



Selected CICP Publications 2014

Forging Stronger Cambodia-Japan Relations

H.E. Amb. Pou Sothirak

Enduring Partnership for Peace and Prosperity between Cambodia and Australia

H.E. Amb. Pou Sothirak

The Important Value of Human Resource Development in Transforming Cambodian Society

H.E. Amb. Pou Sothirak

ASEAN-China Partnership for East Asia Cooperation in Maritime Security

H.E. Amb. Pou Sothirak

ASEAN Community 2015: What Does It Mean For Indonesia

H.E. Dr. Hassan Wirajuda

Cambodia Between Vietnam and China

Dr. Bernd Schaefer

ASEAN Integration: The Pivotal Role of Education in Cambodia

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Prospects for China-Cambodia Relations in the Context of China and ASEAN Relations

Zhu Zhenming

Sea of Insecurity: ASEAN and South China Sea Conflict Resolution

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The Role of Civil Society in Democratic Governance

H.E. Amb. Pou Sothirak

Thai Foreign Policy since Thailand's 2014 Military Coup: Implications for Cambodia

Dr. Paul Chambers

ASEAN: Australian Perspectives – Past, Present, Future

H.E. Mr. Simon Merrifield

US Engagement in Southeast Asia in the context of the US Pivot to the Asia-Pacific and its implications for Cambodia

Dr. Ear Sopal

Vietnam's Foreign Policy Objectives and Its Neighbors

Dr. David Koh

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Throughout 2014, the Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace has been energetic in promoting its core objective to cultivate broader interest and collaboration in the fields of political science, international relations, regional integration, security, and the socio-economics of Cambodia and the region. Our core activities concentrate on the stimulation of an environment dedicated to the study and dissemination of information about political, economic, and social trends in Cambodia and the region of Southeast Asia as a whole. We conduct conferences and public lectures, carry out and publicize original research, organize and implement seminars and training, and our executive staff continually attends national, regional and international conferences and workshops on relevant issues.

During this last year, CICP has been able to achieve substantial results firmly establishing it as a leading national think tank. The Institute has received merited recognition from the Cambodian government, the diplomatic corps, civil society organizations, as well as from the general public. We are proud of these accomplishments and aspire to continue our work with passion and dedication.

We would like to dedicate the collection of selected papers and articles, compiled in this publication, to those individuals and institutions who share our goal and vision of bringing more clarity and depth to a wider audience on pertinent issues challenging the development of harmony and well-being in Cambodia and the region.

Furthermore, we would like to extend our sincere appreciation to all contributors individually for contributing their valuable work with CICP. Especially, we would like to thank Dr. Wilhelm Hofmeister, Director of the Konrad-Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) Regional Program Political Dialogue with Asia, for providing the financial support for this publication.

CICP is prepared to be pro-active in the year ahead as we realize that the future of our success hinges on the ability to bring significant issues affecting Cambodia and the wider region to generate critical and constructive discussion among the scholarly community and professionals.

Ambassador Pou Sothirak

Executive Director

The Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace

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He joined the crusade to safeguard Cambodian from foreign occupation and internal conflict from 1986 - 1992, serving as Humanitarian Coordinator at one of the refugee camps on the border between Thailand and Cambodia. He worked as an engineer at the Boeing Company from 1981-1986 after obtaining a Bachelor Degree in Electrical and Computer Engineering from Oregon State University, USA, in 1981. Over the years, he has written books and published numerous articles on various aspects about Cambodia.



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Professor Zhu Zhenming is a professor at the Yunnan Academy of Social Sciences in China. He has done research work at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, and the Yunnan Academy of Social Sciences since 1982. He served as deputy-director of the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies from 1995-2007, after that he served as Deputy Secretary-General of Yunnan Academy of Southeast Asian and South Asian Studies from 2006-2011. He is also Editor-in-Chief of the academic journal Southeast Asia. Currently, he is Deputy Secretary-General of China Association of Southeast Asian Studies,

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His research field is Southeast Asia area studies, and his research interests include China-Southeast Asia relations as well as the Greater Mekong cooperation. He is author of several books about Thailand, China-Southeast Asian relations, and several of academic papers and research reports which have been published both inside China and abroad.



Simon Merrifield is a career Australian diplomat who was appointed as Australia's first Jakarta-based ambassador to ASEAN in September 2013. He has a long association with the region, starting as an exchange student in Indonesia in the mid-1980s followed by assignments in Manila, Jakarta and Kuala Lumpur. He served two terms in Malaysia, firstly as Counsellor for Political and Economic Affairs, then as Deputy High Commissioner. He lived in Yangon from 2008-11, accompanying his wife, who was Australia's

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“FORGING STRONGER CAMBODIA-JAPAN RELATIONS”

H.E. Amb. Pou Sothirak
Executive Director, Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace

Remarks Delivered during Cambodia-Japan Dialogue

Organized by the Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace
Phnom Penh, Friday, 2nd May 2014

It is a privilege for me to talk about an enduring relationship between Cambodia and Japan at this dialogue.

The bond of friendship and cooperation between Cambodia and Japan dated back since 1632 when a famous Samurai by the name of Morimoto Ukondayu made a pilgrimage to Angkor Wat to pray to Buddha for his father's happiness.

Cambodia and Japan established diplomatic relations on 8 February 1953, the year Cambodia gained independence from France. Since then bilateral tie between the two countries continued to progress and expand gradually.

The relation remained uninterrupted until April 1975, when the Embassy of Cambodia was closed, following the Khmer Rouge take-over in Phnom Penh, and similarly the Japanese Embassy in Phnom Penh was closed as well.

In 1992, Japan reopened its Embassy in Phnom Penh after the comprehensive settlement to the “Cambodian Conflicts” was reached, leading to the signing of the “Paris Peace Accord” on 23 October 1991. Cambodia has re-opened its Embassy in Tokyo in 1994.

The Government of Japan has substantively supported the resolution of the peace process in Cambodia, and has played a critical role in the late 1980s and early 1990s during the period of the United Nations Transitional Authority for Cambodia (UNTAC) contributing to the maintenance of stability and setting in motion the process of rehabilitation and reconstruction of Cambodia.

Japanese assistances have been highly visible and beneficial to the national development of Cambodia especially in the field of education, health care, and physical infrastructure such as new school buildings, health centers, construction of roads, bridges, ports, electricity power, water treatment plants, and others, all of which are built with good quality construction and high standards.

Japan has assisted Cambodia continuously, extending official development assistance (ODA) to help secure Cambodia's regional status within ASEAN and the Mekong region, by giving consideration to the following four areas:

- 1- Strengthening government organizations for future development, particularly reform of the administrative and fiscal systems and consolidation of the legal system, as well as reinforcement of the human resources development.
- 2- Creating an environment conducive to economic growth and helping Cambodia acceded to ASEAN and the World Trade Organization, allowing the country to fully participate in the regional economy.
- 3- Rebuilding the much need physical infrastructure, which was destroyed during years of conflict, and putting in place a new foundation for the country's socioeconomic growth in order to achieve balanced development and create a bond between urban and rural areas.

- 4- Clearing the unexploded antipersonnel mines and bombs, which are holding back Cambodia's development, and helping to address the existence of many physically or mentally disabled people.

Japan has also been very active in the area of Cambodia cultural heritage preservation. Under the framework of the UNESCO-Japan Trust Fund, Japanese Government Team for Safeguarding Angkor (JSA) has assisted the Cambodian authority to develop the International Program for Safeguarding Angkor and has worked to conserve and restore the whole of Bayon Temple and Angkor Temple complexes. Many eminent Professors and Scholars from Waseda and Sophia Universities have extended their invaluable assistances for archeological training and research and have been able to concretely achieve the restoration works and promote of the cultural sites of Angkor as the contribution toward the world's cultural diversity.

Another outstanding contribution from Japan is the generosity extended to support the functioning of the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) which was established by the United Nations and the Royal Government of Cambodia with the mandate to bring to justice the senior leadership of the Khmer Rouge regime and those most responsible for the crimes committed during their rule. Japan has been the leading donor to the ECCC, funding about 44 percent of ECCC's international assistance. Japanese professionals have served in key positions in the court, including as a judge in the Supreme Court Chamber. Japan remains an important donor to bring a measure of justice to the Cambodian people and help the Cambodian victims pursue their dream of seeing justice for the Khmer Rouge atrocities within their lifetimes.

In the regional context, Cambodia has also benefited from cooperation through regional and sub-regional frameworks. For instance, through ASEAN + 1, Japan has been actively engaged in the Initiative for ASEAN Integration Fund (IAI) projects and many other projects for building an ASEAN Community. During the Fifth Mekong-Japan Summit Meeting on 14 December 2013 in Tokyo, the CLMV countries welcomed the announcement made by Prime Minister Abe which stated that approximately 600 billion JPY in ODA support covering a three-year period from 2013 fiscal year is progressing steadily as pledged at the previous Mekong-Japan Summit, and that a total of 200 Billion JPY in support for the Mekong region is scheduled to be pledged at a series of meetings being held during this period. This effort is part of the "Tokyo Strategy 2012 for Mekong-Japan Cooperation" designed to improve the Mekong connectivity and narrowing the development gaps toward building the ASEAN Community in 2015. These initiatives will significantly help improve the living standard of the local population in the CLMV countries in general and in Cambodia in particular.

The landmark official visit of His Excellency Samdech Prime Minister Hun Sen of Cambodia to Japan in June, 2007 during which time he signed with His Excellency Mr. Shinzo Abe, then Prime Minister of Japan the Join Statement reaffirming the strong ties and mutual trust that have been nurtured through a history of cooperation in peace building and national reconstruction and also signed the Agreement for the Liberalization, Promotion and Protection of Investment to promote investment and strengthen economic relations between Cambodia and Japan. With this Join Statement and Agreement in place, trade and investment have expanded between our two countries, and we notice a significant increase in Japanese investment, especially in the manufacturing industry, where the investment in 2011 doubled to 75 million dollars from 35 million dollars in 2010. Then in the year 2012 it quadrupled to 300 million dollars from 2011. Japanese investment is expected to grow sharply in the foreseeable future.

More recently, following the 40th ASEAN-Japan Commemorative Summit and the 5th Mekong-Japan Summit at the bilateral meeting on 15 December, 2013 in Tokyo, Samdech

Prime Minister Hun Sen expressed his gratitude to the Government and people of Japan for their development assistance to Cambodia, stressing that Japan is one of the countries that established diplomatic ties with Cambodia since its independence. During the meeting, Cambodia and Japan have agreed to expand their bilateral ties from “New Partnership” in 2007 to “Strategic Partnership” in 2013. PM Shinzo Abe has announced his government’s commitment to continue supporting Cambodian national development efforts and decided to provide a fresh ODA loan of \$133 million to Cambodia. After the bilateral summit, both leaders witnessed the signing ceremony of four documents. The Exchanges of Notes of the Projects for Improvement of the National Road No. 1, Sihanouk Provincial Referral Hospital, and the Equipment for the Restoration of the Western Causeway of Angkor Wat, were signed by H.E. Long Visalo, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Cambodia, and Japanese Ambassador to Cambodia H.E. Kumamaru Yuji. The Memorandum on Defense Cooperation and Exchanges between the Ministry of Defense of Japan and the Ministry of National Defense of Cambodia was signed by H.E. General Neang Phat, Secretary of State for National Defense, and Japanese Minister of Defense H.E. Itsunori Onodera, as a part of the strategic partnership.

This new partnership between Cambodia and Japan has come at a very interesting time, especially after the July 2013 national election. During the visit to Cambodia in November 2013, PM Abe pledged to help Cambodia with electoral reform, following a request by Samdech PM Hun Sen to send experts to Cambodia ahead of the future polls and amid an ongoing dispute over national elections by the two major political parties, the CPP and the CNRP.

It should be noted that the strategic partnership reflects well the current trend emerging from the new geo-economic and geo-political context of Cambodia-Japan relations. These changes also bring about new challenges and opportunities that require both Cambodia and Japan to continually nurture their relationship and adapt to new circumstances, especially as Cambodia is preparing itself to embrace the fast approaching 2015 ASEAN Community.

In this regard, the important task facing Cambodia and Japan now is how to bring the cooperative relationship to a new level, where they are able to meet the challenges of not only domestic requirement but also the new emerging regional order in the Asia Pacific and beyond. More importantly, how both sides could forge a greater convergence of interests, institutionalize a more comprehensive agenda for cooperation, and find greater synergy in implementing that agenda.

More concretely and in addition to the existing framework of cooperation, Cambodia-Japan strategic partnership should encompass the following agenda:

- 1- Commitment to the “responsibility to implement” what has been agreed. Capacity building, institutions, and strategies are key and require the appropriate capacity to implement them. This allows Cambodia-Japan cooperation to grow faster by strengthening the institutions needed to not only implement a cooperative agenda but also to sustain and nurture that cooperation. Both Track 1 and Track 2 are needed. Sound strategies are also required to guide the implementation process.
- 2- Strengthen the capacity of the Cambodian civil servants to monitor and assess progress in the implementation of the Cambodia-Japan strategic partnership’s Plan of Action. This capacity-building program should be part of broader Cambodian-Japan cooperation to strengthen the capacity of the appropriate government officials by providing the necessary training to various line-ministries responsible for the implementation of the Cambodia-Japan agreements.
- 3- Enhance the capacity of universities and think tanks in Cambodia to conduct policy-oriented research and studies so that Cambodia and Japan can draw more

independent, evidence-based lessons on how to promote and strengthen Cambodia-Japan strategic partnership.

- 4- Create a new policy research institute for Cambodia-Japan strategic partnership or support existing institutes that aim to promote the implementation of concrete action plans and facilitate intellectual exchange regarding Cambodia-Japan cooperation beyond 2015. This initiative will provide a better venue for exchanging views, generating new ideas, and providing assessments on the progress of cooperation between Cambodia and Japan. Furthermore, it can facilitate greater interaction, cooperation, and dialogue among Track 1 and Track 2 stakeholders of the partnership on a regular basis.
- 5- With regards to the promised assistance toward electoral reform, Japan should capitalize on its strength as a mature democratic country with election experience to help undo the current political stalemate arising from the disputed election results of the last national election. Japan can help Cambodia to institutionalize acceptable election reforms based on the principle of free and fair elections, ensuring that all political parties contesting in the election abide by the electoral law, and ascertaining that the institution that oversees the process of election is truly conducting its required functions in an utmost neutral and impartial condition. Japan has goodwill and the capacity to help normalize the post-election situation expeditiously based on sincere dialogue and cooperation in the spirit of national reconciliation among the political parties concerned.

Conclusion

Under the wise leadership of H.E. Samdech Hun Sen, Prime Minister, the Royal Government of Cambodia has done much to create stability, and to enhance economic development and peace in the country.

Although Cambodia has achieved social cohesion and has taken steps to address glaring economic and social disparities, the country still faces many daunting challenges in its efforts to improve the livelihood of its people due to its troubled past and political conflicts.

Cambodian foreign policy plays critical role in ensuring the prevalence of peace, the enhanced internal security, the political stability, and national development.

Cambodia has made a right decision to look to the East Asia power for more aid and consider Japan as its top development partner to address the evolving domestic challenges and rectify external influence exerting on Cambodia. By embracing Japan firmly, Cambodia can continue to improve its economy and sustain its commitment to sound social development as well as take its rightful place on the international stage with pride and honor.

Japan, which has provided more than \$2.25 billion in development aid to Cambodia since 1992, also agreed recently to strengthen ties with the country in the areas of health care, infrastructure, investment, and security.

As 2015 is fast approaching, it is imperative that Cambodia and Japan commit themselves to ensure that the next phase in their strategic partnership will not only bring about stronger and healthier relations between the two sides, but they must collectively adhere to the common interest of the region in insisting that peace, stability and prosperity must prevail over conflicts and confrontation. They should resolve to work hand in hand with other countries in the Asia-Pacific region to build the foundation of trust and confidence, to chase away suspicion and misunderstanding, and to encourage a peaceful

settlement, without the use or threat of force in response, to interstate disputes through negotiation and with full respect to the universally recognized international law.

In this regard, the Cambodia-Japan strategic partnership should continue to evolve around the following principles: (1) ensure durable peace, stability, and shared prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region; (2) continue to deepen their collaboration on economic, social, political, and security issues; (3) Reinvigorate their cooperation through a central focus on real people, a strengthened resolve to sharpen the ultimate goal of their strategic partnership, and to not lose sight of the comprehensiveness of their bilateral relations and the imperatives of regional concerns to strengthen peace and ensure continuous growth in our region; and (4) transform decisively their relationship into a partnership for democracy, peace, prosperity, and the respect of the rule of law and human rights.

“ENDURING PARTNERSHIP FOR PEACE AND PROSPERITY BETWEEN CAMBODIA AND AUSTRALIA”

H.E. Amb. Pou Sothirak
Executive Director, Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace

Remarks Delivered during the Cambodia-Australia Dialogue

Organized by the Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace
Himawari Hotel, Phnom Penh, Monday, 26th May 2014

I take great pleasure in talking about an enduring relationship between Cambodia and Australia at this important dialogue to commemorate the 40th Anniversary of Australia's dialogue partnership with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

To emphasize the excellent relationship between Cambodia and Australia, please allow me to quote a statement made by H.E. Ambassador Alison Burrows during the last Australia Day on 26 January 2014:

“Australia and Cambodia continue to enjoy a warm relationship based on historical ties and shared national interests. This relationship is comprehensive, ranging across issues such as regional security, law enforcement and transnational crime, trade and investment, people-to-people links and development cooperation”

The above statement resonates well the warm and cordial relationship that Australia has with Cambodia for over 60 years.

Special recognition should be given to the role Australia played in support of the Cambodian Peace Process during the protracted conflicts in the 1980s. Although most of the credit should be given to the United Nations and the international community as a whole, we should take this opportunity to recall the Australia's involvement in the search for lasting peace and political settlement in Cambodia. This dated back to when the Honorable Bob Hawke's government was in office from March 1983 to December 1991, committing Australia to play a more active role in a Cambodian settlement. H.E. Bill Hayden, in his capacity as foreign minister from 1983 to 1988, had the Australia's pro-active role accepted by the international community, including eventually ASEAN, as a responsible and knowledgeable voice on the issue of the Cambodian settlement. Australian efforts at that time gave weight to and imparted a sense of urgency to the effort to find a political solution acceptable to all parties involved in the Cambodian conflicts.

Moreover, it is worthy to note the staunch commitments made by the Honorable Gareth Evan. When he became Australian Foreign Minister in 1988, he devoted himself to do whatever he could for the Cambodian people and relive the country from the agony of the genocidal Khmer Rouge regime, and the protracted misery of the civil war and foreign occupation of Cambodia which followed it. It took him nearly eight years to conclude the Paris peace agreement in October 1991 to unravel the Cambodian conflicts and bring about a durable peace, and a respect for human rights and democracy. This was a formidable achievement for the international community, and one in which, I am pleased to be able to say, dialogue with Australia played a remarkable central part as a middle power to give lasting hope for the Cambodian people to have a better future.

Let me turn your attention now to some of the salient features of the diplomatic relations between Cambodia and Australia during the past 60 years.

The cornerstone of Cambodia-Australia diplomatic relationships can be characterized by the longstanding support for peace and development in the country. From finding lasting peace, improving physical infrastructure and the productivity of agriculture to reducing poverty and driving economic growth, Australia has firm stance from which to assist Cambodia achieve social cohesiveness, economic prosperity, and improve its international standing as a modern nation with pride and honor.

The Australian Government holds the view that a prosperous Cambodia is vital to Australia's economic interest as well as to ensure that the trans-boundary issues, such as drug-trafficking and pandemics, are managed effectively.

Australia is keen to help Cambodia achieve national progress and remain a peaceful, stable and democratic nation in South East Asia. Australian efforts to support Cambodian national development programs in agriculture, rural development, infrastructure, health and governance, gender equality and to strengthen human capital all make a direct contribution to Cambodia's future prosperity.

Australia's strong support for the Cambodian Peace Process in the late 1980s and early 1990s, including Australian's leading role in the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (1992-93), remind the Cambodian people of the valuable contributions Australia has made to bring lasting peace and prosperity to Cambodia.

Australia was among the generous nations to accept Cambodian refugees. Between April 1975 and June 1986, 12,813 Cambodian refugees landed in Australia under the Refugee and Special Humanitarian Program. By the mid-1990s family-stream migration increased the numbers of Cambodian-born people in Australia to over 20,000. According to the 2011 census, there were around 28,000 Cambodian-born people and their families living in Australia. They are well educated and have high standards of living and some of them have returned to help rebuild the Cambodian nation.

There is a modest number of Australians in Cambodia, approximately 2,500 to 3000. Most are dual Cambodian-Australian citizens or expatriates involved in development assistance work or in business. In 2013 about 120,000 Australians visited Cambodia for holidays, business and work.

Presently, Australia remains an active development partner, assisting Cambodia to promote effective governance and improve productivity in agriculture, health, and infrastructure. The Australian government aims to strengthen law and justice systems, providing assistance to Cambodia's National Police to prevent and address crime, by widening access to the judicial service through the provision of legal aid across the country and supporting Transparency International to implement anti-corruption programs. In addition, Australia also has a defense cooperation program with Cambodia.

On trans-boundary issues, Australia is prepared to work in close collaboration with Cambodia to address such issues as combating human smuggling and trafficking, child sex tourism, narcotics trafficking, and terrorism.

Australia has a strong commitment to meet Cambodian's development needs. This is reflective in substantial Australian Official Development Assistance (ODA) to Cambodia. According to the figures listed in the website of the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the bilateral program expenditures have increased from \$ 49.7 million for the 2012-2013 fiscal year to \$ 51.1 million for 2013-2014,.

Australia has committed substantial financial contribution with the amount of \$22.96 million to the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) also known as the Khmer Rouge Tribunal. Australia has also provided funding to support public outreach campaigns and is an active member of the Principal Donors Group in New York and 'Friends of the ECCC' group in Phnom Penh.

The Australian Government also supports the work of non-government organizations (NGOs) and international organizations in Cambodia providing direct support for victims of child sexual abuse, prevention programs and awareness-raising and advocacy activities.

In addition, high level exchanges between the two countries have formed an essential part of the cordial bilateral relations between Cambodia and Australia.

In October 2006, Samdech Prime Minister Hun Sen visited Australia as a Guest of the Australian Government. During this visit, an Agreement between Australia and Cambodia on the Transfer of Sentenced Persons and a bilateral Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on investment cooperation were signed.

In May 2010, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, H.E. Sar Kheng, visited Australia and signed a Joint Declaration on Cooperation to Combat Transnational Crime.

From 21-22 February this year, the Honorable Julie Bishop, Foreign Minister of Australia, visited Phnom Penh. During the visit she held talks to strengthen bilateral relations with Prime Minister Hun Sen, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation H.E. Hor Namhong, and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior H.E. Sar Kheng. She also had productive discussions with Australian and Cambodian business leaders. I had the opportunity to take part in this discussion and was impressed with her commitment for the renewal of the Colombo Plan to promote education with Cambodia.

Going forward, Cambodia and Australia should strive to ensure that their enduring relationship remain relevant and more productive, enabling both countries to meet not only the challenges of their respective domestic requirement but also to better cope with new emerging regional order in the Asia Pacific and beyond. The two sides should seek to strike common interests, prepare for a more comprehensive agenda for greater cooperation, and commit greater synergy in implementing that agenda.

Aside from ensuring that the existing framework of cooperation proceeds smoothly and in order to move the enduring Cambodia-Australia partnership to the next level, I have a few thoughts to share as follows:

- 1- Both Cambodia and Australia should reaffirm the commitment to execute the agreed upon programs with the focus on capacity building and to promote effective institutions. Australia, with its vast experience and wealth, can impart the necessary knowledge to promote human resource development by providing skill training to the Cambodian institutions responsible for the implementation of the various Cambodia-Australia programs.
- 2- Cambodia has yet to alleviate poverty and in this regard, Australia can help the country work harder to narrow the development gap by ensuring that growth is inclusive and sustainable. Australia should place more emphasis toward improving the health care delivery service, upgrading educational programs, and enhancing agricultural extension programs for the poorer and more remote communities of Cambodia.
- 3- To allow Cambodia to invigorate economic activity, Australia may wish to do more for the country to improve the infrastructure development. Cambodia can attract more FDI and create more jobs by enhancing physical connectivity, particularly in energy and transportation.
- 4- Cambodia is committed to solidifying the rule of law. Australia should double the effort to improve the quality and access to justice, by upgrading the capacity of the courts and the Cambodian National Police, with a focus on addressing violence against women and increasing access to legal aid for the poor.

- 5- As Cambodia is prepared to embrace the ASEAN Community by 2015, Cambodia and Australia must work hand in hand to move forward together toward greater political, economic and social integration. The two sides must endeavor to deepen further the cooperation and must do everything to avert the dangers of plunging this region into an atmosphere of fear and mistrust which can destabilize the decades of peace and progress. For the region of the Asia Pacific further progress and remain peaceful, Cambodia and Australia must work harder to ease tension and suppress conflicts arriving from territorial disputes that can destabilize peace and stability and economic progress.

Conclusion

Over the last two decades, we have witnessed the gradual transformation of Cambodia amidst the legacy of the tumultuous past. Visible growth along with other development and democratic reforms has brought positive change to Cambodia.

With the help from Australia, the country is now on the right track and is opening up to improvement.

But despite considerable progress Cambodia still remains one of the poorest countries in East Asia. About 20 per cent of the population still lives in poverty and income inequality is widening between urban and rural areas, where over 80 per cent of poor people live. Cambodia's progress towards meeting its 2015 Millennium Development Goals is mixed. Promoting sustainable development in Cambodia is in Australia's interest. A more stable, prosperous Cambodia will contribute to regional economic growth and assist in fighting transnational crime.

Cambodia-Australia relations will continue to resonate well if the two sides adhere to closer and stronger cooperation with mutual respect whereby the relationship gives full and unreserved commitment to align Cambodian's own development goals with those of Australian health, education, agriculture and rural development, infrastructure and law and justice.

I will conclude my remarks by mentioning that during the meeting between Prime Minister Samdech Hun Sen and the Australian Prime Minister His Excellency Tony Abbot on the sidelines of the ASEAN Summit and related summits in Brunei in October 2013, the two leaders have announced their determination to strengthen ties between the two countries and Australia will continue to maintain a strong commitment to Cambodia's development. This would undoubtedly bring the assurance that lasting partnership and cordial relations between Cambodia and Australia will continue well into the future.

**“THE IMPORTANT VALUE OF HUMAN RESOURCE
DEVELOPMENT IN THE TRANSFORMING
CAMBODIAN SOCIETY”**

**H.E. Amb. Pou Sothirak
Executive Director, Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace**

**Remarks Delivered during a Workshop on
“Preparedness and Challenges of Cambodia Higher Education towards
ASEAN Community 2015 and beyond**

**Organized by Australian Alumni Association of Cambodia
Phnom Penh Hotel, Phnom Penh, Thursday, 19th June 2014**

I am delighted to be able attend this workshop and before I start, allow me to extend a sincere appreciation to Mr. Sopagna Seang, President of the Australian Alumni Association of Cambodia for inviting me to this special gathering.

I am happy and privilege to share some of my views on a critical subject I hold dear to my heart and mind: the important value of human resource development in the transforming Cambodian society.

For emerging country like Cambodia, promoting quality education is very important to help us break the cycle of poverty, improve the living standard of our people and ensure that, as our society evolves, the socio-economic development will be sustainable and inclusive.

I believe that today workshop provide a very good opportunity for all of us to reflect and identify what would be the appropriate policy agenda for both improving the quality of our national education and skill development needed in the rapidly changing society of the 21st Century. I like to offer some thoughts as follows:

Allow me to begin with a quote by Professor Isik Ozge Ozturk of Columbia University who said:

“Education in every sense is one of the most fundamental factors of development. No country can achieve sustainable economic development without substantial investment in human capital. Education enriches people’s understanding of themselves and the world. It improves the quality of their lives and leads to broad social benefits to individuals and society. Education raises people’s productivity and creativity and promotes entrepreneurship and technological advances. In addition, it plays a very crucial role in securing economic and social progress and improving income distribution.” (Ozturk, 2001)

From this statement, we can agree that education matters, for individuals, for families, for communities and for governments. How education matters is a function of how best educational policies can be utilized to ensure that education, as a public good, is shared equitably to prepare our generation for a rapidly changing world.

As Cambodia transitions toward the ASEAN Community 2015 and beyond, we should strive to improve national educational system as a whole, allowing the Cambodian youths to absorb the necessary skill and knowledge in order to complete favorable in the emerging job markets deriving from regional integration. Cambodia needs to be aware of changing demands for education that will impact on the development of our national economy and society.

I like to focus on two areas and highlight the important role of education can play in shaping the future of our country and capacity building needed to prepare Cambodian youths for the ASEAN Integration. In so doing, I hope to highlight some critical issues related to the policy perspective to facilitate these objectives.

The role of the schools and what we expect from them?

In a modern society, the role of schools must encompass economic, social, and legal aspects.

Educational experts suggest that the process of learning or education in itself provide the foundation for economic growth. It is learning that is central to modern growth theory since school will teach us the general knowledge and prepare us to become creative and innovative with practical problem solving skills through critical thinking.

We need to learn new ideas, new thinking, and new way of solving problems to cope with the knowledge base economy of the global world. It is this kind of education that each individual must acquire through schooling that can assure us the basis for economic growth and development of our society.

The longer we spend time in school and the higher the quality of the school the more we become productive citizens of our nation. The benefits of schooling are linked directly to high quality curriculum, high quality teachers, and high quality student learning outcomes. Therefore for schools to be relevant, the economic purpose must be well founded on the promise that economic growth requires a well-educated workforce that can fuel innovation, change and new ideas, and such an economic development is best served by comprehensive educational systems that provide high levels of knowledge and skills to all students. In this sense, education certainly matters – but quality education matters even more.

Educational specialists also adhere to essential value of schools which embedded deeply in social context and as such serve important social purpose. Not unrelated to economic function of schools, social purpose of schools – a school for all citizens or a common school can provide the opportunity for learning in a broad range school subjects, including civic education to engage future citizens in building society that cohere to the common value and common aspiration, therefore equipping us with the means to combat many local issues that threatened the harmony of a developing nation. Social context of schooling create a citizenry with common values and a commitment to social harmony and development.

We must alter the perception that education and schooling are reserve for the elites and the privileges, and ensure that everything society has to offer needs to be made available to all – not just a few, including the poor and the underprivileged.

These are important social purposes of schooling linked directly to the nation building role of a common school, the development of social cohesion and the promotion of value that will serve all citizens well into the future.

The legal aspect of schooling has to do with the ability of the government to deal with the evaluation and monitoring of the performance of the educational systems by using legal and administrative procedures to improve the delivery of education to students.

While legal frameworks can help compulsory education to increase education enrolment, one of the key challenges to the legal purpose of schooling is to ensure that nine years free and compulsory education in Cambodia is enforceable. Important legal instruments must also cover the legal age to work, where the worst form of child labor, particularly from the vulnerable groups, has been severely affected. Social reasons alone suggest the importance to compulsory education.

For any testing program to be effective we need to enroll as many eligible students as possible in schools. Increase the number of years required by law from nine to twelve years,

for instant should be explored to increase school enrolment and to mitigate the effect of large dropout rate that are still pervasive in the rural areas of Cambodia. But this policy should be carefully weighed against the enormous costs in terms of infrastructure, teachers, curriculum development etc. Other important of the legal purpose of schooling is the quality assurance that each school must possess and the system of examination that can procedure the best and qualified students for the required jobs after they graduate from school.

Skills requirement to prepare Cambodia's youths for ASEAN integration

From the above statements, I am sure that we become even more reassured that schools matter because they provide foundational skills and knowledge, be it numeracy, literacy, citizenship, values and basic understanding in arts, science and social studies. In modern nation, school curricula are also concerned with extra skills learning such as problem solving, critical thinking, team work, communication skills etc. – sometimes called 21st century skill. If all of these are done well, high school graduates can already make valid contribution to the economy and to society.

But what come next? After learning these skills, can Cambodian youths be reassured to get a decent job, especially when Cambodia fully integrates in ASEAN Community?

While we welcome regional integration which facilitates free movement of goods, services, capital investment, and skill labor within the 10 countries of ASEAN, we should be aware that free movement of labor will most likely limit or at least decrease the chance of employment of the Cambodian youths as they must compete head-on to secure job opportunity with other foreign work forces who will enter the Cambodian labor market starting from 2015.

Coping with this reality, a fundamental question should be asked “Does Cambodia has a right policy to address the capacity-building in order to develop a productive, competent, and competitive workforce?”

Without a rigorous human resource development policy, Cambodia will lack behind other capable youths in ASEAN to meet the changing job demands and challenges of the integration of regional and global labor markets.

A quick snapshot of the situation would reveal that Cambodian youths have good reason to be concerned for not being able to find job so easily after graduation. Here are some of the reasons why this is the case:

- 1- An ILO survey conducted in 2013 over 500 firms suggests that more than half to the companies were not satisfied with their employee's performance due to the skill gap among Cambodian graduates such as the lack of communication skill, insufficient foreign language skill, teamwork and ability to take initiative. These inefficiencies points to the inferior quality of education in Cambodia when compare to other ASEAN neighbors. Fundamental problems still exist within the educational system of Cambodia, for instant, the lack of qualify teachers and school buildings, and limited access to education especially in the rural areas.¹
- 2- According to some economists, the lack of the equitable human resource development policy inhibits Cambodia to compete in an integrated economy. The effect of nepotism and corruption for instant does not allow fair competition among students. Employments in state institutions often seen as a result of family members

¹ Read article by Heng Pheakdey “Educational Reform-A long-term Strategy to Prepare Cambodia's Youth for ASEAN Integration”, published by Khmer Times, 6 June 2014, available at <http://www.khmertimeskh.com/news/1945/educational-reform--a-long-term-strategy-to-prepare-cambodia---s-youth-for-asean-integration/> (accessed 14 June, 2014)

or relatives or those who pay bribe for positions. Children from rich and powerful families do not have to learn; they can get degrees and work in the government.² These groups of youths are not well qualified in a merit based society and will not help Cambodia propel well into the 21st century.

- 3- A study done by a research associate with CDRI³ points to skills mismatch in Cambodia, where there is an oversupply of skills in certain fields and an undersupply in key areas of national economic development. This is happening because there is a lack of an effective forecasting mechanism in the educational system that can help students to make an informed decision on what skills they supposed to study. If this situation is allowed to prolong, it will cause economic slowdown, lower economic competitiveness, and create more unemployment in the long-run in the country. The study also highlights youth graduates' un-employability is the result of both the mismatch between the demand and supply of university graduates and graduates' lack of necessary knowledge and skills, both hard and soft, to be able to get a job.

Dealing with these shortfalls and trying to catch up with the more advance economy of the region, country like Cambodia will do well if we are able to undertake the following approaches toward education:

- 1- Ensure that the basis of higher education in Cambodia teaches the 21st century skills that are becoming part of the curriculum in many advanced and developed countries which include not only the foundation courses in technology, science, art, and social studies but also cross curriculum skills such as problem solving, critical thinking, team work, communication skill, English as a foreign language etc.
- 2- While adhering to the importance of school and skills learning, Cambodian higher educational system should include the teaching of civic education where emphasis is placed upon the cultivation of well-educated citizenry who can contribute not only to new ideas, innovation, and economic productivity but also to a socially just and fair society that understand and respect the important of life long process of learning.
- 3- Formulate highest education policy based on "employability skills" that labor market requires to impart the necessary knowledge by focusing on methodologies that can promote science and technological advancement, embrace up-to-date curriculum, invest in research and development, and diversity school system based on the accumulation of capabilities and quality learning.
- 4- There ought to be a well-coordinated mechanism within state institutions that deal with the provision of general and vocational education to ensure that the appropriate forecasting is well done in determining the amount of labor forces and the competencies and skills that are required by Cambodia in keeping up with the pace of economic growth and development and the demands of the labor markets, whether they are public or private. In addition, such a mechanism must ensure high standard and quality education from both public and private schools.
- 5- It would not be sufficient to focus only at higher education. In fact a holistic approach to education for all is critically important as well. More efforts should be

² Read article by Say Mony "Multiple Skills Needed To Compete in a Future Asean, Economist Says" , Voice of America, 15 February 2013, available at <http://www.voacambodia.com/content/multiple-skills-needed-for-asean-competition/1603984.html> (accessed 14 June, 2014)

³ Study by Sen Vicheth "Cambodia's Higher Education Structure and the Implications of the 2015 ASEAN Economic Community", CDRI Annual Development Reviews 2013-13, available at http://www.academia.edu/2300622/Cambodias_Higher_Education_Structure_and_the_Implications_of_the_2015_ASEAN_Economic_Community (accessed 14 June 2013)

made to ensure that there are plenty of elementary, secondary, and tertiary schools in the rural areas. These schools should be equipped with latest text books and other pedagogic materials to promote the teaching of all subjects, including moral and civic education. Extra emphasis should be made to the proper functioning of these schools by developing good school administrators, producing sufficient qualified teachers, and ensuring equal access to education, especially enrolment among girl students. Teachers should be adequately remunerated so as to encourage them to teach full time, and national budget for education must be sufficiently allocated to make this sector a top priority.

Conclusion

As Cambodia prepares itself together with other member states for the ASEAN Community 2015, a comprehensive approach to education with appropriate skill development and training and capacity building are keys to develop a productive, competent, and competitive workforce to shoulder nation building process. With appropriate policy and keen commitment from the government, we will enable our people to meet not only the changing job demands and challenges in the face of the integration of regional and global labor markets, but the aspiration of our youths to have a modern and vibrant nation.

In conclusion, I simply want to say that schools matter, skills matter, and people matter. Our country's future depends on a pool of well-educated individuals that can contribute to new ideas and innovation, economic productivity, and a just and fair society. We need an integrated education and training system that are constantly reviewed and re-engineered to ensure that every citizen are on board and be able to address the emerging needs and priorities of our nation. Cambodia needs to rebuild the precious human capital so that we can become more resilient amid the ASEAN regional integration by 2015 and beyond.

“ASEAN-CHINA PARTNERSHIP FOR EAST ASIA COOPERATION IN MARITIME SECURITY”

H.E. Amb. Pou Sothirak
Executive Director, Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace

Remarks Delivered during the 3rd World Peace Forum
“In Pursuit for Common Security: Peace, Mutual Trust and Responsibility”

Organized by Tsinghua University
Beijing, China, 21st – 22nd June 2014

It is an honor for me to take part in this prestigious forum. I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to Professor Chen Jining, President of Tsinghua University for the kind invitation and the warm hospitality extended to me since my arrival to Beijing.

I am privileged to be among the eminent speakers and the distinguished participants to share my views on how best the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and China could work together to enhance East Asia Cooperation in order to address current regional and international concerns to promote peace, stability and development in the region.

Introduction

Our Asia region is home to a number of latent security problems, including inter-state military rivalries, some of which are the leftovers of past conflicts – those between North and South Korea, China and Taiwan, and sometime erupt between China and Japan. Others stem from past grievances and unresolved territorial disputes – the disputes over islands and maritime and air space in the South China Sea between China and other claimant states, in the East China Sea between China and Japan, and the border conflict between Cambodia and Thailand.

These issues are very complex and difficult to solve. What needs to be done is to avoid misunderstanding and miscalculation and resolve to settle these disputes without the use of military force through peaceful negotiation and in accordance to international norms and standards.

Over the years, ASEAN has been confronted with the most divisive issue of maritime security and cooperation, while trying to maintain collective duty to manage one of the most difficult security relations not only among claimant states but between great powers by preventing the emergence of regional hegemony – either US or China – and keeping the region peaceful and stable, as well as maintaining the independence of the smaller states in the region.

Nonetheless, there is a general acceptance that ASEAN’s processes are key instruments for helping to address common security challenges in the absence of a resolution to competing territorial claims and to promote coordinated efforts to tackle non-traditional security in the South China Sea among all involved.

My presentation focus on addressing the trust deficit in the region of East Asia and discussing ASEAN-centered security process with its dialogue partners, especially China,

amidst the lack of sufficient mechanisms to manage the maritime region in the South China Sea.

Addressing the Trust-Gap in the East Asia Region

The tension and mistrust in East Asia has been escalating in recent years as China, Japan, and South and North Korea have been inflexible. They compete rather than compromise and cooperate on the issues of mutual disagreements.

The visit of Japanese Prime Minister to Yasukuni shrine in late December last year, where 14 Japanese leaders convicted as war criminals by an Allied tribunal after World War II are honored along with other Japan's war dead, increased international friction and prompted a stern accusation from China and South Korea while the United States expressed disappointment in the visit to the controversial Shinto Shrine. The visit by Japanese Prime Minister last year to the Shrine angered China and South Korea and prompted the two countries to criticize that such visit is a renewed symbol of Japan's past militarism which strained their regional ties. Despite Mr. Abe's reassurance that he has had no intention at all of hurting the feelings of the Chinese or the South Korean people and his visit was meant to offer his respects to those who lost their precious lives for Japan and pray that their souls rest in peace.

The declarations of Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) by China on 23 November, 2013, which aim to safeguard state sovereignty, territorial land and air security, was seen as exceeding its contest in the East China Sea and has drawn condemnations from Japan and the United States. For Japan, Beijing's creation of a new ADIZ is a direct challenge to Japanese control of the Senkaku (Diaoyu) islands. For the U.S., although the Chinese ADIZ is nothing new and unique, but the concern was the decision that such declarations happened swiftly and unilaterally without any consultation, triggering fear for a war with Japan by mistakes which could pull the U.S. in as Japan's ally.

The launching of long-range missiles twice in 2012 and the conduct of the third nuclear test by the DPRK coupled with the domestic power struggle recently in North Korea undermined the trust building process in the Korean Peninsula and may jeopardize the hope to normalize the two Koreas that would establish long lasting peace and promote peaceful unification.

The growing strategic rivalry between the United States and China is also a major rupture in trust building in the Asia Pacific as well. Although the Sino-American relationship includes elements of cooperation, such as the pursuit of economic gain and the desire to avoid risk, but confrontation and rivalry also prevail: the dominant power wants to protect its supremacy and the rising power aims to displace it amid deep-rooted ideological and institutional systems.

It is therefore important for ASEAN and China to focus on the building of mutual confidence and developing friendly and cooperative behavior with all the East Asia Summit (EAS) participants. Some of these initiatives should include:

- 1- Encourage frank discussion and open dialogue among all EAS participants to address common security challenges, especially on maritime issues.
- 2- Promote better understanding and avoid any act of miscalculation among parties concerned for peace, security and stability on the Korean Peninsula and the East and South China Sea.
- 3- Improve the communication channels and provide better clarification on issues related to individual country's historical interpretation so as to minimize domestic

patriotic sentiment and allow diplomacy to prevail over the narrow nationalistic interest.

- 4- Reduce tension in the political-security arena by avoiding provocative gestures or aggressive actions through the creation multi-dialogue mechanisms at all official levels for countries in the Northeast Asia region to reconcile their differences through peaceful discussion, be it the denuclearization of North Korea, the tensions on territorial claims in the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands in the East China Sea, or the Paracels, Spratlys and Scarborough shoal in the South China Sea.
- 5- Enhance soft cooperation such as disaster relief, environment, and nuclear safety cooperation and other nontraditional security. Through soft cooperation the culture of dialogue and cooperation could achieve trust building and preventive diplomacy.
- 6- Create an effective crisis management scheme at the operational level between navies and coast guard units of all regional states. All sides should agree on prior notification of military exercises in the East and South China Sea, and facilitate the rescue at sea of people and vessels in distress. Crisis management capabilities should be based on rules and procedures aimed at defusing tensions, preventing conflict from happening, and promote transparency and reciprocal respects.
- 7- As peace and security in the region depends highly on trust and confidence among countries in the region, the outcomes of the recently held fourth summit of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) from 20-21 May this year in Shanghai where China took over the CICA presidency from 2014 to 2016, should be implemented swiftly to encourage regional countries to build stronger partnerships of confidence and trust to achieve common peace through upgraded cooperation in politics and security, mutual growth through strengthened economic cooperation and shared development through boosted social and cultural ties.
- 8- Unless the U.S. and China can reconcile their competition and avoid pushing and pulling each other over their strategic interests, the deepening of mutual distrust in the region will remain the major security threat to the Asia Pacific region. For China, there should be a recalibration of perception to its absolute and undeniable maritime claims and modifying the use of military might and growing assertiveness for pursuing its rise. Beijing should also avoid the assertion that other countries are causing trouble by trying to infringe on China's territories. For the U.S., an attempt to contain China through its pivot policy back to Asia should be avoid and ensure that the commitment to defend the region is welcome by all parties. Washington should capitalize on its leadership as the Pacific Power to encourage China to rise peacefully and to behave as a responsible player on the world stage and to counsel restraint to its friends and allies in the Asia-Pacific region and urge them to make efforts to find a compromise with China on issues where China feels strongly that its interests are threatened.

If both ASEAN and China can effectively maintain and vigorously pursue these promises mentioned above, they will definitely enhance mutual trust and promote cooperation between themselves and therefore be able to reduce the distrust level among all nations within the East Asia Region.

The ASEAN-Centered Process for a Desirable East Asia's Maritime Security

As strategic and economic weights continue to fade away gradually from the West and swing toward Asia, this century is declared the century of Asia.

Amidst the shifting power dynamic, no one can say with certainty what the new international or regional order will look like or when it might fall into place. One thing is sure; the rise of China is the defining element of Asia's growing influence because of its strategic weight spurred by the rapid economic growth and military modernization.

Although the United States still has strategic primacy in the Asia-Pacific region, its US-led unipolar strategic order is eroding. Countries like Russia, India and China are on a trajectory of increasing global power and influence, not to mention the rise of ASEAN economies.

The tensions created by various parties in the South China Sea issue a serious regional flashpoint that could destabilize the region if not properly handled. It is highly sensitive to China, which has consistently indicated that it does not want the issue discussed at regional forums or settled by arbitration or mediation. However, a few Southeast Asian and other countries, Japan and the United States included, believe the issue needs to be addressed because it is central to regional peace and security.

For a desirable ASEAN driven maritime security regime to transpire as a viable mechanism to settle possible inter-state disputes, coordinate responses to transnational security threats and balance the competing powers in the East Asia, here are some thoughts:

- 1- ASEAN needs to maintain its liberal agenda by aspiring to promote political democratization, deepen economic interdependence, and construct viable institutions through which Southeast Asian states can conduct their affairs multilaterally.
- 2- The ten Southeast Asian nations must manage their inherent differences quietly so as to foster stronger intra-ASEAN unity and strengthen its centrality. This could provide opportunities for external partners to gain leverage and strike common purpose with all involved, keeping the region of Southeast and Northeast Asia peaceful and prosperous.
- 3- ASEAN needs to gradually move away from the informal, consensual style of cooperation toward an increased formalization or legalization of regional institutions. ASEAN must ensure that the scope of its regionalism and community building are moving forward steadfastly to observe rules based and obligations of a global and modern system. An ASEAN-led security community needs to inspire new capacities for taking proactive and operational steps on security issues such as territorial conflicts, arms control, nuclear proliferation, and the remnant security issues of the Cold War (i.e. Korean Peninsular and cross-Strait relations between China and Taiwan), as well as other transnational and non-traditional security concerns all of which continue to pose a threat to regional stability.
- 4- Regarding ASEAN centrality, for the grouping to continue sitting in the driver's seat of the key ASEAN processes, such as the ARF, the APT, the EAS, and regional trade negotiations, ASEAN must do more to maintain and foster this relevance and primacy as the pre-eminent regional body. ASEAN must be willing to tackle sensitive and common security issues of the region more convincingly, and project its collective leadership on issues of regional and international concern. ASEAN must be able to resolve the challenges posed by the "ASEAN Way", be it the divergences in political interest, the competing interest in the South China Sea, or different understandings of the concept of human rights and democracy. More importantly, ASEAN needs to formulate a common voice in international fora and act in unison on political-security issues as well as economic and social issues.
- 5- While engaging China in security dialogue, ASEAN should avoid being understood as the promoter of the discourse to contain China's "peaceful rise", but rather should capitalize on its strategic role to encourage China to adhere to the promise that its rise

is indeed peaceful and beneficial to region and urge China to work toward collective resolutions. China must find peaceful solutions to the South China Sea issues according to the principles and norms of international law, and must use relevant multilateral instruments as prescribed by the Chairman's Statement of the 8th East Asia Summit in Brunei on 10 October 2013, especially with reference to the Chinese proposal to formulate the Plan of Action (POA) to implement the Phnom Penh Declaration on EAS Development Initiative which was adopted at the 7th EAS in Phnom Penh, Cambodia in 2012, and the Maritime Security Cooperation.

- 6- Whereas the dialogue partners of ASEAN, especially the Plus Three countries of China, Japan, and South Korea, and the United States, should work together in a concerted manner to encourage the APT and the EAS. Together we must move forward toward ascertaining ASEAN's role in regional security by engaging in frank and open discussions with each other and other stakeholders, with a view aiming at exploring new ideas and creative approaches or strategies in managing, if not resolving, conflict rather than simply defending respective national interests.
- 7- Unless China, Japan, and South Korea can agree to a sense of common security – that is to say stop clinging to individual visions of the future and self-serving versions of history, end the perception that these countries are individual actors when relating to the outside world, and start thinking in term of regional interests and priorities – the search for an effective maritime architecture will not be possible and as such the region remains vulnerable to conflict arriving from misperception, misunderstanding and miscalculation.
- 8- When dealing with other big powers such as China, Japan, and the United States, ASEAN must appear as a pacifying force rather become entwined in power rivalries beyond ASEAN's sphere of influence. Big powers are competing to claim their rights to sovereignty and resources as well as freedom to access a busy passageway for shipping through the strategic sea-lanes in the South China Sea and air traffic above it.

To this end, all stakeholders support the ASEAN-led security initiatives in ensuring that these security arrangements continue to remain open, inclusive, transparent and outward-looking, striving to strengthen global norms and universally recognized values with ASEAN as the driving force working in partnership with the other participants of the EAS.

Conclusion

The shift in strategic and economic weights towards Asia, and the security uncertainty associated with such shifts, coupled with the gamut of nontraditional security threats requires a more relevant and coherent multilateral structure that could help countries in South East Asia and the broader Asia Pacific region address old and new security challenges.

All countries in the region need to be more vigilant and recognize the potential of tension, miscalculation and event conflict that are fault lines and create difficulties between nation states as they strive to maximize their interests.

Building confidence and instilling mutual trust as well as resolving conflict through diplomacy have been at the heart of ASEAN's regionalism. A peaceful and secure region depends primarily on how states manage their relations through the ability to promote trust and confidence and chase away suspicions, misunderstanding, and miscalculation.

ASEAN – China partnership for East Asia cooperation in securing a stable and peaceful security environment in the maritime domain hinges on the ability of the two sides,

working together with other partners, to make current peace more durable, forge stronger common interest and continue the habit of dialogue which will help the region withstand and resolve serious tensions as they arise.

All external partners of ASEAN should know that a united ASEAN is a prerequisite to the “ASEAN way” of diplomacy, involving consensus-based decision-making and non-interference in the internal matters of member states, which fits well with the direction of Chinese foreign policy to push for a much anticipated COC. As the formal process of consultation has already been started, ASEAN and China should proceed with the spirit of trust and strengthened confidence, committing to working together at the comfort level by the parties involved in order to achieve consensus in the formulation of a COC that would accelerate the process of building a sound legal regime to help regulate the activities of the countries in the region and ensure that the common interests of all stakeholders are properly preserved so as to maintain peace, security, stability and prosperity in our region as a whole.

If Asia is to fulfill the promise of this century, all countries must reconcile their differences and do everything they can to avert the dangers of military conflicts, for example in the South China Sea where contentious maritime claims occurred that can become a destabilizing force and render grave consequences extended far beyond individual national borders. For the best interest of this region, we must welcome more partners for peace, and avoid those who play out wider rivalries in our region.

ASEAN needs unsolicited and unwavering commitment from its dialogue partners, especially from China, in working closely together to address the persistent tensions caused by transnational and non-traditional security along with traditional security concerns such as the potential conflict in the South China Sea.

“ASEAN COMMUNITY 2015: WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR INDONESIA?”

**A Public Lecture by Dr. Hassan Wirajuda
Co-founder & Patron, Institute for Peace and Democracy, Bali, Indonesia**

**At the Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace
Phnom Penh, Monday, 30th June 2014**

Indonesia has a very special relationship with Cambodia, in good and bad times. We can recall the role of Indonesia played in time difficulties, especially during the time of my predecessor Foreign Minister Ali Alatas, who initiated the JIM I, JIM II, JIM III, leading to the Paris Conference and Paris Final Agreements, which eventually restored the sovereignty of Cambodia. Now of course as fellow ASEAN members, we are together with all other ASEAN states in developing closer relationships in the ASEAN community. So, as we are preparing ourselves to make the ASEAN community into a reality by 2015, we are in the midst of our intensive preparation.

When ASEAN Leaders decided at the East Asian Summit in Philippines to accelerate target dates from year 2020 to 2015 it was mainly driven by the fact that there is cooperation and integration and community building in the East Asian region. You may recall that this was primarily driven by ASEAN as a product of intensive dialogue that we conducted within ASEAN but also with our partners; ASEAN+1, ASEAN+3, ASEAN+6, etc. That's why our leaders decided to accelerate integration, in order to enable ASEAN to continue to play a central role. We must develop ASEAN as strong and cohesive community organization because we are dealing with larger partners. These are countries in North East Asia such as China, Japan, South Korea but also when we talk about the larger group such as East Asia Summit, it includes India, Australia, New Zealand, and later on also United States and Russia. It is important to develop ASEAN as cohesive and strong. So, it is quite a transformation of ASEAN from rather a loose association into a community. The idea to transform ASEAN was triggered by the problems that struck some key member countries of ASEAN following the East ASEAN financial crisis or monetary crisis in 1997 and 98 which started in South Korea. Financial crisis struck Thailand, Malaysia, Philippines and Indonesia. It took a crisis to change, perhaps. I recall that at the ASEAN Summit in 2002, as a response, Singapore proposed that we establish an ASEAN economic community. Because as a result of the crisis that struck some key countries of ASEAN, ASEAN lost its competitiveness. Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong then said that around that time, of the foreign direct investment that came to Asia, 85% went to China. He even questioned whether the remaining 15 % came to ASEAN. That's why we needed to strengthen intra-ASEAN economic cooperation.

As a consequence of the financial crisis that struck in 1997 - 98, Indonesia decided to transform from a military dominated government into a full fledge democracy. Because then we realized, we had made policy mistakes by developing according to an imbalanced concept of development. Development for about 33 years put heavy stress on economic development and neglected political development. That's why there was no checks and balances. And at the end, there was no political space. While economically we grew on the average of 7-8%. But as we experienced, people don't live on bread alone. In fact, and as a consequence of economic progress, when people have enough food, shelter, better access to public health and education, they would demand nothing else but more freedom and greater political space.

This is the lesson that we learned from our own experience. This is also the lesson that we should learn from the Arab Spring that struck countries in the Middle East and North Africa. It was not lack of economic development. It was because of imbalance in the development concept of these countries, an imbalance that heavily stressed the economic component while neglecting the political one. That was our response in 2002. Yes we agreed to participate in the economic community of ASEAN but economic cooperation can lead to competition for profit and it might create frictions among us. I recall that around that time we talked about ASEAN developing its free trade agreement with China. We should have waited for ASEAN to conclude an agreement with China, but each of us competed to do it first. This what I mean by economic cooperation may also lead to frictions.

But one noticeable element, particularly in my view then, was that of consensus which we developed since 1969, the very beginning of ASEAN. We tend to, in the name of harmonious intra ASEAN relationships, be reluctant to introduce many new issues which might serve the harmonious relationship among ASEAN members. For example, border conflicts. ASEAN is full of potential border conflicts. In fact, in geographical terms, particularly from the perspective of the law of the sea, the configuration of ASEAN is maritime-biased. ASEAN contains two of the largest archipelago countries in the world Indonesia and Philippines, but also a land locked country like Laos. And then some other ASEAN states which have water but are locked by the water of their neighbors. Finally, an island country like Singapore.

And so there are quite complex border problems that we have. You can imagine, not only we are talking about land borders but also sea territory and economic zones. In the past, we did not solve the problem. I think we should take a new approach. I would call for taking the bull by the horns. That means we ASEAN members must dare to face problems between us. We must recognize we have problems and then be ready to sit down, dialogue and negotiate to solve them. That's from the perspective of the peaceful resolution of conflicts. Because how can we create through ASEAN community some cohesion within ASEAN if we neglect to solve problems among ourselves. That's one issue.

Another issue is, as we learn from the case of Myanmar, that there is gap in our political orientation in ASEAN, ranging from democracy to authoritarianism, and even to the extreme of the military junta of Myanmar. We spend a lot of time and energy in many ASEAN forums, particularly at the foreign minister and summit levels to deal with this lack of democracy and human rights in ASEAN. That's why we insist that ASEAN balance the economic community concept introduced by Singapore, with a political and security community concept that has the core values of the promotion of democracy, respect for human rights, good governance, and peaceful resolutions of conflict.

Of course initially, it was very controversial. A book by Richard Grifford suggested that Indonesia was playing a hegemonic role and that Indonesia was bullying other ASEAN states. I don't think this was the case. It was the honest intention of Indonesia, based on our experience of an imbalanced concept of development. That's why we would like to see cooperative community building, and we think that community building in ASEAN should be balanced. Thanks to the consensus mode of decision making, the controversial concept of political security could be addressed. In the end, only one year after Indonesia hosted the Bali summit in October 2013, ASEAN leaders adopted the balanced concept of the ASEAN community which rests on 3 pillars, ASEAN economic community, ASEAN political and security community and ASEAN social cultural community.

This is the beginning of a process transforming ASEAN from a loose association to a community based on the ASEAN charter, which entered into force in December 2008. But it was quite a long journey from Bali 2003 to Bangkok 2008 because of the problems detailed. Yes, we agree on the main agenda of a balanced concept of community. But when we

drafted the ASEAN Charter, there were heated discussions on matters relating to the promotion of democracy and the promotion of human rights. It was much easier to agree on provisions related to the ASEAN economic community, as well as the ASEAN social culture community. But certainly the questions of ASEAN political and security community were the most difficult ones. This was because of the background of each of us and the level of development. But again, thanks to the consensus process of decision making, we were able to agree. That's the reason for the ASEAN charter, and for the blueprints of each of those 3 community pillars. Our leaders decided to implement the ASEAN community to be effective by 2014 rather 2015. Here we are, only a year before the ASEAN community takes its full effect. It was the day of the Cambodia summit that our leaders set the target date of 31st of December 2015.

But never mind of the date because we are not talking about the implementation of ASEAN Community being in full force by January 2015. ASEAN has made quite a preparation since Charter and blueprint were adopted in 2008. We prepared plans of action and also specific target dates in which the commitment or implementation by each ASEAN members are measured. We call it the scorecard. Despite those efforts, I don't think by January we ASEAN members are in a position to implement fully one hundred percent of those targets. It is much easier for us to set clear targets or specific items that we agree on in the area of economic security rather than the economic community. If you compare the blueprints of those three pillars, the plan of action of the economic community is more comprehensive. Also, the ASEAN pillar social culture community is much less significant than the political and security communities.

For the economic community, we set the target of creating ASEAN as a single production base where there is a free flow of goods, services, labor, capital and labor. There is not much problem for the flow of goods as the ASEAN free trade agreement was established in January 2002. What we can do is to increase the number of items that we agreed to trade freely within ASEAN. I must mention that ASEAN experiences a development gap, particularly between the six ASEAN members and the four and through time it has not reduced which indicates limited progress. As Vietnam has grown, now the gap is between the ASEAN 7 & 3. But even the 3 is now in a position to join the ASEAN free flow of trade which is also a sign of progress. So, now we talk about some 2,000 traded items which would freely flow within ASEAN. So, on the economics front ASEAN completed 82% of the scorecard targets pertaining to the specific commitment by each of ASEAN members. On the social and cultural dimension about 91%, and on political and security dimension it is only about 12%. Some 66% hopefully will follow. This is in terms of success. It shows how the implementation of the ASEAN community has come into effect since January 2016.

Of course we agreed that the three countries of Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar would join us later on issues sensitive to them, and in light of the degree of competitiveness that they would attain throughout the process. So, in other words, when we begin to implement the ASEAN community we will still have two ASEANs here.

On the political and security community there is much less commitment from all ASEAN members to implement the charter's provisions on key values such as democracy promotion, human rights, good governance, and peaceful conflict resolution. These are the terms under which the development gap covers not only the gap of economic development but also the gap between us in terms of political development.

And I said in the beginning, that is the most sensitive issue. But what's important is that despite initial differences, eventually we agreed to enshrine these purposes and objectives in the ASEAN charter. Of course we cannot expect that as we place targets and objectives on political and security development in ASEAN it will supplant the ASEAN Charter, and it doesn't mean that by tomorrow all ASEAN members are expected to be

democratic, with full respect for human rights. It is a process, like the process of our economic cooperation. So, to me the fact that we are becoming more and more open to each other is a good sign, and the fact that we are more willing to learn from each other is a good sign.

And the process is not linear but often we make one step forward take two steps backwards. Myanmar has made quite good progress, but we regret the fact that there was a coup d'état in Thailand which indicates a setback. It's not linear but I believe it's a process that takes some time. Nonetheless it took Europe 15 years for all European countries to embrace democracy and to respect human rights after the Helsinki Act of 1975. So, you might ask when all ASEAN nations would become democracies? Using the yardstick of Europe, by 2030 it would be good enough if all ASEAN became full fledged democracies with respect for human rights.

On human rights, it was difficult to reach agreement when we drafted ASEAN charter, in particular on Article 14, which is often referred to as the enabling provision on ASEAN Human Rights. But in the end, we agreed. We understand the difficulties of some of different levels of economic development and political development, that in the beginning the ASEAN intergovernment commission on human rights has an unbalanced mandate. Its mandate centers heavily on the promotion function of the ASEAN commission, and less much less on the protective function of human rights. But anyway we agreed on reviewing the terms of reference of the mandate of the ASEAN commission, and eventually this review process will bring about more a balanced concept. I'm optimistic that we will continue to make progress and the process is ongoing on the ASEAN political and security community.

One important aspect of the political and security community-building targets is to create an ASEAN that is peaceful, that is secure not only within itself but also with its neighbors. There are some criticisms, such as the negative view that ASEAN is only a forum for talk. In fact, it is because of dialogue that ASEAN has enjoyed 47 years of continuous relative peace and security. Yes there are border security issues with the potential for conflicts. But so far, we are able to manage the potential conflicts or disputes and prevent them turning into open conflicts. That's a big achievement for ASEAN.

We may appreciate this better if we compare ourselves with other regions. We came to the conclusion following the war in Iraq, that when a region or regional organizations are unable to manage their own household to solve their conflicts, there are others who readily and voluntarily help them to solve it. But we know today of the ensuing conflict in Iraq. Look at what's happening in Syria, it was because the Arab League was not able to manage their own region, and this created conflict not only in Syria but also other places such as in Libya and Yemen. Also, look at what's happened in Africa. In North Africa, in West Africa, in East Africa, not only people are killed, woman and children suffer, but the war created profound infrastructural damage in these regions. Look at the example of the material destruction in Syria. It is a quite set back to their process of nation and state building. That's why it has been a great ASEAN achievement of maintaining peace and security in the past 47 years, which allowed us to focus our time, energy, and resources for our economic development. That's why ASEAN, which is a region of 570 million people, has become a region which is a very dynamic economically.

Having said that, as we agreed under the political and security community and its blueprint and plans of action, we must act diligently to address whatever problems we have. But there is a need to address, to implement those 3 pillars in more balanced way. Otherwise, as Indonesia has experienced, the imbalance in the concept of our development leads to a serious crisis. The crisis brought Indonesia to the brink of collapse and disintegration. But looking at the larger region of East Asia, there is an actual suffering related to the imbalance in the idea of cooperation. This is increasingly called the Asian

paradox. Cooperation has been achieved in terms of economic trade, investment, and financial stability, but is rather weak in terms of politics and security. That's why the region of East Asia is unable to cope with the current challenges, such as how to deal with the potential conflicts of border and territorial disputes on land and water. We may learn from the experience of Europe, which at the height of the Cold War developed a mechanism, through the Helsinki process, that led to peaceful solutions, following the collapse of the Berlin Wall in September 1989.

So, in short, what does the ASEAN community mean to us? I don't want to speak of Indonesia, as it sounds rather egotistic. From our own experience of an intra ASEAN free trade area, the arrangements improved our intra-regional trade by about 15% a year and I believe through the ASEAN economic community we should be able to increase the free flow of ASEAN goods trade, services, capital as well as skilled labors. In the next ASEAN Summit in Myanmar there will be discussion on increasing the target of ASEAN GDP for example from 2.2 billion dollars now to 4.4 billion by 2023. So quite double. We are discussing the possibility of ASEAN for reducing the incidents of poverty from 18.9 % to around 9% by 2030. This would benefit all, including both Indonesia and Cambodia. We should also agree to some kind of policy on reducing our debt, or reducing our debt to GDP ratio. I'm happy to learn that here in Cambodia you have now around a 34% debt to GDP ratio which in economic terms is quite healthy. All of ASEAN should be able to reduce that ratio further. In the case of Indonesia in 1990 after the crisis, our debt to GDP ratio was around 90%. We pledged ourselves, not to be overburdened by the huge debt.

We systematically reduced our debt and now our debt to GDP ratio is among the lowest in the world, at 23%. In comparison for some European countries, which struck by the Euro zone crisis had ratios of 130%. Italy's ratio is about 134%. So, I think in this region we have adopted quite prudent fiscal and monetary policies and like other countries in East Asia we put more emphasis on saving and reducing spending. That's the reason for the relatively low debt to GDP ratio in our case. Our low debt to GDP ratio creates and develops Indonesia, making it quite resilient in dealing with the 2008 Global financial crisis and the recent Euro zone crisis. It has allowed Indonesia to maintain relative economic growth which is now the second fastest after China. That is I think what ASEAN also should discuss in their meetings.

Of course the community building process needs a strong ASEAN secretariat, which is now considered weak and is not in a position to cope with ASEAN's greater challenges of community building. But also there is a need to restructure and to reorganize the ASEAN Secretariat. That's why now there should be a review of the organs of the ASEAN secretariat. What does the community building process entail in terms of ASEAN centrality? Of course we are focusing ourselves, our time, energy, and resources on our own community building process. If not, ASEAN would have much less capacity or attention to pay to the larger process of community building in East Asia. This is a natural consequence, as we only can play a greater role in establishing a central seat for ASEAN in the region if we are strong and cohesive. It was unfortunate that the ASEAN foreign ministers meeting here and for the first time in the history of ASEAN we failed to agree on an ASEAN foreign minister statement. From then on, many workshops and seminars have been on ASEAN centrality. The consequence of our focus on our own intra process of community building is a reduction of focus and attention on the larger process in our immediate region in East Asia. Where does this ASEAN community process lead us to? Some may speculate that we should lead to ASEAN union as the case of Europe and Africa. Actually, there was a proposal when we adopted the ASEAN Charter. Former President Ramos of the Philippines wished that reference on the ASEAN unit be put in the ASEAN Charter. I argued against it. Why? Because, I contend that ASEAN from the very beginning followed the bottom-up

process of step by step and gradual integration. Unlike Europe since the Rome treaty of 1957, which decided the European community was a supranational organization. But not us. It took us 46 - 47 years to transform ASEAN from a rather loose association. I don't think the founders of ASEAN had the view or conception that eventually ASEAN would lead to an ASEAN Community. Whether this would lead to ASEAN union, I don't think as of now it would.

What does this community building mean for Indonesia and Cambodia. Certainly, as I mentioned earlier, as we set target for all those three areas of community. The key word here is progress. That we together would benefit and together we will make progress. Look at, for example, the target date of the GDP doubling by 2030, to reduce the poverty to half of what we have now by 2030. This only a few items that we can say we all would benefit from. Indonesia would benefit, but certainly Cambodia and other ASEAN members as well. And it allows each individual member of ASEAN to build on each of our national development processes.

And not only Indonesia would benefit from the ASEAN community, but the ASEAN community would also benefit from the progress that we make in Indonesia. Like the case of other ASEAN members. Indonesia is now, in quite a process of transformation from the situation that led us to a crisis in 1998/99. Particularly, in four different areas of reform, namely in the process of democratization, of upholding the rule of law, of greater respect for human rights, in the area of decentralization, and in dealing with the economic crisis, or for that matter, economic development.

I think Indonesia made substantial progress in these four major areas. This transformed Indonesia from authoritarian government into a full fledged democracy. On the 9th of July we're going to have the third direct election of President and Vice President. We just completed the legislative election on the 9th of April. Which is, I think the largest election exercise. We have 185 million registered voters. There are around 550,000 polling stations and the elections were completed in one day. So by the evening of the 9th of April we knew poll results. Because we allowed exit polls, there were number of independent results hour by hour. And interestingly, the results from the exit polls were more or less similar to the actual count announced a month later.

We also struggled to transform Indonesia to full-fledged democracy. That is the reason for the idea of sharing experience and best practices. At this time as we are entering the stage consolidating our democracy, we wish to learn from the experience of others. That's why in 2008, I initiated the Bali Democratic Forum. And as its implementing agency, we established the Institute for Peace and Democracy. In the past 2 years, 186 countries and international organization participated in our forum. Making the BDF, as we call it, a premiere global forum of dialogue on democracy.

And we also developed through IPD various forms of cooperation such as, the Indonesia-Egypt Dialogue on Democratic Transition, then, Indonesia-Tunisia, Indonesia-Myanmar, and there will be Indonesia-Fiji. Thematic issues are addressed such as women in politics, election commission capacity building, training for political parties, and others. For that matter, I warmly welcome and am grateful to the Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace for developing cooperation with our institute in holding this seminar. We're looking forward to having more intensifying activities between our two institutes.

In the economic dimension Indonesia continues to make progress, Indonesia is now, the 6th largest economy in the world. The recent World Bank report says that in terms of GDP purchasing power parity Indonesia now is the 10th largest, in fact overtaking Italy. And as some projections hold, Indonesia will be the 7th largest economy in the world by 2030 and the 6th largest economy by 2035. Meaning, that we contribute to the larger market of ASEAN, larger and greater competitiveness of ASEAN and indeed ASEAN can benefit

also from the greater Indonesian market. But likewise, Indonesia could benefit from a larger and stronger ASEAN market.

A main question is whether as Indonesia is growing and is making progress, if Indonesia needs greater space and will lead ASEAN. I don't think so because to us as part of our independent and active foreign policy, ASEAN would remain the cornerstone of our foreign policy. And our greater activities and greater role in the larger region or the world doesn't mean, and should not be interpreted as in contradiction to our role in ASEAN. In fact I would say they are complimentary one to one another – ASEAN, Indonesia's role in ASEAN, and Indonesia's role in the larger world.

Speaking of Cambodia, like Indonesia and other ASEAN members, Cambodia too would greatly benefit in all three areas of the ASEAN Community. Nonetheless, in the past decades Cambodia is enjoying the vibrant and rapid economic growth which is an opportunity for other ASEAN members. But also there is greater contribution of Cambodia to the common effort or joint efforts to create the economic community of ASEAN. So I do not pretend to cover in this limited time all the aspects of ASEAN community building. I believe that during the question and answer session other issues may be raised. So I anticipate an active discussion in this seminar. So, Chairman again thank you very much. To all the audience participants, my thanks and appreciation for your kind attention. Thank you very much.

“CAMBODIA BETWEEN VIETNAM AND CHINA – PAST AND PRESENT”

**A Public Lecture by Dr. Bernd Schaefer
Professorial Lecturer, George Washington University**

**At the Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace
Phnom Penh, Monday, 28th July 2014**

Summary

After the countries of Indochina became independent, the situation in divided Vietnam drew Cambodia gradually into an unavoidable conflict. Pushed by China, communists charged for power and extended their struggle to Cambodian territory. Competing groups in Cambodia allied themselves with foreign powers. Events of 1970 plunged the country into a downward spin. The situation worsened when China and Vietnam engaged in conflict that turned Cambodians into pawns and their territory into a battlefield between 1977 and 1990. Only when Vietnam and China reconciled, could the situation for Cambodia finally improve.

1965-1970: Prince Sihanouk's Decisions

Prince Norodom Sihanouk, Prime Minister and ruler of newly independent Cambodia sensed the prevailing geopolitical winds in Southeast Asia early, since the late 1950s. He acknowledged and adjusted accordingly to the needs and powerful influence of the revolutionary People's Republic of China. The latter was the dominant support behind the push of the communist Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) to conduct revolutionary struggle in South Vietnam, overthrow the pro-American regime in Saigon and unify the country under socialist auspices.

After severing ties with the United States in 1963, Prince Sihanouk's government recognized in 1967 the Provisional Revolutionary Government (PRG) of South Vietnam, the Southern arm of communist Hanoi, after he had extracted concessions from the Vietnamese communists regarding the future Vietnamese-Cambodian borderline.

During that period, communists in China and Vietnam acted in congruence and cooperated closely: They supported Sihanouk's government against the Cambodian communists under Saloth Sar/Pol Pot who expected revolutionary support from Beijing and Hanoi to overthrow the Sihanouk regime. However, the latter strived for a communist victory in Vietnam first and told the Cambodian communists to "wait". This de facto support of Sihanouk was reciprocated by the Cambodian ruler to allow sanctuaries of the South Vietnamese communist PRG on Cambodian territory as well the flow of military and other supplies to South Vietnam via the so called "Ho Chi Minh Trail" through the jungles of the three Indochinese countries. Thus in order to maintain its formal neutrality and independence and to facilitate its long-term survival as a non-communist state in the region, the Cambodian government was willing to make short-term compromises.

Sihanouk deposed: Sino-Vietnamese Congruence, GRUNC and FUNC

In March 1970 Prince Sihanouk got deposed by inner-Cambodian opposition led by Marshal Lon Nol and Prince Sirik Matak. The DRV responded by viewing Cambodia as "our Czechoslovakia", this is drawing parallels with the Soviet bloc military intervention in Prague in August 1968. Transposed to Indochina, this concept of a dominant nation declaring smaller and weaker ones as limited in sovereignty meant that communist Vietnam

considered Cambodia to be inside a sphere of influence where anti-Vietnamese governance would not be permitted. As a consequence, the DRV began arming and supporting the Cambodian communists to support them in the overthrow of the Lon Nol regime.

After some back and forth, Sihanouk set up his exile in Beijing because PRC and DRV acted in congruence and jointly persuaded him. A “Royal Government of the National United Front of Cambodia (GRUNC)” was established with Sihanouk as head of state and royalists dominant in the cabinet. The actual armed resistance in Cambodia, organized by Khmer Rouge exile-Minister of Defense Khieu Samphan, was the “National United Front of Cambodia” (FUNC). Soon this led to communist dominance among the anti-Lon Nol forces on the ground in Cambodia, reducing Sihanouk to a mere figurehead of the opposition with the communists under Pol Pot holding actual power.

1974/75 Chinese Turn: Cambodia to Balance Vietnam

The January 1973 Paris Agreement between the United States and the Vietnamese governments from Hanoi and Saigon sealed the complete American military withdrawal from Vietnam. After that victory for the Vietnamese communists, gradually tensions began to emerge between PRC and DRV. The ultra-leftist Chinese communists were concerned about Soviet influence on Hanoi and an upcoming Vietnamese dominance over Indochina. The Cambodian communists meanwhile developed ever stronger anti-Vietnamese attitudes and pro-Chinese positions. During the 1974 visit of Khieu Samphan to Mao Zedong, the first ever meeting between the Chinese Chairman and a leading Cambodian communist, the PRC’s anti-Vietnamese, Maoist reorientation towards the Cambodian communists became official. Increased Chinese military aid made Phnom Penh fall to revolutionary communism on April 17, 1975 before the communist takeovers in South Vietnam and Laos.

China and the CPK: Maoist and anti-Vietnamese Alliance

The Chinese radical policy shift in 1974 towards the Communist Party of Kampuchea (CPK) came at the expense of North Vietnam and the Cambodian royalists around Sihanouk. It was celebrated and affirmed in June 1975 during a meeting in Beijing between Chairman Mao and the victorious Pol Pot where the Chinese leader admired the CPK’s course and viewed the Cambodian as a true revolutionary heir of Chinese communism.

Another seminal meeting took place in Beijing between Mao’s successors and the CPK leadership of Democratic Kampuchea in October 1977, where they displayed a close and cordial relationship. This meeting stood in stark contrast to the Beijing leaders’ encounter with the leadership of the united Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV) in November 1977 where the SRV refused to establish an anti-Soviet alliance with the PRC. As a result, during the next month and with Chinese propagandistic backing the DK began incursions into Vietnamese territory. The ensuing bloody 1977/78 Kampuchean-Vietnamese border clashes, initiated through DK attacks born of delusions and overconfidence into its military strength, triggered Vietnamese retaliation and incursions into Cambodian territory.

1978/79: Pro-Vietnamese Regime Change in Cambodia

By early 1978, the SRV had made the decision to work actively towards regime change in the DK in order to establish a pro-Vietnamese regime in Phnom Penh. The preferred scenario was an overthrow of the Pol Pot regime from within by anti-Pol Pot Cambodian forces, but the SRV also pondered as plan B its own military intervention from outside. Hanoi was concerned about the presence of Chinese and North Korean arms and advisers in the DK, as well as of the worst scenario of a simultaneous multi-front military conflict of border clashes between DK and Vietnam, China and Vietnam, in combination with anti-communist guerrillas operating in South Vietnam and supported by both the PRC and the United States.

While it proved difficult to overthrow Pol Pot just with Cambodian defectors and exiles based in Vietnam, Chinese internal developments turned out in the SRV’s favor and diverted Beijing’s attention from Cambodia. In December 1978, the Chinese Communist Party held its Third Plenum where at a contentious meeting Deng Xiaoping prevailed over

its internal opponents and began the launch of China's economic reforms. In January 1979, the Chinese leader was scheduled to visit the United States to establish full diplomatic relations with Washington. Those events diminished Vietnamese fears of meeting resistance by Chinese armed units when intervening militarily in Cambodia. As it turned out, the SRV easily overthrew the Pol Pot government and established a new pro-Vietnamese government in Phnom Penh. China's brief punitive military retaliatory action against the SRV Northern provinces in March 1979 did not hurt Vietnam beyond its immediate effect.

1979-89: China Coordinates anti-Vietnamese Insurgency

However, supported by Thailand and the U.S., China was capable in the mid- and long term to use the remnants of Pol Pot forces and refugees from Cambodia's Western areas to mount a significant guerrilla war challenge against the new government in Phnom Penh. In 1982 a "Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea" (CGDK), led by Sihanouk, Pol Pot, and Son Sann, was formed and equipped with arms to build up military capacities. Neither the army of the Phnom Penh government nor the large Vietnamese force remaining in the country after 1979 was able to completely quell the military opposition. Cambodia descended into civil war, the guerrilla war created disarray and disruptions. By the end of the 1980s it dawned on the SRV and its Cambodian allies: There was no military solution to end civil war. Only a combination of Vietnamese military withdrawal and an internal Cambodian political solution would provide a way out of the quagmire.

Dominoes I: Change in USSR, Change in Vietnam

Such a Cambodian solution only became an option when the international environment and geopolitics began to gradually change. From 1986 onwards, the Soviet Union under its leader Mikhail Gorbachev embarked on internal political and economic reforms without an economic opening to outside investment. More pertinent for the Cambodian situation, Moscow was increasingly willing to embrace international cooperation and work towards de-escalation of global conflicts.

During the same time, Vietnam suffered from grave economic disaster, low living standards and diplomatic isolation over its ongoing military presence in Cambodia. Following in the shadow of Soviet reform, the Vietnamese communists adopted policies of "DoiMoi" (Renovation) and began to implement gradual changes in the party and economy. In the realm of foreign policy, DoiMoi resulted in Vietnamese willingness to seek regional cooperation and to implicitly acknowledge the need to end the de-facto "Indochinese Federation" Hanoi had established with Phnom Penh and Laos.

Dominoes II: Change in Vietnam, Change in Cambodia

The changes in Vietnam provided the Cambodian government under Prime Minister Hun Sen with leverage to seek national reconciliation with the moderate opposition while to attempt simultaneously to isolate Pol Pot and to reach out to ASEAN countries, especially Indonesia. By the end of the 1980s, the Hun Sen government had corrected what it called the Marxist-Leninist "errors" of the Cambodian communist party congresses of 1981 and 1985 which were modeled after the pre-DoiMoi Vietnamese system of party and society. In 1989 the "People's Republic of Kampuchea" (PRK) was renamed to SOC, State of Cambodia. Unlike the other communist states in East Asia, namely China, Vietnam, Laos, and North Korea, Kampuchea/Cambodia was the only country that abandoned the Asian communist model.

Soviet-Chinese Normalization, Sino-Vietnamese Congruence

After decades of ideological acrimony, the changed international environment allowed for the restoration of Soviet-Chinese ties through the removal of China's 'Three Major Obstacles' (Soviet military withdrawal from Afghanistan and Mongolia, Vietnamese military withdrawal from Cambodia). The fallout from the protests on Tian An Men Square in Beijing and their violent military crackdown in June 1989, followed by the toppling of communist regimes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union since fall 1989, created a joint Chinese-Vietnamese "Fall of Communism" shock. Vietnam and China ruled by their communist parties realized they were sitting in the "same boat" and could not afford by any means the domino effect of the fall of one party regime in any country. China and Vietnam, while still harboring mistrust towards each other, acted in congruence by first slowing then accelerating economic reform, and by propagating nationalism and patriotism as new internal cohesion of their respective societies.

Cambodia: Internationalization and De-Internationalization

Between 1990 and 1993, the "Cambodian problem" was first internationalized before it had to become de-internationalized. While Australia entered the proposal for a United Nations role in Cambodia during political transition, the U.S. and China withdrew their support for Cambodia's UN representation by Pol Pot's dethroned DK Government (which they had constantly supported between 1979 and 1990). The international euphoria of 1990/91, which viewed all global conflict spots as solvable through multilateralism, resulted in October 1991 in the Paris Peace Agreement on Cambodia, signed by all four warring Cambodian factions, as well as by all members of the UN Security Council and the members of ASEAN Members. In 1992/93 UNTAC, the United Nations Transitional Authority for Cambodia, entered the country and prepared, among other things, the first free Cambodian elections of May 1993.

Cambodia between China and Vietnam

As of today, Cambodia remains always at risk between the opposing interests of Vietnam and China. Unlike in the past, however, the country now enjoys complete territorial integrity and authority. Domestic political conflicts in Cambodia have become mostly de-internationalized and, last but not least, since 1999 Cambodia possesses both the cover and the framework of ASEAN to mitigate claims from Hanoi to Beijing to influence Cambodian decisions.

Currently the South China Sea witnesses competing nationalisms between China and Vietnam, fueled by Chinese great power claims. It will always remain a constant pattern: Vietnam and China expect any Cambodian government to always share their respective interests. They expect loyalty and gratitude.

Lesson for Present Cambodia: Diversification

The lesson for present Cambodia to deal with competing foreign claims and interests can only lie in "diversification".

A first exceptional pattern works like this: When Vietnam and China act in accordance, Cambodia has limited leverage.

Another exceptional pattern works the following way: When Vietnam and China are in severe conflict with each other, Cambodian internal divisions will be exploited from the outside.

The normal pattern is as follows: When Vietnam and China are in nationalist competition, Cambodia gains in sovereignty but has to walk a very fine line in relation to both.

If Cambodia places all its diplomatic and geopolitical eggs in one basket, they will ultimately break. Cambodia needs to diversify its interests into as many baskets as possible - large, medium, and small.

“ASEAN INTEGRATION 2015 AND BEYOND: THE PIVOTAL ROLE OF EDUCATION IN CAMBODIA”

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**Remarks Delivered at the National Conference on “ASEAN Integration 2015 and
Beyond: Cambodia’s Preparedness and Challenges”**

Organized by the Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace
InterContinental Hotel, Phnom Penh, 21st - 22nd August 2014

Education is the most powerful weapon, which you can use to change the world.

- Nelson Mandela (1918-2013, Former President of South Africa)

Nations will march towards their greatness in the direction given by its education. Nations will soar if its education soars; will regress if it regresses. Nations will fall and sink in darkness if education is corrupted or completely abandoned.

- Simón Bolívar (1783-1830, a South American Liberator)

Introduction

Education plays a pivotal role for the development of any nation. As the next step in ASEAN’s integration quickly approaches, it is important to keep in mind that the third pillar of ASEAN, ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community, encompasses education and human resource development. If ASEAN hopes to achieve relatively uniform economic prosperity, it is incumbent upon the leaders to insure that each ASEAN nation has the educational system to create the requisite human resources in order to be successful and be able to realistically keep up with countries like Singapore, Thailand, and Malaysia.

A key component within the Socio-Cultural Community pillar of ASEAN is human development through the advancement and prioritization of education. Specifically, ASEAN aspires to enhance the “well-being and livelihood of the peoples of ASEAN by providing them with equitable access to human development opportunities by promoting and investing in education.”¹ Building a “knowledge based society” is in fact, the highest priority goal of all ASEAN Member States. It is understood that education plays a pivotal role in economic prosperity, improved health, greater democratization, and attaining better human rights for all citizens.

¹ Roadmap for an ASEAN Community 2009-2015, ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint, p. 68.

Pivotal Role of Education

Utilizing statistics from 1820 to the late 1990's it is evident that the gross domestic product (GDP) per capita in industrialized nations was positively correlated to the advances in education (Maddison, 2001). There is evidence demonstrating that individuals with higher test scores earn more (Hanushek and Zhang, 2006); additional years of education translate into higher earnings (Krueger and Lindhal, 2001); greater educational attainment (university) translates into tangible economic rewards (OECD, 2006); and increasing years of education for males over 24 is correlated to a stronger rate of overall economic growth (Barro, 2002).

When comparing developed countries to less developed ones, it is noted that educational attainment at or above the secondary level is a critical factor in the more developed countries results, while educational achievement at the primary level shows very positive results in less developed countries. The positive benefits of primary education are particularly true for girls (UNESCO, Education for All, 2005). Possessing a well-educated work force has been shown to attract high wage jobs. This means that nations with better-educated citizens tend to have substantially higher average wages (Economic Analysis and Research Network, 2013). "Each additional year of schooling appears to raise earnings by about 10 percent in the United States, although the rate of return to education varies over time as well as across countries" (Krueger and Lindahl, 2001).

Education seems to play an important role in health as well. It has been demonstrated that people with higher educational attainment have a greater life expectancy. Moreover, people with education suffer less incidence of the most common acute and chronic diseases, are less prone to hypertension, emphysema or diabetes, and have fewer sick days from work (Cutler and Lleras-Muney, 2006). According to the authors of this study, "An additional four years of education lowers five-year mortality by 1.8 percentage points; it also reduces the risk of heart disease by 2.16 percentage points and the risk of diabetes by 1.3 percentage points." In a New York Times interview both James Smith, a health economist at the RAND Corporation, and Richard Hodes, Director of the National Institute on Aging, said the most important factor for insuring a long and healthy life is education. Actually no other social factor, health coverage scheme, or even increased income is consistently linked to longevity (Kolata, 2007). A dramatic finding in 1999 in the United States was that age-adjusted mortality rate for those who dropped out of high school is twice that of their peers who had some college education (National Vital Statistics Reports, 2001).

In addition, nations with educated people have a greater likelihood of enjoying a democratic form of government (Glaeser, 2009). "Education makes people easy to lead but difficult to drive, easy to govern, but impossible to enslave," said Henry Peter Brougham (1778-1868), a British political leader and supporter of humanitarian causes. This is part of the rationale behind having universal human rights. But in order for human rights to have any effectiveness, average citizens must be made aware of their rights, and the only way to do this is through education - human rights education. By providing human rights education there are many concomitant benefits such as creating people who both understand and demand to be treated with dignity, empowerment for social justice, and a feeling of connection with people from other nations. Research showed that there was a 77 percent correlation between education levels and degree of democratization (Glaeser, Paonnetto and Shleifer, 2005). These findings reinforce Kofi Annan's statement, "Education is a human right with immense power to

transform. On its foundation rest the cornerstones of freedom, democracy and sustainable human development.”

From the aforementioned research it seems apparent that education is the foundation upon which strong communities, successful nations, and peaceful coexistence can be constructed. In appreciation of the pivotal role that education plays in creating a successful and livable ASEAN community, this paper will briefly look at the current situation of education Cambodia. Cambodia is one of the more recent nations to join ASEAN as well as being one of the poorer nations within this community, especially when compared to Singapore, Brunei, or Thailand. First the recent history of Cambodia’s education will be discussed including an analysis of the strengths and noteworthy accomplishments the government has made. This will be followed by examining the areas that need improvement which give rise to concerns about Cambodia’s ability to adequately educate enough of its citizens in line with its ASEAN neighbors. Lastly, the paper will suggest some ways in which Cambodia can address its weaknesses in order to be a strong contributing partner within the ASEAN community in the future.

Progress, Challenges and Opportunities of the Cambodian Educational System during the Four Distinct Periods

The Near Destruction Period

The recent history of education in Cambodia can be divided into four distinct periods beginning with the Khmer Rouge purges from 1975 to 1979. The Khmer Rouge systematically eviscerated the existing education by murdering educated Khmer people including teachers and dismantling the entire system. This was because the Khmer Rouge believed that education corrupted the minds of the people and distracted from what was important – manual labor and growing rice. This philosophy was summed up by the idea, “the spade is your pen, the rice field your paper” (Hinton, 2005). It has been estimated that 75 percent of all teachers, 96 percent of university students and 67 percent of all primary students were killed under this regime (Clayton, 1998).

The Early Recovery Period (1979-1989)

With the defeat of the Khmer Rouge, the Vietnamese set up a new government and rebuilt the educational system modeled after the Vietnamese Communist approach, which meant a highly centralized system where students were required to learn Vietnamese as well as socialist theory. Because of the dismantling carried out by the Khmer Rouge, this meant that the educational system had to utilize what was left while it focused on trying to enroll as many students as possible and sometimes had to conduct classes in simple huts or under trees. This meant that enrolment openings at upper secondary schools and universities were sorely limited. This lack of higher education opportunity resulted in a system of nepotism and corruption, which often determined that individuals with better connections received higher education. Given the prior

complete obliteration of the educational system, the Vietnamese rebuilding effort was quite impressive in its ability to restart education nationwide at a reasonable level of quality.²

The Reconstruction Stage in the 1990s

A new era in the Cambodian education system came with the exit of Vietnam, one where there was a significant role played by Western donors. Since the 1990's Western donor countries have contributed 500 million or more each year of development aid (Teaching Matters, 2008). In response to these donor countries and the peoples' needs, the government sought to provide a good education to all citizens in order to alleviate poverty and give everyone an equal opportunity for a life of dignity with economic security. Specifically, the Cambodian Constitution in 1993 guaranteed that, "The State shall protect and upgrade citizen's rights to quality education at all levels and shall take necessary steps for equal education to reach all citizens." Later, in Article 66 it reads, "The State shall establish a comprehensive and standardized educational system throughout the country that shall guarantee the principles of educational freedom and equality to ensure that all citizens have an equal opportunity to earn a living."³

Despite these lofty goals because of too few resources or too little support, the educational system lacked sufficient funding and many outlying provinces, especially in Khmer Rouge areas, failed to receive this promised equal educational opportunity. The main achievements during this era were the enrollment of 2.5 million students, state support of teachers was reintroduced, and a system of public examinations began. Increasing and standardizing compulsory schooling to 12 years, up from 1996, was another key policy contributing to this improvement.⁴

The Development Transition Period from 2000 to 2010 and Beyond

Currently the population of Cambodia is 15.4 million people, and it is estimated that over 52% are below the age of 24.⁵ This puts added pressure on the government to meet the needs of the youth. The most recent period runs from 2000 to 2010 marked by a more stable political atmosphere with one dominant party and strong economic growth.⁶ During this most recent era many educational reforms were initiated which included accountability from NGOs, the government and donors. School fees were abolished in 2001, and there have been programs to address the needs of girls, the most impoverished citizens, and certain ethnic minorities.

The percentage of the national budget committed for education has gone up significantly 13.6% in 2000 to a high of 19.8% in 2004, and then 15.5% in 2013.⁷ While the percentage utilized on education has fluctuated, the total amount spent has continued to increase with a total of \$335 million spent in the 2014 budget, up from the \$280 million that was

²*Progress and Challenges of Education in Cambodia Today*, 2012, by Pou Sovachana.

³ The Constitution of Cambodia, 1993.

⁴ Euro Trends, 2009

⁵ CIA Factbook, 2014.

⁶ Ministry of Planning, 2010.

⁷ MoEYS, 2009-2013 Education Indicators.

budgeted in 2013. The percentage of GDP spent on education stood at 2.6 percent (2010, ranked 152 out of 172 countries⁸), significantly lower than almost every other country in the region; Laos 3.3 percent, Thailand 3.8 percent, and Vietnam 6.6 percent.

With the financial support and technical assistance of many international organizations (i.e. World Bank, European Commission) and NGO's there have many reforms put into place, but the main focus seems to be on primary education. The child-friendly schools model was introduced since 2001 by UNICEF to respond to persistent issues hampering the achievement of universal enrolment and the completion of nine-year basic education.⁹The Education Law (2007) lays out a path on how to educate more of the Kingdom's children with a better schooling system. The law provides parents greater freedom in how to educate their children and seeks to clarify the best practices for teaching and implement them.

Another positive sign is the increase in the total number of schools. This is important because it means that all children have reasonable access to school, even those in distant rural regions. The number of primary schools has increased from 6,277 in 2005-2006 to 6,910 in the 2012-2013 academic year. For lower secondary schools the increase in schools (in the same time period) has been from 911 to 1,214, and for upper secondary from 252 to 433.¹⁰ Another positive accomplishment has been the increase in primary and secondary school attendance from 2005-2006 to 2012-2013. The net attendance rate rose from 91.3% to 94.3% and for girls it swelled from 81.7% to 94.2% during that time span. However, there is evidence of persistent challenges as well. The survival rate from grade 1 through grade 12 (the percentage of students who begin school and later graduate) was only 11% in the period from 1996 through 2008. The transition rate - the number of students who proceed from primary to secondary education - in 2008/2009 was 78.4%, but it should be noted that the transition rate for remote schools was 60.5% compared to 76% for the rural regions, and 92.6% in the urban districts (Education Management Information System, 2010). These results point to an unequal system biased to those in more developed areas who have more money and political influence.¹¹Compared to other ASEAN Member States, Cambodia has the highest dropout rate in ASEAN, with less than a third of the students continuing studies beyond the sixth grade.¹²Moreover, the latest Human Development Report ranked Cambodia 136th out of the 187 countries rated. The development index - which takes into account standard of living, knowledge and the ability to live a long healthy life - clocked in well below the regional average (0.584 compared to 0.703¹³).Only some 9.9 per cent of Cambodian females 25 and older have had some secondary school education, among the lowest in the world, on a par with Afghanistan, Rwanda and Sierra Leone.¹⁴

Furthermore, teacher qualifications are an area of concern. The majority of primary school teachers had only post-primary education, while 34.5% of the teachers in remote areas

⁸ World Bank data, 2010.

⁹ Unicef, Child Friendly School in Cambodia, 2003.

¹⁰ MoEYS, 2009-2013 Education Indicators

¹¹<http://www.voacambodia.com/content/multiple-skills-needed-for-asean-competition/1603984.html> retrieved on 19 August 2014

¹² The Phnom Penh Post, July 28, 2014, *Gender Gain Still Lag: Report*.

¹³ Human Development Reports.

¹⁴ The Phnom Penh Post, July 28, 2014, *Gender Gain Still Lag: Report*.

and 6.4% in the rural areas have no education beyond the primary level¹⁵. It is troubling that the educational requirement for teacher training at the primary level was grade 12 at the teacher training college but only grade 9 for the rural areas. Another issue is average class size where it was shown that there is an average of 46.2 students per class at the primary school level, which is the highest student-teacher ratio across ASEAN, behind Laos 27, Myanmar 28, and Vietnam 20.¹⁶ A critical item, of great concern to public school teachers in Cambodia, is remuneration. Recently, on August 21st, 2014, Prime Minister Hun Sen raised the minimum monthly salary from about \$105 to \$138 by April 2015.¹⁷ However, this increase was not enough to make ends meet and be able to attract highly talented new generation into the teaching profession. Earlier this year, a group of teachers gathered in Phnom Penh to find ways to establish a rate that they consider to be a living wage. The Cambodian Independent Teachers' Association (CITA), which has more than 10,000 members, along with the opposition Cambodian National Rescue Party (CNRP) had campaigned for teachers to earn \$250/month. A 2012 report by Volunteer Services Overseas (VSO) shows that low pay is the top cause of teacher dissatisfaction in Cambodia. About 67 percent of teachers must take a second job to make a living, according to the report.¹⁸ The low salaries paid to those teachers drive down the quality of education.

Despite notable improvement in access to education in the past two decades, Cambodia continues to struggle with improving the quality of education and extending the development effort beyond basic education. In the fifth mandate, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport has set out the eight priority reforms of 2014-2018 to restore the quality of national education in Cambodia as follow:¹⁹

1. Strengthening financial and state property management
2. Strengthening staff management
3. Strengthening all types of examination
4. Establishing a think tank for education
5. The Reformation of higher education
6. Improving quality and efficiency of educational services
7. Youth development of technical and soft skills
8. The reformation of physical education and sports

It is too early to assess the outcome of these deep priority reforms set out to improve the education sector, but the most visible initiative taken by MoEYS to stamp out the cheating and bribery-ridden grade 12 national exams on August 4-5, 2014 was hailed a success by the government. This necessary overhaul to strengthen quality education for high schools seniors during the final year exams cut the pass rate for the nationwide examination from 87 percent in 2013 to a low 25.7 percent in 2014. This abysmal result at high schools highlights the issue of education quality in Cambodia. There is a real need to improve teaching and learning at all levels. The road ahead to eliminate the culture of cheating and corruption in national exams with strict rules and oversights will be arduous because of the fixed mindset of the students and

¹⁵ UNESCO based on geographic regions established by MoEYS

¹⁶ The Cambodia Daily, August 27, 2014, *Report Calls for Foreign Teacher Trainers, High Salaries.*

¹⁷ The Cambodia Daily, August 22, 2014, *Hun Sen Announced Raises for Teachers and Nurses.*

¹⁸ The Cambodia Daily, April 19, 2014, *Low Salaries Stifle Education Reform Efforts.*

¹⁹ MoEYS

the low wage of the teachers, university lecturers, and educational administrators.

Ensuring high quality basic Education for All remains the priority of the government, but in the long term, the development of quality higher education will be a key to economic growth and sustainable development. Higher education is often cited as a potential contributor to getting people out of poverty, inequality, and other broader social ills. Cambodia has witnessed a swift and substantial expansion of higher education institutions (HEIs) during the last decade. At present, according to the latest figure from the Cambodian Department of Higher Education there are 39 public and 66 private HEIs with the gross enrolment rate of over 250,000 students. There are substantial reports that many private university owners are more interested in profit than producing qualified human capital. Revenue and profitability are their major concerns, often at the expense of quality.²⁰

In today's markets, a functioning educational system needs to meet the expectation of the ASEAN business community. Employers are asking for more critical thinking skills and creativity, ability to work as a team player, English language and a proactive attitude. Clearly the present educational system in Cambodia is not producing the types of graduates that the business community covets, which means that there is a human capital gap which must be closed by increasing the capacities of graduates. Numerous studies by CAMFEBA²¹ 2008, UNDP 2011, World Bank 2014, and businesses documented that Cambodian university graduates are not armed with the right set of skills required by the employers. Too often schools in Cambodia focus on memorization and the accumulation of facts, but this does not create employees with analytical thinking skills who are capable of creatively solving problems or generating innovative programs. There is also a strong focus on business in universities, but to support a diversified economy, there must be more qualified graduates in science, social sciences, mathematics, and engineering.

There is a concern that Cambodia is not well prepared for ASEAN integration in 2015. A low number of skilled workers and a gap between industry's needs and the competency of the graduates characterize the present state of the Cambodian labor market. This is because of a lack of sufficient financial incentives to government advisors, a scarcity of think tanks, a culture rife with plagiarism, and the poor results of institutions for higher education (which may be the fault of lazy students, the institutions themselves or both). According to the Asian Development Bank annual report in 2012, 62% of employers complained that graduates from vocational training lacked the required skills, while 73% of employers were dissatisfied with university graduates.²²The report also noted that overall economic growth remains high due to a strong manufacturing sector, but noted that the lack of skilled human resources was hampering growth in the Kingdom and will cause economic slowdown in the long run. This is because firms need to bring in more expensive foreign managers with it being estimated that a mere 20% of managers were Khmer.²³

Another glaring problem seems to be a general lack of curiosity on the part of students and graduates; there seems to be no motivating desire to personally investigate something, which does not seem right. Furthermore, students are not inclined to do non-required reading

²⁰ The Phnom-Penh Post, April 20, 2012, Cambodia's Sinking Higher Education System.

²¹ The Cambodian Federation of Employers and Business Associations

²² The Phnom Penh Post, 12 April 2012, ADB says staff a priority

²³ The Phnom Penh Post, 12 April 2012, ADB says staff a priority

to broaden their thinking or challenge their accepted assumptions. It is the elephant in the room - the mindset of students and many others towards the value of education and critical thinking.²⁴

Recommendations

To turn the pressing challenges of Cambodia's current education system into opportunities, here are the main recommendations:

- High quality education system is expensive. Invest more in education by increasing budget allocation and percentage of GDP for education comparable to other ASEAN Member States (figure should be between 4-6 percent of GDP).
- Teachers, university lecturers, and educational administrators are poorly trained and paid. Invest in training and provide them a living wage to attract better students, lessen the pull to accept graft or side payments, and to retain the most qualified candidates so that they don't leave for a better job in the private sector.
- Improve facilities and infrastructure. Make a push to build more schools in the most remote areas as well as the most under-served regions to encourage these students to embrace school and have a brighter future. Schools must also address the needs of female students in the secondary programs so that there is safety, ease of transportation, and identifiable incentives that can be communicated to parents.
- Work with the business community to understand what types of graduates they want to hire and which skills are most in demand, so that there can be a higher percentage of Cambodian managers and give better economic payoffs to Khmer graduates in order to attract more investments.
- End the culture of cheating, accepting bribes, demanding small payments from students and all other forms of corruption.
- More money must be devoted to schools so that the poorest students don't have to choose between food or school materials or books. The students should have access to clean and comfortable classrooms that are not too hot or stifling. They need to be encouraged to read outside of class by having ready access to interesting and inviting libraries, free use of school computers with internet access, and special financial incentives for the ones who perform best.
- Investment in research and innovation technology is necessary for meeting the demand of a knowledge-based society. Make research a core mission within universities.²⁵
- Promote the use of English as an international business language at schools, universities, and the work place.
- Since Cambodia is committed to being a part of ASEAN, students must be given more information about the ASEAN community and how these changes affect them in Cambodia as well as being made aware of the opportunities that lie ahead with ASEAN integration.

²⁴*Progress and Challenges of Education in Cambodia Today*, 2012, by Pou Sovachana

²⁵ Scoping Study: Research Capacities of Cambodia's Universities, The Development Research Forum in Cambodia, 2010.

Conclusion

The AEC's implementation in 2015 and beyond will transform Cambodia and other Member States into a regional market with the free flow of goods, services, skilled labor, and capital. If Cambodia is to achieve the lofty goal of full integration into ASEAN, it is imperative for the country to establish a high quality and innovative education system with equal access to learning for all citizens. For Cambodia, ASEAN community integration serves as an opportunity to create partnerships and to strengthen human capacity building. However, it is important for the country to build up its domestic capacity before engaging with others. A common concern emerges that ASEAN integration presents a substantial risk when Cambodia has a low quality education for most people. Other Member States such as Singapore, Thailand, and Malaysia will take advantage of this and get the better job opportunities. Furthermore, investment will be directed towards places with a better-educated work force. At this time, building and creating a "knowledge based society"²⁶ becomes ever more urgent and more important for Cambodia. The provision of quality education for ALL is the answer to fighting poverty and inequality and spurring lasting progress. As a consequence of quality education, the living standard of the Cambodians will be significantly improved and socio economic development will be sustainable and inclusive.

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“PROSPECTS FOR CHINA-CAMBODIA RELATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF CHINA AND ASEAN RELATIONS”

**A Public Lecture by Zhu Zhenming
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**At the Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace
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China attaches great importance to developing ties with ASEAN

China and ASEAN countries are linked by the same mountains and rivers and face each other across the sea. Friendly history of exchanges between China and ASEAN countries can be traced to ancient times. After founding of the People's Republic of China, China established diplomatic relations with Vietnam, Indonesia, Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos. China established diplomatic relations with Malaysia in 1974, which is a member of ASEAN. Henceforth, China began to develop relations with ASEAN members. But during the period of cold war, China-ASEAN relations also underwent tortuous process.

Since China started the process of reform and opening up to the outside world in December 1978, great changes have taken place in China's political and economic situation and foreign relations. China re-adjusted its policies towards Southeast Asia and actively promoted development between China and Southeast Asia.

The Chinese government always takes ASEAN as its priority in China's diplomacy. China creates numerous "firsts" in developing China-ASEAN relations. China is the first non-ASEAN country to accede to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia, the first to build a strategic partnership with ASEAN, the first to launch FTA negotiations with ASEAN, which is the world's largest FTA between developing countries. China is also the first country outside ASEAN to support the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone.

In addition, the Chinese leaders have visited to ASEAN frequently. Last year the Chinese new leaders, President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang successively visited ASEAN in one month. It is a rare case in China's foreign exchanges. It also demonstrates ASEAN occupies quite an important position in China's neighboring diplomacy.

Why China wants to develop important relations with ASEAN? The reasons are as follows:

Firstly, neighboring areas are always a priority in China's diplomacy. According to China's foreign policy, "neighborhood is crucial to its security, development and prosperity," and "developing countries are the foundation for China's diplomacy." ASEAN is in neighborhood of developing countries. China's policy of building good-neighborly relations with ASEAN is by no means an expedient measure, but China's long-term and consistent strategic choice.

Secondly, China and ASEAN economies are strongly complementary. Culturally, two sides have common cultural values.

Thirdly, historically both suffered imperialist aggression and their people carried out struggle against imperialist aggression and for independence and liberation. The Chinese people and ASEAN people have common destiny.

Fourthly, China and ASEAN countries enjoy long history of friendly contact with profound traditional friendship.

Fifthly, China and ASEAN are neighbors and enjoy geographical proximity. The better relations with neighbors can assure of development. This is a simple philosophical principle from ancient China, which China always follows.

China -ASEAN relations continue to expand and deepen

With the joint efforts of both sides, China-ASEAN relations constantly expand and deepen and both sides have benefited from this relation. Particularly since China-ASEAN established strategic cooperative partnership for peace and prosperity in the recent decade, China-ASEAN relations have reached a stage of maturity, in which cooperation between two sides has entered fast lane.

China has not only built a strategic partnership with ASEAN, but also has upgraded comprehensive strategic partnership with ASEAN. China and ASEAN have maintained frequent high-level contacts. Chinese leaders have attended all the previous China-ASEAN Summits.

In January 2010, China-ASEAN Free Trade Area (CAFTA) was established as scheduled, and zero tariff treatment was provided for more than 90% of the products exchanged between China and ASEAN. According to the agreement, China and four new ASEAN members, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam, will join China-ASEAN Free Trade Area in 2015.

From China's side, establishment of the China-ASEAN Free Trade Area is a major event in relations between China and ASEAN. It is a historic breakthrough in East Asian economic cooperation and has important significance in politics and economy.

In recent 10 years, China-ASEAN trade has grown fast. In 2013, two-way trade reached 443 billion US dollars, a six-time increase comparing to 2003, and China has become the largest trading partner of ASEAN, while ASEAN is China's 3rd largest trading partner.

China-ASEAN mutual investment has kept growing, cumulative investment is more than 100 billion USD, up by four times comparing to 2003. Two-way investment reached 12 billion USD in 2013, in which China's investment to ASEAN reached 5.74 billion USD and ASEAN's investment to China reached 8.35 billion USD. China's investment to ASEAN will increase further.

China-ASEAN exchanges have greatly expanded. The number of mutual visits made by both peoples reached 15 million in 2013. China is the second largest source of inbound tourists for ASEAN. Every week there are over 1,000 flights between China and ASEAN.

Moreover, China-ASEAN has a lot of cooperation mechanism, and cooperation fields include agriculture, transportation, energy, information and communication, civil aviation, science and technology, environmental protection, intellectual property rights, ocean shipping, culture, education and tourism, disease prevention and control, and so on. The cooperation has yielded fruitful results.

China's policy toward ASEAN and prospects for China-ASEAN relations

We believe that overall situation in China- ASEAN relations are sound. There is no denying that there are still disturbing factors that affect relations between China and ASEAN, such as the dispute in the South China Sea between China and some countries, changes of domestic

situation in some countries affect bilateral relations, some problems in economic cooperation between China and some countries and so on. Of course, it is not the mainstream of China-ASEAN relation, and it should not and cannot affect overall China-ASEAN relations.

Chinese new government and new leadership highly value China's relations with ASEAN and put some new thinking for promoting development of bilateral relations. The new ideas of "China-ASEAN community of common destiny" put by President Xin Jinping when he visited Indonesia in October 2013 received widely attention by ASEAN Member States and international community.

Moreover, China leadership put emphasis on building Maritime Silk Road, constructing Bangladesh, China, India, Myanmar Economic Corridor, building Upgrade Version of China-ASEAN Free Trade Area, creating Diamond 10 Year of China-ASEAN relations, "2+7 cooperation framework", and so on. These proposals are for realizing a wide-range, in-depth, high-level and all-round China-ASEAN cooperation in the next decade.

In order to promoting development of China-ASEAN relations, China takes "three insurances" as principles to develop relations with ASEAN. That is to adhere to prioritizing the good-neighborly and friendly cooperation with ASEAN in its peripheral diplomacy, adhere to consolidating strategic partnership with ASEAN and adhere to conducting friendly consultations and mutually beneficial cooperation to properly handle differences and problems with some members of ASEAN, eliminate interference and promote the China-ASEAN relations to a new level.

On the South China Sea dispute, recently, minister Wang Yi, Chinese ministry of foreign affairs, has proposed the use "dual-track" approach to address the concerned countries directly through friendly consultations and negotiations in a peaceful way, so that peace and stability in the South China Sea can be jointly maintain by China and ASEAN countries.

At present, China is implementing the above proposals and ideas. When these proposals and ideas come true, China-ASEAN relations also will turn a new page. We look forward to this day coming.

Development of China-Cambodian relations

Cambodia is China's near neighbor. China's tie with Cambodia has a long history. Bilateral friendship between China and Cambodian has dated back to ancient times. Chinese people know Cambodia long before. 700 years ago, a Chinese official Zhou Daguan as Chinese a special envoy of the emperor came to Cambodia, which was called Zhen La according to Chinese ancient record. He stayed in Zhen La, namely Khmer Empire, for one year.

After returned to China in 1297, he wrote a book and detailed records what he saw in Zhen La. This book makes Chinese and foreigners knew ancient Cambodia. Particularly, there were precise record of Angkor's scope, scale, size, people's life, etc... Through this book, foreign explorers found site of Angkor Wat in 19th century, which led to its glorious restoration. Up to today, this book remains a rare resource that people understand ancient history of Cambodia. This is also an important event in China-Cambodian relations.

After peace achieved in 1993 in Cambodia, friendly cooperative relations between China-Cambodia have developed rapidly.

Chinese evaluation of China-Cambodian relations

Since diplomatic relations between China and Cambodia established in 1958, bilateral relations have lasted for a long time, have been moving forward and made great achievements. Since Cambodia realized peace in 1993, China-Cambodian relations have entered a period of stable, sound rapid, and overall development. Exchanges and cooperation between two sides are becoming closer and closer. These growing ties have passed down from one generation to another.

Chinese leaders have made some comments on China-Cambodian relations. As early as 2000, Chinese former president Jiang Zemin said, "We believe China-Cambodian relations will be strengthened by joint efforts, become model of equal and mutual benefits, sincere cooperation between big and small countries."

Back in 2004, former Chinese President Hu Jintao pointed out when he met Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen visited in China that since entering new era, China-Cambodian relations have continued to develop, two countries have become good friends, partners that could trust each other through closed cooperation.

In 2012 former Chinese President Hu Jintao visited Cambodia, he said that China and Cambodia are traditional neighbors of friendship, stressing that "the good-neighborly ties of friendship between the two countries are forged and carefully nurtured by the older generations of leaders," and "have withstood the test of time and international vicissitudes and moved forward steadily."

Chinese new leader, President Xi Jinping pointed out that China-Cambodian relations were "the model of friendly coexistence and close cooperation between countries." He also noted that China and Cambodia were "good neighbors, friends, partners and brothers."

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang met with Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen in Beijing in 2013. In talking, Li Keqiang said that "China and Cambodia are true friends and good partners."

The above comments on China-Cambodian relations reflect the mood of Chinese government and its people.

Various cooperation between China and Cambodia

In politics, both sides reached important consensus and establish a comprehensive strategic partnership of cooperation. The two sides establish an inter-governmental coordination committee to coordinate and deepen cooperation in various areas.

Exchanges and cooperation between the two-sided governments, parliaments and political parties promote communication and coordination at various levels.

In recent years, the two sides enhance coordination and cooperation in international and regional affairs, especially both sides jointly endeavor to push forward the resolution of the South China Sea dispute through bilateral mechanisms and peaceful negotiation.

With good political relations, the two countries are deepening their economic and trade relations. The level of trade and economic cooperation between two countries constantly upgrade. Based on China's statistics, bilateral trade reached 3.7 billion USD in 2013. On investment, China's cumulative investment contracts reached more than 9.6 billion USD in end of 2013 based on Cambodian statistics. China has become the top investor in Cambodia.

Other cooperation areas, such as agriculture, transportation, infrastructure, energy, communications and water conservancy etc., have made progress.

The two sides believe that China-Cambodian relations are in best stage of development since the establishment of diplomatic relation.

Reasons of development of China-Cambodian relations

Generally speaking, main reasons of stable, sound and overall development of China-Cambodian relations are as follows:

(1) Ties between China and Cambodia have long history; traditional friendship has been passed down from generation to generation.

(2) China and Cambodia has no disputes in territory and territorial waters, emerged problems and troubles are relatively easy to handle.

(3) Friendship between China-Cambodia jointly forged and nurtured by Chairman Mao Zedong, Premier Zhou Enlai and other members of the older generation of the Chinese leadership and His Majesty King-Father Norodom Sihanouk. The friendship has gone through test of 55 years since two sides established diplomatic relations.

(4) Cambodia royal family makes important contributions to development of China-Cambodian relations. King-Father Norodom Sihanouk had close ties with Chinese three generations of leaders, and regarded China as his second hometown. The great friendship crosses more than half a century. In China, Majesty King-Father Norodom Sihanouk became most familiar foreign leader to Chinese people and has been respected by Chinese people. Chinese people know and understand Cambodia well through Majesty King-Father Norodom Sihanouk, from that, Chinese people increase friendly feelings to Cambodia and its people.

(5) China and Cambodia mutually support and trust in major issues as well as enhance both unity and cooperation. Chinese President Xi Jinping said that China-Cambodia relation was the model of friendly coexistence and close cooperation between countries when he met Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen in Boao of China's Hainan Province on April 7, 2014. In response, Premier Hun Sen reaffirmed that enhancing the comprehensive strategic partnership is his country's political choice.

(6) China has respected Cambodian development path that Cambodia has chosen and adhered to principle of non- intervention in internal affairs, gained trust from the Cambodian government and its people.

(7) China will support Cambodian development and supports China-Cambodian relations. Chinese people appreciate efforts of Cambodia for maintaining China-Cambodian relations and China ASEAN relations regardless of external pressures. From China's internet we find out that Chinese netizens are almost one-sided to support for developing China-Cambodian relations. It indicates that development of China-Cambodian relations has deep foundation of popular will.

(8) China's sincere assistance to Cambodia promotes development of China-Cambodian relations. China has provided some assistance that it can go on for a long time. The assistance without any extra political conditions is beneficial to Cambodian development, particularly improvement of infrastructure. This has gained high evaluation from Cambodian government and its people.

(9) Both leaders have strategic vision and are good at grasping the overall situation of China-Cambodian relations. Even if there are problems, two sides can solve properly and avoid expansion of contradiction.

Problems and prospects for China-Cambodian relations

There are also some problems to be solved in China-Cambodian relations, such as communication and coordination between two sides' enterprises are not sufficiently in economic cooperation; few workers of Chinese enterprises in Cambodia are so lack of understanding of Cambodian laws, regulations, manners and customs, which produce negative effects; positive dissemination of China-Cambodian relations is not fully acceptable, and so on.

Given the above issues, I think we need to take some measures to resolve. For example, (1) both China and Cambodia should look at mainstream of China-Cambodian relations, grasping the overall situation of China-Cambodian relations (2) carefully implement consensus that two sides reached and action plan the two sides decided, (3) strengthen exchanges between both medias, (4) educate Chinese workers from Chinese enterprises in Cambodia to increase more knowledge about Cambodia, consciously abide by Cambodian rules and manners and customs, (5) cherish result of China-Cambodian relations, jointly maintain China-Cambodian friendship .

To sum up, there are great potential in development of China-Cambodian relations, future of China-Cambodian relations is bright.

“SEA OF INSECURITY: ASEAN AND SOUTH CHINA SEA CONFLICT RESOLUTION”

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Paper Submitted to Sub-Forum One: “Asia Calls for New Concept on Security”

**Organized by the Chinese People’s Association for Peace and Disarmament
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Since its formation in 1967, ASEAN has faced many political security challenges, externally, internally, and institutionally. This paper examines the challenges confronting the ASEAN Political Security Community on South China Sea (SCS) conflict, and contends that ASEAN centrality can prevail by enhancing community building and reliance on peaceful settlement of disputes. I have organized my topics of discussion into four sections: 1) ASEAN: from Formation toward a Rules-Based Organization (the ASEAN Charter), 2) The SCS Maritime Challenges, 3) In Search for Solutions, and 4) Conclusion: The Path to Regional Peace, Stability, and Security.

ASEAN Forms Formation toward a Rules-Based Organization (the ASEAN Charter)

For many centuries, Southeast Asia has been a part of the world whose fortunes were not only shaped by its local habitants but also by external powers. In the sixth and seven centuries, Southeast Asia “was a theater for the intersection of Indian and Chinese influences” when the trading empire of Sri Vijaya rose to power (Short History of Southeast Asia by Peter Church, p. 15). Later, Southeast Asia experienced rivalry and conflict for economic and political control with European colonial powers (French Indochina: Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam; British: Myanmar, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei; Netherlands: Indonesia; Spanish and US: Philippines). The only country in Southeast Asia that did not face colonial occupation was Thailand, in those days known as Siam. In the Second World War, Britain and the USA created the “Supreme Allied Commands in Southeast Asia” to identify the region in military and political terms (The politics of ASEAN: An introduction to Southeast Asian regionalism by Estralla Solidum, p. 5).

When ASEAN was founded in 1967, the cold war had already heated up. The USA and the former USSR battled, mostly and indirectly, in Vietnam. With its formation, ASEAN tried to create stability in a quite unstable political environment both externally and internally. The founding states of the association (Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand) wanted to overcome their differences believing that cooperation would help stabilize the region. The main aim of the association was “to *promote regional peace and stability through abiding respect for justice and the rule of law in the relationship among countries of the region and adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter*” (Bangkok Declaration).

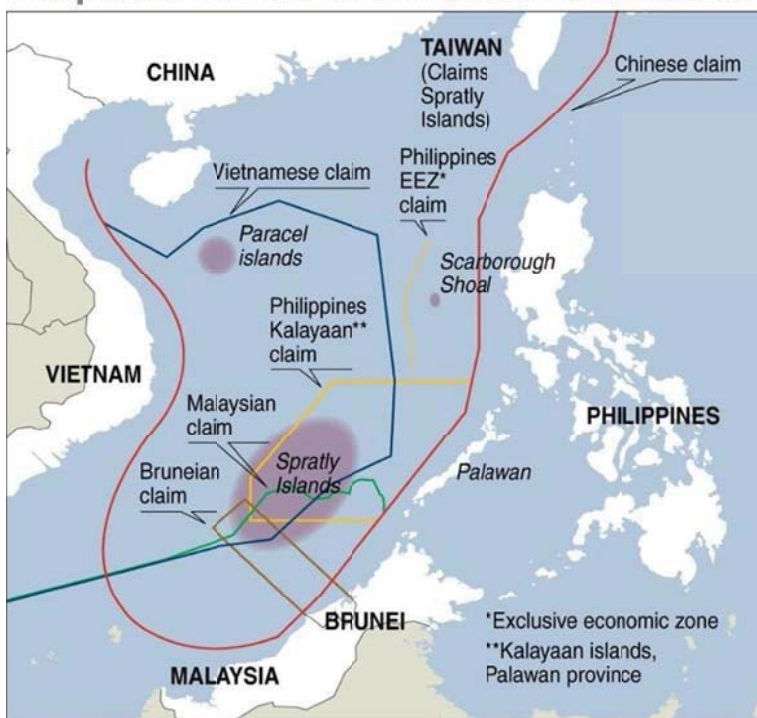
The end of the Cold War (the end of 1980s) encouraged ASEAN to open its doors to the admission of new members (Brunei in 1984, Cambodia in 1999, Laos in 1997, Myanmar in 1997, and Vietnam in 1995) based on the hope that an increased population would translate to economic strength (expansion and trade liberalization). The ASEAN Charter entered into force in December 2008 providing for the first time a constitutional base for increased cooperation and unity. The new political commitment at the top level is to unite ASEAN and its Member States under “One Vision, One Identity, and One Caring and Sharing Community” (ASEAN Moto). The near future primary goal of ASEAN is to

establish a political, economic, and socio-cultural community by the end of 2015. The ASEAN Member States have made great progress towards the goal of living together in a region of peace, security and stability, sustained economic growth, shared prosperity and social progress. ASEAN has become one of the most successful groupings credited by preventing strife and promoting trade and investment. Kofi Annan, former Secretary General of the United Nations, when he visited the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta, Indonesia (March 5, 2010) said in his remarks, "ASEAN is one of the most successful organizations which I look up to and admire."

ASEAN's unity is significant because collectively as a bloc, the ten Member States have a population of more 620 million, a market with a GDP of more than \$2.2 trillion and occupy a prime position in the political stage. Economic relations between China and ASEAN are growing. In 2013, total Sino-Southeast Asian trade hit an all-time high of US\$443.6 billion, an increase of 10.9 percent in 2012. China is ASEAN's largest trading partner, while ASEAN is China's third largest trading partner. However, a rising China presents both opportunities as well as challenges for Southeast Asia. Globally and regionally, China is an economic engine for growth and development in terms of trade, investment, and development assistance. This era of Sino-Southeast Asia relations is a golden era that brings prosperity and mutual peace. Yet, the dispute over the South China Sea can potentially disrupt this idyllic development (China-ASEAN ties: Soft power snagged in South China Sea by Lim Kheng Swe, RSIS September 6, 2014).

The SCS Maritime Challenges to ASEAN

Disputed claims in the South China Sea



Sources: D.Rosenberg/MiddleburyCollege/HarvardAsiaQuarterly/Phil gov't

AFP

The state of maritime security and safety in Southeast Asia has always been one of the major concerns of both regional states and the international community at large (Maritime Security in Southeast Asia by Rizal Sukma). Maritime security in Southeast Asia is clearly critical for promoting trade flows and ensuring the prosperity and stability of regional states. While China, Vietnam and Taiwan claim sovereignty over the Paracels, China has competing claims over Taiwan, Malaysia, Brunei, the Philippines, and Vietnam.

The South-China Sea is part of the Pacific Ocean extent on the southern territory of China's mainland and borders with Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam. This sea territory has been a place for dispute since

ancient times. ASEAN is facing many maritime challenges, which include Sea Lines of Communication's security, transnational maritime crime, marine resources security, maritime environment security. *But the most challenging issue is the maritime border dispute in ASEAN.*

A rising China is seeking to safe guard its sea-boundary claims, through which "China enjoys indisputable sovereignty over the South China Sea and the island. China's stand is based on historical facts and international law" (Foreign Ministry spokesperson Jiang Yu, September 2011, China warns India on South China Sea exploration projects). The SCS is one of China key interests. China claims about 90 percent of the SCS's 3.5 million square km waters. The sea provides 10 percent of global fish catch, carries 45 trillion in ship-borne trade a year and is rich in oil reserve energy (Reuters). China has since the beginning of the year required foreign fishing boats to get approval before entering waters that China claims as its own. Four ASEAN countries (Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Vietnam) and China have conflicting claims to jurisdiction of varying kinds over South China Sea. China wants to maintain peace and stability in the SCS by promoting the cooperation between and development of countries in the region. Based on the trade relations between China and ASEAN, the least China wants is any social or political discontent in its neighborhood.

However, the overlapping claims have lead to a series of confrontations, particularly between China and individual ASEAN claimant states. The competition for occupation of Paracels between China and Vietnam, for instance, led in 1974 to brief of PRC-South Vietnam armed confrontations, ending with Vietnam's expulsion from the conflicting zone. More dreadfully, in 1988, Vietnam and China also clashed over Spratly islands, resulting in sinking of several Vietnamese Vessels and loss of sixty four soldiers. China then occupied seven reefs and rocks in the Spratlys (Johnson South Reef Skirmish). And recently, in May 2014, the HYSY 981 oil-drilling rig began operating in waters near the Paracels Islands, which led to violent clashes between Chinese and Vietnamese government vessels and anti-China protest in Vietnam. It was one of the most threatening breakdowns in their relations since China fought a brief war with Vietnam in 1979 to retaliate against the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia. In mid-July, the Chinese fleet moved away from the area and the tension between China and Vietnam has been easing.

In 2012, the Philippines naval ship and China's patrol boats engaged in military stand-offs, accusing each other of illegal fishing and intruding into Scarborough Shoal. Frustrated with the slow pace of diplomacy, the Philippines, under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS of 1982) and supported by the U.S., has initiated international arbitration over the islands. China has decided not to participate in the hearings. If a negotiated agreement can't be reached, the ideal solution would be to resolve the dispute based on international laws and legal principles – the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and the 1988 Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Fixed Platforms located on the Continental Shelf. However, China is asserting its positions by claiming historical rights to these waters. And the disputes, which arise from claims based on different principles, are unlikely to be resolved. China refused to discuss the SCS conflict based on a "Three No" strategy: 'No' to internalization of the conflict, 'No' to multilateral negotiations, and 'No' to specification of China's territorial demands (China and the South China Sea Dispute by Valencia). However, China will continue its effort to communicate with the Philippines with a view to properly addressing the current situation. Malaysia and Brunei also claim small territories according to UNCLOS.

With regard to China's military rise and growing assertiveness and to counter the US engagement to assist Vietnam and the Philippines, Beijing has warned Washington to stay out of the SCS disputes and let the countries in the region resolve the issues bilaterally and by themselves. The U.S. has called on Beijing to use international law to clarify its territorial claims in the dispute area. Using its economic and political influence, China continues to choose one-on-one negotiations with rival claimants. At the East Asia Summit in Myanmar in November 2014, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang said that China and ASEAN need "peace and stability" but he also warned without mentioning the specific contested seas that "China's resolve to safeguard territorial sovereignty is clear."

The SCS issue has become one of the major challenges to ASEAN solidarity and unity. The dispute over the SCS has tested the loyalties of ASEAN between China, the United States and their ASEAN neighbors. Among the ten Member States, there are four claimant countries and six non-claimants. All ASEAN countries have different viewpoints based on divergent interests in the SCS. Among the non-claimant states, Indonesia and Singapore hold a neutral stance. Both countries expressed their concerns on affecting the freedom of navigation in the SCS. The remaining members, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Thailand, do not have immediate interest in the SCS but they want peace and stability. They all enjoy close friendship and cooperation with China, especially Cambodia.

Divided, the ten Member States are vulnerable against the pressure from the major powers. Staying united is in the best interest for ASEAN Member States to maintain regional peace, security, stability and prosperity and to resist interference at the hands of major powers. The key to achieving centrality lies with individual countries in ASEAN and what they want to achieve with each other and together as a group with external actors. Whether ASEAN and its Member States put regional interest at the forefront remains to be seen.

In Search of Solutions

Given the complexity of the claims - the issues of sovereignty, economic and geopolitics significance - the SCS disputes have the potential to trigger armed conflicts, or even more disastrously, inter-state war in East and Southeast Asia, if not properly managed and resolved.

In 1992, ASEAN issued a declaration calling for peaceful means in settling those disputes. In 2002 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, the ASEAN Member States concluded with China a Declaration on the Conduct (DOC) of Parties in the SCS. The document reaffirmed the ASEAN - China commitment to the peaceful resolution of jurisdictional and territorial disputes, to the freedom of navigation and over-flight, and to the exercise of self-restraint. The guidelines for the implementation of the DOC in 2011 had been adopted. Other mechanisms such as ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), East Asia Summit (EAS), ASEAN Defense Ministerial Meeting Plus (ADMM+), ASEAN Maritime Forum have been created to build trust, enhance peace, reconcile differences, and create a political and legal basis for negotiating the code of conduct (a legally binding document that outlines how territorial disputes in the South China Sea must be resolved) in the future. The real challenge ASEAN faces is the typical dilemma of collective action.

It is noteworthy to point out that from 2002 to 2012, instead of focusing on the all-out implementation of the agreed documents, the ASEAN claimants and China weren't in sync throughout. Efforts by ASEAN to craft a code of conduct (COC) to manage SCS tensions all but collapsed in 2012 at a summit chaired by Cambodia when the group failed to issue a joint statement for the first time. ASEAN has been trying to engage China with the rule based multinational framework to resolve the SCS dispute with peaceful means. It is

critically important that ASEAN could effectively move from a non-binding agreement DOC to a bidding COC (a set of binding principles such as the peaceful resolution of disputes with the conformity of international law) to try to contain and defuse the current tensions in SCS. Therefore *the earlier adoption of the COC is extremely important for ASEAN and China to promote and maintain peace, security and stability in the region.*

Conclusion: The Path to Regional Peace, Stability and Security

The aim of the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC) is “to ensure that people and Member States in the region live at peace with *one another* and with the world in a just, democratic and harmonious environment” (ASEAN Political-Security Community blueprint, 2009-2015). To achieve this, it requires ASEAN to strengthen intra-regional relationships among member countries of ASEAN (*‘one another’*), and the relationship between member countries and ‘the world’. Each individual country of ASEAN has a dual role to play in keeping peace and security not only among other ASEAN countries but also with external actors (in the SCS context, China and the US).

To build a regional security and prevent conflicts will not be easy considering ASEAN’s immense diversities and adversities. However, over time the chosen regional security architecture will need to foster and nurture a culture of dialogue and alliances with all stakeholders not only constrained by the strategic interests of the major powers. ASEAN Member States need new alliances to make peace and promote regional security and not old alliances to wage confrontations and hostilities. In this context, ASEAN needs to open up more and widen cooperation with the international communities especially with the middle powers such India, Japan, South Korea, Australia, etc... Together ASEAN countries should take initiatives to choose new approaches to maintain peace, stability and prosperity in the region, to enhance cooperation in the SCS and promote maritime security and safety, as well as freedom of navigation. Establishing regular ASEAN + 1 conferences or dialogues with other powerful neighbors to strengthen external engagements and reiterate the importance of ASEAN unity and solidarity.

If there is a lesson we can draw from successes elsewhere or from history, all parties (ASEAN and China) involved must solve the disputes by peaceful means, undertake diplomatic interventions, rule out the use or threat of force, and ‘honor’ the basic principles of ASEAN for inter-state relations known as the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation of Southeast Asia of 1976 (TAC) that include the following: 1) Mutual respect for the independence, sovereignty, equality, territorial integrity for all nations; 2) The right for every State to lead its national existence free from external interference, subversion or coercion; 3) Non interference in the internal affair of one another; 4) Settlement of differences or disputes by peaceful manner; 5) Renunciation of the threat or use of force; and 6) Effective cooperation among themselves as well as upholding the fundamental principles of the international laws.

Giving consideration to regional circumstances and major powers alliances, establishing mutual trust with China through constructive efforts and gradual expansion of multilateral security cooperation will be in the best interest of ASEAN’s long term diplomatic goal concerning the South China Sea conflict resolution. Both sides should work continuously and closely together to look for common ground and seek win-win solutions while acknowledging their differences. Each side must take on the larger challenge of transforming the flows of history from confrontation to coexistence for the mutual benefit of all and ensuring regional stability through peaceful means instead of seeking regional hegemony.

“THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE”

Pou Sothirak

Executive Director, Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace

Remarks Delivered during the Bali Civil Society Forum on Democratic Governance in the Twenty-First Century: The Role of Civil Society Bali, Indonesia, 8th - 10th October 2014

I am particularly delighted to be invited to this gathering to share my views on how civil society could make effective contributions to democratic governance.

Before I start, please allow me to extend my sincere appreciation to Pak Ketut Putra Erawan, Executive Director of the Institute for Peace and Democracy for his kind invitation and warm hospitality extended to me since my arrival to the beautiful island of Bali.

I would like to share my views on the important role civil society assumes in shaping democratic governance and how civil society instills trust, encourages tolerance, promotes cooperation and stimulates civic engagement so that democratic value can be enhanced in the context of a modern nation. I will then discuss some of the major challenges with respect to democratic governance in Cambodia and give some concluding thoughts on what would be a sensible way for CSOs and government to work together when addressing democratic governance.

In my view, any civil society whose sphere of action is independent of the state and is involved with democratic governance should act as an organized counterweight to the state, so that their capability in the process of promoting democratic governance can effectively energize resistance to any tyranny that might be imposed by a state.

To my knowledge, democratic governance is a principle whose application is crucial to any country which wants to achieve genuine democracy. Democratic governance brings forward the respect of human rights, the rule of law, civic participation in nation building, as well as transparent and accountable processes and effective state institutions.

It is therefore understood that the realization of true democracy requires all stakeholders – the state, civil society, political party or other form of civic group – to work together to enhance citizen participation, improved civic education, and promote more awareness and appreciation of democratic principles at the local as well as the national level.

Let me now turn to some of the challenges seen in Cambodia with relation to democratic governance as follows:

Since the Khmer Rouge era, Cambodia has undergone triple transitions, moving from a command economy to a free market system, from war to peace, and from authoritarian rule to gradual democracy. Since early 1990s, democratization and globalization have become the two essential challenges to the development of Cambodia.

After two decades of war, the first democratic-style election took place in May 1993 under the auspices of the United Nations.

Cambodia is now trying to re-establish itself as a democratic country with the fundamental respect of human rights, social justice, and rule of law. To support these efforts, the government of Cambodia unleashes national policy known as the Rectangular Strategy, now in its third phase, to secure the national goal of attaining long lasting peace, sustainable development, strengthened democratic institutions, protected national sovereignty, and

improved livelihoods for the people. Despite the government's serious commitment, Cambodia's biggest challenges are to overcome and improve such issues as weak democratic governance, under-developed economic institutions and extremely limited human resources. Today, Cambodia is at the crossroads of a difficult journey towards establishing democratic principles based on the respect for human rights and the rule of law.

In terms of democratic governance, Cambodia has done well in the maintenance of peace and internal security, but is still confronted with the glaring shortfalls in the application and implementation of the rule of law and human rights, hence hampering the progress of sound democratic principles. Much more needs to be done to ensure the emergence of democratic establishments, allowing the proliferation of civil society and promoting the influence of an independent media. The government should continue to ensure that state institutions are functioning without the abuse of power and position. Cambodia still needs to work swiftly to get rid of corruption and avoid all together the inequality before the law and impunity for the rich and powerful. If Cambodian society is to move towards true democracy, government should strive correct flaws in law enforcement and back up the principle of "check and balance" operations among all state's institutions. The Judiciary should uphold its independence and impartially protect the rights and freedom of all Cambodian citizens.

Currently, deep national reforms are needed across all public sectors to forge common interest of the nation with equal balance to maintain the liberty of the people.

Some to the major challenges that we still see happening in Cambodia include how to foster good governance to allow society to form itself to make collective decisions and take joint action for the benefit of its citizens. Although the Cambodian government has been diligently working to improve governance in the past 20 years, it still has a ways to go yet before all citizens can really benefit from a fair and equitable democratic society. Despite relatively high economic growth, Cambodia still has much to do to ensure that its development challenges can be met satisfactory, particularly how to make economic policy more sustainable and inclusive, enhance public services especially in education and health care, improve transparency and accountability, human rights, social equity and alleviate widespread poverty.

A major setback is the pervasiveness of land conflicts with rapid growth of land grabbing and renewed wave of violence in 2014.¹ Accordingly, an NGO called the Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights (LICADO) has emphasized that land is the essential means to provide people with the basic requirements for a decent life and land grabbing creates detrimental effects that could potentially ruin life and impose long-term hardships on the affected population. LICADO has called on the government to act and end the epidemic of land-grabbing. Notwithstanding the efforts made by the government in land reforms, land grabbing continues to put stiff burdens on the population, especially the marginalized segment of the society.

The case of corruption in Cambodia remains a stumbling block to national development and obstructs the progress of democratic institutions. Its multi-dimensional effects have permeated almost every aspect of Cambodian's public life.² Corruption in Cambodia is well entrenched in a system of patronage with petty and grand forms of corruption widespread among the rich and powerful. Common people in Cambodia can confirm that corruption is a persistent occurrence in everyday life and keeps increasing. In

¹2014 Brings a New Wave of Cambodian Land Conflicts, statement by LICADO, available at: <http://www.licadho-cambodia.org/pressrelease.php?perm=342> (accessed on 6 October, 2014)

² Overview of Corruption in Cambodia, report by U4 Anti-corruption Resource Center, available at: <http://www.u4.no/publications/overview-of-corruption-in-cambodia/> (accessed on 6 October, 2014)

2013, Transparency International ranked Cambodia 160 out of 177 countries with a score of 20 (0 is highly corrupt and 100 is very clean).³ Despite keen efforts made by the government to deepen good governance and accountability of public institutions and tackle all forms of corruption, the ranking reconfirms that the public sector remains highly corrupted with a weak system of checks and balance, ineffective accountability mechanisms, and limited public participation in the process of development. Unless government can come up with a vigorous mechanism to stamp out corruption and be able to dilute the colluding effect between and among those in power, civil servants, and businessmen, and rectify the patronage system by putting public interests ahead of self-interest, corruption will remain a major impediment to national growth and will prevent democratic principle from thriving.

Another major challenge to democratic governance in Cambodia is the rule of law. While the need to have good laws is important, ensuring proper implementation of the established laws carries even more vital weight. Although there are plenty of laws in place in Cambodia, the process of enforcing these legislative regulations remain a serious problem due to such factors as lack of capable and honest human resource to see to it that the court is truly independent, transparent, and accountable. There is ambiguity, with conflicting and overlapping laws that makes enforcement difficult. Vested administrative practice, lack of professional and serious commitment to enforce the law against wrongful and abusive public officers, coupled with the die-hard mentality toward improvement against corrupt practice contribute to a sever lack of confidence by the general public toward the judicial system.

For Cambodia to achieve social cohesiveness and overcome the enormous difficulties that confront the legal system, there are several key tasks that must be seriously pursued.

To start, consideration for drafting new laws should be as simple as possible, easy for common people to understand, without ambiguity or conflicting nuances, and taking into account the harmonization and consistency with existing laws and regulations. If Cambodia is to move towards true democracy, then all three branches – the executive, the legislative and the judiciary – should work harder to correct flaws in law enforcement and back up the principle of “check and balance” operations among all state institutions. The Judiciary should uphold its independence and impartially protect the rights and freedom of all Cambodian citizens. Another important aspect in this endeavor is to prevent political interference and avoid any ill-practice when making the court adjudication and ensure that all Cambodian citizens regardless of their status and background receive fair, equitable, and impartial judicial service.

Let me now give my concluding remarks on the role of Civil Society in democratic governance.

In a modern society, a country in the pursuit of sound democratic governance should take into account strong national values and the respect of human dignity. In so doing, a country must pay due consideration to its own history, local realities and learn from the experience of other countries. Moreover, it would be wise for the state to engage other non-state actors, especially CSOs, to instill democratic values in the nation-building process.

There have been convincing factors that civil society’s participation in democratic governance is crucial to develop national ownership of the country’s development processes.

CSOs can and should participate with the government by contributing to practical policy and conducting non-biased advocacy work to mobilize civic activities to promote

³ See Corruption Perceptions Index of Cambodia, available at: <http://ticambodia.org/index.php/news/pressrelease/corruption-perceptions-index-cpi-2013> (accessed 6 October, 2014)

democracy with due respect to the rule of law. It is, however, counterproductive if CSOs exert its scope of influence to act as counterweight without regards to the shared responsibility with the state institutions in seeking for effective democratic governance.

CSOs need to be able to develop effective engagement strategy, possess required capacities in policy and advocacy with a clear message, while working collaboratively with state institutions to deliver good governance. If good relationships and effective coordination can be formalized and sustained, CSOs can no doubt contribute to the making of more effective democratic governance.

While it is the prerogative for the government to assume a primary role in ensuring how democratic governance can be best developed and implemented, the state should promote active and effective civil societies by allowing them to bring new initiatives to the forefront and suggest different methods of political participation to build a solid foundation for democratic governance. Government should understand that civil societies can play a complementary role with state institutions to encourage the habit of trust and support people's participation for effective, responsive and accountable governance.

There is no doubt that CSOs have a critical role to play in democratic governance. But their mandate will not be successful unless they can strike a balance between being agents for positive change and being provocateurs when rallying civic actions to uphold democratic governance, especially when dealing with the complicated situations that may involve the abuse of power by the state.

“THAI FOREIGN POLICY SINCE THAILAND’S 2014 MILITARY COUP: IMPLICATIONS FOR CAMBODIA”

**A Public Lecture by Dr. Paul Chambers
Director of Research and Lecturer, Institute of Southeast Asian Affairs, Chiang
Mai University**

**At the Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace
Phnom Penh, Thursday, 27th November 2014**

Introduction

On May 22, 2014, a military coup overthrew the elected government of Yingluck Shinawatra. The junta immediately voided most of the 2007 constitution, dissolved the Senate, and began to make plans toward ushering in yet another permanent constitution, all designed to establish a new and lasting regime that would sustain Thailand’s arch-royalist order. Yet what has been the foreign policy of Thailand since the coup? How is it different than before the putsch? What are the implications of Thailand’s post-coup foreign policy for Cambodia? This study will address these questions. In short, the new foreign policy pursued by the Gen. Prayuth Chan-ocha regime seeks first to extend Thai military security along its borders and abroad. Second, borrowing from the Shinawatras before him, Prayuth’s foreign policy aims to boost economic cooperation with neighbors such as Cambodia. Third, the Thai coup group is hoping that its foreign policy will produce rapid domestic dividends of popular support, and is thus eager for cooperation with neighbors such as Hun Sen. Nevertheless, the Thai junta remains suspicious of the Cambodian Prime Minister given the latter’s past association with Thaksin Shinawatra. Thailand’s post-coup foreign policy is of utmost relevance for Cambodia given that Thailand’s military will most likely remain quite powerful both directly and behind the scenes for many years to come. Before examining Thai policy toward Cambodia since the coup, we need to look at the Thai worldview of the international community; the factors which influence Thai foreign policy, the actors who guide Thai foreign policy, and a brief history of Thai-Cambodian relations.

Worldview, Factors Influencing Thai Foreign Policy, and Shapers of Foreign Policy

To understand the Thai elite world-view towards other countries, one needs to comprehend the notion of the geo-body of a nation. This concept, coined by Thai historian Thongchai Winichakul, is defined as a “man-made territorial definition” which is not just the space and territory under a nation, but also the concepts, practices, and institutions related to it, that defines the territoriality of the nation (Thongchai 1994, 17). Thongchai also emphasizes the geo-body’s need to differentiate what he calls “we-ness” from “other-ness.” The latter reflects a negative national social construct which is quintessentially xenophobic in nature. Fear, disdain and even hatred of foreigners helps to build a united national identity—the patriotic “We-ness” which glues the Thai nation-state together. Moreover, nationalism can become a state-driven phenomenon that helps to propel “We-ness”.

Thailand’s elite worldview centers upon the current king; the mythology of generous, Thai, Buddhist monarchs; Members of the royal family and aristocrats who gain legitimacy by their proximity to the palace; the Privy Council; Thailand’s entrenched military and civilian bureaucratic elites; and business leaders. The perception idealizes a

Buddhist-monarchical kingdom unpolled by foreigners; much more civilized than its neighbors; and striving to protect and even extend the Thai ethos as reflected in territoriality and continuing independence. Foreign policy is an instrument of this worldview.

This perception has long overshadowed Thailand's relations with Cambodia. From 1431 until 1863, the kingdom of Cambodia was almost always a vassal subject of Siam (Thailand). Following Cambodia's independence from France in 1953 (which Thailand had championed), Bangkok supported Washington in both plotting the overthrow of Cambodian Prime Minister Prince Norodom Sihanouk and later, in 1979 to 1989, the ouster of a Vietnamese-installed regime. Only as the Cold War began to end in 1988 did Thailand and Cambodia experience a thawing in ties. However, support for the genocidal Khmer Rouge guerrillas by Thai businesspeople and the Thai military as well as Thai involvement in a 1994 coup attempt in Cambodia—purportedly financed by businessmen working for Thaksin Shinawatra—(Adams, 2014) reinforced Cambodia's suspicions of Thailand's true intentions.

Since 1992, when a loose variant of democracy swept across Thailand, seven factors have tended to influence Thai foreign policy. These include first, national security, which implies the territorial preservation or extension of the Kingdom of Thailand. Second, there is nationalism, which draws upon emotional legitimacy to galvanize popular support around a foreign policy objective. Third, there is military security, which looks to potential external threats. Most recently this has come in the form of counter-terrorism or counter-insurgency efforts. Fourth there is border security. This factor has been a crucial area of concern because Thailand has yet to demarcate all of its borders with Cambodia, Myanmar and Lao PDR. Fifth, energy security is important for Thailand. Indeed, the search for oil, coal, and hydropower abroad has helped to fuel Thailand's growing economy. Sixth, economic security is fundamental to Thai foreign policy. Such security can be seen in the form of increasing Thai investment and trade in mainland Southeast Asia. Finally (seventh), individual business interests have sometimes been a major element in Thai foreign policy. This can be seen in the foreign policy of Prime Ministers Thaksin Shinawatra and Chavalit Yongchaiyudh in particular.

One interesting aspect of recent Thai foreign policy is the number of actors involved in formulating it. Indeed, from 1992 until the 2014 coup, ten institutional players could be identified as shaping, guiding and helping to implement the country's external relations. Some of these players have more formal roles than others. Table 1 below lists them:

Table 1: The Veto Players in Thai Foreign Policy

Institution	Formal Hierarchy	Informal Hierarchy	Mission in Foreign Policy
<i>After May 22, 2014: National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO)</i>	1	2	<i>Oversee Thailand's polity for the King</i>
1. Office of Prime Minister	1	3	Formal overseer
2. National Security Council	2	4	All aspects of security as directed by Prime Minister
3. Ministry of Foreign Affairs	3	5	All aspects of foreign relations as directed by Prime Minister
4. Ministry of Defense	4.	2.5	Military and border defense
5. Ministry of Finance	5	4	Macro-economic Security

6. Ministry of Commerce	6	6	Macro-economic security (trade)
Ministry of Energy	7	7	
7. Defense Council – ARMY, Supreme Command, Air Force, Navy	8	2.5	Military and border defense
8. National Intelligence Agency	9	5	Conducts intelligence on Thais and foreign subjects
9. Judiciary (Constitution Court)	10	3	Can adjudge the legality of foreign policy decisions made by the executive branch.
10. Parliament (Parliamentary Committees)	11	8	Monitor the executive branch; Must give its consent to treaties negotiated by the executive branch
11. AMBIGUOUS – PALACE & PRIVY COUNCIL	0	1	Above politics

This table indicates that many state-based players are involved in Thai foreign policy and each is hierarchically situated, both formally and informally. Where the formal and informal hierarchies are distinct, the result in Thailand is an informal state parallel to the formal one—a parallel state. Thus, for example, the Defense Council (as composed of the Commanders of the Royal Thai Armed Forces, the Army, the Air Force and the Navy) is generally insulated from the dictates of the Prime Minister—despite formally appearing under the premier’s control. Such a situation has contributed to numerous coups against ruling civilian governments. Moreover, the fact that several (sometimes disputing) veto actors have been involved in foreign policy since 1992 has sometimes created foreign policy gridlock, hindering its effectiveness.

Thai Policy toward Cambodia since 2001

In 2001, following the election of Thaksin as Thailand’s Prime Minister, Thailand began to pursue new policy which might be termed *pragmatic amity*. Thaksin himself referred to the new policy as “Forward Engagement” (Pavin, 2010). Such a strategy centered on smoothing over differences, including the final demarcation of all remaining ambiguous border differences as well as building joint projects between the two countries in trade, investment, energy, and tourism. A principal mechanism of Thaksin’s tactic was ACMECS (Arrewaddy-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Scheme). ACMECS, initiated by Thaksin in 2003, is a strategy intended to boost regional cooperation towards greater development among Thailand, Myanmar, Lao PDR, Cambodia and Vietnam. But as ACMECS was a strategy of Thailand, the latter provided the lion’s share of funds for ACMECS projects and, in return, ACMECS aid recipients were supposed to use Thai companies in their projects. Moreover, the agreement sought to achieve zero-tariff imports into Thailand of raw materials, agricultural products, and certain industrial goods more cheaply produced in other ACMECS countries (Chambers 2006). In Cambodia, two ACMECS-sponsored special economic zones were established in Banteay Meanchey and Koh Kong provinces to strengthen and expand the economic and trade cooperation between the two countries. ACMECS projects in Cambodia focus on road-building, contract farming, industrial estates

and energy. ACMECS complements increasing integration through both ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) and the GMS (Greater Mekong Subregion). Indeed, one GMS economic corridor linked Thailand to Cambodia. This was the Southern Corridor from Bangkok to Phnom Penh to Ho Chi Minh.

Thaksin's policy of *pragmatic amity* ensured a positive pro-active between Thailand and Cambodia throughout his administration. Indeed, though in 2003 in Phnom Penh, Cambodian motorcyclists torched the Thai embassy following rumors that Thai elites wanted to capture Angkor Wat, Thai-Cambodian relations quickly returned to a positive status.

Yet by 2006, opponents of Thaksin, arch-royalists and some military officers had begun to suspect that Thaksin was prioritizing his private business interests above national interests in Thailand's foreign policy, including in policy toward Cambodia. Nevertheless, this charge was not a stated reason for the coup against Thaksin, in September that year. Moreover, the 2006-2008 military junta continued Thaksin's policy of *pragmatic amity* toward Cambodia. By May 2008 another pro-Thaksin government had been elected to office. On May 22, this administration, led by Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej, agreed with Cambodia to have the latter list Preah Vihear temple as a United Nations World Heritage Site. Control over 4.6 square kilometers in land abutting the temple was to be decided later. However, at the time, anti-Thaksin nationalism was rearing its head in Thailand with "Yellow Shirt" protestors claiming that Thaksin was a country-seller. Meanwhile, Thailand's military senior brass, Constitution Court and parliamentary all opposed the deal. The result was that the Constitution Court issued an injunction against the Samak-Hun Sen agreement (Ahuja, 2008). Moreover, several units of armed forces from both Cambodia and Thailand were sent to the frontier to face off against each other.

In general, the army has always controlled policy along Thailand's borders. And it continued to do so throughout the Samak government, that of his successor Somchai and the administration of anti-Thaksin Prime Minister Abhisit Vechachiwa (2008-2011). Frontier tensions have continued to be high at Preah Vihear since 2008, and there have been periodic (sometimes deadly) skirmishes between Thai and Cambodia troops during this time. Thai-Cambodian relations remained fractious partly because, during Abhisit's administration, Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen appointed fugitive Thai Prime Minister Thaksin as the former's special economic advisor. Rumors also abounded that Cambodia was allowing pro-Thaksin militants--"Red Shirts"--to reside in Cambodia (Reuy, 2010). Given that the survival of Abhisit's coalition government depended upon support from anti-Thaksin nationalists, aristocrats, and Thailand's anti-Thaksin military leadership, his government practiced a rather hawkish policy toward Cambodia which might be termed *edgy antipathy*. It was a policy that saw Hun Sun as a national security threat.

Anti-Thaksin nationalists, however, were unable to turn Thaksin's close ties to Hun Sen into a political issue against him. In 2011, his sister Yingluck Shinawatra and her Puea Thai Party won a general election and she became Prime Minister. Her government immediately began a rapprochement with Hun Sen, resurrecting Thaksin's policy of *pragmatic amity*. Part of this "amity" involved "football diplomacy" whereby some of Thaksin's Red Shirts leaders played football with Hun Sen and other members of the Cambodian leadership (The Nation, 2011). The Thai government's objective was to smooth out relations with Cambodia. However, following the game, anti-Shinawatra Thais only became more incensed. Nevertheless, Yingluck's rapprochement was essential to boosting Thai economic ties with Cambodia (Ciorciari, 2011). Under her 2011-2014 government, Thai-Cambodian border trade and Thai investment in Cambodia each saw a robust

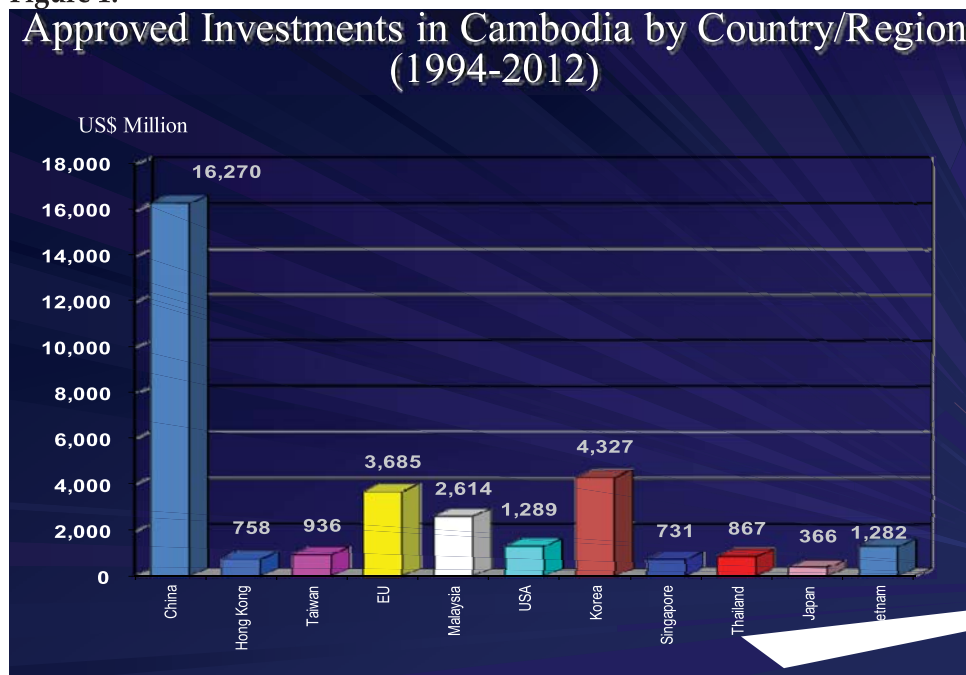
expansion(Cambodia's conducts most of its border trade with Thailand)and by 2012, Thailand stood as the eighth largest investor by country in Cambodia (See Table 2 and Figure 1 below).

Table 2: Thai-Cambodian Border Trade Value 2003-2013
(in millions of Thai baht)

2003	17,825.6
2004	23,539.7
2005	30,712.4
2006	36,036.4
2007	37,299.7
2008	51,060.5
2009	46,201.1
2010	57,281.5
2011	65,446.2
2012	84,471.9
2013	96,768.4

Source: Bank of Thailand

Figure 1:



Source: Council for the Development of Cambodia

In late November 2013, following the International Court of Justice's decision to award all the promontory of Preah Vihear to Cambodia and Thailand, Thailand interpreted the ruling as meaning that both sides needed work out the problem bilaterally to establish the exact boundary line. Prime Minister Yingluck, now seeking to distance herself from the government's previous chumminess with Hun Sen, publicly promised Thai people that her government would prioritize Thailand's sovereignty and the nation's pride (Supalak, 2013). At the same time, her army commander Gen. Prayuth Chanocha declared "we are reinforcing our forces to be ready to fully protect our sovereignty" (RFA, 2013). These ominous words, occurring amidst growing anti-government and anti-Thaksin

demonstrations in Bangkok and southern Thailand guaranteed that there would be no negotiations between Thailand and Cambodia, especially as the protestors were very anti-Cambodian in their rhetoric and graffiti. Moreover, other border dispute areas—most importantly the ocean boundary dispute—were now left wholly unresolved partly in reaction to the unresolved tensions at Preah Vihear.

Enter Prayuth and Prawit

The May 2014 coup brought the generals who had supported the hawkish Abhisit government to power. Gens. Prayuth Chan-ocha and Prawit Wongsawan were now at the apex of authority. The question now was whether their National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO) military junta would follow the more pragmatic policies of the Thai junta of 2006-2008 or instead the clearly anti-Cambodia policy of the Abhisit Vechachiwa government. At least as of 2015, one can say that in fact the NCPO is following the lead of Surayud in pursuing Thaksin's *spragmatic amity* policy though combined with an emphasis on security. Such a policy might be termed *cautious cordiality*. Indeed, amidst evidence that the NCPO has been seeking to work out a deal with Thaksin himself in Thailand, the junta has appeared to offer "carrots" and "sticks" to Cambodia. On May 31, NCPO head Prayuth met with Cambodia's Defense Minister Tea Banh. Only two weeks later, on June 15, however, the NCPO began a policy of jailing and deporting illegal Cambodian migrants in Thailand. Though the move would have had a deleterious effect on Thailand's economy given Thai dependency on migrant workers for menial labor, it might have harmed Hun Sen even more. After all, remittances from these laborers are an important part of incomes for many of Cambodia's poor. Though the NCPO discontinued the deportation, its implied message was clear: the Thai military could create migrant instability for Hun Sen if it wanted to. Thailand's generals feared that Hun Sen would maintain close connections with Thaksin; offer asylum to pro-Thaksin Red Shirt fugitives; and even perhaps allow a Thai government-in-exile to exist in Phnom Penh. In an effort to mollify the NCPO, Hun Sen's government engaged in several conciliatory gestures. First, on June 30, a Thai anti-Cambodian nationalist (Veera Somkwamkit) who in 2010 had entered an area of Cambodia, claiming it for Thailand, was released from prison. Then, on July 3, Hun Sen himself made a speech in which he denied that Cambodia would ever allow itself to be a base for Thais opposed to the NCPO regime. On July 7, Hun Sen personally met with acting Thai Foreign Minister Sihasak Phuangketkeow. This was followed on July 28 by a visit to Bangkok by Hun Sen's son Hun Manet, who met with Prayuth and other members of the NCPO. Finally, on October 30, 2014, Prayuth, now both appointed Thai Prime Minister and NCPO head, as well as Foreign Minister Tanasak Patimapragorn made an official visit to Phnom Penh where they were received by Hun Sen. The trip specifically focused on expanding bilateral cooperation in tourism (including opening up Preah Vihear as a joint tourist destination); expediting the completion of a six-kilometer railway connection between Thailand and Cambodia at the Aranyaprathet-Poipet border; increasing the number of border crossings; and working together to reduce human trafficking. But Prayuth also asked for greater cooperation from Cambodia in helping to return fugitives from Thai law. Cambodia's government, however, has been noncommittal about returning any Thai political refugees to Thailand. Continuing border disputes were hardly broached during Prayuth's visit and, indeed, his trip came only four weeks after the latest violent clash between Thai and Cambodian soldiers along the disputed 4.6 square kilometers next to the Preah Vihear border temple (PTG, 2014). The incident and Prayuth's failure to react to it has raised fears that, under the NCPO, there might be an escalation of frontier fighting; border trade might be adversely affected; and the 2013 International Court of Justice ruling about

Preah Vihear could be ignored by Thailand. During Prayuth's visit, Cambodia's Foreign Minister announced that it would be unnecessary to reopen access to Preah Vihear temple from Thailand since tourists have ample access to the temple through Cambodia (Xinhua, 2014). The announcement appears to demonstrate that though Hun Sen is willing to work with the NCPO, it will not kowtow to Thailand's military-based regime.

Conclusion

In conclusion, at the beginning of this study, three questions were asked: what has been the foreign policy of Thailand since the coup? How is it different than before the putsch? What are the implications of Thailand's post-coup foreign policy for Cambodia? In answer to the first question, this study argues that the NCPO has followed a policy of *cautious cordiality*. That is, the new regime has placed much greater stress on security, though, following Thaksin, it is looking for legitimacy and business as usual with both global investors and members of the international community. Finally, the NCPO is hoping that quick cooperation with immediate neighbors will win it greater popular support in Thailand. In answer to the second question, one can say that the NCPO today is following a mix of two former Thai foreign policies. Indeed, rather than the *pragmatic amity* of Thaksin and Yingluck Shinawata or the *edgy antipathy* of Abhisit Vechachiwa, the NCPO is pursuing a policy of *cautious cordiality*, which might be termed a middle-ground between them. Finally, in answer to the third question, on the one hand, the NCPO has now shown that it is willing to maintain many aspects of a close friendship with Cambodia. But in three areas, the NCPO has kept to a hardened position: issues along the Thai-Cambodian frontier, pro-Thaksin fugitives in Cambodia; and Hun Sen-Thaksin relations. The NCPO is today pursuing a "carrot" and "stick" approach toward Hun Sen. The carrot is cooperation with Hun Sen while the stick is to increase the Thai military presence along the Thai-Cambodian border or force Cambodian migrants in Thailand back to Cambodia. For the future, Thai foreign policy toward Cambodia will depend upon the temper of Thai nationalism and the success of what the NCPO perceives as a cordial approach towards Hun Sen. Yet if peace is to be maintained between the two countries, the NCPO regime and Hun Sen are going to have to learn to cooperate and meaningfully work together. The reason is because both the Thai military and Hun Sen are likely to be major political players for many years to come. Without cooperation, it is likely that Thai-Cambodian relations will witness renewed tensions and instability – outcomes that neither side really wants.

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“ASEAN: AUSTRALIAN PERSPECTIVE – PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE”

**A Public Lecture by H.E. Mr. Simon Merrifield
Australian Diplomat to ASEAN**

**Organized by the Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace
Sunway Hotel, Phnom Penh, Thursday, 11th December 2014**

Australia became ASEAN’s first dialogue partner in 1974, so this year we have been commemorating 40 years together. At the ASEAN-Australia 40th Anniversary Summit in Nay Pyi Taw in November, leaders announced that Australia-ASEAN relations would be elevated to the strategic level. For us, it acknowledged the road we have travelled together across the three pillars of ASEAN, but more than that, it signaled a shared future, one where we would continue to collaborate on promoting security, prosperity and people-to-people engagement in this corner of the world.

Back when this relationship began, Australia’s Prime Minister, Gough Whitlam, said that of all the regional arrangements in Southeast Asia, “...ASEAN was unquestionably the most important, the most relevant, the most natural.” Those words resonate today, because we see ASEAN as a great success story in international affairs and essential to achieving and preserving a stable and prosperous region. What has been good for ASEAN has been good for Australia.

These are profoundly important times for ASEAN as Member States enter the final stretch in preparing for the ASEAN Community in 2015. An extraordinary amount has been achieved on these ambitions to date and some very difficult challenges remain. But whatever metrics might be applied to progress achieved and gaps remaining, the fact is that ASEAN is one of the most successful regional groupings on the planet and has an incredibly bright future.

When ASEAN formed in 1967, or even when Australia became its first dialogue partner in 1974, few would have envisaged things turning out quite so well. But through vision, leadership and a deeply ingrained habit of consultation, ASEAN has come to be the defining feature of Southeast Asia’s stability and prosperity – stability and prosperity for 10 countries and 625 million people. As profoundly important as that is for Southeast Asia, it’s hardly less important for ASEAN’s friends and neighbours who share this wider region.

ASEAN matters to Australia, especially now, in the 21st Century. But to understand the context we should look back just a bit, for while ASEAN has a lot of newer partners, Australia is an old friend – not just through our 40 years of dialogue partnership, but through a close network of relationships with Southeast Asian countries individually from the beginning of Southeast Asia’s post-colonial era – for the past 70 years.

One measure of that is that we have had a resident embassy in every current ASEAN country since the earliest years of their respective independence. Those embassies were there for a reason, because our interests were engaged and there were things to be done. Then as now, we worked hard to play a useful role and make a difference. In some countries, we have had the honour of helping facilitate the path to formal independence, such as our UN Good Offices role in Indonesia in the 1940s. In others, we have played an active diplomatic role at critical points in history, such as our campaign to garner international support for the formation of Malaysia in 1963. And in Cambodia, we helped facilitate the cessation of years of conflict, through our key role in the Paris Peace Accords,

along with our subsequent substantial commitment to UNTAC, including the military component under General Sanderson's command.

We have been a key development partner to our friends in Southeast Asia for many years. From the 1950s, tens of thousands of Southeast Asian scholars secured higher education in our universities under the Colombo Plan and its successor schemes. We have built bridges, including the first bridge across the Mekong between Thailand and Laos 20 years ago, or the many erected throughout Cambodia as part of Australia's support for post-war reconstruction. And helped people better connect with one another through upgrading more than 1,300 kilometres of roads in Cambodia, including our contribution to the Southern Coastal Corridor.

Just as Australia's appreciation of ASEAN is not a recent revelation, so too our view that its future significance is not just fashion. Far from it, for our economic partnership is on a trajectory like never before. Back in 1974, no-one would have foreseen that by 2014, ASEAN would be Australia's second-largest trading partner. But that's just what it is: a larger trading partner for us than Japan, than the EU, than the US. With a \$92 billion two-way trade relationship, ASEAN is second only to China. And this figure is more than double what it was a decade ago. The recent growth has been amazing. This is not a relationship that is standing still.

Trade grows for many reasons, but Australia and ASEAN have worked hard together to create the right conditions for growing our trade. Where once we all hid behind tariff walls, we were reborn as free traders and between us have negotiated a high-standard free trade agreement known as AANZFTA – the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement. This ground-breaking agreement was something we both wanted – an idea to advance our mutual interests and better link ourselves economically. At the time, though, ASEAN had concerns about capacity constraints: how could Member States negotiate in their own best interests, and be confident they were doing so?

It was around that concern – and our collective ambition to allay it – that Australia, New Zealand and ASEAN set up something in the ASEAN Secretariat aimed at building up the technical capacities of Member States to deal with these issues. Known as the AANZFTA Economic Cooperation Support Program, it works hard to build capacity among ASEAN Member States – especially the less developed ones – to understand and deal with those essential but complex and technical concepts and procedures crucial to trade: rules of origin, certification, customs, intellectual property and competition policy.

Through sharing knowledge and collaborating on something as important and valuable as AANZFTA, Australian and ASEAN trade officials have built up remarkable mutual understanding and respect, and the ambition to do more. That ambition is reflected in ASEAN's bold and exciting initiative of RCEP – the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership. The objective of RCEP is to achieve a modern, high-quality agreement among 16 diverse countries to cover trade in goods, trade in services, investment, economic and technical cooperation, intellectual property, competition, dispute settlement and so on. This is no modest undertaking – upon conclusion it would involve half the world's population and 30 percent of global GDP.

Quite apart from our collaboration on FTAs, Australia has been working with the ASEAN Secretariat to help ASEAN Member States on economic issues, which in more recent years we have described as 'helping with the move towards the AEC.' In its current form, this facility is known as the ASEAN-Australia Development Cooperation Program II (AADCP II), but AADCP II is in fact the grandchild of the ASEAN-Australia Economic Cooperation Program, which began in 1974 and has now reached its third generation. So AADCP II's DNA goes back four decades.

These programs have a special character in that they are not about what Australia thinks ASEAN needs, but about what ASEAN itself identifies as priorities. So AADCPII programs focus on agreed high-priority AEC Blueprint activities and current priority areas are services, investment, agriculture, ASEAN Connectivity and financial integration. And this month, AADCPII will be supporting ASEAN's first consumer protection conference in Hanoi, under a broader project aimed at supporting research and dialogue on the consumer protection agenda.

We have some other new and interesting projects starting soon or under way. The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission has begun an intensive capacity building program for ASEAN Member States on implementing competition law, which commenced in Vientiane in September with its inaugural activity led by Professor Allan Fels, an eminent Australian who was our first competition commissioner.

Another new endeavour is support to the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia, or ERIA, whose role it is to provide research and policy recommendations to ASEAN Leaders, Ministers and others involved in developing policy on ASEAN's economic community building. Over the next two years, we will be delivering assistance towards better joining up ERIA's research and analytical output with its potential users. This will have a particular focus on Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam.

Central to our support for the AEC is working to help narrow ASEAN's development gap. That is at the heart of our \$1 billion plus annual set of country-level development programs, with Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Myanmar, the Philippines and Indonesia. In Cambodia, Australia is one of the largest bilateral aid partners, with an annual program this year of over AUD\$80 million. Australian support for agriculture, rural development, infrastructure, health and governance, gender equality and strengthened human capital all make a direct contribution to Cambodia's future prosperity and to narrowing that gap.

These large programs are enhanced by our regional programs, which support responses to challenges faced by three or more ASEAN Member States. One example is our support for trade and transport facilitation in the Greater Mekong Subregion. By helping Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam adopt ASEAN-wide systems, we help reduce the cost and time needed to trade goods across Mekong borders. This helps unlock the economic benefits of new infrastructure.

Our latest regional initiative is an A\$ 10 million commitment over three years to the Mekong Business Initiative, a new facility to provide technical expertise on policy reform to governments in the Mekong countries. In line with our aid-for-trade and economic diplomacy agendas, the MBI will work to improve regulatory environments in those countries to help businesses, especially SMEs, take advantage of the AEC.

While the breadth and depth of our trade and economic cooperation make for the dominant story in the ASEAN-Australia partnership, it's far from the only story. For example, we take a close interest in ASEAN's work on disaster management, building on our strong bilateral cooperation in this area, borne out of responses to major catastrophes such as the 2004 tsunami, the 2008 cyclone in Myanmar, and the devastating Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines last year.

As we know only too well, a number of Southeast Asian countries are disaster-prone. For our friends in the Philippines, disaster strikes too often, as we've seen again with Typhoon Hagupit. In such circumstances, friends always rally to assist, but communication and coordination of responses pose a very particular challenge. That is why Australia has been a staunch friend and key financial supporter of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management, or the AHA Centre. In its short life since late 2011, the AHA Centre has supported ASEAN responses to disasters seven times,

each time reflecting its growing capacity and experience. Having recently completed its comprehensive lessons-learned exercise on ASEAN's response to Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines, Australia is confident that the AHA Centre will continue to invest in building preparedness and increasing the capacity of the region to respond to disasters.

Southeast Asia's transformation since 1967 is astonishing – not just the economic transformation but dramatic reduction in tension and instability. It is a challenge to actually claim the absence of something as an achievement, but ASEAN has every right to frame its habits of consultation as making a critical contribution to preserving a peaceful neighbourhood. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine what Southeast Asia would look like today had ASEAN never come about. Or as the Philippines Permanent Representative to ASEAN has said, "If you think working with ASEAN is a challenge, try working without it!"

ASEAN has a key role in helping all of us successfully manage the changing strategic dynamics in the region, including the relationships between and among the major players. ASEAN centrality serves a strategic purpose in helping to balance these dynamics. ASEAN and ASEAN-led fora can make the most of this centrality with active management of some of the region's more sensitive issues. This includes, of course, the ongoing tensions in the South China Sea, which affects claimants and non-claimants alike by virtue of its role as a major thoroughfare for international trade – including Australia's, with around 60 per cent of Australian exports and 40 per cent of imports passing through those waters.

This is why it's important for members of the broader region to invest in building up ASEAN-led mechanisms for dealing with security and strategic issues. This why Australia has consistently attached great store to those processes that have brought together ASEAN members with the wider region. And this is why Australia chose to be a founding member of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and has been an active participant for the 20 years of its existence.

The ARF's work on functional cooperation across so many areas has been critical to fostering the habits of cooperation. From disaster management and maritime security to newer issues such as cyber, the ARF has delivered practical results to the regional security agenda.

Australia also sees opportunity for the region with the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus (ADMM+). With disputed territories in our region giving rise to the risk of miscalculation, the ADMM+'s fostering of military-to-military cooperation at the operational level is of immense value – its efforts on building relationships and familiarity between services has a vital role to play in our regional security, complementing both the ARF and the East Asia Summit (EAS).

From Australia's perspective, the EAS is the premier regional forum: it is a leaders-led process, it includes all ASEAN members together with all the key players in the region, with the United States, China and India at the one table, and it has the mandate to address the most compelling issues of our times. With ASEAN at its centre, the East Asia Summit represents a potential anchor for our region's peace and a stabiliser for our region in challenging times.

Australia's aspiration for the EAS is for it to build confidence and nurture a culture of dialogue and collaboration on security issues in this part of the world. We also want the EAS to ensure that regional financial and economic integration keeps moving forward, binding our economies together and deepening our mutual interest in thwarting future financial crises. And we also see the EAS as a vehicle to address the trans national issues of our times, including resource and food security, non-proliferation and terrorism, disaster management and pandemic response. In all of this our objective should be to nurture habits of consultation across the region. Consultation, as ASEAN has taught us, can make the search for solutions easier and diminish the risks of miscommunication.

Since the ASEAN Charter came into force, ASEAN has been looking increasingly outwards to the world. This is evident in so many ways: the great sense of welcome that newly arrived Ambassadors to ASEAN sense when they take up their posts, the global view that recurs in ASEAN-led statements such as the Bali Principles, the determination to ensure that ASEAN's own economic community takes advantage of economic integration on a broader scale, such as with RCEP. So as ASEAN contemplates its next big step – framing its vision beyond 2015 – its friends stand by in support, confident that the great ASEAN ambition of fostering stability and promoting prosperity will continue to project out onto a broader canvas.

A key feature of our future relationship with ASEAN will be the culture of two-way partnership. This notion – that Australia has much to learn from our friends in the region – underpins the thinking behind the New Colombo Plan, our scheme to provide opportunities to young Australians to live, study and work in Asia. Foreign Minister Julie Bishop announced in Nay Pyi Taw that, following its successful pilot in 2014, the New Colombo Plan would be rolled out to all ten ASEAN Member States. So in Cambodia, from next year, expect to see more bright young Australians on your streets, here not just to absorb the cultural wonders of Angkor Wat or the beauty of Rattanakiri, but to learn, understand and appreciate your way of life and your way of seeing things.

People-to-people links lie at the heart of any successful partnership. In order to enhance further people-to-people engagement with ASEAN on a regional scale, the Government has decided to establish an Australian-ASEAN Council to initiate and support activities designed to enhance awareness, links and understanding between people and institutions in Australia and ASEAN.

So there are some new things for the ASEAN-Australia relationship, which sit proudly among many of our mature, longstanding commitments to our Southeast Asian friends. Make no mistake: our vision for the future of our engagement is about building on the strengths of the past, not replacing them.

We remain committed to helping ASEAN narrow the development gap, by sustaining our \$1 billion plus aid investment among the less well-off ASEAN members.

We remain committed to supporting ASEAN connectivity, reflected in such concrete terms by that first bridge over the Mekong 20 years ago and many, many projects since.

And we remain committed to supporting the ASEAN Community 2015 vision, through our programs designed to support Member States as they identify and overcome the challenges to achieving economic integration.

In Cambodia, Australia will remain a friend at your side and continue to support what has been a remarkable transformation towards peace and prosperity. We will continue to build on the \$700 million investment we have made in assisting Cambodia, and strengthen further our bilateral relationship that spans the full spectrum of engagement from combating transnational crime to ever-deepening trade links.

So, looking ahead, our friends across ASEAN can continue to count on Australia as an old friend and neighbour, committed to a stable and prosperous Southeast Asia as a key element of our own stability and prosperity. But we are an old friend open to new ways. As we move forward, in partnership, jointly investing in a prosperous future to the benefit of us all.

“US ENGAGEMENT IN SOUTHEAST ASIA IN THE CONTEXT OF THE US PIVOT TO THE ASIA PACIFIC AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR CAMBODIA”

**A Public Lecture by Dr. Ear Sophal
Associate Professor, Occidental College, Los Angeles**

**Organized by the Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace
Hotel Cambodiana, Phnom Penh, Friday, 12th December 2014**

I would be remiss to begin without mentioning my books, *Aid Dependence in Cambodia: How Foreign Assistance Undermines Democracy* and *The Hungry Dragon: How China’s Resource Quest Is Reshaping the World*. The former is about the impact of aid on Cambodia, the latter co-authored with Sigfrido Burgos, is about China’s global resource quest across Africa, Asia, and Latin America, and what this means for the countries involved.

So I teach courses that try to explain differences in development. Why does one country develop while another does not? Why is dramatic inequality present in a country, even in the same city, with neighbors right next to each other – a slum and a luxury condo? I do this at Occidental College in Los Angeles, a small Liberal Arts college where our most famous alumnus is Barack Obama.

Before coming to Occidental College in August, I taught for seven years at the US Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California. My students were junior military officers, namely captains and majors, across all the services: Army, Navy, Air Force, you name it. And many had just returned from Iraq and/or Afghanistan and were taking courses from me on how to rebuild countries after wars. Being in the military they’re all about getting the job done. However, nation-building is not straightforward, not like a blueprint to building a house that depicts where the kitchen and bathrooms will be. It’s complicated even if you can build yourself a slide showing the counterinsurgency dynamics of why the central Afghan government is not getting the support it needs. The work we do is more suited to the metaphors of gardening than of building. As a scholar, I cite here the work of David Korten on the Learning Process Approach, which is essentially the idea that the weather changes, the locals know best the soil conditions, and they know when to prune.

It’s about dispensing with the illusion of control, which of course is very hard for the military. “Gardeners have no illusion of control. We create the right growing conditions, nurture a healthy soil life, set up our lifestyles so we have time to tend our crops, and we plant a diverse variety of sturdy, healthy plants and watch them grow. We adjust as we go along - removing excess weeds, mulching, watering and fertilizing when necessary - and picking off pests. But ultimately - the end result almost always includes crop failures, and unexpected successes. And we will feel more like stewards, sometimes even observers, than masters of our domain.”¹

Of course, I sound like the world’s best gardener, but in reality, all my plants are dead – too long ago unwatered! So caveat emptor, buyer beware, let’s talk about US Engagement in Southeast Asia in the context of the US Pivot to the Asia-Pacific and its implications for Cambodia, and go back to 2011 when President Barack Obama said the following in a speech that opened the US Pivot to Asia: “After a decade in which we fought

¹<http://cseaperkins.wordpress.com/tag/sustainability/>

two wars that cost us dearly, in blood and treasure, the United States is turning our attention to the vast potential of the Asia Pacific region.”² Why? Well, you see this circle that includes Southeast Asia, China, and India? More people live inside of it than outside of it. He said “With most of the world’s nuclear power and some half of humanity, Asia will largely define whether the century ahead will be marked by conflict or cooperation.”³ And he added the following:

... as a Pacific nation, the United States will play a larger and long-term role in shaping this region and its future, by upholding core principles and in close partnership with our allies and friends.

... As a result, reductions in U.S. defense spending will not come at the expense of the Asia Pacific.

... we’ll reengage with our regional organizations...I’ll be proud to be the first American President to attend the East Asia Summit. And together, I believe we can address shared challenges, such as proliferation and maritime security, including cooperation in the South China Sea.

... Meanwhile, the United States will continue our effort to build a cooperative relationship with China...⁴

So what does this mean? Security, Economy, and Democracy. Let’s begin with Security. The US Navy plans the addition of ships in Asia in 2017 and 2020 from 50 in 2013 to 55 in 2017 to 58 in 2020. In South Asia, that number goes from 25 in 2013 to 34 in 2017, remaining the same in 2020. Meanwhile in other parts of the world, there’s a decline in naval presence. You also correlate this with increase in troop presence. In Korea, we expect an increase to 28,500. In Darwin, Australia, an increase of 2,500 troops. Australia is where he made the US Pivot speech, oddly enough. But you also see fires burning everywhere, including the Middle East in Iraq and Syria, in Afghanistan, and certainly in Ukraine. So while these fires burn, we have the Senkaku Islands in East Asia, and of course continuing tension over the South China Sea. But clearly, the pull of the Middle East on US Foreign Policy remains strong.

So, as I said before, it’s not just security, but economy, and there it’s mostly about the Trans-Pacific Partnership which involves the countries of North America, Peru, and Chile down South, and across the Pacific Ocean, Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, Japan, Brunei, Vietnam, and Singapore, but notice it does not include China. 60% of US trade is with the Pacific region.⁵ Asian maritime and regional security are vital US interests.⁶ Asian Americans are 6% of the US population, but more importantly are the fastest growing ethnic group; Asians dominate the vast number of foreign students in America.⁷

So what is the geo-economic context? In Southeast Asia, you have a region with 1.7 million square miles, circa 618 million people, \$2.158 trillion GDP (2011), and \$3,538 per capita GDP. In China, you have a country with 3,705,407 square miles, 1.35 billion people, \$10.028 trillion GDP (2014), and \$7,333 per capita GDP. China ASEAN trade has grown rapidly, and as of 2012 reached 210 billion in exports and nearly as much in imports. The volume of trade that year hit \$400 billion.

²<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/11/17/remarks-president-obama-australian-parliament>

³<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/11/17/remarks-president-obama-australian-parliament>

⁴<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/11/17/remarks-president-obama-australian-parliament>

⁵<http://asiancenturyinstitute.com/international/628-president-obama-s-pivot-to-asia-is-all-about-china>

⁶<http://asiancenturyinstitute.com/international/628-president-obama-s-pivot-to-asia-is-all-about-china>

⁷<http://asiancenturyinstitute.com/international/628-president-obama-s-pivot-to-asia-is-all-about-china>

So let's anchor a conceptual framework, and start off with two types of power: (1) Hard power and (2) Soft power. Hard power you already know as military power projection. Soft power is the power to influence by persuasion rather than coercion. Joseph Nye's original definition was narrow, excluding investment and aid and formal diplomacy. Soft power can be "high," targeted at elites, or "low," targeted at the broader public. Think of Psy's Gangnam Style music video, seen now 2.176 billion times on YouTube, for example or one of the largest Chinese-language schools outside of China located right here in Phnom Penh, the Chhong Cheng Chinese School.

Southeast Asia is China's nearest maritime neighborhood. Think of this as a kind of Monroe doctrine of China where China's backyard is its sphere of influence just as President James Monroe argued that Central and South America were America's backyard. The Chinese model could be disastrous for a region of nascent democracies and weak civil societies.⁸ China appears to be using its soft power to incrementally push Japan, Taiwan, and even the United States out of regional influence.⁹

Now, let's look at changes and continuity in US-Cambodia relations. In the 1950s you had these defining events:

- 1950: State Department recognizes Cambodia
- 1950: First U.S. diplomat presents credentials to King Sihanouk on July 11
- 1953: Cambodia declares its independence
- 1955: U.S. assistance program begins focusing on infrastructure and education
- 1958: Eisenhower and Sihanouk visit to the United States
- 1959: Inauguration of National Road 4¹⁰

By 1965-1973, you had the bombing of Cambodia by the US, where more tons of bombs fell on Cambodia than in all of World War II Europe and Nagasaki and Hiroshima.

In terms of security, you have, more recently:

- 12-15 May 1975: SS Mayagüez Incident
- 17-18 July 2006: Admiral Fallon's "get-to-know-you" mission
- 24-25 Jan 2007: Admiral Roughead
- 9-13 Feb 2007: USS Gary visit, 1st US Navy ship in 30+ years
- 20-22 Aug 2007: Admiral Keating

And the 2007 visit of the USS Essex, which brought Admiral Willard to Cambodia. In terms of using military assets for public diplomacy purposes, you have the 15 June 2010 visit of the 1,000 hospital bed ship USNS Mercy (on which I had the pleasure of staying and lecturing for five days) and JDS Kunisaki which arrived in Cambodia as part of Pacific Partnership 2010 for the first time.

In terms of political angle, I was there in 2001, when Amb. Kent Wiedemann said "Rome cannot be built in a day... [but] The government keeps coming up with excuses"¹¹ on anti-corruption actions. A week later, Cambodia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation issued an unsigned diplomatic letter stating that it: "deeply regrets that recently, certain ambassadors have performed their behavior like instructors teaching the Royal Government of Cambodia, or opposition parties....More seriously, the

⁸http://carnegieendowment.org/files/pb_47_final.pdf

⁹http://carnegieendowment.org/files/pb_47_final.pdf

¹⁰http://cambodia.usembassy.gov/media2/pdf/book_us_cambodia_relations.pdf

¹¹<https://www.cambodiadaily.com/archives/govt-blasted-for-inaction-on-corruption-25348/>

said ambassador has also used inflammatory words inciting revolt against the Royal Government of Cambodia.”¹²

I was there in 2006 when the new US Embassy building was dedicated. Earlier in 2005, human rights and labor rights activists had been arrested and imprisoned. The occasion of the dedication was an excuse to get Foggy Bottom’s (State Department headquarters) attention and invite a high level guest, who turned out to be Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Chris Hill, to Cambodia. We were told that the freedom of the human rights and labor rights activists would be his “gift”. In 2009, US Ambassador Carol Rodley argued at a “Clean Hands” concert that \$500 million in corruption each year equaled 20,000 6-room schools OR \$260 extra PER MONTH for civil servants. Less than a week later, yet another diplomatic note was sent, this time to the US Embassy, cc’ing all other diplomatic missions. The note read in part: The Royal Government of Cambodia absolutely refutes to [sic] politically motivated and unsubstantiated allegation made by the United States diplomat in contradiction of the good relation between Cambodia and the United States Government.”¹³

Cambodia’s Ambassador to the UK added in a personal though public letter to Rodley: “While you are of course entitled to your personal opinions, the danger of expressing them publicly is that they can be interpreted as being politically motivated, which immediately compromises your reputation as an impartial observer of Cambodia and [an] honoured guest... I hope that you will now reconsider your remarks, which appear to have been based on misinformation, and take urgent steps to clarify your position.”¹⁴

In terms of economy, in 1999, the US and Cambodia agreed to link labor to trade, which meant that under the Multi Fibre Arrangements, and prior to World Trade Organization entry in 2004, Cambodia’s access to the US market was restricted. If Cambodia had better labor it could export more to the US. The labor standards would be monitored by Better Factories Cambodia, an International Labor Organization third party program. Today, Cambodia exports more than \$5 billion in garments, most of which is destined to the US. This from a few million dollars in the mid-1990s.

But as much as we would like to think this is all about the US and Southeast Asia (and in particular Cambodia), the elephant (or dragon or panda) in the room is China, and China’s impact on US Treaty Allies like Japan. As the US State Department “Strategic Goal 2: Objective 2.2 - Rebalance to the Asia-Pacific through Enhanced Diplomacy, Security Cooperation, and Development” states: “Treaty alliances with Japan, the Republic of Korea, Australia, the Philippines, and Thailand, form the cornerstone of our strategic position in the Asia-Pacific.”¹⁵ And, by extension, it’s about where China is taking Southeast Asia, and what that means for America. So the Pivot is in large part about China’s rise/return/sphere of influence. As President Obama said recently, “Our goal is not to counter China. Our goal is not to contain China. Our goal is to make sure international rules and norms are respected and that includes in the area of international disputes.”¹⁶ What disputes are we talking about? The South China Sea. “Territorial sovereignty, contention on energy, threat to maritime security and overlapping maritime claims are at the core of the South China Sea dispute”¹⁷ It’s about Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) of countries, which overlap in much of

¹²<https://www.cambodiadaily.com/archives/govt-attacks-critics-with-ministry-letter-25501/>

¹³http://www.embassyofcambodia.org/bulletin/information_bulletin_june_2009.pdf

¹⁴http://www.cambodianembassy.org.uk/index_main.php?issue=6&Button=Go&wn=&smenu=&lang=&mcat=0&menu=1&menu1=8&menu1cat=0&menu2=&menu3=&link=0&link1=0&readmore=0&d_link=&k=2&k1=&locate=

¹⁵<http://www.state.gov/s/d/rm/rls/dosstrat/2014/html/225797.htm>

¹⁶<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2014/04/28/obama-philippines-china/8403801/>

¹⁷<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/indias-maritime-gateway-to-the-pacific/article5714122.ece>

the world. An EEZ "is a sea zone prescribed by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) under which a state has special rights over the exploration and use of marine resources, including energy production from water and wind. It stretches from the seaward edge of the state's territorial sea out to 200 nautical miles from its coast. In colloquial usage, the term may include the territorial sea and even the continental shelf beyond the 200-mile limit."¹⁸ The US is not a signatory to UNCLOS, while China signed on June 7, 1996.

Deng Xiaoping said "Since we can't solve the South China Sea issue, we can leave it to the next generation which will be smarter."¹⁹ In other words, let's kick the can down the road. China's Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf Act of 1996 is worth noting: "This Act created an exclusive economic zone (EEZ) with 200 nautical mile limits from its coastal baseline, and claimed the right, inter alia, to broadly undefined powers to enforce laws in the EEZ, "including security laws and regulations." Based on the Act, the PRC does not recognize the airspace above its EEZ as "international airspace" and has interfered with and protested US reconnaissance flights over its EEZ. China takes the position that all maritime data collection activities, including military intelligence and hydrographic collection activities, fall within the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea [UNCLOS] provisions for marine scientific research and therefore require coastal-state consent before they could be carried out in the two-hundred-nautical-mile EEZ."²⁰ Note the airspace is claimed, and that's where the East China Sea debacle comes in, which some consider is equivalent to a declaration of war by China on Japan.

What's the US Position? "The US has protested this sovereignty claim as a violation of international law numerous times since this law was passed. The US Government has long conducted a vigorous freedom of navigation program through which it has asserted its navigational rights in the face of what it has regarded as excessive claims by coastal states of jurisdiction over ocean space or international passages. When remonstrations and protestations are unavailing, elements of US military forces may sail into or fly over disputed regions for the purpose of demonstrating their right and determination to continue to do so."²¹ And what is at stake? 213 billion barrels of oil. Indeed, proven and undiscovered oil reserve estimates in the South China Sea range as high as 213 billion barrels, the US Energy Information Administration said in a 2008 report. That would surpass every country's proven oil reserves except Saudi Arabia and Venezuela, according to the BP Statistical Review.

The South China Sea has 30 billion metric tons of oil and 16 trillion cubic meters of gas. China has 2 billion metric tons of proven oil reserves and 2.8 trillion cubic meters of natural gas reserves according to BP Plc estimates.

On 12 July 2012, "The Association of Southeast Asian Nations failed to reach consensus on handling disputes in the South China Sea, reflecting a rift between China and the U.S. over rules to keep peace in the trade lane"²² according to Bloomberg. The bloc's inability to agree on a communiqué is unprecedented, Indonesian Foreign Minister Marty Natalegawa said. "This is strange territory for me. It's very, very disappointing that at this 11th hour Asean is not able to rally around a certain common language on the South China Sea. We've gone through so many problems in the past, but we've never failed to speak as one."²³

¹⁸<http://bookstore.gpo.gov/products/sku/008-046-00272-0>

¹⁹http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2010-07/26/content_11046544.htm

²⁰<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/south-china-sea.htm>

²¹<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/south-china-sea.htm>

²²<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-07-12/asean-fails-to-reach-accord-on-south-china-sea-disputes.html>

²³<http://www.globalresearch.ca/asean-summit-breaks-up-amid-feuding-over-south-china-sea/31923?print=1>

On 18 November 2012, a Cambodian government spokesperson, told media that Southeast Asian leaders “had decided that they will not internationalize the South China Sea from now on.”²⁴ This, of course, was straight from China’s Script:

“We oppose the internationalisation of the South China Sea,”²⁵ Chinese government spokesperson Qin Gang told reporters. Observers argued that there was a Chinese Seat the ASEAN Table, courtesy of Cambodia. “China has given over US\$2bn in bilateral aid and loans to Cambodia in recent years, building vital roads and other infrastructure while a western-driven aid effort flounders amid alleged mismanagement and government corruption. Chinese companies have invested US\$8billion in Cambodia since 2006, making the country by far the biggest investor in the 15 million population Southeast Asian neighbour.”²⁶

Philippines President Noy Noy Aquino was displeased: “There were several views expressed yesterday on ASEAN unity which we did not realize would be translated into an ASEAN consensus. For the record, this was not our understanding. The ASEAN route is not the only route for us. As a sovereign state, it is our right to defend our national interests.”²⁷

This brings us to dimensions of Chinese influence, and you see them across Garments, construction, telecommunications, fiber optics, pharmaceuticals, gold mining, oil, agro-industry... You name it. But why? Southeast Asia is within China’s geopolitical interests, and perhaps a string of pearls for its naval war ships is the idea, dotted across parts of Southeast Asia and South Asia. Or is it a maritime road complemented by an economic belt?

Of course, China isn’t just constructing roads, it’s doing dams on its own portion of the Mekong River, which has seen nearly a dozen proposed, existing, and under construction dams. The effect on downriver Mekong countries like Laos, Thailand, Vietnam, and Cambodia, is tremendous, regardless of whether you believe their construction has anything to do with perennial droughts and flooding.

I saw the building frenzy in East Timor, when I worked there for a year, with a large Chinese Embassy, and a relatively modest US Embassy. Both the Ministry of Foreign Affairs building and the Presidential Palace of East Timor were built courtesy of China. In Cambodia, the Senate Complex, which includes a golf range, and the Council of Ministers Building were built courtesy of China. Imagine the White House having been built by China. We now live in that age. Then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, on a visit to Cambodia, remarked “Sometimes it is a little frustrating, I will admit, for the United States, because we channel our aid, in so far as possible, to the people themselves. We want more people fed. We want more people healthier. We want more men, women, and especially children to have a better life. So we cannot point to a big building we have built. But we can point to more children being alive.”²⁸ But the US remains distracted with fires burning in the Middle East, while China is eating America’s lunch in Southeast Asia.

²⁴<http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Latest-News-Wires/2012/1119/Obama-visit-to-Cambodia-overshadowed-by-row-over-South-China-Sea>

²⁵<http://www.simonroughneen.com/asia/seasia/philippines/another-asean-rift-over-south-china-sea-the-irrawaddy/>

²⁶<http://www.simonroughneen.com/asia/seasia/philippines/another-asean-rift-over-south-china-sea-the-irrawaddy/>

²⁷<http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Latest-News-Wires/2012/1119/Obama-visit-to-Cambodia-overshadowed-by-row-over-South-China-Sea>

²⁸<http://www.state.gov/secretary/20092013clinton/rm/2012/07/194909.htm>

“VIETNAM’S FOREIGN POLICY OBJECTIVES AND ITS NEIGHBORS”

A Public Lecture by David Koh

**Director, David Koh & Associates and Managing Director, Atlas Research and
Consulting**

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Abstract

Vietnam’s foreign policy has been adjusting to new international environment and domestic needs after the Cold War. After going through a short period of unipolar world and American dominance, an anxious environment exist today for Vietnam, as it adjusts to a rising and powerful neighbor, and tries to refrain from resorting to hard alliances that marked its foreign policy four decades ago. Vietnam is keeping in mind strategic lessons drawn from its past differences with Cambodia and China, which led to its isolation in the 1980s. A cautious approach is taken to not take its differences with China to the end of the road, but at the same using multiple and multilateral approaches to try to adjust to the rise of China. Relations with Cambodia are a function of the relations with China, but both countries should move their bilateral relationship away from the anchor on China.

Introduction

It is my honour to be invited here by CICP, the premium research institution in Cambodia, to deliver this public lecture in Phnom Penh. Let me first say that I am not a first time visitor to this beautiful city. Phnom Penh, when I was in secondary school and beginning to pay attention to world affairs, was a city of chaos, a victim of the Vietnam War and great power rivalry. Phnom Penh subsequently became the epicenter of unspeakable horrors against humanity; acts that one must say cannot be considered Khmer culture – not even human. I visited Cheuong Ek last Saturday, and I was really shocked at the brutality of the Khmer Rouge. Thus I am very happy to see Phnom Penh – and Cambodia at large – now at peace, becoming more beautiful by the day, developing and yet also trying its best to retain its essential charms. The first time I was here in 2008, I came to work with the CICP as well as members of your government on organizing the Cambodia Forum in Singapore. It was our Singaporean way to say that Cambodia develops late but Cambodia matters to the region, and how Cambodia develops will be important to not just itself and its neighbors, but also to ASEAN.

My speech today will focus on three major portions. I will start with Vietnamese foreign policy today – its strategy, its focus, and the challenges, and the strategic issues. Second, I will address concerns about how Vietnam is dealing with China’s rise, with reference to strategy. Third, I will touch on Vietnam’s relationship with Cambodia, in particular over the Kampuchea Krom issue.

Part One

Throughout the millennium, any student of Vietnam will learn sooner or later, a narrative and history of repulsing foreign invaders and that ensuring the country stays united for this

purpose is a constant challenge. Mr. Ho Chi Minh's famous saying of "Nothing is more precious than independence and freedom" summarizes this well and still reverberates in the Vietnamese heart. This is the major theme that informs Vietnamese foreign policy. What then are Vietnamese strategies to achieve independence and freedom?

Current Vietnamese strategy cannot be detached from the recent historical background. During the Cold War, Vietnam faced a stark choice between the Western world and the Communist World as it faced the return of French colonialism. As events turned out, it was the Communist World that held out the most immediate aid, and in any case, the French were with the Western world and therefore asking for help from a post-war America that feared the encroachment of communism was out of the question.

As such, Vietnamese foreign policy and strategy after the Second World War naturally followed that of the communist world, but it also experienced anxiety when the communist world, after de-Stalinisation in the 1950s, fell into disunity. Vietnamese consideration was that disunity could have meant a failure of the communist world to support its war of reunification. It emphasized the need for unity, and avoided leaning too much towards either China or Soviet Union, aware that support from both were needed. Opposition towards the Western world and the adoption of the communist model of politics and economics were of course other consequences as well.

China leaned towards the Western world after the death of Mao Tzetung and the fall of the Gang of Four. Following the Khmer Rouge attempt of trying to take southern Vietnam by force, the tragedy of the Third Indochina War took place when Vietnam invaded Cambodia. Vietnam achieved its political objectives of getting rid of the Khmer Rouge and installing a friendly government, but became lost in a strategic wilderness as it was isolated by the international community. There is now a very strong awareness in Vietnam that while its decision to topple the Khmer Rouge was correct and decisive in preventing further massacre in both Cambodia and in Vietnam, it stayed too long in Cambodia. Subsequent financial difficulties and the end of Soviet support led to its voluntary withdrawal from Cambodia, and internal reforms. The domestic reforms also led to new assessments of its foreign policy, including a few important lessons:

- a) China is the most important neighbor because of its size, and other neighbors are also important, and thus it is important above all to be at peace with all.
- b) The previous policy of leaning on one major power (the Soviet Union) against China, while it was inevitable and Vietnam had not much of a choice, should not be easily repeated so long as options are still available. Keeping options open, avoiding drastic and stark choices, diversifying into new channels of relationships in multilateral and bilateral sets, are important tactics in this new foreign policy. Thus Vietnam wants to be friends with everyone, and not to interfere in neighbors' politics, and wishes as well that neighbors' politics do not drag Vietnam into unnecessary disputes.
- c) Internal reforms leading to domestic strength is the *sine qua non* condition of military and national strength, not alliances with big powers.

With such lessons drawn out from the warring years, it could be imagined that Vietnam is now hardly having any appetite for more military conflict – not because it is fearful, but because it is weary and understands the need for growth and development as the important foundations of strength. After the Cambodia conflict wound down, Vietnam constructed a comprehensive foreign policy change that was combined with domestic reforms and indeed meant to serve domestic reforms. Relations with China took a strong turn for the better from 1990 and on the last day of 1999, the two countries signed a land

border agreement. Vietnam also joined ASEAN in 1995, and reconstructed its relationship with the West.

But with the current situation in the South China Sea, things could well change again. The strategy in the 2000s saw slight adjustments as a result of a perceived new threat from China. There is now a strong emphasis on not just upgrading its military capabilities at sea, but also the strong foray into international diplomacy, hoping to use it as a deterrent against war, and against China. For instance one tactic has been to forge very strong relationships with the Permanent Five members of the United Nations Security Council, the European Union, and India, as well as trying to give high priority to the issue of the South China Sea in ASEAN's regional processes. Another strategy is to take a strong and active approach in ASEAN affairs. A third strategy is to seek to the largest extent possible integration with the world.

The government has also been strong in its opposition against Chinese moves in the South China Sea, while its Communist Party mechanisms remain a way to dialogue with China and if possible, come to diplomatic agreements with China and hoping that China would keep to these agreements. Unfortunately, the last tactic has not been very successful, and thus there has been domestic opposition against this channel.

It is appropriate therefore for me to now move into Part Two of this lecture – the rise of China and challenges presented to Vietnam.

Part Two: Relations with China

In this section I pose the question of the China challenge to Vietnam and how the challenge is impacting on the environment for Vietnam.

Vietnam is unlikely to enjoy the full benefits of the economic rise of China. Like all other countries, Vietnam is baited by the potential and lucrative China market. However, the promise of the Chinese market is, in the deep perspective, not very attractive to Vietnam because of both countries' similarities in economic structure, and the imbalance of trade and investments favouring China greatly. Vietnamese goods are not competitive in China though they are competitive in the USA and Europe. The upside of the economic challenge of China is China's need to spend surplus savings, consequently to invest overseas. One of these immediate destinations is Vietnam. There are however domestic reactions to this investment, not just because of the perceived poor quality, but also the question of why Vietnam should allow China to gain economically from it when China refuses to listen to Vietnamese objections regarding the South China Sea. Some even suspect that Chinese investments are Chinese plots to plant spies and to debilitate the Vietnamese environment by exporting polluting industries to Vietnam.

The suspicions about economic issues are enlarged in the strategic and political challenges that China brings, including what Vietnam sees as Chinese occupation of islands over which Vietnam claims sovereignty. Popular and intense in Vietnamese historical bookmarks are the losses of 1974 and 1988. In 1974, as the Vietnam War was turning the tide against South Vietnam, China sent its navy to occupy the Paracel islands that were under the control of South Vietnam. This was a master stroke of military strategy by China – to attack Southern Vietnam while America was withdrawing from it and unable to defend its maritime territories. The northern Vietnamese government was worried about it but found it difficult to object, given that China was a fellow socialist country, and a big helper in its war against South Vietnam. In 1988, taking advantage of the Vietnamese economic weaknesses and distracted by domestic reforms, China attacked Gac Ma or Johnson South Reef. The naval battle resulted in the loss of Vietnamese lives, and the reef to China. There has been

no Vietnamese attempt to retake the reef by force, mainly because Vietnam did not have the naval capability, and the China-Vietnam détente in 1990 cast these issues to the side.

These issues are tied to the domestic challenges of the regime. Critics see the Vietnamese Communist Party as being close to the Chinese Communist Party. Given the twin threats by the global market and globalization to the survival of the communist regime, critics argued that it is the core interest of the Vietnamese regime to “align” itself with Communist China, and thus puts the survival of the communist regime above the loss of islands to China. Logically, this view is persuasive, but it does not fly. The reason is there are behind the scene confrontations in the Party-to-Party channel between the Chinese and Vietnamese over the issues of islands. No Vietnamese leader, communist or otherwise, is going to lose the islands on his watch, and the 1979-1990 period basically is evidence to show that the Vietnamese CP is capable of a public confrontation with the CCP. In 1990, at the Chengdu meeting between the top leaders of both sides to find a way to restart peaceful and cordial relations, Vietnam made compromises to end the warring situation and to allow it to break out of isolation. Vietnamese CP prefer to let their quarrels with the Chinese remain behind closed doors, using the communist party channel, rather than having them boiling in the open, in the interest of unity within the communist world. In the Vietnamese world, when something is behind closed doors it does not mean it is not serious, but when it is discussed openly and there are open confrontations, then the matter is really serious.

The PM and the government of Vietnam more appropriately term the Vietnamese strategy as “Struggle and Cooperate”.

A very apt description of the foreign policy of Vietnam, therefore, has been to adjust to a rising China and the changes in the international environment that brings. In mid-December 2014 Vietnam asked the Permanent Court of Arbitration to take its interests into consideration when adjudicating on the Philippines’ complaint against China regarding the South China Sea. As scholars have noted, this is not a direct legal action by Vietnam against China, but Vietnam is saying that it is a relevant third party in the legal dispute between China and Philippines now before the Court. A clever tactic that stakes Vietnamese interest without confronting China.

Somewhere down the road I am afraid Vietnam will have to switch strategies when game-changing incidents on the South China Sea make the current approach unbearable and untenable. But one needs to point out this is almost the only irritant, although a very infectious and ignominious one, in otherwise good Sino-Vietnamese relations.

What is to come ahead for Vietnam? The scenarios do not look promising for a Vietnam that is able to be more autonomous from the influences of China than now. China is going to pull far ahead economically and will find a balance in its relationship with the US. ASEAN is far from directly backing up Vietnam over the South China Sea disputes, although ASEAN does emphasize navigational safety and refrain from using force and instead the need to adjudicate the claims using international maritime laws. Other potential backers do not appear to be anywhere near. Can India play a role helping Vietnam? Russia is on China’s side because it needs China to balance against the USA, and is itself in trouble over its economic situation. The Europeans are preoccupied with economic issues and the situation in Eastern Europe and the Middle East. Europe, in fact, wishes to have a seat at the table of East Asian regional processes, but is not interested in partaking any of the international political competition that the USA is engaged in with China in this region.

Strategically, Vietnam may become isolated because there are no clear backers that can weigh up to China, while China does what it wants in the South China Sea. I believe avoiding isolation – defined as a lack of options and a sidelined position – is what Vietnamese leaders want, and isolation against the backdrop of an angry and giant

neighbour is to be avoided at all costs. China is going to continue to lull Vietnam into an ideological backwardness by reiterating its solidarity with Vietnam in the pursuit of Socialism, while on its own it will try all sorts of ways to reform its economy and society away from the socialist model. In the end, the common things between China and Vietnam will be a single-Party system in power pursuing different interpretations of socialism, with a left-over state-dominated economic structure, with nothing else being much in common between the two, and in mutual suspicions over the South China Sea and the role of the US in the region (whether Vietnam will sign up to closer military relations with the US).

Vietnam will hope that by giving primacy to international law in its strategy and international posture, the international community that provides the legal basis for the maritime regime would back it up. This strategy would work only if all the important players and other countries in dispute with Vietnam also place primacy on international law and see adherence to international law as in their long-term national. Unfortunately, this is not the case. On this note, I turn to the relationship between Vietnam and Cambodia.

Part Three: Relations with Cambodia

In discussing Cambodia-Vietnamese relations one would glance to the last war between Vietnam and Cambodia. Behind this history, is the issue of whether southern Vietnamese territories are really Vietnamese or Kinh, and whether Cambodia has the right to those territories. The Cambodia-Vietnam border treaty that supposedly has settled these questions is supposed to release both countries from becoming the perpetual victims of histories, and yet it does not appear that the treaty has eradicated totally the ghosts of the past.

People in Vietnam who have a role to play in contributing to policy-making understand the issue probably differently from the way Cambodians understand it. In the view of Vietnamese, the treaty was supposed to have settled the issue of the border between Cambodia and Vietnam. But perhaps their understanding is not updated on the latest reality on the ground in Cambodia, especially new realities that come with a new age of politics in Cambodia. It is now acceptable to ask: to what extent do the population in Cambodia, especially the alternate elites, accept the treaty as legitimate? How does one preempt future challenges to the legitimacy of this treaty? If this treaty can be challenged, might not earlier treaties that give rise to current borders between Cambodia and Thailand, and those between Vietnam and China, Vietnam and Laos, and Laos and Cambodia be challenged as well? As we can see, it is a can of worms, and if the present generation constantly harks back to glorious histories and desires to restore them, it would be unfair to the future generation who could witness international conflicts again. Let us stop future conflicts now by asking everyone to recognise the legitimacy of the border treaties and move on.

I do not believe that any treaty will settle anything permanently overnight, least of all issues of sovereignty and history that are rather recent. Acceptance will be laborious. But it maybe worthwhile to understand how the issue of the Kampuchea Krom recently arose – the circumstances under which it arose and the ways to manage it. As it is heard, the Vietnamese charged-affairs in Phnom Penh was called on the telephone and told that the six western provinces of Vietnam were actually Cambodian territory, and he was asked for his views. Naturally as a response from an official, the Vietnamese diplomat denied it and berated the caller. Not known to him, the conversation was taped and the recording spread like fire, stoking nationalist fires among those who held strong feelings about it. The nationalist response in Kampuchea Krom caught the Vietnamese government off-guard.

The lessons I draw from the Kampuchea Krom issue are as follows. One, to ensure matters do not get out of hand, the governments of both sides should restrict

the role of the media in the conduct of bilateral relations, and seek to consult each other rather than resorting to the media as the channel of communication. It is possible in Vietnam, but is this possible in Cambodia?

The second lesson is that of ethnicity and its role in domestic politics as well as international relations. Borders in Southeast Asia are notorious for not respecting ethnic lines. In line with the objectives of ASEAN, countries in ASEAN have mostly decided to either refer territorial disputes to international courts, or to respect the border treaties that have already been signed and not to allow irredentist movements from undermining those treaties.

The third lesson is: people can look at a half-filled class as half empty, or half full. There are plenty of historical issues for Cambodia and Vietnam to throw at each other, yet there are even more issues for the future that need cooperation for their respective national interests: the Lao-Cambodia-Vietnam triangle, for instance, or the ASEAN vision of community. Or the vision of ASEAN Centrality in the conduct of international politics in the region. Do we want to see Cambodia and Vietnam at odds again by taking different sides in the big power struggle for supremacy in the region, or do we prefer to see Vietnam and Cambodia, with the rest of ASEAN, working to regulate regional affairs according to an international order where all nations respect each other and collaborate for mutual gain? There is no doubt I choose the second vision. Our vision must be long term, and it must be pro-ourselves, pro-ASEAN. Not pro-China, or pro-US, or pro anybody else.

I therefore would like to applaud both Cambodia and Vietnam for having not over-reacted over the Kampuchea Krom issue. I also believe that the Vietnamese mean it when they tell me they would not interfere in the internal affairs of Cambodia, as evidenced by the distance they keep from the Cambodian opposition. Apparently they have refrained from having close contact with the opposition in Cambodia in due consideration for the good relationship between the two countries and governments. I would suggest that while this keeps the peace in not giving one another the reason to suspect each other's suspicions, it is no longer sufficient for the long term. The essential factor for a sustainable long term relationship is no longer just the matter of the two governments having trust in each other. As such, increased understanding – not superficial ones – between the two nations, rather than just between the two governments, should be the way forward. I am not calling for increased intensity in people's diplomacy in the form that was conducted through contact between government-controlled friendship associations a-la the Cold War. Structurally and materially, they have to be different. There should be genuine contact and seeking of understanding between both sides at the local and grassroots level; greater effort at increasing border economic benefits; promoting ethnic diversity and autonomy within the framework of recognition for current national boundaries; the promotion of Khmer culture on the Vietnamese side, and Vietnamese culture on the Cambodian side, and promoting the welfare of hundreds of thousands of migrants from both sides. The measures may include Vietnamese government having exchanges with opposition parties in Cambodia. In addition, the two governments may wish to look for new areas of political/security, as well as social cooperation, so that the trust in each other among the people are strengthened.

The future of Vietnamese foreign policy: Conclusion

All countries seek to live in peace with their neighbours and the world in order to promote development, and Vietnam is no different. The nightmare for Vietnam is to be on the backfoot on all four fronts of its foreign relations – China, Laos, Cambodia, and the

international community. Isolation will cut them off from the global markets of trade and investments, and development. And the seas to the east of Vietnam now face a huge Chinese military presence. Therefore, peace with China and Cambodia are goals at the forefront of its foreign policy strategy.

Yet, what can Vietnam do when it appears to have irreconcilable differences with its giant neighbour over a sacrosanct matter like territorial sovereignty? Here is another question to answer the first: would Vietnam invite a major power to balance up and counter China? Similarly, Cambodia also faces the same questions, but Cambodia's situation vis-à-vis Vietnam is quite different. Vietnam and Cambodia have a 1985 and 2005 border agreed to by both governments and there appears to be no other territorial disputes – unless the Kamphuea Krom issue rises from the dead. The border has also been demarcated completely in June 2012. But between China and Vietnam, there are current territorial disputes in the South China Sea, and both sides label their claims as undisputable. If Cambodia's relationship with Vietnam is a function of Vietnam's relationship with China, then it also means that so long as the South China Sea disputes are not resolved, there will continue to be potential problems in Cambodia's relationship with Vietnam, in so far as Cambodia is willing to continue to allow its relationship with Vietnam to be a function of Vietnam's relationship with China. What I understand, in short, is that there appears to be irreconcilable differences between China and Vietnam, but there are no such differences between Cambodia and Vietnam. Thus, the governments of Cambodia and Vietnam should ensure that no new differences surface and that steps are taken to promote understanding and harmony.

Foreign policy-wise I do not see Vietnam tilting towards China or the US in a strategic way that is in anyway resembling its decision to sign a de-facto alliance with the Soviet Union in 1978. Not unless China takes further steps in putting pressures on Vietnam such that the domestic support for current Vietnamese policy is no longer tenable or could lead to a drastic fall in support for the communist regime even among its die-hard supporters. This would force a change to a new policy that sees Vietnam taking the position of 1978 again. The ball is actually in the Chinese court.

Vietnamese foreign policy today is very different from the high noon of the Cold War. Today it seeks to live in peace with all neighbours but yet faces enormous challenges from China. It will seek a place in the sun that lives by international law and regimes, is friendly with all friends and walks the same journey as countries in its neighbourhood. To survive in the international politics of the post-Cold War, countries need both international laws and political support, and good friends who are big, strong, and friendly. Vietnam has gone into all the necessary avenues to pursue these strategies, but how much it can achieve does not depend on Vietnam's own efforts alone, but also on the situation of international politics. If the US and Europe are deeply engaged and seek to assert their interest in this region, and with a strong ASEAN, then the options for Vietnam will be much more than when any one of those factors are absent.

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