

in the Cambodia War
From Battlefield to Ballot-box

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Introduction: Theoretical Considerations

THE end of the cold war resurrected the hopes of people, politicians and pundits that the United Nations (UN) might finally be able to play the pivotal role in the maintenance of international peace and security. This global institution had never been more active in 'high politics'. Since 1989, the number of UN peace-keeping operations has expanded greatly: between the end of the Second World War and 1989 the UN set up thirteen peace-keeping operations; the next four years added thirteen more. The peace-keeping operations continued to expand. By the end of 1994, it had 75,000 'blue helmets' deployed around the world, drawn from more than seventy countries and participating in seventeen simultaneous peace-keeping operations. So far, no fewer than 1,200 UN blue helmets have given their lives to keep the peace.¹ The cost of these operations has been high: no less than US\$4 billion was spent in 1994 alone. Not only have the cost and number of the peace-keeping operations dramatically increased,² but the nature of the UN role has also been transformed in an unprecedented fashion.

Peace-keeping as a conventional approach to conflict management has been supplemented by what Boutros-Ghali has called 'peace-building'.³ This newly emerging approach to conflict management and dispute settlement demonstrates that the UN has begun to intervene in the once forbidden area of sovereign states' domestic affairs. Central to this new direction in UN intervention are the issues of human rights and democracy. With democracy seemingly on the rise throughout the world, the question is no longer whether democracy is desirable, but how it can be created or restored. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of this trend is the way in which the UN has been given the unprecedented mandate to turn battlefields into ballot-boxes. The United Nations Transitional Assistance Group (UNTAG) in Namibia in 1989, as well as other UN activities in states like Nicaragua, Cambodia, and Bosnia, are the most conspicuous examples of this new UN role, either in keeping the peace and restoring law and order, or in planting the seeds of liberal democracy. Woodrow Wilson's once dead dream of making the world safe for democracy has indeed come back to life.

The new internationalism has not gone unchallenged, however. When, for example, the UN Security Council voted to endorse a high-powered, American-led multinational force to protect the food aid in

peace plan *reu vicum* to a conceptual fallacy, and became a tragic recipe for renewed warfare. These sceptics are divided into two major groups: socio-cultural institutionalists and legalists/moralists. The pessimism of the former is embedded in the theoretical foundation that democracy is a political system that requires people's willingness to accept an elected government by consent as a means to resolve conflict. For socio-cultural institutionalists, Cambodia's political and factional traditions—anti-democratic cultural attitudes towards liberal values and an absence of state institutions—posed a serious problem for UNTAC.

The culture-clash thesis raised doubts about the key assumption that UNTAC would succeed in its undertaking. Among these cautious academic writers are Gary Klintworth, Michael Leifer, Abdulgaffar Peang-Meth, and Pierre Lizée. Klintworth, for instance, argues that the last thing Cambodia needs is democracy: the system of proportional representation 'is likely to give the country a weak government of competing factions, each trying to outmanoeuvre and destroy one another'.⁵ Based on this fundamental assumption, he argues that Cambodia needs a strong and charismatic leader like Hun Sen, Pol Pot, or Prince Norodom Sihanouk, and that there is room for only one such leader. According to him, the UN peace plan overlooked the nature of Cambodian politics and its politicians' irreconcilable political ambitions.⁶ Michael Leifer also questions the utility of the plan for similar reasons. In his view, genuine compromise and power-sharing has never been part of the political tradition and experience of Indo-China. In that part of the world, power has been treated as a possession to be monopolized. At issue, therefore, is whether the measure and formula of political compromise reached by the warring Cambodian factions in the political settlement on 23 October 1991 is genuine or merely a case of tactical accommodation leading to renewed warfare.⁷

Abdulgaffar Peang-Meth's prediction was also based on the belief that the UN peace plan had gotten itself into something messy and unmanageable. The problem of factionalism characterized by the Cambodian parties' 'respective political and ideological orientations [and] the personalities and style of the faction leaders' made it difficult for them to achieve compromise. Related to this problem of factionalism is that of the socio-cultural characteristics of Cambodian society.⁸ He argues that Cambodian politics has long been influenced by religion,⁹ and simply concludes that Cambodia is typified by 'loyalty and allegiance' to leaders much more than to ideals and philosophies; 'passivity and conservatism' in general, while being active and uncompromising; and adherence to what they consider as "honour", "face", and "dignity" as values.¹⁰ In other words, the Cambodians as a people were never serious about what they said they would do; as he bluntly put it, the political factions' 'gentle, pleasing Buddhist-inspired attributes prompt them to respond with public endorsement of the peace plan ... while they continue to battle each other over specific peace plan dictates'.¹¹

Peang-Meth's argument, while interesting, is of limited use because it does not reveal the specific reasons that motivate political groups to make

down for a while. The American soldiers were so well-armed and so aggressive that the local war-lords backed off. But when the force was withdrawn and replaced by UN peace-keeping personnel, the war-lords resurfaced and ambushed the UN-led Pakistani forces. In Bosnia as well, where UN peace-keeping forces have been constrained by the ongoing conflict among the Serbs, the Croats, and the Muslim Bosnians, success has proven elusive. These are but two examples of how UN peace missions went awry.

Although faced with such ostensibly insurmountable difficulties, the UN's new role in creating and restoring democracy in war-torn states continues to be advocated. The demise of the Soviet empire and its socialist allies in Eastern Europe at the end of the 1980s has accelerated the global resurgence of democracy and human rights (characterized as the 'third wave' of democratization).⁴ The prospects for these liberal values to flourish throughout the world have inspired scholars and politicians alike to search for ways in which democracy and human rights can be planted or restored, in order to do away with conflicts deeply rooted in authoritarian or dictatorial forms of governance.

Will the UN, as the world's most important international organization, be an effective catalyst for turning swords into ploughshares or battlefields into ballot-boxes? Opinion is divided. Those belonging to the pessimistic camp have made their positions clear. Democracy is impossible in conflict-ridden societies unless there is a deep socio-economic transformation. Among these are theorists who claim that the civic culture constitutes the primary condition for democracy, and those who believe that without economic development the search for democracy is merely wishful thinking. Political institutionalists, while rejecting the 'democracy via civic culture' and the 'democracy via capitalism' schools of thought, nevertheless maintain that adequate institutionalization is necessary for building democracy.

These arguments cast doubt over any attempts to 'fast-track' societies under the firm grip of long-established authoritarianism into ones where democratic ideas and practices prevail. In this book, the focus is mainly on the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC). The UN role in Cambodia merits serious examination for a few good reasons. One reason is that UNTAC represented the UN's most innovative peace-keeping and peace-building activity to date. The multifarious mission had more than 20,000 personnel working on the ground, with a cost of no less than US\$2 billion. Their mission was to create a neutral political environment for free and fair elections. Another reason is to find out why the belligerent Cambodian factions signed their peace agreement in October 1991 to allow the UN to send a mission to Cambodia, but did not fully abide by their agreement. Why did the Khmer Rouge in particular pull out of the electoral race?

'Perfectionists' who wrote about the UN role in Cambodia had every reason to predict all kinds of disasters, and subsequently tended to label UNTAC a 'flop' or a 'flash in the pan'. They maintained that the UN

specific decisions or to take certain actions; it does not explain what factors contribute to the seemingly unpredictable changes in Cambodian political attitudes from peaceful to bellicose and back again. Pierre Lizée offers a more systematic analysis of the Cambodian problem, although he borrows heavily from Peang-Meth's arguments. Lizée poses an interesting question: 'Why have the Cambodian political factions always refused to settle their conflict?' Based on the basic assumption that the Cambodian factions had never been willing to accept the agreement they signed in Paris, Lizée makes a serious attempt to examine their cultural attitude towards conflict.¹²

Lizée's central argument rests on the basic assumption that the seeds of Western democracy simply cannot grow in the infertile cultural ground of Cambodia, where a tradition of electoral contestation is virtually non-existent. The peace plan failed because the Cambodians' attitude toward conflict differs fundamentally from the one which has underlain that framework since its inception'. He then goes on to argue that 'the four factions' views on conflict ... are a function of Cambodia's socio-historical development and they could not be reconciled with the process whose logic, though seen as appropriate by its proponents, rested upon the presuppositions about conflict resolution correct only in the Western context'.¹³ He concludes that the Cambodian tradition is not amenable to a Western-style peace plan.

According to Lizée, the deep cultural influence of the 'Hindu Brahmanic cult', as expressed by Peang-Meth, along with Theravada Buddhism's emphasis on individualism, made it extremely difficult, if not impossible, for Cambodians to accept and comply with the peace plan. In the first analysis, this religious heritage inhibited the Cambodian élites' willingness to build their power base on 'popular support and participation' and to submit themselves to 'the practices of political legitimacy'. The second analysis rests on his assumption that 'Buddhism is a religion of retreat from the world. It sees everything as marked by change and impermanence and thus posits that human beings have little effective control over their destiny or their surroundings'.¹⁴ This fatalistic view of human life, combined with other factors, prevents Cambodians from putting 'much faith in notions, such as the Western concept of political legitimacy, that aim at encompassing and regulating the entire social order'.¹⁵ At the heart of this culturally based argument is the inherent weakness of Cambodia's political institutions.

A socio-cultural institutionalist perspective like Lizée's has both merit and limitations. Its advocates are generally correct in saying that, unless the 'bottom up' process of socio-cultural and economic transformation is first achieved, the UN's role in holding elections in backward and authoritarian states like Cambodia will not succeed. Cambodia's socio-economic conditions do hinder rather than help the process of democratization. This view sees no value in planting the seeds of liberal democracy. In fact, he points out that 'it's not because the UN didn't do its job that there is war in Cambodia, rather it's because there can be only factionalism and war in Cambodia that the UN hasn't been able to

do its job well'.¹⁶ The proposition implies that UNTAC did its job, but political factionalism made Cambodian leaders unwilling to take their agreement to heart and to abide by it. All in all, this theory suggests that democracy by external imposition was bound to fail from the outset.¹⁷

There are some problems associated with this line of reasoning, however. It is not clear why political factionalism should always pose the main barrier to democratic development; some democratic states are governed daily by factionalism. Furthermore, the objection that the introduction of liberal democracy would violate the integrity of the Third World's political traditions cannot always be validated.¹⁸ Although political factionalism is omnipresent in the Third World, 'Third World democracies have emerged with a rapidity that has surprised the former non-democratic rulers and their successors alike'.¹⁹ The first election in Nicaragua in February 1990 represented the Third World's first peaceful transfer of power. If factionalism is the direct cause of war, does that mean that it is the permanent enemy of peace and democracy? It has sometimes been argued that 'war has been the democratizing force'.²⁰

One must remember that Cambodian religions and culture espousing 'tolerance' and 'non-violence' have existed for centuries.²¹ Moreover, to say that Cambodians would never be willing to adopt democratic values is not totally true; it is also patronizing. During my interviews with ordinary people on the streets immediately prior to the elections, I got the clear impression that they understood at least the fundamentals of the electoral process. Most, of course, did not understand what a democratic political system was all about, but they realized that this was their first chance in a long time to determine their political leaders' fates. As will be explained later, the large turnout of voters, the participation of twenty political parties in the elections, and the relatively peaceful negotiations on the formation of a coalition government defy cultural determinism.²² The culture-clash thesis, however persuasive it may sound, does not take into account the fact that sharing power with the Khmer Rouge was not something that the Cambodian factions alone refused to do but Western liberal democracies also refused to allow it to happen. In my view, political behaviour and cultural attitudes can ultimately be shaped by economic conditions and political institutions. The UN peace plan was something the multifarious UNTAC mission was trying to accomplish; something that the Cambodian factions and the people could not do for themselves.

While I agree with Trevor Findlay (leader of the Project on Peacekeeping and Regional Security at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute) who said that UNTAC's success 'confounded those who argued that any attempt to introduce a democratic mechanism like voting was absurd in a culture like Cambodia',²³ I do not suggest in any way that culture is totally irrelevant, but that the reductionism of cultural determinism shows a lack of vision and reveals its fatalism. Thus, the conceptual issue is not primarily the problem of unchangeable political behaviours, but the possibility of change in political attitudes through changes in the perception of insecurity and through the transformation of the political or security environment within which domestic actors

could put their trust in each other and would be willing to establish the mutually acceptable democratic rules of the political game.

This leads to my critique of those who relentlessly but understandably inveighed against the UN's decision to include the Khmer Rouge 'genocidists' (who had committed heinous crimes in Cambodia) in the peace agreement and considered such a political action as anathema to all moral principles. These legalist/moralists put forward their cogent arguments with an air of pessimism that the UN peace plan was a bad deal for Cambodia because it was not on the right moral and political track. By trying to include the Khmer Rouge in the electoral process, the UN approach was seen to be conceptually flawed in view of that faction's unchanged ideological nature and its relentless pursuit of power by force.²⁴ Typical of this view is a *New York Times* editorial dated 10 July 1992, which states that the Khmer Rouge still believed 'that political power grows only out of the barrel of a gun'. It went on to suggest that their 'defiance poses a clear challenge to the Security Council, with global stakes. The Council can now move quickly to reinforce the authority of Yasushi Akashi, the capable UN administrator for Cambodia, using maximum diplomatic muscle backed by the threat of military force. Or it can let the Khmer Rouge wreck the peace.'²⁵

More sophisticated legalist/moralists like Raoul Jennar and Ben Kiernan, intent on castigating the Khmer Rouge, present compelling arguments that the UN peace plan failed because the UN played the Khmer Rouge's game. Jennar goes so far as to say that 'the idea of the "agreement on a comprehensive political settlement" is dead'.²⁶ For Kiernan, the UN peace plan was a perfect case of building castles in the air since democracy could be mixed with genocide.²⁷ For him the concept of a 'UN government' in Cambodia supported by an international peace-keeping force was misleading and was a 'recipe for renewed civil war, if not genocide'.²⁸ Kiernan cited a number of instances where the Khmer Rouge's acts of defiance against the UN followed the latter's indecisive and inactive policy towards them: 'Since last October's Paris agreement, the international community has given the Khmer Rouge valuable time to aggressively expand their military control, move into the political arena, stockpile weapons, and collect vast sums of money—all without the UN control which the agreement stipulates and to which the other Cambodian parties are subjected.'²⁹ The UN was unremittingly chastised and charged with dancing to the Khmer Rouge's tune by not taking decisive military action against them.

Although these legalist/moralist arguments are quite compelling, they are not without weaknesses. These scholars fail to recognize the logic of conflict in general and the Cambodia war in particular, and never explain how democracy can be planted in countries like Cambodia. They do not even attempt to understand the Khmer Rouge's insecurity dilemma; their views are mired in the faction's past brutality and in an impractical concept of power politics. Their analyses fail to account for the fact that without the great powers' agreed-upon disengagement from Indo-China, the prospect for peace would have been extremely

difficult, if not totally impossible. Without the pro-active intervention of the UN Security Council's Permanent Five Members (P-5), the Cambodian adversaries would not have agreed to the new democratic rules of the political game and would have continued to battle each other until death. The legalist/moralist prescription would have renewed bloodied battle that members of the international community were unwilling to engage themselves in. It bears remembering that more than 100,000 Vietnamese troops, allied with the Phnom Penh regime's 200,000 men under arms, had failed to wipe out the Khmer Rouge by military means; yet these legalist/moralists expected the UN to fight a war against the faction and win. Their call for military punishment of the faction was, in my view, a prescription for renewed civil war that would ultimately wreck the emerging democratic process. In addition, they fail to explain why the Khmer Rouge agreed to sign the agreement in the first place; these writers take 'bad behaviour' at face value rather than examining what determined it. It is time to consider a new paradigm.

It is important to put these pessimistic arguments into a theoretical context, and to reconsider the conceptual aspect of international peace-keeping. Socio-cultural institutionalism is a perspective to be taken seriously. The legalist/moralist perspective is ethically attractive. However, neither conflict resolution by way of leaving parties in conflict to work out their agreement, nor dispute settlement by judicial means based on international law (rather than the consent of the adversaries), is appropriate in the context of domestic conflict.

To begin with, the pluralist and cultural ways of thinking allow little or no room for the UN to play a potentially effective mechanism for the maintenance of domestic peace and security, or for turning the battlefield into a ballot-box. John Burton (a well-known pluralist scholar who has developed a conflict resolution model) presents a strong argument for this view based on three major factors: the question of effectiveness in light of the division within the UN Security Council; the question of legal mandate under the UN Charter—under Article 2, paragraph 7, the organization is not authorized 'to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state'; and the question of hindrance (whether the UN subverts the process of conflict resolution), since dispute settlement is based on the rules of law and not on human needs.³⁰

What Burton has said about the nature of domestic conflict may, none the less, be useful to our analysis. He has developed a theory of global conflict, whereby, at the philosophical level, conflict does not 'arise out of objective differences of interests and rivalries over scarce resources'.³¹ Rather, international conflicts are due primarily to the nature of states, their unresolved problems, and their failures. States fail because their institutions have failed; as a result, they have violated the requirements for basic human needs rather than meeting them. These needs—identity, recognition, stimulation, control, and security—are 'ontological drives' that transcend any particular culture.³² Edward Azar also argues that 'the real source of conflict is the denial of those human needs that

are common to all and whose pursuit is an ontological drive in all'. Those needs are defined in terms of 'security, distinctive identity, social recognition of identity, and effective co-operation in the processes that determine conditions of security and identity, and other such developmental requirements'.³³

These pluralist conceptual insights help explain why misunderstandings and misperceptions among social groups are deeply structured and inhibit prospects for democratization. Domestic anarchy is created and perpetuated by the absence of a legitimate government capable of protecting citizens' rights and meeting their basic human needs. This internal disorder is not the same as international anarchy (the total absence of a world government), for there are 'governments' within the national boundaries. Do these governments function in the way as is widely understood by the West?

Mohammed Ayoob argues that, unlike the Western states which are structurally strong because they enjoy 'unconditional legitimacy', those in the Third World are structurally weak because they have not attained the level of unconditional legitimacy from their populations.³⁴ The fundamental structural problem with this anarchic, domestic environment is that it does not easily allow for the dynamics to deepen a sense of mutual understanding among hostile, social parties. Under such anarchical conditions (the absence of a strong and legitimate government), it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, for parties in conflict to be willing to search for a mutually acceptable solution. Decision-makers' perceptions may be shaped by their interpretations of historical events, or by experiences from their childhood. Robert Jervis' cognitive theory of perception and misperception under international anarchy sheds light on what occurs during domestic anarchy. He reconciles some liberal thinking with the realist concept of international anarchy. Based on liberal assumptions, he suggests how cognitive factors affect foreign decision-making in a confusing or anarchic international environment. Within this 'self-help' international system, it is not necessarily irrational for decision-makers to be preoccupied with real, potential, or imagined threats from without.³⁵ This theoretical insight can be applied to domestic conflicts in the Third World as well.

Thus, the roots of domestic conflict are neither simply motivated by rigid fundamental ideological clashes nor by the inherent struggle for power among social groups. Differences over ideological and cultural values may be sources of tension, but they are not direct causes of open armed conflict. The insecurity dilemma creates certain conditions under which domestic conflicts may be externalized. With the presence of domestic anarchy characterized by the absence of a legitimate government capable of meeting their security needs, social groups' current perceptions of reality can be seriously shaped by their learning from historical events and can be aggravated by their ongoing fear of present and future uncertainty. Misperception of each other's intentions by different hostile groups would not necessarily lead to war unless it reached the point where political leaders perceived the security of their regime to be

immediately threatened by both domestic and external enemies and where they have calculated that their external allies would back them up militarily and diplomatically.³⁶

Although domestic conflict may seem almost intractable or extremely complex, it does not automatically require the UN to play an aggressive role. Legalists/moralists are tempted to think otherwise, however. Their conviction rests on the notion that during the cold war between East and West, the UN was thought to be 'dysfunctional'. When the cold war was pronounced dead, legalists/moralists saw the possibility of rejuvenating the UN Charter and reinvigorating the Security Council's role in the maintenance of international peace and security.³⁷

Legalists/moralists' concept of law and order as an approach to dispute settlement is based on the justification that the UN Charter authorizes the Security Council to enforce its decisions and findings on international law. With reference to the enforcement of international law, Jarat Chopra maintains that the concept of consent was never a legal requirement for peace-keeping operations. His argument points out that because peace-keeping does not appear in the UN Charter, there is no explicit legal requirement for consent.³⁸ The Security Council has the legitimacy to enforce the peace conferred upon by Article 1(1) which allows it to take 'effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of the threats to peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression and other breaches of the peace'.³⁹ The concept of enforcing international law followed the declaration on 17 December 1989 by the General Assembly (which adopted Resolution 44/23) that the 1990s is the 'Decade of International Law'.⁴⁰ For international law to be enforced, the UN may exercise the right to punish those violating the UN Charter. B. Russett and J. Sutterlin viewed Mikhail Gorbachev's and George Bush's 'New World Order' as being founded on the rule of law and on the principle of collective security. In their view, 'collective security may suppress incipient acts of aggression as well as defeat or punish those that do emerge'.⁴¹

Legalists argue that the primary condition for success in dispute settlement rests upon the Security Council's ability to compel hostile parties to comply with its decisions or to punish those acting in violation of international law. The basic concept of law enforcement is therefore based on the assumption that under certain circumstances peace cannot be obtained by waiting for the consent of belligerents, whose pursuit of power must be curbed by credible collective measures. Without access to the use of force, the UN will fail to carry out its tasks for lack of credibility. Legalists justify this use of force, without hostile parties' consent, on legal grounds (the UN Charter authorized the Security Council to enforce the peace) and on grounds of protecting human rights. This view, therefore, makes it possible for the Security Council to intervene even in the domestic affairs of states.

While the legalistic approach to dispute settlement addresses new and dangerous challenges, it none the less has conceptual limitations. Its strengths rest upon the legal foundation that military intervention in

war-torn states may be absolutely necessary and that collective security can be applied in a situation where foreign aggression has occurred. Existing law-breakers and physical boundaries between states can be easily identified. In civil wars or low-intensity conflicts, however, this is not always the case. Collective security, however, 'was a thoroughly militarized means of peacemaking, a strategy of making war to stop war. In retrospect, it seems unlikely that such a punishing strategy could ever succeed in bringing about reconciliation between warring parties.'⁴² In other words, under conditions of domestic anarchy, a military strategy of punishment may make things worse rather than better.

How can the UN not only help make the world safe for democracy, but also sow the seeds of democracy in order to make the world more secure for humankind? Social scientists have long ignored the role of external actors in making democracy thrive. Political economist Claude Ake contends that 'democratization is not something that one people does for another. People must do it for themselves or it does not happen.'⁴³ This general mentality may have prevented students of democracy from developing a theory of external action in the process of democratization. In his discussion of democracy in the Third World, political scientist Robert Pinkney has testified that, to his knowledge, no authors 'have offered external influences as a primary explanation of democracy'.⁴⁴ In his personal view, external actors 'can [only] destroy it, subvert it or ... help to sustain it once it has been established'.⁴⁵

Although I do not claim to fill this intellectual gap in democratic theory, I will outline a specific theoretical framework in which the UN could play a crucial role in the process of democratization in the Third World. My argument is that the UN has the potential to play a role in neutralizing domestic conflicts by way of democratic institution-building. I propose that the organization take a pro-active role in intervening in domestic conflict without resorting to the level of aggression advocated by the legalists/moralists. I call my approach conflict neutralization.

Conflict neutralization is defined as a political process whereby military conflict can be rendered inactive by a legitimate authority (a third party) through democratic means. This model implies a transition from a situation of warfare to one of liberal democracy and is built upon four important elements: the notion of relative success, the principle of effective co-operation, and the concepts of the insecurity dilemma (for conflict analysis) and legitimate authority (for conflict neutralization). It rests on the premise that the more the UN is willing and able to perform as a legitimate authority, the more likely it will succeed in turning the battlefield (rooted in the insecurity dilemma) into a ballot-box. This does not mean, however, that no legal framework exists at all. What conflict neutralization suggests is that the UN must first and foremost obtain the consent of the parties in conflict to establish the rules of the political game.

The term 'success' may be defined in several ways. Political scientist Ernst Haas, for instance, defines success in terms of outcomes such as 'abatement', 'isolation', 'settlement', and 'stopping hostilities'.⁴⁶ Success

is a dependent variable; it depends, for one thing, on a conflict management regime (where regime is defined as a set of explicit or implicit principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which the expectations of actors converge in order to co-ordinate the actors' behaviour with respect to an issue of concern to them all).⁴⁷ Mark Zacher defines success as 'the compliance of an aggressor with the directive soon after its passage'. But if a crisis or war 'continues for a considerable period of time after the passage of a resolution seeking to end it, or ends as a result of the developments on the battlefield, then organizational success has not taken place'.⁴⁸ In general, success has been defined in terms of the UN's ability to end war by getting the adversaries to comply with the Security Council's decisions or resolutions.

In this book, success is taken as a dependent variable and is defined in relative terms. Success is associated with the term 'progress', depending upon the degree or level of the adversaries' willingness to accept the democratic rules of the political game and to abide by those rules. Qualitative factors such as governability or decision-making capacity may be desirable, but they are not very useful as yardsticks with which to measure UN success in planting the seeds of liberal democracy in widely divided societies. In the context of conflict neutralization, the degree of success depends upon the level of both citizens' and political parties' participation in the electoral process, a decrease in political violence, the election of a legislature, the promulgation of a liberal democratic constitution, the degree of peaceful transfer of power, and the level of an elected government's legitimacy *vis-à-vis* unelected elements.

The transition from warfare to democracy is a delicate process whereby parties in conflict agree to end their conflict and choose instead to compete for political legitimacy via the ballot-box. In many parts of the Third World, however, free and fair electoral competition is extremely difficult to achieve. The main problem lies in a political phenomenon known as the insecurity dilemma, namely a complex situation in which hostile actors are caught by their perception of insecurity due to their deep-seated historical animosity, exacerbated by the persistent condition of domestic anarchy. The dilemma is that the more each actor tries to increase its security by military means, the more insecure it will become; similarly the more each feels that co-operation with its enemy may be necessary to increase its security, the more it will fear that its security will be put at greater risk since the enemy cannot be trusted. Conflict neutralization sees the absence of a legitimate authority (under the insecurity dilemma) as ultimately perpetuating this dilemma. The prerequisite for moving out of this dilemma is for the hostile actors to be both willing and able to achieve effective co-operation in the electoral process. Effective co-operation may be defined as the willingness and ability of all hostile actors to agree on the democratic rules of the political game and to abide by these rules in the electoral process.

Legitimate authority has been developed as the instrumental concept for democratic institution-building to enable effective co-operation. This concept moves away from the legalistic concept of power by questioning

the actual motive of peace enforcement: enforcing what, in whose interest, and for what purpose? In this context, it recognizes a real need for UN authority with legitimacy. Does the UN have any political legitimacy? According to legalists/moralists, it does; as already noted, the legal concept of legitimacy is derived from constitutional and legal sources (that is, the UN Charter or international law). According to pluralist scholars, however, it does not because the UN cannot function to meet the adversaries' security or basic human needs. In this study, however, UN legitimacy may exist, depending on how the UN performs as an international political authority.

The term 'performance' is an important part of the concept of legitimate authority. In James Rosenau's view, the legal sources of authority have undergone erosion: 'The sources of authority have shifted from traditional to performance criteria of legitimacy.'⁴⁹ Unless an authority performs effectively, it may not be able to command effective co-operation from individuals. As he puts it: 'The more the performance record is considered appropriate—in terms of satisfying needs, moving toward goals, and providing stability—the more likely they are to co-operate and comply. The less they approve the performance record, the more likely they are to withhold their compliance.'⁵⁰

Is there room for military activity? The bottom line is not that peace enforcement as a security concept is flawed, but rather that the true issue is how peace can be obtained without giving rise to more conflict. A military role may be useful if it builds confidence by way of disarmament. How strong should the UN's military role be? It is difficult to state precisely how physically mighty it should be. The UN ability to perform must be backed by sufficient force to ensure that it is not vulnerable to any party's hostile action. On the other hand, the UN's overpowering ability to act militarily may do more harm than good. The best prescription for UN military action is adequate strength, defined in terms of its ability to act effectively in deploying its personnel to specific targets.

After all is said and done, it is important to keep in mind that UN legitimate authority does not come from nowhere. It is debatable whether the UN has acquired greater authority than the states that sustain it. Pluralists are not entirely incorrect when they doubt the UN's ability to act legitimately because, as already pointed out, its action was primarily based on international law, not on meeting human needs. None the less, conflict neutralization assumes that the organization is willing and able to perform as a legitimate authority only when the P-5 are willing and able to reach a collective agreement, to act in concert in terms of having compatible foreign policy objectives, and to offer support for UN action. According to political scientist Janice G. Stein, 'when superpowers do recognize a common danger and negotiate to stop military hostilities between their clients, their negotiations take place under almost ideal conditions'.⁵¹ For the P-5 to have a positive impact on the democratization process, they must first and foremost disengage from their political confrontation over a particular contentious issue and subsequently reach collective agreement.

The P-5's collective agreement alone, however, will not prevail upon adversaries' perceptions and calculations unless it is accompanied by a high degree of compatibility in their foreign policy objectives, decisions, and actions. Political scientists Mark Zacher and Ernst Haas offer useful insights for conflict neutralization in this regard. Zacher's argument based on the rational actor model is helpful to analysts in predicting the future effectiveness of UN conflict management in the post-cold war period.⁵² For Haas, what matters most is the changing nature of state relations and states' broader interests, rather than simple strategic considerations.⁵³ Both would agree, however, that when the P-5 act in concert, UN peace efforts tend to be more successful. Zacher's term 'consensual international system' is helpful in terms of explaining collective action by the P-5 of the Security Council in the post-cold war era.⁵⁴

Adequate strength, however, is a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition for success in conflict neutralization. Regardless of how much strength the UN has, success will also depend on its policy objective.⁵⁵ While it has some popular appeal, the legal argument that domestic peace or democracy can be enforced by military action presents a serious conceptual deficiency: it fails to grasp the fundamental nature of domestic conflict. One of the major problems with legalism is the question of what to enforce and in whose interest. It seems clear, as already discussed, that proponents of this concept view enforcement as the Security Council's ability to get hostile parties to comply. The danger of moving away from the principle of impartiality is that taking sides is bound to be divisive, and military action may ultimately dissolve into punishing someone for the benefit of someone else.⁵⁶

As the backbone of the UN, the P-5 must therefore make decisions not so much on the basis of what international law says but rather on what they should do and how they should perform to enhance UN legitimate authority. In this context, conflict neutralization draws some insights from hegemonic stability theory which posits that hegemons must be both willing and able to provide some order in the international system by reducing anarchy.⁵⁷ Although a hegemon's primary role is to keep order by way of enforcing rules and norms, it has the same interests as the 'common good' of all states. It avoids the 'collective goods' problem by offering 'free rides' to other states.⁵⁸ Failing to do so will lead the international system back to chaos and anarchy. Effective performance on the part of the UN therefore requires the P-5's willingness and ability to act in the interests of all adversaries.

In short, for the UN to become a legitimate authority, its impartiality must be maintained by adequate strength. In conflict neutralization, the notion of impartiality does not mean passivity but objective intervention to satisfy the adversaries' security needs. 'Impartiality' and 'adequate strength' are mutually reinforced and work together to achieve a highly acceptable level of effective co-operation (from adversaries) in the process of democratization. Ultimately, the aim of legitimate authority is meeting the adversaries' security needs through enabling them to effectively co-operate in the global arena.⁵⁹

full consent is a sufficient condition for success. Coercion alone, totally dictated by the P-5's foreign policy interests without an acceptable degree of consent by parties to conflict and with the judgement that offenders of the law must be punished, will always lead, through bias and the threat of an absolute win-lose outcome, to rebellion, more conflict, and more repression of democratic practices. Due to historically based deep-seated misperceptions, consent and simple faith in the adversaries' goodwill alone, however, will always lead through more uncertainty to greater mistrust, betrayal, and more conflict. Only with an authority to which the adversaries can consent, and which they can tolerate because it is strong and impartial enough to meet their basic security needs, can the UN's interventionist attempts at democratic institution-building or conflict neutralization be successful.

In light of this theoretical insight, I will examine the UN role in the Cambodia war, and its impact on the democratization process. UNTAC succeeded to the extent that it did because the P-5 were initially willing and able to act collectively in pursuit of a peace plan that would enable the UN to play the role of a legitimate authority, with the aim of creating a neutral political environment for the Cambodian signatories to compete in free and fair elections. UNTAC was designed to be impartial, but authoritative. When implemented, however, it did not perform as well as had been anticipated. Its weak start largely resulted in the contending Cambodian parties' lack, if not loss, of full confidence in the UN ability to neutralize the security environment, due in large part to both the P-5's inability to make a credible political will to help UNTAC perform effectively, and their unwillingness to show strict impartiality.

Finally, I will offer a general normative theory of conflict neutralization by drawing some important lessons from UNTAC's limited success and by taking a further look at its legacy. A brief comparative study of other UN peace missions will also be provided in order to broaden my model by explaining why the UN succeeded in some places but failed miserably in others.

1. Michel Courton, 'Peace-keeping: Between Hope and Despair', Paper presented at the Ninth Asia Pacific Roundtable, Kuala Lumpur, 5-8 June 1995, p. 9. See also Daniel Livermore, 'Peace-keeping: Between Hope and Despair', Paper presented at the Ninth Asia Pacific Roundtable, Kuala Lumpur, 5-8 June 1995, p. 3.

2. As of June 1992, the UN had thirteen peace-keeping operations: Middle East (300 personnel), India-Pakistan (38), Cyprus (1,500), Golan Heights (1,100), Lebanon (5,300), Iraq-Kuwait (320), Angola (100), El Salvador (380), Western Sahara (328), former Yugoslavia (24,000), Somalia (25,000), Mozambique (4,000), and Cambodia (19,200). Data from United Nations and *New York Times*, cited in *Globe and Mail*, 8 June 1993. According to Gerhard Will, the ability of the UN to intervene in conflicts in an attempt to bring about peaceful solutions to international conflicts has increased in proportion to the increasing absence of mutual world-power obstructionism since the end of East-West confrontation. See Gerhard Will, 'The Elections in Cambodia: Taking Stock of a UN Mission', *Asian Politics*, 44, 4 (1993): 393-402.

3. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *An Agenda for Peace*, New York: United Nations, 1992.

4. According to Samuel Huntington, the first 'long' wave of democratization began in

the 1820s and continued until 1926. The end of the Second World War ushered in the second wave of democratization that reached its zenith in 1962 with thirty-six countries governed democratically. See Samuel P. Huntington, 'Democracy's Third Wave', in Larry Diamond and Marc Plattner (eds.), *The Global Resurgence of Democracy*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993, p. 3.

5. Gary Klintworth, *Cambodia's Past, Present and Future*, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Working Paper No. 268, Canberra: Australian National University, 1993, p. 21. See also interview, 22 May 1993.

6. Gary Klintworth, 'Cambodia 1992: Hopes Fading', *Southeast Asian Affairs* 1993, pp. 113-29.

7. Michael Leifer, 'Power-sharing and Peace-making in Cambodia', *SALS Review*, 12, 1 (Winter-Spring 1992): 139-53.

8. Abdulgaffar Peang-Meth, 'The United Nations Peace Plan, the Cambodian Conflict, and the Future of Cambodia', *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 14, 1 (June 1992): 39.

9. See his article, 'Understanding the Khmer: Sociological-Cultural Observations', *Asian Survey*, 31, 5 (May 1991): 442-55. In this article, he argues that the Cambodians' behaviour has been shaped by two main religions. The first religion, known as Brahmanism or the Hindu brahmanic cult, 'described life in terms of a pyramid-like system at the apex of which was the god-king, Devaraja, who acted as an intermediary between the gods and a social order that propounded well-defined class/statuses/role relationships' (ibid., p. 445). The other religion is Theravada Buddhism, which 'preached equality and extolled individual achievement, merit, and reincarnation' (ibid., p. 446). As a result of influence by these religions, the 'dichotomous Khmer' accepted 'their roles and duties under the Devarajas for personal security and protection in the social order' and accepted 'fatalistically the good and evil outcomes of karma' (ibid., p. 447). Thus, in this analysis, the Khmer have a split personality. On the one hand, they can be passive, pleasant, and gentle. On the other hand, they can be warlike. All the writer says is that there are contradictions within the Khmer personality that may manifest disagreement, conflict, and violence. For instance, he points out that although the Khmer are passive and preoccupied with harmony, sometimes the 'spirit of the Devaraja breaks out of their subconscious' and 'they are spurred to action'. It seems that, in this analysis, sometimes the Khmer manifest the spirit of the Devaraja (that is, there is no room for compromise, complacency, accommodation, or conciliation) but the god-king 'is the master of all existence and all must bow to him' (ibid., p. 448). The Khmer behaviour, then, confirms the problem of their dispute settlement: 'the spirit of the Devaraja dictates that there cannot be many god-kings at the apex of the pyramid. It follows that if 10 Khmer of relatively equal status are locked in a room, 10 different factions are likely to emerge. Cambodia is a land of cliques whose members are bound by family ties, personal ties and favours, and work ties' (ibid., p. 451). 'This analysis, however, is problematic; it is unclear as to how, when, and why one particular personality, especially the brahmanic, surfaces.'

10. Ibid., pp. 448-9.

11. Peang-Meth, 'The United Nations Peace Plan, the Cambodian Conflict and the Future of Cambodia', p. 39.

12. See his unpublished paper 'Of Peace and Conflict in a Faraway Land: The UN and the Challenge of Peace in Cambodia'. The same argument can be seen in his 'Peace-keeping, Peace-building and the Challenge of Conflict Resolution in Cambodia', in Centre for International and Strategic Studies, *Peace-keeping: Norms, Policy and Process*, Peace-keeping Symposium, Ottawa, 9-14 May 1993, pp. 128-40. See also his 'The Challenge of Conflict Resolution in Cambodia', *Canada Defence Quarterly* (September 1993): 35-42. A similar argument, thought somewhat more descriptive, is put forward by writers like Craig Etcheson. Etcheson, for instance, points to the fact that the Khmer Rouge apparently never intended to honour the Paris agreements. During the UN advance mission, the Khmer Rouge insisted it was waiting for the deployment of UNTAC before it would co-operate in the peace process. When the peace-keepers arrived, it demanded that UNTAC would give assurances that all Vietnamese troops had indeed left Cambodia in 1989. Feeling some frustration, UNTAC said there was no evidence that Vietnamese troops remained. The response was to raise a new demand: the government would have to be completely dismantled before the Khmer Rouge disarmed. According to Etcheson, the