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CAMBODIA'S BORDER WITH ENGAGEMENT FROM POWER COUNTRIES

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With Compliments

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Abstract

This paper provides an overview of the Cambodia's history in the period of dark-age, turbulent, colonization, decolonization, cold war period, democratization and even in the globalization process. Having had a troubled in the past of civil war and infringement on its territorial sovereignty, peace and stability, they become a focal point for Cambodia's future development and growth. In this sense, it remains vital that Cambodia moves towards normalizing relations with its neighbors. The Challenges remain a cardinal, and will likely be provided a hint on the direction of Cambodia policy.

Introduction

The earliest known kingdom in the area, Funan, flourished from around the first to the sixth century A.D. It was succeeded by Chenla, which controlled large areas. The golden age of Khmer civilization, however, was the period from the ninth to the thirteenth century, when the kingdom of Kambuja, which gave Kampuchea, or Cambodia.

Angkorean Cambodia exemplified some aspects of Marx's so-called Asiatic Mode of Production, with large state-directed public works and dependence on an elaborate hydraulic system for food production. Then the shift would have meant an enormous break with the past that Irrigation plays only a minor part in modern Cambodian food production. And although, European visitors commented on the continuing existence of hydraulic agriculture in the 16th century, it must have fallen into decline. As the archaeologists believe, Angkor's population was over one million. Perhaps as the hydraulic system fell into disrepair as a result of the ecological crisis and possible sabotage by intruders, and the population would have had to relocate as a matter of survival. How many perished during the invasions? Did the apparent ecological crisis lead to famine and disease? Or did the population decline more gradually? Cambodia twice suffered demographic catastrophe during the 19th century - during the incessant wars of the 'Dark Age' and the Great Rebellion of the 1880s—so perhaps something similar happened in the 15th century, unless fresh archaeological or documentary evidence will be emerged. In 1863 King Norodom signed an agreement with the French to establish a protectorate over his kingdom. The country gradually came under French colonial domination. During World War II, the Japanese allowed the French government (based at Vichy), which collaborated with the Nazis the Vichy French to continue administering Cambodia and the others Indochinese territories, but they also fostered Khmer nationalism. Cambodia enjoyed a brief period of independence in 1945 before Allied troops restored French control. King Norodom Sihanouk, who had been chosen by France to succeed King Monivong, in 1941, rapidly assumed a central political role as he sought to neutralize leftist and republican opponents and attempted to negotiate acceptable terms for independence from the French. Sihanouk's "royal crusade for independence" resulted in grudging French acquiescence to his demands for a transfer of sovereignty. On October 17, 1953; France and Cambodia sign an agreement on the hand-over of military sovereignty to Cambodia and November, 9, 1953, the Independence Ceremonies are held, marking the end of colonial presence in Cambodia. The following year, July 21, 1954, the Geneva Conference on Indochina was concludes and issues a Final Declaration of the Geneva Conference on the Problem of restoring Peace in Indochina.

The Paris Peace Accord of 1991 ended the war of more than twenty years long and disruption in Cambodia. The United Nations Transitional Authority for Cambodia (UNTAC) managed the transition period from 1991 until the national elections in May 1993. The national's constitution was proclaimed by the Constituent Assembly in September 24, 1993, with King Norodom Sihanouk as head of state. Cambodia was thereby re-established as a constitutional monarchy, with an elected senate and national assembly.

The International Community restores Peace and Stability to Cambodia, and Bilateral Relation between Neighboring Countries a prerequisite for sustainable Peace, Stability and Security in the Peninsular. Cambodia is located in the southwest of the Indochina peninsula with a coastline on the Gulf of Thailand. It shares borders with Vietnam to the east and southeast, Laos in the north and Thailand to the north and west. Cambodia's population is estimated at 14 million people, of whom 90% are ethnic Khmer.

1. A brief of Cambodia's history in French Colony

Cambodia was ravaged by foreign invasions and wars from 14th up until the 19th century, when new dynasties in these countries fought over control of Cambodia. The war that began in the 1830's almost destroyed Cambodia.

French colonialism arrived in Indochina in 1858; four centuries after the Iberian conquistadors set sail from Manila on a doomed mission to carve out an empire on the Southeast Asian mainland. By 1893, after a bloody war of conquest, they would control all of the Vietnamese territories from the Chinese border. King Norodom signed a treaty in 1863 that enabled the French to be a protectorate, thus effectively stopping the foreign wars. For the next 90 years, France in essence ruled over Cambodia.¹

The French would stay in Indochina until 1954, when a peace conference in Geneva brokered a settlement to the anti-colonial war that raged in the region after World War II. Cambodia secured its own independence the year earlier following King Sihanouk's 'royal crusade', although this must be seen in the context of France's reversals in Indochina as a whole, which culminated in catastrophe at the Battle of Dien Bien Phu in 1954.²

1.1 The treaty of 1863

Their behavior suggests that they had entertained designs on Cambodia some years before the establishment of the protectorate. French missionaries had proselytized in the kingdom since the 17th century, and although they made few converts, they had won the trust of King Duang and several of his predecessors. There had also been a tremendous spurt of popular interest in the kingdom following the posthumous publication of the diaries of the French traveler Henri Mouhot. These contained a description of the ruins of Angkor, which the popular imagination saw as an Eldorado in the East. To acquire them would bring glory to *la belle France*.

When King Duang died in 1860, Cambodia fell into a familiar pattern of instability. Ang Vodey, who was to reign as King Norodom after his coronation in 1864, sought talks with France on the advice of French missionaries, and this time the response came quickly. On August 11, 1863, Norodom signed a 'treaty of friendship, commerce and French protection' with the Breton sailor Admiral Pierre de La Grandière, whose gunboat was moored on the river nearby.

Norodom tried to placate Mongkut by arguing that de La Grandière had bullied him into signing the treaty before he had time to read the Khmer text. In December 1863, Norodom signed a secret treaty with the Siamese king, which ran counter to his pledges to France. In fact, Napoleon did not ratify the treaty until April 1864. Their misgivings intensified when, in March 1864, they caught him trying secretly to slip out of Udong for his coronation at Bangkok. A few salvos from a gunboat convinced Norodom that he should abandon the plan. Instead, he was crowned at Udong the following June in a ceremony presided over jointly by the French and Siamese. French learned (via a report in the Singapore newspaper the *Straits Times*) of his secret treaty with King Mongkut, the terms of which gave the Siamese the right to appoint 'the kings or viceroys' of Cambodia and gave further slices of Cambodian territory to Siam. Under French pressure and on the advice of the British, the Siamese formally agreed that their treaty was null and void.

(1) *The geopolitics of Cambodia during the cold war period*, Sok Udom Deth, Ohio University, 2009

(2) *A short History of Cambodia: from empire to survival*, John Tully 2005,

The Second Empire of France collapsed as a result of Napoleon III's disastrous war against Prussia in 1870. With the new Third Republic came a reforming zeal that coincided with a more vigorous style of imperialism by the European powers. The inefficient and corrupt Khmer state would have to be replaced with government and administration based on European ideas of fiscal prudence, and legal-rational principles. Cambodia, which had been a drain on the French exchequer, would pay its way.

1.2 The French reform program

Implementing the *mission civilisatrice* would prove harder than the French had realized. For the next thirty-odd years, the French *Résidents* would wage a constant battle against Norodom and his ministers and provincial officials. Too weak to actively oppose the French, Norodom's preferred the old game of passive resistance to reform.³

The main planks of the reform program included: the creation of private property in land, the abolition of slavery, legal and administrative restructure, and cuts to royal spending and sinecures, later described by French administrator Gustave Janneau as 'worm-eaten debris'. Creaking, inefficient and corrupt, the French saw it as a system of licensed robbery in which the main purpose of officials seemed to be personal enrichment at public expense.

The country was divided into 57 provinces, each of which was administered by a member of the royal family or a high mandarin, and with considerable duplication of functions between the provinces and the central government.

There was no system of education apart from limited instruction given to boys by monks at the pagodas, and no institutions of social welfare or health (in contrast to what had existed at Angkor). The legal system was often irrational, cruel and unjust.

In March 1884, they insisted on a thoroughgoing revision of the 1863 treaty. Three months later, after further procrastination by Norodom, Governor Charles Thomson's gunboat churned up the Mekong from Saigon with a small army of French marines and Vietnamese riflemen aboard. Thomson hauled Norodom out of bed in the predawn darkness and forced him to sign the new treaty, the first article of which committed the king to accept 'all the administrative, judicial, financial and commercial reforms that the government of France deems useful in future'. Thomson gave Norodom a clear choice: sign or abdicate and, under *force majeure*, he signed.

1.2 The Great Rebellion of 1885–1886

In early January 1885, Khmer rebels, led by Norodom's half-brother Prince Si Votha, embroiled almost all of the country. By the middle of 1886, it had become clear to the French Colonial Ministry that there would have to be a negotiated solution to the conflict and that this would involve backing away from the terms imposed upon Norodom in the 1884 treaty. Moreover, the French would have to solicit the king's support to end the uprising. The French estimated that 10,000 people had died during the revolt, but other statistics show that the Cambodian population fell from 945,000 (in 1879) to 750,000 (in 1888), as a net loss of 195,000 people.

(3) Jean Moura, *French Resident in the 1870s. He was also a naval officer, a scholar and the author of a history of Cambodia.* (Courtesy of Cambodian National Archives, Phnom Penh)

1.3 Sisowath and the Franco–Khmer accord

The French were eager to accelerate their reform program. Although stymied by what they saw as the laziness and incompetence of Khmer officialdom, the French were to achieve more in the first few years of Sisowath's reign than they had managed in the 40 years under Norodom.

Sisowath's coronation in 1904, however, marked the beginning of a new stage of Franco–Khmer relations. Although, he had proved himself a competent and physically courageous military commander during the Pou Kombo insurrection, his pliability reflected a pragmatic mix of self-interest, resignation to the facts of **Realpolitik**, a genuine respect for French culture, and faith in the ability of France to protect his kingdom. His reign, and that of his son Monivong (who succeeded him after his death in 1927) was one of Franco–Khmer accord, marked by social peace and stability—a break from the more turbulent Norodom years. Slavery was abolished, the Khmer legal code overhauled, and a system of competitive entry to the civil service introduced. The institution of private property in land, long a key plank of the reform plan, began with the introduction of a cadastral program and the distribution of title deeds. Steps were taken to root out corruption, particularly in the collection of taxes, and there was some expansion of public works schemes such as roads and bridges, government buildings and dredging of the port of Phnom Penh. A limited civil list was introduced to curb spending on minor royalty. The system of apanage, under which district administration was farmed out to members of the royal family and high mandarins, almost as individual fiefdoms, was abolished. Most importantly, a new three-tier system of local government bodies was set up under the supervision of French *Résidents*.

In 1906 he undertook a tour of France, where the President of the Republic received him in the Elysée Palace at Paris. Equally impressive were the civic and industrial wonders of the protectoration. He committed a major diplomatic gaffe in France when he called publicly for the restoration of the lost provinces of Battambang and Angkor to Cambodia, that he was rewarded soon afterwards when in 1908, after delicate negotiations, Siam agreed to their return. Shortly afterwards—following an unsuccessful anti-French revolt by followers of the Apeuvongs family who had governed the provinces on behalf of Siam since 1795—a French archaeological team began the painstaking task of restoring the Angkor ruins. These had remained a symbol of *Khmerité*—‘Khmerness’—since their loss over a century before, and with their return to Cambodia was almost whole again.

1.4 The 1916 Affair

Sisowath's gratitude showed in his wholehearted support for the French cause during the Great War of 1914–18. Some 2,000 Cambodians served as *tirailleurs* (infantrymen) in French colonial regiments in Europe, while some hundreds of Khmers workers joined in the munitions factories in France. A number of Khmers won medals for bravery in battles on the western front and in the Balkans. The Royal family served in the army, these included Sisowath's eldest son (Prince Monivong, whom was selected by French for successor), who trained at the Saint-Maixent military academy and rose to brigadier's rank. Another prince, Leng Sisowath, left his bones in a French military cemetery.

The Allied victory in Europe probably enhanced France's prestige among the general population, and further strengthened ties with the Khmer elite. The French built a huge commemorative

monument in Phnom Penh (later demolished by the Pol Pot regime) and the war hero Marshal Joffe made a triumphal tour of the country, including to the Angkor ruins. It was the beginning of the zenith of French power in the kingdom, a period described by the Cambodian writer Huy Kanthoul as ‘**a kind of belle époque**’, that would continue for many years. By the 1920s, the economic austerity of the war years had lifted and there was something of an economic boom, marked by increased spending on public works, health and education, and by the development of large-scale rubber plantations on the left bank of the Mekong, upstream from Phnom Penh. The Angkor restoration project had continued throughout the period, and under the able direction of French scholar and linguist Suzanne Karpelès a Buddhist Institute was set up to study and preserve Cambodian religious culture.⁴

The economic boom was curbed to a sharp end with the onset of the Great Depression: the economy was stagnated, public expenditure was slashed to balance budgets and there was great destitution among the Khmers. That was on the eve of World War II, though, the economy was on the mend again.

Even today there are some very old Khmers who look back with nostalgia to the colonial era. However, war and French humiliation at Asian hands during the Japanese occupation were to change the political situation forever, and trigger a qualitative leap in consciousness that was to lead to independence within less than a decade after 1945.⁵

2. War and Japanese occupation

The fall of France came swiftly in June 1940. The victorious Germans partitioned the country into a nominally independent state with its capital at Vichy in the south and directly occupied zone in the north. The authorities in some of France’s overseas colonies heeded the call of General de Gaulle to continue resistance, but many others, including French Indochina Governor-General at Hanoi, Admiral Jean Decoux, declared their loyalty to the quasi-fascist pro-Axis regime at Vichy, led by the geriatric war hero Philippe Pétain.

The French capitulation was a devastating blow to French morale in the colony, and it must have given the Francophile Khmer elite cause for grave concern. Worse was to come in early 1941, when the Japanese brokered a humiliating agreement between France and Siam—by 1939 renamed Thailand—following a short-lived war. The war had broken out in late 1940, with the Thais taking advantage of France’s weakness to demand the handover of Cambodia’s western provinces, which they had ceded in 1908. While the land war was inconclusive, the French had inflicted a stinging defeat on the Thai navy at the Battle of Koh Chang in the Gulf of Siam, and might have expected a more favorable outcome than that imposed by Japan. However, despite its nominal alliance with Vichy, Japan’s underlying aim was to undermine western colonial power in Asia, regardless of its political complexion. They awarded Thailand almost all of the territories she had asked for, with the exception of the area around the Angkor ruins, which France argued bitterly to retain. Now, their protector’s sword and shield were broken. Perception of France’s weakness led on one hand to profound disillusionment and depression, but on the other to the growth of nationalist sentiment and to a new confidence that Asians could defeat the almighty Europeans. The former effect was most pronounced in the case of King Monivong, who had succeeded his father to the throne in 1927. Monivong could pass as a ‘brown Frenchman’.

(4) *A short History of Cambodia: from empire to survival*, John Tully 2005, Page 98

(5) *A short History of Cambodia: from empire to survival*, John Tully 2005, page 103

Although, he never lost his identity as a Khmer; he spoke fluent French and had adopted many western customs. He had risen to the rank of brigadier in the French army and although he was a figurehead who played relatively little part in government affairs, he was intensely loyal to France. When the news came through of the forced cession of Battambang and Siem Reap provinces, Monivong was plunged into deep gloom and retired to his estates, at Bokor a French pleasure palace atop of mountain overlooking the Gulf of Siam, where he refused to meet with French officials and even ‘forgot’ their language. He died soon afterwards in the company of his favorite concubine, Saloth Roeung, the sister of a man called Saloth Sar who was later known to the world as Pol Pot. While Monivong died without hope, the French humiliation had electrified the young Cambodian intellectuals associated with the magazine *Nagaravatta*, and nationalist sentiment swept through some circles of the Buddhist *sangha*. *Nagaravatta* openly criticised the French authorities, who responded with heavy censorship before banning it outright in 1942. However, war and French humiliation at Asian hands during the Japanese occupation were to change the political situation forever, and trigger a qualitative leap in consciousness that was to lead to independence within less than a decade, after 1945.

Looking back to the post Angkorean period when a group of Japanese businessmen and travelers from Kumamoto prefecture traded with Khmers and visited the temples of Angkor. The exact time of the contact is not confirmed but it was proved by the Japanese scripts on one of the wall at Angkor Wat. It is said Japanese came to trade with Cambodia and brought gold back to build a castle in Kumamoto, one of the prefectures on Kyushu island of Japan. But it was just a short term momentous bilateral relation. The modern relations between Japan and Cambodia started in early 1950s after diplomatic ties established in 1953. The relationship was improved significantly when King Norodom Sihanouk made an official visit to Japan in 1955 to sign a treaty of friendship between the two countries and the Japan’s adoption of a resolution of gratitude regarding Cambodia’s act of abandoning the rights to claim reparation from Japan. The wholehearted behavior of Cambodia towards Japan after World War II through bilateral assistance such as the abandonment of rights to claim reparation after Japan lost in the war and Cambodia even provided Japan with rice, is the pushing factor for latter cooperation between the two countries. The bilateral relations were disrupted from mid 1970s to early 1990s after Khmer Rouge cut diplomatic ties with Japan in 1975. After 1979, the new government of Cambodia called State of Cambodia was established but Japan together with the US did not have official relations with this government. Only after Paris Peace agreement and conflict resolution in Cambodia paved the way for official diplomatic relations between the two countries. Japan reopened her embassy in 1992 while Cambodia reopened her embassy in 1994. During the cold war, Japan shared common foreign policy with US towards East and Southeast Asia. At the end of the Cold War, Japan actively returned to Cambodia through official development assistance (ODA) and peace building and national reconstruction efforts. Japan supports Cambodia in many fields especially conflict resolution, peace building and national reconstruction.⁶

2.1 King Sihanouk’s Coronation

Monivong’s successor to the throne, a 19-year-old prince Norodom Sihanouk, whom Decoux had installed on the throne in the belief that he would be a docile puppet, initially surpassed their best expectations, preferring to chase girls and watch films than worry himself with affairs of state or nationalist politics. Another young man called Son Ngoc Thanh, a Khmer Krom from the lower

(6) CICIP working papers No31, *Cambodia between China and Japan*, October 2009 by Chheang Vannarith

delta and a member of the *Nagaravatta* circle, came to symbolize Cambodian nationalism at this stage. The Vichy regime in Indochina was viciously repressive. The police rounded up thousands of real and imagined opponents and interned them in prisons and concentration camps, including the Pich Nil camp. It was also a period of mounting austerity with widespread shortages of food and clothing and, according to Cambodian nationalists, taxation grew steadily heavier. The Allied navies cut Indochina's overseas trade routes and the Japanese occupation forces requisitioned much of the country's food and plantation products for their own consumption and for export to the Home Islands. This built up a head of resentment against the French, whom the Khmers held responsible for the shortages. The Vichy political regime was also contradictory. While the French authorities were repressive and insensitive, they were also conscious of their extreme weakness, *vis-à-vis* both the Japanese and their colonial subjects. The Japanese had ousted the British and Dutch colonial authorities in Malaya and the East Indies and their rhetoric was stridently anti-European. The French must have been fearful of the longer-term intentions of their nominal allies. They responded by attempting to mobilize the Khmers behind their regime. They encouraged *Khmerité*, and while this was in the main cultural and meant to bolster French rule, it was to have unforeseen consequences. Vichy's quasi-fascist trappings were visible everywhere, at least in the towns, with huge portraits of Pétain on the façades of buildings and exhortations to uphold the imperatives of 'Work, Family and Fatherland'. Khmer boys were encouraged to join the scouting movement and a kind of mass youth militia, the Yuvan, was set up to mobilize young Cambodians behind the regime. However, these organizations brought young Khmers out of their families and villages and gave them an inkling of potential collective strength that would be turned against the colonialists.

2.2 The Revolt of the Parasols

Despite their promotion of *Khmerité* the French were inconsistent. In 1941, the French authorities decided to replace the ancient Khmer script (based on Sanskrit) with a new Romanized script known as *quoc ngu khmer* after the reformed Vietnamese script. The move caused widespread indignation, particularly in the Buddhist *sangha* and in the proto-nationalist circles around Son Ngoc Thanh and *Nagaravatta*. Son Ngoc Thanh secretly negotiated with the Japanese who, while they counseled prudence, did not discourage his nationalist ambitions. The *quoc ngu khmer* issue provided the Cambodian dissidents with a focus for popular discontent; on the one hand, the French encouraged *Khmerité*, yet on the other they threatened the age-old Khmer customs. In July 1942, a nationalist monk called Hem Chieu delivered a vitriolic anti-French sermon to a group of Cambodian *tirailleurs* in a Phnom Penh *wat*. An informer tipped off the French police, who arrested Hem Chieu and a number of other monks and lay nationalists. In response, several thousand angry Khmers, including monks with their distinctive orange robes and parasols, marched on the *Résidence Supérieure* demanding the prisoners' release. A riot ensued, in which a number of police and demonstrators were injured and more arrests made.

Further bloodshed was probably deterred by the presence of Japanese military police, the *Kempetei*, who stood by but did not intervene. The event entered Khmer political folklore as the Revolt of the Parasols, after the monks' sunshades. In another country, the incident might have been relatively unremarkable, but in hitherto docile Cambodia it was a significant milestone on the road to national independence. Afterwards, the colonial authorities launched a general crackdown, banned *Nagaravatta* and sentenced several of the perceived ringleaders to death. The French government commuted these terms to life imprisonment on the prison island of Poulo Condore in the South China Sea. There, tutored by Vietnamese nationalist prisoners, the Khmers

gained an advanced anti-colonial political education. Son Ngoc Thanh, meanwhile, had sought sanctuary with the Japanese, who spirited him out of the country to Japan, where he was to remain until the last months of the war, remaining in postal contact with his supporters in Cambodia.

2.3 French humiliation

With hindsight, it is clear that the high tide of Japanese expansion in Southeast Asia and the Pacific came in the months immediately after the aerial attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941 and the fall of Singapore in early 1942. Thereafter, with her supply lines dangerously over-extended, Japan was to face the full might of American military and industrial power, and soon suffered big defeats at the Battles of Midway and the Coral Sea. The D-day landings by the Allies in France in the summer of 1944 led rapidly to the liberation of Paris and the fall of Vichy. That was time to indicate that Governor-General Decoux was prepared to change his political spots and made a secret agreement to back the Allies. When the time came with Vichy's dead and a new anti-Axis government at Paris, he decided to drop the fascist paraphernalia and pro-Axis regime. Decoux's usefulness to the Japanese was in question.

On 9 March 1945, the Japanese staged an *Indochina-wide coup de force* against the French, crushing feeble efforts at resistance with ease. In May 1945, Son Ngoc Thanh returned from exile aboard a Japanese bomber and enormous crowds of supporters welcomed him at Pochentong airport. Such was Thanh's prestige among Khmers and standing with the Japanese that Sihanouk stifled his jealousy and appointed his rival as Foreign Minister. Nationalist firebrand or not, Thanh did little to change the timid course of the government at this stage, although he appears to have been an enthusiastic collaborator with the Japanese. He was instrumental, however, in setting up a nationalist militia, the Green-shirts, as the core of a projected national army. When the first atomic bomb fell on Japan on 6 August 1945, Thanh's supporters grew restless.

Although the Japanese army in Indochina was intact, Germany had already capitulated. Two days later, the Union Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR) entered the Pacific War. If the hard-line nationalists were to take control of government, they had to act soon before Japan's collapse. On 9 August 1945, the day, the second atomic bomb fell on Nagasaki, a group of militiamen burst into the royal palace, demanding the removal of old retainers and bureaucrats from the government and their replacement with nationalists. It amounted to a putsch. Some of the old guard ministers retained their posts, but Son Ngoc Thanh took up the post of prime minister and other nationalists took key positions. The whole affair had strong comic opera overtones. Son Ngoc Thanh insisted on the centrality of the alliance with Japan even as Tokyo was on the brink of unconditional surrender and news of the horror of Nagasaki and Hiroshima spread around the world. The Khmers could look forward, perhaps, to the gradual extension of their government's powers. Cambodia's first ever elections were scheduled for April 1946 and a number of political parties emerged to contest them. Most of these parties represented the interests of factions, extended families, and cliques within the Khmer elite, and some of them existed for little more than the personal self enrichment of their tiny memberships. Given that Cambodia had no experience of democracy, and that political parties had never existed before, this was not surprising. Such parties were fluid and transient and won few votes, despite financial backing from the French administration. In the lead-up to the 1946 elections, two major parties crystallized, the Liberals and the Democrats, and these became, roughly, the right and the left inside the national assembly and were to dominate parliamentary politics until Sihanouk

amalgamated most of the parties after independence. In the meantime, Thanh took few initiatives apart from organizing a referendum on the question of independence and the legitimacy of his government. The vote was Stalinist style, with 99.999 per cent voting for Thanh, but it probably did reflect a genuine desire for independence. It was also the first time that a government had allowed the Khmers to vote for anything.

The end came inevitably for Thanh's government. It was only a matter of time before the French returned and they would not tolerate what they would see as a government of Japanese puppets and traitors.

2.4 The French's return with the lost territory and the fall of Son Ngoc Thanh

On August 8, 1945, an advance guard of British troops, flew into Pochentong airport and disarm Japanese forces. On August 15, 1945, followed by General Jacques Leclerc, the French commander in Indochina, who arrested Thanh at gunpoint and dragged him off to prison in Saigon, to the slightly guilty bemusement of the British commander that regarded Thanh as a 'silly little man'. Sihanouk assured the Allies that 'the Cambodian people had always loved France'. The French, for their part, did not publicly hold Sihanouk's lapse against him. Most likely they were aware of the deep reverence, of which the Khmers viewed the monarchy and were unwilling to stoke nationalist fires by moving against him. The French government was aware that there had been a sea change in political consciousness in Southeast Asia. The hothouse of war and Japanese occupation had caused a flowering of nationalism across the region. The Cambodians had enjoyed a kind of independence and they saw no reason why colonialism should return. The British were already preparing to depart from Burma. The Roosevelt administration in the United States had been openly hostile to the re-imposition of French colonial rule in Indochina and the American sympathy for Asian peoples' national aspirations, President Harry Truman was committed to honor the US promise to quit the Philippines by 1946. The Viet Minh controlled much of neighboring Vietnam and their uneasy truce with France would not last long. In this atmosphere, it was prudent for France to make a number of reforms. In the balance of things, it was better for them to work with Sihanouk and to contain nationalist feeling by granting some autonomy to Cambodia, in early January 1946. It was not real independence, though, as control over military affairs and foreign relations, finances, customs and excise, posts and telegraphs and railways remained in French hands, and French officials would supervise most aspects of the Khmer government, bureaucracy and the police. On May, 27, 1946, fighting breaks out along the Indochina-Thai border in an area ceded by French Vichy to Thailand in 1941, but claimed by the present French Government. By June 1, 1946, France asks US and British support for its demand. On June 15, 1946, Thailand formally submits its border dispute with Indochina to the UN Security Council. On July 27, 1947, a five nation mediation commission in Washington concludes six weeks of deliberations by rejecting Thailand claims to territory in Indochina. On October 15, 1946, Thai Parliament approves the cabinet's Decision to return, the ceded territory by the French Vichy in 1941, to Indochina- Cambodia and Laos. On November 18, 1946, French and Thai negotiators agree to create a commission consist of French, Thai and neutral representatives to study the dispute over the Cambodian-Thai border. On August 12, 1947, Thailand abandons its claim to territory in Indochina.⁷

(7) *The history of Cambodia from 1st Century to 20th Century*, SLK, 05/02/2009

The Democrats adhered to many of the policies of the French Socialist Party. They stood broad-mindedly, for a modernized and democratic Cambodia as an independent state and constitutional monarchy within the French Union. Concretely, this meant universal suffrage, a bicameral parliament and the gradual transfer of power from the French administration. Unlike the anti-French Khmer Issarak guerrillas, who were already ambushing French patrols in the countryside, the Democrats believed it was possible to win independence by peaceful and constitutional means. Unfortunately, Prince Yuthevon, leader of the Democratic Party (DP), did not survive for the ratification. Sickly from childhood, he retired for a holiday at the resort town of Kep on the Gulf coast, only to contract malaria and to die in July 1947. As Huy Kanthoul later lamented, his death was ‘an almost irreparable loss’ to the DP. One could go further, in a political climate, all too often, marked by corruption and unprincipled intrigue, he stood out as an honest man—and one with great moral authority among Khmers. Had he lived, he might have acted as a counterweight to Sihanouk’s, perhaps, saw them as a potential threat to his position, and increasingly authoritarian tendencies. Later, seeking to cast himself as the sole architect of Cambodian independence, he attempted to write them out of history. Sadly, many Khmers today seem to have forgotten his name, not the least because of a concerted effort by Sihanouk to belittle him and erase his name from Cambodia’s history.

The return of the lost provinces of Battambang and Siem Reap later in the year must have lightened the gloom felt by Yuthevon’s fellow Democrats. The Japanese had awarded the provinces to Thailand in 1941 as part of a treaty they imposed to end the Franco–Thai War. The following years, however, the fighting between French soldiers and Issarak guerrillas intensified and the Viet Minh controlled much of the eastern part of the countryside. Parliamentary politics, too, was proving to be much more problematic than first expected, with horse-trading, bribery and corruption widespread. Sihanouk, angry over his manoeuvres, was perhaps forgotten, by the passage of a new Franco–Khmer treaty, signed in November 1949, which established Cambodia as an ‘independent state’ within the French Union, with more powers passing over to the Cambodian government. The French, however, remained the real masters of the country and many countries refused to recognize Cambodia as a fully sovereign state.⁸

3. The Royal Crusade for Independence

Sihanouk launched his ‘crusade’ in quixotic style in March 1953. Irritated by French refusals to grant the concessions of a new protocol on self-government agreed to in early May 1952, the king flew to Paris to argue his case with the French President, Vincent Auriol. The lack of progress was undermining Sihanouk’s nationalist credentials and giving ammunition to the Issarak and Viet Minh guerrillas, who denounced him as a colonialist stooge. Time was running out for the French in Indochina. French public opinion had swung against the war with the Viet Minh. Such a victory would render Sihanouk’s position untenable and he could well look forward to a life in exile should the Issaraks come to power in Cambodia. In 1953, Cambodia managed to gain their independence in spite of World War II and the First Indochina War. Their independence was obtained through the political savvy of King Sihanouk. Wanting to be released from the pressures of the monarchy, Sihanouk abdicated the throne and became a full time politician. He started a political faction called the People’s Socialist Community (Sangkum

(8) *Russell R. Ross and Andrea Matles Savada: Administrative Divisions Cambodia 1986*

Reastr Niyum), which then won by a landslide in the 1955 national elections. In part the success was due to his popularity, but also from police brutality at the polling stations.

4. Lon Nol period 1970-1975

While Sihanouk was abroad in 1970, he was ousted from power and fled to China. General Lon Nol, the prime minister, had hoped for US aid, but the US was occupied with Vietnamese troubles and didn't help. In the meantime, since his army was ill-equipped, they couldn't stop an invasion by the South Vietnamese, searching for North Vietnamese.

To add to Lon Nol's problems, Sihanouk had been persuaded to set up a government while in exile, called the Khmer Rouge. The Khmer Rouge became a thorn in Lon Nol's side along with the South Vietnamese until the Khmer regime collapsed. Another contributing factor to the collapse was the repeated US bombing of the Cambodian countryside. In 1975, the Khmer Rouge was able to take over Phnom Penh and shortly thereafter, the North Vietnamese were occupying South Vietnam.

5. The genocide regime - Khmer Rouge period 1975-1979

On 17 April 1975 the final collapse came, with government soldiers throwing down their weapons and burning their uniforms as the guerrillas filed into the city. Peace had come, but it was the beginning of Cambodia's greatest agony. For many, it was to be the peace of the grave. The Khmer Rouge felt antipathy toward Cambodians living in urban areas and forced them to the countryside where they were forced to work in various forms of agriculture. Leading the Khmer Rouge was a man by the name of Saloth Sar, better known as Pol Pot. The government, Democratic Kampuchea (DK), was run in part by rural Cambodians who were illiterate, but had fought along with the Khmer Rouge in the war. The derision and ill-treatment felt towards the former city dwellers was slightly better than the treatment of anyone intellectual, religious, and those who were believed to be against the regime - their punishment was death. During Pol Pot's (Khmer Rouge's) regime over twenty percent of Cambodia's population was murdered.

6. The people republic of Kampuchea

The Khmer Rouge's plan to attack Vietnam and other areas backfired when the Vietnamese surprised Cambodia with an attack of over 100,000 troops. They were accompanied by Cambodian Communist rebels and managed to invade Phnom Penh, which had been vacated by the Khmer Rouge the day before. The Khmer Rouge, Pol Pot among them, fled to the Thai-Cambodian border, where they were given asylum by the Thai government, which was unfriendly to Vietnam. The Vietnamese established a regime in Cambodia, the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) that included many members of the Khmer Rouge as well as Cambodians who had fled to Vietnam before 1975.

The PRK years were marked by gruelling poverty, with the new regime and its Vietnamese sponsor attempting to rebuild a society almost from scratch. What was a daunting task was made much harder by the enforced international isolation of the PRK at the hands of ASEAN, China and the United States. Once again, Cambodians were suffering as a result of international political decisions beyond their control. The very countries that had conspired to drag Cambodia

to its ruin were now set on blocking its recovery. Once again, Khmers were the victims of the Cold War and of age-old patterns of East Asian Realpolitik that preceded it.

By the end of 1989, the Cold War had ended which had the Vietnamese exiting Cambodia. Without financial support from the Soviets Union, the Vietnamese couldn't keep their troops in the country. This withdrawal made things difficult for Cambodians, especially the prime minister, Hun Sen. The Khmer Rouge had not disappeared, but had made their presence known and was threatening military action. Since Cambodia was without much needed foreign aid, they discarded socialism and tried to get investors interested in the country.

Another major change was in the country's name, it was changed to the State of Cambodia (SOC), while the Kampuchea People's Revolutionary Party (KPRP), who currently ruled Cambodia, had changed their name to the Cambodian People's Party. An attempt to have a free-market economy just increased the gap between the rich and the poor with many government officials becoming millionaires.

7. Peace settlement with engagement from power countries

7.1 Geneva Conference

Final declaration, dated July 21, 1954, of the Geneva Conference on the problem of restoring peace in Indochina, in which the representatives of Cambodia, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, France, Laos, the People's Republic of China, the State of Viet-Nam, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom and the United States of America took part.⁹

The Geneva Conference opened on 8 May 1954 with delegations from the United States, France, Britain, the USSR, the People's Republic of China (PRC), Cambodia, Laos, the (communist) Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV), and its anti-communist rival from the South, the Republic of Vietnam (RVN). The main item of business was to negotiate settlements of the Vietnamese and Korean conflicts. Cambodia was a tangential issue in a conference dominated by the superpowers and their big power allies, but the Cambodian delegates Nong Kimny, Sam Sary and Tep Phan, instructed by Sihanouk, left their modest mark on history. Very quickly, they were on their feet objecting to a proposal from the DRV's Pham Van Dong (backed by the PRC and the USSR) to seat representatives of the communist-dominated 'resistance movements' from Laos and Cambodia (including the Khmer People's Liberation Army). When it became clear that the issue was a sticking point for Sihanouk's delegates, the PRC's Zhou Enlai and the USSR's Molotov persuaded Pham Van Dong to drop the demand—an early victory for the Khmer delegates. By mid-July, the delegates had come to an agreement on most issues relating to Indochina. However, Sihanouk was unhappy with the final proposals, for although they guaranteed his country's neutrality they fell short of ensuring the complete withdrawal of the Viet Minh and disarming the KPLA, and also forbade Cambodia from entering into military alliances with other countries. After weary late-night debates, the Russian and Chinese delegates pressured the Vietnamese communists to bow to Cambodia's terms and Cambodia signed the final agreement on 21 July 1954. It was a significant triumph for Sihanouk's delegates, who had fought stubbornly for their country's sovereign rights.

(9) *The Final declaration of the Geneva Conference: On Restoring Peace in Cambodia, July 21 1954*

7.2 International Court of Justice

After Cambodia gained its independence, the most remarkable dispute between Thailand and Cambodia was over the ancient Khmer temple of Preah Vihear, which is located on the Thai-Cambodian border. In October 1959, Cambodia brought the case to the International Court of Justice, which in 1962, voted in favor of Cambodia, thereby placing the temple under Cambodian jurisdiction. In its Judgment, the Court found that the subject of the dispute was sovereignty over the region of the Temple of Preah Vihear. This ancient sanctuary, partially in ruins, stood on a promontory of the Dangrek range of mountains which constituted the boundary between Cambodia and Thailand. The dispute had its *fons et origo* in the boundary settlements made in the period 1904-1908 between France, then conducting the foreign relations of Indochina, and Siam. The application of the Treaty of 13 February 1904 was, in particular, involved. That Treaty established the general character of the frontier the exact boundary of which was to be delimited by a Franco-Siamese Mixed Commission.

The issue only re-emerged and still going on when Preah Vihear Temple was enlisted in the World Heritage Sites in July 2008; in protest of Cambodia's claim over the territory, hundreds of Thais troops confronted with their Cambodian counterparts in various sites along the border. Thus far, while talks have been held between the Cambodian and Thai commissions, the dispute has not been solved.¹⁰

7.3 Paris Peace Agreement 23 October 1991

In 1991, the UN, Cambodia, and other interested parties came to an agreement to end the Cambodian conflict. A United Nations Transitional Authority (UNTAC) and a Supreme National Council (SNC) were formed and were comprised of members from different factions within Cambodia. The agreement in Paris and the UN protectorate started competitive politics in Cambodia, something they hadn't seen for about 40 years.

Following the 1991 Paris Peace Accords, the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) cleared the way for first national elections. In May 1993, Yashusi Akasi headed UNTAC mission in Cambodia in sponsoring for an election of the national assembly, which ended up ouster the military regime. The elections for the National Assembly were held in 1993 under the eyes of the international observers. The Cambodians wanted a royalist party, FUNCINPEC, but Hun Sen, who won the second largest number of seats, refused to give up his power. Fortunately a compromise was reached and a government was formed with two prime ministers, FUNCINPEC had the first Prime Minister, Prince Norodom Ranariddh and Hun Sen became the second prime minister. This first phase of the political transition (1992-1997) was characterized by instability, massive political conflict, pre-electoral violence and the repression of oppositional forces. Officially, the first elections were declared free and fair by election observers and gave reasons to hope for a new democratic tradition of electoral politics. However, several voters had been barred from participating by the remnants of the Khmer Rouge movement.

(10) *The International Court of Justice, Summary of the Judgment of 15 June 1962*

A name change for the country was in order, so in 1993 Cambodia became known as the Kingdom of Cambodia and Sihanouk became the king once again after ratifying a new constitution which re-established the monarchy. After these changes were made, the UN no longer accepted the DK as the ruling party, thus causing them (the DK) to lose their seat and power in the UN.

Referring to Article 7, section 2 of the Paris Peace Agreement: “The Signatories whose territory is adjacent to Cambodia, namely, the Governments of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Kingdom of Thailand and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam”¹¹, undertake to:

- a) Prevent the territories of their respective States, including land territory, territorial sea and air space, from being used for the purpose of providing any form of military assistance to any of the Cambodian Parties. Resupply of such items as food, water, clothing and medical supplies through their territories will be allowed, but shall, without prejudice to the provisions of sub-paragraph c) below, be subject to UNTAC supervision upon arrival in Cambodia;
- b) Provide written confirmation to the Commander of the military component of UNTAC, not later than four weeks after the second phase of the ceasefire begins, that no forces, arms, ammunition or military equipment of any of the Cambodian Parties are present on their territories;
- c) Receive an UNTAC liaison officer in each of their capitals and designate an officer of the rank of colonel or equivalent, not later than four weeks after the beginning of the second phase of the ceasefire, in order to assist UNTAC in investigating, with due respect for their sovereignty, any complaints that activities are taking place on their territories that are contrary to the provisions of the comprehensive political settlement.

Final Act of the Paris Conference on Cambodia: The following States participated in the Conference: Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Canada, the People's Republic of China, the French Republic, the Republic of India, the Republic of Indonesia, Japan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, the Republic of the Philippines, the Republic of Singapore, the Kingdom of Thailand, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.¹²

1.1 ASEAN Spirit to endeavor peace

Cambodia became a full member of ASEAN in 1999 and signed a number of documents including Treaty of Amity and Cooperation. In article 1 of the foresaid treaty stated that treaty is to promote perpetual peace, everlasting amity and cooperation among their peoples which would contribute to their strength, solidarity and closer relationship.

(11) *Peace Agreement Digital Collection, Cambodia >> Final Act of the Paris Conference on Cambodia, 23 October 1991*

(12) *Peace Agreements Digital Collection, Cambodia >> Agreement Concerning the Sovereignty, Independence, Territorial Integrity and Inviolability, Neutrality and National Unity of Cambodia*

Since ASEAN was established in 1967, the number of its members has increased to 11 (in the newly 19th ASEAN Summit in Bali Indonesia from 14-19 November, 2011) after more than 40 years of development. ASEAN not only carried out wide and deep cooperation among its own members in many areas, such as politics, economy and security, but also established the “11+3” mechanism with China, Japan and South Korea in many areas. The role played by ASEAN on the international stage is becoming more important. Currently, the biggest challenge inside ASEAN is how to carry forward integration. ASEAN member countries have unbalanced levels of development, various nationalities and different religious beliefs. Their cultures, histories, political systems and social traditions are also not the same. Therefore, it is hard to carry out an internal integration. ASEAN lacks a coordination mechanism and its internal "discipline restriction" has not yet matured, and therefore, it still has a long way to go in its mechanism construction. In order to realize this heroic ambition, ASEAN should carry out internal communication to create a peaceful atmosphere and give pressure to promote peace in the entire region. Promoting a peace settlement for the border dispute between Thailand and Cambodia is helpful for the establishment of ASEAN's internal coordination mechanism.¹³

The dispute is likely to be a protracted, and it's localized one. But the cross border trade between Thailand and Cambodia is continuing the same pace, in the areas where not affected by the sporadic armed clashes. The Integration and foreign Investors are more likely to be deterred by political instability in Thailand more than by the occasional clashes along the border. The United Nations Security Council has endorsed ASEAN's role in solving this dispute. It's an opportunity for ASEAN Chair for playing a proactive diplomatic role. Otherwise, the ASEAN's can only intervene with the consent of both parties. However, ASEAN's principle of non-intervention is not absolute, there is growing recognition that if an internal conflict spills over and affect regional security then ASEAN can be involve. The cessation of hostilities can then be firmed up by further negotiations between the Thai and Cambodian joint border Committee and their respective Defense Ministers. Indonesia, as ASEAN Chair, can observe and facilitate where it's appropriated. The Agreement on border line and Demarcation will be likely to take a decade or even longer. With regards to the new elected Royal Thai Government, the political groups will not continue to use the border dispute with Cambodia as political football.¹⁴

(13) ASEAN to explore internal coordination mechanism to promote peace, 20/05/2011, peopledaily.com.cn

(14) ASEAN and the Thai-Cambodia Border dispute - Cartyle A. Thayer (May 1, 2011)

Conclusion

This paper was written with an attempt to illustrate the history of Cambodia and the engagement from international, as well as, from power countries. Michael Leifer, for instance, notes: “Ever since the decline of the ancient Khmer Empire, geography has combined with politics to shape the fortunes of the Cambodian state.” Similarly, British journalist William Shawcross also writes: “Cambodia is a victim of its geography and of its political underdevelopment.” After gaining independence, Sihanouk’s efforts to keep Cambodia neutral were undermined by its complex geopolitical situation. While in power, the Khmer Rouge provoked border disputes with Cambodia’s neighbors that would lead to its own demise. The Vietnamese intervention into Cambodia and the establishment of the People’s Republic of Kampuchea did not leave Cambodia at peace, for the country became a battleground that served the interests of bigger powers and beyond. In practice, the bilateral and multilateral forum are two diplomatic channels, which can led to settle peacefully the issues, and both often overlap and complement each other all the time. This is precisely because multilateral forums represent democratic norms and allow weaker and smaller countries to have a say in decision-making, though it may often be the bigger and most powerful countries that may bear larger responsibility in the implementation of these decisions. In bilateral format, smaller and weaker nations are likely to be influenced by bigger and powerful nations. In the long term run, therefore, multilateralism remains the cardinal principle guiding Cambodia’s vision of the conflict. Bilateral forum is also envisaged, in favor of negotiations between the Thai and Cambodian joint border Committee and their respective Defense Ministers regarding the dispute area and the overlap zone. The Agreement on border line and Demarcation will be timely discussed and will be likely take place a decade or even longer.

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