CAMBODIA–
THE 1989 PARIS
PEACE CONFERENCE

Background Analysis and Documents

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INTRODUCTION

THE ROAD TO THE PARIS CONFERENCE: THE CAMBODIAN PEACE PROCESS IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

From 30 July to 30 August 1989, representatives from nineteen countries (including the People's Republic of Kampuchea [PRK]), the United Nations, and the Khmer factions opposing the PRK regime in Cambodia met in Paris in what may be regarded as the most ambitious and elaborate international effort to find a solution to the Cambodian conflict. The Paris conference was the culmination of years of tortuous efforts in a peace process marked alternately by hope, frustration, and stalemate. A mood of cautious optimism prevailed among the participants at the opening of the conference. Many delegates believed that it provided the best chance thus far for a settlement of one of the bloodiest and intractable regional conflicts in the Third World.[1] Contributing to this outlook was the fact that the conference had been preceded by a phase of intense diplomatic efforts, all of which had signaled considerable willingness among the contending parties to reach a settlement. Among these were two major regional conferences, several rounds of "national reconciliation" talks between the Cambodian resistance factions and the PRK regime and a seeming desire for compromise and accommodation shown by the principal external powers involved in the conflict, China and the Soviet Union. At the end, the Paris conference was to fall far short of providing a decisive breakthrough toward the resolution of the Cambodian conflict. But few critics could justifiably blame the conference itself for failing to end the conflict. It is the events preceding the conference, and the nature and issues of the Cambodian peace process as a whole, which explain the lack of success at Paris.

In this Introduction we trace the genesis of the Paris conference and critically examine the peace process as it unfolded since the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia in the closing days of 1978. The history of the Cambodian peace process parallels the complexity that underlies the origins and sources of the conflict itself. The Cambodian conflict is many-pronged; it is at the same time a contest for power between op-

[1]For example, Singapore's ambassador to the United Nations, who attended the Paris talks, believed that there was a 50 percent chance of a breakthrough at the Paris conference. Tommy Koh, "The Paris Conference on Cambodia: A Multilateral Negotiation that Failed," *Negotiation Journal*, vol. 6, no. 1 (Jan. 1990), p. 86.

posing Cambodian political groups, a particularly acute manifestation of geopolitical rivalry among two Great Powers, China and the Soviet Union, and, last but not the least, both a symptom of and a catalyst for regional polarization between Communist and non-Communist Southeast Asia. The progress or otherwise of the peace process, therefore, needs to be assessed by looking at movement at all three levels of the conflict.

A detailed history of peace-making efforts on Cambodia is well beyond the scope of this chapter. The aim here is to comment on the principal diplomatic milestones on the road to the Paris conference and to provide an analysis of the potential for conflict resolution at the Paris meeting. The review is presented in three parts. The first analyzes the factors that contributed to the stalemate, both military and diplomatic, which characterized the conflict from the time of the Vietnamese invasion until 1986–1987. The second looks at the changing conditions and perceptions of the various key players in the conflict that created hopes for progress in regional negotiations within the framework of "cocktail diplomacy" during the 1987–1989 period. Of particular importance here is the organization of the two Jakarta Informal Meetings (JIM) and the impact of these meetings within the peace process. The concluding section evaluates the prospects for a breakthrough in the peace process that formed the very rationale for undertaking a major international exercise in peace-making such as the Paris conference.

I. CAMBODIA: THE ANATOMY OF A COMPLEX STALEMATE, 1979–1986

The year 1979 ushered in a new turning point in the history of Indochina. In late December 1978, Vietnam sent some 120,000 troops into Cambodia after two years of conflict between the two Communist countries. Since then, Vietnam began its occupation and established a new pro-Vietnam Cambodian regime known as the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK), now under the leadership of Heng Samrin and Hun Sen. The international community responded to the Vietnamese action with strong condemnation. Now known as the Third Indochina Conflict, Cambodian–Vietnamese hostilities became internationalized. Two opposing camps emerged: one consisting of the three Indochinese states (Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam), the Soviet Union, and other Soviet allies; the other made up of three Cambodian resistance factions (the Kampuchean People's National Liberation Front (KPNLF), led by former Prime Minister Son Sann; the National United Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful and Co-operative Cambodia (FUNCINPEC) headed by Prince Sihanouk; and the Khmer Rouge, represented by Khieu Samphan), the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), China, the United States, and other Western countries. Despite some support from countries in the Soviet-dominated bloc, the three Indochinese states have become isolated, economically, diplomatically and politically. By 1986, the Cambodian crisis had remained largely unresolved.

As historians and policymakers concerned with the conflict would well recognize, nothing illustrated the formidable challenge of peace-making in Cambodia more than the difficulty experienced in getting the various parties directly or indirectly involved in the conflict to agree on a suitable negotiation forum. The disagreement centered around the contradicting interpretations of the conflict put forward by the two opposing camps.

Vietnam viewed the conflict in Cambodia as having originated in a domestic power struggle among rival Cambodian factions. The Khmer Rouge faction led by Pol Pot was overthrown by a Cambodian national salvation front (later known as the PRK). Hanoi's deployment of substantial troops in Cambodia to sustain the PRK was justified under the terms of a 1979 security treaty signed between the two parties. Thus, Hanoi rejected the view that it was a direct party to the Cambodian conflict and insisted that the question of withdrawal of its troops could only materialize at the request of the PRK. In its view, the PRK was the sole legitimate Cambodian government.

Despite its rejection that it was a direct party in the Cambodian conflict, Vietnam acknowledged the wider geopolitical dimensions of the Cambodian situation. In this context, the Vietnamese argued that their troops stationed in Cambodia served as a defensive move to counter the threat of Chinese expansionism into both Cambodia and Vietnam. Thus, a Vietnamese withdrawal could only be possible after the Chinese threat receded.

Vietnam's position on the Cambodian conflict shaped its attitude toward peace negotiations. According to Hanoi, the situation in Cambodia was "irreversible" and hence non-negotiable. However, if ASEAN states, especially Thailand, felt threatened by developments in Cambodia, this concern could be addressed by direct talks between Bangkok and Phnom Penh. Vietnam would also be willing to participate in direct talks with the ASEAN states to discuss Thai security concerns within the framework of the ASEAN's regional security formula, the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN). By claiming that it was not a direct party in the Cambodian civil war, Vietnam wanted in fact to make sure that it would not have to submit to the authority of an international forum.

The Vietnamese position was clearly articulated in a four-point proposal which emerged at the end of a conference held by the foreign ministers of the three Indochinese states, held in Vientiane on 17–18 July 1980. The proposal, made in the name of the PRK, was intended to alleviate Thai–Cambodian border tensions. It pointed out that the worsening regional situation required a mutual understanding between ASEAN and the Indochinese states. Such an understanding would entail mutual acceptance by the two sides' respective "legitimate security interests." It proposed the creation of a demilitarized zone on the Thai–Cambodian border to be supervised by a joint commission and discussion between the two countries to resolve other "relevant" issues of mutual

concern, to be confirmed "by an international conference or by some form of international guarantee." The proposal, prefaced by a reference to an earlier offer, made in January 1980 by the Indochinese foreign ministers, expressed a willingness to sign non-aggression treaties with Thailand and other ASEAN countries. On 25 September 1980, Vietnam and the PRK confirmed their rejection of the idea of an international conference on Cambodia put forward by ASEAN. This conference would bring together all the adversaries involved in the conflict. Instead, Hanoi tried to persuade Thailand to accept a partial withdrawal of its forces.

Vietnam's perspective on the Cambodian situation conflicted sharply with that of the ASEAN states. The latter's position was coloured by a number of perceived implications of the Cambodian conflict for the wider regional security environment. The Vietnamese invasion not only ended ASEAN's hopes for an era of relative peace and stability in Southeast Asia after the United States' disengagement from Indochina but also marked the beginning of heightened Great Power rivalry. The Sino-Vietnamese confrontation evidently aggravated the existing rivalry between Beijing and Moscow. In addition, for the first time, non-Communist Southeast Asian states perceived a direct military threat from the on-going conflict in Indochina. As the "frontline state" vis-à-vis Indochina, Thailand particularly felt threatened by a Vietnamese expansionism.

For ASEAN, the central issue in the conflict was the Vietnamese invasion and occupation of Cambodia, rather than a domestic power struggle among the Cambodian factions, as Hanoi would have liked the international community to believe. In response to the Vietnamese action, therefore, ASEAN's main objective was to deny Vietnam the possibility of imposing a fait accompli on Cambodia. The Vietnamese invasion violated ASEAN's policy designed to prevent intervention by one country in the affairs of another within the region. If Vietnam's action had gone unopposed, politically, it would have created a dangerous precedent. Accordingly, ASEAN's strategy was two-fold: to withhold recognition and legitimacy from the PRK, while mobilizing support for the overthrown Khmer Rouge regime; and to ensure Hanoi's international isolation, both diplomatically and economically.[2]

In ASEAN's perspective, any meaningful negotiation to settle the conflict required the unconditional withdrawal of Vietnamese forces from Cambodia. There was, however, some flexibility in ASEAN's demands. Specifically, ASEAN states did not press for an immediate withdrawal. The Thai foreign minister, for instance, hinted that the withdrawal could take one to two years. Similarly, Indonesia and Malaysia were not entirely opposed to a partial withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Cambodia,

[2]Chan Heng Chee, "The Interests and Role of ASEAN in the Indochina Conflict," paper presented to the International Conference on Indochina and Problems of Security and Stability in Southeast Asia, held at Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, 19–21 June 1980, p. 12.

pending a political settlement over the crucial issue of power sharing among the Cambodian factions. This position implied that if such a settlement were not to be achieved, Vietnamese forces could remain as a guarantor of the PRK. However, the ASEAN states generally insisted that negotiations to settle the Cambodian conflict focus on the Vietnamese invasion. Such negotiations could best be conducted within the framework of an international conference on Cambodia.

From the outset, ASEAN concentrated its diplomatic energies at the United Nations, mobilizing international disapprobation of Hanoi and securing approval for an International Conference on Kampuchea (ICK). At the same time, it rejected Hanoi's proposals regarding talks between ASEAN and the Indochinese states. In ASEAN's view, such bilateral or regional dialogues would be tantamount to an acceptance of the Vietnamese invasion and of the PRK's legitimacy. ASEAN also feared that Hanoi would use bilateral and regional conferences to divert attention from its military occupation of Cambodia by raising the issue of China's strategic ambitions in the region, an issue on which ASEAN remained divided.[3] Malaysia and Indonesia were not totally averse to the concept of a regional dialogue. The members of the association, however, were unanimous that any such dialogue should focus on the Cambodian problem rather than reflect Hanoi's attitude toward China.

Thus, while ASEAN advocated peace negotiations, the framework it proposed was designed to serve the security interests of its members. Those interests centered on the need to defend Thailand and to prevent Vietnamese hegemonism in Indochina. As long as Vietnam refused to budge from its view that the situation in Cambodia was irreversible, its offer of good neighbourly relations with ASEAN was unacceptable to the latter. In short, the different views of the conflict held by ASEAN and Vietnam and these parties' contending approaches to peace negotiations constituted the first major factor in the complex Cambodian deadlock.

Given the military stalemate that developed at the beginning of the 1980s, this factor became primordial. The impossibility of gaining a clear victory on the ground forced the different parties to adopt a strategy articulated essentially around diplomatic initiatives. The defence of a particular perspective of the conflict was in this light the means of gaining an advantage over the opposing parties. Vietnam could see its protégé in Phnom Penh gain legitimacy if the conflict in Cambodia was portrayed as hostilities between Cambodians. The resistance and its backers, on the other hand, hoped to convince the world community that the Cambodian situation was in fact an international conflict caused by

[3]Larry A. Niksch, "Vietnam and ASEAN: Conflict and Negotiation Over Cambodia," paper prepared for the conference on Southeast Asia: Problems and Prospects sponsored by the Defense Intelligence College and the Georgetown Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, D.C., 4–5 Dec. 1984, pp. 6–8.

Vietnam so as to completely discredit the PRK. Each side could see time as playing in its favour by forcing the adoption of its definition of the Cambodian situation by the international community. A prolonged conflict accredited the civil war thesis by demonstrating that the installation of the PRK was a fait accompli and that this regime, rather than Vietnam, should participate in peace negotiations. Protracted hostilities could also be seen by the resistance as forcing the adoption of its perspective on the Cambodian situation. The international economic embargo imposed on Vietnam after the events of December 1978 was weakening the Vietnamese economy. Hanoi would eventually have to settle the conflict; its presence at the negotiation table would be an acknowledgement of its actions on Cambodian soil.

Intra-ASEAN differences also served to compound the stalemate by contributing to greater intransigence on the part of Vietnam. Hanoi calculated that, in time, ASEAN's unity would collapse and international opposition to the PRK would diminish. A particularly damaging indication of the intra-ASEAN differences over Cambodia was the so-called Kuantan principle, jointly enunciated by the president of Indonesia and the prime minister of Malaysia at their meeting in the Malaysian town of Kuantan on 26–28 March 1980. The Kuantan principle contained elements of a possible trade-off between the security interests of Vietnam and that of ASEAN as defined by Kuala Lumpur and Jakarta. Accordingly, Vietnam was to heed the latter's desire to see an end to its dependence on the Soviet Union in exchange for a recognition by ASEAN of Vietnam's security interests in Indochina. The Kuantan formula reflected a growing concern on the part of Jakarta that the Cambodian conflict, if unresolved, would become a grave threat to security of all regional states. Thailand particularly feared for its security. Hanoi and the PRK repeatedly warned Bangkok against providing sanctuary for the Cambodian resistance guerrillas.

A more basic factor behind the Kuantan principle was that the ASEAN states held differing perceptions of the Sino-Vietnamese strategic rivalry. The Kuantan formula clearly reflected the Malaysian and Indonesian view that China posed the real long-term threat to Southeast Asia and that Vietnam could be a bulwark against Chinese expansionism. This view conflicted with the strategic perceptions of Singapore and Thailand, both identified as the "hardliners" within ASEAN. They considered that Vietnam constituted the main menace to regional peace and security. Malaysia's and Indonesia's interest in offering a quid pro quo to Hanoi was shaped by the belief that a Cambodian stalemate sustained by China's "bleed-Vietnam-white" policy would not serve ASEAN security interests. Rather, it would lead to a more entrenched Soviet–Vietnamese strategic alliance and contribute to a greater degree of Chinese influence in the region.

The Kuantan formula proved unacceptable to Thailand and Singapore. The Thai prime minister pointed out that as long as Vietnam refused to withdraw troops from Cambodia, any concession to Hanoi, such as recognition of its security interests in Indochina, would be ill-timed. The Kuantan principle suffered an early demise, as indicated in the ASEAN foreign ministers' response to the Vietnamese military incursion into Thai territory on 23 June 1980. At their meeting on 26 June 1980, the ASEAN ministers closed ranks and reverted to their original position by calling for the total withdrawal of Vietnamese forces from Cambodia and by reaffirming their continued recognition of the Khmer Rouge regime and the idea of "an independent, neutral and non-aligned Kampuchea, free from foreign interference." The ministers did not indicate that they would recognize Vietnam's security interests in Indochina. Although individual ASEAN countries, especially Indonesia and Malaysia, hinted that dialogue with Hanoi should resume, the attitude of compromise evident in the Kuantan principle was no longer apparent.[4]

This whole episode revealed the polarization of ASEAN into the so-called hardline and moderate camps. Furthermore, it contributed to the Cambodian stalemate by strengthening Hanoi's belief that ASEAN's internal divisions would favour its strategy of holding out until international disfavour with Vietnam changed. A major casualty of the diplomatic deadlock was the International Conference on Kampuchea (ICK) held under the auspices of the United Nations in mid-July 1981. ASEAN was the major force in bringing about this conference. For the organization, such a conference was essential in helping the international community recognize that the central issue in the Cambodian problem was Vietnam's invasion and occupation of Cambodia.[5]

The ICK, boycotted by Hanoi and the Soviet Union, was marred by a Sino–ASEAN rift. In this respect, it illustrated the presence of another factor conducive to the stalemate. Although ASEAN persuaded China to attend the conference, the two parties differed over the terms of an eventual settlement. ASEAN pushed for a formula (adopted the previous month at a meeting of its foreign ministers) which would have seen the simultaneous disarming of all four Khmer factions in the immediate aftermath of the total withdrawal of Vietnamese forces from Cambodia. The ASEAN proposal also called for an interim administration which would rule Cambodia until free elections under United Na-

[4]Justus M. van der Kroef, "ASEAN, Hanoi, and the Kampuchean Conflict: Between Kuantan and a Third Alternative", *Asian Survey*, vol. 21, no. 5 (May 1981), pp. 516–21.

[5]In the Conference, ASEAN presented this proposal: ". . . a cease-fire in Cambodia [and a UN peace-keeping force to supervise it], the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Cambodia, 'disarming of the various conflicting factions' in Cambodia under UN supervision, the establishment of a 'temporary administration' in Cambodia pending 'free elections,' and formation of an international committee to "negotiate" with Hanoi, Moscow, and others on a Cambodian settlememt." Justus M. van der Kroef, "The United States and the Cambodian Problem: Political Realities and Policy Options," *Asian Affairs: An American Review*, vol. 9, no. 2 (Nov./Dec. 1981), p.72. Van der Kroef cited an interview with the Malaysian Foreign Affairs Minister Tengku Ahmad Rithauddeen; Agence France Presse, Kuala Lumpur, 8 July 1981 (Foreign Broadcast Information Service, 9 July 1981). Also see "The ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Manila," *OANA*, (19 June 1981), *BBC Summary of World Broadcast the Far East*, 22 June 1981, p. FE/6755/A3/1. It is at this meeting that the proposition was first presented.

tions supervision were held. The underlying calculation was that such a proposal would address Hanoi's concerns about the possibility of a return to power of the Khmer Rouge.

China, backed by the United States, rejected the ASEAN proposal on the grounds that it gave equal status to the Vietnamese aggressor and the legitimate Cambodian government. Beijing's representatives asserted that the Khmer Rouge were willing and capable of holding free and fair elections by themselves and therefore should be restored to power in Phnom Penh. China's position was disturbing to ASEAN. The members of the Association suspected that Beijing's main interest was not to find a compromise but rather to use the Cambodian situation to bog down Hanoi in a protracted engagement. That way, Hanoi's capacity to contest with China for influence in Southeast Asia would be seriously damaged.[6]

Faced with Chinese intransigence, the ICK was rescued from complete collapse only by a last minute attempt by France to put forward a compromise formula. The final statement of the conference called for "appropriate arrangements to ensure that armed Kampuchean factions will not be able to prevent or disrupt the holding of free elections, or intimidate or coerce the populations in the electoral process." Despite the face-saving gesture, the failure of the ICK was a major blow to the Cambodian peace process, aggravating the stalemate that had already developed over the refusal of the Indochinese states to accept ASEAN's proposals for peace negotiations. The disagreement between China and ASEAN meant that the latter's efforts to bring about peace in Cambodia could not carry much weight in the international community.

A third factor contributing to the stalemate was fragmented relations among the three Cambodian resistance factions, namely the Khmer Rouge, the KPNLF, and the FUNCINPEC. The fragmentation made it very difficult for ASEAN to succeed in its diplomatic efforts. It is ironic that ASEAN, which has led the international opposition to the Vietnamese invasion, spent as much energy on this endeavour as on achieving cooperation and unity among the Cambodian factions which were supposed to provide a credible alternative to the PRK. Maintaining a facade of unity among the Cambodian factions was essential in light of the unsavoury reputation of the Khmer Rouge. This enterprise proved difficult in view of the atmosphere of distrust that had marked relations among the three Cambodian factions despite their common objective in resisting the Vietnamese occupation.

The three factions had good reason for their mutual suspicion. Reduced to some 25,000 forces in the aftermath of the Vietnamese invasion, the Khmer Rouge still outnumbered the other two resistance factions, the KPNLF with only 5,000 armed rebels and the FUNCINPEC

[6]Michael Leifer, *ASEAN and the Security of Southeast Asia* (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 116–17.

with no strong military base.[7] This preponderance gave them a diplomatic weight that was resented by the non-Communist factions. Son Sann was adamant in his refusal to cooperate with the Khmer Rouge as part of a new coalition. Neither was he prepared to accept Prince Sihanouk as the leader of such a coalition because of the tensions that had developed between the two men in the past. Sihanouk, for his part, remained profoundly distrustful of the Khmer Rouge because he had purged them during the 1960's and now feared that they might seek revenge. Also, he referred to the fact that they had killed several members of his family. The Khmer Rouge, mindful of their experiences with the Prince, were equally wary of his leadership of a new Cambodian resistance coalition.

Because of the contentious situation among the Cambodian factions, both ASEAN and China exerted pressure on them to come to a compromise. These efforts paved the way toward the formation of the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK) in June 1982. The creation of the CGDK represented a diplomatic breakthrough for ASEAN. The presence of this new coalition did little, however, to bridge the gulf of mistrust and rivalry among its members. The chronic absence of mutual confidence within the CGDK remained a major obstacle to peace-making efforts in the Cambodian conflict.

Soon after the formation of the CGDK, Sihanouk realized that the Coalition Government's strategy, influenced by ASEAN and China, placed too much emphasis on opposing the Vietnamese presence in Cambodia. In this respect, it neglected the prospect for long-term peace within the country through a political process of accommodation among the Cambodian factions. This prompted the Prince to propose talks on "national reconciliation" between his representatives and those of the PRK. Those talks would enable them to seek a formula for a "national union government" that would comprise the CGDK and the PRK. The task of this new government would be to arrange a cease-fire and hold elections.

The concept of "national reconciliation" was anathema to the Chinese. Beijing's position paralleled its insistence on the restoration of the Khmer Rouge regime to power in Cambodia. Although a new party program released by the Khmer Rouge in 1985 indicated its willingness to negotiate toward a formula for national reconciliation, most observers agreed that this was a diplomatic ploy aimed at winning sympathy for the resistance coalition, rather than a serious effort to break the stalemate.[8]

The stalemate in Cambodia was reinforced by a fourth major factor: the state of the geopolitical rivalry among great powers. Since the

[7]*Strategic Survey 1981–1982* (London: International Institute of Strategic Studies, 1982), p. 98.

[8]Justus M. van der Kroef, "Delaying Peace: The Case of Cambodia," *Bulletin of Peace Proposals*, vol. 17, no. 1 (1986), p. 64.

Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979, superpower relations were hardly conducive to dialogue on the resolution of regional conflict. Quite to the contrary, the advent of the Reagan Administration saw a dramatic intensification of United States efforts to resist perceived Soviet gains in the Third World through the imposition of a heavy political, economic, and military burden on Moscow. The White House saw regional conflicts as a major factor in the deterioration of East–West relations and as a justification for a massive American military modernization program. The Reagan Administration's attitude toward the Cambodian conflict was determined by the policy framework governing its overall approach to regional conflicts. Cambodia, which was in Washington's perspective a direct result of Moscow's military and economic backing for Vietnam, was included among the targets of the Reagan doctrine aimed at achieving a "roll back" of Soviet geopolitical advances in the Third World.

Yet, because of China's deep involvement in the Cambodian conflict, Washington did not see the need for any direct engagement. As John Esterline indicated, "the present situation costs the U.S. very little in a military sense—since the PRC bears the burden of resisting the Soviets and their clients in Hanoi and Phnom Penh—and permits the U.S. to reconfirm security arrangements in Southeast Asia."[9] In addition, Washington did not want to be seen by the American public as getting involved once again in Indochina. In light of this, the United States only provided approximately US$ 5 million worth of non-military aid per year to the anti-Communist Cambodian factions.

Another facet of the Great Power equation was the Sino–Soviet rivalry. Since the late 1950s, relations between Moscow and Beijing had become increasingly strained. After the American departure from Indochina in 1975, the region became one of the main foci of competition between the two powers. As the Khmer Rouge regime and Vietnam intensified their hostility toward each other, China and the Soviet Union took sides. Moscow and Hanoi signed a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation in November 1978. In the meantime, China reiterated its support for the Khmer Rouge regime and, in February 1979, attacked Vietnam in retaliation for the latter's invasion of Cambodia.

The Cambodian conflict became the principal obstacle that prevented the normalization of Sino–Soviet relations.

> China has stated that three preconditions must be met by the Soviet Union before any marked improvement in Sino-Soviet relations [i.e. better party to party relations] could take place: a reduction of Soviet troops along the Chinese border with the Soviet Union and Mongolia; a withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan; and a halt to Soviet support of the Vietnamese occupation of Kampuchea. Of these three preconditions, China has publicly stated that the last one cited is the most important and therefore the key element for any normalization of Sino–Soviet relations.[10]

Until 1986, the Soviet Union refused to discuss the Cambodian conflict with China on the grounds that Sino–Soviet talks should be exclusively based on bilateral questions. The absence of progress in relations between Beijing and Moscow meant that the Cambodian peace process was impeded.

The military situation remained blocked throughout the early 1980s. Many Vietnamese offensives failed to wipe out the resistance camps. In fact, in July 1984 the PRK admitted that the resistance had become a serious threat to its stability. At the same time, however, the CGDK was hardly capable of inflicting a military defeat on Vietnam or toppling the PRK.

Matters were not helped by the Vietnamese dry season offensive of 1984–1985. This offensive wiped out almost every resistance camp inside Cambodia and sent thousands of civilians into refugee camps in Thailand. The CGDK soon regrouped, however. Khmer Rouge attacks inside Cambodia resumed. In 1986, battalion-sized units penetrated deep inside Cambodia and waged a fierce battle with Vietnamese forces. The Sihanoukist forces also improved their performance, while the KPNLF continued to mount small-scale guerrilla attacks. Moreover, by now, Chinese pressure had led the three resistance factions to cooperate more effectively with one another.

In summary, by the end of the first half of the 1980s, the military and diplomatic situation in the Cambodian conflict showed little sign of movement toward victory for either of the contending parties. On the one hand, Hanoi's goal of extending its influence over Indochina had not been fully realized; Cambodia remained a battlefield. The PRK was still in a vulnerable position as the battle lingered on. The Soviet Union's continued diplomatic support and military assistance to Vietnam and the PRK, though considerable, could not guarantee its Indochinese allies' victory either.

On the other hand, efforts by China and ASEAN to put pressure on Hanoi both politically, through condemnation and isolation, and militarily, through backing for the military efforts of the CGDK, had not resulted in a Vietnamese rollback. In fact, China's "bleed-Vietnam-white" strategy might have been counterproductive. As the *Strategic Survey* pointed out: "The strategy of diplomatic isolation and support for the Khmer resistance's guerrilla campaign of attrition, which ASEAN, China and the West pursued, far from forcing concessions from her [Vietnam], only reinforced her intransigence and her insistence that

[9]John Esterline, "Vietnam in 1986: An Uncertain Tiger," *Asian Survey*, vol. 27, no. 1, [Jan. 1987], p. 100.

[10]Leif Rosenberger, "The Soviet-Vietnamese Alliance and Kampuchea," *Survey*, (27), Fall-Winter 1983, pp.226–227.

the situation in Kampuchea was both 'irreversible' and an 'internal' matter."[11]

II. BREAKING THE STALEMATE: THE ORIGINS OF "COCKTAIL DIPLOMACY," 1987–1989

In the face of the ongoing Cambodian deadlock, many negotiation formulas were developed in the hope of generating a diplomatic breakthrough. The first attempts to bring about movement in the peace process essentially resulted from efforts made by ASEAN. One was the so-called five-plus-two formula. This formula would have brought together the five members of ASEAN (Brunei was not a member of the association at this time), Hanoi, and Laos. Had there been any meetings between these parties, none of the Cambodian factions would have been included. This formula would have the advantage of preventing a confrontation between the participants over the issue of who represented the legitimate Cambodian authority.

The five-plus-two formula was discussed at the Seventh Summit of the Non-Aligned in March 1983. Malaysia was the driving force behind the initiative, though it most probably worked in concert with Vietnam.[12] Both looked favourably on negotiations where the Chinese influence could be curtailed. Beijing, however, was not about to abandon its control over the negotiation process. Furthermore, it could not let the legitimacy of the CGDK be questioned. Therefore China objected to the formula and, in effect, signaled its demise.

Another attempt to find an appropriate discussion formula was made in April 1985. Indonesia and Malaysia got the other members of ASEAN to approve the idea of "proximity talks." The formula entailed indirect negotiations between the CGDK and the PRK in which ASEAN officials would act as go-betweens. This concept also evolved from a desire to get talks going even if there was disagreement on the legitimate holder of Cambodian authority.

> Justification for this unusual arrangement [proximity talks]—as in the case of the five-plus-two formula—stemmed from the face-saving necessity of not forcing the two rival claimants to Cambodian government legitimacy to confront each other directly and, equally important, not forcing their respective patrons to be in the same room with them.[13]

Under pressure from China, the formula was modified so that it would in effect bring about discussions between the CGDK and Vietnam. Hanoi then insisted that the PRK had to be the main interlocutor of the resistance in any negotiations on the Cambodian conflict. After some initial reservations, Vietnam was in essence agreeing to the original formula. A joint communiqué of the Indochinese foreign ministers' meeting stated that the idea "deserve[d] examination." However, Vietnam and the PRK adamantly refused to accept Khmer Rouge representatives within the CGDK camp. The prospect for "national reconciliation" in Cambodia, according to the view held in Hanoi and in Phnom Penh, was conditional upon the "elimination of the genocidal Pol Pot clique." Given all these different objections, the "proximity talks" concept failed to produce any significant progress in the search for a peaceful settlement in Cambodia.

Beijing's opposition to many of the diplomatic efforts of Malaysia and Indonesia created tensions between the Chinese and the two Southeast Asian countries. It seemed to Vietnam that the coalition set up in response to its action in Cambodia would slowly weaken over time. Hanoi also found reason for optimism in the victories of the 1984–1985 dry season offensive. This led, in the first part of 1985, to accouncements about the possibility of a total Vietnamese withdrawal from Cambodia. Hanoi first stated that the partial withdrawal of its troops, already occurring, it said, since the beginning of the 1980s, would lead to a complete withdrawal by 1995. It then moved this deadline to 1990. The offer of a total withdrawal was linked, however, to the "elimination of the genocidal Pol Pot clique." It also emphasized the possibility of "an arrangement between the PRK and Sihanouk." Hanoi was in fact trying to impose a framework whereby a withdrawal of its troops from Cambodia would still leave it in control of the country; the Khmer Rouge would no longer be an effective threat, and the PRK would remain in place.[14]

The idea of talks between all the Cambodian factions was still on the agenda, though. On 17 March 1986, the CGDK put forward an eight-point peace plan.[15] Among other things, this plan proposed direct nego-

[11] *Strategic Survey 1982–1983* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1983), p. 95.

[12] Justus van der Kroef, "Kampuchea: The Road to Finlandization 1983," *Asian Profile* vol. 13, no. 3 (June 1985), p. 228.

[13] Justus van der Kroef, "'Proximity Cocktails' and 'Provisional Salvation;' Cambodia's Tortuous Course," *Issues and Studies*, vol. 22, no. 4 (April 1986), p. 123.

[14] Nguyen Co Thach's declaration of June 1985 is as follows: "At present, almost all countries have shared the same views on the fundamental questions concerning a political solution to the Kampuchean issue. The first and mot [sic] essential point is elimination of the genocidal Pol Pot clique and complete withdrawal of Vietnamese army volunteers from Kampuchea. The second one, which is also of great significance, is that all countries must respect Kampuchea's national rights. Most of them have welcomed an arrangement between the PRK and Sihanouk. The third one is that all South-East nations must co-exist in peace and co-operation in the framework of a peaceful and stable South-East nations. The fourth one is that other countries must respect the national rights of South-East nations, refrain from aggression and interference in their internal affairs." "Vietnamese Foreign Minister On Need for Negotiations on Cambodia," Hanoi (20 June 1985), *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts The Far East*, 22 June 1985, p. FE/7984/A3/3; "Indochinese Foreign Ministers' Meeting," SPK (15 Aug. 1985), *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts The Far East*, 17 Aug. 1985, p. FE/8032/A3/2.

[15] The eight points are as follows:

"1. The tripartite Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK) calls on Vietnam to get into negotiation with it in order to discuss about the process of the withdrawal of the Vietnamese troops from Kampuchea. We do not demand Vietnam to withdraw all its forces from Kampuchea at once. We accept the withdrawal of the Vietnamese forces from Kampuchea in two phases within a definite period of time.

tiations between Hanoi and the CGDK leading to the withdrawal of Vietnamese forces from Cambodia. It also stated the need for negotiations between the PRK and the CGDK to establish a new four-party coalition government pending elections under the supervision of the U.N.

The call for a "national reconciliation" was remarkable because it meant that the PRK was now recognized as an interlocutor by all the members of the Coalition Government and China. This movement could be seen as a response to the apparent good will found in Vietnam's proposals for the withdrawal of its troops from Cambodia. However, the core of the CGDK position remained intact. The Cambodian situation was still considered an international conflict created by Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia. Accordingly, the PRK, in fact the instrument of Vietnamese control over the country, had to be dismantled.

At the end of 1986, Hanoi showed some signs of flexibility on the question of Khmer Rouge representation in eventual talks. A distinction was made between "leaders" and "followers" of the Pol Pot regime, with the elements of the latter deemed acceptable as interlocutors.

This sign of flexibility was followed by movement on the part of Sihanouk. In July 1987, the prince eased his insistence on direct CGDK–Hanoi talks and lent his approval to the idea of informal deliberations among the four Cambodian factions. The latter formula for talks, dubbed as a "cocktail party," had been energetically advocated by Mochtar Kusumaatmadja, the foreign minister of Indonesia. Subsequent talks between Mochtar and Vietnamese Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach in Ho Chi Minh City on 27–29 July resulted in a joint statement calling for

"Other countries may take part in the negotiation according to their judgement in order to help bring about a political solution to the problem of Kampuchea.

"2. After the agreement on the process of the withdrawal of the Vietnamese troops from Kampuchea, there will be a cease-fire so as to allow Vietnam to withdraw its forces according to the said agreement.

"3. Both the withdrawal of the Vietnamese troops and the cease-fire must be supervised directly by a UN observer group.

"4. After the first phase of the Vietnamese troops' withdrawal, Heng Samrin and his faction get into negotiation with the tripartite CGDK in order to set up a quadripartite coalition government of Kampuchea with Samdech Norodom Sihanouk as President and HE Son Sann as Prime Minister in conformity with the spirit of the great national union and national reconciliation so that each of the four parties should have the same rights as political forces in the national community.

"5. The quadripartite coalition government of Kampuchea will hold free elections under the supervision of a UN observer group.

"6. Kampuchea will be restored as an independent, united in her own territorial integrity, having a liberal democratic regime, peaceful, neutral and non-aligned country without any base of foreign troops on her soil. Kampuchea's neutrality will be guaranteed by the UN with the presence of its observer group on the spot for the first two or three years.

"7. Kampuchea welcomes all countries from the West as well as from the East and neutral and non-aligned countries to help rebuild the country.

"8. As for Vietnam, Kampuchea independent, united in her own territorial integrity, peaceful, neutral and non-aligned, is willing to sign with it a non-aggression and peaceful coexistence treaty and to establish economic and trade relations between the two countries for ever."

"New CGDK Proposal in Peking," Xinhua, [17 March 1986], *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts The Far East*, 18 March 1986, p. FE/8210/A3/1.

"an informal meeting between the two Cambodia sides [to] be held without preconditions or labels," and on an equal footing between the two sides. The "cocktail party" concept called for a two-stage negotiation. The first stage would see all the Cambodian factions talk to each other. It would be followed by a second round of talks to which Indonesia would invite other regional parties, including Vietnam.

However, hopes created by the Mochtar-Thach accord were short-lived. The idea of a Cambodian "cocktail party" caused a serious rift within ASEAN as Thailand and Singapore indicated strong disapproval. In their view, Mochtar had gone too far toward appeasing Hanoi by agreeing to the two-stage talks. On 16 August 1987 the "cocktail party" concept was discussed at an ASEAN foreign minister meeting in Bangkok. Thailand and Singapore expressed concern that the Mochtar-Thach accord did not specify the time frame in which Vietnam would participate in the dialogue process. Without this, a "cocktail party" would lend credence to Hanoi's claim that the conflict in Cambodia was a domestic power struggle. The participants at the meeting finally took the position that a cocktail party could only take place if Vietnam joined the talks immediately after the initial informal talks between the Cambodian factions.

Indonesia insisted that its ASEAN partners reconsider their perspective on an eventual "cocktail party." The association, partly motivated by the need to salvage the credibility of Jakarta, reformulated its position and submitted a "Joint Explanatory Note" to the United Nations Secretary-General on the eve of the annual General Assembly vote on Cambodia in September 1987. This note, while endorsing the idea of a Cambodian factional meeting, specified, however, that such a meeting would have to be followed by a second stage of talks attended by other concerned parties in the conflict, including Vietnam.

As the General Assembly vote on Cambodia approached, the Soviet Union stepped in by voicing strong support for the national reconciliation process among the Cambodian factions and criticizing ASEAN's backtracking on the Mochtar-Thach accord. China also indicated its approval of the "cocktail party" concept. Chinese Foreign Minister Wu Xueqian was believed to have conveyed this approval to Mochtar in New York at the time of the General Assembly debate. Even more significantly, Beijing appeared ready to drop its earlier demand that the restoration to power of the Khmer Rouge regime remain an integral part of any Cambodian settlement.

The PRK for its part came up with a five-point "Declaration on the Political Solution to Kampuchea Problem" on 8 October 1987. This declaration endorsed the idea of national reconciliation, expressed a willingness to talk to the CGDK, with the exception of Pol Pot and his "close associates," and offered Sihanouk "a high position in the state leading apparatus." The PRK still maintained the essence of their position—the situation in Cambodia should be seen as a conflict among Cambodians—but they also showed signs of willingness to compromise with their

adversaries. Phnom Penh's five-point proposal of October 1987 for the first time used the previously forbidden words "neutral and nonaligned Cambodia" and "coalition government."[16]

Surprisingly enough, the only remaining barrier at this stage to the "cocktail party" was Sihanouk himself. The prince, who had initially appeared to have endorsed the idea, now adopted a much more ambivalent position. He insisted on the CGDK's eight-point plan as the basis for any dialogue to achieve peace in Cambodia and demanded a first phase of Vietnamese withdrawal as the precondition for national reconciliation talks. However, the prince was ready to meet with Hun Sen, as he had mentioned on many occasions in the preceding months.[17]

The first Sihanouk-Hun Sen talks were held on 2–4 December 1987. Sihanouk insisted that the PRK was illegal and that the only Cambodian regime acceptable to him would have to be a "liberal democracy." This position in such a government, he told Hun Sen, could be decided only by elections, not by the PRK's largesse. The four-point communiqué which resulted from the meeting did not show any progress; it only affirmed that the "Cambodian people themselves must resolve" the conflict and that the aim of the Cambodian peace process should be to

[16]Gareth Porter, "Cambodia: Sihanouk's Initiative," *Foreign Affairs* vol. 66, no. 4 (Spring 1988), p. 820. The five points proposed by the PRK are:

"1. In carrying out its national reconciliation policy, the PRK is ready to meet Samdech Norodom Sihanouk and the leaders of other opposing groups to discuss a peaceful solution to the Cambodian problem and national reconciliation.

For the supreme interests of the nation, the PRK is ready to offer Samdech Sihanouk a high position in the leading state organ in conformity with his contribution to the cause of peace, national reconciliation and the independence of the country.

The PRK will welcome individuals and groups from the opposition, with the exception of Pol Pot and some of his close associates, who return to take part in the reconstruction of the country.

"2. The Vietnamese volunteer force will be withdrawn from Cambodia simultaneously with the conclusion of all intervention and the provision of aid and the use of foreign territory against the PRK.

"3. After the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Cambodia, general elections will be held in the presence of foreign observers and a coalition government will be set up to build a peaceful, independent, democratic, neutral and non-aligned Cambodia, maintaining friendly relations with neighbouring countries and all countries the world over.

"4. Cambodia advocates the opening of direct or indirect negotiations to transform the Cambodian–Thai border into a border of peace and friendship in accordance with procedures agreed upon by the two parties, including international control and supervision.

Furthermore, the refugee issue is a matter of humanitarian concern. The PRK is ready to discuss with international humanitarian organizations and concerned parties the voluntary, organized and orderly repatriation of Cambodian refugees who are currently living in various refugee camps on Thai territory.

"5. In order to guarantee the agreement already reached, Cambodia's independence and peace in Southeast Asia, an international conference will be convened to be attended by the two conflicting Cambodian parties, the Indochinese countries, the ASEAN states, the USSR, China, India, France, the USA, Great Britain, and other countries which have contributed to the peaceful solution of the Cambodian problem and to peace in Southeast Asia."

"PRK Ready to Offer Sihanouk 'High Position in the Leading State Organ,' Phnom Penh (8 Oct. 1987), *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts the Far East*, 9 Oct. 1987, pp. FE/8694/A3/3–4.

[17]On Sihanouk's diplomatic efforts during that period, see Porter, "Cambodia: Sihanouk's Initiative" [see footnote 16 above].

"reconstruct a peaceful, independent, democratic, sovereign, neutral and non-aligned Cambodia."

The meeting was nonetheless significant in some respects. It boosted Hun Sen's international standing and put pressure on Sihanouk's CGDK partners to join the negotiations. The latter did not happen, however. On 9 December, the refusal of Son Sann and the Khmer Rouge factions to participate in the dialogue process was the reason given by Sihanouk for canceling his second round of talks with Hun Sen. But four days later, the prince reversed his decision and agreed to go ahead with the second round, to be held in the latter part of January.

The reasons for these about-turns were not entirely clear. But the initial cancellation seemed to be inspired by Hanoi's refusal to join the talks, as well as by criticism from his ASEAN and Khmer Rouge allies that his first meeting with Hun Sen did not deal with the key issue of Vietnamese troop withdrawal. ASEAN was divided over the appropriate response to the first round of talks; Indonesia and Malaysia expressed satisfaction, while Thailand and Singapore took a more reserved position.

The outcome of the second Sihanouk–Hun Sen talks, held on 20–22 January, was much more disappointing than the first. The two sides reaffirmed that Cambodia should be "independent, neutral, and non-aligned and have a freely-elected parliament." But the meeting failed to advance the peace process, for a number of reasons. The Khmer Rouge boycotted these talks, as did Son Sann, despite an earlier commitment by him to attend. In addition, a major disagreement surfaced between Sihanouk and Hun Sen over the former's three-fold demand that: (1) the PRK should be dismantled; (2) an international peace-keeping force should be stationed in Cambodia to monitor the Vietnamese troop withdrawal; and (3) a provisional coalition government would assume office pending elections to be held under international supervision. Hun Sen objected to all these demands, insisting that a provisional government might be formed only after the general elections. He also restated the familiar PRK–Hanoi position that the Khmer Rouge must be eliminated as a political and military force as part of any settlement.

Although the PRK showed some flexibility by announcing on 24 January that it was willing to negotiate with Khieu Samphan, the Khmer Rouge and the KPNLF continued to express reservations about the Sihanouk initiative. On 7 January 1988, the Khmer Rouge made it clear that negotiations about Cambodia must involve direct Vietnamese participation. Son Sann made a similar demand, adding that he would not sit down for talks with Hun Sen until Vietnam withdrew its troops from Cambodia. The limits of the "national reconciliation" process were fully underscored by Sihanouk's resignation from his position as President of the CGDK at the end of January 1988, citing the KPNLF's criticism of his leadership. Although the prince was persuaded by China and his coalition partners to resume his presidency the next month, he was to resign once again on the eve of the JIM I talks in July 1988, this time as a protest against Khmer Rouge attacks on his forces.

The failure of bilateral Sihanouk–Hun Sen talks prompted Hanoi to press ASEAN to revive the original idea of two-stage "cocktail talks," which had been put aside as meetings between Sihanouk and Hun Sen proceeded. In this respect, an important turning point was a visit by Thai Prime Minister Prem Tinsulanond to Moscow in May 1988. Prem returned to Bangkok convinced of Moscow's sincerity in offering to cooperate in resolving the Cambodia conflict. This sincerity might have reflected itself in a timely announcement by Vietnam that it would withdraw a substantial number of its troops from Cambodia, a move which helped moderate Thailand's position on the "cocktail party" talks.

By this time, Indonesia could also go ahead and organize the first round of such talks, which were to proceed in two stages. In the first, the Cambodian parties would hold talks focusing mainly on the "internal" aspect of the conflict, namely reconciliation and power-sharing. In stage two, both the Cambodian parties and regional governments would discuss the "external" aspect, focusing largely on the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops, international supervision, and guarantees concerning the withdrawal and cessation of external aid for the Cambodian parties.

THE REGIONAL PEACE PROCESS: JIM I AND JIM II

The Jakarta Informal Meeting (JIM I) took place at Bogor, near Jakarta, on 24–28 July 1988. Although Sihanouk did not attend the meeting, he was in Jakarta as a "private guest" of President Sunharto during the entire period of the talks.

JIM I did not produce any breakthrough. As the *Far Eastern Economic Review* pointed out, "At the end of the first day of meetings on 25 July, it became clear that the four factions were set to sniff around each other rather than talk seriously about a joint programme leading to a political solution."[18]

There were some signs of flexibility in the JIM I talks, however. The PRK, which had at first issued a seven-point peace plan aimed at eliminating the Khmer Rouge, reversed itself two days later by proposing a national reconciliation council that would include all four factions. Sihanouk continued his line of accommodation toward the PRK by dropping his demand for international peace-keeping force (previously rejected by the PRK) and by playing down his demand that the PRK administration be dismantled before elections. He also showed a willingness to leave vacant the Cambodian seat at the United Nations.

The JIM I meeting was important because of the new dynamic it imparted to the peace negotiations. The formula adopted—the Cambodian factions met in the morning and were joined in the afternoon by ASEAN, Vietnam, and Laos—meant that the two opposing camps had made concessions so that the meeting could be held. Hanoi had accepted

[18]"The Prince Offstage," *Far Eastern Economic Review (FEER)*, 4 Aug. 1988, p. 13.

that it should be a full participant in talks aimed at resolving the Cambodian conflict. All the members of the Coalition Government and ASEAN's "hardliners" were for their part willing to accept negotiations among Cambodians as a way of putting an end to the hostilities in Cambodia. This entailed an important role for the PRK at the negotiation table. The announcement by Vietnam of its imminent withdrawal from Cambodia added to the weight of the PRK. From now on the negotiations would essentially have to deal with the relations among the four Cambodian factions. An important aspect of this new dynamic was the attention that had to be given to the Khmer Rouge. Vietnam's announcement that it would soon withdraw its troops had placed the backers of the Coalition Government in front of the contradictions of their policy: they could not see a return to power of the Khmer Rouge, yet they were giving support to a coalition in fact controlled by this faction. The international community had to decide what it would do with the Khmer Rouge, and this decision would obviously be influenced by the respectability now accorded to the PRK.[19]

JIM I set up a working group to prepare for another round of meeting in early 1989. In October 1988, the meeting of the working group did not succeed well. The Khmer Rouge boycotted it, thereby raising new uncertainties about the direction of the peace process. At the October talks, a dispute arose between Thailand and Vietnam. While the former insisted on such a meeting, the latter proposed that a second ministerial meeting be held only if it were necessary. In an attempt to revive the talks, Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas went to Hanoi on 17 November to seek Vietnam's backing for the next round of "cocktail talks," known as JIM II.

The organization of JIM II was difficult. A two-day tripartite meeting conducted by Sihanouk, Son Sann, and Hun Sen started on 8 November 1988, in Paris. The meeting set up a working committee to study "all possibilities for a political solution to the entire Cambodian problem." However, the Khmer Rouge refused to participate in this process. On 22 November 1988, Khieu Samphan issued a list of 11 conditions dealing with the Khmer Rouge's position on peace negotiations.[20]

[19]Michael Leifer describes the importance given to the Khmer Rouge and the "[revision of] the long-standing representation of the conflict" at the JIM I meeting. M. Leifer, *Cambodian Conflict—The Final Phase?* (London, Institute for the Study of Conflict, 1989), p. 16.

[20]The 11 conditions are: 1. Vietnam must withdraw its troops from Kampuchea under a specific timetable and with international supervision as key part of the overall specific and comprehensive agreement; 2. This is to be followed by a cease-fire among the four contending Cambodian factions; 3. As soon as the Vietnamese troops withdraw, a four-party coalition government, headed by Sihanouk, takes control of the country; 4. The Khmer Rouge agree not to monopolize power; 5. A constituent assembly is established to write a new constitution; 6. A national army of 40,000 is formed, with each faction contributing 10,000 armed men; 7. Cambodia becomes "independent, peaceful, neutral and non-aligned"; 8. Cambodia adopts "free multiparty parliamentary" systems; 9. Human rights are duly respected; 10. An international conference (including the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council) to "find effective measures" to guarantee the above; 11. An international peace-

In the list, the group accepted the need for an international peace-keeping force to enforce a peace agreement, thereby bringing its position identical to that of the non-Communist factions. Hun Sen strongly objected to the idea once again, on the ground that such a force would violate Cambodian sovereignty.

Sihanouk put forward a five-point peace plan on 30 November 1988, urging a specific deadline of the withdrawal of the Vietnamese troops, calling for an international peace-keeping force, the simultaneous dissolution of the PRK and CGDK, general elections in Cambodia under international supervision, the establishment of a four-party provisional government and a national armed force.[21] Sihanouk insisted that acceptance by the PRK of the plan was a precondition for any further talks. Khieu Samphan also announced his intention to "join with all parties of our Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea in the next meeting in Paris."

In early 1989, while accepting the need for the cessation of outside military assistance as part of a settlement, the PRK continued to reject the idea of an international peace-keeping force. Instead, it accepted an armed control commission.

The idea of an international conference, already apparent in the peace negotiations so far, was seen as a logical culmination of the JIM process. On 20 September 1989, following talks with the president and foreign minister of France, Sihanouk called for an international conference on Cambodia "as soon as possible." The French proposed such an international meeting in early 1989. However, before such a conference was possible, the peace process had to make substantial progress.

Matters were somewhat brightened on 25 November when the Khmer Rouge signaled its intent to join the next round of JIM talks.[22] This prospect followed a joint China-Thailand appeal that "the Khmer Rouge should be more flexible" and "participate in the next Paris meeting."[23] The PRK also specified its position on the Khmer Rouge's participation in the peace talks. On 30 October, Hun Sen listed a number of Khmer Rouge leaders who would be unacceptable to the PRK as participants in negotiations. It included Khieu Samphan, Pol Pot, Ieng Sary and his wife, Son Sen, Ta Mok, Nuon Chea, and Ke Pauk. Later, Hun Sen changed his position on the unacceptability of Khieu Samphan.[24]

In spite of some flexibility, there remained two main obstacles to the peace process: Vietnam's refusal to discuss the so-called internal aspect of the Cambodian problem; and disagreement between Thailand and Vietnam regarding the timing of Vietnamese troop withdrawal and cessation of foreign aid to Cambodian factions.[25]

Peace prospects were still improving slowly, however. Extra-regional factors were not as grim as they used to be. The Chinese foreign minister's visit to Moscow on 1–3 December 1988 (the first time since 1957) raised hope for a breakthrough on Cambodia. China, however, did not win Soviet backing for a deadline for the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops by June 1989, which would have been six months earlier than the deadline set by Hanoi. Yet Moscow assured that the later deadline would be met. The two foreign ministers simply "reaffirmed their intention to facilitate the solution to the external aspects of the Cambodia settlement," while expressing hope that "contacts with the participation of all the Khmer sides" would produce an "internal" settlement.[26]

Early 1989 saw further progress on the "external aspect" of the Cambodia problem. Vietnam's First Deputy Foreign Minister, Dinh Nho Liem, visited Beijing on 14 January, giving a signal of Vietnam's desire to compromise with China. Another development was some movement on the part of Vietnam. On 6 January, Hanoi offered to withdraw all its troops from Cambodia by September, if a political settlement could be reached. Hanoi also seemed to accept the idea of an international peace-keeping force. During his visit to Hanoi on 9 January 1989, Thai Foreign Minister Sitti Sawetsila (a first-ever foreign-ministerial-level contact) discussed with Vietnamese leaders a "compromise formula" for peace-keeping in Cambodia. While the Vietnamese wished to see foreign peace-keepers monitor the withdrawal of their troops, the Thai proposed that foreign peace-keepers enforce the terms of whatever arrangement was made. The two sides did not agree on any compromise; it was then agreed that further talks were needed.[27]

China hailed the change in Vietnam's attitude, calling the latter's new troop withdrawal deadline as a "step forward" and conceding that the Thai-Vietnam formula meant that Hanoi indeed had "for the first time agreed that the withdrawal and other related methods for achieving a solution be carried out under effective international supervision". For its part, China indicated that it would be willing to gradually reduce and eventually stop providing military aid to resistance factions once Hanoi produced its precise withdrawal timetable and agreed to international supervision.[28]

Progress on the intra-regional factors of the conflict was more limited. A Thai initiative toward the PRK, for instance, proved to be a divisive issue for ASEAN. The Thai government invited Hun Sen to visit

keeping force is stationed throughout Kampuchea to enforce the agreement. *Indochina Chronology*, vol. 7, no. 4 (Oct.–Dec. 1988), p. 13.

[21]Ibid.

[22]*FEER*, 8 Dec. 1988.

[23]Nayan Chanda, "The Cambodian Chameleon," *FEER*, 15 Dec. 1988, p. 16.

[24]Ibid., pp. 16–17.

[25]Michael Vatikiotis, "Retaining the Initiative," *FEER*, 1 Dec. 1988, p. 21.

[26]"Clearing the Peking Road," *FEER*, 15 Dec. 1988, p. 16.

[27]*Indochina Chronology*, Vol. 8, no. 1 (Jan.–March 1989), p. 3.

[28]Robert Delfs, "A Deal Takes Shape," *FEER*, 26 Jan. 1989, pp. 11–12.

Thailand. On 25 January 1989, the PRK prime minister arrived in Bangkok in order to open new dialogue on the Cambodian conflict. The Thai Prime Minister, Chatichai, stated that his Cambodian guest would be received in his personal capacity as a faction leader, and not as head of a government. Concerned with the fact that the Hun Sen visit would legitimize his regime, Chatichai traveled to Jakarta on 19 January to assure President Suharto that the Thai initiative was not intended to upstage Jakarta's plan for JIM II. Critics later blamed Thailand's reception of Hun Sen for a hardening of the position of the PRK and Hanoi.[29] The Thai initiative was seen as an indication of a Thai willingness to go along with Vietnam and the PRK's desire for a "partial settlement," one related to the role of external parties in the Cambodian conflict, without settling the vital issue of power-sharing.

Held on 16–21 February, JIM II was in fact marked by Hun Sen's and Hanoi's intransigence. Indeed, at JIM II Hanoi did not offer any concessions on two main issues on which progress was needed: the question of a Cambodian interim regime and international supervision.

An Indonesian working paper proposed the continuation of both the PRK and CGDK pending elections of a constituent assembly. It also suggested the creation of an international control mechanism to supervise the Vietnamese withdrawal, to enforce an eventual cease-fire, and to organize elections. The working paper proved to be of no avail in breaking the impasse. Hun Sen would agree only to a limited peace-keeping force of 600 lightly armed troops; the resistance, however, demanded a stronger force, capable of preventing electoral fraud.

JIM II dashed hopes for an early partial settlement, one that could have dealt with the internal aspect of the conflict. By the end of the conference it seemed that the regional approach to the Cambodian conflict, which had dominated the peace process since 1987, was exhausted. An international conference, in which the outside powers could play a more active role, appeared to be one of the only recourses left.

Signs of slow rapprochement between Moscow and Beijing created a positive environment for such a conference. Four rounds of Sino–Soviet talks at the deputy-minister level, held in August 1988, had established an understanding between the two parties; the Soviet Union would intercede with Hanoi to speed up the withdrawal of its troops from Cambodia, and China would phase out aid to the resistance groups. Chinese foreign minister Qian Qichen's visit to Moscow in early December 1988 was followed, in February 1989, by talks in Beijing with his Soviet counterpart. A nine-point communiqué issued after the second meeting noted Vietnam's decision to complete its troop withdrawal by September 1989, the question of cessation of aid to the Cambodia factions, and the need for an "effective international control mechanism." A summit between Gorbachev and Deng Xiao Peng was held in May. The

[29] *FEER*, 2 Feb. 1989, p. 13.

two leaders discussed the Cambodian crisis. With regard to the problem of power-sharing among the Cambodian factions, however, China's and the Soviet Union's differences clearly remained. Beijing expressed its support for a provisional four-party government under Sihanouk. Moscow preferred to leave the matter of a power-sharing agreement among the Cambodian factions to the PRK and Hanoi.

It is therefore in a context marked by the rapid evolution of the whole Cambodian equation that France decided to organize an international conference. The Paris talks were preceded by a series of meetings among the four Cambodian factions. Sihanouk and Hun Sen held discussions on 24 July and were joined the following day by Son Sann and Khieu Samphan. These meetings centered around the nature of an eventual national reconciliation. They failed, however, to produce any agreement. At the invitation of the French government, further talks took place in the time left before the Paris conference began. All the faction leaders could agree upon was the format of the Cambodian representation at the talks. It was an ominous sign of things to come. The four leaders were not at all ready to make significant concessions on the question of power-sharing.

III. COULD THERE BE SUCCESS IN PARIS?

A number of factors had contributed to hopes for a breakthrough at the Paris conference. First, the parties directly involved had realized that their objectives could not be achieved by military means within acceptable costs. The failure of military force to break the stalemate had become apparent, especially in the wake of the last major Vietnamese dry season offensive in 1985–1986. While Vietnamese forces had succeeded in pushing the CGDK forces into Thai territory, the latter had not only survived but continued its offensives deep into Cambodian territory. For their part, the PRK forces had remained largely ineffective. Thus, no party at this time had the edge to ensure decisive final victory on the battlefield.

Secondly, the parties involved had come to the conclusion that the costs of continuing the conflict were higher than the cost of a political settlement. This was notably the case for Vietnam, whose intervention had been the key issue in the conflict. The cost of the conflict in human, political, and economic terms had been high. In July 1988, the vice-commander of Vietnamese troops in Cambodia estimated that about 55,000 Vietnamese troops and civilians had perished since 1977. The on-going conflict had deprived Vietnam of access to international capital and aid needed for urgent economic development. In addition, the conflict had increased Vietnam's dependence on the Soviet Union, a fact which the Vietnamese nationalists resented. Furthermore, the cost of a settlement had become more acceptable to Hanoi. One reason was that the political legitimacy of the PRK regime, both at home and abroad, had been clearly enhanced, while the prospect for a return of the Khmer Rouge to power seemed increasingly unlikely as the peace process unfolded.

Other parties were also in this position. The Soviet Union's costs for its indirect involvement in the conflict had been mainly a massive drain on its economy. The Soviet involvement also prevented real progress on Sino–Soviet rapprochement and better relations with the United States. Thus, because the costs of continuing the conflict had been immensely high and its attempts to improve relations with Beijing and Washington had not been very successful, Moscow had now realized that its interest did not lie in the on-going war in Cambodia. A settlement would of course make Vietnam less dependent on Moscow and would affect access to military installation at Cam Ranh Bay. This preoccupation was slowly losing its importance, however, as Moscow was planning on overall force reduction programme in the Pacific region.

The cost-benefit calculations for Beijing were much less simple. China's "bleed-Vietnam-white" policy was rooted in its historical animosities with Vietnam and was clearly integral to its desire for domination of the region. Beijing had already committed itself to improving ties with the Soviet Union, if the latter made concessions on Cambodia. Once the Soviets obliged, Beijing had to appear flexible to protect its credibility. In addition, an improvement in ties with Moscow was clearly in Beijing's strategic interests at that time, as it reduced the Soviet military pressure on its border region. This might explain why Beijing was willing to accept a non-Communist government in Cambodia and to stop providing aid to the resistance.

For ASEAN, a stalemate was a mixed blessing at best. The Cambodian problem had initially helped to strengthen ASEAN's unity and its international reputation. But as the stalemate continued, ASEAN began counting its costs. ASEAN's unity had been severely tested by the ongoing Cambodian conflict. The stalemate sustained Chinese influence over the security concerns of the association, a factor especially unwelcomed by Indonesia and Malaysia. It has also been argued that the stalemate and ASEAN's devotion to the Cambodian situation had distracted the association's attention from its economic objectives. This problem had weakened ASEAN's credibility, since the original vision for the establishment of this association was to promote economic regionalism.

Two other factors had also contributed to the impression that movement in the peace process was possible. First, the difference over an appropriate negotiating forum had been resolved. Previously, the main factor had been to deny the PRK any legitimacy. Now, the PRK was accepted as a key player in any settlement. This was partly due to the PRK's ability to hold its ground and to gain international recognition. Second, the changing international climate, marked by the emergence of superpower détente and the resolution of regional disputes, had provided an optimistic outlook on the Cambodian situation. Many actors, such as the United Nations secretary-general, France, the United States, and Japan, had decided to become more active in the peace process.

However, when the parties convened in Paris, the possibility of movement toward peace was limited. On matters pertaining to the internal aspect of the conflict, the relevant parties, Vietnam, China, and the Cambodian factions, still had a vested interest in continuing the stalemate. For Vietnam, prolonged hostilities were not without significant benefits. The PRK was gaining viability and international legitimacy. One reason was that it had been accepted as an "interlocutor valuable" by all three CGDK groups. Hun Sen's stature was further enhanced by Vietnam's announcement that it would withdraw its troops by September.

Thus, on the one hand, Hanoi could see its policy of creating a fait accompli bear fruits. A diplomatic stalemate would also mean that growing dissatisfaction with the Khmer Rouge after the Vietnamese withdrawal from Cambodia would eventually lead to Western countries' recognition of the PRK. China, on the other hand, had to oppose this prospect by making sure that the Khmer Rouge remained an important factor in the Cambodian equation. China's and Vietnam's positions meant that despite the fact that there was some movement on the "external" level of the conflict, neither side was ready to put more pressure on its Cambodian client to an extent that would facilitate a political settlement on the issue of power-sharing.

The most basic problem lay in the Cambodian factions' obstinate refusal to share power with one another. On the surface, they expressed their willingness to bring about a national reconciliation. When dealing with the question of power-sharing, however, each of the factions was prepared to cooperate only to the extent that none of the others would play a superior or dominant role in a coalition government. Throughout its history, Cambodia has been characterized by political factionalism. Groups have competed with one another rather than worked together on a cooperative basis. This political culture instilled into Cambodian leaders the idea that deception and betrayal are everywhere. Thus in order to secure their power, Cambodian leaders had to eliminate opposition. The talks in Paris proved to be another example of this historical trend. The talks were perceived by the leaders not as a way to solve the Cambodian conflict but as a way to win this conflict.

Two issues of power-sharing proved especially difficult to overcome at the negotiation table. The first was concerned with the role of the PRK, with Vietnam wanting the PRK to remain in power until elections, while China and the Cambodian resistance insisted on the dismantling of the PRK and establishment of a quadripartite coalition prior to elections. The contradicting views of the Cambodian conflict were still in place. The PRK authorities considered that they were the legitimate Cambodian government and that, as such, they should hold elections. The coalition government argued, on the contrary, that the PRK was the means of Vietnamese domination over Cambodia; for that reason, it should not be allowed to organize elections. Beyond the rhetoric, the debate had to do with the control of the electoral process and the advantages that could be gained from that control.

The second issue was the role of the Khmer Rouge forces. While Vietnam and the PRK wanted the Khmer Rouge forces to be disarmed

and disbanded, China and the resistance wanted the Khmer Rouge, with a scaled-down version of its army, to be a member of a coalition government.

The debate on power-sharing issues was often cloaked in accusations and counter-accusations concerning "genocide," leveled by Hanoi and Phnom Penh against the Khmer Rouge. China and the Khmer Rouge countered these by raising the issue of Vietnamese settlers in Cambodia. But these questions represented tactical moves that masked the refusal of both sides to concede on the fundamental issue of power-sharing.

Thus the essential condition for reaching an agreement was absent in Paris. Those looking for a breakthrough would have been well advised to recall a statement made by Mochtar Kusumaatmadja on 9 July 1983 regarding the requirements of successful conflict resolution of the Cambodian issue. In Mochtar's view, a solution to the Cambodian conflict would have to pass through three stages, the first of which involved "problem solving" among the Cambodian factions, followed by a "regional level solution" and finally a settlement agreed to by "countries outside the region." When the contending parties and diplomatic mediators gathered in Paris, it was obvious that Mochtar's formula had been turned on its head. While efforts had been made to resolve the conflict on all the fronts, progress regarding the external aspect of the conflict had far outstripped that regarding the internal aspect. The hopes raised on the eve of the Paris conference were therefore grossly misconceived.

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CHAPTER I

OPENING ADDRESSES (30–31 JULY 1989)