troubles in Haiti; and in connection with that Timothy Carney, in 1993 chief of the UNTAC component for "Education and Information", in fact UNTAC's political arm, in 1998-1999 U.S. ambassador in Haiti and then Chargé d'Affaires after 13 August 2005, praised the IRI and was himself featured in their response to the *New York Times*.

The original text from which the present version has developed was written soon after the formation of a new government following the 1993 election and drafting of a new constitution, and it discussed only those subjects. In what follows here I have preceded that text with some of the 1980s background, and continued with some of the significant post-1993 developments.

Although the term was not yet then in use, the goal of the U.S.-dominated 1993 UN intervention in Cambodia, like that of more recent similar interventions around the world, was not the establishment of 'democracy', but 'regime change'.

This was subsequently acknowledged by two of UNTAC's (United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia) spin doctors. Stephen Heder, Deputy Director of UNTAC's political commissariat, the so-called 'Information and Education Component', and thus a very important UNTAC official, later wrote, "in fact, the Paris Agreements did not place a high priority on the consolidation of liberal democracy in Cambodia... all they insisted on was the achievement of a new political arrangement via a free and fair electoral process." That is, a facade of electionism or, what has been called a demonstration election<sup>3</sup>. In the words of another UNTAC Cambodia operative, David Ashley, "the elections were intended not so much to introduce democracy as to create a legitimate and thus diplomatically recognizable government". The existing government was declared illegitimate because it had been brought into existence with Vietnamese aid, and had remained

<sup>3</sup> Edward S. Herman and Frank Brodhead, *Demonstration Elections, U.S. Staged Elections in the Dominican Republic, Vietnam, and El Salvador*, South End Press 1984; Heder, *Phnom Penh Post* (PPP) 4/4, 24 Feb-9 March 1995, p. 19; and Ashley, PPP 4/11, 2-15 June 1995, p. 6.

close to Vietnam, a situation intolerable for the U.S.

The above statements, and what follows, will no doubt surprise those, I think a majority of even the rather well-read but non-specialist public, who, with respect to the events discussed, have been nurtured by a rare dialectical reinforcement between official U.S. and allied disinformation and house-broken journalists who with witless reverence repeated whatever their favorite 'western diplomats' said, until apparently they all came to believe their own propaganda which they foisted on an unsuspecting public. It has not been in Iraq alone that journalists were 'embedded', or, more accurately, jumped with passion into the sack with brass and spooks.

What follows is intended as an investigation into the history of a certain period, and the historiography of that history. Although it is very contemporary history, for which direct information from interviews with participants is a favorite technique, the secrecy surrounding all aspects of Cambodian affairs on all sides, and the tendentious news, if not outright disinformation indulged in, ensure that the student of current Cambodian affairs will often go astray relying on the journalistic technique of straight reporting of 'facts' (or factoids) elicited through questioning of participants or informed sources, and must resort to the academic historians' techniques of analyzing--reading between the lines of recalcitrant sources, both written and oral.

There is a perennial conflict between the tasks of the journalist and the academic, especially

when journalists are writing history or academic historians trying journalism. The former prefers, or in any case is usually forced, to take his information in face-to-face contact with individuals who are deeply involved in the activity being investigated and he must generally get it quickly into a more or less entertaining form for his editor and his readers, while the latter, if historian or social scientist, tends to distrust what people say about events in the past or in which they were involved, and wishes to search for what was recorded as close to the event as possible, or provided by alternative sources.

Thus journalists seem to object that working historians too often refuse to accept sources, written or oral, at face value, while academics find that journalists shoot from the hip to make sensational points. Academics, after all, generally have to depend on journalists for the latest information and they are disappointed when the latter show insufficient care in its transmission.

The problem is not just, as some journalists have argued, that governments, especially Communist, may offer only "self-serving selections of confidential documents", and "are unlikely to open their archives to independent historians"<sup>4</sup>. Oral interview material, and not just from 'communists', may be equally self-serving, and anonymous interviews,

<sup>4</sup>Quotations from Nayan Chanda, *Brother Enemy, the War After the War*, San Diego, New York, London, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1986, p. ix, who thought the problem was with 'Communist' governments, but we now have daily evidence that major capitalist governments are equally guilty. My review of Chanda's book will appear in a forthcoming publication, *Kicking the Vietnam Syndrome in Cambodia*, to be published by Funan Press, Phnom Penh, 2007.

even accepting that anonymity cannot always be avoided, have a historical evidential value equivalent to self-serving archival selections. The historians' duty is to subject them to the same sort of source criticism that would be given written documents. This is the crux of the difference between journalists and historians. Journalists rarely do engage in source criticism, if only because of the demands of their work (historians, I admit, too often do not either, but then they are not acting as historians).

There is also a more insidious impediment to serious journalistic and academic treatment of situations like that in Cambodia, of which a good example came to my attention in 1998.

One evening in 1998 at the bar of the Foreign Correspondents' Club in Phnom Penh one of the young resident western journalists said, "You might be surprised, Michael, at the number of things on which we agree" in response to my jibe, "so there is one thing on which we agree", after he remarked that he, like I, had not expected Prince Ranariddh to return to Cambodia after the armed conflict in July 1997.

Intrigued, I said, "tell me more", since I had always considered, both from his published reportage, and from conversations on earlier visits to Phnom Penh, that he and I were on opposite sides of the political and ideological barricades in Cambodia, and that he was among those journalists who believed their duty to be to undermine the Cambodian Peoples Party (CPP), in particular Prime Minister Hun Sen, in favor of the royalist

FUNCINPEC party, Prince Ranariddh, and Sam Rainsy.

Instead, I discovered that he and most of his colleagues regarded Ranariddh and the entire FUNCINPEC apparatus with contempt, as an incompetent, corrupt, and unpleasant bunch who could not possibly be trusted to govern Cambodia if they were brought to power. They agreed that Hun Sen is far superior in intellect, political sense, and organizational ability, and no one cared to argue when I remarked that most of the able Cambodian administrators are in the CPP or closely allied with it.

"Why don't you write things like that", I asked. "I can't", was the answer. The reasons why he 'can't' were never clearly expressed, but it seemed to be in part awareness that anyone who broke with the pack would not be taken seriously by the editors for whom they write, that it is not considered proper to write critically of other journalists or their productions, or that they are supposed to just report on day-to-day 'facts', not engage in 'analysis'. Thus, something like 'strongman Hun Sen organized anti-Ranariddh demonstrations' would be a news fact (factoid?), but a description of a demonstration contrary to the accepted paradigm, or contrary to what CNN was broadcasting, would be analysis.

An explicit example offered by that journalist concerned the demonstrations outside the Royal Hotel just after Ranariddh returned to Phnom Penh in 1998 and took up residence there. He said that the CNN presentation was dishonest,

depicting the event as a serious riot. It was nothing of the kind, he said (I was not in Phnom Penh then, and can say nothing from personal observation). He had observed it from a good position and said it involved a few groups of pro- and anti-Ranariddh youths throwing punches at one another until they were all chased away by the police. "Why don't you write this, exposing the CNN propaganda?" "I can't", for three obvious reasons. He cannot criticize another agency, his editor would not accept something so contrary to conventional wisdom, and it would be 'analysis', not 'factual reporting'.

As another resident journalist, and one who was not subject to the constraints of getting out a new 'fact' each day, put it, reporting follows a rhythm, and no one wants to be the first to break with the rhythm, perhaps for the very practical reason that they might lose their employment<sup>5</sup>.

What this means, however, is that at the center of news production about Cambodia for the English-speaking world, there is a group of journalists who do not entirely believe what they are writing. Specifically, the two whom I have cited here did not believe that in July 1997 'strongman' Hun Sen organized a coup to get rid of Ranariddh and his FUNCINPEC supporters (on which see further below, pp. 159, ff.). Both of them claimed that they had never used the word

<sup>5</sup>The pressures of standard paradigms, or rhythms, are also well known in the academic world, and the first to break with the pack may there also face problems, through the process of 'peer review' pre-publication refereeing of their work, supposedly to guarantee quality, but also to prevent upstarts from questioning the establishments.

'coup' in what they wrote about that event (although the second did not think the first was telling the truth about this). In the view of one, "Nhiok Bun Chhay had been running wild", and the "action he and his military colleagues initiated provided Hun Sen with a perfect opportunity to get rid of some dangerous enemies"<sup>6</sup>.

When I first wrote down the above in 1998 I wondered if the circumstance that after several years of conversations which convinced me that the person I first cited above was opposed to me on all points, the revelation that we were in broad agreement might indicate that a shift in the rhythm was occurring, that a 'new paradigm' was emerging in reportage on Cambodia. That hope was misplaced, as will be shown in the material presented below.

Both of the journalists in question have left Cambodia; and I shall not name them because they are no doubt still constrained to remain within the dominant paradigm to maintain their supply of bread and butter. One of them, however, was among the trio who successfully 'outed' Raoul Jennar as perhaps pro-CPP, preventing him from receiving an EU appointment, and they were indignant at being called 'U.S. journalists', pointing out that they (two of them) worked for European press organizations, even though those two were

<sup>6</sup> For a similar assessment of Nhiok Bun Chhay (who later became politically respectable and in 1998 was appointed to the Senate) from a very different, and strongly anti-CPP, anti-Hun Sen, ideological standpoint see the remark by Stephen Heder, below, p. 165. Amusingly, Nhiok Bun Chhay is now the Deputy President of the Senate and is of the anti-Ranariddh faction of FUNCINPEC which desires cooperation with the CPP.

Americans<sup>7</sup>.

No matter. At that level all the journalism in question here is 'U.S.', wherever it is published.

The rhythm evoked above has meant that the word 'strongman' must precede every mention of the name 'Hun Sen', except, of course, when he is a 'Vietnamese puppet', just as in the early 1980s the Cambodian government could not be named otherwise than as the 'Vietnamese-backed Heng Samrin regime' (except when Cambodia 'expert' Stephen Heder insisted on calling it the 'Pen Sovann regime')<sup>8</sup>. A few years later the rhythm was 'communist hardliner Chea Sim' blocking progress toward democracy by a young, more liberal Hun Sen, until Chea Sim was translated into a benevolent Buddhist father figure maintaining a balance against 'strongman' Hun Sen, with the ultra right-wing IRI offering to support Chea Sim's faction against Hun Sen<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> PPP 7/2, 30 January-13 February 1998, p. 2, Matthew Grainger, "EU media guru says Ranariddh guilty", a title in itself redolent of emotional prejudice.

<sup>8</sup> Stephen R. Heder, "From Pol Pot to Pen Sovann to the Villages", paper presented at the International conference on Indochina and Problems of Security in Southeast Asia, Bangkok, Chulalongkorn University, 1980.

<sup>9</sup> For details of the changing rhythms see forthcoming *Kicking the Vietnam Syndrome*; and for IRI support of the 'moderate' CPP faction, which could only have meant that of Chea Sim, see PPP 13/24, 19/11-2/12, 2004, and comment below, p. 182.

## The 'Peace Process' Leading to Elections

The 1993 election and new Constituent Assembly marked the beginning of a phase in Cambodia's modern history as crucial as the deposition of Sihanouk in 1970, which began 9 years of war and revolution; the revolutionary victory of 1975; and the destruction of Democratic Kampuchea ('Pol Pot Regime', 'Khmer Rouge') by Vietnam in 1979.

The Paris Agreement under which this election was held was the culmination of a long process of harassment and negotiation begun soon after the overthrow of Pol Pot in 1979, and read carefully, it seems to have been designed to ensure further destabilization, rather than lasting peace. It was the last stage in the international campaign to destroy the PRK/SOC as part of the U.S. vendetta against Vietnam. Negotiations reached this stage because the PRK refused to dissolve as had been predicted for ten years, and when it was realized that the PRK was a relative success, not a Vietnamese front, that the Vietnamese army was really leaving, and that the new Cambodian state could not be defeated militarily by its enemies<sup>10</sup>.

When it was seen that the PRK-which by 1981 had a constitution, a national assembly chosen in an election, and a new government structure of genuine Khmer elements, not just disguised Vietnamese- could not be destroyed by recycling

<sup>10</sup> PRK is 'Peoples Republic of Kampuchea' the official English-language name from 1979 to 1989 when it was changed to 'State of Cambodia', SOC. Now, the official name in English is 'Cambodia', or 'Kingdom of Cambodia'.

the Khmer Rouge and creating new contra groups, some of which were the nuclei for Son Sann's KPNLF and Sihanouk's FUNCINPEC, the international community in 1982 cobbled together the three-party Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK), taking the name of Pol Pot's 'Khmer Rouge' regime<sup>11</sup>. This strange creature, a shotgun marriage of three partners whose mutual hatred was exceeded only by their antipathy for the PRK and Vietnamese, and all of whom at one time or another had been rejected by the Cambodian nation, received international recognition and Cambodia's UN seat, thus setting the stage for the comedy of the next few years during which the government that steadily worked to improve the conditions of its people was treated as a pariah, while the contras became legitimate Cambodia.

The contra coalition was only preserved by increasing foreign aid. While able to blow up bridges, attack civilian trains, and murder a few people here and there, their military success was never impressive. The confidence of the PRK side was shown by the annual withdrawals of Vietnamese troops, which by 1983 were undoubtedly underway; an increasingly Khmer administration, particularly

<sup>11</sup> KPNLF is 'Khmer Peoples National Liberation Front'; FUNCINPEC is, in French, 'Front Uni National pour un Cambodge Indépendant, Neutre, Pacifique et Coopératif'. The term 'contra' has been deliberately chosen to draw a parallel with the right-wing 'contra' groups in El Salvador and Nicaragua and their death squads supported by the U.S. regime, and, of relevance for Cambodia, the International Republican Institute, which is still organizing mischief in Cambodia. See on this subject, Vickery, "Kampuchean 'Contras'", *Bangkok Post*, "Post Bag", 7 July 1986, to be reprinted in *Kicking the Vietnam Syndrome*.

after the 5th Party Congress in 1985; and gradual, even if limited, political relaxation within Cambodia<sup>12</sup>.

For ten years the foreign opponents of the PRK and Vietnam (The U.S. ASEAN, and most western European countries) remained in denial of these developments, and the interested public was kept in the dark by the 'embedded' journo-propagandists described above.

Among the techniques to delude the foreign public was assimilation of the post-1979 PRK to its predecessor, the Khmer Rouge DK. The CIA, in their publication on Cambodian demography, ignored the most murderous DK year, 1978, and tried to portray the year 1979, following the overthrow of DK, as a worse year for hunger and death than the DK period. This slant was followed in the writings of a number of well-known journalists, including William Shawcross, who asserted that even if the worst stories about DK were true, it was now (1980) that Cambodia was in danger of extinction<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> On that first, major, withdrawal, see Vickery, *Cambodia 1975-1982*, Boston, South End Press and Sydney, George Allen & Unwin, 1984; second edition, Chiang Mai, Silkworm Books, 1999, Postscript 1983; and on the changes after the 5th Party Congress, Vickery, *Kampuchea, Politics, Economics and Society*, Frances Pinter (Publishers), London, Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., Boulder, 1986; Vickery "La kremlinologie face au Cambodge" (translated by M.-Cl. Orieux), *Affaires cambodgiennes 1979-1989*, Asie-Débat-5, Paris L'Harmattan, 1989, pp. 129-35.

<sup>13</sup> National Foreign Assessment Center, "Kampuchea: A Demographic Catastrophe", CIA, May 1980, based on research completed on 17 January 1980; Michael Vickery, "Democratic Kampuchea: CIA to the Rescue", *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* (BCAS), 14/4 (1982), pp. 45-54; Shawcross, "The End of Cambodia", *New York Review of Books* (NYRB), 24 January 1980, an article full of errors of both fact and interpretation. For a full treatment of Shawcross see my forthcoming *Kicking the Vietnam Syndrome*.

The depiction of Cambodia as a basket case, especially in comparison with a neighboring country favored by the U.S., continued for several years in the early 1980s. In 1983 Elizabeth Becker claimed that Cambodians were well behind other Southeast Asian villagers who can "take for granted: clean water, a measure of sanitation ... and a dependable supply of affordable food."

To the contrary, in Thailand, where there had been no war, foreign invasion, carpet bombing, nor revolution, where foreign investment is massive and the sympathy of the most advanced Western powers is enjoyed, health authorities, as in Cambodia, were concerned about serious malnutrition among half or more of the country's children; and only 30% of the population had a safe water supply (*Bangkok Post*, 18 Oct. 1981, p. 8). Moreover, the food supply situation there, in nutritional terms, may have been deteriorating (*Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*, 14/4 [1982], p. 21), and during the refugee influx in 1979-1981 there was some concern that the 'high' standard of living of Cambodian refugees with foreign support might evoke invidious comparison and ultimate political disaffection by the poor Thai peasants who observed them<sup>14</sup>.

Security for travel in some rural areas of Thailand was also no better than in Cambodia where Khmer Rouge were fighting the PRK. In

<sup>14</sup> Becker, "Cycle of Poverty" and subsequent articles (*Washington Post* 28 February and 1 March 1983). Comparison of Thai villagers and Cambodian refugees is from my own experience in the refugee camps in 1980. For the full treatment of Becker's info-ganda and my attempt to counter it, see *Kicking the Vietnam Syndrome*.



the important areas of historical monuments around Sukhothai and Sri Satchanalai during the 1980s, where I spent much time with an Australian archaeological project, we were warned that certain places were 'off-limits' because of 'banditry'. That situation no longer (2006) prevails, no doubt because protection of tourists is now more profitable than toleration of bandits.

Two of the most important international 'human rights' organizations also decided to play politics against the PRK and in favor of its enemies, including the Khmer Rouge remnants. The Lawyers Committee for International Human Rights and Amnesty International throughout the 1980s issued dramatic special reports against Cambodia, the contents of which could not stand up to careful analysis, in particular when, as in Becker's treatment, comparison was made with Thailand<sup>15</sup>.

For example, In the Amnesty International Report of 1986, covering the year 1985, the section on Thailand claimed 76 death sentences, "reports of prisoners dying in custody due to severe ill-treatment", "government armed forces... alleged to have extrajudicially killed members of ethnic minority groups", convictions by military courts for "peaceful acts which may be deemed... to constitute 'lèse majesty'", 480-day detention without charge in political cases, and incarceration of other political suspects in 're-education'

<sup>15</sup> The Cambodia expert who was responsible for the details, and much of the writing, of the reports of both organizations, was Stephen Heder, an important figure in UNTAC in 1993 (see below), and now working for the Khmer Rouge trial.

centers-precisely the same kinds of actions reported for the PRK, but worse than what was alleged against the PRK in 1985 and 1986. Moreover, a responsible Amnesty official told me that the Thai government, like the PRK, was unwilling to cooperate with Amnesty investigations. Yet there was no special report about Thailand, nor international press campaign organized to discredit that regime. So much for Amnesty's pretended even-handed objectivity<sup>16</sup>.

One detail, which one would have expected Amnesty to notice, if they acted in accordance with their expressed principles, was that the death penalty in Cambodia, since 1980, had been limited to those convicted of leadership of a treason or espionage network, "many crimes against the population in the past" (obviously aimed at former DK personnel), or for rape followed by murder<sup>17</sup>. Now, of course, since 1993, Cambodia is the only country in Southeast Asia without a death penalty.

<sup>16</sup> See Michael Vickery, "A Critique of the Lawyers Committee for International Human Rights, Kampuchea Mission of November 1984", *Journal of Contemporary Asia* vol. 18, No. 1, 1988, pp. 108-116; Vickery, "Amnesty International and the War Against Cambodia", Adelaide, *Samizdat*, June 1987 and reprint, *Samizdat*, Penang, October 1990, including "Amnesty Strikes Again", an analysis of an Amnesty Bulletin on Cambodia dated April 1988. This *Samizdat*, both in the original and revised version, was widely distributed to persons and organizations interested in Cambodia, beginning with the International NGO Conference in Brussels in 1987, and will be published in full in *Kicking the Vietnam Syndrome*. Parts of the critique, although not its main argument, have been published as "Human Rights in Cambodia", in Naomi Roht-Arriaza, ed., *Impunity and Human Rights in International Law and Practice*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1995.

<sup>17</sup> Michael Vickery, *Kampuchea, Politics, Economics and Society*, pp. 118-122.

Given the background of 'respectable' publications and 'human rights' bodies working against the PRK, it is not surprising to still see the assimilation of the PRK to DK among right-wing writers who treat Cambodia, not DK, but the entire period from 1975 to the present, as a failed state; but it was adopted even by publications on the left (such as it is in the U.S.). In an article on Cambodian women in *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* (BCAS 28/2), the author wrote of "a period of isolation (1975-89), the last ten years of it under Vietnamese rule"<sup>18</sup>.

The 'Vietnamese occupation' shibboleth is a case in point illustrated by the journalist-academic-apparatchik treatment of the numbers of Vietnamese troops in the country and their partial withdrawals which were announced beginning in 1982, the size of the Khmer Rouge, and the growth of the PRK army. It was generally accepted that 180-200,000 Vietnamese troops entered in 1979, and most journos continued to accept statements by 'western intelligence analysts' that the withdrawals were faked, and were nothing more than replacements.

These were the figures put forward in the semi-scholarly *Asian Survey* annual summary article of Vietnamese affairs for the year 1979 by

<sup>18</sup> For 'failed state' see McAllister Brown and Joseph Zasloff, *Cambodia Confounds the Peacemakers 1979-1998*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1998, which is the worst of the serious, ostensibly academic rather than journalistic, examples of the 'rhythm' or 'paradigm', and in fact, especially if viewed together with their previous work, shows them as unreconstructed VWRs (Vietnam warmonger retreads); Pamela Collett, BCAS 28/2 (1996).

John C. Donnell, professor of Political Science at Temple University. He wrote that the offensive of December 1978 began with some 100,000 Vietnamese and 15 to 20 thousand Khmer troops; and later the Vietnamese strength was increased to 150-200,000<sup>19</sup>.

My choice of the University of California's monthly *Asian Survey* as source for analysis of this topic is deliberate. In their January and February numbers each year they publish summary articles on the previous year in each Asian country, and a large number of these articles are written by active or former members of various U.S. government services. This was particularly true of the articles on the three Indochina countries during the 1980s.

Thus for Cambodia, the articles for the years 1979 and 1980 were done by an academic, to be sure a safe one, Michael Leifer, but for 1981 and 1982 by the State Department's Timothy Carney, for 1983 by journalist-apparatchik Elizabeth Becker, and for 1984 and 1985 by the army's Colonel Michael Eiland, whose record included helping to manage both the illegal bombings of Cambodia in 1969-1970, and the refugee relief *cum* Pol Pot aid program on the Thai border after 1979<sup>20</sup>.

<sup>19</sup> "Vietnam 1979: Year of Calamity", *Asian Survey* (AS) XX/1 (January 1980), pp. 19-32.

<sup>20</sup> See the critique of Becker in *Kicking the Vietnam Syndrome*; on Eiland's role in the bombings see Shawcross, *Sideshow*, p. 25; and on his work at the Thai border in 1979-1980, see John Pilger, "America's Second War in Indochina", *New Statesman*, Aug 1, 1980. Eiland's presence there was known among people, including myself, who worked in the refugee camps in 1980.

In his first article Leifer repeated the 200,000 figure found in Donnell, but supplied no figure for the next year. Neither was there a figure in Carney's two pieces, and for 1982 he asserted that the withdrawal alleged by the Vietnamese was only a rotation, with 20,000 new troops coming in from Vietnam. For the year 1983 Becker gave figures of 150,000 Vietnamese troops claimed by the resistance (contras), 50,000 Khmer Rouge soldiers, and an army of only 20-30,000 for the PRK<sup>21</sup>. Then Eiland, for 1984, emphasizing that his article was "drawn solely from open sources", that is, bracketing out anything he knew from his military sources, refused to offer any troop figures at all, but did make the interesting observation that the contra estimate of Vietnamese civilian population in Cambodia, one million, was "hysterically high" (probably true of the contra

<sup>21</sup> Michael Leifer, "Kampuchea 1979: From Dry Season to Dry Season", AS XX/1 (January 1980), pp. 33-41, and "Kampuchea 1980: The Politics of Attrition", AS XXI/1 (January 1981), pp. 93-101; Timothy Carney, "Kampuchea 1981: Fragile Stalemate", AS XXII/1 (January 1982), pp. 78-87, and "Kampuchea in 1982: Political and Military Escalation", AS XXIII/1 (January 1983), pp. 73-83; Elizabeth Becker, "Kampuchea in 1983", AS XXIV, No. 1 (January 1984), pp. 37-47. In a letter to editor Philip Bowering of *Far Eastern Economic Review* (FEER) I said, "with respect to slanting news on Cambodia, could you ask your writers to stop referring to the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea, or any of its three factions, as the 'resistance'. Some of them may not be old enough to recall and be sensitive to the issue, but 'the resistance' conjures up images of French and Polish heroines remaining silent under Gestapo torture or of ordinary citizens hiding Jewish neighbors from deportation, not U.S.-financed contras trying to destroy what little progress has been made in their countries in the interest of groups which behaved hardly better than Gestapo when they had earlier chances to govern."

estimate of Vietnamese troops too). A year later he still refused to give a figure for 1985, and noted only that "as in previous years, the Vietnamese in April made a production of a putative troop withdrawal", which all right thinkers, obviously, should not believe. Equally specious in Eiland's view was the Vietnamese announcement that "it would withdraw its troops from Cambodia by 1990, or sooner if a political solution could be found", which he considered "rather at odds with the Vietnamese minimum position of elimination of the DK as a political and military entity". Of course, for Eiland there was no question of the PRK ever being able to take over its own defense. For Eiland, the question of a Vietnamese officer to a Thai border outpost about the location of the border "symbolically mark[ed] the high-water mark of the Vietnamese thousand-year *nam tiến*, or march to the south", a fine example of the real Vietnam syndrome<sup>22</sup>.

The next two years were covered by Nayan Chanda, newly based in the U.S., where his attitude, earlier notable for scholarly objectivity and some sympathy for the beleaguered peoples of Indochina, changed with the climate. For 1986 he wrote, "In May, Vietnam announced its annual withdrawal of troops from Cambodia (such withdrawals have been routine since 1982), but Western intelligence sources maintained that

<sup>22</sup> Michael Eiland, "Kampuchea in 1984 Yet further from Peace", AS, Vol. XXV, No. 1 (January 1985), pp. 106-113, quotations from pp. 106 and 111; "Cambodia in 1985 From Stalemate to Ambiguity", AS, Vol. XXVI, No. 1 (January 1986), pp. 118-125, quotations from pp. 119, 123.

Vietnamese troops still numbered about 140,000". A year later he followed the apparatchiks' practice in *Asian Survey* of refusing to give a total, noted that Vietnam announced a 20,000 troop withdrawal, but gave equal credence to the claims of "Western intelligence sources in Bangkok" that "in preceding weeks Hanoi had brought in some 12,000 to 15,000 new troops to Cambodia". It was noteworthy that Chanda, in spite of years of work in Indochina, relied for these details on an article by the new *FEER* Indochina correspondent, Murray Hiebert, cynically entitled, "That Annual Exercise"<sup>23</sup>. The figures offered by Chanda, indicating a reduction in Vietnamese forces of possibly no more than 5,000, meant that 135,000 might have been left from the "Western intelligence" estimate of the previous year.

By 1988, however, the game was over, no doubt to the consternation of the writers cited above; and the *Asian Survey* Cambodia articles for the following two years were turned over to a newcomer, Khatharya Um, a Khmer resident in the U.S., and a doctoral candidate at the University of California. For 1988 she did not directly give a total for Vietnamese troops. Nevertheless, after having said that "to Sihanouk's insistence that Vietnam complete its troop withdrawal by 1989, the best that Phnom Penh was prepared to offer

<sup>23</sup> Nayan Chanda, "Cambodia in 1986 Beginning to Tire", *AS*, Vol. XXVII, No. 1 (January 1987), pp. 115-124, see pp. 117-8 (written after Chanda had been moved to Washington); and "Cambodia in 1987 Sihanouk on Center Stage", *AS*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 1 (January 1988), pp. 105-115; Murray Hiebert, "Cambodia: That Annual Exercise. Hanoi Withdraws 20,000 Troops from Cambodia", *FEER* 10 December 1987.

was reduction of the withdrawal timetable, following an agreement, from 30 to 24 months". She noted that the high command had withdrawn in June and recorded, without skepticism, the stated Vietnamese intention to withdraw the final contingent of 50,000 by December 15. This implied a huge reduction of 80,000 or so from the implicit "Western intelligence" estimate of 1987. In "Cambodia 1989", she reported that on "September 27, 1989, Hanoi announced it had withdrawn its remaining 26,300 troops from Cambodia". In that article she offered a figure of 30-40,000 for the Khmer Rouge<sup>24</sup>. It is obvious that 'Western intelligence in Bangkok', code for the U.S. Embassy and attached agencies, probably convinced by their own propaganda that the Vietnamese had no intention of ever leaving, had misled the housebroken journalists Elizabeth Becker and Nayan Chanda.

In spite of working for agencies which in the nature of their duties must engage in disinformation, and no doubt at times themselves functioning as the anonymous sources of disinformative scraps from 'Bangkok-based diplomats' or 'western intelligence', which pepper media reports, all of those government officials have some claim to academic status--Carney was accepted as a scholar's scholar on Cambodia when he chose to engage in that genre, Pike and Eiland had doctorates from respectable universities, Quinn from a slightly less respectable institution, the University of Maryland; and they would not

<sup>24</sup> "Cambodia in 1988", *AS*, Vol. XXIX, No. 1 (January 1989), pp. 73-80; and "Cambodia in 1989", *AS*, Vol. XXX, No. 1 (January 1990), pp. 97-104.

have been caught overtly spreading disinformation, particularly when writing for an academic publication. Thus, since they undoubtedly knew, insofar as western intelligence could know, what the true figure for Vietnamese troops in Cambodia was year by year, the way they treated this matter, or refused to treat it, in *Asian Survey* is highly interesting.

None of the articles on Cambodia, from 1980 (covering 1979) through 1985, offered any figure on Vietnamese troops in the country at all, except the 150,000 provided by Elizabeth Becker from CGDK sources which were known to wildly exaggerate (note Eiland's remark a year later about the 'hysterical' estimate of Vietnamese settlers in Cambodia). Only in 1987 could Nayan Chanda get a "Western intelligence" figure for the previous year of 140,000. The primary fact on which most discussion of the status of the PRK turned was ignored in that academic, or should we say regime-academic, journal of record for Asia.

Well, perhaps the team conferred in advance and decided the question should be covered in the Vietnam sections. Indeed academic Donnell's 1980 article did provide the figures which I cited above. The Vietnam articles were handled in 1981 and 1982 by former State Department officer Douglas Pike, then given to Edmund McWilliams of the same background in 1983, turned over to journalist Nayan Chanda in 1984, then to academics W.J. Duiker in 1985 and 1986, and John H. Esterline in 1987.

A figure similar to Donnell's was repeated by Pike for 1980, saying "about a third of the PAVN's 180,000-man force" in Cambodia would continue active combat, while the others were scheduled for non-combat duties (p. 91); and for 1981 Pike upped the figure to 200,000, apparently the 'western intelligence source' figure, but he was scrupulous enough to footnote that Jane's authoritative publication "carries the PAVN force in Kampuchea at 100,000", if true a significant reduction (pp. 74, 77, n.12)<sup>25</sup>. A global figure was produced by Edmund McWilliams for 1982 after the first withdrawal announced by the Vietnamese, and when read carefully, there is no doubt that he credited them with a drop in strength from 180,000 at the beginning of the year to 150,000 at the end, which I duly noted in *Cambodia 1975-1982*<sup>26</sup>. This fact was not given any prominence by McWilliams, as though writing for *Asian Survey* he felt he had to put the truth in but

<sup>25</sup> Douglas Pike, "Vietnam in 1980: The Gathering Storm?", AS, XXI/1 (January 1981), pp. 84-92, and, "Vietnam in 1981: Biting the Bullet", AS XXII/1 (January 1982), pp. 69-77. It was always characteristic of Pike's work, starting with his first major publication which received wide notice, *Vietcong*, that the text may be pure regime propaganda, but the footnotes are loaded with valuable factual information from reputable sources. Whether he was aware of it or not, Pike's footnotes often deny his text. This is reminiscent of Stalin-era Soviet writers, who did know what they were doing, alternating paragraphs of real data or analysis as speculative 'what-might-be-said', followed by the orthodox party line. One such work I recall reading at the time was P.I. Lyashchenko's *A History of the Russian National Economy* (English translation, New York, 1949).

<sup>26</sup> *Cambodia 1975-1982*, Boston, South End Press; Sydney, George Allen & Unwin, 1984, p. 291; second edition, Chiang Mai, Silkworm Books, 1999, p. 310.

hoped readers would not notice it, and it was no doubt a gaffe on his part, directly contrary to the official line which held that the Vietnamese moves were nothing but disguised rotations. Indeed, in another context he parroted the official line that the "unilateral withdrawal" was "in fact only a rotation"<sup>27</sup>.

Chanda did not quite follow suit in 1984, with "more than 10,000 troops returned to Vietnam", and "western intelligence reports nevertheless indicated that in 1983 Vietnamese troop strength in Cambodia was lower than the previous year".

Well, how much lower? Why were the western intelligence sources who write for *Asian Survey* reluctant to give global figures? The obvious answer seems to be that the withdrawals announced by the Vietnamese were real, and far fewer troops remained in Cambodia than the figures 'western intelligence' was spoonfeeding journalists. The *Asian Survey* crowd knew this, but would not go against the regime line (rhythm, paradigm again) to that extent in print. Neither would they write in that context what they knew was a lie-that can be left to journalists.

Duiker continued the obfuscation, writing in 1984 about "Hanoi's refusal to remove its occupation forces", although he considered "plausible" the Vietnamese claim "that it was attempting to turn over battlefield responsibilities to the PRK's own armed forces". In his article about 1985, however, Duiker said "Vietnamese

<sup>27</sup> Mc Williams, p. 62, 180,000; p. 68, 'rotation'; p. 70, 150,000.

occupation troops [are] currently estimated at approximately 150,000", the figure given two years earlier by McWilliams and by Becker from the CGDK, implicitly denying that there had been any withdrawals. Esterline went back to the know-nothing stance in his treatments of 1986 and 1987, only adding in the latter that "Vietnam reiterated its promise to withdraw by 1990, but perhaps he was only deferring to Nayan Chanda, who for 1986 cited the "Western intelligence" estimate of 140,000, and then implied 130-135,000 in 1987"<sup>28</sup>.

By March 1989 the U.S. was admitting that "Vietnam currently has 60,000 to 70,000 troops in Cambodia", "[d]uring 1987, the Vietnamese withdrew 15,000-20,000 troops from southwestern and northwestern Cambodia", in "December 1988, the Vietnamese claimed to have withdrawn a total of 50,000 troops in 1988, though the number was probably closer to about 35,000", in any case giving the lie to the estimates funneled through *Asian Survey*<sup>29</sup>. Just six months later FEER was relying on "diplomats in Bangkok and Hanoi" for the number of Vietnamese troops

<sup>28</sup> William J. Duiker, "Vietnam in 1984 Between Ideology and Pragmatism", AS, Vol. XXV, No. 1 (January 1985), pp. 97-105, quotations from pp. 101, 103; "Vietnam in 1985 Searching for Solutions", AS, Vol. XXVI, No. 1 (January 1986), pp. 102-111, quotation from p. 102; John H. Esterline, "Vietnam in 1986 An Uncertain Tiger", AS, Vol. XXVII, No. 1 (January 1987), pp. 92-103; and "Vietnam in 1987 Steps Toward Rejuvenation", AS, Vol. XXVIII, No. 1 (January 1988), pp. 86-94, quotation from p. 92.

<sup>29</sup> "The Military Situation in Cambodia", Statement of RADM Timothy W. Wright, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (East Asia and Pacific Affairs), before the Subcommittee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, 1 March 1989.

remaining in Cambodia-"estimated to number 26,000 by the Vietnamese, but 30-40,000 by Western sources"<sup>30</sup>.

A similar and related question was the size of the PRK army. After serious research Timothy Carney came up with a figure of 30,000 in 1982<sup>31</sup>. That figure was repeated for years, heedless of the great efforts at military expansion (noted by Carney, 1983, p. 79), including a five-year draft and much social pressure, which must have considerably increased the numbers of Cambodian under arms. If the PRK forces expanded even by 5000 per year, they would have reached 50,000 or more by 1988, exceeding the combined total of the armed forces of their Coalition enemies.

By late 1989 this was admitted, as seen in an *FEER* article, reporting, "the Phnom Penh government... recently embarked on a programme to upgrade its regular forces, estimated to total 40-50,000, and paramilitary troops, numbering around 100,000"<sup>32</sup>.

Even the DK side was covertly admitting that a Vietnamese withdrawal was underway. Near the end of the 1980s their activities within Cambodia were less combat and more agitprop, and one of their arguments to gain support was that by 1990 there

<sup>30</sup> Rodney Tasker and Murray Hiebert, "A test of arms", *FEER*, 28 September 1989, p. 20.

<sup>31</sup> Carney's presentation at the 1982 Princeton conference, published as "The Heng Samrin Armed Forces and the Military Balance in Cambodia", in David A. Ablin & Marlowe Hood, editors, *The Cambodian Agony*, Armonk, New York, M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1987, pp. 192-193.

<sup>32</sup> Rodney Tasker and Murray Hiebert, "A test of arms", *FEER*, 28 September, 1989, p. 20.

would be no more Vietnamese in Cambodia and people would have to deal with DK forces, so they had better make their peace now (oral information in Cambodia at the time). Memories were certainly long enough to understand what that meant.

This was a situation-voluntary withdrawal of Vietnamese troops and their replacement by a PRK Khmer army--which was the worst nightmare of the CGDK and its foreign supporters, for it removed the main *raison d'être* of the foreign support for Pol Pot, Son Sann and Sihanouk, and this is why such efforts-in which journalists and academics colluded-had to be made to keep the facts from reaching a wide public who saw less and less reason for the apparent torment of Cambodia (similar to the changing attitudes to the Iraq war now).

In all of the various proposals and formats, the principal demands made by opponents of the PRK centered on withdrawal of the Vietnamese troops in Cambodia and free elections. An assumption behind this emphasis was that the PRK only existed by virtue of the Vietnamese. Once they were gone, the reasoning went, the PRK would quickly fall, and in free elections the PRK leaders would stand no chance. As it gradually became clear that the PRK would not just fade away, the proposals called for formation of a coalition government among the PRK and its Cambodian enemies.

In the face of clear Vietnamese intentions to get out fast, ASEAN began to engage in delaying tactics. Just before the first Jakarta Informal Meeting in July 1988 an ASEAN Foreign ministers' Joint Communiqué, as though there had been no changes

since 1979, expressed "deep concern over the continued illegal occupation of Kampuchea by Vietnamese military forces", which by then had already decreased from 200,000 to 50-70,000. A subtle new approach was the foreign ministers' "call for a durable and comprehensive political settlement in Kampuchea which will lead to [emphasis added] the total withdrawal...under international supervision"<sup>33</sup>.

The Vietnamese were not to be permitted to just leave, and the ASEAN foreign ministers were even seeking to delay their departure until new machinery could be set up to undermine the PRK. As Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas told a Thai journalist, the question is no longer just "the unilateral withdrawal of Vietnamese troops," but withdrawal "in a context of an overall comprehensive solution", meaning within a framework supervised by those powers which desired a change in the Cambodian government. What was really causing concern was not the Vietnamese troops, whose numbers were dwindling, but PRK durability. ASEAN even seemed to be calling for another foreign occupation, named the 'International Peacekeeping Force', in the embarrassing event of a real Vietnamese withdrawal. The U.S. also chimed in with "uncertainty about Vietnamese intentions", and the "direct threat to Thailand of continuing Vietnamese occupation"<sup>34</sup>.

<sup>33</sup> "ASEAN Joint Communiqué", *The Nation* (Bangkok), 6 July 1988. This and the following three paragraphs were first published in "Cambodia (Kampuchea): History, Tragedy, and Uncertain Future", *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*, 21, 2-4 (1989), p. 55.

<sup>34</sup> *The Nation*, 6 and 8 July 1988, 10 July 1988, pp. 6-7; *Bangkok Post*, 2 July 1988.

The enemies of the PRK were caught in a dilemma created by a too wishful belief in their own propaganda. Behind all of the moves since 1979 was a conviction that the PRK could never become anything more than a Vietnamese puppet state, without any national base, which would collapse as soon as the Vietnamese could be made to leave, of course unwillingly. The maintenance of this view against all the accumulating evidence to the contrary resulted, as I noted above, from the dialectical reinforcement between official U.S. and ASEAN disinformation and house-broken journalists. Ultimately they could not avoid perceiving that the Vietnamese really intended to leave; and embarrassment was caused by the sudden realization that the PRK was a real Cambodian government which might survive, not at all the 'failed state' of Brown and Zasloff.

Not only were Vietnamese troops gone by 1989, but changes in geopolitics, in particular in Sino-Soviet relations, meant that China's interest in the Khmer Rouge was decreasing; and the ostensible reason for their support, Vietnamese 'occupation', was disappearing. By 1988 there was serious reason to hope that some influential western country, perhaps Australia or France, which were the most positively engaged in Cambodia, would break ranks and recognize the PRK. Had any such government had the courage, that act might well have ended the 'Cambodia Problem', and the frightful muddle of 1992-93 would never have come about<sup>35</sup>.

<sup>35</sup> When in 1988 the Australian government detached a foreign service officer to supervise Australian aid programs in Cambodia, it was assumed by many that she was intended as a sort of unofficial consul. Unfortunately, that was not true. The term 'western' here, although awkward, is used in a conventional political, not geographical, sense.



Australian Senator, later Foreign Minister, Gareth Evans reportedly argued against this proposition, saying that the "Khmer Rouge could not effectively be excluded from a political settlement through the mechanism of extending recognition to the SOC"<sup>36</sup>. The reasoning was that "the Khmer Rouge cannot be effectively isolated and marginalised with their military influence nullified, so long as it continues to be supplied, especially by China, with arms and money and diplomatic support", and China had maintained that "it will give a commitment to cease military support...only in the context of a comprehensive settlement agreed by all four Cambodian parties....unless and until China is prepared to withdraw..whatever Australia and other countries choose to do, the continuation of the bloody war is inevitable"<sup>37</sup>.

Certain important points were neglected by Evans. The problem since 1979 had not been the 'isolation' and 'marginalization' of the Khmer Rouge. That had been accomplished by the Vietnamese in 1979, after which the Khmer Rouge were with all deliberation revived, rearmed and pushed onto center stage with an aid program involving international cooperation, in particular among China, the United States (which supplied money directly) and Thailand, with Australia following faithfully behind the U.S., once Senator Evans

<sup>36</sup> Frank Frost, "The Cambodia Conflict: The Path Towards Peace", *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, Volume 13, Number 2 (September 1991), p. 147. The quotation is from Frost, not Evans.

<sup>37</sup> Quotation from a statement by Evans on 6 December 1990, cited in Frost, op. cit., p. 147.

had become Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1988<sup>38</sup>. With Bill Hayden, Evans' predecessor, Australia was more independent, and had taken some real initiatives to solve the Cambodian impasse<sup>39</sup>. In spite of this the new PRK, although cut off from most of the world, had developed sufficient military capability to combat the Khmer Rouge rather effectively, even after Vietnamese troops

<sup>38</sup> US money for the Khmer Rouge: one piece of documentation which was never properly followed up was a letter from Jonathan Winer, counsel to Senator John Kerry, about direct U.S. aid to the Khmer Rouge. Dated 22 October 1986, it was sent to Larry Chartisten, Vietnam Veterans of America, with the details that "...The Khmer rouge received no funds from the U.S. from fiscal year 1976 through 1979. In the years from 1980-86 they received...In FY 87 dollars: 1980 \$54.55 million...1981 \$18.29 million...", and smaller amounts in following years. Although soon after this letter was made public Winer refused further contact, and those uncomfortable with what he had said tried to deny his credibility, his Washington bona fides as a financial analyst are now supported by an *International Herald Tribune* article of 21 September 2001, p. 1, entitled "Bin Laden Money Trail: How America Stumbled", citing Jonathan Winer, "who led the State Department's international law enforcement efforts from 1994 to 1999" on the subject of *hawala* banking, an institution which has been revealed to the U.S. public since the September 11 events. See also on Winer the 18 June 2001 *Nation* (New York) article "After Dirty Air, Dirty Money", by Lucy Komisar, citing "Jonathan Winer, a former high-level crime-policy official in the Clinton State Department". Winer's letter was noted in my "Cambodia (Kampuchea): History, Tragedy, and Uncertain Future", *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*, Twentieth Anniversary Issue on Indochina and the War, Vol. 21, Nos. 2-4 (April-December 1989), pp. 35-58 (see p. 35 and note 1).

<sup>39</sup> The ideas which Hayden manifested about conflict resolution in Indochina were not to the liking of the U.S., ASEAN, and conservative Australians, who initiated a press campaign to discredit his projects, and in September 1988 he was replaced as Foreign Minister by Gareth Evans, a more acquiescent follower of U.S. Indochina policy. See more detailed treatment of this in my forthcoming *Kicking the Vietnam Syndrome*.

left over a year before the remarks of Senator Evans quoted above. Recognition of the PRK by western countries would have enabled them to re-marginalize the Khmer Rouge, whatever Chinese desires, particularly as Chinese policy gradually changed in conformity with changes in China's national interests.

By the late 1980s the real leader of the anti-PRK vendetta was not China, but the United States; and it was not fear of Chinese reaction which prevented recognition of the PRK. The U.S. had no fear of offending China, or Thailand through which Chinese aid to the Khmer Rouge must pass, on other issues, such as human rights, intellectual property, trade imbalances, etc. The pressure on those matters was sometimes crude and offensive, but not the least objection was expressed about Chinese and Thai aid to the Khmer Rouge<sup>40</sup>.

U.S. foot-dragging, in comparison to Chinese flexibility, was seen most clearly at the time of the Pattaya meeting of August 1991, the last meeting at which all parties finalized what they would sign in Paris two months later.

By that time everyone else, from Phnom Penh to Beijing, except possibly the Khmer Rouge, had found a formula which could become a signed peace agreement. Even though the SOC had been forced to give away almost everything but its formal existence, the U.S. objected that it

<sup>40</sup> The change in U.S. policy to oppose recognition of the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea in the U.N. in 1990, was mainly window-dressing, and to head off domestic criticism of U.S. policy.

was not the 'comprehensive' solution which had been sought, to the extent that Hun Sen, Sihanouk, and other parties complained about the U.S. attitude.

It was reported that "Phnom Penh government officials increasingly view China...as the best hope for ending 12 years of war..."; "China has been doing its best"; and "the officials said they viewed China's softening stance toward them as part of a changing world political order". No such 'softening stance' was perceived on the part of the U.S. "Phnom Penh fears the United States could impede Cambodian peace efforts by insisting that a United Nations peace plan be followed to the letter". Sihanouk also feared this, urging "Washington to be 'realistic' and 'flexible' taking into account the true situation in Cambodia", and the fact that, according to him, "France, China and Thailand have been supportive of the 'compromise solution'". Hun Sen also expressed worries, saying "some foreign countries' might slow down progress", apparently "directing his comments at the United States, which is reluctant to accept...amendments", although "China and France...have joined Thailand in saying they are prepared to accept any compromise solution adopted by the Cambodians". The journalists' ubiquitous favorite, the 'Bangkok-based diplomat', also fretted about "the remarkably slow speed taken by...especially the United States... [and] 'this kind of attitude could impede the peace process'; while a colleague thought "the US reluctant to see the Cambodian conflict resolved outside the lines it has drawn...[because] Washington has

raised a comprehensive settlement in Cambodia as one condition for full normalization of ties with Vietnam". Even "a Cambodian resistance source [that is, the contras normally beholden to the U.S.] said it seemed the Americans 'are digging their own grave...if it [the United States] remain the only one...to oppose the Cambodian approach to find their own solutions, it could be viewed as trying to infringe upon a small nation's sovereignty'"<sup>41</sup>.

Finally it was clear to all that the U.S. claim over the past ten years to be following ASEAN on Cambodia was a smokescreen. The U.S., had been pushing ASEAN, perhaps even China, not following. In 1985 there had seemed to be interest within ASEAN for a negotiating process with Vietnam in regard to Cambodia. The U.S., which until then had claimed to be following the ASEAN lead, came forward in the person of then Secretary of State George Shultz to warn ASEAN against making proposals which Vietnam might accept<sup>42</sup>.

It was not, in the end, China's support for the Khmer Rouge which held back a Cambodian peace agreement, but the U.S. position<sup>43</sup>; and when the Chinese were freed from U.S. pressure

<sup>41</sup> See respectively, "Phnom Penh: Peace depends on China", *The Nation* (Bangkok), 11 July 1991; "US could impede peace efforts", *Bangkok Post*, 2 August 1991; "US opposes compromise solution for Cambodia", *The Nation*, 23 August 1991; "Hun Sen: Outsiders may hinder Pattaya meeting", *The Nation*, 26 August 1991; "Pattaya II: Another try at peace", *The Nation*, 26 August 1991.

<sup>42</sup> Shultz was quoted in the *Bangkok Post*, 13 July 1985.

<sup>43</sup> See Michael Vickery, "The Campaign Against Cambodia: 1990-1991", *Indochina Issues* 93 (Washington, D.C.), August 1991.

by the peace agreement they were eager to develop good relations with Phnom Penh and provide generous aid, while the U.S. still grumbled about its 'road map'. Chinese diplomats returned to their old embassy in Phnom Penh, offered a token payment to the SOC for taking care of it, pledged humanitarian aid, and were reported to be planning "technical and financial resources to reactivate Cambodia's discarded [sic] industries... [of which] five...were built with aid from Beijing in the past....While other countries...build up their presence... slowly and cautiously, Sino-Cambodian ties have already begun to flourish". This was not, moreover, just a sudden reversal imposed on China by the peace agreement. It seems that the "Chinese reappearance on the scene... was the result of calculated diplomatic moves begun in September 1990 during peace talks in Jakarta, where representatives of Phnom Penh and Beijing met for the first time"<sup>44</sup>.

An intriguing piece of evidence about the nature of U.S. involvement in the peace process was published after the Pattaya conference by the well-connected Thai journalist Kavi Chongkittavorn, "[a]t the end of May 1990, one of Gen Chatichai Choonhavan's policy advisers, Pansak Vinyarat, secretly flew to Rome to meet with a senior U.S. official to work out a linkage between the setting up of a Supreme National Council in Cambodia and a ceasefire agreement"<sup>45</sup>.

<sup>44</sup> Kavi Chongkittavorn, "Rapid Sino-Khmer normalization", *The Nation*, 20 November 1991.

<sup>45</sup> Kavi Chongkittavorn, "Conundrum translates to peace", *The Nation*, 23 October 1991. Pansak Vinyarat, interestingly, was one of the 1970s leftists who backed Thaksin Shinawatra, and became one of his principal advisers. It will be curious to see where his next jump takes him.

What role did the U.S. have in that discussion? For whom was the U.S. speaking? Whose ceasing of fire could they influence? The Khmer faction on whom the U.S. is believed to have had the most leverage, Son Sann's KPNLF, was of so little significance that they could be ignored. General Chatichai's adviser could only have been concerned about U.S. pressure on Thailand, or U.S. influence, direct or indirect, on the Khmer Rouge, perhaps via U.S. connections with China.

Equally intriguing was the timing of a visit to Thailand by "deputy assistant for public relations to the U.S. president Sichan Siv", who was feted by Thai Foreign Affairs Minister Arsa Sarasin rather than by a Thai public relations official, and whose visit was announced only on the "Society" page of the *Bangkok Post*, without comment in the general news or political pages. Sichan Siv is a former U.S.-based official of the KPNLF, and his visit occurred just before the Pattaya conference<sup>46</sup>. What special instructions from President Bush to the Thai government with respect to Cambodia was Sichan Siv transmitting? Was it related to Son Sann's last-minute efforts to delay the settlement, or to ways of using the split between Son Sann

<sup>46</sup> *Bangkok Post*, 12 August 1991, "Outlook" section, p. 29, "Society", a picture of a seven-person group at a party "recently hosted" by Foreign Minister Arsa Sarasin, and including, besides the Foreign Minister and Sichan Siv, the Permanent Secretary of the Foreign Affairs Ministry Vittaya Vejajiva, Director-General of the Foreign Ministry's Information Department Sakthip Krairiksh, and "US Minister's Counselor" Victor Tomseth. On Sichan Siv see Michael Vickery, "Cambodia (Kampuchea): History, Tragedy, and Uncertain Future", *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*, Vol. 21, Nos. 2-4 (1989), p. 57, n. 65, in 1985 "Sichan Siv identified himself as 'KPNLF Representative to the United Nations'".

and the military wing of the KPNLF under General Sak Suthsakan, one of the Cambodian military who was close to the U.S. during 1970-75, and who in 1991 appeared unhappy with the peace agreement and the exclusion of his faction from the SNC (Supreme National Council, see below)?<sup>47</sup>

In view of their record since 1975, the alleged concern of "a few Western nations with high human rights values...getting alarmed with the strong possibility of a return of the genocidal Khmer Rouge....[and] the United States, Britain and Australia...at the forefront in warning the delegates of the Paris International Conference on Cambodia", or pious "statements before the signing ceremony [when] the foreign ministers of the US, Britain, and Australia underscored the brutality of the Khmer Rouge rule", or "[President] Bush [I] 'express[ing] our on-going concern' about the possibility that the murderous Khmer Rouge might once again dominate Cambodian politics" seem hardly worth the newsprint on which they appear<sup>48</sup>.

The reason for inventing the 'Peace Process' was not to marginalize the Khmer Rouge, nor to end a war, but to forestall a PRK/SOC victory, or

<sup>47</sup> "Moves made to patch up rift within Cambodian faction", *Bangkok Post*, 5 September 1991, "In an attempt to patch up long-standing differences, the military arm of the [KPNLF]...asked to be represented in the Cambodian Supreme National Council". General Sak Suthsakan's memorandum "said reconciliation within the KPNLF could occur" in that way.

<sup>48</sup> Quotations respectively from *The Nation* (Bangkok), 25 October 1991; *Bangkok Post*, 29 October 1991; and *Los Angeles Times*, 25 September 1991.

its recognition. This meant that the international diplomatic campaign against the PRK/SOC was cranked up a couple of notches. It proceeded through the Jakarta Informal Meetings beginning in July 1988, meetings in Tokyo, Bangkok, and Pattaya, and three draft agreements before the signatures of October 1991. The 'Peace Process' was an element of the 'Nicaragua Model', (recommended in 1990 by Ms. Sidney Jones, still one of the prominent 'human rights' activists), which the U.S. had worked on that country-- political isolation, economic blockade, support for 'contras' just across the border, resulting in economic disintegration, declining standards of human rights, and political disaffection within the target country, until in an election the targeted party loses<sup>49</sup>.

This highlighted a key element of U.S. regime policy, to squeeze and cajole Phnom Penh into a Nicaragua-type debacle, rather than expect outright victory through military action by the U.S.-backed coalition contras<sup>50</sup>.

Until 1989, in spite of all the objective difficulties, the economy showed grounds for optimism. According to a 1990 UN study, "[c]onsidering the devastation inherited from war

<sup>49</sup> Sidney Jones, "War and Human Rights in Cambodia", *New York Review of Books*, 19 July 1990, pp. 15, ff. In 1990 Jones was with Asia Watch, and is now with the International Crisis Group--one of the 'human rights' organizations which unnecessarily harass Cambodia.

<sup>50</sup> See Vickery, "The Campaign Against Cambodia: 1990-1991". The elections are meant as 'demonstration elections', as analyzed by Edward S. Herman and Frank Brodhead, *Demonstration Elections*, Boston, South End Press, 1984.

and internal strife, the centrally directed system of economic management... has attained unquestionable successes... especially marked in restoring productive capacity to a level of normalcy and accelerating the pace of economic growth to a respectable per capita magnitude from the ruinously low level of the late 1970s". They also made creditable progress in developing social services, health care, education, agriculture, and vaccination programs for children and animals.

In particular, the position of women, a matter about which foreign NGOs and the Human Rights crowd have been carping since 1993, was better, in terms of access to higher positions and services for working mothers than at any other time before or since.

Similarly, more positive official attention was given to non-Khmer minorities than under previous regimes. This was particularly noticeable with respect to the Cham. Before 1975 they were defined as 'Islamic Khmer', while the name 'Upland Khmer' (*khmer loeu*) was given to Mon-Khmer and Austronesian hill and forest groups who were a majority in the two northeastern provinces of Ratanakiri and Mondulakiri, and who also populated much of the southwestern mountains, and parts of the North. If such definitions implied equality, as they were intended, they also, by assimilating the designated peoples to the majority Khmer, removed any need for special consideration for their cultures and languages.

Their situation under DK has not been adequately studied, and as with the Khmer majority,

it varied from place to place. Some of the northeastern minorities were considered privileged groups by DK, while it is generally believed that the Cham suffered more than the Khmer. Their religion, certainly, like all religious practices, was suppressed.

During the PRK/SOC there was a conscious policy in favor of these minorities. In the Northeast, for the first time, they became province chiefs in Monduliri, Ratanakiri, Stung Treng, and Preah Vihear, and were also lower-level district chiefs, and others occupied some of the top positions in the armed forces and became ministers. Certainly the PRK had a better record than any previous Cambodian regime in giving responsible positions to non-Khmers, and the position of minorities was far better than in Thailand. The Cham were the ethnic group in which the state took the greatest interest as a national minority. Throughout the 1980s their religion, Islam, was the only religion other than Buddhism to be expressly tolerated, and it was clear from press and public pronouncements that a greater effort than under any previous regime was being made to integrate them into Cambodian society, and to make them feel that they were first-class citizens.

Unfortunately there are signs that the new Royal and capitalist government may be less active in support for minorities. Certainly since 1993 official attention in favor of the Cham has declined, perhaps because those who have remained prominent in national politics have joined FUNCINPEC or Sam Rainsy. Moreover, there is some danger now that they may suffer a

backlash from the 'war on terror' (see below, pp. 179-180).

Among the frantic measures intended to effect destruction of the PRK/SOC was an economic blockade against Cambodia along with Vietnam which the U.S. successfully railroaded through international financial institutions, even against the views of their experts. Although no one thought Cambodia would immediately fall apart economically, or be defeated militarily, there was a possibility of exhaustion in the long-term if U.S. policy to arm their enemies and block their economy continued.

In the end the United States successfully applied its Nicaragua strategy to Cambodia. That is, a new government, after the elimination of a ruinous dictatorship (in Cambodia the PRK replacing DK in 1979), starts to reconstruct an administration and economy with very limited resources, both material and human. They consider that a type of socialism is most appropriate to their policies of emphasizing basic needs of the population rather than profits for business. Normal international relations and foreign aid are important, if not crucial. The U.S., however, blocks such aid and gives support to contras operating from the border regions of a neighboring state happy to serve U.S. interests. Gradually the pressures of trying to rebuild the economy while forced to invest heavily in defense undermine the currency and discourage the population. The new state is persuaded to move more and more into a free-market economy favoring the import of

luxuries by the rich, which further alienates the rest of the population; and the state officers themselves succumb to the temptations of easy wealth. Finally, in an election the new state may lose to enemies favored by the U.S. Admission of this policy for Cambodia two years before the election was in a support programme for the Cambodian KPNLF 'contras' which "officials say is loosely based on the successful American strategy in Nicaragua". Washington "is allocating up to US\$20 million to be mostly funneled through territory under control of the two non-communist groups", the KPNLF and the Sihanoukist forces<sup>51</sup>.

The position of the anti-PRK parties at the end of 1988 was that the PRK must not be allowed to survive the Vietnamese withdrawal as government of Cambodia. The international settlement planned to precede or coincide with the Vietnamese withdrawal would require replacement of the PRK with a 4-power coalition (Democratic Kampuchea-DK, KPNLF, Sihanouk, PRK) in which no party would be dominant, and the arrangement would be assured by an international force. Naturally the PRK refused to dissolve itself after having rather successfully governed for ten years. PRK leaders agreed to some kind of participation of their enemies, minus eight DK leaders, in a new government which would be in fact an enlarged PRK. They also agreed to hold elections under international observation and to abide by the results even if they lost their

<sup>51</sup> Nate Thayer, "Guerilla fund-fare", *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 7 February 1991. See also my letter on 'Kampuchean Contras', in *Bangkok Post*, 'Postbag' (letters), 7 July 1986.

dominant position. Together with this was a warning that by 1990 at the latest the Vietnamese forces would be gone, and then the problem would have resolved itself and would no longer require any concessions to the coalition<sup>52</sup>. Their apparent success in building an army, the restoration of agriculture to near self-sufficiency, and the impetus to economic growth provided by the new encouragement for some privatization after 1988 indicated that this was not an idle threat.

The Paris Accord incorporated most of the anti-SOC provisions of the draft agreements devised by western states, starting with the Australian 'Redbook' of February 1990, whose authors thanked U.S. Congressman Stephen Solarz and Prince Norodom Sihanouk, and no one else, for inspiration. No more ardent enemies of Phnom Penh, outside of the Khmer Rouge leadership, could be imagined<sup>53</sup>.

<sup>52</sup> This was first stated explicitly by Hun Sen in a report of the latest discussions in Jakarta and Paris, broadcast in Phnom Penh during the week of 20-27 November 1988, and printed for distribution by the PRK authorities. It was also summarized in *Pracheachon*, the newspaper of the Peoples Revolutionary Party of Kampuchea, no. 325, 25 November 1988.

<sup>53</sup> The Australian paper is, *Cambodia: an Australian Peace Proposal*, "Working Papers prepared for the Informal Meeting on Cambodia, Jakarta, 26-28 February 1990", Canberra, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, February 1990. In recompense Solarz recommended Australian Foreign Affairs Minister Gareth Evans for the Nobel Peace Prize, however strange it may seem that a peace plan designed to force the Khmer Rouge back into the Cambodian government should qualify its author for that honor. But one recalls the devaluation of the Nobel Prize when it was given to Henry Kissinger, the only Nobel prize nominee to also be accused of crimes against humanity.

The Australian Peace Proposal started with the assumption that the State of Cambodia government in Phnom Penh and the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK) were of equal stature and legitimacy, and its preferred option was for a Supreme National Council (SNC) consisting of "representatives of the four parties [three of them within the CGDK], explicitly structured on a quadripartite basis", which would hold "all government authority", and "would irrevocably devolve all that government authority - legislative, executive and judicial - to the UN Secretary-General"<sup>54</sup>. Most peculiarly, in its "Working Paper II", which "gives an account of the existing structure of the civil administrations in Cambodia", the "National Government of Cambodia" (the Khmer Rouge-dominated CGDK) was given precedence and to the extent possible was described, like the State of Cambodia, as having a constitution, a ministerial structure, civil servants, and a provincial administration<sup>55</sup>.

The most reasonable draft proposal was the August 1990 UN "Framework"<sup>56</sup>. It was what its title said, a "Framework", and it permitted joint discussions among all Cambodian factions concerning "[t]he composition of the SNC, including the selection and number of its members", who "should be composed of representative individuals with

<sup>54</sup> *Cambodia: An Australian Peace Proposal*, pp. 12, 15.

<sup>55</sup> *Cambodia: An Australian Peace Proposal*, pp. 21-24.

<sup>56</sup> "Framework for a Comprehensive Political Settlement of the Cambodia Conflict", United Nations A/45/472, S/21689, 31 August 1990, endorsed by Security Council Resolution 668 and General Assembly Resolution 45/3, pp. 7-8.

authority among the Cambodian people [and]... acceptable to each other". This gave Cambodians, in principle, considerable control over their fate, and that may have been why the Big Five, before there had been time to get intra-Cambodian discussions started, rushed through their November 1990 "Proposed Structure", with very detailed decisions about administration and election modalities imposed on the Cambodians, in particular imposed on the SOC which already had a functioning government, but whose dissolution was implicit in the 'Proposed Structure'<sup>57</sup>.

Finally representatives of the SOC and the three contra factions met in Paris in October 1991 with representatives of eighteen other countries and an Accord was signed as the basis for a UN-supervised election.

What did the 1991 Paris Accord mean politically? At worst the State of Cambodia appeared to have signed away its existence. If the agreement was read literally, and enforced in that interpretation, the UN would have been able to control five key ministries: Interior, Defense, Finance, Foreign Affairs, and Information, on the grounds that those ministries could influence the election, and the UN could also decide unilaterally that other ministries or departments must be taken under tutelage for the same reason. That control was never exercised, however, and the SOC administration remained intact, bringing accusations from the anti-SOC factions that UNTAC was not implementing the Paris Accord, and was in fact favoring the SOC.

<sup>57</sup> "Proposed Structure for the Agreements on a Comprehensive Political Settlement of the Cambodia Conflict", Draft Text. This was not a UN document.



## Organizing for Elections

Under the Paris Accord the elections were stacked, as far as possible, against the SOC. After much protest they signed for proportional representation by province, contrary to former Cambodian practice, a formula designed to give the maximum chance to their enemies, in particular the Khmer Rouge, and to any other new parties which formed. The agreement provided that any group of 5000 persons could be registered as a political party, and the multi-party system which was accepted, both in the agreements and in the new Cambodian People's Party program, had the potential to produce an incompetent legislature and an impotent government.

It is well known that proportional representation, because it can help numerous small parties to get seats, favors a weak, often incompetent, government, as seen in the former Italian electoral system, rejected in 1993 by Italian voters in a referendum. This same objection had been made by the leader of, at that time, one of international capitalism's favorite Southeast Asian regimes, Malaysia's Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamed, whose view was, "proportionate representation is not practical for Malaysia as it needs a strong government to implement projects", "there would be chaos if the proportionate representation system were to be adopted in a developing country like Malaysia... because the government would not have the majority and therefore become weak and not able to run the country effectively". Similarly, a

respected academic historian, writing on the Indonesian election of 1955 which put 28 parties into parliament, said, "the elections had...thereby represented a further step in discrediting the whole parliamentary system"<sup>58</sup>.

And, apparently, when not trying to bring Cambodia to heel, certain western democratic politicians did not think much either of proportional representation. President Clinton, in backing away from his nomination of Lani Guinier as head of the Justice Department's civil rights division, said that one of her articles seemed to be "arguing for principles of proportional representation and minority veto as general remedies that I think inappropriate as general remedies and anti-democratic, very difficult to defend"<sup>59</sup>.

The Big-Five, apparently expecting a much stronger showing by the CPP than by its tripartite enemies, hoped to weaken the post-election government with a multiplicity of small parties, even if this meant "discrediting the whole parliamentary system".

Furthermore, and contrary to what usually passes for a democratic election, Cambodian voters were restricted to choosing party slates, not individual candidates. This may be a good system in a country with stable government, an educated

<sup>58</sup> Mahathir's remarks were in "Dr M: Proportionate representation unsuitable", *New Straits Times*, 23 November 1994, p. 2; Merle Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia*, p. 238.

<sup>59</sup> *International Herald Tribune*, 5-6 June 1993, p. 3. In fact, this was a misrepresentation of Guinier's views at a time when Clinton saw that a move toward the right was in his interest. See Randall Kennedy, "Lani Guinier's Constitution", *The American Prospect*, Issue 15, Fall 1993.

population, and well-known ideology-based parties--all lacking in Cambodia. A plausible interpretation of this arrangement by the Big Five was that SOC candidates were expected to be local administrators, many of whom may have had good records, or at least were known, whereas the candidates of parties deriving from FUNCINPEC or KPNLF, or formed by returned emigrés, would be unknown, and if their backgrounds were discovered many might be less popular among voters than even mediocre SOC candidates. In some cases, the result was that voters did not know the identities of the people for whom they were ostensibly voting. It is uncertain whether lists of candidates in Khmer were posted in or near all polling places, a task which was the responsibility of the Cambodian parties (I did not see any in polling places I visited). UNTAC prepared lists of the candidates of all parties in English, but the transcription of many names was so eccentric that it could have disoriented even specialists--for example 'Seun Souberdo' for Son Soubert. Apparently UNTAC did not seek competent advice on Khmer transliteration conventions<sup>60</sup>.

The most dangerous joker, however, was the provision that anyone born in Cambodia, and their children, wherever born and aged 18, could vote. This implied that all refugees overseas aged 18, even if they had never seen Cambodia, did

<sup>60</sup> According to Prof. Reginald Austin (Director of the Electoral Component of UNTAC), during a visit to the Australian National University on 4 November 1993, the transliterations for the lists of candidates had been generated by computer--a bizarre procedure, since many of the names of SOC, FUNCINPEC AND KPNLF candidates had well-known English transcriptions. On emigré parties see further below, pp.60-61.

not speak the language, and were citizens of another country, might vote. Such practice would not be accepted anywhere in the world, and forcing it on Cambodia illustrates the malevolence of those members of the international community who were responsible for the texts of the new agreements. The purpose seemed to be to garner as many anti-SOC votes as possible, for it was well known that most of the refugees would vote against Phnom Penh<sup>61</sup>.

In what was certainly an oversight, the text also implied that all the Vietnamese born in Cambodia but in 1993 resident in Vietnam, and their children, perhaps up to half a million persons, could also vote. As could have been predicted, this forced a change in the rules, to stipulate that a voter must be a 'Cambodian person', defined as a person born in Cambodia, at least one of whose parents was born in Cambodia; or a person, wherever born, at least one of whose parents was

<sup>61</sup> Contrary to popular impression, most of the refugees had not fled during the Khmer Rouge period, but after 1979, when special camps were built along the Thai border to attract them (see Michael Vickery, "Refugee Politics: The Khmer Camp System in Thailand", in David A. Ablin and Marlowe Hood, eds., *The Cambodian Agony*, M.E. Sharpe, Inc., New York, 1988, pp. 293-331.). In general their reason for fleeing from PRK Cambodia was anti-Vietnamese prejudice, which would influence their vote, and which makes the large Cambodian communities in the U.S. hotbeds of anti-Phnom Penh propaganda and activity, including overt plans to overthrow the government. In November 2000 a group calling themselves Cambodian Freedom Fighters launched armed attacks on government buildings in Phnom Penh; and by June 2005, against the protests of IRI and the human rights crowd, U.S. authorities agreed that their leaders in the U.S. should be arrested for violation of U.S. laws. See PPP 14/10 20 May-2 June, 2005 and 14/11, 3-16 June 2005, and below pp. 177-9.

born in Cambodia and had a parent also born there. This still permitted most Cambodian refugees to vote, if they returned to Cambodia to register, a stipulation which discouraged all but the most committed and wealthy. In fact, few refugees took the trouble to register and vote, far too few to affect the outcome<sup>62</sup>.

The zeal to undermine the SOC meant that the Paris Agreement favored the Khmer Rouge, as they themselves gleefully recognized. In the transcript of a talk by Pol Pot to a group of cadres in February 1992, leaked to the SOC and distributed to foreign journalists in December 1992, Pol Pot emphasized the advantages which they derived from the Agreement, and complained about the delay in setting up UNTAC, which he felt would permit the favorable application of the Agreement and protect the Khmer Rouge from hostility by the UNAMIC (Advance UN Military Mission) armed unit under the French General Loridon<sup>63</sup>.

<sup>62</sup> An amusing result was that several leaders of the anti-SOC parties, notably Son Sann, were excluded from the ranks of Cambodian persons by virtue of having been born in the Khmer-populated areas of southern Vietnam, until UNTAC made a special dispensation for them.

<sup>63</sup> As far as I know there has never been a full description and analysis of this document. For comment at the time see, "K. Rouge wants to open battlefield in P. Penh", *Bangkok Post*, 10 December 1992, where it was misidentified by Ben Kiernan, as "a directive to young Khmer Rouge diplomats from the radical faction's Foreign Minister Ieng Sary"; *The Nation*, 10 December 1992, "Secret document quotes Pol Pot", following a report from *Far Eastern Economic Review*, which attributed the document correctly to Pol Pot. The authenticity of this document was accepted by Timothy Carney in Timothy Carney and Tan Lian Choo, *Whither Cambodia? Beyond the Election*, Singapore, ISEAS, 1993, p. 35, "On my reading of it, and every other Cambodian specialists [sic] who looked at it, it was Pol Pot talking to senior leadership circles".

Pol Pot's remarks indicate that he considered Loridon a serious threat which would disappear with the arrival of UNTAC, an assessment in which he was proven correct. We may be sure he considered Loridon's removal a great favor<sup>64</sup>.

I must emphasize that my purpose in saying this is only to publicize the Khmer Rouge attitude at the time, not to say that UN forces should have gone to war with them. Even if such a campaign had been successful, it might have been counterproductive because of the destruction and Cambodian deaths which would have resulted.

Other weaknesses in the DK position emphasized by Pol Pot were the end of Chinese aid, and the defection of KPNLF and FUNCINPEC elements from the tripartite coalition. Sihanouk was unreliable, and "went around the bend" in moments of stress; and Ranariddh, Pol Pot felt, might move toward the PRK/SOC, on which see further below.

Nevertheless, once UNTAC under Yasushi Akashi arrived, the KR incessantly complained that (1) UNTAC did not take over the government as the Paris Accord allowed, and (2) UNTAC did not supervise withdrawal of the Vietnamese who still allegedly occupied Cambodia and dominated the government. These complaints were part of a strategy outlined by Pol Pot in his February talk, and it appears he had interpreted the Paris Accord as setting up an equal four-party regime

<sup>64</sup> Loridon was replaced in 1992 for trying to push an aggressive policy if the Khmer Rouge did not observe the provisions of the Paris Agreement. On the Loridon affair see Nayan Chanda, "UN Divisions", *FEER*, 23 July 1992, pp. 8-9.

under the SNC. In part, the sense of Pol Pot's assessment of the Paris Agreement as favoring his party was that it permitted their policy of stonewalling on those two points. There was no mention at all in Pol Pot's talk of the election.

The Khmer Rouge were assigned, though not explicitly, a particular role in the plans to destroy the PRK/SOC. In arguments such as that of Evans cited above, concern about the 'Red Khmer' was a red herring. They were needed as the ever-present threat to keep Phnom Penh from simply going its own way; and by 1990, in spite of relative success on the battlefield, the SOC knew they could not maintain sufficient military force against the Khmer Rouge who still received foreign aid. During the negotiations throughout the 1980s it was asserted that the Khmer Rouge were too strong to be excluded, even if they were abhorred. Phnom Penh denied that, and said the problem was foreign support for the Khmer Rouge, and now we know they were right.

After the agreement was signed, there was even some noise from the U.S. side to blame the SOC for the agreement forced on them by international pressure and which included the Khmer Rouge, and American insistence that they would never recognize a government in which the KR were included. Phnom Penh had been conned. Once the international community had forced them to accept the Khmer Rouge, it was their faction which started to get the blame. A journalist commented on the possible future of Pen Sovann as "the only noteworthy Cambodian

politician untainted by the current Phnom Penh government's cooperation with the Khmer Rouge in the peace plan", that is by the acceptance of the Khmer Rouge into the new coalition which was forced on Phnom Penh by the Big Five<sup>65</sup>. And the U.S. Congress, with its typical perspicacity, grumbled about paying the U.S. share of a U.N. operation if the Khmer Rouge were included<sup>66</sup>. In Phnom Penh in June 1992 I was told by one of Hun Sen's associates that before his trip to the U.S. in March, the U.S. State Department's Robert Solomon warned him that he would face hard questioning from Congress about the Khmer Rouge in the new Supreme National Council (SNC).

Within UNTAC in Phnom Penh 'human rights violations' were only those attributed to the CPP; and when Dennis McNamara, director of the Human Rights Component, organized a 'Human Rights' conference in November 1992, he excluded anyone who might have spoken up against the Khmer Rouge.

The bias there was somewhat surprising because in June 1992 McNamara told me he thought there was perhaps more risk for human rights activists in Malaysia [where he had worked] and Singapore than in Phnom Penh. Among the foreign participants invited to the conference were representatives of all the western SOC-bashing organizations--Lawyers Committee,

<sup>65</sup> AFP [Sheri Prasso], "Pen Sovann's return may result in instability", *New Straits Times* (Kuala Lumpur), 10 February 1992.

<sup>66</sup> "US senators seek ban on KR return", *The Nation*, 5 December 1991.

Amnesty, Asia Watch--while specialist students of Cambodia who had written frequently about human rights there, but with sympathy for Phnom Penh, were not only not invited, but two of them who happened to be in town were denied permission to sit in even as non-participating observers<sup>67</sup>. Indeed, except for the opening ceremony, the conference was closed to all but those invited, apparently to prevent the raising of questions embarrassing for UNTAC.

A vigorous Khmer Rouge was part of the UNTAC game plan. General Loidon had to be removed to prevent any risk of premature destruction of the Khmer Rouge before they had served their purpose. His removal meant that UNTAC would never enforce 'phase 2'. A year later, as an excuse to avoid enforcement, someone provided Akashi with an assessment that "the KR are stronger than before"; a great risk to the elections; "their military strength has increased by at least 50 per cent, they have new weapons, they are operating in larger units, they are led by leaders who are more extreme than in past years, so we have to be prepared"<sup>68</sup>. It is now clear that this was all nonsense, but it was necessary in order to counter the declining estimates (seen to be accurate soon after the election--see below, p. 114) of Khmer Rouge strength which might have undermined the role in which they had been cast<sup>69</sup>.

<sup>67</sup> They were Ben Kiernan and myself.

<sup>68</sup> *The Nation* (Bangkok), 20 May, 1993, citing a statement by Akashi.

<sup>69</sup> For some of these low estimates, only 8-10,000, see Gary Klintworth, "Cambodia 1992, Hopes Fading", *Southeast Asian Affairs* 1993 (Singapore), p. 122.

Was Akashi disinformed? Or was he active in the disinformation? In a talk in the Cambodiana Hotel in Phnom Penh on 10 July 2001, he said that in his last "tête-à-tête" with Khieu Samphan in Beijing in January 1993, after the Khmer Rouge had threatened to opt out of the election, he told Samphan that the KR should remain in the election, that although this time they might win only a few seats, it would nevertheless give them opportunity to exercise influence, make their ideas known, and eventually win more, even a majority. Thus we see UNTAC policy toward the Khmer Rouge.

By May 1993 it seemed that the 'free and fair internationally supervised election' would take place in the worst possible conditions. The Democratic Kampuchea (DK) group, or 'Khmer Rouge', had withdrawn from the election (notwithstanding Akashi's plea to remain), with a spurious claim that a crucial clause of the Agreement, withdrawal of Vietnamese armed forces, had not been observed, and it appeared that they had convinced a large part of the populace of the truth of that claim. The same theme was taken up by FUNCINPEC, and even more stridently by Son Sann.

Violence, among the parties, against Vietnamese, and among the citizenry, all armed in the American and Thai laissez-faire style, was generalized. Until then, in the 1980s, no one but police and military had guns and security within Phnom Penh was greater than after 1991. The economy, which in spite of the U.S.-led blockade, showed slow, steady progress in 1980-88, had

collapsed since the peace agreement had been signed, and a wide wealth gap, which PRK/SOC policy up to 1988 had tried to prevent, had brought increased misery to much of the population.

Twenty parties were accepted for registration by the UNTAC Electoral Component. Few of them, perhaps fortunately, appeared serious. Seven were founded by people who had spent most of the previous 10-20 years in the United States or France. Most of the party names were permutations of a few clichés--Democracy, Republican, Neutralist, etc.; and their platforms consisted of praise for everything good--democracy, freedom, human rights, social welfare, peace, and of course a free market economy, without concrete policies to achieve such virtues. The party logos, which appeared prominently on the ballot papers, ostensibly as a guide for illiterate voters, were equally complex and confusing, most constituted by a multiplicity of intertwined symbols. One new party leader who returned from the U.S. showed his level of realism by raising the American flag over his office and hanging a picture of President George Bush [I] on the wall<sup>70</sup>.

The serious parties were the Phnom Penh government's CPP, FUNCINPEC under Sihanouk's son Norodom Ranariddh, and two branches of the former KPNLF of Son Sann, his own Buddhist Liberal Democratic Party (BLDP) and

<sup>70</sup> Raphael Pura, "Former Refugee From Cambodia Returns in Bid to Lead Country", *Asian Wall Street Journal*, 2 November 1992. His name was Kethavy Kim, and his party the Republic Democracy Party. Another Cambodian Bush activist who returned to found a party was Ted Ngoy.

Sak Suthsakan's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). If the Khmer Rouge, officially the *Partie of Democratic Kampuchea* (PDK) had not rejected participation, they also would have been serious contenders, if only because they would probably have had total control over the votes of 10-15% of the population. We must not forget that in spite of their refusal to open their zones to UNTAC, to canton their troops, and partially disarm, the door was left open for them to participate in the election until virtually the last minute.

Still another party with a serious name and leader was 'Le Parti Démocrate' of In Tam, although it was difficult to guess what attraction its candidates might have for voters in 1993. The Democrat Party was the strongest party of pre-independence Cambodia, winning all the country's past free elections, in 1946, 1947, and 1951, on a platform of pluralism, nationalism, understood if unexpressed resistance to the monarchy, and a covert goal of full independence, including sympathy for Cambodian, and Vietnamese, guerrillas fighting against the French<sup>71</sup>. They were destroyed by government harassment after Sihanouk's victory of 1955, but until 1975 they were remembered with sympathy by politically conscious Cambodians, in particular the educated middle class, survivors of which made up a large section of the PRK/SOC second and third level

<sup>71</sup> Michael Vickery, "Looking Back at Cambodia", in Ben Kiernan and Chanthou Boua, *Peasants and Politics in Kampuchea 1942-1981*, pp. 89-113; and David Chandler, *The Tragedy of Cambodian History*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1991, pp. 30-32, 35-38, 44-45, 55-59, 62-64, 82-85, 93-94.

administrators. In Tam himself was not one of the original Democrats, but he helped revive the party to oppose Lon Nol in 1971-72, ran against the latter for president in 1972, and perhaps lost because of dishonest ballot counting. At least he gained considerable popularity at the time. After 1979 he organized an armed force on the Thai border, was one of the founders of FUNCINPEC, then renounced warmongering, and in 1988 returned to visit Phnom Penh in a manner indicating support for the PRK. His new 'Parti Démocrate' looked like a potential collaborator with the Phnom Penh government party in an eventual coalition<sup>72</sup>.

During the last half of 1992 it appeared that no party would take a majority, and most observers were betting on the election resulting in a coalition of Ranariddh's FUNCINPEC and Hun Sen's Cambodian Peoples Party, even a pre-election coalition. At least that is what people who did not desire chaos hoped for. The SOC was the only group with a national administrative capability, and Ranariddh, of all other party leaders, had been making the most conciliatory and rational noises, notably opposing violence against the Vietnamese. A debacle by SOC, desired by the United States, leaving a coalition of FUNCINPEC and the ex-KPNLF parties, or either or all of them with the refugee parties, would have been a disaster.

<sup>72</sup> One original Democrat who was still active then was the late Son Sann, who tacitly acknowledged that party's popularity by taking its old logo, a three-headed elephant, as an element in the logo of his BLD. There was thus possible confusion for unsophisticated voters between the Democrats, who used that party's traditional symbols, and the BLD.

Defection of Ranariddh from the tripartite coalition including the Khmer Rouge, and a coalition between FUNCINPEC and the CPP, was a major concern of Pol Pot as expressed in his February 1992 talk, and he was insistent that efforts must be made to prevent it.

One striking feature of the platforms of most parties was lack of any reference to Cambodia's traditional royalty. With the exception of one small explicitly royalist party and FUNCINPEC, it would appear that the parties were republican, as could be expected from the backgrounds of those leaders whose previous political activities were known.

Because of this, the enthusiasm for Sihanouk after the election seems opportunistic, and showed that no group had sufficient political imagination to escape from tradition. Or rather, even if they do not like Sihanouk, they are returning to traditional Cambodian politics<sup>73</sup>.

<sup>73</sup> See further below; and Serge Thion's excellent "The Pattern of Cambodian Politics", in Serge Thion, *Watching Cambodia*, Bangkok, White Lotus (1993), pp. 119-136. It is reminiscent of the 'stop in the mind' of 17th-century English parliamentarians who would die for the cause "that Parliament's authority must prevail over the King", but who were "unable to express this idea in theoretical form" (Christopher Hill, *The Century of Revolution 1603-1714*, New York, W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1961, p. 63). This is also seen in the current (2006) political crisis in Thailand, where both sides vie to charge the other with *lèse-majesté*. See below, p. 101, on the first National Assembly meeting in 1993. Now, in 2006, however, Cambodians seem to be overcoming this 'stop in the mind' (see below, pp. 193-4).

## Election predictions

After 1992 the burgeoning cooperation between FUNCINPEC and the CPP broke down with accusations of CPP responsibility for attacks on, and killings of, FUNCINPEC personnel. The journo crowd tried to pin guilt on Minister of Interior Sar Kheng and Minister of State Security Sin Song, whose fates after the election provide interesting counterpoint to the allegations (see below p. 132). Clear CPP guilt was demonstrated in only a few cases, and it must not be forgotten that such inter-party cooperation was anathema to two important players, the Khmer Rouge and the United States. The CPP, in particular Hun Sen, had no reason to initiate attacks on FUNCINPEC until it was clear that the latter had declared their enmity; and Hun Sen's assertions that some of the attacks were Khmer Rouge provocation or internal FUNCINPEC feuding were not unreasonable.

It was difficult to explain why the CPP should have tried to destroy the coalition which would have been useful. Indeed, there was no attempt by political analysts at the time to explain it. They preferred to treat it as typical 'communist' violence to intimidate other parties. It was rarely mentioned that those who stood to gain from a CPP-FUNCINPEC split were the 'Khmer Rouge' PDK, who were still formally in the running for the election until April 1993, and whose leader Pol Pot, in a speech in February 1992, had complained of the danger of rapprochement of his former

allies, the FUNCINPEC leaders, with the CPP.

A CPP-FUNCINPEC election alliance was also anathema for most of the powers behind UNTAC, who considered that the purpose of the election was to eliminate the CPP.

As reported later, UNTAC Military Commander General Sanderson held that such an alliance would be a "major infraction of the Paris Accords", although to quote an approving assessment of Sanderson, in "a functioning, established democracy such behavior would not be frowned upon". Cambodia was not to be permitted to engage in such democratic behavior on its own. "It could have been disastrous", although no reason was given beyond "it would have antagonized the Khmer Rouge". Of course the international community, concerned with democracy, could not do that. Only the CPP was to be antagonized; and the feared disaster was obviously that with FUNCINPEC and the implication of Sihanouk's support, the CPP might have secured a real victory in the election<sup>74</sup>.

Something not known when I first wrote about this in late 1993, outside of certain inner sections of UNTAC, was that the period of greatest allegedly CPP-FUNCINPEC violence in 1992-93

<sup>74</sup> See Trevor Findlay, *Cambodia the Legacy and Lessons of UNTAC*, Stockholm: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute and Oxford University Press, 1995, p. 24; and my review of it and Timothy Carney and Tan Lian Choo, *Whither Cambodia? Beyond the Election*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1993, in *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (September 1995), pp. 439-443. Findlay quaintly remarked that "Sihanouk and Hun Sen shelved their plans for a coalition government by early December".



was also the time during which the PDK leadership had ordered their personnel in the field to engage in a policy of real genocide against any and all Vietnamese. This was only revealed in 1996 when Heder, one of the UNTAC inner circle who were directly involved, published the results of his interviews with PDK defectors. This was the only evidence ever found of a DK genocidal policy, and it is peculiar that it was covered up at the time by the UNTAC authorities<sup>75</sup>.

In early May most predictions were that the CPP would at least come first, perhaps with a small absolute majority.

This was even true of the two American 'democracy institutes' whose members were personally hostile to SOC. In their seminar for international election observers on May 21, one of them warned that the post-election period could be the most dangerous for those who had worked against the SOC, because CPP was expected to win the largest number of seats, and

<sup>75</sup> See Steve Heder, "The Resumption of Armed Struggle by the Party of Democratic Kampuchea: Evidence from National Army of Democratic Kampuchea 'Self-Demobilizers'", chapter 3 in Steve Heder and Judy Ledgerwood, eds., *Propaganda, Politics, and Violence in Cambodia* [at the time of the 1993 election], *Democratic Transition under United Nations Peace-keeping*, Armonk, New York, M.E. Sharpe, 1996. My interpretation here assumes that Heder was telling the truth; but in his writing over the years he has shown himself to be so erratic that this could have been one of his fantasies, like the 'Operation Dovetail', cited by David Roberts and denounced as harebrained by General Sanderson (David Roberts, *Political Transition in Cambodia 1991-99*, London, Curzon, 2001, pp. 70-71).

thus to dominate the new government<sup>76</sup>.

Gareth Evans also reluctantly made a similar assessment, saying the Khmer Rouge was not just non-cooperative, but was making an "active attempt at disruption and discrediting the outcome". If the pro-Sihanouk group won, the Khmer Rouge would hold back from violence and try to negotiate reconciliation and participation. "If, on the other hand, as is possibly a little more [emphasis added] likely, the Hun Sen people gained a clear majority", the Khmer Rouge might consider further insurgency, etc<sup>77</sup>. That was no doubt true, because Hun Sen was saying that if he won he would wipe them out, while FUNCINPEC was explicitly conciliatory. Evans's statement illustrates the role assigned the Khmer Rouge, which I evoked above.

A journalist reporting from Kompong Cham, the largest constituency, wrote, "Rival political

<sup>76</sup> They were the 'International Republican Institute' (IRI) and the 'National Democratic Institute for International Affairs' (NDI), affiliated with the American parties, and funded in Cambodia mainly by USAID. In Cambodia they were involved in election monitoring, campaign techniques, party organizing, etc., but among the experts brought by IRI was Raul Garcia Prieto, vice-president of the El Salvadoran ARENA Party, long identified, and by 1993 confirmed by an UN Truth Commission, as mainly responsible for the death squads and massacres in El Salvador during the civil war. Since 1993 IRI has maintained hostility to the CPP and Hun Sen, and has been the main supporter of Sam Rainsy, as confirmed in 2005 by Khmer-American Ms. Mu Sochua, FUNCINPEC Minister for Women's Affairs between 1996 and 2003 before defecting to the Sam Rainsy Party (PPP 14/4, 25/2-10/3, 2005, Derek Cheng, "Tenuous democracy blamed for IRI pullout", quoting Sochua, "The IRI are outspoken in their support for SRP").

<sup>77</sup> "KR has 'upped ante' ahead of elections", *The Nation*, 17 May 1993. Evans was both predicting a CPP win, and indicating his distaste for it, with a hint of blackmail--vote for the CPP and the KR will attack.

parties [citing the Liberal Democrats, a breakaway group from Son Sann's KPNLF]...say they believe the Phnom Penh government will win...."<sup>78</sup>; and even some FUNCINPEC leaders doubted their party's strength, as was seen in the defection of three of their generals to CPP just a few days before the election. They said the reason for changing sides was disapproval of Ranariddh, who had taken over from Sihanouk and was cooperating with the Khmer Rouge (this should be noted with respect to the events of July 1997). But more likely their defection meant they thought CPP was going to obtain the best result in the election and dominate the post-election government, probably with Sihanouk, whom they had willingly served, as some kind of honorary chief of state or king. One of them, Sou Kim Sun, had been a FUNCINPEC Division Commander, and chief of FUNCINPEC's election campaign in Phnom Penh, where he was a candidate<sup>79</sup>. His defection must have been particularly embarrassing.

CPP officials proclaimed that they expected a 60-70% majority, and their reworking of the candidate lists after the election suggests they believed it (see below, pp. 98-99).

One very peculiar analysis in the opposite direction, made in January 1993, gave the CPP only fourth place with a mere 9% support, behind FUNCINPEC with 30%, the BLDP with 18.5%,

<sup>78</sup> *The Nation*, 13 May 1993, Chris Burslem, "Using scare tactics to intimidate voters".

<sup>79</sup> Details from their press conference in Phnom Penh, 19 May 1993.

and the Democrats with 10%. This analysis emanated from UNTAC's Information and Education Component, Washington's base within UNTAC, dominated by anti-Vietnam vendetta types who were responsible for another disinformative tract after the election (see below, p. 93). It may have been merely the working of blind prejudice, or it may have had a covert purpose. Certainly no one outside that agency would have agreed with their figure for the CPP. Given its date, we might infer that it was to undermine the potential FUNCINPEC- CPP cooperation, by introducing a 'confidential', authoritative, purportedly UN, assessment that the CPP was extremely weak, unworthy as an election ally. If not leaked directly to FUNCINPEC, it would have been intercepted by FUNCINPEC agents within UNTAC, such as Norodom Sirivudh's wife, Christine Alfons Norodom, who was employed in the Rehabilitation Component<sup>80</sup>.

<sup>80</sup> This analysis, which was anonymous, bore the inimitable literary style of Stephen Heder. See below for his post-election analysis. The employment of Christine Alfons Norodom was one of the grosser manifestations of UNTAC's version of neutrality.

## Election Results

The final election results were announced by UNTAC on 10 July 1993, officially proclaimed the next day, and the new Constituent Assembly held its opening ceremony on June 14. In the total popular vote FUNCINPEC won approximately 45%, the CPP 38%, and the Buddhist Liberal Democratic Party of Son Sann nearly 4%, with the rest spread among minor parties. Because seats in the new Constituent Assembly were determined proportionally by province, the two largest parties had representatives from all provinces except the 6 provinces with only one seat each, where the largest vote determined the seat. FUNCINPEC got 58 seats, CPP 51, BLDP 10, and Moulinaka, the party which had the fifth largest total popular vote, 1.37%, one seat. The fourth highest total popular vote was taken by Sak Suthsakan's Liberal Democratic Party, but they did not win enough in any province to get a seat.

The complete failure of all other small parties to obtain enough votes to get seats, even with the advantage of proportional representation, was not expected, but it might be interpreted as showing a degree of political maturity among voters, who realized that only the larger parties could govern. It showed further that the blatant Americanism of four or five of the small parties did not have the attraction for Cambodians which the leaders of those parties, and their foreign supporters, had expected. And some prominent figures from an older political generation who had

remained outside Cambodia from the 1970s to 1991 must finally realize that they are no longer of interest to the Cambodian public<sup>81</sup>. It may also be well to emphasize that the roughly 11% of votes cast for non-royalist small parties plus the CPP's 38% and BLDP's 4% means that over half the electorate voted against monarchy and against Sihanouk<sup>82</sup>.

The collapse of In Tam's Democrat Party took most knowledgeable observers by surprise, and may have been the result of his own gaffes. His expected supporters would have been urban, educated, 'middle-class', professionals and state employees, who were anti-Sihanouk and who did not want a return to traditional politics. Many such people worked loyally for the PRK, but liked the idea of a more pluralist system, and would have been attracted by a party which represented an alternative to the CPP, but not rejection of all it represented. At the last joint rally of all parties just before the election In Tam simply played the Sihanouk card, offering complete loyalty, which

<sup>81</sup> Including In Tam, Chak Saroeun, both among the founders of FUNCINPEC, Sak Suthsakan, Cheng Heng, Buor Hell, a cousin of Sihanouk, and even Son Sann, whose party was expected to do much better than the 10 seats they received.

<sup>82</sup> See the distortions by Brad Adams, below, p. 123. Observers of Cambodian affairs should not be misled by the participation of Son Sann's faction, then the KPNLF, but in the election divided between his own BLDP and Sak Suthsakan's LDP, alongside FUNCINPEC in the tripartite Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea. The BLDP and LDP, in ideology and personnel, are quite different from FUNCINPEC. They derive from non- or anti-royalist groups of the past, and foreign backers hoping for a coalition of these non-communist groups were certain to be disappointed.

he said he had always had, and boasting of his role as one of the founders of FUNCINPEC. He personally had been a loyal Sihanoukist until at least 1970, but that is not what the old Democrat Party had represented. His potential voters that day might have decided that if they wanted Sihanouk they should vote for FUNCINPEC, and if they didn't, for the CPP. In neither case was 'Le Parti Democrat' any longer an attractive alternative<sup>83</sup>.

The Cambodian population also showed that it wished to be governed by persons and parties that either remained in Cambodia during the difficult years, or, if not, are believed to represent Prince Sihanouk; and the Cambodian refugee community, because of its extremely low participation in the election and because its representatives (seven parties) were rejected by the Cambodian public, can be expected to have no further role in Cambodian politics, at least not directly. Nevertheless, some of the large refugee communities in the U.S. are overtly hostile to the CPP, and via reactionary U.S. politicians, such as Congressman Dana Rohrabacker and Senator Mitch McConnell, attempt to influence U.S. intervention. They are also the base of the Cambodian Freedom Fighters (see above note 61 and below, p. 177).

The method of proportional representation for allocating seats in the new Assembly--which seemed designed to weaken the CPP when it was

<sup>83</sup> In 1963, as governor of Takeo, In Tam had been involved in the treacherous arrest, which led to execution, of Preap In, a former Democrat and Son Ngoc Thanh activist. See Chandler, *The Tragedy of Cambodian History*, pp. 133-4.

expected that the CPP would receive a majority of the vote--did not work as expected, first of all because of the near total rejection of the small parties and the poor showing of Son Sann's BLDP. The new Assembly, contrary to expectations, was essentially a two-party organ, with a small BLDP in a position to affect majority votes. Proportional representation did, however, perform its function of diluting the power of the party receiving the largest vote, that is FUNCINPEC. Had the election law incorporated the principle of largest party taking all seats in any election district, then FUNCINPEC would have won 79 seats to 41 for the Cambodian Peoples Party; and no other parties would be represented in the Assembly<sup>84</sup>. The designers of the election law would appear to have outsmarted themselves<sup>85</sup>.

Although FUNCINPEC 'won', it did not have a majority. Its most logical ally in a coalition, according to normal parliamentary procedure and the recent background of the respective parties (alliance in the CGDK), would have been BLDP, but their combined total of 68 seats was still not the two-thirds (80 seats) necessary to adopt the constitution, and to vote confidence in a government<sup>86</sup>. Thus drafting of a new constitution

<sup>84</sup> Note that such a result would deviate even more from the total popular vote, according to which FUNCINPEC would rate 54 seats, the CPP 45, BLDP 5, and the rest going to several small parties.

<sup>85</sup> It is not certain they wanted too strong a showing by FUNCINPEC either. The U.S. did not want a dominant Sihanouk, and might have preferred a strong bloc of the former KPNLF parties, with support from FUNCINPEC and the emigré parties.

<sup>86</sup> At Hun Sen's insistence, the assembly adopted a two-thirds rule for confirmation of the government.

could have been blocked if cooperation between FUNCINPEC and CPP had not been achieved. Even the combined FUNCINPEC-BLDP majority which would normally have sufficed to form a government might have been only theoretical, for those two parties did not have a national administrative capability; and continuing administration had to count on support by the cadres of CPP. Moreover, the leadership of the BLDP, and of the LDP, the party of General Sak Suthsakan which also derived from the KPNLF, had a history of opposition to and dislike of Sihanouk, which might have prevented close cooperation between them and FUNCINPEC, in spite of the antipathy of both toward the CPP, communism, and Vietnam<sup>87</sup>.

There had to be either open cooperation between FUNCINPEC and CPP in the future government, or persuasion of a large number of politicians and administrators of one of those parties to defect to the other, which seems to have been what the Americans on the spot had in mind. As indicated below (p. 82), however, the party-jumping might not have gone the way they wished<sup>88</sup>.

<sup>87</sup> These two parties, and the parent organization KPNLF, were led by supporters of the Khmer Republic in 1970.

<sup>88</sup> Raoul Jennar, both in a public meeting in Phnom Penh and in print, quoted someone whom he identified as a 'senior American UNTAC official', and whose identity in Phnom Penh was transparent, as saying "we can do without Sihanouk; we can do without the CPP; we have 90 million dollars to keep the officials and soldiers of SOC and to buy the CPP deputies necessary to get a 2/3 majority and put in place the coalition of our choice" (Jennar, "Cambodian Chronicles" X, European Far Eastern Research Centre, Jodoigne, Belgium, 29 June 1993).

## Election irregularities

When it became clear that FUNCINPEC would win, CPP officials called a press conference on June 1 to announce that they had complained since the beginning of the election, and were continuing to complain, about irregularities in three provinces and Phnom Penh and would request new elections in those areas. Their complaints concerned broken locks and seals on ballot boxes, discrepancies in numbers of ballots counted compared to numbers of persons who had voted, and loss of ballots. They said that if their complaints were rejected, they would refuse to accept the results of the election. They also complained about bias on UNTAC's radio, with Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Khieu Kanharith saying that "in any future UN elections they must be more careful about the personnel of this component", that is the Information and Education Component.

UNTAC rejected CPP demands for new partial elections, although they acknowledged that seals and locks had broken and some ballots had been misplaced. Such defects were disgraceful enough given the funds and expertise available to UNTAC, but they probably did not affect the outcome of the election.

There was reason to complain about UNTAC radio, and Khieu Kanharith's jibe about the personnel of the UNTAC Information Component which ran UNTAC radio, was apposite. That component was loaded with Cambodia expertise, including its

director, U.S. State Department officer Timothy Carney, and deputy director Stephen Heder, both with long anti-PRK/SOC records, and they knew precisely what effect their work would have on the Cambodian public<sup>89</sup>.

The specific complaint was that their broadcasts showed anti-CPP bias just before the election and during the vote counting. They began broadcasting partial results at 7 PM, on Saturday evening, May 29 (voting ended May 28). The first announcements enthusiastically said FUNCINPEC was ahead in 4 places, Phnom Penh, Kompong Som, Kratie, and Pursat, but no figures or percentages were provided, nor was there information about places where the CPP might have been ahead. This was moreover contrary to a policy announced by UNTAC to publish the result in each province when its count was completed. The broadcast was repeated several times that night, and later the same evening UNTAC radio broadcast the totals counted for all parties in Phnom Penh. At that time CPP had received 4,336 votes, FUNCINPEC 7,518, and all other parties only 2-3 figure results, all such results being so small as to be insignificant. Election Component chief Reginald Austin was interviewed, possibly unaware of what UNTAC radio was broadcasting

<sup>89</sup> Carney was among the State Department officers active on the Thai-Cambodian border when the U.S. was involved in setting up the Khmer Rouge again after their debacle in 1978-9, and Heder, since 1980, has been active in anti-Phnom Penh propaganda, in particular from the shelter of the Lawyers Committee for International Human Rights and Amnesty International, unloading reports which would not have withstood criticism if presented as journalism or academic studies (see notes 15 and 16 above).

in Khmer, and he said that they had some very preliminary results in 12 provinces. As UNTAC Information chief Carney cautioned in a broadcast the following morning, that was only 2% of the total vote. Thereafter every day UNTAC radio reported the total vote of each major party and emphasized the number of provinces 'won' by each, but rarely noted the proportional process which would determine the number of seats<sup>90</sup>.

Further UNTAC radio duplicity was charged by a Phnom Penh newspaper, which said that during the election period UNTAC radio jammed the Khmer Rouge transmitter and broadcast FUNCINPEC programs on its frequency. That would have been totally illegal, and one wonders if some of the "racist and inflammatory broadcasts" about which Akashi complained originated with UNTAC 12<sup>91</sup>.

<sup>90</sup> This, and further references below to radio and television broadcasts, unless otherwise identified, are based on my own listening and recordings.

<sup>91</sup> Reported in "UN 'jammed KR radio to save elections'", *The Sunday Post* (Bangkok), 19 September 1993, p. 4, citing the Phnom Penh magazine *Mekong*.

## Problems of transition<sup>92</sup>

A serious defect of the Paris Peace Agreement (PPA) was that it failed to specify, or even to provide a general outline on, how the new government, if other than the CPP, should take over from the old following the election. By early May this problem was beginning to worry the top level of UNTAC, to the extent that they revealed some of their worries to the press.

On 5 May 1993 both *Bangkok Post* and *Nation* wrote about the problem, based on remarks of Akashi passed on to them either by Akashi himself or by his deputy Behrooz Sadry. In the *Bangkok Post* the title was "Akashi calls for Cabinet to replace SNC", and in the *Nation* "UN proposes consultative cabinet for Cambodia". The texts were virtually the same, and I quote here from the *Post*.

One proposal discussed within UNTAC was that "...the winners [note the plural] form an interim consultative Cabinet directly after the vote count to help a peaceful transition.... Although the Cabinet would have no executive powers, it could have an important role in taking over the....(SNC's) function as the voice of Cambodia, consulting with the UN and the international community in the three months transitional phase" [emphasis added, and on which see below]<sup>93</sup>. This would perhaps be "a way

<sup>92</sup> This section, not written until 1998, was published as "Revisiting the legalities of '93", PPP vol. 7, no. 10, 22 May-4 June 1998, just before the second election in July 1998.

of ensuring the Khmer Rouge did not try to use its membership of the SNC to influence national politics...." [this, of course was a smokescreen; it was not the KR they were worried about]. Another obfuscatory comment was, "Behrooz Sadry, the Deputy head of UNTAC, said the purpose...was to guard against too much influence by the SNC...not [the SNC] take decisions.... which go against the wishes of those who have been elected".

But a crucial point was that the UNTAC leadership thought that the "Phnom Penh Government... [was] expected to carry on administrative functions..." and "If the result is split, the royalists and the government may be forced into a coalition".

Thus, three weeks before the election UNTAC foresaw an embarrassing situation in which they would not know what to do, and moreover, they envisaged an outcome such as actually occurred.

The relevant provisions of the PPA, with respect to the above, are as follows :

(1) [my numbering] the statement, "Welcoming the unanimous election, in Beijing on 17 July 1991, of H.R.H. Prince Norodom Sihanouk as the President of the Supreme National Council"<sup>93</sup>.

(2) "For the purpose of this Agreement, the transitional period shall commence with the entry into force of this Agreement and terminate when the constituent assembly elected through

<sup>93</sup> In the introductory statement, "Agreement on a Comprehensive Political Settlement of the Cambodia Conflict".

free and fair elections... has approved the constitution and transformed itself into a legislative assembly, and thereafter [emphasis added] a new government has been created"<sup>94</sup>.

(3) "The Supreme National Council (SNC) is the unique legitimate body and source of authority in which, throughout the transitional period, the sovereignty, independence and unity of Cambodia are enshrined"<sup>95</sup>.

(4) "... free and fair election of a constituent assembly, which will draft and approve a new Cambodian Constitution in accordance with article 23 and transform itself into a legislative assembly, which will create the new Cambodian Government. ..." [article 23 is about basic principles, human rights, etc, neutrality, "which the new constitution will incorporate" (emphasis added)]<sup>96</sup>.

(5) "The constituent assembly referred to in article 12 of the Agreement shall consist of 120 members. Within three months from the date of the election, it shall complete its task of drafting and adopting a new Constitution and transform itself into a legislative assembly which will form the new Cambodian Government" [emphasis added]<sup>97</sup>.

(6) "The constitution will be adopted by a two-thirds majority of the members of the constituent assembly"<sup>98</sup>.

<sup>94</sup> In Part I, "Arrangements During the Transitional Period", Section I, "Transitional Period", Article 1.

<sup>95</sup> Part I, section III, "Supreme National Council, Article 3".

<sup>96</sup> Part II, "Elections", Article 12.

<sup>97</sup> Annex 3, "Elections", article 1.

<sup>98</sup> Annex 5, "Principles for a new constitution for Cambodia", "6".

There is nothing about how coalitions would be formed, or whether the new constitution should be republican or royalist.

It would seem that in view of what is not specified, Sihanouk as head of SNC remained a sort of chief of state throughout the transitional period, and that no new government structure was envisaged until after the new constitution had been promulgated. It is also implicit, and this is reflected in the remarks by Behrooz Sadry noted above, that the administration in place would continue to administer until the new constitution and new government issuing therefrom had been established, and moreover, that this could take up to three months.

Thus, contrary to what anti-CPP people have been wailing ever since, there was no legal way for Ranariddh and FUNCINPEC to take over the government immediately after the election.

Neither, of course, was there explicit permission for Sihanouk to exercise the usual duty of chief of state to choose a new candidate PM. His right to do that, if at all, would depend on the form of government written into the new constitution. The assumption contained in the PPA was that the same government, that is CPP, although formally under Sihanouk and the SNC, would remain in place throughout the transition. Since the PDK, having boycotted the election, could not expect to demand any further role in the SNC, the latter, for practical purposes, consisted only of CPP, FUNCINPEC, and BLD, of which the last, because of unexpectedly bad election results,



would be insignificant in any coalition plans.

Sihanouk, it would seem, exceeded his authority in announcing a coalition, but far from demeaning Ranariddh, by forcing him to accept a coalition with Hun Sen, as conventional wisdom would have it, Ranariddh and FUNCINPEC were promoted to a status to which they were not entitled under PPA until after promulgation of the constitution.

When the new 'constituent assembly' first met, they apparently violated the letter of PPA in immediately declaring Sihanouk Chief of State with unbroken tenure from 1970, and in accepting the new coalition before writing the constitution. But this was not any part of a CPP plot--it was more in favor of the royalists.

Had Sihanouk not intervened as he did, and had the CPP continued to govern alone for three months while the constitution was being drafted, it is quite likely that splits would have appeared already then in FUNCINPEC and BLDP, with some of their members switching to support for the CPP, or at least breaking with their original parties to form a new alignment, which might, at the end of the three months, have secured a majority vote for the CPP in the assembly, or, if not that, a non-royalist constitution. Unity of the so-called 'non-communist resistance' was a myth. BLDP and its parent organization, KPNLF, were historically more anti-royalist than even the CPP, and among the younger FUNCINPEC people who returned to Cambodia in 1992-93 after 15-20 years abroad there were several who, as we now see, would

have been more comfortable in a non-royalist party. Sihanouk well understood this, and, realizing that a republican constitution might appear, he engineered a 'constitutional coup'<sup>99</sup>.

<sup>99</sup> See Michael Vickery, "The Cambodian People's Party: Where Has it Come From, Where is it Going?", *Southeast Asian Affairs* 1994. Singapore. Institute of Southeast Asian Studies. 1994, pp. 102-17.

## The New Regime

After the election, UNTAC seemed to be faced with a surprisingly united Cambodian people who rejected the election and the UNTAC intervention itself.

Sihanouk may have pulled off a coup as dramatic as the coup which deposed him in 1970, and which was constantly in his mind as he maneuvered around UNTAC and domestic opponents. One might imagine him directing events from behind the scenes, but some of the incidents which gave him his advantage were fortuitous.

Fortuitous was the absence of the predicted Khmer Rouge violence to disrupt the election. One journalist who regularly wrote about Khmer Rouge affairs, and who claimed to have special contacts with them, said it was because Sihanouk made a deal with them. On the other hand Stephen Heder of the UNTAC Information Component said there was no change in the level of hostile Khmer Rouge activity during the election. According to him they failed because they did not know where the polling stations were, and because of a good defense by SOC<sup>100</sup>. The good defense was true enough, but the rest of

<sup>100</sup> Heder's remarks were in an informal conversation with me and two other persons on 1 June 1993. Possibly Heder had been responsible for convincing UNTAC of a Khmer Rouge threat, and for the analysis of increased Khmer Rouge capability quoted by Akashi in May (see above, p. 58), which with hindsight seems so peculiar, and he wished to maintain that his reporting had been accurate.

Heder's explanation is peculiar. The Khmer Rouge could not have been ignorant of the locations of polling stations; and reports from most of the country said the level of hostile activity was indeed lower. Not all province dwellers had been worried. On 25 June 1993 Joanne Healy, who had spent two years on an Australian project in Battambang, told me that they did not at all believe the Khmer Rouge in that area would try to disrupt the election with violence. There were reports from the Northwest that on election days some Khmer Rouge soldiers actually voted, which means that they had registered to vote earlier and suggests that there had never been a plan to attack polling places.

The second fortuitous circumstance was the unexpectedly poor showing of the CPP. Had CPP taken first place, there would have been no complaints from them and no instigation of popular unrest, and they could have made their own deal with Sihanouk on much stronger ground. They had already recognized him as Chief of State in 1991, and he would have had to choose between acting in that role alongside a CPP with legitimate power, or leaving in a sulk against an internationally recognized election.

Of course, had CPP won, FUNCINPEC might have rejected the result, and have been supported in their rejection by the U.S. This could have taken Cambodia from the 'Nicaragua solution' to the 'Angola ploy', in which the U.S. delayed recognition of the 'wrong' victor in an internationally supervised free and fair election

until the U.S.-favored loser was able to crank up the civil war again<sup>101</sup>.

Sihanouk's sudden return to Phnom Penh just before the election and after a long absence may have turned the vote for FUNCINPEC. He himself claimed in a moment of pique that FUNCINPEC only won because of his arrival<sup>102</sup>. In any case his role as political arbitrator was saved by CPP's loss, which opened the door for his very skilful coup.

His first move was to form a coalition government of the two large parties, FUNCINPEC and the CPP. On June 3, at 5 o'clock P.M., Khieu Kanharith announced at a press conference that a new government had been formed under Prince Sihanouk, and that the State of Cambodia government was dissolved. The new government would be a coalition of FUNCINPEC and CPP, with Prince Ranariddh of FUNCINPEC and CPP Prime Minister Hun Sen as Deputy Prime Ministers. Kanharith added that a condition of SOC for consenting to the coalition was that the Khmer Rouge be excluded, which Sihanouk promised; and Kanharith said, "we hope he keeps his promise". Each ministry would also have co-ministers, one from each party, and, in true Sihanouk fashion, a guarantee of ministerial instability.

Prince Sihanouk's solution to the impasse of a victorious party which was incapable of governing

<sup>101</sup> See again, Herman and Brodhead, *Demonstration Elections*; and on Angola etc, forthcoming in *Kicking the Vietnam Syndrome*.

<sup>102</sup> This was on 4 June when he dropped his first proposal to establish a FUNCINPEC-CPP coalition, and blamed his son Ranariddh for lack of enthusiasm.

and a losing party which under the PPA was not required to give up power for three more months was outside and contrary to the Paris Agreement. It was in fact a negation of the election and preemption of the constitution drafting process. It was nevertheless a positive move, because it averted conflict between the two parties, and ensured their collaboration, without which Cambodia could not be governed.

The U.S. objected strongly, Akashi's remarks were not encouraging, and Ranariddh asked for some changes before agreeing to participate. The following day, June 4, Sihanouk, offended, renounced his project.

If Sihanouk's announcement and dissolution of a government within 24 hours was reminiscent of his 1960s style, the next act in this theatrical production showed that the same techniques were being revived. In the 1960s, in the face of a political crisis, when his desires were blocked by opposing factions within his own Sangkum Reastrniyum political organization, Sihanouk would threaten to resign and leave his Cambodian people to their fate at the hands of corrupt politicians. Soon thereafter 'spontaneous' demonstrations would be held and petitions sent to the palace by the 'people' imploring Sihanouk to remain as head of the government or Chief of State. The demonstrations sometimes turned violent, as in the attacks on the U.S. and British embassies in 1964.

On June 5 it was announced that a similar demonstration of the people's will would be held

in front of the palace; then it was canceled and people were told to return on Monday, June 7. Without further announcement, on Sunday June 6 truckloads of people were brought to the palace to listen to an extremely emotional speech by Sihanouk, accompanied by Prince Chakrapong, which was later broadcast several times. His main points were as follows<sup>103</sup>.

Before 1970, before I was overthrown by the Lon Nol coup, Cambodia was not only the equal of many countries in development, but ahead of many of the Third World in Asia. Then we were left behind because of war.

A few days ago I agreed to head a government uniting all parties except the Khmer Rouge, "who do not agree", including BLDP and Moulinaka. All would have been included in the ministries<sup>104</sup>. My objective was to make it just like the Sangkum of the 1960s.

Do not consider the Khmer Rouge as enemies. Talk to them, use a policy of peace, solidarity, brotherhood; the policy of the two head monks of the Sangha; to save the poor and indigent.

Hun Sen and Chea Sim begged me to take over the government. I didn't dare refuse this request which came from the people [emphasis

<sup>103</sup> The following is a summarized paraphrase, not an exact translation, although I have kept closely to Sihanouk's language. The comment by Brown and Zasloff, p. 171, that the speech was a denunciation of FUNCINPEC, and implicitly pro-CPP, is not accurate.

<sup>104</sup> His remark that the Khmer Rouge "do not agree" is an interesting reflection on his attitude toward them. If they had agreed, would he have brought them in? Incidentally, his original proposal did not include BLDP or Moulinaka.

added]. But there were obstacles; from certain foreign circles which have an imperialist and colonialist policy. They say that if Sihanouk gets power as before, he must be overthrown as in 1970. Because if he is allowed to pursue the policy of independence, neutrality, territorial integrity, etc., colonialism and imperialism cannot win, they cannot drink the blood of Kampuchea and the Khmer people, cannot pursue a policy of oppression. Sihanouk must be overthrown.

Now those foreign circles are giving a lot of money to some political parties which [long hesitation] do not follow Sihanouk. Whoever will oppose Sihanouk, keep him from forming a government, they will give those people a big budget, to cause Sihanouk's defeat<sup>105</sup>.

Some do not follow me. They set conditions. they say that they follow Sihanouk, but they don't accept my formula, don't agree with certain conditions<sup>106</sup>. So I can't form a government.

Some Khmer politicians have told foreign ambassadors, 'we must resist, and not let feudalism return'<sup>107</sup>. I never made feudalism in the Sangkum time; ask the *daun chi*, ask the *achar*<sup>108</sup>. We had

<sup>105</sup> The long hesitation here is because he was on the point of a serious slip of the tongue. The party which was rumored to be receiving such foreign, American, aid and encouragement was his own son's FUNCINPEC.

<sup>106</sup> This is apparently a reference to Ranariddh.

<sup>107</sup> It is not certain to whom Sihanouk was referring. It sounds like someone from BLDP, or even non-royalist members of FUNCINPEC like Sam Rainsy.

<sup>108</sup> *Daun chi* are the old ladies who shave their heads, dress in white, and take religious vows; *achar* are lay religious men who take care of temples and ceremonies. Referring to them as authorities on politics is typical of Sihanouk demagoguery.

Peoples Congresses every 6 months so that the people could say what they liked and didn't like. There was full freedom to speak. There were free elections for representatives<sup>109</sup>. And the throne was shade for the people, just like my arrival now is shade, that's all. I have no wish for power.....

What should we do, if we can't have my coalition government? Let all 4 parties run their own areas. The Khmer Rouge area is 15% or 12% of Cambodia, FUNCINPEC has a smaller area, and Son San an even smaller area, etc., SOC is biggest with over 80%. I ask them all to protect the people in their areas. Don't make war, raise the standard of living of the people, especially the poor.

I will remain as shade for my 'children'<sup>110</sup>. I will stay. I won't leave now. But the government can't be formed. The SNC asked me to be president, to unite, but I cannot unite, cannot form all into a single strand. So let each faction take responsibility toward the people, for history, for the monks, and for the international community who came to rule us, especially UNTAC [emphasis added].

An election is very good. Some parties don't accept the results; I wasn't given power by anyone to organize the election for the people, because

<sup>109</sup> The Congresses were totally stage-managed; and elections under Sihanouk, after the fraudulent one in 1955, were hardly more than single-party, single-candidate, or at least with strictly limited participation (1958, 1962, 1966). Of course, the 1972 election of Lon Nol was not much improvement, and the last free elections Cambodians had seen were under the French in 1951. See Vickery, "Looking Back at Cambodia" (above, note 71).

<sup>110</sup> In his speeches Sihanouk habitually addressed the Cambodian public as his 'children'.

the international community, UN, UNTAC took that power. I have no power, I am only the shade. UNTAC has total responsibility for the election. I had nothing to do with it; let them take responsibility.

Can we guarantee peace in the future? UNTAC says they will rule us until August; at the end of August UNTAC will turn power over to the Khmer [that is, at the end of the three-month transitional period following the election].

Let SOC run their provinces (lists names); and other factions theirs. Wait for September. I won't go anywhere. We will meet again. We are not yet independent, not until September.

Thus, in this speech Sihanouk accused UNTAC of trying to impose a colonial, imperialist rule over Cambodia, he disavowed the election, and finally he encouraged the four factions to divide and govern Cambodia on their own.

The June 6 speech, in the context of Cambodian politics, was inflammatory, of the type which in the 1960s incited the people to violent action. Also inflammatory was another Sihanouk broadcast on the evening of June 9. While advising all parties to accept the election results, and to take their places in the new Assembly on June 14 as allocated by UNTAC, Sihanouk noted that "UNTAC did not conduct the election in an entirely correct manner".

## The 'secession' movement

The violence which Sihanouk incited did not occur in Phnom Penh, and not immediately, no doubt because of the strength of SOC police, and the apparent, if illusory, strength of UNTAC. It occurred when, on 10 June Chakrapong led some dissatisfied CPP leaders, in particular State Security Minister Sin Song, to Prey Veng and declared an autonomous zone, loyal to Sihanouk, in Prey Veng, Svay Rieng and Kompong Cham, in protest against the 'unfair election'. Interestingly, Khmer-language newspapers reported that Chakrapong visited his father on June 9 before setting off for Prey Veng. It is probable that Sihanouk encouraged, or at least acquiesced in the move, which would later give him the opportunity to save the country from partition. When demonstrators in the 'autonomous' provinces threatened violence, Sihanouk, in a broadcast on June 12, emotionally begged them not to hurt any UNTAC personnel and said he had urged Akashi to withdraw all UNTAC personnel from those areas. In the same speech he virtually agreed with the secessionists that the election was dishonest and said that he did not condemn their actions.

There were also vague reports that the northeastern provinces of Ratanakiri, Monduliri, and Stung Treng would join the autonomous zone, under the influence of General Bou Thang, former chief of the PRK army, and a member of one of the local ethnic groups in Ratanakiri.

The secession occurred just one day before the official UNTAC announcement of election results, which showed some surprises among the CPP winners. Thirty-two CPP candidates whose listings should have put them into the assembly had resigned leaving their places open for lower-ranking CPP candidates.

An analysis of this secession prepared for UNTAC by Stephen Heder of the Information and Education Component alleged that persons who headed the lists of CPP candidates in several provinces but were passed over (formally they resigned) as deputies in the new Assembly were in fact "assigned to participate in the 'illegal struggle' or at least to be prepared to move into such activities if the situation should deteriorate further", perhaps as the nucleus of an alternative power structure should the CPP be defeated in the Assembly<sup>111</sup>. "The reported plan ... was to rely on the parts of Cambodia east of the Mekong as a 'fall-back base area'... in which to regroup and concentrate forces"; and "it has been decided to attempt to establish in Cambodia east of the Mekong an area which... is

<sup>111</sup> At a seminar at the Australian National University on 4 November 1993, Prof. Reginald Austin, who headed the UNTAC Election Component, informed us that all but one of those who resigned sent in identical letters saying they 'had too much work at the office'. The exception complained of ill health. Heder's curious analysis, was a confidential UNTAC document entitled "CPP Secession, Resignations from the Assembly and Intimidation of UNTAC: Background and Theories", dated 13 June 1993, by UNTAC 12 "Deputy Director (Analysis) Stephen Heder". It was almost immediately leaked to me, allowing me to prepare a counter analysis and distribute it to the heads of the UNTAC components, some diplomats, and members of the press. My main points are included here.

free of 'enemy' influence... UNTAC, FUNCINPEC and eventually the PDK [Khmer Rouge]".

According to Heder the "original planning process reportedly also included negotiations and arrangements with Vietnam for the provision of support for the fall-back base"<sup>112</sup>. The CPP would not have been that stupid. Reliance on Vietnam in such a situation would have been the kiss of death politically.

Heder linked the secession with the changes in CPP candidates chosen to enter the elected assembly. According to him, faced with unexpected defeat, the CPP withdrew some "CPP members and assign[ed] them to if not 'illegal' then 'semi-legal' or the possibility of 'illegal' work". This is seen from an "examination of the composition both of the group who stayed or were brought in and of the group that withdrew". A number of top CPP leaders were kept in the Assembly. "Also kept in the Assembly were almost all the intellectuals and others who could be described as the CPP's 'econocrats' and 'technocrats', the Party's propagandists and educational and cultural workers, and its legal experts. Moreover, the ranks of these groups were expanded by CPP members from these categories [i.e. technocrats, etc.] to replace more senior CPP members [who did not have such qualifications] who resigned their candidacy". Likewise, "another group kept in or

<sup>112</sup> This, interestingly, was the line of the pro-Khmer Rouge newspaper, *Oudomkati Khmer* ('Khmer ideal'), which on the front page of its issue of 22 June, published a map-cartoon showing UNTAC in cooperation with the Khmer Rouge 'pulling' the affected provinces back from a Vietnamese magnet.

brought into the Assembly were low-ranking CPP members from its structures in [the provinces]", while "their superiors resigned". Heder says, "they seem to be in the Assembly in order to 'hold the fort' for their superiors, who are now assigned to... maintaining and building up CPP strength in the most important provinces".

The inferences about types of persons included in the assembly were true. Those put in the Assembly were more appropriate than the superiors who resigned, in terms of building a democratic regime in cooperation with other parties. They are also precisely the types of person who would be chosen by any rational party in a western democracy.

Contrary to Heder's analysis, the two actions, resignation of some CPP candidates and formation of the autonomous zone, are much better explained as quite unconnected maneuvers. The autonomous zone was an unexpected, *ad hoc* action by a few hotheads protesting the election, perhaps also protesting their being dropped from the Assembly, and it was probably approved tacitly by Sihanouk both to object to UNTAC and to create an opportunity to gain credit by exerting his moral authority to put down the autonomy movement. The timing, the association of Chakrapong with Sihanouk between June 6 and June 9, and its quick end, show that the 'secession movement' was not part of a long-term plan and was not related to the choice of CPP candidates for the Assembly. Perhaps Hun Sen stole some of the credit by absenting himself from the 15 June meeting of the Assembly in the palace throne room to rush off to

Kompong Cham to put the 'rebels' in their place<sup>113</sup>.

The final choice of deputies by the CPP to fill their 51 assembly seats was not at all sinister, but it reveals an interesting pattern and undoubtedly signals their strategy in the newly-formed coalition government and constituent assembly.

As part of the registration procedure all parties gave UNTAC lists of their proposed candidates for each province they were contesting. In general the parties listed far more candidates in every province than there were seats to win. For example, the CPP listed ten candidates for the six seats of Banteay Meanchey, and twenty-six candidates for the twelve seats of Phnom Penh. This was obviously to make certain that there would be enough registered candidates left if some resigned, switched sides, or met an untimely end.

Whatever number of seats a party won in a province, the deputies to occupy those seats were to be appointed automatically in accordance with the official listings of candidates submitted to UNTAC<sup>114</sup>. This was the procedure followed by FUNCINPEC, and each of the ten BLDP winners was first on his respective provincial list.

<sup>113</sup> William Shawcross, probably just swallowing whole Heder's rant, was quite mistaken in writing that after the 1993 election the CPP threatened war with the UN and secession of the eastern half of the country, forcing the UN to accept a coalition government. As described above, a coalition was unavoidable given the PPA rules and the ambiguous election results. See Shawcross, "The Lessons of Cambodia", in Nicolaus Mills and Kira Brunner, eds., *The New Killing Fields*, New York, Basic Books, 2003, pp. 37-52.

<sup>114</sup> Remember that voters did not choose candidates, but only parties, and it was left to the parties to pick the successful candidates.

The CPP proceeded differently; 32 of their winners resigned, opening the way for others farther down the lists to assume places in the assembly.

The choice of CPP deputies certainly appears purposeful, and the purposes are in general transparent. Certain persons, however mediocre their parliamentary capabilities, had to be included because of their current party and government roles. Eleven provincial governors, a group generally considered as veteran or hardline politicians, were passed over, and only five (from Kompong Speu, Koh Kong, Monduliri, Preah Vihear, and Ratanakiri) were included as deputies. In all but the first of these cases the governors are natives in ethnic minority areas on the Vietnamese or Thai borders, which is explanation enough for their importance<sup>115</sup>. The Kompong Speu governor, although not in a remote or minority area, is, like his Preah Vihear colleague, one of the young CPP generation, aged 42, and he studied medicine during 1970-75.

Also excluded were most of the candidates with a military or security service background, while those included are two "military intellectuals", according to Heder, and the Defence Minister, who is of the young generation (48) and is an ethnic Thai from the southwest<sup>116</sup>.

<sup>115</sup> The remaining governors were either not on the lists of candidates, or too far down to be relevant to the discussion, or in single-member Sihanoukville which CPP lost to FUNCINPEC.

<sup>116</sup> In the short biographical sketches of the CPP deputies in the CPP newspaper *Pracheachon*, number 23 (1373), 20 June 1993, no military titles at all are included.



The CPP was obviously trying to include the maximum number of younger, more intellectual members among their deputies in the Assembly. At least 33 were former teachers, current members of the Ministry of Education, doctors, or with some university level education. The average age of the deputies was 49.7, there were 24 under 50 years old, and three more under 40.

All of this probably indicated sincerity on the part of the CPP to cooperate with FUNCINPEC in the drafting of a constitution and the future governance of Cambodia. In this light the omission of Chakrapong, number 2 in their Kompong Cham list, and Sin Song who headed the CPP list in Prey Veng, rather than a plot to establish an alternative power base, suggests removal of a bitter opponent of FUNCINPEC's Ranariddh, and a general avoidance of military and police personnel, which was also in line with a desire to work constructively within the new political environment.

The pattern of resignations and replacements suggested that the CPP really expected to win approximately a two-thirds majority in the assembly. In general the old CPP political leadership were among the top of the lists of provincial candidates, and the younger technocrats and intellectuals, who ranked lower politically, were farther down the lists. Since in the final choice the latter replaced their political superiors, it is clear that the CPP had always expected that most of the younger group, along with the older politicians, would get in. If the lowest replacement

in each province is taken as the bottom line of what they had expected to win without any resignations, the total is 81 seats, or 67%<sup>117</sup>.

The FUNCINPEC group in the assembly was much less impressive. There were a few stars from the old Cambodian elite who were also well educated, such as the princes Ranariddh and Sirivudh, a half-brother of Sihanouk, Ranariddh's brother-in-law Roland Eng, Sam Rainsy, son of a famous Sihanouk enemy of the 1950s who disappeared in mysterious circumstances, and Chau Sen Chumno, son of a prominent businessman and politician of the 1950s-60s<sup>118</sup>. A few more were highly qualified technically (Ing Keat, Pou Sothirak, and the CPP defectors Ung Phan and Kann Man, who, it should be noted, owe their qualifications to their opportunities under the PRK/SOC during 1979-1989). In spite of their class and education, however, the FUNCINPEC elite have spent little or no time in Cambodia since before 1975, are without administrative or political experience, and

<sup>117</sup> This type of analysis shows that they expected to do badly, that is win only half or less of the seats--and their prognosis was accurate--in Banteay Meanchey (33%), Kompong Speu (50%), and Kandal (45%); and expected no more than 60% in Svay Rieng, where their three seats are 56% of the total.

<sup>118</sup> Norodom Sirivudh is son of Sihanouk's father King Suramarit by a second wife, not Queen Kossamak. There were at least three such offspring. Just over a month after Sihanouk's abdication in March 1955 in favor of his father, Suramarit, the *Journal Officiel* published Kret (decree) 48 PR dated 21 April 1955, granting monthly allowances "to our children Their Royal Highnesses Norodom Vacheahra [princess], Sirivudhi, and Preyasophon [probably princess]". For details on Sam Rainsy's father Sam Sary, see David Chandler, *The Tragedy of Cambodian History*, pp. 77, 92, 99-100, where Chandler is mistaken about 'thipodei', which means 'power', not 'democracy'.

may for those reasons be outclassed by the CPP<sup>119</sup>.

Most of the rest, however, perhaps more than 40, had no more than primary education and no professional or administrative experience other than primary school teacher before 1975. Then they were ordinary farmers under DK, and since 1979 either, in a few cases, ordinary citizens within Cambodia until recently or already anti-PRK activists in border military formations or guerrillas and agents inside the country<sup>120</sup>.

Son Sann's BLDP fielded a number of potentially capable people, but one who stands out for another reason, and not elected, is Hem Krisna, first on their Kompong Chhnang list of candidates, who in 1980, in one of the few PRK trials which was given publicity, was sentenced to 20 years in prison for active subversion in the service of the non-communist anti-PRK forces on the Thai border. It seems that all such political prisoners, whether tried for specific offenses or not, had been released. One of the small parties, 'Khmer Nationalist', was largely made up of them<sup>121</sup>.

<sup>119</sup> Ranariddh had hardly ever lived in Cambodia since adolescence. In the early 1960s he was already in France for education, returning once or twice a year for well-publicized family visits.

<sup>120</sup> In his article in *FEER*, 8 July 1993, Nate Thayer said about 40 of FUNCINPEC's 58 assembly members were of this type. In the last week of June 1993 I was able to obtain 38 CVs from the FUNCINPEC office in Phnom Penh (they said the rest had not been compiled), including those of Ing Keat, Pou Sothirak, Ung Phan and Kann Mari, and found that over 30 of them were of insignificant background.

<sup>121</sup> The trial was reported in the army newspaper *Kong tap padiwat* ('revolutionary army'), no. 7, June 1980; see Michael Vickery, *Kampuchea, Politics, Economics, and Society*, p. 119.

## End of 'secession', opening of the assembly

As noted, just when Chakrapong had set off to lead the 'secession', Sihanouk advised all parties to accept the election results, and to take their places in the new Assembly.

When the Assembly first met on 14 June, Ranariddh proposed that Sihanouk be declared Chief of State with unbroken tenure since before March 1970, meaning with the same powers as he had enjoyed before being deposed. This was voted by the Assembly with a show of hands. Sihanouk accepted, made remarks about the need to get away from foreign domination, and suggested that the Assembly should meet in the Throne Room of the Palace, where they could be away from journalists and foreigners, and could discuss without keeping a written record<sup>122</sup>.

On 15 June the Assembly met in the Throne Room, and the session was televised. Hun Sen was not present, having rushed off to Kompong Cham to terminate the so-called autonomous zone. Heng Samrin, Chea Sim, Ranariddh, and Son Sann sat in the first row. The two latter assumed traditional obsequious poses, with bowed faces, hunched shoulders, and hands raised, palms together, in the traditional gesture of respect. Chea Sim sat upright with hands clasped halfway

<sup>122</sup> This information is from persons who were among the guests at the opening ceremony. They also reported that the show of hands for Sihanouk as Chief of State since 1970 was not unanimous, but they were unable to identify the abstainers.

into that gesture. Heng Samrin sat still with a stony face and hands in his lap. Most of the deputies, like Heng Samrin, were expressionless, some taking detailed notes, not showing any signs of obsequious respect. Perhaps this indicates that few deputies in either party like Sihanouk's maneuvers, but feel unable to reach a solution without him (the 'stop in the mind' evoked above, note 73).

In the televised session Sihanouk said the Khmer must make the constitution, not foreigners; in 1947 the French made a constitution, and then the Democrat Party objected and changed it, "didn't they, Samdech Son Sann?", an amusing jibe at Son Sann's political past<sup>123</sup>. "They say we are still a Protectorate of the UN. Only Khmer can cook Khmer food so that it is good. The Barang [westerners] don't know how."

<sup>123</sup> In 1946 Son Sann was a member of the Democrat Party which had won that constituent assembly election, and they indeed revised the constitutional draft proposed by the French. The latter would have been more favorable to Sihanouk, while the Democrats' draft, which was, with a few modifications, accepted, diminished his authority.

The first draft proposed by the French (by a 'Franco-Khmer' commission) was distinctly conservative. Universal suffrage was rejected; and the National Assembly was to be elected by Provincial Councillors, themselves elected by Communal Councillors directly elected only at that low level. Legislative power rested with the king, and the monarchy was to be hereditary in descent from Sihanouk.

The Assembly, or perhaps really its Democrat Party majority, prepared another draft incorporating direct election of the National Assembly, which would have legislative powers, and this was the constitution which was adopted. Succession to the throne was vested in the descendants of King Ang Duong, Sihanouk's great-great grandfather, leaving the way open for all of Sihanouk's royal rivals. The contemporary (1946) press does not support David Chandler's interpretation in *The Tragedy of Cambodian History*, p. 29, that the Democratic Party modifications to the French draft were proposed by Sihanouk.

Following the 16 June television broadcast of the June 15 meeting there were announcements that the provinces involved in the secessionist autonomous zone had renounced that project. On the morning of 17 June Sihanouk's request to Chakrapong, Sin Song, and Bou Thang to return to Phnom Penh was broadcast, and at 11:30 on the same day a meeting of Sihanouk with Hun Sen, Sin Song, and Chakrapong to discuss the new coalition government was broadcast and televised. Forgiveness for the rebels was immediate.

A piquant question was, who would get credit for ending the attempt to create an autonomous zone, Hun Sen or Sihanouk? If, as I believe, the plot was to some extent a Sihanouk maneuver, one purpose, after stirring up trouble and putting pressure on UNTAC and the CPP, would have been for Sihanouk to gain charismatic credit for terminating the threat to national unity. Hun Sen would seem to have preempted that by ignoring the Assembly meeting in the palace and flying off to Kompong Cham, after which the autonomous zone collapsed. Did Hun Sen spoil Sihanouk's plan? Was Hun Sen showing open rivalry?

Hun Sen could have been in danger, not only as the leader of a party hated by FUNCINPEC, but as an orator who can compete with Sihanouk and Ranariddh on an election platform or on TV. It must be doubly galling to the princes because Hun Sen is from a poor family background, with little formal education.

In the broadcast of the meeting of Sihanouk, Chakrapong, Sin Song, and Hun Sen the formula

for the new government was announced. There would be co-prime ministers, Ranariddh and Hun Sen, and ministries would be apportioned equally between the two major parties, with fewer ministries for the BLDP and perhaps one for Moulinaka. An interesting detail was Hun Sen's insistence that the new government should be approved by a 2/3 majority vote, not a simple majority, as is usual for votes of confidence. There seemed to be evidence here of the possible Hun Sen-Sihanouk tension. Hun Sen could be heard on television prompting Sihanouk when the latter described the proposal. Sihanouk said that although he had been given full power, he did want to use it, and he would not object if Hun Sen's proposal for a 2/3 vote was accepted by the Assembly, as it later was. It was clear, however, that Sihanouk would have preferred a simple majority on this question. Hun Sen insisted on entrenching the principle of a 2/3 majority from the beginning, to prevent the ejection of his party from the government by a coalition of FUNCINPEC and BLDP.

By June 16 it seemed that all Khmer factions had in fact rejected the work of UNTAC. The Khmer Rouge had rejected them in advance. Then the CPP rejected the election results as partly dishonest, and Sihanouk made remarks in support of their position. Then, Sihanouk, by totally ignoring the election and calling UNTAC 'imperialist' and 'colonialist', also disavowed the election. The only faction to firmly support the election results was FUNCINPEC, but in the

opening of the Constituent Assembly Ranariddh proposed that Sihanouk be declared Chief of State without a break since before 1970, which partly negated the election by preempting part of the constitution-drafting process, and Ranariddh acceded to Sihanouk's request to cooperate in the coalition which negated the election.

## The government

The composition of the 'Provisional National Government' was announced on 2 July. The guiding principle in its formation was that each of the two major parties should have equal representation on the whole, and at all levels, in each ministry. In fact, of the 65 members of the government, 32 were CPP and 29 FUNCINPEC, but the equality of the latter was maintained by giving two ministries, Energy and Public Works, to Ing Kiet who was also a Minister of State. Ing Kiet's accumulation of functions illustrates the very shallow depth of FUNCINPEC's talent pool, which forced them, as 'victors' to allow a formal majority to CPP in government personnel. Three positions were held by Son Sann's BLDP and one by Moulinaka.

Another function of a bloated government was to give the maximum number of persons a chance at ministerial prestige, and thus co-opt as many potentially influential persons as possible. This was clear in Sihanouk's post-election discussions with party leaders, and it fits well with his traditional governing style-to include as many mutually inimical figures as possible to facilitate his rule by playing them against one another.

There were 28 ministries, in addition to co-presidents, vice presidents, 'ministers of state', and ministers and vice ministers in the 'cabinet of the president', altogether eleven persons. Indeed two more, for a total of four, vice-ministers in the presidential cabinet were added between the

issuance of a document entitled 'Structure of the Provisional National Government' on 2 July, and publication of the list in *Phnom Penh Post*<sup>124</sup>. This is considerably more than in previous governments under any regime, and there was even a proposal to expand the number of ministries to 34. PRK governments kept ministerial portfolios below twenty, and Sangkum governments in the 1960s were constitutionally limited to sixteen portfolios<sup>125</sup>. A draft constitution which was unofficially circulated in Phnom Penh in September 1993 provided a limit of twenty members in the Council of Ministers, but in the final constitution no limit was imposed.

The new government was headed by Co-Presidents Norodom Ranariddh and Hun Sen, with Co-Vice Presidents Ung Phan and Keat Chhon. Keat Chhon is a highly qualified engineer whose own political history runs from Sihanouk's pre-1970 Sangkum through Lon Nol's Republic, and some time with DK before joining SOC. Ung Phan had also moved around. Until arrested for attempting to form a new political party in 1990, he was a ministerial level official of the PRK.

Two of the three Ministers of State were also returnees who were already well known in their fields before 1970. Ing Kiet of FUNCINPEC is another engineer and Van Molyvann, listed as a CPP representative, is an architect<sup>126</sup>. Ing Kiet also headed two ministries, Energy and Public

<sup>124</sup> PPP, Vol. 2, No. 14, dated July 2-15, 1993.

<sup>125</sup> *Constitution du Royaume du Cambodge*, article 79 (later amended to article 96).

<sup>126</sup> Among his works were the Basak theater near the Cambodiana hotel and the Olympic Stadium.

Works, apparently because his qualifications were so much superior to those of anyone else. The third Minister of State was Hor Namhong, last Foreign Minister of SOC, who also has a background as Sihanoukist and then with DK before 1979. Thirty-seven of the 65 members of the government, fourteen from FUNCINPEC, nineteen from CPP, the three from BLDP and Moulinaka's Minister of Veterans' Affairs were chosen from outside the elected members of the Assembly, which is in conformity with previous Cambodian practice before 1975.

Only two of the CPP nominees from outside the Assembly were among the candidates who resigned just after the election. They were Sin Sen, number 5 on the Phnom Penh list, who was then Deputy Minister of Security, the position which he was given in the new government, and Chhay Than, number 4 on the Takeo list, who was then Minister of Finance, and now Deputy Minister of Veterans' Affairs. Among the other non-parliamentary CPP members of the government at least fourteen were persons with special technical qualifications or experience in PRK/SOC administration at ministerial level. The CPP was still pursuing the policy which influenced their choice of assembly members, to bring in as many technically and administratively qualified persons as possible.

Equally interesting is that fifteen of the CPP members of government were once listed by FUNCINPEC as members of the 'Hun Sen Clan', while only four were called 'Chea Sim Clan' by

the same source; and none of the old politicians among CPP assembly members, or alleged high-level Chea Sim stalwarts (Chea Sim, Chea Soth, Heng Samrin, Say Chhum, Sar Kheng, Math Ly, Nay Pena, Men Sam An), were in the new government. The remaining ten CPP members of the government were not listed in FUNCINPEC's analysis<sup>127</sup>. Like the choice of assembly members, the composition of the government signaled a decline in the Chea Sim faction in favor of the more intellectual and technically qualified followers of Hun Sen. More speculatively, because it was obviously necessary to give a few ministerial spots to Chea Sim men, the CPP leadership, guided by Hun Sen, apparently tried to keep them in posts having little political clout. Three of the four identifiable Chea Sim men were Deputy Minister of Tourism Sam Prum Monea, So Khun as Minister of Transport, and Tram Eav Tek as Deputy Minister of Public Works. While all had posts requiring some technical expertise, such as they held under SOC, these positions are not of major political importance. The only reputed Chea Sim man in a politically powerful position in the new government was Sin Sen, one of four Deputy Ministers of Interior and Public Security, precisely the position he already held under SOC.

Given these 'numbers', analyses of the new situation which continued to characterize Chea Sim as the dominant figure in the CPP seem

<sup>127</sup> FUNCINPEC, *Réalités cambodgiennes*, No. 2, 2ème quinzaine Mars 1993.

eccentric. An example was David Chandler's description of the CPP as "...divided into supporters of Chea Sim, the party's strongman [emphasis added]...and those who support...Hun Sen". Chandler also said, "[u]nfortunately, the major parties contesting the election offered the voters a replay of earlier times...Sihanouk (FUNCINPEC) and Chea Sim (CPP) were known political quantities...". This suggests that the election was a contest between old generations<sup>128</sup>. Yet, during the election Chea Sim was very nearly invisible, while Hun Sen vigorously led the CPP campaign. There was a suggestion of 'replay', and that is a certain parallel between Hun Sen in 1993 and Son Ngoc Thanh in the 1950s, who then could challenge Sihanouk as an orator on equal terms, as Hun Sen has proved capable of doing now<sup>129</sup>. If there has been a generational split in the Cambodian parties (FUNCINPEC, CPP, and BLDP), as Chandler suggested, power within the CPP seems effectively to have passed from Chea Sim's group to that of Hun Sen<sup>130</sup>.

Chandler's analysis, in a disconcerting way, reflected Stephen Heder's disparaging treatment of Hun Sen in comparison to Chea Sim, as seen through

<sup>128</sup> David Chandler, *Cambodia, Asia-Australia Briefing Papers*, Vol. 2 No. 5 (1993), The Asia-Australia Institute, The University of New South Wales, pp. 7-8.

<sup>129</sup> Having written a book with a large section on the 1950s, *The Tragedy of Cambodian History* (chapters 2-3), Chandler should have been more sensitive to this replay.

<sup>130</sup> Chandler, *Cambodia, Asia-Australia Briefing Papers*, p. 7, where he would seem to have been mistaken in suggesting that there was a "lack of mechanisms, and perhaps also the inclination, to transfer power from one generation to the next".

the eyes of disgruntled old Khmer Rouge, which he presented at Australian National University in 1990. In 1993, however, Heder implicitly disavowed his earlier analysis, holding in his "Secession,...", that there is no significant factional division within the CPP<sup>131</sup>.

Three ministers were from the BLDP: Keat Sokun in Youth and sports, Thach Reng in Rural Development, and Say Bory in Relations with Parliament. All three were candidates in the election but not high enough on the lists to win seats in the assembly. Keat Sokun spent 1980-1992 in Australia; and Thach Reng spent several years in the U.S. following the end of the war in 1975<sup>132</sup>. Since, in addition to Son Sann who became Deputy-President of the Assembly, at least three of the BLDP assembly members, Son Soubert, Ieng Mouly, and Pen Thol, have equivalent paper

<sup>131</sup> Parallel to Heder's treatment is Chandler's, "[a]mong many foreign observers, and urban Khmer, Hun Sen is thought to represent a more liberal and open-minded segment of the party, but evidence for this is hard to find in his recent speeches and in his behavior in the aftermath of the PPC's recent defeat...[t]he dynamics of the Chea Sim-Hun Sen rivalry are concealed from view, and papered over in public...[w]hat is certain is that Chea Sim has spent at least forty years in the Cambodian Communist movement, while Hun Sen, at least twenty-five years Chea Sim's junior, joined the Khmer Rouge as a teen-ager in 1970 or shortly before". This, at least, should be one good reason for Hun Sen to appear more attractive to "foreign observers, and urban Khmer", although apparently not to the Heder-Chandler school of Cambodia analysis. See Heder's ANU papers ("Khmer Rouge Opposition to Pol Pot: 'Pro-Vietnamese' or 'Pro-Chinese'", and "Recent Developments in Cambodia", 28 August and 5 September 1990 respectively, discussed in Vickery, "The Campaign Against Cambodia: 1990-1991", *Indochina Issues* 93, August 1991); and Heder, "CPP Secession, etc.", discussed above.

<sup>132</sup> Keat Sokun's background was reported in *Bangkok Post*, 28 September 1993, "Inside Indochina", p. 4.

qualifications, BLDP may have taken advantage of the opening of ministries to persons outside the assembly to increase their numbers within the state apparatus, but the choices may also reflect intra-party tensions which burst into public view between Son Sann and Ieng Mouly just before the election.

## The Khmer Rouge

One of the ostensible purposes of the Paris Accord, to neutralize the Khmer Rouge by disarming them and bringing them into the electoral process, was unsuccessful. The Khmer Rouge refused to disarm or to allow UNTAC inspection of their territory, and they denounced the election.

When the election was over, however, they loudly accepted the results, showing which had been their favorite party. For a few weeks it appeared that they might succeed in their goal of getting into the new government without having disarmed or faced the voters, because Sihanouk continued to speak of reconciliation with them, and FUNCINPEC policy had always been reconciliation, in contrast to Hun Sen who said that after his party won they would proceed to destroy the Khmer Rouge on the battlefield.

Because of this background, the sudden, and apparently very successful, offensive of the new combined army against Khmer Rouge strongholds which began in mid-August, even though preceded by warnings from Ranariddh, was a surprise<sup>133</sup>.

This may mean that Ranariddh on this question acceded to Hun Sen's policy, and that together they would finally succeed in ending the 'Khmer Rouge problem', at least as an ever-present military threat. The Khmer Rouge were indeed collapsing under attack from the new Cambodian government, estimates of their strength after the election fell

<sup>133</sup> This was reported in detail in the *Bangkok Post* and *Nation* (Bangkok), during August-December 1993.



once and for all from over 30,000 to 10,000 or even less, just about what the PRK was saying in 1988-90, and there was no identification, or even mention, of new leaders. Akashi (above, p. 58) was no doubt disinformed, probably by one of the peculiar analyses for which his own '[Dis] Information and Education Component' became famous. Had there been no Khmer Rouge, the PRK/SOC could not have been defeated with the 'peace process' mechanism.

The military successes, reportedly followed by numerous desertions among the Khmer Rouge rank and file, demonstrated how much they had depended on foreign support. The joint offensive against them was also a direct threat to Sihanouk, who was counting on using them in his maneuvers for personal power. His traditional political technique before 1970 was to build as large a coalition as possible from incompatible elements, for the more contesting parties in a coalition, the easier it was to manipulate them. The two-party coalition which he proposed on June 3 was hardly sufficient, and he probably intended from the beginning to dissolve it on the slightest excuse, in order to make possible a wider coalition giving him greater authority. One of the purposes behind the 'secession' would have been to multiply the factions and create tension among them which only he could control.

Right after the election it seemed likely that it would be Sihanouk who would persist in including the Khmer Rouge, if they survived the unexpected onslaught launched by the coalition of FUNCINPEC, the CPP, and the BLDP; and later in 1993 that

prognosis seemed to be coming true, as reported in, "Ranariddh ready for constitution revamp talks", saying that Ranariddh and Sihanouk were trying to find a constitutional way to include the Khmer Rouge in the government and at the same time marginalize Hun Sen<sup>134</sup>. The launching pad for the shootout of July 1997 was already being laid.

<sup>134</sup> *New Straits Times*, Kuala Lumpur, 27 December 1993; see again Thion, "The Pattern of Cambodian Politics".

## The Constitution and the reorganized Royal Government

The constitution was drafted by a commission consisting of thirteen members, eight substitute members, four experts, and the Minister for Relations with Parliament. It was presided by the President of the Constituent Assembly, Son Sann or his Vice-President, Chea Sim. Of 24 members, besides the presiding officers, ten were CPP, ten were FUNCINPEC, and four were BLDP. Fifteen were ministers or deputy ministers; and nineteen were elected members of the assembly.

None of the old generation of CPP politicians, or from any party for that matter, was included except Son Sann and Chea Sim, potentially, in his capacity as deputy presiding officer, because he is Vice-President of the assembly. The commission's Vice-President, and probably the active leader, was Minister of Justice Chem Snguon, and the secretary ('*rapporteur*', as a more precise translation) was FUNCINPEC's Tao Seng Huor, Deputy Minister for the Environment. Most of them were from the groups I identified above as intellectuals or professionals; and the shrill objections from certain NGOs in Phnom Penh that the constitution was being written in secret by irresponsible politicians were misplaced. They appeared to be a generally non-Sihanoukist group<sup>135</sup>.

<sup>135</sup> The others, with party affiliation, in order of their official listing were Kan Man (F), Keat Chhon (C), Chhuor Leang Huot (C), Thor Peng Leat (C), Sam Rainsy (F), Sisowath Sirirat (F), Son Soubert (B), Som Chanbot (F), Un Ning (C), Loy Sim Chheang (F), Cheam Yeap (F), Pol Ham (B), Pou Sothirak (F), Sar Sa-at (B), Ing Keat (F), Ouk Rabun (C), Ung Phon (C), Ek Samol (C), Say Bory (B), Chan Sokh (?), Chhon Iem (C), Heng Vong Bunchhat (F), Khieu Rada (F).

After some indecision as to whether Cambodia would have a 'Chief of State' or a king, the commission opted for monarchy. The reason for indecision, or for suggesting the return to monarchy at all, which was certainly not the popular choice among the urban educated who dominated assembly and government, was the Sihanouk problem. All parties were on record as considering that Sihanouk must occupy a leading position, if only ceremonial. Probably most, even within FUNCINPEC, wanted his role to be only ceremonial, not that of a powerful executive.

Even if, however, as I believe, most of the leaders of all the political parties would have liked to see Sihanouk remain in Pyongyang without any input into domestic politics, the opportunistic political culture of Cambodia (and the 'stop in the mind') prevented any of them from saying this. If anyone had suggested that Sihanouk be kept out, all the others, even if they agreed, would have pounced on him with accusations of treason, or some equally serious offense. They were all mesmerized too by the belief that the 'people', especially the rural people, are devoted to Sihanouk, and that a reputation of anti-Sihanoukist would destroy whatever popular support they enjoy.

On the one hand, given Sihanouk's propensities, the decision for monarchy may have been good for Cambodia, for the country's history during the 1940s-1960s shows that it has been easier to draft a constitution depriving a king of real power, than to limit the role of chief of state. Perhaps there

was fear that even in a brief term as chief of state Sihanouk would make a new deal with the Khmer Rouge just when the three other main factions had agreed to destroy them, and had the ability to do so.

In contrast to the old monarchical constitution the king's power was very limited in that of 1993, and this was so specific that it must mean there was significant opposition to restoring the monarchy. Article 7 says the king occupies the throne, but does not hold power, and this is repeated in article 17 which insists that this limitation "absolutely cannot be amended". Vastly different from the old monarchical constitution, according to which the king 'granted' a constitution, articles 135-138 of the new charter make clear that it and parliament exist before the king and that he is chosen by them.

The monarchy is elective. The king may not choose his successor. That task is given to the Royal Council of the Throne, consisting of the President of the National Assembly, who in the absence of a king becomes Head of State; the Prime Minister; the Supreme Monks of both Buddhist Orders; and the First and Second Vice-Presidents of the National Assembly<sup>136</sup>. They must choose a new king from among the descendants, aged at least 30, of former kings "Ang Duong, or Norodom, or Sisowath", a redundant formulation, since the latter two were sons of Ang Duong, Sihanouk's great-great grandfather, through both his father

<sup>136</sup> The provision for the President of the National Assembly to become Head of State in the absence of a king is taken over from the pre-1970 constitution.

and his mother; and descendants of other sons of Ang Duong are so few and little known that they would have no chance of being chosen<sup>137</sup>.

The legislative body was the 120-member assembly chosen in the May election, and which after promulgation of the constitution became the "National Assembly", with a mandate for five years. The legislature was unicameral, like that of the PRK, but in contrast to the pre-1970 constitution and that of the Khmer Republic, both of which had partly appointed upper houses.

In 1999 a Senate was added. Its main function seems to have been to give prestigious titles to political figures who could not be fitted in elsewhere.

The government consists of a Prime Minister chosen from among the elected deputies of the winning party. The other ministers, whose numbers are not limited, do not have to be members of the assembly, but they may not be civil servants, businessmen, or industrialists, and they must be members of political parties represented in parliament (art. 100).

The last stipulation, together with the very large number of articles setting out social, medical, and educational services which the state must provide, reflects the socialist ideals of the PRK, which must have been attractive to some members of the other parties too, in spite of the articles of the constitution which stress that Cambodia is to follow a market economic system. Indeed, in

<sup>137</sup> The pre-1970 constitution merely said descendants of Ang Duong were eligible

order to support the social welfare provisions of the constitution, which are far more extensive and detailed than in any previous Cambodian constitution, and, if implemented would make Cambodia a truly 'welfare state', the free market economy would have to be tightly supervised and subjected to heavy taxation, after western European, not U.S. or Thai, models.

Obviously, this has not happened. Since 1993 Cambodia has followed the extreme free-marketeering of the U.S. and Thai models, with the predictable problems.

Provincial and lower level administration remained unchanged, and "shall be administered in accordance with conditions set in an organizational law", which means that the PRK/SOC administrative structure was left in place<sup>138</sup>. Apparently FUNCINPEC realized the impossibility of changing that, either in form or personnel, at that time.

The Provisional Government established following the election was reorganized in the new 'Royal Government of Cambodia' established on 29 October 1993<sup>139</sup>. Near equality between the two large parties was maintained, and a 'transitional clause' permitted the continuation of dual prime ministers for a period of five years (that is, until the next election in 1998), but some ministries were combined, the total number of personnel decreased from 65 to 51, and the changes in structure and personnel reflected jockeying both among the parties, and between the two apparent

<sup>138</sup> Constitution, articles 126-7.

<sup>139</sup> PPP, Vol. No. 23, 5-18 November 1993, p. 2.

factions of the CPP<sup>140</sup>. Twenty-nine members of the Provisional Government, twelve CPP, fifteen FUNCINPEC, and one each from BLDP and Moulinaka, were not kept on in the Royal Government, which had eight new faces, four CPP, three FUNCINPEC, and the new Secretary of State for Religious Affairs who was listed without party affiliation.

The new line-up showed some gain for the Chea Sim group within the CPP. Chea Sim himself moved up from Vice-President of the National Assembly to President, displacing Son Sann, whose son Son Soubert was Second Vice-President, with a FUNCINPEC man as First Vice-President. A presumed protégé of Chea Sim, Sar Kheng, was brought into the government as a Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior, but he may be balanced there by Im Chhun Lim of the Hun Sen group, a historian by training, an SOC ideologue, and a former member of the Supreme National Council. In Defence, however, the CPP side was represented by two of the youngest generals, Tea Banh and Chay Saing Yun, who were not listed in FUNCINPEC'S analysis of 'clans', but who were probably closer to Hun Sen than to Chea Sim. Of the twelve CPP members of the Provisional Government dropped from the Royal government, six were of the Hun Sen group and three Chea Sim men.

Still, of twenty-four CPP members of the government eleven were considered to be of the

<sup>140</sup> Details were published in PPP, and in the Khmer newspaper *Reaksmei Kampuchea* of 30 October.

Hun Sen group, with only two certain Chea Sim followers, while ten were not classified as to 'clan' in the FUNCINPEC analysis. Most of them, however, because of their relative youth or intellectual background could be presumed closer to Hun Sen than to Chea Sim.

The first report of the assembly debate on formation of the new government indicated that observers should henceforth pay as much attention to FUNCINPEC factions as to those within the CPP. Ranariddh complained that not all FUNCINPEC members voted for his proposals, and some of the disagreement concerned support for BLDP candidates, whose entry into the government was decided by horse-trading between the two big parties<sup>141</sup>. There was certainly a faction within FUNCINPEC lukewarm toward monarchy, especially of the Sihanouk variety, and this faction was probably headed by Sam Rainsy, one of their brightest young stars (who in 1994 was expelled from the party and from the National Assembly).

Contrary to anti-PRK/CPP prognoses over the previous years, a FUNCINPEC-BLDP alliance was not a foregone conclusion. The leaders of the BLDP and its parent organization, the KPNLF had been historically non-, even anti-, royalist, and younger, educated BLDP persons may find more congenial colleagues among the new CPP elite.

Because of this I made the following prognosis in 1993, "when the new regime is shaken out, it would not be surprising to see a new alignment

<sup>141</sup> Ker Munthit, "Cabinet Compromise", PPP, Vol. 2, No. 23, 5-18 November 1993.

opposing a group of technocrats and intellectuals, mostly of the younger generation from all three parties, and in general non-royalist, to old CPP party stalwarts, royalists, and opportunists". This seemed for a long time to have been inaccurate, but in 2006 it may be in the process of realization, with Ranariddh, Chakrapong and Sirivudh put on ice, as it were, harsh criticism in the local press, for the first time, of royalty in general, Chea Sim on the sidelines since his humiliating quick trip to Bangkok in 2003 to enable Hun Sen to be re-installed as Prime Minister, Sam Rainsy back from momentary exile, his parliamentary immunity restored, and promising cooperation with Hun Sen for the good of the country, and the October 2006 coup within FUNCINPEC ousting Ranariddh as party chief and consolidating power in the group favorable to cooperation with the CPP.

The formation of the new government in 1993 did not meet with the approval of those who had desired regime change, and a good example of their petulance was a propaganda tract by Brad Adams, then of the United Nations Center for Human Rights (UNCHR), now of Human Rights Watch, presented in the form of a submission to the U.S. Senate on 4 September 1997<sup>142</sup>.

<sup>142</sup> Michael Vickery, "From Info-Ed to the UN Center for Human Rights", PPP, vol. 7, no. 7, April 10-24, 1998. In its following issue, the PPP published a craven apology, in spite of no offer by any of the persons concerned to publish a complaint or refutation. Michael Hayes, publisher of PPP, told me they had threatened to sue, and he could not risk that. I have now discovered that my article has been removed from the on-line edition of the Post. This illustrates the view of press freedom held by UNCHR, and the courage of the publisher of "Cambodia's Independent News & Views".

Adams began his presentation to the Senate with distortions of the 1993 election results, saying "the royalist FUNCINPEC party and its allies won a clear majority of seats...69 of 120", and "62% of the Cambodian electorate voted to replace Hun Sen and the...CPP". Adams here was mesmerized by the myth of the 'anti-communist resistance', that strange creature slapped together by U.S. and Chinese pressure in 1982. Perhaps the one seat won by Moulinaka might legitimately be added as a FUNCINPEC ally, but the KPNLF, from which BLDP descended, had a history perhaps more anti-royalist than even the CPP. Once they left the battlefield, BLDP, and LDP, the other descendent of the KPNLF, were in no way natural allies of FUNCINPEC, as we have seen in the shifts in parliament since 1993. Half of BLDP joined in alliance with CPP, and the leaders of LDP, which did not win any seats, have been working with one or another CPP leader. An honest assessment would be that FUNCINPEC and its allies won  $58 + 1 = 59$ , against CPP with 51, and both were faced with 10 BLDP representatives who might go either way.

Even more distorted was Adams' claim that 62% of the voters were anti-CPP, a total obtained by taking all non-CPP votes as in favor of FUNCINPEC. The latter got roughly 45%, CPP 38%, BLDP 4%, and 16 minor parties altogether 11%. Some of those minor parties, however, were expressly in favor of cooperation with CPP, if they won any seats, and even more of them were outspokenly anti-royalist and republican, thus not

at all potential allies of FUNCINPEC. Counting the votes party by party shows that slightly over half of the voters chose parties which were historically, or explicitly, anti-royalist.

Contrary to the picture Adams foisted on Congress, the election was very close, fully justifying a coalition government, such as is common in Western European parliamentary democracies. There was no "landslide victory" (Adams' words), and to say that "the UN and the international community capitulated and allowed the rules to be changed in the middle of the game", shows either that Adams was faking it or that he had never read the relevant documents.

Disinformation concerning the election, the coalition government, and the secession has been perpetuated by careless, or malicious purveyors of info-ganda. The worst, ostensibly academic, treatment was by Brown and Zasloff in 1998; and as late as 2005 the *Phnom Penh Post* was still pushing the counterfactual canard that "Funcinpec won a UN-organized election in 1993 but was forced to share power with the CPP when Hun Sen threatened to set up an autonomous zone covering most of the provinces east of the Mekong"<sup>143</sup>.

As noted above, one great defect of the Paris Agreement was that it did not provide clearly for a transition to a new government after the election, but following the Paris and UNTAC rules it would

<sup>143</sup> Brown and Zasloff, pp. 160-161; "News Analysis" by Vong Sokheng, in "CPP-Funcinpec union unlikely, say insiders", PPP 13/27, 31/12/2004-13/1/2005, p. 5.

not have been possible for FUNCINPEC to immediately form a government, even if they had won over 50% of the votes and seats. In fact, the CPP had an absolute right to remain in power alone for up to three months, the quick formation of a coalition was of more benefit to FUNCINPEC than to CPP, and the top UNTAC leadership had considered the possibility of such a coalition in the event of a close election result as early as the beginning of May.

### Effects of the UN-intervention

Although the 1993 election did not succeed in its goal of 'regime change', it saddled Cambodia with a 'Bourbon restoration' of royalty and former urban upper class who in their double decade absence learned nothing and forgot nothing, and assumed they had a right to recover their pre-1975 privileges. This has made good governance difficult, and provided the basis for the constant carping issuing from foreign-backed NGOs and the human rights crowd.

As Joel Charny wrote, "rarely mentioned are the class divisions between the traditional Francophone elite and the lower middle-class government officials with elite aspirations. Their different experiences after 1975, when many of the former group waited out the conflicts in France and many of the latter group suffered first genocide and then occupation in Cambodia, contribute to the gulf between them"<sup>144</sup>.

The elite returnees, moreover, at the insistence of their foreign backers, were allowed to retain their foreign citizenship and passports, giving them a bolthole to access whenever they found themselves in trouble. This allowed them to talk and act irresponsibly. If they encouraged a strike of factory workers or a political protest which turned violent, or were involved in an attempted coup, or violated the law on criminal defamation, they could cut and run, leaving their local

<sup>144</sup> Joel Charny, "Keep hope alive during Cambodian crisis", PPP 7/21, 18/9-1/10, 1998, p. 11.

subordinates to face the music. Later, after noise from their foreign backers, intervention by the king, and an obsequious apology, they could always return.

The Paris Agreement broke the close relationship with Vietnam, and a new opening was made for cultivation of ethnic hatred. Cambodia was also deprived of Vietnamese help and advice in the transition to capitalism and a free market, which is being managed in Vietnam in a less disruptive way; and Cambodia was pushed into a closer relationship with Thailand, which became a model for politics and the economy, but which at this date (2006) shows a worse record than Cambodia in the areas in which Cambodia is faulted—corruption, dubious justice, mysterious disappearances of regime opponents, and inability to form a constitutional government.

Cambodia since 1993 has thus been a victim of the same processes as the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Just as occurred in the so-called Soviet bloc, the sudden leap from a type of socialism to the free market meant, after 1988-89, a collapse of social services and education, which in spite of Cambodia's precarious situation had shown impressive development after 1979<sup>145</sup>. During 1979-

<sup>145</sup> There is a fairly large, but now neglected, literature offering positive treatments of Cambodia after 1979. See, in order of publication: Vickery, *Kampuchea Politics, Economics and Society*; Eva Mysliwiec, *Punishing the Poor, The International Isolation of Kampuchea*, Southampton, Oxfam, 1988; Grant Curtis, *Cambodia A Country Profile*, Stockholm, Sweden, 1990, which extended the treatment of Vickery, *Kampuchea* up to 1988; Chantou Boua, *PPP*, Vol. 3, No. 25, 16-19 December 1994; Margaret Slocumb, *The Peoples's Republic of Kampuchea 1979-1989, the Revolution after Pol Pot*, Chiang Mai, Silkworm Books, 2003. Better known, however, are negative treatments such as Evan Gottesman, *After the Khmer Rouge*, Yale, 2003, on which see Luke Hunt's flattering but perverse review, *PPP* 13/27, Dec 31-Jan 13, 2005, p. 13, and Michael Vickery, "Wrong on Gottesman", letter criticizing Luke Hunt's review, *PPP*, 14/2, 28/1-10/2, 2005, p. 13.

91, there were 12 years of developing and expanding participation in public affairs, the "modernization and democratization of many social... relations", which Stephen Heder, among Cambodia specialists very nearly a professional enemy of the PRK/SOC and Hun Sen, called a prerequisite for "the task of building democracy". UNTAC put an end to this, and restored a system of "patrimonialist politicians" (Heder), in which old attitudes and practices have become dominant, and in which the "lower middle-class government officials with elite aspirations" (Charny), after their socialist models collapsed, and under constant pressure from American neo-liberalism and its Southeast Asian acolytes, could see no way than to take over for their own use the old 'patrimonialist' practices<sup>146</sup>.

There was a decline in living standards for many, but sudden wealth for those who could make use of the new market freedom, too often in ways which if not illegal, were dubious. Luxuries flowed in for those who could pay for them, the most visible being private automobiles. Less visible was the uncontrolled market in weapons, and Cambodia soon came to resemble Thailand with many people carrying handguns, and willing to use them to settle personal disputes. The weapons, moreover, are not leftovers from Cambodia's own war of the 1970s (the country is not 'awash' in old

<sup>146</sup> See Heder, *PPP* 4/4, 24 Feb-9 March 1995, p. 19, and my article, "Whither Cambodian democracy?", *PPP*, 15-30 May 1997, and in an abbreviated version in *The Nation* (Bangkok), 16 May 1997. It is amusing to cite Heder, who certainly did not intend his observations to be used in this way. See again, Serge Thion's excellent "The Pattern of Cambodian Politics", in Serge Thion, *Watching Cambodia*, Bangkok, White Lotus (1993), pp. 119-136.



war weapons, as the journo like to say), but the newest models, obviously coming from abroad, mostly from Thailand.

Although the economic effects of their 'Great Leap' out of a form of socialism into a free market were becoming apparent before the arrival of UNTAC's roughly 20,000 contingent, those effects were exacerbated by the flood of new money brought in to finance the UN operation, and as salaries for the highly-paid and free-spending new foreign community of UNTAC, Western aid organizations, plus hangers-on, NGO organizers, and journalists<sup>147</sup>.

UNTAC left soon after the election, but a large number of the new foreign community remained to work with the dozens of NGOs established during 1993, many of them as activist groups against the Cambodian government. A large new American contingent settled in with USAID and the Asia Foundation, famous for their partisan activities in the 1960s, and they brought generous funding for a number of the new NGOs<sup>148</sup>.

This new international community which descended on Cambodia after the 1991 Paris Agreement saw Cambodia at its worst since the early years of the PRK right after 1979. They had not seen the steady development of 1979-1989, nor had they read of it. They knew little of Cambodia and had been misled by the anti-Phnom Penh

<sup>147</sup> Even relatively low level foreign employees hired locally by an UNTAC component could earn over US\$7000 per month, in salary plus per diem, tax-free, as I was informed by one beneficiary of the system.

<sup>148</sup> Asia Foundation was expelled by Sihanouk in the 1960s, and within the Cambodia studies milieu it is a commonplace that it was then a CIA subsidiary.

and anti-Vietnam propaganda which had dominated in the Western media. Thus they imagined that the gross inequalities, corruption, and violence which they saw in 1991-1993 had been typical since 1979, and that the task of UNTAC was to oversee the replacement of an evil regime with a better one under which those problems would be alleviated. When this did not happen, they blamed the Cambodian leaders, not what had been imposed on them by changes in the world economy, or by the interference of the western 'great powers' and China via UNTAC<sup>149</sup>.

Thus Cambodia, since 1993, has continued to be the object of the same type of mis- and dis- information which characterized the 1980s, as the regime-change project has continued, through a series of political crises, including, in 1997 and 1998, murderous attacks on a meeting led by opposition politician Sam Rainsy and on an automobile convoy carrying Prime Minister Hun Sen, for which, in the first case, the international community and their journo-propagandists blamed Hun Sen, but in the second were certain that it was a fake scenario which he arranged; two more national elections in 1998 and 2003; a terrorist assault in 2000 organized by U.S.-based dual-passport Cambodians, which the journo-apparatchiks tried to dismiss as a CPP setup; a phony Islamic terrorist plot with arrests and imprisonment on the flimsiest evidence, which the U.S. embassy supported; and an attempt to discredit Prime Minister Hun Sen with an accusation, supported by falsification

<sup>149</sup> See Brown and Zasloff's 'failed state', pp. 1-2, 271.

of a crucial document by a Paris-based Cambodian organization, that a new treaty with Vietnam gave away Cambodian territory (below, pp. 184, ff.). Through it all has been the tortuous dealing with the Khmer Rouge, which led ultimately to the most serious post-UNTAC crisis, the mini-civil war of 1997.

The first political surprise after the 1993 election was invitations to visit the U.S. given to the two SOC officials most often blamed by journo for instigating election violence against FUNCINPEC, Sar Kheng and Sin Song. The former was invited in November 1993 and the latter in February 1994. Sar Kheng's invitation was official, "to expose [him] to the mechanics of democracy and...wean him away from the influence of Vietnam...", as it was quaintly reported, and Sin Song was invited privately by an American Senator who opposed lifting the embargo against Vietnam (a real VWR). As reported in the press, the State Department said "Sin Song did not fall under any of the visa ineligibilities set forth in our immigration law"; "U.S. officials say they had no evidence that Sin Song was directly implicated in terrorist activities" although, according to a journo-activist of the time, Sin Song was "a former minister, implicated as a leader of last year's short-lived secession attempt and an organizer of CPP death squads"; and "firm evidence emerged in early 1993 that Sin Song was abusing his position by coordinating squads of secret police tasked in assassinating and intimidating political opposition, UN investigators, human rights activists, and opposition party officials say". The two CPP figures

who, accurately or not, had been most often identified as responsible for pre-election violence against other parties were thus implicitly, and in the case of Sin Song very explicitly, exonerated by the U.S. or else, as some cynics would have it, they were rewarded for organizing the violence which, by undermining a possible FUNCINPEC-CPP alliance, favored U.S. plans. Or, perhaps the accusations against them had just been wrong<sup>150</sup>.

Responsibility for pre-election violence in 1992-93 has never been adequately explained. An Asian diplomat with long experience in Cambodia told me that he believed the pre-election violence, to the extent it was centrally planned, had been organized by a third person, also a security official whom he knew rather well, and concerning whom, I was told by a person well placed in the CPP milieu, they had begun to consider since before the election as perhaps too well connected to the KR. The KR, of course, along with the Great Powers behind UNTAC, were the fiercest opponents of a pre-election CPP-FUNCINPEC coalition. Shawcross, in his funny "Lessons of Cambodia" (above, p. 96) also blamed that person, but perhaps only because he accepted the new U.S. line on Sar Kheng and Sin Song as possibly born-again democrats.

<sup>150</sup> Sar Kheng's trip was reported in PPP, vol. 2, no. 24, 19 November-2 December 1993, in Nate Thayer, "New govt: who's really in control"; and Sin Song's invitation was reported in PPP vol. 3, no. 3, 11-24 February 1994, Nate Thayer, "Fury over Sin Song's trip to US". Information on Sin Song's American patron is from *Indochina Interchange*, Vol. 4 no 1, March 1994.

The invitations to Sar Kheng and Sin Song prefigured another interesting shift in the factional balance, which involved American interest in Cambodia, and which represented a surprising shift in the U.S. move to establish contacts within the new regime. This was the journalistic repositioning of Sar Kheng, believed, until after the formation of the new government, to be leader of a young 'hard line' anti-Hun Sen faction within the CPP.

The Americans, displeased at the ability of the CPP to preserve its hegemony in the new coalition, seemed to be playing a new card in Cambodian factional politics, giving support to Sar Kheng, previously reputed to be of the more rigid communist faction of Chea Sim and a rival of Hun Sen, and to Sin Song, clearly out of favor with Hun Sen since the secession. At the same time Sar Kheng began recruiting as advisers a number of intellectuals from the LPD who had spent years fighting against the PRK on the Thai border or in exile in the West, in particular in the U.S. By 1995 Sar Kheng, among the politically active foreign community in Phnom Penh, had been transformed from hard-line communist to the new hope for democracy against the intransigent Hun Sen, and Sar Kheng's reputed patron, Chea Sim, was transfigured from ex-Khmer Rouge communist to benign supporter of Buddhism. As noted above, Ron Abney of the IRI said they would support the 'moderate' CPP faction if it broke away (above, p. 13, below, p. 182).

During its first post-UNTAC year the new government was still forced to devote attention to the Khmer Rouge problem. The UNTAC intervention did not bring peace. Armed conflict--war--continued into 1994 between the government and the KR. The latter still controlled significant areas in the North and far South, and rendered much of the country insecure, even though after Paris they lost the international support and recognition they had enjoyed (see above). They still, however, could cut timber to sell to private Thai companies backed by the Thai army. And the war continued.

By June 1993 the Khmer Rouge were trying to negotiate entrance into the new royal government through the back door, and all during late 1993 and 1994, Sihanouk was wheeling and dealing to bring the KR completely into the coalition, proposing even to illegally amend the constitution and hold new elections especially for the purpose. Another rival faction in the grand coalition would have given him the type of leverage to rule which he had enjoyed in the 1960s, and the KR could be expected to use him against their real enemies in Hun Sen's party.

Hun Sen managed to block those maneuvers, in the process, in early July 1994, quashing a coup attempt led by one of Sihanouk's sons. A few days later, 7 July 1994, such games were stopped with a law outlawing the KR, jointly supported by the two big parties in the government, but opposed by Sihanouk, Sam Rainsy, Amnesty International, and Julio Jeldres, Director of the Australian-financed

Khmer Institute of Democracy and Sihanouk's official biographer.<sup>151</sup>

It is worth reviewing some of the details.

In November 1993 Julio Jeldres' Khmer Institute of Democracy had sponsored a conference of representatives from Khmer NGOs to discuss the Khmer Rouge and immigration. There were demands to limit the entrance of foreigners [read 'Vietnamese'] to Cambodia, and the head of the Khmer Students and Intellectuals Association said the government and the Khmer Rouge should negotiate.<sup>152</sup> The following year Jeldres tried to organize a non-government forum in his Khmer Institute of Democracy to discuss the draft law outlawing the Khmer Rouge, the purpose of course being to drum up opposition to the law. Ranariddh forbade Sam Rainsy and Norodom Sirivudh, the government members most vocally opposed to the law, to attend, and Chheang Vun, a CPP member of the assembly designated as new ambassador to Australia, accused Jeldres of interfering

<sup>151</sup> Although Rainsy in the end voted for it. Julio Jeldres was an immigrant from Allende's Chile to Australia in the early 1970s, who managed to get into Sihanouk's entourage, and became an English-language propagandist against Sihanouk's enemies, which then included the PRK/SOC, and in particular their supporters among western academics. After the Paris Agreement was signed Jeldres received \$A20,000 Australian financing, arranged by Gareth Evans, to set up a "Khmer Institute of Democracy", which was "the brainchild of Cambodian exiles in California", and which continued the same propaganda functions (Leo Dobbs, "Former Royal Aide Opens Think Tank", PPP, 1/10, 20 November-3 December, 1992, p. 2, 'former' referring to the fact that Jeldres had announced his resignation from Sihanouk's service, to which he later returned, becoming Sihanouk's official biographer.).

<sup>152</sup> Mang Channo, "NGOs urge action on foreign workers", PPP, 2/23, 5-18 November 1993, p. 19.

in internal affairs and threatened him with expulsion. This was quite piquant, for Jeldres is a naturalized Australian and his KID, at that time the main NGO hothouse for Khmer Rouge propaganda in Phnom Penh, was financed by Australia, and was apparently a project in which Foreign Minister Gareth Evans had a direct interest.<sup>153</sup>

This does not mean that Jeldres in a crypto-commie KR supporter. Everything he has written, as well as his associations, suggest that he is somewhere on the far right, and, like the Cambodian rightists whom he supports, believed that drawing the KR into the government could further the main right-wing goal--get rid of Hun Sen<sup>154</sup>.

Because of the opposition of Sihanouk, who had faxed a message that he would refuse to sign the anti-KR law, the assembly then had to vote a law authorizing Chea Sim, as acting chief of state, to sign the bill outlawing the Khmer Rouge.<sup>155</sup>

<sup>153</sup> Not long before the election in May 1993 William Shawcross made a documentary film in Cambodia, including a scene of students in Jeldres' Institute discussing politics in Khmer, with Jeldres presiding with a benign smile on his face. What the students were saying was strongly sympathetic to the Khmer Rouge, lost of course on Shawcross, but who, by that time probably did not care (whether Jeldres understands Khmer is not known to me, but he must certainly have had some idea of what went on in his classes). On Shawcross' deviating, and devious, positions see further in *Kicking the Vietnam Syndrome*.

<sup>154</sup> PPP, 3/17, 26 August-8 September, 1994, with its record of sympathy for those trying to undermine the government, slanted a report against Chheang Vun ("Controversial Vun set for Canberra posting"), without clearly informing its readers what had been at issue, and at the time the incident occurred did not report it at all. In December 1994, PPP publisher Michael Hayes acknowledged to me that the headline about Chheang Vun had been bad, but excused himself on grounds of fatigue.

<sup>155</sup> *Bangkok Post*, 5 July 1994, "Inside Indochina", "Sihanouk balks at outlaw of KR".

In an interview with the *Far Eastern Economic Review* in June 1994, Sihanouk admitted he wanted political power, and blamed Hun Sen for blocking him. This provoked a long public answer from Hun Sen in which he rejected concessions to the PDK, and also rejected constitutional changes to give more power to Sihanouk, which had been proposed to him by Prince Sirivudh, Sihanouk's half-brother, who held the posts of FUNCINPEC Secretary-General, and Foreign Minister.<sup>156</sup> In the context of Cambodian society and political history, Hun Sen's bold stance against Sihanouk could be seen as unforgivable *lèse-majesté*.

In the midst of these pro-Khmer Rouge maneuvers the tensions came to a head on 2 July 1994 when the two leaders of the 1993 post-election secession movement, Prince Chakrapong and Security Minister Sin Song, were caught in the act, apparently, of fomenting a coup. It was put down quickly, and another high official in the security services, Sin Sen, whom some considered to have been more involved in pre-election violence than Sar Kheng and Sin Song (see above), was revealed as deeply involved in the coup preparations, and was arrested. At the request of the King and Queen, Chakrapong was allowed to leave the country, but Sin Song and several others were arrested, later tried and most of them found guilty, although Sin Song escaped

<sup>156</sup> This appeared in *The Nation* (Bangkok), 24 June 1994, "Sihanouk and Hun Sen at opposite ends", text of Hun Sen's letter to Sihanouk concerning Sihanouk's desire to assume power.

to Thailand. This second coup attempt by Chakrapong and Sin Song, coming in the middle of the tensions surrounding policy toward the PDK and Sihanouk's evident desire for increased power, no doubt convinced Hun Sen that his domestic enemies, including some princes and their allies, would stop at nothing to remove him.

In this connection it is interesting that the names of two FUNCINPEC generals who would later be involved in the 1997 shootout, Nhiek Bun Chhay and Kroch Yoeun, were mentioned as having been the object of an arrest order by Sin Song, which started the ball rolling.

The results of this coup fiasco propelled William Shawcross into what is perhaps his most disgraceful sentence. Shawcross, like most journo's, had often faulted the CPP for the pre-election violence in 1992-1993, allegedly organized by Sar Kheng and Sin Song. Then in 1996, in a long tirade listing subsequent misdeeds of Hun Sen and the CPP, he wrote, "People's Party [CPP] officials opposed to Hun Sen have been sentenced to long prison terms for plotting coups". This was so twisted I at first could not think of what might have been meant. But it must have referred to the arrest of Sin Song after the coup planned in July 1994, led by him and Prince Chakrapong. Apparently Shawcross would forgive Sin Song's 1993 election misdeeds as long as he later turned against Hun Sen.<sup>157</sup>

<sup>157</sup> "Tragedy in Cambodia", NYRB 14 Nov 1996, p. 43. For fuller treatment of this and other of Shawcross' peculiar musings see *Kicking the Vietnam Syndrome*.

Putting the KR outside the law in 1994 did not end that problem, and continued fighting made many areas insecure. As the KR gradually lost their foreign support, however, they fell apart and different factions among them negotiated with the CPP or with FUNCINPEC for favorable terms for re-integrating.

Splits also became apparent in the Phnom Penh parties. Sam Rainsy, whom I depicted above as perhaps the leading non-royalist within FUNCINPEC, and who became Minister of Economy and Finance after the 1993 election, was in October 1994 expelled from the FUNCINPEC party and the National Assembly. The precise reasons are obscure. What is of note is that in 1995 he formed his own political party called 'Khmer Nation', which based its appeal on violent racial propaganda against Vietnamese, and accusations against the government of Hun Sen that it is too subordinate to Vietnam. One person who joined Rainsy in the new party was Kong Korm, from the CPP, who had been PRK ambassador to Vietnam in the 1980s, and Minister of Foreign Affairs between 1984 and 1987. In explanation of his switch, he declared that he had always been anti-Vietnamese.

The formation of 'Khmer Nation', in 1995, changed to 'Sam Rainsy Party' just before the election of 1998, has had a baleful effect on Cambodian politics. Although claiming to represent 'Democracy' against the 'Communists' of the CPP, Rainsy's tactics resemble more the fascist methods in Europe in the 1930s--violent racism,

against Vietnamese, concealed when he speaks in English and French, but in full force in Khmer, and horrifying to the European election monitors who take the trouble to listen to his speeches with interpreters; populist rabble-rousing, encouraging factory workers and the urban poor to strike and make unrealizable demands--both tactics which do win votes, but which Rainsy, an inveterate capitalist money man, would probably strike down severely if he ever achieved power.

He has existed on foreign support in the most reactionary American milieus, the IRI, Senator Mitch McConnell and Congressman Dana Rohrabacker and the overseas Cambodian communities in which anti-Vietnamese feelings are rife.

In an interview, Ron Abney, a long-time IRI director in Phnom Penh, said that IRI had decided in 1996 that "Rainsy's party as the only legitimate pro-democracy, non-government party" deserved their support.<sup>158</sup>

We have noted what IRI means by 'democracy', and given their record in other countries (see above, p. 67), one must ask whether they see Rainsy as the potential leader of a Cambodian ARENA, and whether Rainsy seeks to emulate the methods of IRI's Central American heroes.

"Three years after the international carnival of the UN-organized national election in Cambodia in May 1993 (I wrote in 1996), pessimism prevails among most of the continuing observers of Cambodian affairs<sup>159</sup>. It would seem that what I

<sup>158</sup> PPP 13/24, 19/11-2/12, 2004

<sup>159</sup> The 1996 paper was entitled "Cambodia Three Years After", and was published in translation as "Kambodja En rättvis betraktelse", in the Swedish political magazine *Kommentar* Nr 2/96 (1996), pp. 5-24. Excerpts here, to p. 145, are in quotation marks.

wrote, with conscious exaggeration, just after the signing of the Paris Agreement in 1991, 'Cambodia survived the war, American bombing, Lon Nol's incompetence, Pol Pot's brutality, and the poverty of the last 12 years, but it may not survive this peace', may have been more prescient than I desired<sup>160</sup>.

"Three years later, the war which the Cambodian population thought would end with the international intervention and election, continued, although at a somewhat reduced level; but its most serious effect for development, an inflated military budget and military control of scarce resources such as forests may be greater threats to progress than the situation before 1993.

"Although certain macroeconomic indicators seem positive--inflation is under control, and there is some real economic growth as measured by free-market standards--the disparity between small very rich groups obviously living far beyond their legitimate incomes and the mass of the population whose standard of living declines is increasingly evident with each passing year. The state, moreover, is too weak to collect normal levels of taxation, and one result of the economic imbalance and the siphoning of wealth into dubious channels is that no state salaries provide even a fraction of the income necessary for a minimum decent life, and all civil servants must have other sources, either by neglecting their

<sup>160</sup> This article, "Will Cambodia Survive the Peace", was also published in Swedish translation as "Överlever Kambodja 'freden'", *Kommentar*, Nr 1-2/1992, p. 3.

duties to engage in other legitimate employment, or through corruption. Of course, education, medical care, and even minimal social services have fallen below their levels in the last half of the 1980s.

"International donors are aware of these imbalances, and together with plans for loans to Cambodia, they are asking why local resources cannot be mobilized more effectively. The resources are certainly there, for there is obviously much wealth being wasted on conspicuous consumption. Mobilization means first of all adequate taxation, and there is no sign that the National Assembly would democratically vote the taxes required. If they did, they might be charged by business interests, both local and foreign, with interference in the free market. This is an area in which the tools given to Cambodia by the West in 1993 are inadequate for the tasks Cambodia has been forced to face.

"The international community in Phnom Penh, and most of the international media, complain that in spite of the great favor done to Cambodia by the Great Powers in bringing democracy to the country, the ungrateful Cambodians, in particular the 'communists' of the Cambodian People's Party, have refused to implement a true multi-party system, and that within the existing government coalition the CPP has held on to more power than they were entitled to after 'losing' the election which FUNCINPEC 'won'. The government, they say, continues to intimidate opponents, harass the press, engage in corruption, and maintain a regime

characterized by gross human rights violations. Naturally, these critics blame the government, rather than objective international conjunctures, for the weak economy and ensuing social injustice."

As Mr. Chang Song, once Minister of Information in the Khmer Republic government of 1970-75, later reminded *Phnom Penh Post* readers, the human rights record of the present state is far superior to that of the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s (the so-called golden age), when Cambodia was dominated by people now favored by foreign interventionists and who have been conniving since 1993 to secure more power for themselves<sup>161</sup>.

"Indeed, most of the foreign media which takes an interest in Cambodia, encouraged by many of the foreign-backed NGOs which sprouted like mushrooms under UNTAC, and sections of the foreign community working in large international organizations, are engaged in a campaign to demonize the Cambodian government reminiscent of U.S.-led propaganda against Cambodia and Vietnam in the 1980s. In their latest move, NGOs are demanding that the large donor nations should

<sup>161</sup> Chang Song, "Democratic reforms need support; Lessons being learned by Govt", *PPP*, Vol. 4/26, 29/12, 1995-11/1, 1996, pp. 8-9, noting that Sam Rainsy's father, Sam Sary, disappeared, presumably murdered, after opposing the government in the 1950s, while today Rainsy is "free to shuttle in and out of the country... free to launch campaigns to promote his agenda..."; that Ieu Koeus, head of the Democrat Party opposed to King Sihanouk was killed by a grenade thrown into his party's headquarters, and another of that party's activists, Keng Vannsak, was imprisoned and tortured, both for no more than engaging in legitimate political campaigns. Chang Song went to the U.S. after 1975, and opened a store, which was trashed by right-wing Cambodian emigré fanatics when he was seen to be sympathetic to the PRK/SOC.

put conditions on their aid to Cambodia, pending political changes, a demand also made by the leading opposition politician, Sam Rainsy, who outside of the Khmer Rouge, is the leading manipulator of anti-Vietnamese chauvinism to further his political goals."<sup>162</sup>

Some important international aid organizations took similar positions. In late 1995 Ramses Amer and I were engaged by the Swedish International Development Aid (SIDA) organization, which, given Sweden's Social Democratic background, one would have expected to be sympathetic to the problems of a damaged third world country trying to recover according to a moderately socialist programme, to conduct documentary research and interviews within Cambodia and prepare a report for SIDA on "Democracy and Human Rights in Cambodia". Our report was relatively sympathetic to the CPP and the government, and we considered that this was an honest position to take. We were astonished that at the upper levels of SIDA the dominant opinion was that their report should have damned Phnom Penh. In April 1996 a special seminar on our report was held in Stockholm (which I appreciated for the free trip to Europe), at which, to oppose us, they invited Dennis McNamara whose UNTAC component, as described above, was an anti-SOC, covertly even pro-KR propaganda unit, and so-called Cambodia specialist Laura Summers, who was the last surviving pro-KR propagandist among reco

<sup>162</sup> *The Nation* (Bangkok), 3 June 1996 Opinion, p. A5, "Politics left off the aid donors' agenda".



gnized scholars. At the "Third International Conference on Kampuchea", 25-26 July, 1987, in Bangkok she had declared emotionally in favor of the CGDK (whose goal at the time was to displace, if possible militarily destroy, the PRK); and she appealed for international recognition of the CGDK, saying "From England, the motherland of parliaments, we wish you [CGDK leaders] well", at the same time alluding to the virtues of the Thatcher government in supporting the CGDK<sup>163</sup>. In spite of the tendency of the Stockholm seminar, I think her effort to give Mrs. Thatcher a leg up by evoking British support for the CGDK, while dropping Mrs. Thatcher's name to give respectability to the KR, would have embarrassed SIDA if they had been aware of it, but an interesting facet of our Stockholm seminar was that the 'ringers' called in to oppose Ramses Amer and myself hardly uttered a word, preferring to work against us *en coulisse*, as has been typical of groups desiring to maintain some degree of respectability while more or less covertly advancing positions which have lost all respectability<sup>164</sup>.

"The re-emergence of violent anti-Vietnamese xenophobia is among the most troubling

<sup>163</sup> The information cited here is from an official publication of some of the speeches of the conference printed in a booklet issued by the "Department of Press and Information of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea", dated August 1987.

<sup>164</sup> If any reader is curious about details, our report on "Democracy and Human Rights" has been on deposit at the library of the NGO Coordinating Committee for Cambodia in Phnom Penh, and if requested I will be happy to provide via e-mail the text of my written comments on the seminar.

manifestations of Cambodian politics since 1993. This was a dark side of Cambodian politics throughout the independent kingdom and Khmer Republic (1954-1975), and it reached its murderous high point under the regime of Pol Pot's Democratic Kampuchea. The PRK-SOC, after 1979, became the first government in modern Cambodia to renounce anti-Vietnamese chauvinism as a bedrock of Cambodian nationalism and patriotism, and to actively promote friendship with Vietnam and with Vietnamese in Cambodia. Their opponents in the CGDK, encouraged by the support of the U.S. and China, who saw the CGDK as a tool in their own anti-Vietnam policies, continued the chauvinism of the Khmer Republic and the Khmer Rouge, and one result of the Paris Agreement was to bring chauvinist politics back into Cambodia, where in the election campaign, FUNCINPEC and the BLDP, particularly the latter, indulged in anti Vietnamese propaganda as violent as that of the PDK.

"Some elements of the new foreign community, apparently intoxicated by the emigré propaganda to which they had been exposed in the U.S. or France before arriving in Cambodia in 1992-93, and perhaps also sympathetic to U.S. regime goals, did little to discourage this resurgence of racism. In its first issue the American-owned *Phnom Penh Post* ran an article on Vietnamese within Cambodia. Interviewing only representatives of FUNCINPEC, BLDP, and PDK, whose anti-Vietnamese positions were well known, *Phnom Penh Post* repeated without comment their assertions, such

as, "UNTAC is ignoring the reality of Cambodian history", it was the Vietnamese presence which was causing the war, "we have to get our country back from foreign occupation", "we just cannot mix with these people...the Vietnamese are warmongers", "at stake here is the issue of a 'Cambodian' Cambodia, and not a 'Vietnamized' Cambodia where foreigners were to be given the right to take part in the elections"<sup>165</sup>. These were quotations respectively from Ieng Mouly of the BLDP, Veng Sereyvuth of FUNCINPEC, and Khieu Samphan of the PDK. There were no opinions from Cambodians or foreign Cambodia specialists known to be more sympathetic to Khmer-Vietnamese friendship.

"Now that anti-Vietnamese racism has again become rooted in Cambodian politics, foreign critics blame the government when Vietnamese suffer, yet also blame the government when action is taken against newspapers which incite racism; and the darling among the dissidents favored by the foreign community and press, Sam Rainsy, who formed his own party, Khmer Nation after expulsion from FUNCINPEC in October 1994, is the most vocal of all in propagating anti-Vietnamese chauvinism."<sup>166</sup>

<sup>165</sup> Sara Colm, "Factions, UNTAC Debate Electoral Law", PPP, 1/1, 10 July 1992.

<sup>166</sup> This was noticed as early as the 1993 election campaign. PPP, Vol. 2 No. 9, 23 April-6 May 1993; p. 4, Kevin Barrington, "Rainsy Bemoans Censorship, UN Cites Racism". The prominent FUNCINPEC member, Mr. Sam Rainsy was refused permission to broadcast one of his election speeches because it was considered too racist in his attacks on Vietnamese. UN officials said "the text did not take into account the responsibilities involved in the freedom of expression".... "The freedom of expression also has responsibilities". "It was racist in the extreme"; "He used it [the word 'Yuan'] repeatedly, insistently, emphatically, and with some degree of venom". The four

It is noteworthy that the Khmer who have most insistently beaten the anti-Vietnamese drum since 1992 have been returnees from 10 to 20 years abroad, who seem to have learned their 'traditional hatred of Vietnam' in American and French universities. It resembles the situation in Israel where, as Noam Chomsky has described it, many of the most fanatic activists against the Palestinians are persons who grew up in the United States and then migrated to Israel.

Anti-Vietnam sentiments also pervade one of the later academic treatments, by Brown and Zasloff, in their description of the CPP as 'tainted' by "association with Vietnamese mentors" and as having "followed Vietnamese tanks into Phnom Penh in 1979".<sup>167</sup>

"Another of the latest mantras (in 1996) of a certain vocal section of the NGO and international organization community in the last few years is the poor situation of women and children, which they tend to see as the effect of a malevolent government, rather than proceeding from objective economic and political changes of recent years.

points Rainsy raised in his script were also the straight Khmer Rouge line. (1) the present regime was installed by the Yuon, (2) the regime was therefore indebted to the Yuon; (3) they must give compensation to the Yuon, and (4) the regime leaders will use the sweat blood, wealth and territory of Cambodia to pay, in order to stay in power and keep the support of the Yuon. Already in 1993 Rainsy showed his true colors. Interestingly, the PPP article said that "some members of the U.N. Information and Education sympathize with" Rainsy's complaint that he was being treated unfairly, but to take up that subject would go beyond the limits set for this discussion. See further in *Kicking the Vietnam Syndrome*.

<sup>167</sup> Brown and Zasloff, pp. 160-161.

"Because of the demographic changes of the DK years, that is the heavy death toll above normal, particularly among men, Cambodia was left in 1979 when the PRK was formed with an excess of women. This has been variously estimated, from a high of 60% to a more accurate figure of 52.2% in the latest statistical study<sup>168</sup>. Whatever the statistical truth, many more households have been headed by women than was usual in pre-war Cambodia. This is not entirely the result of disappearance of males during DK, but also of the weakening of the old rural society. It has been found that among the squatter communities in Phnom Penh, women are often the actual heads of households, even when living with a husband; and it is likely that many rural households are headed by women because husbands spend long periods elsewhere, usually in urban areas, earning extra income. Probably many military households are also headed, in fact, by the wives.

"Regardless of ideology, which being socialist insisted on gender equality, the PRK was forced to give more attention to women because of need for their labor. There were more kindergartens and day-care centers, including at factories, than before 1975 or since 1991; and the number of pre-schools declined from 689 in 1985-86 to 203 in 1993-94<sup>169</sup>. In rural areas the agricultural 'Solidarity Groups', working on state-owned land,

<sup>168</sup> Royal Government of Cambodia, Ministry of Planning, National Institute of Statistics, "Report on the Socio-Economic Survey of Cambodia 1993/94", Phnom Penh, 1995.

<sup>169</sup> Edward B. Fiske, *Using Both Hands, Women and Education in Cambodia*, Manila, Asian Development Bank, 1995, p. 32.

gave some protection to poor and widowed women, whose situation has declined since the introduction of free market policies and land privatization after 1989.

"Besides this, the PRK offered more women opportunities to assume more responsible positions in political, administrative, and economic affairs than had been possible in pre-war Cambodia. There were a number of women in ministerial positions, and as province and district chiefs, where there had been none before, and at lower levels far more women than had been customary, over one-third of the lower level civil service positions. In industry, where there had already been many women workers in the 1960s, they were moving into management positions under the PRK. Now, in the formation of new village-level organizations foreign NGO workers have noted that women who were formed in the PRK Women's Associations, or who were KR cadre in 1975-1979, are the most articulate, confident and active."

One statistic, which enemies of the Cambodian government use to allegedly prove that women are marginalized, is the number of women members of parliament, only 7 out of 120, under 6% after 1993. This may not look good compared to Scandinavia, but it was not out of line with Thailand (24/393, or 6.1% women) or Malaysia (15/190 for 7.8%). What the critics should be looking at is the comparison with pre-UNTAC PRK Cambodia where 21 of 117 members of parliament, 17.9%, were women, and

where all aspects of health and education, in particular affecting women and children, were superior to what resulted in 1993 from the facade of democracy introduced at the price of 2 billion dollars by UNTAC<sup>170</sup>.

Compared with the prominence of women in prestigious positions under the PRK/SOC, it was notable that there was no female minister in the new Royal Government formed in 1993 after the election. It was not relevant, as some commented, that under the PRK there had not been a ministry of women's affairs. There had been a powerful women's organization which functioned as a ministry. Even the State Secretariat for Women's Affairs, one of the positions given to FUNCINPEC in the division of posts in the coalition, was headed by one of the men returned from long exile in the West.

That anomaly was rectified in 1996 when Ms. Mu Sochua, a Khmer American who had returned to Cambodia before the 1993 election after six years working in the refugee camps on the Thai border, joined FUNCINPEC, and became an adviser on women's affairs to Ranariddh, who appointed her as Minister of Women's Affairs. Ms. Sochua, who had left Cambodia as a teenager before 1975, and had grown up in the U.S., began to work in the refugee camps along the Thai-Cambodian border in 1980 where she learned Cambodian politics in the anti-Phnom Penh milieu predominant there.

<sup>170</sup> Statistics as of 1996. The distorted presentation of the statistics came to my attention in, of all places, the *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*, 28 February, 1996 by Pamela Collett, pp. 27-8; and I answered with the comments offered here, which were received with some asperity, in again, of all places, BCAS.

Her appointment as minister was not smooth and was accompanied by a campaign of anonymous smear letters against her, no doubt partly as unavoidable prejudice against a foreigner taking over from women who had been doing an excellent job all through the 1980s, of which Sochua may have been unaware in her isolation in the anti-Phnom Penh hothouse on the Thai border. Her first actions in Phnom Penh in the beginning of the UNTAC period suggest such lack of knowledge about what had gone on before<sup>171</sup>.

Most sources agree that domestic violence has increased with the leap into a free market economy and the destruction of the PRK social safety net after 1989. In the 150 pages of Judy Ledgerwood's "Analysis of the Situation of Women in Cambodia" in 1992 there is no evocation of domestic violence as a particular problem, but in late 1995 concerned foreign NGO workers were incensed that after six months of research in Phnom Penh (population of over half a million) and three provinces (another million or so), one group of investigators had managed to discover 50 cases of battered wives<sup>172</sup>. Unfortunately, rather than seeing this in relation to Cambodia's post-socialist economic and social collapse, they preferred to relate it to the allegedly inherent male chauvinism of Cambodian society.

Little has changed since the above was written in 1996. It would seem that the very real

<sup>171</sup> See report and interview in PPP 5/6, 22/3-4/4, 1996, pp. 6-7.

<sup>172</sup> Judy Ledgerwood, *Analysis of the Situation of Women in Cambodia. Research on Women in Khmer Society*. UNICEF, Phnom Penh (mimeo), 1992.

problems of Cambodia in the areas of welfare, human rights, corruption, and a precarious democracy are directly related to the way in which Cambodia was forced too rapidly into political and economic change for which the country and its leaders were not prepared, and instead of sympathetic help from an international community pretending horror at the DK debacle from which Cambodia had emerged in 1979, most foreign inputs were to punish Cambodia for not immediately becoming a Sweden of Southeast Asia.

The alleviation of all of the specific Cambodian problems requires, not more neo-liberalism, but state intervention in the interest of social justice and to maintain basic living standards. There was a good beginning under the PRK, when the state controlled the major economic sectors. Foreign institutions genuinely concerned with Cambodian development, rather than just carping about corruption, lack of political pluralism, and free market virtues, should be helping Cambodia strengthen state institutions to enforce mobilization of domestic resources and foreign aid into channels of benefit to the entire society. Instead of focusing only on those articles of the constitution which define democratic formalism, they might pay attention to the other articles of the constitution which require the state to maintain education, culture and social welfare.

For the Cambodian government to undertake the reforms demanded by their critics, and which are really needed, tough progressive taxation is required, but this is something no Cambodian

government is strong enough to carry out, at least not peacefully. Suppose the requisite laws were passed, but that the rich businesses simply refused to pay their taxes. Then, as happens in well-run western countries, those owing taxes could be arrested, and even imprisoned, but in the climate which has developed since 1991 that would no doubt require harsh police measures, and then we would see the do-gooders of the NGOs, 'human rights lawyers', and international organizations raving about violations of human rights<sup>173</sup>.

<sup>173</sup> On 'Human rights lawyers', and 'human rights bread sellers', see Alan Myers in PPP 9/10, May 12-25, 2000.

## The year 1997, prologue to the second election 1998

Another election was mandated by the constitution for 1998, and as the inevitable tensions surfaced the two major parties sought to make deals with KR remnants, which made for an exciting year in 1997.

### -The grenade attack

In March a demonstration in front of the National Assembly organized by Sam Rainsy was disrupted when four hand grenades were thrown into the crowd. Given the knee-jerk anti-Hun Sen mentality of the international press and NGO society, it has been assumed that Hun Sen was responsible for organizing the attack, without consideration for the obvious circumstance that had Hun Sen wished to get rid of Rainsy, the latter would simply have disappeared, like his father in the 1960s, and that Hun Sen would not have been so stupid as to organize a public execution, knowing that blame would rebound on himself<sup>174</sup>.

The mysteries of this incident have not been solved, but it continues to be raised by the regime-change crowd. There was an FBI investigation, because an American, the IRI representative, was wounded. They broke off their investigation before issuing a final report, and this led to allegations in a certain journalistic milieu that they had to leave

<sup>174</sup> There was no such excitement in those milieus the following year when a rocket was fired at Hun Sen's car in Siem Reap. In fact, there were suggestions that it was a hoax.

after threats against them had been made, presumably, by Cambodian authorities. When, later that year, I asked a knowledgeable US Embassy person about such threats ("who threatened the FBI?"), his answer was indirect, "well, KR radio had broadcast violent attacks on the FBI investigation". In their own preliminary report, published in the *Phnom Penh Post*, along with their answers to questions by Senator Jesse Helms who obviously was not satisfied that they had not issued a condemnation of Hun Sen, they reported an implicit threat by Rainsy, who was unhappy that they refused to turn all the results of their investigations over to him, and they also showed distrust of evidence given to them by Rainsy's wife<sup>175</sup>.

There is nothing in that published FBI material to support the wild allegation by Shawcross, apparently accepting a rant by Rainsy, that the FBI concluded Hun Sen was responsible for the attack and that Ambassador Quinn had the FBI leave Cambodia early in order to prevent their investigation from getting close to Hun Sen, or the equally devious claim in Brown and Zasloff that "FBI agents who investigated the attack... reportedly [note this word] found that the culprits who lobbed the grenades were in the employ of the CPP"<sup>176</sup>.

<sup>175</sup> PPP, 8/21, 15-28 October 1999, pp. 13-15.

<sup>176</sup> Shawcross, "The Lessons of Cambodia"; Brown and Zasloff, p. 259, with a footnote to sources which are unreachable, at least with normal search engines; "AP, June 29, 1997; SEASIA-L@msu.edu, June 30, 1997", the latter being their favorite for many details. Philip Short, in a letter to PPP 14/1, 14-27 January 2005, objecting to a review of his biography of Pol Pot by Craig Etcheson, said, "I spoke three years ago to two sources, one of them directly implicated in the planning of the attack, who both

Peculiarly, Rainsy has since, at moments when he wished to curry favor, implicitly exonerated Hun Sen from direct blame. The first occasion was on his return to Phnom Penh following temporary exile after the July 1997 shootout, when Rainsy invited "... Hun Sen in December [1997] to participate in a first anniversary ceremony [of the grenade attack] in an attempt at reconciliation... [and] now tends to focus his anger at what he calls a ring of mafia-style leaders within the business community and the CPP", followed, in another article, by a quotation from Rainsy, "I think Hun Sen... You Hockry and Sar Kheng are at least responsible for not taking the proper precautions [to protect the demonstrators]". The listing is interesting in its inclusion of leaders of both the alleged factions within CPP as well as FUNCINPEC's You Hockry who soon after the July 1997 violence returned to work with Sar Kheng. Again, in 2006, in order to return to political life in Cambodia, Rainsy apologized for accusing Hun Sen of responsibility for the grenade attack<sup>177</sup>.

Still another crime was committed that day, and its perpetrators are obvious. The luxury hospital in the palace, right beside the scene of the grenade attack, and run by a Swiss society doctor, refused to open its gate to those wounded by grenades, but that crime has occasioned no excitement either in the press or among the NGO and human rights crowd.

independently confirmed the Prime Minister's role", but he did not say this in his book, where, as Etcheson remarked, he only referred to vague stories reported by PPP. Although Short said, quite reasonably, that in the political climate in Cambodia he could not name the sources, one must also note that, in the political climate in Cambodia, it is easy to find eye-witness testimony to any side of any controversy.  
<sup>177</sup> PPP, 6/7, 27/3-9/4, 1998, p. 4, and p. 6; PPP 15/3, 10-23/2, 2006, p. 1.

### -The July 1997 Shootout<sup>178</sup>

Four months later, on July 5, shooting erupted in and around Phnom Penh and continued for two days, at the end of which the armed units of FUNCINPEC had been routed. Several of their officers, including General Kroch Yoeun, noted above in connection with the 1994 coup attempt, had been killed, and another, also involved in the 1994 affair, Nhiek Bun Chhay, commanding the FUNCINPEC forces, escaped and fled to the northwest border area. Prince Ranariddh, who had fled to Paris on July 4, was replaced as First Prime Minister by Mr. Ung Huot, who had returned to Cambodia for the UNTAC election after many years, including the Khmer Rouge period, in Australia.

This event, right up to the present, has been, with few exceptions, treated by the press, and even by card-carrying scholars, as a 'bloody coup by strongman Hun Sen' to oust Prince Ranariddh and destroy the FUNCINPEC party<sup>179</sup>. In 1993 it was said that journalists swarmed into town hoping to see blood, and left disappointed. Now they saw some blood, and they certainly knew what to do with it--grease their own personal Vietnam syndromes by kicking a Cambodian leadership which, like Vietnam, had refused to kowtow.

<sup>178</sup> Parts of this section were originally published as "A non-standard view of the coup", PPP 6/17, 29 Aug-11 Sept, 1997, p. 11; and in *Nation* (Bangkok), 25 September 1997, p. A5, with the title "The real story of Cambodia cries out to be told".

<sup>179</sup> Journo comment is too prevalent to require citation. For pseudo-scholarly work see Brown and Zasloff, pp. 239-240.

'Strong Man' Hun Sen, they said, moved to wipe out his opposition because he feared the results of next year's (1998) election, required by the constitution. UNTAC's 2 billion was wasted, because it didn't buy compliance with what the West wanted in Cambodia. Those FUNCINPEC figures who chose Hun Sen over Ranariddh were 'quislings', although when they returned to Cambodia after 1991 they were hailed as the best elements of FUNCINPEC, as they no doubt were. Ung Huot, for example, had been highly praised for trying to impose greater discipline and efficiency in the Ministry of Education after formation of the Royal government in October 1993.

The CPP position after the events was that it had been an attempted coup by FUNCINPEC, with support from KR troops, to overthrow the CPP and Hun Sen, and a White Paper was published to this effect. This was rejected out of hand by the journos and by most of the Cambodia specialist crowd; but I discovered in visits to Phnom Penh later that the White Paper arguments were widely accepted among serious diplomats.

Perhaps the only journalist who attempted at the time to look at evidence from both sides was Barry Wain, who wrote, "in circumstances that remain disputed, Mr. Hun Sen's military forces... defeated Prince Ranariddh's troops in Phnom Penh". As noted at the beginning of this survey, other journalists who lacked Wain's authority and independence surreptitiously held similar views, although in their published work they felt obliged to perform a hatchet job on a well-known

researcher known for sympathy toward Hun Sen and the CPP<sup>180</sup>. The pro-CPP interpretation found its most prominent international supporter in Tony Kevin, Australian ambassador to Cambodia, who was in Phnom Penh at the time<sup>181</sup>.

For 'human rights lawyer' Brad Adams, however, in his disinformation ploy to the U.S. Senate, the mini-civil war of July 1997 was nothing but a putsch by Hun Sen, totally ignoring the evidence that the other side was equally prepared and that they may well have started the action. It is true, as Adams said, that "the home of... Ranariddh was surrounded and attacked", but then it was serving as a command post for the anti-government forces, as is clearly seen in a film which they shot of themselves, later found by the government (Ranariddh himself had bugged out on July 4th and was on his way to France). There they appear relaxed and confident of their coming victory. Ly Touch, now a FUNCINPEC member of parliament, was on the phone, to foreign journalists, saying that Hun Sen had been killed by his bodyguards, evidently in preparation for an extra-judicial execution which they were planning.

<sup>180</sup> See above, p. 12; and Matthew Grainger, "EU media guru says Ranariddh guilty", a title in itself redolent of emotional prejudice, PPP 7/2, 30 January-13 February 1998, p. 2.

<sup>181</sup> Wain in *Asian Wall Street Journal*, 20-21, February 1998, p. 10, entitled "Salvaging Elections in Cambodia". For a serious discussion of the position that the 'coup' may have started as an attempted putsch by Ranariddh's forces, see Tony Kevin, "U.S. Errs in Cambodia Policy", *FEER* 21 May 1998, p. 37; "Cambodia Prepares for National Elections", *The Asia-Pacific Magazine* No. 9/10, 1998; and "Support Cambodian Elections", *Christian Science Monitor Weekly* 24-30 July, 1998, p. 16.



This is one of the most stunning pieces of evidence for the interpretation of the events as a FUNCINPEC coup manqué, and shows that it was not only, to quote Adams again, "senior FUNCINPEC military officials who were targeted for execution". FUNCINPEC evidently had its own list of targets too, if they had won<sup>182</sup>.

Further support for the CPP interpretation came with the discovery of Khmer Rouge documents on their negotiations with Ranariddh and his colleagues. *Phnom Penh Post* published summaries of their important details in May 1998, quoting "An independent expert in Phnom Penh [who] describe[s] the papers as 'politically explosive' and possibly the 'most important' to have been found in Cambodia in recent times. Senior CPP sources said the books were 'priceless' and would change not only Cambodians' views of Hun Sen's actions in July last year - but that of the world."

<sup>182</sup> I have discovered that this view is widespread among diplomats in Phnom Penh, although they refuse to make it public, and the evidence is well-known to the journalistic herd who, nevertheless, continue to bray on about 'strongman Hun Sen's bloody coup to oust Prince Ranariddh'. One detail which has been difficult to pin down is the statement in the government's first White Paper that at 5 A.M. on July 5, Voice of America broadcast a taped message from Ranariddh that a coup against him was underway in Phnom Penh. At that time Ranariddh was on a plane to France, and nothing had yet happened in Phnom Penh. If the story was true it meant that FUNCINPEC was preparing a cover story for the putsch they were planning, and that some Americans were in on it. In December 2001 the ambassador of a respected western country which has no strategic, economic, or vengeance interests in Cambodia told me he was convinced that the story was true, because it had been confirmed for him by a person close to Ranariddh, one of the people seen clearly in the video which the FUNCINPEC leaders made of themselves early in the fighting when they believed they would win.

Not surprisingly, I suppose, given that introduction, they were ignored by most of the important press organs and wire services. At the time I was in the United States and received the *Phnom Penh Post* article immediately by fax, after which I remained another week in the U.S., reading the *New York Times* every day, but found nothing there about this important revelation<sup>183</sup>.

Finally *Phnom Penh Post* made up for its gaffe in highlighting those papers by giving generous space to the spin doctors from UNTAC days, Stephen Heder and David Ashley, to interpret the importance of the 'KR papers' as merely demonstrating the lack of reality in the KR position, imagining that they could still play a role in Cambodian politics<sup>184</sup>.

Totally ignored in the standard, anti-CPP treatment was the build-up to the events of July 5-6. Although journalists cannot always be historians and sociologists, they must pay some attention or their simple-minded recording of the 'facts' of the moment (always partial because choices must be made, and therefore inevitably partisan) leads them into gross misinterpretations, not to say disinformation.

No doubt for journalists the 1980s are such ancient history that they cannot be accused of bias for forgetting them. All Cambodian political

<sup>183</sup> PPP 7/10, May 22-June 4, 1998; see also a description of their discovery by Bou Saroeun and Peter Sainsbury, in Bou Saroeun, "The KR Papers", PPP 11/15, July 19 - August 1, 2002.

<sup>184</sup> Stephen Heder, "US must hold Hun Sen to higher standards than EU" PPP, 7/12, June 19 - July 2, 1998; David Ashley, PPP, Issue 7/13, July 3-16, 1998, pp. 9, 12.

figures, however, know, and do not forget, that the entire so-called peace process evolution was intended to get rid of the CPP, even at the risk of giving the KR a place in the government. The Paris Agreement and the 1993 election only came about because the PRK/SOC managed to defeat cruder schemes. And in spite of 2 billion dollars and a whole gaggle of experts, the conduct of balloting and counting was sloppy enough to give the CPP reason to claim fraud.

It is, however, disinformation just to say that Ranariddh won but Hun Sen refused to move out. As described above, the coalition was mandated by Paris and UNTAC rules concerning the new constitution; and the position retained by the CPP was in accord with its votes, 38% against 45%. This is the minimum background.

It was disinformation not to at least acknowledge in passing that in the weeks preceding the July 1997 affair Ranariddh boasted that he would use new KR allies to further his own policies, especially, and most dangerously, against Vietnam<sup>185</sup>. It was disinformation not to note that ever since 1993 the royalists had been plotting to undermine Hun Sen as much as he, no doubt, had been plotting to stay ahead of them. The post-election

<sup>185</sup> PPP, 5/10, 20 September-3 October 1996, "Ranariddh dismisses rumored CPP scheme", and interview with Matthew Grainger, "Ranariddh: 'KR will be very tough'". The same theme was implicit in the formation of the 'National Union Front' of FUNCINPEC and Sam Rainsy's 'Khmer Nation Party', with participation in the celebration by 20 Khmer Rouge delegates from Ieng Sary's 'Democratic National Union Movement'. See Ker Munthit, "Smiles all round as one-time foes join hands in NUF", PPP 6/5, March 7-20, 1997, p. 4

secession was under Ranariddh's brother Chakrapong, just dumped by the CPP, and directly instigated by an important non-CPP higher-level personality. Hun Sen outplayed them and got credit for putting down the secession. All through 1994 various royalist schemes were hatched to undermine the CPP by bringing the KR into the government via a back door; and in July of that year a royalist coup was barely nipped in the bud. Even Steve Heder, no friend of the CPP, expressed dismay that FUNCINPEC "general Nhiek Bun Chhay plays footsie or worse with the likes of Ta Mok, Khieu Samphan and Nuon Chea"<sup>186</sup>.

The royalists, moreover, seem to have got what they asked for. As argued in the CPP White Paper edited by a U.S. lawyer, and as supported by another American lawyer-journalist, Mike Fowler, who said, in his presentation of the case, that the royalists had been trying to provoke such an incident, apparently overconfident of success, and Hun Sen had a good legal case against them, if only he had resorted to the courts rather than to violence<sup>187</sup>. I wonder what courts he could have used. The Phnom Penh foreign community and the international press have condemned the Cambodian courts as nothing but rubber stamps for the government, they would have denounced any verdict in Hun Sen's favor as dishonest; and probably no international court would have taken the case.

<sup>186</sup> Stephen Heder, "Khmer Rouge again slipping away from punishment", a second installment of Heder's edited testimony before the US Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on East Asia and the Pacific, PPP 7/13, July 3 - 16, 1998.

<sup>187</sup> Mike Fowler, in PPP 12-24 July 1997, p. 11.

Finally, in the absence of inside information, a foreign observer must at least acknowledge that the July 1997 action was an explosion resulting from simmering hostility between the two sides which had been obvious for months.

### -Aftereffects of July 1997

The FUNCINPEC armed forces were badly defeated; several of their top officers were killed, and their most prominent general, Nhiek Bun Chhay, fled with some troops to the Thai border. In Phnom Penh the formal two-party government was maintained, Ung Huot took over from Ranariddh as 'First Prime Minister', and FUNCINPEC bureaucrats who had not fled returned to work<sup>188</sup>.

One positive result of the events, however they began, was dramatically improved security in areas which had been relatively unsafe for travel<sup>189</sup>.

In June of 1997 an American archeologist had written to me about his recent visit to the seventh-century city of Sambor Prei Kuk some 20 km north of the provincial capital of Kompong Thom in central Cambodia, an area long considered unsafe for casual travel because of Khmer Rouge presence, and where a Japanese UN volunteer was killed in 1993.

The archaeologist had to hire a jeep and two armed guards from the provincial authorities and take plenty of cigarettes and small change for the numerous patrols and roadblocks by all sorts of

<sup>188</sup> A prominent western ambassador told me how an important FUNCINPEC official, indeed one of those in the video made to record their 'victory', asked for protection, which was granted, but that his CPP minister made contact to urge him to return to work, "his signatures were needed on documents", and within days he was back at work normally.

<sup>189</sup> Some of the following was published in "Cambodian Impressions October 1997", *The Nation* (Bangkok), 18 November 1997, with the title, invented by the editor, "Flip side view of Cambodia's woes".

soldiers of varying allegiance who would be encountered along the road.

But when I went there in October no armed guards were thought necessary, and the rains had reduced the road from Kompong Thom to such a mud track that the three of us had to ride pillion on motorcycles for the two hours to Sambor Prei Kuk. There were no soldiers, pseudo soldiers, roadblocks, or beggars en route. Everything was as it had been when I made my last previous visit to the ancient city in 1962--villagers going to and from Kompong Thom, or busy in their fields and around their houses.

Indeed, by late 1997 more of Cambodia was safe for travel on main roads than at any time since Lon Nol's coup in 1970. Some of it was directly attributable to the outcome of the 'July events' (standard euphemism for the shootout of 5-6 July). As my motorcycle driver remarked, the road to Sambor Prei Kuk used to be very dangerous, even when the Khmer Rouge were not around. Local men en route who had been armed in the 1980s to defend their villages, then used their weapons for private enterprise after the KR danger receded, but after the July events "Hun Sen sent word that all those weapons were to be withdrawn in 3 days, and in 3 days they were gone".

Until heavy rains washed out stretches of it, the entire route 6 beyond Kompong Thom to Siem Reap, which even in the relatively safe early UNTAC period of 1992 had been considered too dangerous for civilian traffic, had become passable, and western NGO workers had started taking

river boats all the way to Kratie and Stung Treng in the Northeast. Some of the improvement antedated the July events. Route 5 to Battambang, also a no-no in 1992-3, became generally safe for normal traffic after the split in the Khmer Rouge in which those in the Pailin area under Ieng Sary made peace with the government, or with Hun Sen, as some commentators would have it.

Of course, Brad Adams, in his screed to the Senate noted above, said that Cambodians are "one of the most terrorized people in the world". This was not the impression one got travelling around the country on provincial roads, which improved weekly in physical state and in security after the disappearance of the main contra warlords in July, talking to local people who showed less sign of political terrorism than during the 'golden years' of the 1960s (further examples in March-April 1998 were: another trip with a foreign group to Kompong Thom and Sambor Prei Kuk, Kompong Cham and Hanchey, and with 30 students from Phnom Penh to Kirivong and Kampot near Phnom Voar, until 1997 a dangerous Khmer Rouge area).

Calm after the storm also came to Phnom Penh. No longer did armed groups of rival forces drive around showing their weapons, and most foreign residents considered the city somewhat safer, although, as in New York, attacks and robberies late at night were still not unknown.

The improvement was in part, of course, simply because there was only one source of official power in place of two competing forces. The same improvement would not have come about, however,

if the July events had gone the other way, if only because FUNCINPEC, even had they won in Phnom Penh, could not have imposed the same authority over the provinces where they have never had sufficient personnel to take over administrative responsibility, and in Phnom Penh they would have had to be far more bloody to impose their single-party rule at the center.

Another positive impression in late 1997 was the condition of the local press. There were 30-40 newspapers, with a very wide spectrum of political opinion. The variety and level of criticism of the government and its leaders by newspapers supporting opponents, such as Ranariddh, Sam Rainsy, and the Khmer Rouge, made the Khmer press one of the freest in Southeast Asia, and the level at which criticism was pitched was generally higher than in previous years, more concerned with comment on political, administrative, and economic issues, rather than just personal insults. Even now after dropping Cambodia 18 places, Reporters Without Borders, in their new Worldwide Press Freedom Index, still rated Cambodia higher than those favorites of Western capitalism Thailand, Singapore and the Philippines (*Cambodia Daily* 25/10/06).

Unfortunately, equivalent improvement was not evident in the foreign press corps reporting from Phnom Penh. Rarely has reporting about Cambodia been very praiseworthy, but after July 1997 it fell to its lowest level. Without considering any of the evidence there was a nearly universal conclusion that what happened on July 5-6 was a premeditated coup by Hun Sen. When I sought

to engage the Southeast Asia correspondent of a major European newspaper in a discussion, saying "let's go through the government white papers on the events and you tell me which points you object to and on what grounds", his answer was, "I haven't read the white paper". Three months after the event that was inexcusable from Nick Cummings-Bruce of the *Guardian*.

## The 1998 election

Five years after UNTAC, and one year after the 1997 fracas, the next election was due, according to the constitution, and was held on July 26, 1998. It went off smoothly and most foreign election observers declared it free and fair, not marred by the same disturbances as the 1993 exercise. An exception, of course, was the International Republican Institute, who, while admitting that the situation on election day looked good, said that didn't matter and in a statement to the U.S. Congress full of misinformation and dishonesty, claimed that the election was "among the worst we have seen since 1993"<sup>190</sup>.

It took four months, however, for a new government to be formed, because of objections by the losing parties, this time FUNCINPEC and the Sam Rainsy party.

This delay, and the difficulties attendant on it, were unwelcome surprises, given the smooth running of the election, especially compared to that of 1993. Moreover, these unpleasant surprises, even more than the somewhat similar difficulties following the 1993 election, may be attributed to the malevolence of the losing parties, who even in losing maintained sufficient popular support to cause trouble, and to the malevolence of international instances which supported them. The

<sup>190</sup> The favorable impression was certainly true in Battambang, where I observed the election along with David Roberts, having chosen that place because journalist Nate Thayer had predicted that it would be 'hot'. For the IRI statement, and comment on it, see Lorne Craner, "IRI: Cambodia's elections...", and David Roberts, "IRI report 'hypocritical...unfounded'", both in PPP 7/23, October 16 - 29, 1998, p. 10.

latter were, first, the crowd of foreign journalists either resident in Phnom Penh, or who fly in peripatetically. They have nearly all been in opposition to the Cambodian government since before 1993, and, especially since 1996, their reporting had been so biased as to be disinformation. Then there was the United Nations Center for Human Rights in Phnom Penh, which maintained the record of major 'Human Rights' organizations for biased reporting on Cambodia; and of course the IRI which was outspoken in support of Rainsy<sup>191</sup>.

But before continuing with those problems, let's look at the election results. The Cambodian People's Party (CPP) received 41.2% of the total popular vote, giving them 64 seats, FUNCINPEC got 31.7% of the vote and 43 seats, and the Sam Rainsy Party took 14.3% and 15 seats. The seats were allotted according to a rather complicated formula based on proportional representation by province, which accounted for the apparent discrepancy between percentage of total popular vote nationwide and number of seats. The 36 other parties won nothing. Thus CPP received a narrow majority of the 122 seats in the National Assembly, but was far short of the two-thirds majority constitutionally required for a vote of confidence and formation of a government.

The percentage results, in terms of blocs, were not very different from 1993. Then also the

<sup>191</sup> Derek Cheng, "Tenuous democracy blamed for IRI pullout", PPP 14/4, 25/2-10/3, 2005, quoting Mu Sochua, "The IRI are outspoken in their support for SRP". See above, pp. 18-19, on Amnesty International and the Lawyers Committee for International Human Rights.

'winning' party received less than a majority of the total vote, 45%, but it was FUNCINPEC; and the total of FUNCINPEC plus Sam Rainsy, most of whose supporters were FUNCINPEC defectors, in 1998 was just over 45%. The 1998 'winners', the CPP, gained only 3% more votes than in 1993, but because their opponents were split, and they were favored by the proportional representation formula, they could claim a bare majority of seats in parliament. The third largest party in 1993, Son Sann's BLDP, which then took 4% of the votes and 10 seats, won nothing this time. The 36 total losers, with about 12% of the votes, resembled the equivalent bloc in 1993, then 16 parties, which together received about 11%.

Thus, from 1993 to 1998 there was little change in the size of the political blocs. There was a solid bloc of royalists, plus those who preferred a royalist party to former communists, which together made up over 40% of the voters; and there was another large bloc of around 40% who continued to vote loyally for the CPP. There was also a very interesting 10-12% of the population, who were probably mostly the same persons in 1993 and 1998, who refused to vote for either of the major blocs, but whose significant total percentage was wasted because of their propensity to vote for minor parties. Of course, several of those minor parties in 1993 were explicitly non-royalist, and had said they would cooperate with the CPP if they entered parliament. In 1998 probably a larger number of the minor parties would have allied with FUNCINPEC, for in addition to the former

FUNCINPEC supporters who voted for Sam Rainsy, there were seven other parties which were splinters from FUNCINPEC, usually for personal, rather than ideological reasons. Some of them were potential allies of FUNCINPEC, others, such as the party of Ung Huot, who in 1997 had agreed to take over Ranariddh's position of formal First Prime Minister, perhaps not.

In any case the claim of the opposition that a majority, 31%+14%+12% (total 57%) voted against the CPP, and thus made its domination of the government illegitimate, cannot be entertained, and would not be entertained in any of the current western democratic structures, where the largest party gets to choose the government.

The result of the close election and four months delay in forming a government was that Hun Sen remained as single Prime Minister, Prince Ranariddh became President of the National Assembly, a Senate was created to provide a few more prestigious posts--Chea Sim as President, and intriguingly, old anti-CPP warrior General Nhiek Bun Chhay (who, along with others important in the 1994 'coup' and 1997 shootout, Chakrapong, Srey Kosal and Sin Song, were given full amnesty), as Deputy President<sup>192</sup>.

The splits in FUNCINPEC in 1998, and again recently in 2006, should not be seen as a results of the violence of July 1997. It was predictable in 1993, when, clearly, some of the younger, more intellectual, returnees from the post-1975, or

<sup>192</sup> PPP 7/26 (27/11-11/12, 1998), p. 1; PPP 8/5 (5-18 March 1999), p.1.

even post-1970, Khmer diaspora, did not belong with the old royalist courtiers, and would have been more comfortable with their peers in CPP, but had joined FUNCINPEC in the 1980s out of ignorance of the internal situation in Cambodia, and as victims of inaccurate reporting by the international press.

A similar case was that of Ms. Mu Sochua, who remained as Minister for Women's Affairs, although, as we shall see, she was becoming disillusioned with her position, probably because of old elitist FUNCINPEC attitudes. When, around the time of the 1998 election, I met by chance one of the women among the leadership of the old PRK Women's Association whom I had met in the 1980s, I asked her how Sochua had fitted into her position, as a foreigner placed at the top of a group who had functioned very well before. The answer was that Sochua had adapted very well, she had tried to understand what the old organization had accomplished and to work with the former-PRK group. In view of later developments, Sochua might have done better to have joined the CPP on return to Cambodia and engage in women's affairs on that terrain, although she would not have immediately been named minister. With her energy and new ideas, however, she might well have contributed more to women's welfare via the functioning PRK apparatus, than as a representative of the elitist and male chauvinist FUNCINPEC.

## War Against Terror, Cambodia Style, 2000-2003

Characteristic of journalistic reaction to Cambodian events were the first reports of armed attacks on government buildings launched in the night of 24 November 2000 by a group calling themselves 'Cambodian Freedom fighters' (CFF).

The government immediately identified the perpetrators as a "terrorist group... led by... a Cambodian-American from California". But the *Phnom Penh Post* seemed more sympathetic to an interpretation that "many people... are highly skeptical of the government's claim that it was the victim of an attempted coup"; Human Rights Watch deplored the resulting arrest of suspects, and worried about "a pretext for the Government to move against political opponents"; Lao Mong Hay, who had replaced Julio Jeldres as director of the Khmer Institute of Democracy, feared that the government reaction announced a witch-hunt against other political parties; and Sam Rainsy said it was all a big setup orchestrated by Hun Sen to create an atmosphere of fear and intimidation to justify a pre-emptive crack-down on government opponents<sup>193</sup>.

All of this in spite of the fact that a Cambodian-American freely admitted, according to the American ambassador, that he had been involved in planning the attacks.

While some of the concerns of the skeptics were legitimate as such, it seemed that they disapproved of the government taking any action against

<sup>193</sup> PPP 9/25 (8-21/12, 2000)



cnemics from the right, or based in the U.S.

At the time I contributed the following to the discussion<sup>194</sup>.

"In the last couple of weeks we have seen a conjunction of episodes, the possible interrelation of which points, if they are indeed interrelated, in a troubling direction.

"There was the CFF shootout with its overt U.S. linkages admitted both by participants here and by their leaders and supporters there, the prestige-enhancing entertainment of a U.S.-based CFF figure by the National Press Club in Washington<sup>195</sup>, sympathetic coverage on Radio Free Asia; and their announced purpose to disrupt good relations with Vietnam, just when a new newspaper named *Cochinchina* began spewing out the worst sort of anti-Vietnamese racism, and a leading opposition politician tried to provoke an incident on the border with Vietnam.

"Saddest, but not surprising, was the knee-jerk reaction of so-called Human Rights organizations, both here and in Washington, against the Cambodian government for proceeding energetically to neutralize the terrorists. The measures were 'directed against opposition figures' they say. Well, who else were likely to be among the CFF anyway--certainly not CPP loyalists?

"It may also not be strictly coincidental that all of this happened just when it looked like the

<sup>194</sup> Published as "Troubling conjunctions", PPP 10/1 (Jan 5-18, 2001), p. 13.

<sup>195</sup> *Newsweek*, December 18, 2000 "Cambodia: Fighting for Justice?", By Adam Piore, With Kevin Doyle in Phnom Penh.

U.S. was going to have President Dubya as new Dear Leader, an outcome for which right-wing Cambodians both here and there had already proclaimed support.

"Finally, and also not surprisingly, an *Asian Wall Street Journal* article of 12 December 2000 sounded off with a wild screed by the International Republican Institute which was nothing but a rehash of the propaganda of the Sam Rainsy political faction. And it included--of course, they are Republicans--a plea for Bush regime II to make a sharp shift in policy toward Cambodia<sup>196</sup>."

Ultimately the real terrorist nature of the November 2000 attacks and the legitimacy of the Cambodian government's reactions had to be admitted. By June 2005, U.S. authorities agreed that the CFF leaders in the U.S. should be arrested for violation of U.S. laws in their plot to overthrow Hun Sen<sup>197</sup>.

During the time the realities of the CFF were being sorted out, there was a different type of reaction to another 'terrorist' caper.

In May 2003, the arrest of a Jemaah Islamiya group, teachers at an Islamic school, consisting of two Thais, one Cambodian Cham and an Egyptian, was announced. They were accused of plotting to blow up the U.S. and British embassies. The Ministry of Interior said the government had acted on information supplied by authorities in the United States, and said U.S. agents from the

<sup>196</sup> I received this through Cam Clips e-mail, and am assuming here its accuracy.

<sup>197</sup> PPP 9/25, 8-21/12, 2000, pp. 1-3, 8-9; 14/10, 20 May-2 June, 2005; 14/11, 3-16 June 2005; 14/19, September 23 - October 6, 2005.

Central Intelligence Agency had interrogated the men after they were arrested. The Thais and the Cham were sentenced to life, and the Egyptian acquitted<sup>198</sup>.

"Legal experts said the trial had obvious irregularities in its judicial process" (PPP 14/1). The prosecuting evidence presented in court was a single statement allegedly made by a 29-year-old motorcycle taxi driver saying he overheard an English conversation between two of the suspects about a plot to bomb the embassies. Cross-examination revealed he was unable to speak English.

Nevertheless, the U.S. Embassy strongly praised the verdict as "an important step in fighting terrorism in Southeast Asia".

In June 2003, during a visit by Secretary of State Colin Powell, Cambodia signed an "Article 98 agreement," promising not to surrender U.S. citizens accused of war crimes to the International Criminal Court. In return, the U.S. ended the moratorium of military aid to Cambodia in early August; and the signature of Article 98 no doubt smoothed the way to U.S. prosecution of the leader of the Cambodia Freedom Fighter terrorists. Powell also was reported to have advised Hun Sen to delay the Khmer Rouge trial until after the election<sup>199</sup>.

<sup>198</sup> PPP 12/12, 6-19/6, 2003; PPP 13/27, 31/12, 2004-13/1, 2005; PPP 14/01, 14-27/1, 2005.

<sup>199</sup> PPP, Issue 14/19, September 23 - October 6, 2005. I heard of Powell's advice to Hun Sen on the KR trial from a person in the diplomatic milieu.

## 2003 election

Another election was constitutionally required in 2003, and was held on schedule. The results, by bloc, were similar to 1993 and 1998. The CPP received 47.3% of the votes, the SRP and royalist FUNCINPEC party, which for this election had formed an opposition Alliance of Democrats, respectively collected 21.9% and 20.7%, together a total of 42.6%, leaving 10.1% to the 20 smaller parties which would not be represented in the National Assembly. As in 1998, the opposition claimed that the 52.7% who did not vote for the CPP, proved that a majority of the population wanted a leadership change, and that therefore it was unacceptable for Hun Sen to continue as Prime Minister.

As in 1998, this led to a period of no parliament, nearly a year, as FUNCINPEC and the SRP boycotted the Assembly, preventing a quorum and a vote on a new government. In the end FUNCINPEC agreed to return to partnership with CPP, and the impasse ended in farce, when Senate President Chea Sim, because of intra-CPP disagreement, refused to act as Chief of State *ad interim* to sign a needed constitutional amendment, was forcibly sent to Bangkok, and that duty devolved on Deputy Senate President, the 1997 anti-CPP warhorse Nhiek Bun Chhay<sup>200</sup>.

When the new government formed, Mu Sochua, full of praise for the IRI, defected from FUNCINPEC

<sup>200</sup> PPP 13/15, 16-29/7, 2004.

to the Sam Rainsy Party where she immediately became a member of its steering committee, no matter how bizarre that move appeared just when 60 SRP members were leaving for FUNCINPEC, and there were other signs of the party weakening. Is Sochua ignorant of IRI's history? One should expect real democrats to avoid Rainsy because of his dependence on IRI. In spite of that exhibition of sympathy for anti-democratic tendencies, Sochua received a local nomination for Nobel prize<sup>201</sup>.

For its part, the IRI did not hide its support for Rainsy, to the tune of \$450,000 in 2004 alone. Its long-time Cambodia director, Ron Abney, said they had decided in 1996 that "Rainsy's party [was] the only legitimate pro-democracy, non-government party", and he indicated there that they would gladly interfere further in Cambodia's internal politics: "there is a split within the CPP, there is a moderate wing [by which he could only mean the Chea Sim faction, embarrassed in the formation of the new government] .... if the moderate wing of the CPP came to us and said we want to form a moderate CPP II, we'd probably work with them"<sup>202</sup>.

<sup>201</sup> PPP 14/13, 1-14 July 2005, p. 2.

<sup>202</sup> PPP 13/24, 19/11-2/12, 2004, p. 3, "Political warhorse no stranger to hardball democracy".

## Human rights crisis and the border, 2005-6

In October 2005 a new campaign against Cambodia appeared in the international press reflecting recent news from that country<sup>203</sup>.

As is usual with news from Cambodia it had to do with alleged heavy-handed repression and violation of human rights by Prime Minister Hun Sen, quoting, among other sources, Mr Brad Adams, whose earlier interventions have been noted above, and who is now a prominent figure in the international NGO, Human Rights Watch, which like all organizations self-defined in that way, is assumed by the public to be defending the true and the good.

It seems Mr. Hun Sen ordered the arrest of the operator of an independent radio station and the leader of a human rights group; demanded from Thailand the extradition of two other persons who had fled there to avoid arrest; allegedly threatened a cousin of the king and suggested that perhaps the monarchy should be abolished.

The opposition leader Sam Rainsy who was in Paris to avoid a defamation suit for accusing Hun Sen of responsibility for the grenade attack on a Rainsy-led demonstration in March 1997, reacted by saying Cambodia was a fake democracy like Burma, and "thunder[ed] against [the] 'fascist' state"<sup>204</sup>.

<sup>203</sup> At the time I was in Leiden, and was first aware of the situation from reading the international press. An available Cambodian source was PPP for the same period.

<sup>204</sup> PPP 14/22, 4-18 November 2005; 14/26, 30 December 2005-12 January 2006.

By early 2006 those arrested had all been released, the others forgiven, Rainsy apologized, returned to parliament in Phnom Penh, and appeared desirous of cooperation with Hun Sen.

What was this all about?

It was not just about abuse of human rights, as slipshod journalists would have it.

It was first about a new supplementary treaty signed with Vietnam pursuant to the demarcation of the Cambodia-Vietnam border.

The border between Cambodia and Vietnam was drawn at various times before Cambodian independence in 1953-54 by the French, who, holding authority over both countries, considered the borders as only administrative divisions within French Indochina. At independence those borders remained unchanged, but in some areas ill-defined and never physically demarcated on the ground.

The most controversial region is that south of Saigon, now called Kampuchea Krom ('lower') by Cambodians, including an area with a significant ethnic Khmer population, and which some Cambodians consider was unjustly included within Vietnam and should really be returned to Cambodia. Even some who do not take such an extreme view claim that the post-1979 government, led by former Cambodian communists close to Vietnam, made treaties illegitimately giving even more territory to Vietnam.

Because much of the border was unmarked, in the wartime conditions of the 1960s and 1970s there were violations, and Cambodian complaints,

until in 1967 the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in the North with its southern ally, or arm, the National Liberation Front, accepted Cambodian Chief of State Prince Sihanouk's request that foreign powers recognize Cambodia's existing borders; and they declared their recognition of "Cambodian territorial integrity within its existing borders", together with recognition of "the existing frontiers between South Vietnam and Cambodia"<sup>205</sup>. The US-backed Republic of Vietnam in Saigon did not make such a promise.

The problem, which no one spoke of then, was that long stretches of the border were nothing more than lines drawn on maps, and in part of the ethnically and historically controversial region south of Saigon the original French surveys had been inaccurate, meaning that maps made from them would never correspond to distances on the ground<sup>206</sup>.

As long as the war continued, that is until 1975, nothing could be done, even with the best intentions. During 1970-1975 the Khmer Republic government under General Lon Nol took the extreme position that Kampuchea Krom belonged to Cambodia, putting themselves in opposition to both the DRV and the Republic in Saigon; and then from 1975-1979 Democratic

<sup>205</sup> The 1967 border agreement was published in English by Vietnam in *Kampuchea Dossier I*, Hanoi, *Vietnam Courier*, 1978, pp. 123-4; and in French in Jean Morice, *Cambodge du sourire à l'horreur*, pp. 168-70.

<sup>206</sup> This was described in Victor Delahaye, *La plaine des joncs et sa mise en valeur*, Rennes: Imprimerie de l'Ouest Eclair, 1928; and in L. Malleret, *L'Archéologie du Delta du Mekong*, Tome I, Paris, École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1959, p. 67.

Kampuchea ('Khmer Rouge') continued hostility to Vietnam with respect to the border.

Only with the good relations established between Cambodia and Vietnam after the overthrow of the Khmer Rouge in early 1979 was it possible to seriously reconsider the genuine problems of the border--genuine because demarcation on the ground had never been completed.

To this effect a series of treaties was signed: (1) in 1979 a Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation providing for negotiations to "delineate" (English) / "*délimiter*" (French) the border "on the basis of present border lines"; (2) in 1983 a "Treaty concerning principles for resolving border problems", with the intention to accept as a basis the border which had existed at the time of independence; (3) in 1985 a full new border treaty listing coordinates, with three decimal places in each direction, for 205 points. Comparison of the coordinates with available maps indicates that very few, and very minor, changes were effected in the old border<sup>207</sup>.

Of course, those numbered points, and maps of the scales used (1:100,000 and 1:50,000), are only illustrative. Even the larger scale is hardly sufficient for measuring coordinates of three decimal places, and the map border lines themselves may be several hundred meters wide. Demarcation on the ground would still be necessary, and would require good will and a spirit of compromise on both sides.

<sup>207</sup> There was also an agreement on "Historic Waters" in 1982, but it does not figure in the present controversy. A full maritime border between Cambodia and Vietnam has not been established.

In 1985 demarcation was still not possible because of the ongoing armed hostilities between the Phnom Penh government and their US-China-Thai-Western Europe supported enemies, since 1982 a tripartite coalition dominated by the surviving 'Khmer Rouge'. Only after the October 1991 Paris Agreement was signed by the four Cambodian parties and 18 other countries was it possible to again consider border questions, concerning which article 2 of the Paris Agreement contained a provision for further discord, "abolition of all treaties incompatible with sovereignty, independence, integrity, territorial inviolability, neutrality, and national union", which, in the interpretation of the enemies of the Cambodian Peoples Party (CPP) government in Phnom Penh meant all those treaties negotiated with Vietnam after 1979, even though no one of that persuasion has argued convincingly how those treaties violated Cambodia's sovereignty, etc.

The house-broken journalists of the Western press have consistently taken a position against the CPP and its treaties with Vietnam, starting with Nayan Chanda, one of the most famous and respected journalists reporting on the Far East, who showed his bias in accepting uncritically a U.S. State Department conclusion that, "[a]fter comparing the delimitation [of 1985] with 1964 maps... with the exception of one square kilometer in one area that went to Cambodia, the agreement awarded 'all the disputed areas, some 55 square kilometers, to Vietnam'". Given the scale of the maps and the imprecision of the lines drawn, 55

square kilometers is insignificant, and perhaps only a draftsman's error. Moreover, it is known that maps of the 1960s had arbitrary and provocative borders drawn on Sihanouk's orders<sup>208</sup>.

The problem of demarcation on the ground remains; and there is room for honest disagreement about precisely where the 'existing' border should be traced on the ground, as the post-1985 joint demarcation commission has discovered.

Sometimes the agreed map line cuts through a village, or an individual field, or even a temple; or the border is designated as following a cart track, which of course deviates from one year to the next as a result of rain and the whims of local traffic. Some villagers may even have thought they were in a country other than as shown on the map.

The recently signed supplementary treaty shows near successful completion of the task. There were still seven contentious points, some of which reflect real differences in the maps of the 1950s and 1960s, and of which six, according to a Cambodian official involved, had been settled by the end of 2005.

Why the violent opposition against this important step in resolving such a long festering wound in Cambodian-Vietnamese relations; and why the equally fierce reaction from Prime Minister Hun Sen against his critics which, predictably, has set off more attacks on him from the Human Rights crowd?

<sup>208</sup> Chanda, "Land Erosion, Cambodians question status of country's borders", *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 3 September 1992, pp. 16-17; and "Blood brothers", *FEER* 3 Dec 1992, pp. 14-15; Charles Meyer, *Derrière le sourire khmer*, Paris, Plon, 1971 p. 267, on Sihanouk's interference.

Discussion of this subject must return to the PPA of October 1991 and its peculiar Article 2. It is probably now impossible to find the records of discussions in 1991, and to determine what party inserted this obvious, and irrelevant, provision. It no doubt originated with the anti-Phnom Penh representatives, but why, then, was there no objection from Phnom Penh? Obviously, because the principle enunciated was beyond dispute, and Phnom Penh did not consider that any of its treaties violated the principle.

Since then, however, and particularly in connection with the Supplementary Treaty of 2005, the anti-Phnom Penh factions pretend that all treaties signed since 1979 were contrary to article 2, and that the PPA required the abolition of all those treaties. It is difficult, however, to find statements or analyses by those factions providing specific details of the treaty provisions "incompatible with sovereignty, independence, integrity, territorial inviolability, neutrality, and national union". For them, it seems sufficient to say that because the treaties were signed when Cambodia was, in their words, "under Vietnamese military occupation", they are illegitimate.

Even if that definition of the relationship were accepted, it would not necessarily mean that the treaties fell within the provisions of article 2; and once it was clear that Vietnam was regularly withdrawing troops, and that the Phnom Penh government was ever more clearly Cambodian, that is, between 1982 and 1985, only extremists intent on envenoming relations could insist that

Cambodia was under 'Vietnamese military occupation'<sup>209</sup>.

The first hostile reactions to the "Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Co-operation signed February 18, 1979" were focused on an alleged provision that allowed Vietnam to maintain 200,000 troops in Cambodia for 25 years. This had to be dropped when careful observers realized that the treaty stipulates nothing about Vietnamese troops in Cambodia, and when it had become clear by the end of 1982 that Vietnam wished to withdraw its troops, and in fact withdrew all by 1989<sup>210</sup>.

In recent years detailed objections to this treaty have come from two Khmers living abroad, Bora Touch, a lawyer, in Australia, and Sean Pengse, who operates an organization called "Cambodia Border Committee" in Paris. The former, arguing from the provision in the treaty for "militant solidarity [yuddhasammaki] and fraternal friendship between the Kampuchean, Lao and Vietnamese peoples", insists that it means violation of Cambodia's neutrality, but this is little more than playing with words and hardly to be taken as a serious argument to annul the treaty.

Sean Pengse has gone farther, and more dishonestly, through falsifying article 4 in the Khmer-language text of the treaty on his website, saying that the borders were to be 'dissolved' (Khmer

<sup>209</sup> On gradual Vietnamese withdrawals see above, pp. 20-30.

<sup>210</sup> Even Raoul Jennar, generally sympathetic to the CPP and to its relations with Viet Nam, misread the 1979 treaty to say that it "made official the Vietnamese occupation and the supervision of the Cambodian Communist Party by the Vietnamese communist Party" (Jennar, *Les clés du Cambodge*, Paris, Maisonneuve & Larose 1995, p. 83).

romleay) giving the impression that Cambodia was to be integrated into Vietnam<sup>211</sup>. This was not repeated in the English and French translations on the same website, which stated respectively that "the two countries will enter into negotiations to sign a treaty on the delineation of the national borders between the two countries on basic [sic] of present border lines"; and "elles [les deux pays] procéderont à des négociations pour signer un traité de délimitation des frontières nationales entre les deux pays sur la base des frontières actuelles". There is absolutely nothing here which violates the principles of the PPA.

Further evidence of Sean Pengse's dishonesty on this point is seen in his book, *The Land and Sea Borders of Cambodia* p. 52, where he has published what seems to be the true Khmer text of the treaty, with article 4 saying precisely what is seen in the English and French translations, that is, the borders will be established on the basis of the already existing borders--a slight difference being that the Khmer says 're-establish'. However, later in the same book, p.213, he reproduces a statement by Sean Masavang, saying that the 1979 treaty forced Cambodia to abolish the old borders, and was forced by Vietnam to "abolish its territorial integrity"<sup>212</sup>.

<sup>211</sup> I first noticed this in March 2004. It was eliminated from the website in October-November 2005; but it went into a violently anti-Vietnamese Khmer-language book, *Aggressive Acts of the Yuon against Kampuchea* [English translation], by Som Sekkumar, published in Paris, 1997, p. 248.

<sup>212</sup> The English text cited here was translated from Khmer. It was first published in French by the Cambodian Border committee, Paris, 1999-2001.

Thus the border controversy, as far as the 1979 treaty is concerned, has been stirred up dishonestly by those who simply wish for hostility between Vietnam and Cambodia.

Mam Sonando, the radio operator arrested for interviewing Sean Pengse, was responsible three years ago for inflammatory and inaccurate broadcasts when a crowd was burning the Thai embassy. Mr Hun Sen is obviously concerned about a repeat of that violence against the Vietnamese, which would be even more incendiary politically. The threat against the king's cousin, and others, was also because they charged that the new treaty gave away territory to Vietnam, a subject of such sensitivity that it could lead to violence. Thus, in this case, Mr Hun Sen can credibly argue that he is protecting national security and the domestic peace required to receive the international aid and foreign investment on which Cambodia depends.

This particular controversy seems to have ended, at least for the present, now that King Sihamoni has signed the new supplementary border agreement, Sam Rainsy has apologized, and Kem Sokha, the arrested human rights activist, has declared that he never accused Hun Sen of giving away land to Vietnam. If they continue to work in cooperation with Prime Minister Hun Sen, perhaps the border demarcation work can continue quietly.

Cooperation may, however, be a forlorn hope. Kem Sokha genuinely tried to focus on problems where he and Hun Sen may have common interests. But Rainsy, true to form, as soon as he

returned from France, began attacking Kem Sokha, accusing him of trying to form a new political party, obviously to undermine Sokha's improving relations with Hun Sen<sup>213</sup>.

So where does Cambodia go from here? Politically the CPP under Hun Sen appears in solid control of the government. The former Khmer Rouge are no longer a threat, the two opposition parties are weakened and fragmented, there is a new king who, perhaps because of his solid European background, is sincere in accepting his constitutional role of reigning without ruling, as was seen clearly in his refusal to play party politics with the Vietnam border treaty and to sign it against the wishes of the chauvinists. His high-profile visit to Vietnam in March 2006 supports this interpretation<sup>214</sup>. No doubt his long sojourn and education in socialist Czechoslovakia, and close acquaintance with republican western Europe, has immunized him against the anti-Vietnamese racism which has been stoked by the enemies of the CPP since the 1980s until it is more prevalent and violent than before the war and revolution.

Together with this, another positive tendency, both objectively and comparatively within Southeast Asia, may be a decline in the once nearly sacred aura of royalty and royalism. During 2006 there has been much severe criticism of the royalty as a group in the Khmer-language press, though not of King Sihamoni, indicating that the royal aura is wearing thin. King Sihamoni is still young enough

<sup>213</sup> PPP 15/07, April 7 - 20, 2006.

<sup>214</sup> See PPP 15/6, 24/3-6/4, 2006.



to enjoy decades on the throne, and when there is again the necessity to think of change, the political and social situation of Cambodia may be much different, and the potential rivals available since 1993, whose prestige is in decline, or their children, will no longer be considered as possible candidates<sup>215</sup>.

Cambodia had 23 years (1970-1993) without a king, twice as long as the interregnum between the execution of Charles I and restoration of Charles II in England (1649-1660) and as long as that (1792-1815) between revolution and Bourbon Restoration in France. Statistically, by the time the 'International Community' brought their benevolence to Cambodia in the early 1990s, only a minority of the population were old enough to have had personal, positive, memories of the monarchy.

UNTAC put an end to the 12-year period of PRK/SOC "modernization and democratization of many social...relations" noted above, first of all by ensuring Sihanouk a dominant place as Chief of State, President, or King. Just as in 19th-century France, the monarchy was not restored through popular choice. The Cambodian people were not asked to vote on this most important matter. It was decided in advance. In Cambodia, as elsewhere, a necessary step toward democracy is to either turn to a republican form of government, or to exclude the monarchy entirely from politics, as has been done in those western democracies which are still monarchies. This is prescribed in the Cambodian

<sup>215</sup> Potential royal rivals have been Sihanouk's other children (Ranariddh, Chakrapong), his half brother Sirivudh, and the Sisowaths.

constitution, and there may now be a king who also believes that.

In this progress from near superstitious royalism to secular democracy, Cambodia is unlikely to receive strong support from the modern western milieus who claim in principle to desire that development. Royalist romanticism has raised its head among academic experts, evincing even among them a sort of 'stop in the mind'.

Georgetown University's "David Steinberg, an expert on Burma and a critic of its military junta, reacting to the events in Bangkok in May 1992, bemoaned the lack of a monarch in Rangoon to lessen the suffering of the Burmese"; and Grant Evans, a recognized serious student of modern Laos, ended his *Short History of Laos*, the most reactionary work on Indochina to have appeared since the heyday of French colonialism, with "we will know that [reconciliation among Lao] has occurred when the bones of King Sisavang Vattana are exhumed... and returned to Luang Prabang. The chants of the monks echoing through the temples of the ancient capital, sending the *vinyan* ('soul') of the King on its way, will heal the deep rift in the Lao nation caused by the revolution"<sup>216</sup>.

<sup>216</sup> FEER 16/7, 1992, cited in Paul M. Handley, *The King Never Smiles*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2006, p. 357, where the apparent sympathy for Steinberg's position contradicts the entire tenor of Handley's book, in particular his treatment of the 1992 events; and Grant Evans, *A Short History of Laos*, Chiang Mai, Silkworm Books, 2002, p. 236. In the case of Evans, this represents a real Pauline epiphany on a road to Luang Prabang-Damascus, or just a road to a tenured professorship somewhere in the new world of neo-liberalism (for contrast see Grant Evans and Kevin Rowley, *Red Brotherhood at War, Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos since 1975*, Verso 1984, 1990).

Hun Sen has played the U.S. card more skillfully than his competitors. He has acceded to the demand not to send U.S. troops to the International Criminal Court, he has agreed with the U.S. anti-terror policy, Cambodia is the only country in Southeast Asia where not a peep of objection has been heard to the war in Iraq, U.S. ambassadors have not been sympathetic to Rainsy, in spite of his search for support among American reactionaries within the Bush camp, and apparently Hun Sen had no objections to the dubious trial of a few Moslems. All of this no doubt helped in persuading U.S. authorities to finally arrest and try the leader of the CFF, in spite of his appeal that he was really an anti-Communist 'freedom fighter'.

The regime change policy that was initiated in the 1980s, and that misfired in the 1993 election, has been a complete failure as originally envisioned to replace the CPP and its leaders with contras. It has succeeded, however, in turning the CPP around and pushing Cambodia into an extreme neo-liberal structure in which all of the worst features of the prewar society, which led the country to disaster, have come to the fore, and more violently.

This pro-American policy could have a backlash, however, if cooperation in the 'war on terror' leads to anti-Cham tendencies, especially now when one of the Moslem communities in Thailand is involved in a violent confrontation with Thai authorities who until November 2006 seemed uninterested in working toward a peaceful

solution of recognized problems. Communication between Thai Malays and Cambodian Cham is easy, for many of the latter, in pursuit of Islamic education, have learned Malay, a dialect of which is the home language of Thailand's southern Moslems. Cambodia's first trial of 'Islamic terrorists' does not bode well.

The extreme neo-liberalism will also be disastrous if the divide between rich and poor deepens. The 2006 implosion of Thailand, however, whose neo-liberal model Cambodia imitated from the 1990s, may inspire a retreat from extremes, and the increasing economic cooperation with Vietnam may show the way back to some of the PRK/SOC policies of the 1980s<sup>217</sup>.

Now, in late 2006, the anti-Cambodian campaigns of pack-running journos, apparatchik academics with their failed state scenarios, and VWRs may be running dry. At least, Cambodia does not look so bad in comparison with the favorite of those coteries, Thailand, where parliament has not been able to sit since February, one of its senior statesmen has warned of collapse into a 'failed state', and it has returned to the 70-year tradition of a military coup to resolve a political impasse<sup>218</sup>.

<sup>217</sup> For some details of Cambodia-Vietnam economic relations, see PPP 15/6, 24/3-6/4, 2006. Besides that, dozens of Cambodian students are studying technical subjects, economics, and law in the University of Hanoi, and the first Cambodian Certified Public Accountant received his training there, in a US supported program. See also the enthusiastic reporting on Vietnam in the Khmer newspaper *Reaksmei Kampuchea*, 2-3/11/2006.

<sup>218</sup> *The Nation* (Bangkok), 31 August 2006, a 'failed state' warning by former Prime Minister Anan Panyarachun.

Nevertheless, there is still a major issue on which the VWR may come to life again--the trial of the Khmer Rouge leaders, scheduled to begin next year. I do not intend here to engage in a detailed discussion of its potential problems, and will merely offer a prognosis that it will not achieve any of the positive results promised by its organizers, may very well turn into a complete fiasco, and has the potential to envenom again relations with Vietnam.

It must not be forgotten that when the Cambodians really wanted their own anti-KR trial right after 1979, the 'international community', led by the U.S., which had maintained the KR in Cambodia's UN seat and was nursing them back to health on the Thai border, was opposed, allegedly concerned about the quality of Cambodian justice.

Then, in the 1980s, when a movement started in some western countries to press for a trial, it was in danger of being subverted by the anti-CPP crowd who hoped to turn it against Hun Sen and other CPP leaders. Fortunately that tendency was pushed aside, and the pro-trial movement, since the 1990s, has been organized by persons who wish to judge the real KR, not the people who turned against them. Nevertheless, it is difficult to find much enthusiasm for it among the Cambodian public, and there is much in the way it has been organized to suggest 'judicial colonialism' developing out of 'judicial romanticism'<sup>1219</sup>.

<sup>1219</sup> I owe this terminology to Jeffrey Kingston, "Balancing Justice and Reconciliation in East Timor", *Critical Asian Studies* 38/3 (September 2006), pp. 271-302. See p. 292.

The anti-CPP tendency, moreover, is still alive, and is able to exert influence against U.S. funding of the trial, alleging incompetence of Cambodian judges, and danger of a 'whitewash', code for a trial that would not put Hun Sen in the dock<sup>1220</sup>.

In this connection there was another peculiar presentation by Stephen Heder a couple of years ago. Heder, as noted above, can be termed a professional enemy of the CPP and Hun Sen, although he accepts that serious research, including his own, shows "no evidence implicating... Hun Sen... in KR crimes", nor "anyone in a position of significant power in the current government". Who then did he mean with, "there is good reason to believe an intention exists to ensure that the list of suspects to be tried will be politically determined to shield perpetrators from embarrassing scrutiny, if not from prosecution, as a few of them at least are now in positions of some political authority"? Who is to be protected; who will exert political influence to protect them? This sort of doublespeak is not unexpected from Heder, and it always has a purpose. Readers who do not wade carefully through the verbiage, may come away with the conclusion that "noted scholar" Heder is accusing the current authorities.

Heder, nevertheless, did make a point worthy of notice. The trial will not "grapple with... one of the main historical questions surrounding the KR... the extent to which the crimes were... a result of a conspiracy hatched by certain... leaders...

<sup>1220</sup> All of this is clear in "Doubting US withholds KRT funds", PPP 15/16, 11-24/8, 2006, pp. 1, 5.

[or] were the abuse of delegated authority by their subordinates... even contrary to orders". Of course not. The trial was never intended by its proponents to touch on that subject, or on any other historical question. In fact the 'judicial romanticists' and 'judicial colonialists' certainly wish to avoid it, being convinced that everything was the fault of the leaders<sup>221</sup>. It will be interesting to see if Heder, now working for the KR trial prosecution, will try to remedy this defect he noted.

Even otherwise respectable journalists have not hesitated to evoke alleged participation of Hun Sen in KR atrocities; and the Cambodia Genocide Program at Yale University has not been careful in straining out info-ganda. Their website provides the following: Hun Sen is alleged to have participated in a Khmer Rouge attack on Kompong Cham city, Northern Zone, in 1973. Hospital patients were killed, and "when overrunning two hospitals, Heng Samrin's and Hun Sen's troops threw hand grenades and later slit the throats of critically ill patients"<sup>222</sup> (Kompong Cham was attacked in 1973, but no evidence has been found of Hun Sen's participation in atrocities). Although this had been denounced by researchers, and even by Elizabeth Becker<sup>223</sup>, in a brief survey of Cambodia in the May 25, 2000 *Far Eastern*

<sup>221</sup> PPP 13/25, 3-16/12, 2004, p. 2, "Khmer rouge tribunal in danger of political interference, irrelevancy, says noted scholar". The first quotation above is PPP comment; the following two are attributed to Heder.

<sup>222</sup> The source was Saren Thach, a Cambodian exile who did not claim first-hand knowledge, in *Washington Post*, 30/10/1989, and in *International Herald Tribune*, 2/11/1989.

<sup>223</sup> Becker in *International Herald Tribune* 6/11/89.

*Economic Review*, a non-specialist writer, out for a buck, and assuming that the Cambodia Genocide Program was a reliable source, used this to evoke the possibility of Hun Sen having to face the coming genocide tribunal.

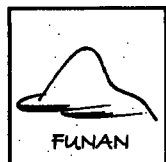
When I complained to the Yale program people, they said their data base just scooped up all reports about Cambodian genocide, although I had assumed from the beginning that it was to catalogue information in primary sources within Cambodia, such as prison records and government documents, not scatter-gun accusations by right-wing Cambodians in the U.S. In fact the data base is hardly more than techno-kitsch for the entertainment of amateurs. Although they agreed that Saren Thach's article was inaccurate propaganda, they still (October 2006) had not removed it from their website, where it may provide titillating material for more unwary journalists when there is increasing focus on the trial during the coming year.

And if the trial breaks down the IRI, VOA, Voice of Free Asia and assorted regime-change artists will be waiting in the wings to try to turn it against Hun Sen and the CPP.

Perhaps this may be concluded with a bit of comic relief from IRI supremo Lorne Craner, in a comment on the September 2006 coup in Bangkok, "You can't sanction a coup just because you don't like the guy if you're going to stand up for democracy... its unconstitutional", apparently in agreement with, "democracy's not about picking winners and losers, it's about defending

institutions"<sup>224</sup>. Everything IRI has stood for, in Cambodia, and previously in Central America, was picking, if necessary by violence, winners who lacked popular support, and subverting constitutions, in Cambodia encouraging Rainsy's efforts to block constitutional formation of a new government following elections in 1998 and 2003.

<sup>224</sup> *The Nation* (Bangkok), 22 September, 2006, p. 10A, from Peter Baker "Ideals and realities clash in US's 'freedom agenda'", *Washington Post*, n.d. The second quotation was attributed there to Michael A. McFaul of Stanford University.



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Editions Funan

# 59, St 172, Sangkat Chhey Chumneas,  
Khan Daun Penh, Phnom Penh (Cambodia)

P.O. Box : 553

E-mail : [funan7@yahoo.fr](mailto:funan7@yahoo.fr) // [funan\\_mp@yahoo.com](mailto:funan_mp@yahoo.com)

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