CAMBODIA'S FOREIGN RELATIONS IN REGIONAL AND GLOBAL CONTEXTS

Edited by
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CAMBODIA'S FOREIGN RELATIONS IN REGIONAL AND GLOBAL CONTEXTS

Published by
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DETH Sok Udom
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Serkan BULUT

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ENDORSEMENT

It is indeed a privilege for me to be asked to write an endorsement for Konrad Adenauer Stiftung's new book, *Cambodia's Foreign Relations in Regional and Global Contexts*. This academic publication will certainly contribute to a better understanding of the evolution of Cambodia's foreign policy in the context of fast-paced and changing regional and international landscapes.

There is no denying the fact that there are not many publications written on this subject from the perspectives of Cambodian scholars and intellectuals, many of whom I assume have witnessed the country's painful journey from the horrors of war at its worst period in the midst of the 1970s to peace, reconstruction and reintegration into the global community of nations. We must be mindful that Cambodia's foreign policy imperatives have been dictated internally by its historical, cultural, geographical and political contexts while externally shaped, to a great extent, by powerful forces of globalization, competing geopolitical multipolar rivalries, and the rising of traditional and non-traditional security threats, as well as other mega trends like climate change and food/energy security issues, to mention just the major ones.

As great advances in science and technology continue to unfold in the 21st century, bringing along innovation and improved well-being to humanity, the post-Cold War geopolitical landscape has brought, on the other hand, many uncertainties to the world. The current global and regional contexts, characterized by i) increasing likelihoods of conflicts (as in the Korean Peninsula), ii) the newly emerging trends of protectionism and populism (as embodied in President Trump's *"America First"* and now *"America Alone"* with its pullout from the *"Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP)"),* iii) the rise of China as an economic power and its grand strategy of the *"Belt and Road Initiative"* (recently counterweighted by Japan's *"Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy,"* in tandem with India's *"Act East Policy,"* and ASEAN-led *"Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)"),* are forming multi-dimensional, cross-cutting geopolitico-economic kaleidoscopic forces that exert tremendous pressure on a small country like Cambodia.

Last but not least, Cambodia's foreign policy alignment with its regional ASEAN Community, well known for its *"ASEAN Centrality"* and *"ASEAN Way,"* offers another perspective on how the country is conducting its policy coordination in a multilateral framework or in fora like the G20, the WTO, ASEM, and the UN, on global issues such as the UN peacekeeping operations and the SDGs.

In sum, and in light of the above, I can only congratulate Konrad Adenauer Stiftung and all the contributing authors for their perseverance in delivering such a quality publication that is much needed for our academia, think tanks and policy makers.
Enjoy the reading!

His Excellency Dr. SOK Siphana
Advisor to the Royal Government of Cambodia

FOREWORD

I am deeply honored by the request from the editors to write the foreword for this great book. *Cambodia's Foreign Relations in Regional and Global Contexts* is a very timely and important book. At the outset, I would like to strongly compliment the three editors, Associate Professor Dr. Deth Sok Udom, Ambassador Sun Suon and Mr. Serkan Bulut, who shared a common vision in 2016 to produce an edited volume on Cambodia's foreign relations in historical and contemporary contexts. They were strongly supported by Cambodia Country Representative Mr. Rene Gradwohl of the German foundation Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, which financed this project. Now, their vision has become a reality. The determination and painstaking efforts of the editors, beginning in March 2016, produced this extraordinary book.

Cambodia's journey since independence has been long and turbulent. This book tells the story of how Cambodia, like a phoenix, has risen from the ashes of suffering and deep despair: from being a victim of the power struggles for hegemony in Southeast Asia during the Cold War to be reborn as a proud nation among nations in the dynamic process of globalization that is sweeping Asia and the world. I think this central theme is articulated most clearly in the following five chapters: the first and the last plus the three chapters 12, 13 and 14 which deal with the relations of Cambodia with the three superpowers: China, United States, and the Soviet Union/Russia. Through the wise guidance provided by the editors, this central theme is cleverly interwoven like a common thread throughout all the twenty chapters of the book and forms the foundation of the story of how relations of Cambodia with regional and global powers have shaped Cambodia's destiny in the modern world. This book includes materials not addressed in previous works on these subjects, and as such, makes it a fascinating read and marks it as an important contribution to the corpus of books covering the impacts of geopolitical politics on Cambodia.

Though I am an Indonesian, I have been lucky to be an eyewitness to Cambodian history in one capacity or another since the 1970s until today. I became acutely aware of the Cambodian tragedy when I was stationed as an economist with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in Bangkok from 1963 to 1981 during which time neighboring Cambodia, which enjoyed peace in the 1960s but was in constant turmoil since 1970 and was since 1975 hermetically sealed from the world by Pol Pot's genocidal Khmer Rouge regime. Then, from my vantage point in Bangkok, one could not help but notice that following the liberation of Cambodia from Khmer Rouge rule by the Vietnamese army supported by Cambodian rebels united under the United Front for the National Salvation of Cambodia (UFNSK), the full story of the brutality of life under Pol Pot's genocidal regime began to emerge.

In February 1979, together with some colleagues, I visited the area south of Aranyaprathet, a small border town in eastern Thailand, where we watched in shock as ghastly frail people with wide, empty eyes stumbled out of the dense Cambodian forests one by one and collapsed on Thai soil by the thousands. I could not hold my tears seeing all that misery and

immediately cabled the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations in New York volunteering to serve in Cambodia as a peacekeeper.

Unfortunately, because of political maneuverings in the United Nations in New York, it took 12 years before I was finally sent to Cambodia. Meanwhile in 1981, I was transferred to the United Nations headquarters in New York where I watched, again as an eyewitness, the intensive lobbying in the United Nations. During 1979 to 1991 Cambodia effectively had two governments side by side, each recognized by a different group of external powers. First, there was the "People's Republic of Kampuchea" (PRK) later renamed State of Cambodia (SOC), led since 1985 by Prime Minister Hun Sen, which was de facto in effective control of 80–90 percent of the country. The PRK was recognized by the Soviet Union, its allies, India and others. Secondly, there was a "counter government" known as the "Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea" (CGDK) established in 1982 and led by Prince Sihanouk consisting of the republican Khmer People's National Liberation Front (KPNLF), the Khmer Rouge's Party of Democratic Kampuchea and the Royalists' United National Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful and Cooperative Cambodia (FUNCINPEC). It controlled the refugee camps in Thailand and some slivers of land inside Cambodia and was recognized by the West, China, the ASEAN six (at the time) and other countries.

From 1982 to 1991, spearheaded by the United States, China and the ASEAN six, a resolution was adopted every year by the United Nations General Assembly incredibly recognizing the CGDK and not the PRK/SOC as the legitimate government of Cambodia. The sponsors argued that Vietnam should never have invaded Cambodia never mind that their action has put an end to the Khmer Rouge's massacre of 1.7 million Cambodians. This gave the Khmer Rouge a new lease on life, and I watched in disgust as the Khmer Rouge ambassador Thioun Prasiddh pranced about the diplomatic receptions in New York telling every ambassador how bad that PRK government was and to please continue to vote for the CGDK as the legitimate representative of Cambodia. I never shook his hand.

During the stalemate, the PRK was ostracized economically and politically by the western donor community thereby prolonging the suffering of the Cambodian people for another 11 years. A real breakthrough only became possible when the Cambodians judged themselves ready for it. In 1987, Prince Sihanouk and Hun Sen, leaders of the two opposing forces, the CGDK and the SOC, came together for two historic meetings near Paris to finally break the stalemate. After that, a confluence of favorable factors led to the signing of the Paris Peace Agreements by 19 signatory states including Cambodia in Paris on 23 October 1991. The UN Secretary General signed as a witness.

The Paris Peace Agreements were finally able to break the decade-long stalemate. It stipulated that the United Nations itself would take control of the administration of Cambodia until it had successfully conducted elections for a new government. However, since the UN cannot put a sovereign member state under trusteeship, a Supreme National Council (SNC) was established to serve as "the unique legitimate body and source of authority" in Cambodia throughout the transition period. Chaired by Sihanouk, it consisted of six representatives of the SOC and two each from the Khmer Rouge, FUNCINPEC and KPNLF. The Paris Peace Agreements then stipulated that the SNC delegate all powers

necessary to UNTAC to implement the agreements. It was envisaged that the SNC would serve largely as a symbolic body, a forum for reconciliation and some very minimal powers of governance.

The United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) was created to implement the provisions of the Paris Agreements. At an estimated cost of USD 1.7 billion, UNTAC had an authorized strength of 15,547 troops and 893 military observers from 34 countries, 3,500 civilian police from 32 countries, 1,149 civilian staff and 465 UN volunteers as well as a 56,000-strong Cambodian supporting staff. UNTAC had an unprecedented mandate and powers, the most important were to conduct free and fair elections, to repatriate the 370,000 refugees in the camps in Thailand, and to demobilize at least 70 % of the military forces of the four factions. Yasushi Akashi of Japan was appointed as the Special Representative of the Secretary General to head UNTAC. He made me he provincial director of Siem Reap, one of twenty such directors. I was delighted. As the provincial director of Siem Reap province, my main tasks, as UNTAC's shadow governor, were supposedly to supervise and control the existing administrative structure, i.e. the State of Cambodia (SOC), as well as to coordinate the activities of all components of UNTAC at the provincial level through frequent coordination meetings and to approve the opening up of offices of all political parties in the run up to the elections.

The Khmer Rouge refused to be disarmed so UNTAC failed to carry out its mandate of demobilizing the Cambodian forces. But UNTAC had achieved two major successes: The first is the complete repatriation of 370,000 refugees from border camps in Thailand. But UNTAC's key success was undoubtedly the organization and conduct of Cambodia's elections in 1993. An estimated 4.3 million Cambodians, 89.5 percent of the registered voters, cast their vote between 23 and 28 May 1993. This ended UNTAC's role, and the Constituent Assembly consisting of the 120 elected deputies drafted a new constitution which was ratified on 21 September 1993. The Assembly then proclaimed Sihanouk constitutional monarch with virtually all executive power vested in the two prime ministers: Prince Ranariddh and Samdech Hun Sen. UNTAC completed its withdrawal on 15 November 1993. I left Cambodia in September 1993 and returned to the United Nations in New York.

In November 1993, the Secretary-General of the UN, Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali appointed me as his personal envoy to the new government in Cambodia. I was overjoyed as I consider Cambodia now my second home. The Royal Government of Cambodia granted me equal status of the 20 ambassadors from countries accredited to the RGC. Arriving in Phnom Penh this time I encountered a different Cambodia. Yes, the people were still poor but there was a general atmosphere of pride and confidence. The successful elections were a watershed as it started a new era in Cambodia in which Cambodia now has one government recognized by all governments of the world. Foreign aid and foreign investment poured in at a rapid pace as if the donors wanted to make up for having denied it to Cambodia throughout the 1980s. I could feel excitement everywhere and I finished my tour of duty in 1997. However, I have continued to come to Cambodia every year after that until today as a board member of two Non-Governmental Organizations dealing with education and to engage in other activities including giving lectures at universities.

Here are some highlights of the five chapters which I have identified earlier as having shaped the central theme of this book. The introductory Chapter 1 by Dr. Path Kosal discusses the interplay between each Cambodian regime's political order and their foreign relations from the end of World War II in 1945 through the end of Cambodia's civil war in 1998. Dr. Path Kosal concludes that the year 1998 marked a major turning point in Cambodia's search for peace and unity. In July of that year, the Cambodian People's Party won the national election and Prime Minister Hun Sen's "Win-Win" policy focused on national reconciliation, national unity, and economic development, while finally effectively bringing an end to the Khmer Rouge political and military organization after nearly thirty years.

Chapter 20, the last chapter, written by Mr. You Sokunpanha, shows conclusively that between the watershed 1993 elections and 2015, Cambodia's gross domestic product rose more than seven times in real terms, suggesting an average annual growth rate of close to eight percent, among the highest in the world. In current dollars, a Cambodian today makes close to USD 1,200 a year, or an incredible four and a half times what Cambodians made in 1993. He notes that the World Bank officially revised Cambodia's economy from low-income to lower-middle-income status in July 2016.

The constantly evolving juxtaposition of Cambodia's relations with the three Superpowers China (Chapter 12), the USA (Chapter 13) and the Soviet Union later Russia (Chapter 14) makes for fascinating reading. These chapters reveal that politically, during the early 1970s and again in the 1980s, the United Nations General Assembly annually had to decide who represented Cambodia, a de facto government or an insurgent/exile coalition. In the early 1970s, it placed China and the USSR on the one hand against the United States on the other but in the 1980s there emerged "the Cambodian problem" in the United Nations which exacerbated disputes between the USSR on the one hand versus China and the United States on the other. After the UNTAC elections they all joined together to support the newly elected Royal Government of Cambodia.

Mr. Bulut in Chapter 13 argues that especially after the 1950s, the whole world became a competition ground for the Soviets and the Americans. It was the side effects of this ideology-driven geopolitical rivalry that brought Cambodia into the picture and made it pay a heavy price as collateral damage in the Soviet-American proxy war in Vietnam. Like many other small states in the international structure, Cambodia found itself in a game that it did not start nor was it ready to play. Today, he argues that while US–Cambodian relations are still haunted by the nightmares of 1970s and 80s, the current relationship is one of economic pragmatism, with human rights issues lurking in the background. He reasons that the fragile relationship between the US and Cambodia is not just determined by the two but rather has been shaped within the context of time and an important third party: China. Like in the early 60's, he contends, when the relationships soured, Cambodia looked to China to compensate and balance the US. While the Cold War is no more, the delicate game of balance between China and the US is still prevalent for Cambodia.

In Chapter 14 on relations with Russia, Dr. Teng Delux writes that after the liberation of Cambodia by the Vietnamese army, the USSR and its allies were the main supporters of

the PRK/SOC, the de facto government of Cambodia. He continues that because during the 1980s the PRK/SOC was ostracized by the West, the only aid it received was from the socialist countries at an annual volume of USD 100 million, of which more than USD 80 million came from the USSR. Without this aid the PRK would have had enormous difficulties to survive in the 1980s. After the UNTAC elections, aid poured in at a rapid pace, mainly from western countries and Japan. Russia, which replaced the USSR, is playing a relatively diminished role in post-UNTAC Cambodia. Mr. Chanborey in Chapter 12 on relations with China describes the constantly evolving relations between China and Cambodia over the years: from China being a poor country in the 70's supporting the Khmer Rouge to recently becoming the second largest economy in the world in which China became Cambodia's top investor and aid provider. With increasing aid came increasing political influence of China, he also shows.

In between these chapters we find 15 interesting and equally strong chapters written by reputable Cambodian and foreign scholars and practitioners. All these chapters provide extensive references and endnotes from the internet which makes the book very useful as a textbook. Part II deals with relations with neighboring counties. Cambodia's geography of being sandwiched by two powerful, and historically antagonistic neighbors—Thailand and Vietnam—had been a persistent compelling factor shaping the country's foreign policy. The editors have therefore wisely invited authors from each respective country to contribute a chapter to give the reader a balanced view. Chapter 6 on relations with Laos was written by Ambassador Julio Jeldres, a well-known author on Cambodian issues. Chapter 7 on Cambodia's relations with maritime Southeast Asia written by Dr. Alvin Lim from Singapore analyzes the increasingly important relations with these countries, especially in the context of ASEAN countries today, while tracing the links of precolonial Cambodia with Java through Prince Jayavarman II who spent some time in Java and with Malaysia through the ties between the Cambodian Cham minority with those in the Malay sultanates.

Part III consists of three chapters on relations with regional "middle powers" Japan, Australia and South Korea emphasizing the recent rapidly rising economic ties including foreign aid and foreign trade relations with these countries but indicating that both Japan and Australia played an important role in the search for a solution of the Cambodian impasses in the 1980s. In Chapter 8, on relations with the European Union the author points out that although the relations between Cambodia and the European Union are rather young, relations with member states of the EU such as France and Germany have always been quite important. He therefore includes short sections on relations with these two countries. The authors of Chapter 15 on India admit that India-Cambodia economic ties remain relatively minor but note the enormous impact Indian culture had on Cambodia.

The book would not have been complete without the inclusion of Part IV on Cambodia's membership in Regional and International Organizations and Part V dealing with Economic Integration, Security Cooperation and Challenges. Because of Cambodia's unique relations with the United Nations, the reader's attention is drawn in particular to Chapter 17 by Ambassador Sun Suon who skillfully guides the readers, through the complex period of United Nations' involvement in the "Cambodian issue" particularly from 1979 to

the UNTAC elections of 1993 and beyond. Also significant is Chapter 16 on Cambodia's relations with ASEAN, tracing such relations back to the 1980s when the ASEAN six was siding with the US and China until today in which Cambodia is a proud member of the increasingly wealthy ASEAN ten alliance striving to achieve the goals of the ASEAN Economic Community.

During today's period of rapid economic growth in Cambodia, there is a rising middle class of predominantly young Cambodians born after the Khmer Rouge period who have a thirst for knowledge about their country's past. This book, originally envisioned as a textbook by the editors, is a rich source of information on the role of foreign intervention in Cambodia and will serve interests of students in enhancing their knowledge in this area. The book's utility, however, goes beyond the classroom. I concur with the editors that this book also serves as a useful handbook on foreign affairs for both academics and the general public. Moreover, I would go a step further by saying that the increasing pivot of ASEAN countries, including Cambodia, towards China economically as well as politically has sparked a renewed interest internationally for books such as this. I anticipate there will be a high demand for this book not only in Cambodia, but also internationally, and that the book will be among the best sellers on Cambodia and on Southeast Asia.

Dr. Benny Widyono
Author of *Dancing in Shadows: Sihanouk,*
the Khmer Rouge, and the United Nations in Cambodia

PREFACE

A look at Cambodia's history and present shows the multifaceted nature of its foreign relations and how the relations have shaped the political, socio-cultural and economic landscapes of the Kingdom. In this regard, foreign relations, simply put, the relations between Cambodia and other states or international institutions, have been a double-edged sword. On one side, there were conflicts, war and diplomatic tensions due to reasons of ideology and national interest, imperialism and mutual misunderstanding. A case in point is the Preah Vihear conflict between Thailand and Cambodia as well as the Indochina war in the 60's and bombardment against Cambodia in the 70's. On the other side, foreign relations have been a source of inspiration, cooperation and development. New political and economic ideas have been exchanged across borders and led to growth and prosperity. Common international environmental and security challenges have been tackled in a cooperative based on the shared vision. There are countless examples buttressing the positive effects of cooperation, such as the UNTAC peace mission, the results of development cooperation and ASEAN. Even if it is not always easy to bring stakeholders together, to create a common basis of mutual understanding, to design cross border decision-making procedures or to overcome national interests and historical resentments, the avoidance of war and insecurity is worth all the efforts.

Cambodia has, since 1991, deepened and extended its foreign relations with regional and international partners, always envisioning the relevance of national stability, national interests and sovereignty. It is due to the importance of Cambodia's foreign relations that Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) Cambodia, in cooperation with the editors of this book, decided to create a comprehensive source of information on the *Foreign Relations in Regional and Global Contexts* of the Kingdom of Cambodia. As there is, to-date, a limited number of publications available, we believe that this book serves as a useful guide into the different relations and dynamics between Cambodia and its diverse cooperation partners. We hope that the publication will be a comprehensive and thought-provoking contribution to the academic field of foreign relations and international studies as well as to all interested people.

One particular aim of the book has been to motivate Cambodian scholars and students to academically engage with research questions about the relations of Cambodia with other countries and contribute with their articles towards the analysis and general better understanding of Cambodia's foreign relations.

We express our appreciation to the editors, who all have been cooperating with Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Cambodia in a professional, constructive and target-oriented way. Moreover, we would like to express our gratitude to the authors, who shared their deep insights and expertise of their specific research field. Against this backdrop, we would like to clarify that all opinions expressed by the authors in this book are theirs exclusively. Finally, I would like to thank Robert Hör, KAS Cambodia Research Associate, for his ceaseless efforts to coordinate the editing process and Phang Sokla, KAS Cambodia Office Manager, for his

patient mastery of the layouting and graphic design of the book.

> *"Our enemies of today are not other nations. Our enemies of today are poverty, ignorance, disease and discrimination. What we need is co-operation based on the idea that the entire world is one human family. Ignorance and lack of understanding among Asian, African and Western nations is the greatest danger we are facing today."*

Closing with this quote of Konrad Adenauer, first chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany after World War II, we wish all readers an inspirational and thought-provoking journey through Cambodia's foreign relations!

Phnom Penh, December 2017

René Gradwohl
Country Representative
Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung
Kingdom of Cambodia

LIST OF BIOGRAPHIES

EDITORS:

Dr. Deth Sok Udom

Dr. Deth Sok Udom is Associate Professor of International Relations and Rector of Zaman University. Dr. Deth finished his Bachelor's degree with High Honors in Sociology at Boğaziçi University (Turkey), a Master's degree in Southeast Asian Studies at Ohio University (USA), and a Ph.D. in Southeast Asian Studies at Humboldt University of Berlin (Germany). He is also a Senior Research Fellow at the Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace (CICP) and a member of the Pacific Forum Young Leaders program (Center for Strategic and International Studies). Dr. Deth is credited with several academic publications and has been invited to give guest lectures at various institutions/universities and has given a number of interviews to local and regional media on Cambodian and regional affairs.

Ambassador Sun Suon, Ph.D

Dr. Sun Suon is formerly Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Cambodia to the UN office, the WTO and Other International Organizations at Geneva (2007-2013). He was concurrently accredited as Ambassador of Cambodia to Switzerland and as the country's Permanent Representative to the UNIDO in Vienna (with residence in Geneva). His previous posting was in New York where he served as Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative of Cambodia to the United Nations (1999-2003).

Ambassador Suon is formerly a senior career diplomat at the Cambodia's foreign service. He has been associated with various academic institutions. He studied law at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" (Bulgaria), where he earned a Law degree (Jurist/LLM) and a Ph.D in Jurisprudence (International Law). He also holds a Master of Arts degree in International Relations from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University (USA). At present, Ambassador Suon teaches international law and other courses of international affairs at Zaman University.

Mr Serkan Bulut

Serkan Bulut is an alumnus of Bogazici and Bilkent Universities in Turkey and the University of Delaware in the United States. Currently he is a Research Fellow at CICP focusing on civil-military relations and foreign policy analysis. His publications on Southeast Asia cover geopolitics, civil-military relations and their reflection on foreign and security

policy making processes. He has lived, traveled and done research in various Southeast Asian countries and presented his work in various international avenues. Mr. Bulut assumed roles in several national and international organizations such as the Turkish Grand National Assembly and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in various capacities.

AUTHORS:

Dr. Path Kosal

Chapter 1: Introduction: Cambodia's Political History and Foreign Relations, 1945-1998 *(Page 5)*

Dr. Path Kosal is Assistant Professor of Political Science at Brooklyn College, The City University of New York. Previously he was lecturer of International Relations at the University of Southern California. Dr. Path received his M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in International Relations from the University of Southern California (Los Angeles), and Bachelor degree of International Law at the National University of Management (Phnom Penh). He served as deputy director of the Phnom Penh-based Documentation Center of Cambodia from 1997 to 2000. His current research focuses the Third Indochina War between Vietnam, Cambodia and China, 1975-1989.

Dr. Deth Sok Udom

Chapter 2: An Overview of Cambodia-Thailand Relations: From Hostility to Harmony? *(Page 27)*

Dr. Deth Sok Udom is Associate Professor of International Relations and Rector of Zaman University. Dr. Deth finished his Bachelor's degree with High Honors in Sociology at Boğaziçi University (Turkey), a Master's degree in Southeast Asian Studies at Ohio University (USA), and a Ph.D. in Southeast Asian Studies from Humboldt University of Berlin (Germany). He is concurrently a Senior Research Fellow at the Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace (CICP) and and a member of the Pacific Forum Young Leaders program (Center for Strategic and International Studies). He is credited with several academic publications and has been invited to give guest lectures at various institutions/universities and has given a number of interviews to local and regional media on Cambodian and regional affairs.

Dr. Morakot Meyer

Chapter 3: A History of the Future is Waiting to be Made: Contemplating Thai-Cambodian Relations–A Thai Perspective *(Page 45)*

Dr. Morakot Meyer is Assistant Professor of History, Chair of Multicultural ASEAN Center Project (MU-MAC), and Deputy Director for Research and Academic Affairs of Mahidol University's Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia, where she teaches Multicultural Studies. She earned her doctorate in History and Civilization from the European University Institute in Florence. Her research interests include the politics of cultural heritage, museum, and nationalism. In 2017, she received a Taiwan Fellowship from Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs to conduct research on museums at the Academia Sinica, Institute of Modern History in Taipei.

Kry Suyheang

Chapter 4: Cambodia's Relations with Vietnam: Prospects and Challenges *(Page 63)*

Ms. Kry is a peace practitioner and a gender advocate. Previously, she served as the deputy director of Anlong Veng Peace Center, a researcher focusing on the Myanmar peace process and communal violence at the Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, and a victim support officer at the Documentation Center of Cambodia. She is the co-author and co-lead researcher for a community action peace research on *Who is listening: Tackling hard issues with empathy. Using Facilitative Listening Design to to understand and respond to anti-Vietnamese sentiment in Cambodian communities.* Ms. Kry holds a Master's Degree in Peace and Conflict Studies from the University of Massachusetts Lowell, USA, and a Bachelor of Education from the Royal University of Phnom Penh.

Chy Terith

Chapter 4: Cambodia's Relations with Vietnam: Prospects and Challenges *(Page 63)*

Chy Terith (MA, LL.M) is an independent researcher. Through his previous work, Terith conducted research on anti-corruption, gender-based violence, rule of law, and other critical issues relevant to the Cambodian laws, governance and political context. In 2014, Terith authored a book titled *When the Criminal Laughs* and co-authored another book chapter, "Including Survivors in the Tribunal Process" in *On Trial: The Khmer Rouge Accountability Process* in 2009.

Dr. Nguyen Vu Tung

Chapter 5: Vietnam-Cambodia Relations: An Analysis from a Vietnamese Perspective *(Page 83)*

Dr. Nguyen Vu Tung is a professor at and the president of the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam (DAV). He was Deputy Chief of Mission at the Vietnam Embassy in the United States.

He earned a Master of Arts in Law and Diplomacy (MALD) from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy in 1998 and received his Ph.D. in Political Science from Columbia University (New York City) in 2003.

His main areas of teaching, research, and publications include international relations theories, international relations in Southeast Asia and Asia-Pacific, Vietnamese foreign policy and relations with the United States, China, and ASEAN.

Ambassador Julio A. Jeldres, Ph.D

Chapter 6: Cambodia's Relations with Laos: In the Shadow of China *(Page 101)*

Ambassador Julio A. Jeldres was born in Santiago de Chile. He became interested in Cambodia's contemporary history in 1967, following the visit of Jacqueline Kennedy to Cambodia. He began a correspondence and long-standing friendship with His Late Majesty King Norodom Sihanouk in late 1967. He served as Deputy Chief of Cabinet, Chief of the Private Secretariat and Special Assistant to His Late Majesty from 1981 to 1991 and as Official Biographer since 1993. He holds a Ph.D from Monash University (2015) and is author of several books, book chapters and research papers on Cambodia's external relations, politics, the monarchy, the Royal Family and the late King Father. He is an Adjunct Research Fellow at Monash University's School of Historical Studies and International Relations.

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Chapter 7: Cambodia and Maritime Southeast Asia *(Page 117)*

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Chapter 8: European Union-Cambodia Relations *(Page 135)*

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Leng Thearith
Chapter 9: Australia's Role in Cambodia:
More than a Peacemaking Architect *(Page 161)*

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Chapter 10: Cambodia-Japan Relations: the Bumpy and Winding Road to
the Strategic Partnership and Beyond *(Page 179)*

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Chapter 11: Cambodia-Korea Relations: Bilateral Cooperations and the Changing Dynamics of Triangular Affairs *(Page 205)*

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Cheunboran Chanborey

Chapter 12: Cambodia-China Relations: What Do Cambodia's Past Strategic Directions Tell Us? *(Page 227)*

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Serkan BULUT

Chapter 13: Cambodia–United States Relations: from Early Encounters to Post-Cold War *(Page 249)*

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Chapter 14: Cambodia-Russia Relations *(Page 269)*

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Chapter 15: Cambodia-India Relations *(Page 291)*

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Chapter 15: Cambodia-India Relations *(Page 291)*

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Sam Ath Sambath Sreysour

Chapter 16: Cambodia in the ASEAN Context *(Page 311)*

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Dr. Oum Sothea

Chapter 16: Cambodia in the ASEAN Context *(Page 311)*

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Ambassador Sun Suon, Ph.D

Chapter 17: Cambodia and the United Nations: A Multilateral Engagement *(Page 335)*

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Ambassador Suon is formerly a senior career diplomat at the Cambodia's foreign service. He has been associated with various academic institutions. He studied law at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" (Bulgaria), where he earned a Law degree (Jurist/LLM) and a Ph.D in Jurisprudence (International Law). He also holds a Master of Arts degree in International Relations from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University (USA). At present, Ambassador Suon teaches international law and other courses of international affairs at Zaman University.

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Chapter 18: Cambodia's Defense Policy and Strategic Environment: Contemporary Issues, Challenges and the Way Forward *(Page 365)*

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Chapter 19: Greater Mekong Subregional Cooperation (GMS) and Cambodia's Foreign Policy *(Page 387)*

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACD ..... Asia Cooperation Dialogue
ACFTA ..... ASEAN-China Free Trade Area
ACMEC ..... Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economics Cooperation Strategy
ADB ..... Asian Development Bank
ADMM Plus ..... ASEAN Defense Ministerial Meeting Plus
ADIZ ..... Air Defense Identification Zone
AEC ..... ASEAN Economic Community
AFTA ..... ASEAN Free Trade Area
AHRD ..... ASEAN Human Rights Declaration
AIIB ..... Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank
AKFTA ..... ASEAN-Korea Free Trade Agreement
APPF ..... Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum
APSC ..... ASEAN Political-Security Community
APT ..... ASEAN + 3
ARF ..... ASEAN Regional Forum
ARMAC ..... ASEAN Regional Mines Centre
ASCC ..... ASEAN Socio-cultural Community
ASEAN ..... Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASEM ..... Asia-Europe Meeting
ATT ..... Arms Trade Treaty
AUN ..... ASEAN University Network
BRICS ..... Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
B&R/BRI ..... Belt and Road Initiative
CDC ..... Council for the Development of Cambodia
CDCF ..... Cambodia Development Cooperation Forum
CEPT ..... Common Effective Preferential Tariffs
CGDK ..... Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea
CIA ..... Central Intelligence Agency
CICP ..... Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace
CLMV ..... Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam
CLV-DTA ..... Cambodia-Laos-Vietnam Development Triangle Area
CMAA ..... Cambodian Mine Action Authority
CNRP ..... Cambodian National Rescue Party
CPK ..... Communist Party of Kampuchea
CPP ..... Cambodian People's Party
CRDB/CDC ..... Cambodian Rehabilitation and Development Board /Council for the Development of Cambodia
CSW ..... Commission of the Status of Women;

DK ..... Democratic Kampuchea
DRV ..... Democratic Republic of Vietnam
EAS ..... East Asia Summit
EC ..... European Community
ECCC ..... Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia for the Prosecution of Crimes Committed during the Period of Democratic Kampuchea
EBA ..... Everything But Arms
EEAS ..... European External Action Service
EEU ..... Eurasian Economic Union
EIB ..... European Investment Bank
EU ..... European Union
EWC ..... East-West Economic Corridor
FDI ..... Foreign Direct Investment
FONOP ..... Freedom of Navigation Operation
FTA ..... Free Trade Agreement
FUNCINPEC ..... National United Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful and Cooperative Cambodia
FUNK ..... Front Uni National du Kampuchea
GATT ..... General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GMS ..... Greater Mekong Subregion
GRUNK: ..... French acronym for: Royal Government of the National Union of Kampuchea (French: Gouvernement royal d'union nationale du Kampuchéa)
GRUNC ..... Royal Government of National Union of Cambodia
GSP ..... Generalized System of Preferences
HDI ..... Human Development Index
IAEA ..... International Atomic Energy Agency
IBRD ..... International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ICC ..... International Criminal Court
ICJ ..... International Court of Justice
ILO ..... International Labour Organization
ITC ..... International Trade Centre
ICTR ..... International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda: ICTY International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia
IMF ..... International Monetary Fund
IPR ..... Intellectual Property Right
JICA ..... Japan International Cooperation Agency
KOICA ..... Korea International Cooperation Agency
KPNLF ..... Khmer People's National Liberation Front
KR ..... Khmer Rouge
KRT ..... Khmer Rouge Tribunal

LDC..... Least Developed Country
LPDR..... Lao People's Democratic Republic
MDGs..... Millennium Development Goals
MGC..... Mekong Ganga Cooperation
MRC..... Mekong River Commission
NAM..... Non-Alignment Movement
NCC..... National Coordination Committee;
NBC..... National Bank of Cambodia
NMAS..... National Mine Action Strategy (NMAS 2010-2019)
NPT..... Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NSEC..... North-South Economic Corridor
NSDP..... National Strategic Development Plan
OBOR..... One Belt, One Road
OCA..... Overlapping Claims Area
ODA..... Official Development Assistance
OECD..... Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OHCHR..... Office of High Commissioner of Human Rights
PAVN..... People's Army of Vietnam
PGI..... Principles of the Global Initiative
PCA..... Permanent Court of Arbitration
PKO..... Peacekeeping Operation (PKOs - Plural);
PPA..... Paris Peace Agreement
PRC..... People's Republic of China
PRK..... People's Republic of Kampuchea
PSI..... Proliferation Security Initiative;
RCAF..... Royal Cambodian Armed Forces
RCEP..... Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership
RGC..... Royal Government of Cambodia
ROK..... Republic of Korea
SDGs..... Sustainable Development Goals
SEANWFZ..... Southeast Asian Nuclear Weapons Free Zone Treaty
SEATO..... South East Asian Treaty Organization
SNC..... Supreme National Council
SOC..... State of Cambodia
SRSG/SR..... Special Representative of Secretary General/Special Rapporteur
SRV..... Socialist Republic of Vietnam
TDB..... Trade and Development Board
TFA..... Trade Facilitation Agreement
TPP..... Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement
TPR..... Trade Policy Review
UFNSK..... United Front of National Salvation of Kampuchea
UN..... United Nations

UNAMIC..... United Nations Advance Mission in Cambodia
UNCT..... United Nations Country Team
UNCTAD..... United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDAF..... United Nations Development Assistance Framework for 2016-2018
UNDP..... United Nations Development Program
UN ESCAP..... United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNESCO..... United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA..... United Nations Population Fund
UNGA..... United Nations General Assembly
UNIDO..... United Nations Industrial development Organization
UNOPS..... United Nations Office for Project Services
UNPKO..... United Nations Peacekeeping Operation
UNSC..... United Nations Security Council
UNTAC..... United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia
USSR..... Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
UXO..... Unexploded Ordnance
WB..... World Bank
WHC..... World Heritage Committee
WHO..... World Health Organization
WIPO..... World Intellectual Property Organization
WMD..... Weapons of Mass Destruction
WTO..... World Trade Organization
ZOPFAN..... Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality

ABOUT THIS BOOK: A READERS' GUIDE

Since independence in 1953, Cambodia as a small country in Southeast Asia had gone through domestic political turbulences and suffered from the repercussions of the Cold War conflicts, especially during the Indochina Wars. Following the Paris Peace Agreements in 1991, Cambodia has integrated into the global economy and has become an active member of the international community, particularly after the accession into the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 1999 and the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2004.

While there has been a considerable increase in journal articles, op-eds and media reporting on Cambodia's foreign affairs, there had not been a book that provides a comprehensive discussion on Cambodia's foreign relations in historical and contemporary contexts across the regions. This volume, titled ***Cambodia's Foreign Relations in Regional and Global Contexts***, is comprised of 20 chapters—authored by more than 20 Cambodian and international academics who are specialized in international affairs with a focus on Cambodia.

This book is divided into five main parts: **Part I** includes this *Readers' Guide* of the Editors Board and an introduction chapter *(Chapter 1)*, which discusses the interplay between each Cambodian regime's political order and their foreign relations from the end of World War II in 1945 through the end of Cambodia's civil war in 1998. In doing so, the chapter provides a broad overview of each political regime's vision of the country and their respective pursuit of national interests within the constraints of the changing structure of regional and international politics. The chapter then concludes with a brief reflection

about historical lessons and future orientation of Cambodia's domestic and foreign policy. **Part II: Relations with Neighboring Countries and Maritime Southeast Asia**, comprised of six chapters (Chapters 2–7), examines Cambodia's relations with neighboring countries, namely Thailand, Vietnam, and Laos, as well as with countries in maritime Southeast Asia. It is worth noting that as Cambodia's relations with neighboring Thailand and Vietnam have relatively been of immense historical and political significance (at times marked by tensions), the Editors Board decided to invite authors from each respective country to contribute a chapter from their country's perspective, so as to offer the readers a more nuanced understanding of Cambodia's complex relationships with its two larger neighbors. **Part III: Relations with Regional and Global Powers** consists of 8 chapters and focuses on Cambodia's relations with countries and regional blocs that have had historical and economic ties with Cambodia. These include Cambodia's relations with the European Union, Australia, Japan, South Korea, China, the United States, Russia, and India. **Part IV: Membership in International Organizations** discusses Cambodia's engagement with inter-governmental bodies. It contains two chapters, each of which provides an overview of Cambodia's role and membership in regional and multilateral institutions by concentrating specifically on ASEAN and the United Nations. Lastly, **Part V: Economic Integration and Security Cooperation** includes chapters on Cambodia's defense security outlook, projects in the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS), as well as the discussion of Cambodia's links to regional integration and global economic and financial architecture through aid, trade, investment, along with an analysis of a perspective of changing political, economic, security, and socio-cultural landscapes of Cambodia in the region and the world.

While Cambodian foreign policy as a course is taught in relevant departments at different universities in Cambodia, there was limited resources and few books as comprehensive as this volume. Therefore, it is intended that this book serves as a useful reference work for the academia as well as the public in their efforts to understand the history of Cambodian foreign relations, as well as the opportunities and challenges in contemporary Cambodian diplomacy. Since each chapter is meant to be a concise discussion for each topic, readers (especially university students) are highly encouraged to consult the endnotes and references listed at the end of each chapter for further elaboration and/or in-depth research.

While the editors of this volume provided the overall format guidelines and comments, the individual authors are solely responsible for the final content and respective views in each chapter, and we respect and appreciate the diversity of their opinions and their contribution of academic expertise to this volume.

An inaugural and relatively large edited volume like this book will not be without shortcomings. Nonetheless, we believe that this first edition will be welcomed by the academia and the general public who are interested in Cambodia's foreign relations, and that the success of this book will inspire more updated and refined editions in the future. It is our hope that this book will serve not only as a handbook on Cambodia's foreign affairs, but that it will also stimulate wider discussion among the academia and the public on this topic.

The Editors Board wish to extend immense appreciation to Konrad Adenauer Stiftung Cambodia, country director Mr. Rene Gradwohl and his dedicated staff for their genuine support for this book project from its inception to its end. Furthermore, it is our honor to have the endorsement by His Excellency Dr. Sok Siphana, Advisor to the Royal Government of Cambodia, of this book. Our special thanks also go to the former envoy of the Secretary General of the United Nations to Cambodia and a long-time friend of Cambodia, Prof. Benny Widyono, who agreed to write the Foreword for our book. Again, we are greatly indebted to all the authors who dedicated their invaluable time writing their chapter and bearing with our editorial requests from the beginning to the completion of this book. Without their valuable contribution, this book certainly would not exist.

Last but not least, we wish to extend our appreciation to Mr. Robert Flinn, Distinguished Professor of Creative Writing at Zaman University, and Mr. Phang Sokla, Office Manager of KAS Cambodia, for their painstaking efforts in proofreading and digitally editing all the chapters to ensure minimal English language errors, if any, in the texts of this book.

Editors Board

DETH Sok Udom, SUN Suon, and Serkan BULUT

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INTRODUCTION: CAMBODIA'S POLITICAL HISTORY AND FOREIGN RELATIONS, 1945-1998

Dr. PATH Kosal

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Dr. PATH Kosal | Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION: CAMBODIA'S POLITICAL HISTORY AND FOREIGN RELATIONS, 1945-1998[1]

I. Introduction

As a small state in the changing hierarchical structure of regional and global power, Cambodia's quest for national unity and sovereignty occupies Cambodian national leaders' central concern throughout the history of its domestic politics and foreign relations. Without economic endurance and political stability, foreign powers' meddling in Cambodia's domestic affairs is a constant theme of its struggle for national unity and autonomy. This chapter is intended to provide a historical sketch of the interplay between each political regime's political order and their foreign relations from the end of World War II in 1945 to the end of Cambodia's civil war in 1998. It begins with a brief reference to the historical legacy of the Khmer empire's engagement with Siamese (Thailand) and Annam (Vietnam), taking stock of how such historical legacies continued to shape different strands of Cambodia's modern nationalism and its relations with the two larger neighbors. At a broader level, it provides an overview of each political regime's vision of the country and their respective pursuit of national interests within the constraints of the changing structure of regional and international politics. It concludes with a brief reflection on historical lessons and future orientation of Cambodia's domestic and foreign policy.

II. Historical Legacies of Pre-colonial Angkor

In pre-colonial period, the interstate system in Southeast Asia was governed by weak territoriality and loose central authority known as the *Mandala* system composed of concentric circles of centre-peripheral relations (Acharya, 2012, p. 61). From the 7th to the 14th century, Angkor governed a vast Khmer empire in mainland Southeast Asia, and Angkorean Kings at the center of power exercised divine and universal authority over their allies and vassals who ruled the peripheral polity independently (Acharya 2012, p. 60). During this period, the Khmer empire was a supra-regional land-based power whose greatness and glory came primarily from territorial conquest and monument building. From the fall of Angkor (1431) to the establishment of the French protectorate (1863), the Khmer empire was significantly weakened by internal strife and efforts of Cambodian kings to stave off subjugation by Siam and Vietnam (Smith, 1965, pp. 9-10). As Siam threatened to annex Cambodia from the northwest, Annam under the Nguyen dynasty gradually absorbed Champa and increasingly threatened the realm of the Khmer empire. A noted scholar Nguyen Van Sieu (1796-1872) described Khmer people as "barbarian" in a vast resource-rich territory beyond its southern boundary (Dutton et. al., 2012, p. 263). The rivalry between Thailand and Vietnam for control over Cambodia increased in its intensity for the first half of the 19th century. King Norodom prevented his kingdom from being devoured by the two neighbors only by becoming a French protectorate in 1863 (Smith, 1965, p. 16).

Notably, Angkor's interactions with Siam and Annam during the pre-colonial era produced a lasting metanarrative of threat from and loss of territory to Thailand and Vietnam. Such threat perception has also been reproduced and perpetuated by Cambodian elites and the intellectual community as post-independent Cambodia engaged in seemingly endless territorial conflict with the two neighboring countries. Existential threats to the Cambodian nation posed by Thailand and Vietnam almost always preoccupied Cambodian nationalists' thinking in the post-independence era.

III. The Sihanouk Era, 1946–1970

In the aftermath of World War II, global politics evolved into the Cold War, characterized by a bipolar system of power, intense ideological conflict and rivalry between the Soviet Union and the United States, and the threat of nuclear war (Kim, 2014, p. 45). In the crucial early years of the Cold War, the grand strategy of the United States was shaped by a small but dominant group of Europe specialists at the State Department, especially Secretary of State Dean Acheson and his chief of policy planner, George Kennan. For these Europe-Firsters, the defense of Europe against the Soviet expansion of communism was to be prioritized over the lesser strategic importance of Asia, given the U.S. resource scarcity (Cha, 2016, pp. 42–47). Washington's policies were motivated as much by strategic preferences as by a racist view of Asian peoples. To Kennan, Southeast Asians were uncivilized and incapable of governing and developing themselves, and if left without American and European leadership, this region

was susceptible to falling under communist control (Cha 2016, p. 50). As a consequence, Washington abandoned its lofty ideal—extolled in the 1941 Atlantic Charter drawn up by the U.S. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Great Britain Prime Minister Winston Churchill—of granting self-determination to all nations. Its Western allies hastened to reassert their authority in their colonies around the world under the pretext of fending off communist expansion. Like other European colonial powers, France's return to reclaim its colonial sovereignty over Indochina in late 1945 was met with militant nationalist resistance and popular rebellions emboldened by a righteous belief in the right to self-determination and the growing international movement for national liberation.

In Cambodia, the short-lived government of Son Ngoc Thanh[2] from August to October 1945 adopted a pan-Indochina nationalist stance, especially in its alliance with the communist Vietminh against France, prompting the latter to dismantle Thanh's government and force him into exile until 1951. On January 7, 1946, France and the new Cambodian government led by King Norodom Sihanouk's uncle, Prince Monireth, signed a modus vivendi (a compromise agreement) in which France consented to Cambodia's demands for internal autonomy in the French union. The agreement also called for the dissolution of many federal services, replacement of Vietnamese with Cambodians in the Cambodian civil service, and strict control of Vietnamese immigration (Dommen, 2001, p. 138). However, this arrangement, combined with more autonomy for Cambodia to manage its domestic affairs in the ensuing years, failed to placate intellectuals and pro-Son Ngoc Thanh forces that opposed continuing French control. In the first multiparty National Assembly election of December 1947, the Democratic Party, founded by a group of intellectuals including Sim Var, Ieu Koeuss and Prince Sisowath Yuthevong in April 1946, won 73% of the vote (Chandler, 1991, p. 30). The election was as much a victory for the Democrats as for Son Ngoc Thanh and his anti-French nationalist movement, the Khmer Issarak. But the election victory failed to translate into successful governance. In 1948, infighting within the Democratic Party and an economic crisis—worsened by the security threat against the government posed by the joint Khmer Issarak-Viet Minh insurgency in the countryside—undermined the party's political legitimacy (Chandler 1991, pp. 39–40). It became necessary to find an alternative form of government that could sustain political stability.

Domestically Sihanouk solidified his image as a semi-divine ruler and firmly wielded power to eliminate all political opponents. Sihanouk's power play strategy of controlling and restraining potential challengers through punishment combined with cooptation was his hallmark as a ruler. He relied on a small circle of loyal political and military heavyweights, including Lon Nol, to do his bidding. The political warfare in Cambodia between 1950 and 1955 was markedly characterized by weakening opposition to King Sihanouk. In 1955 Sihanouk assumed personal command of Cambodian political life. The transformation of Sihanouk from a merely proxy ruler of Cambodia propped up by the French to a national hero who won Cambodia's independence in 1953 is a phenomenal event in the political history of Cambodia. As early as mid-1952, with a growing tidal wave of anti-French popular resistance throughout the kingdom, Sihanouk launched himself into the vanguard of the movement by declaring his "crusade for independence" from France. In March 1953, he dismissed the

Democratic Party cabinet and declared himself Prime Minister. As his memoir later reveals, Sihanouk saw himself as the supreme leader who could rise above warring political factions, unite the country, and prevent foreign interference in Cambodia's domestic affairs (Jeldres, 2005, pp. 52-53). To forge national unity, he formed a new political movement, the Sangkum Reastr Niyum (People's Community) that envisioned an egalitarian democratic socialist regime. Over the years, Sihanouk was increasingly offended by attempts by political factions to turn him into an inconsequential figurehead. He detested Western-style democracy as it created sociopolitical disorder in his kingdom and allowed a demagogue like Son Ngoc Thanh to easily manipulate his people (Jeldres, 2005, p. 53).

In foreign affairs, Prince Sihanouk had two sides: a firm postcolonial nationalist who espoused national self-determination and neutrality and a shrewd pragmatist who sought to maneuver the East-West confrontation in Cambodia's favor through realpolitik diplomacy. In his view, the United States never understood the rightful aspirations of the Cambodian people, and he had to proactively maneuver the interests of great power in favor of Cambodia's cause. For instance, Sihanouk displayed his anticommunist stance and used it to pit the Americans against the French by warning Washington that the French presence in Cambodia was fueling communist recruitment. In February 1953 the French accepted Sihanouk's assumption of the post of commander-in-chief of the royal army and with it responsibility for maintaining law and order and security in the kingdom. Profoundly disappointed in the American Secretary of State Foster Dulles's indifference to his cause, Sihanouk in April turned to enlisting the power of the press and the sentiments of the American public to play the United States off against France by alerting Washington to the risk of the rise of Cambodian communism allied with the Vietminh if France refused to grant complete independence to Cambodia (Jeldres, 2005, p. 48; Dommen, 2001, p. 211). On November 8, France officially granted Cambodia's complete independence, and the next day the formal declaration of national independence was celebrated with a large-scale parade of Sihanouk's armed forces. This public display of Sihanouk's popularity and military strength was meant to deter his domestic and foreign enemies, especially Thailand and South Vietnam, from threatening his regime and Cambodia's national sovereignty.

From 1955 to 1969 Prince Sihanouk's foreign policy was mainly driven by his perception of threats to his power, his conception of monarchical social order, and his desire to maintain Cambodia's national sovereignty. By 1955, in Sihanouk's view, the communist bloc was supporting left-wing parties against him and the Western bloc was ignoring violations of Cambodia's borders in order to protect U.S. interests (Jeldres, 2005, p. 52). In April, at the Asian-African Conference in Bandung, Indonesia, Prince Sihanouk publicly confirmed that Cambodia had joined the community of neutral nations. However, the Eisenhower administration viewed Cambodia's neutrality as disproportionately anti-West as Nehru's neutralist foreign policy had become, and that Cambodia would be dominated by communist China and Vietnam (Rust, 2016, p. 68). Top American officials at the State Department were hostile to Cambodia's neutrality. Unable to turn the Sihanouk's regime into an anti-communist front, the Eisenhower administration relied on the CIA to overthrow Sihanouk by supporting anti-Sihanouk groups (Rust, 2016, p. 4).

By his declaration of neutrality in India and at the Bandung conference, Prince Sihanouk had embarked on a strategy of balance-of-power diplomacy to offset Cambodia's geopolitical vulnerability in the midst of the intensified Cold War in Asia, the onset of the Vietnam War, and the long-standing threat to Cambodia's territorial sovereignty emanating from the West (Thailand) and the East (Vietnam). By 1959 it was clear to Sihanouk that the greatest threats to his power, even his own life, and Cambodia's sovereignty came from Thailand and from South Vietnam, backed by their super-power ally, the United States. The uncovering of the plot against him by his former internal security minister, Dap Chhuon, and a bomb detonated at the Royal Palace in 1959 revealed the direct involvement of Thailand and South Vietnam, aided by the United States, to destabilize Sihanouk's regime (Jeldres, 2015, p. 135; Dommen, 2001, pp. 354–356). The exposure of CIA involvement with the 1959 Dap Chhuon plot severely damaged American relations with the prince (Rust, 2016, p. 4). Furthermore, the assassination of President Diem in South Vietnam on November 2, 1963, hardened Sihanouk's fear of the U.S. government's covert assassination of political leaders who opposed the U.S. foreign policy (Dommen, 2001, p. 696). His fear was not without basis. In 1964, the CIA concluded that any other Cambodian leaders would be much easier to deal with (Rust, 2016, p. 6).

It was the combination of the American hostility toward Cambodia's neutrality, and its inability to stop South Vietnamese and Thai support for Khmer Serei, and the CIA threat to Sihanouk's life that led him to align with communist China and Vietnam. Since 1960, Hanoi's concerted diplomatic efforts to court Sihanouk centered on Hanoi's assurance of Cambodia's neutrality and national sovereignty. After 1964, Hanoi enticed Sihanouk with expanded bilateral trade and allowed Cambodian civilian aircraft to land in North Vietnam en route to China (CPMO, Folder 7793, pp. 1, 30). On June 20, 1967, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) diplomatic office in Phnom Penh was upgraded to the status of an embassy and, two days later, the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam (the Viet Cong) established an office in Phnom Penh. Vietnamese historian Vu Duong Ninh attributes the favorable conditions for the DRV struggle for national liberation in the South to Hanoi's success with its "neighborly policy" toward the Sihanouk regime (Vu, 2015, p. 169). The DRV's strategy was to win Sihanouk's support for its cause, national liberation in South Vietnam.

For Sihanouk, his policy of friendly relations with Hanoi was mistakenly geared towards winning Hanoi's recognition of Cambodia's territorial sovereignty and a better treatment of Cambodia after Vietnam was unified and became a powerful neighbor to reckon with. To Sihanouk's way of thinking, Beijing and Hanoi offered unqualified respect for Cambodia's neutrality and territorial sovereignty and provided him with unconditional economic and military aid (Richardson, 2010, p. 46). As his relationship with the United States continued to deteriorate in the early 1960s, culminating in an open break with Washington in December 1963 (Chandler 1991, p. 124), he decided to stake Cambodia's future on Communist China and North Vietnam. From 1963 to 1965 Sihanouk also sought to exploit the increasing Sino-Soviet rivalry for domination in Southeast Asia in order to extract material aid from Moscow. From September 1963 through the end of 1964, Moscow provided a modest

amount of military aid. But respect for Cambodia's international standing also mattered a great deal to Sihanouk. Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev's cancellation of a planned visit by Sihanouk in November 1965 showed that Moscow did not share the same degree of respect for Cambodia's role that Beijing offered him (Richardson, 2010, p. 47). To Sihanouk, that was an obvious sign that China was more than just a friend to Cambodia.

Sihanouk's triangular arrangement with Hanoi and Beijing against Washington and its ally South Vietnam in the spring of 1964 is a classic realist move, that is, "the enemy of my enemy is my friend." Even against the advice of his own senior cabinet members, Sihanouk adopted an uneasy alliance with the Vietnamese communists. He took risky covert actions that were either inconsistent or in direct violation of the Hague Convention of 1907 on the rights and duties of neutral states. From 1966 to 1968 Sihanouk offered the Vietnamese Communist forces along the Southern front a lifeline—a total of 115,385 tons of material aid including weapons and ammunition passed through Cambodian territory to the Viet Cong—when the Ho Chi Minh trails were being heavily bombed by the United States and North Vietnam faced a U.S. naval blockade. Hanoi called Sihanouk's assistance "the most important and timely support for their military strategy in the South" (Vietnamese Ministry of National Defense Archive, File No. 623, p. 14, p. 518).[3] Beijing allowed Phnom Penh to keep a third of all the material aid and promised more economic and military aid to Cambodia (Richardson, 2010, p. 57). In his memoir, Sihanouk admitted that his army delivered rice that the Chinese bought in Cambodia to the National Liberal Front (NLF) forces along the Vietnamese-Cambodian border from 1964 to 1968 (Jeldres, 2005, pp. 67–68). Notably, Lon Nol benefited personally from all these arrangements by charging expensive fees for the transport of Chinese assistance to the Viet Cong, and after his 1969 visit to China, the Chinese no longer trusted him (Jeldres, 2015, p. 86). In retrospect, Sihanouk's realpolitik maneuvering with the Vietnamese communists diminished the neutrality of Cambodia in the eyes of the world.

By 1969, Prince Sihanouk's regime suffered a legitimacy crisis and his political capital and popularity across all levels of society evaporated quickly as his regime's economic mismanagement since 1966 resulted in an economic crisis (Chandler, 1991, pp. 159–163). The public uncovering of a large presence of Vietnamese communists in Cambodian territory further eroded his legitimacy. Yet, there was no political alternative to Sihanouk's regime. In addition to the economic crisis at home, political turmoil and economic depression in China caused by Chairman Mao's Cultural Revolution deprived Sihanouk of the main source of Cambodia's foreign aid (Richardson, 2010, p. 62).

In his attempt to stave off the threat of the Khmer Rouge-Viet Cong military alliance, Prince Sihanouk initiated a rapprochement with the United States, which not only helped him drive the Vietnamese Communists out of Cambodia's territory but also appeased the military wing of his government by securing the flow of U.S military aid to Cambodia. Sihanouk agreed to the U.S. forces crossing the border in "hot pursuit" of the Vietnamese communists, but the B-52 carpet bombing of Cambodia that President Nixon had ordered was never discussed with Sihanouk (Jeldres, 2015, pp. 154-157). Nevertheless, Nixon and his National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger interpreted that as a blank check for their

secret and illegal bombing on Cambodian territory to destroy Vietnamese communist forces (Chandler, 1991, p. 172). Starting from March 18, 1969, through the end of the year, the U.S dropped about 161,000 tons of bombs (Kiernan, 2008, p. 18). Sihanouk protested the U.S. bombing of Cambodian villages. The Cambodian Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent over 80 protest notes in October 1969 alone to the newly open U.S. Embassy in Phnom Penh (Jeldres, 2015, p. 165).

The American bombing failed to force the Viet Cong out of Cambodian territory. On the contrary, in September, Lon Nol reported an increase in the number of communist troops in the sanctuaries (Kiernan, 2008, pp. 18-19). In fact, the unintended consequences of the bombing were politically detrimental to the intended military objective—the destruction of entire Cambodian villages played into Khmer Rouge propaganda and swelled the ranks of the Khmer Rouge armed forces. In the capital, Prince Sisowath Sirik Matak and General Lon Nol, whom Sihanouk considered loyal to him, plotted a coup against him in March 1970. The coup marked a very important turning point in Cambodia's modern political history because its domestic and international political consequences set Cambodia on an irreversible path toward a bloody civil war between the U.S. backed Khmer Republic and the Khmer Rouge forces supported by communist China and Vietnam.

As a former biographer to Late King Norodom Sihanouk Julio Jeldres recalled, the coup put him in an emotional state of mind. When he arrived in Beijing shortly after the coup, he was still in shock as he had never expected that the loyal Lon Nol double-crossed him, a brazen act of betrayal that angered Sihanouk above all else. In fact, he wanted to return to France, as Princess Monique was counseling him. But, when the communists, especially the North Vietnamese, gave him a false assurance of respect for Cambodia's territorial integrity, which had become Sihanouk's obsession, he gave in and decided to join the fight (Jeldres, 2005, pp. 129–130). In retrospect, Hanoi defaulted all its promises made to Sihanouk from 1967 to 1975. All of Pham Van Dong's promises were, in Sihanouk's own words, "water under the bridge" (Jeldres, 2005, p. 131).

IV. The Lon Nol Regime, 1970-1975

The short-lived Khmer Republic, which lasted from 1970 to 1975, inherited a growing economic crisis from the Sihanouk regime and depended almost exclusively for its survival on U.S. economic and military aid in the midst of the American disengagement from the Vietnam War. Worse, when the Republic was officially proclaimed on October 9, 1970, the country was deeply divided along an urban-rural fault line. This is precisely what Prince Sihanouk had tried to avoid at all costs. Although the Republic received strong support from the intellectual elites, students, and military, 60% of the population, especially in rural areas, still supported Sihanouk. But nothing was more threatening to the new regime than a powerful communist Khmer Rouge-Viet Cong alliance, and the regime had to mobilize its resources very quickly to ward off the existential threat to the young republic. Furthermore, the Sihanouk-led coalition government in exile in Beijing mounted a formidable challenge

to the legitimacy of Lon Nol's regime both at home and abroad.

The military weakness of the Republic was notably endemic, ranging from combat ineffectiveness, systemic corruption, low troop morale to infighting among the leadership (Clymer, 2007, pp. 117–118, 126). In 1970 Lon Nol's army of 35,000—most of whom had no combat experience—faced 65,000 combat-hardened Viet Cong troops (Dommen, 2001, p. 749) along with nine Khmer Rouge battalions and 80 companies, supported and trained by the Viet Cong (Institute of Military History, vol. 6, 2013, p. 256). The Khmer Rouge and its Viet Cong ally were quick to take advantage of the regime's inferior armed forces. From April to June 1970, the Viet Cong and Khmer Rouge troops coordinated a series of counter-offensives, pushing the U.S. and South Vietnamese troops back over the Vietnamese side of the border and gaining control of a large swath of territory along the border from Siem Reap to Kampong Thom in the north, from Kratie in Stung Treng Province to Mondulkiri in the northeast, and much of the countryside of Svay Rieng and Prey Veng from the border to the Mekong River to the east. In Kampong Cham, Vietnamese Military Region 7 managed to defend its central command, ammunition storage, and hospital. The seaport of Kampong Som (formerly known as Sihanoukville), the main transportation lifeline of the Republic, was subjected to frequent communist military raids. By the end of 1970, the Khmer Rouge built a formidable force of 10,000 combatants, trained by the Vietnamese communists (Institute of Military History, vol. 9, 2013, pp. 523-524).

Lon Nol's expectation of unlimited economic and military aid from the United States did not materialize as the Nixon administration was under growing pressure at home to disengage American troops from its costly war in Indochina. In May 1972, when President Nixon dispatched General Alexander Haig to personally inform Lon Nol that his administration intended to restrict the involvement of American forces in Cambodia and provide only limited economic and military aid, Lon Nol wept in the presence of the American general (Dommen, 2001, p. 750). In June 1972 Lon Nol began a general mobilization and by the end of the year, his army reached 180,000 (Dommen, 2001, p. 715). Yet Lon Nol's army remained on the defensive.

The military defeat of the communists in 1970 and 1971 aggravated the legitimacy crisis for the Lon Nol regime and a power struggle ensued among the top three contenders, In Tam, Yem Sambaur, and Prince Sirik Matak. Washington lost confidence in the incompetent and ailing president, and according to South Vietnamese intelligence, in 1972 U.S. Ambassador Swang sought to replace Lon Nol with Sirik Matak, but the CIA disagreed with him (Republic of South Vietnam [RSV] Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Prime Minister's Office, January 20, 1972, p. 9). In March 1973 Lon Nol unilaterally ended popular sovereignty and proclaimed himself president of the Republic. He then elevated his brother, Lon Non, from the rank of police major to an army general and granted him the unchecked power to sideline other able leaders like Prince Sirik Matak (Dommen, 2001, p. 888). Marshall Lon Nol's personalist authoritarianism, corruption, and incompetence further undermined the unity of the Republic.

Central to the Republic's foreign and security policy during this period were its relations with neighboring South Vietnam and its patron, the United States. From 1970 to 1973, the

Khmer Republic's relations with the Republic of South Vietnam turned from an uneasy alliance into outright conflict over ethnic Vietnamese residents in Cambodia, territorial claims, and conflicts of vested national interest. Yet, the United States attempted to forge a strong triangular alliance with Cambodia and South Vietnam to roll back the communist advance, a common threat Washington hoped would unite the two neighbors. In actuality, the supposed reciprocity of cooperation between the two republics was severely undermined by racial animosity, mutual distrust, outstanding territorial disputes, and conflicts of national interests. Friendemy (friend/enemy relationship) perhaps best describes the relations between the Khmer Republic and the Republic of South Vietnam.

The anti-Vietnamese ideology of the Lon Nol regime, fed by popular hatred toward the Vietnamese and fanned by the Khmer media, rocked the relationship between the two countries from the birth to the end of the Khmer Republic. The regime's "great Khmer race" ideology of combined ethnonationalism and popular republican nationalism manifested itself in an anti-Vietnamese, anti-Chinese, anti-French, and anti-Sihanouk sentiment in state-sponsored propaganda, the media, academia, and popular culture (Heder, 2007, p. 301). Anti-Vietnamese nationalism along with the growing fear of Vietnamese communists made the large ethnic Vietnamese community of 500,000 in Cambodia the easiest target for scapegoating (as exploiters of Khmer people) and demonizing (as communist sympathizers). In April 1970 the regime began to persecute ethnic Chinese and Vietnamese across the country. Notably, some 800 Catholic Vietnamese laborers were massacred by regime soldiers and dumped into the Bassac River (Becker 198, p. 125). Systematic persecution of the ethnic Vietnamese community throughout the country followed, including banning Cambodians from buying the properties of departing Vietnamese. Therefore ethnic Vietnamese had to flee without being reimbursed and leave their property behind. The anti-Vietnamese campaign fostered internal unity among Khmer factions but enraged the Vietnamese people.

The Saigon government lodged frequent protests with the Lon Nol government and even appealed to President Nixon to intervene to stop "racial hatred against all the Vietnamese in general in Cambodia's efforts to oppose the communist North Vietnamese threat" (President Nguyen Van Thieu to President Nixon, April 23, 1970). On May 27, 1970, under pressure from Washington, the Lon Nol regime signed an agreement with the South Vietnamese Government in which it pledged to put an end to "forced repatriation" and "forced transfer to concentration camps" of Vietnamese people in Cambodia (RSV Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Report to the Prime Minister's Office, December 24, 1971). However, by the end of 1971, the South Vietnamese Government concluded that the Lon Nol government "harbored deep anti-Vietnamese hatred and intended to repatriate the entire Vietnamese population in Cambodia back to South Vietnam" (RSV Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Report to the Prime Minister's Office, December 24, 1971, p. 162).

Faced with growing protests by the South Vietnamese Government, the Lon Nol regime sought to justify its continued anti-Vietnamese policy based on security concerns rather than racial hatred. In early 1972, it shared intelligence with the South Vietnamese government that revealed that "a large number of Vietnamese people in Cambodia sympathized with the communists" (RSV Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Prime Minister's Office, January

28, 1972). Already under tremendous hardship in the middle of the war, Saigon found itself facing additional pressure to deal with the exodus of Vietnamese residents from Cambodia. By March 1972 a total of 125, 669 Vietnamese citizens were relocated to South Vietnam, causing a significant financial and logistical burden on the government and local Vietnamese authorities (RSV Ministry of Social Affairs' report, March 6, 1972). Before its collapse, the Lon Nol government repatriated half of the Vietnamese population—between 200,000 and 250,000 people—back to South Vietnam (Heder, 2007, p. 301).

This anti-Vietnamese ideology was amplified by the Khmer Republic leadership's perception of Cambodia's inferiority and disadvantageous position vis-à-vis South Vietnam. The U.S. did little to address the Lon Nol regime's concern about South Vietnam's encroachment on Cambodia's territorial sovereignty and its troops' harassment and arrest of Cambodian villagers during raids to destroy communist forces inside Cambodia. The Cambodian leadership strongly resented the fact that South Vietnam was a more important ally to the United States and that contrary to Cambodia's wish, the majority of American aid to the Khmer Republic came through South Vietnam. In reality, the Nixon administration faced strong opposition from the U.S. Congress to any request for increased economic and military assistance to Cambodia. Therefore, the Nixon White House preferred to channel American aid to Cambodia via South Vietnam, and then to the South Vietnamese Government to pay for defending the Lon Nol regime. It was clear to the leadership of the Lon Nol regime that South Vietnam was strategically more important than Cambodia was to the Nixon administration's goal of ending the war in Vietnam.

In 1970 South Vietnam's military intervention against the communists in Cambodia cost over 13 million U.S. dollars, rising to 20 million dollars in 1971 (SRV Ministry of National Defense, August 27, 1970). In 1971, the South Vietnamese Government—with the agreement of U.S. Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird—demanded that Phnom Penh cover a small portion of the cost of its military campaign in Cambodia, to which the Lon Nol government agreed in principle in a letter dated January 6, 1971. However, on March 11, Phnom Penh reversed its position by asserting: "Such military campaigns against the Communists inside Cambodia is unconditional aid, and served South Vietnam's interests more than Cambodia's" (Khmer Republic Ministry of Foreign Affairs to RSV Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Letter No. 190 dated April 4, 1971, pp. 2–3).

In August 1971 Prime Minister Lon Nol sent another letter to the Saigon government to cancel the June 6, 1970, agreement that the military on either side could freely conduct its campaign against the communists within a 16-kilometer-wide zone on either side of the border (General Nguyen Van Cao's Report to the President, September 10, 1971). The South Vietnamese Government responded with a four-pronged threat to (1) cut off its security assistance to defend, and even impede, the shipment of material aid (weapons, fuel, and food)—which the people of Phnom Penh depended on for their survival—from Saigon to Phnom Penh via the Mekong River; (2) suspend emergency military aid to Lon Nol's Army Brigade 22 (over 5,000 troops) in Krek, Kampong Cham Province, which would force the brigade to give up this resource-rich province to the Khmer Rouge; (3) refuse to conduct any military campaigns inside Cambodia to stop communists' military attacks on the Lon

Nol troops as the Khmer government had often requested in the past; (4) freeze all military training in support of Lon Nol's army (General Nguyen Van Cao's Report to the President, September 10, 1971, p. 65). On January 27, 1973, the Paris Peace Accords were signed by the United States and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) to end the war in Vietnam, but the war in Cambodia continued its course because Washington refused to negotiate directly with Sihanouk, intending instead to keep the Lon Nol regime in power in Cambodia (Clymer, 2007, p. 131).

By 1974 the economic crisis that had besieged the Khmer Republic since 1970 intensified and the collapse of the Khmer Republic was imminent. A decline in foreign exchanges and a sharp reduction in foreign aid caused many industries to slow down significantly because Khmer industries relied heavily on imported raw materials. Many plants were forced into large-scale layoffs, causing unemployment to increase exponentially (U.S. Embassy Report to the Secretary of State, December 21, 1974). From December 1974 to March 1975, American assistance was shifted toward the prevention of a humanitarian crisis in Cambodia. On March 12, 1975, the Office of the Inspector General of Foreign Assistance at the U.S. State Department concluded, "The general level of health of almost the entire Cambodian population—the refugees, the poor, families of military serviceman, and particularly children—has deteriorated rapidly. Outside assistance has not reached the vast majority of the war victims," estimated at 3 million people out of the 5 million still under the Khmer Republic's control (Report on "Cambodia: An Assessment of Humanitarian Needs and Relief Efforts" dated March 1975, p. 1). On April 1, 1975, over two weeks before the Khmer Republic fell, Lon Nol left for the United States, but Prime Minister Long Boret and Prince Sirik Matak chose to stay and die in their beloved Cambodia. "[…] If I shall die here on the spot and in my country that I love, it is too bad […]. I have only committed this mistake of believing in you, the Americans,"—those were some of Prince Sirik Matak's last words in his letter to U.S. Ambassador John Gunther Dean (Dommen, 2003, p. 926).

V. The Khmer Rouge War with Vietnam, 1975–1979

As soon as the Pol Pot regime came to power in April 1975, it wasted no time in eliminating any influence that its Vietnamese communist ally had left in Cambodia. Five days after the liberation of Phnom Penh on April 21, 1975, the regime demanded that its Vietnamese comrades terminate all broadcasts from Hanoi in support of the Cambodian revolution against the Lon Nol regime, a service that began on August 1, 1970 (The Voice of Vietnam's Report, May 1975). In fact, the Khmer Rouge gave a cold reception to the Vietnamese delegation well before they marched into Phnom Penh. In September 1974, Hanoi dispatched a high-profile delegation to visit the central office of the Communist Party of Kampuchea (still in the jungle) to reason with the Cambodian comrades that the 1973 Paris Peace Agreement "created favorable conditions for Cambodia" only to find that such a patronizing attitude further irritated the Khmer Rouge leadership (Binh, 2015, p. 241-245).

Harboring irredentist nationalism and racial hatred toward the Vietnamese, the Khmer

Rouge leadership tested a unified Vietnam's military resolve regarding outstanding territorial disputes soon after they took over power in Cambodia. On April 30, 1975, Khmer Rouge military units attacked Koh Tral (*Phu Quoc* in Vietnamese) to revive an old claim to the island. On May 3 the Khmer Rouge took over Koh Krachak Ses (*To Chu* in Vietnamese) and "evacuated" some 500 Vietnamese inhabitants of the island, who were never heard of again. Two weeks later, the Vietnamese launched a counterattack, killing many Khmer soldiers and taking about 300 prisoners (Chanda, 1986, p. 13). After a series of failed negotiations on border disputes in late 1976 at the top level of the two countries' leadership, the land and maritime dispute escalated into armed conflict. The failure of the negotiations was partly due to the legacy of French colonialism. In November 1976 the Vietnamese Politburo proposed to use the French pre-independent map before 1954 with a scale of 1/100.000 as the basis for delimiting the land and maritime boundaries between Cambodia and Vietnam. The Communist Party of Kampuchea (CPK) agreed to use them "*only* as discussion documents" (The Government Council's Border Committee's Directive (No. 91 BG/tm) dated October 8, 1976).

Nonetheless, there were three major problems with the French map. First, certain portions of the border are not clearly drawn. Second, there were a number of major discrepancies between the French map and the French documentary records. Third, in the border region that ran along rivers, there were large discrepancies between the map, documentary records, and the reality of each side's territorial control. These three problems left ample room for different interpretations to support each side's position. The Pol Pot regime also strongly contested Vietnam's claims to the territory in these regions. As negotiations were in vain, the Khmer Rouge leadership opted to use force. Armed clashes between the two sides—the majority of which were initiated by the Khmer Rouge—along the border increased from 174 in 1975 to 254 in 1976,1,150 in 1977, and 4,820 in 1978 (Vietnamese Ministry of National Defense, 2010, p. 26).

To the Khmer Rouge, it was a preventive war to reclaim huge territory occupied by its formidable enemy Vietnam while the latter remained preoccupied with its post-war unification and reconstruction. On April 14, 1976, on the occasion of the second anniversary of the Khmer Rouge victory, Chinese Foreign Minister Huang Hua left no doubt about China's commitment to Pol Pot (Richardson, 2010, p. 91). With an increased flow of military aid from China in 1976-77, the Khmer Rouge attacked Vietnam, ignoring Beijing's appeals for moderation (Mertha, 2014, pp. 6-7). To the Vietnamese, Cambodian hostility toward the Vietnamese with backing from China was part of Beijing's strategy to weaken Vietnam and expand its control over Indochina. In Hanoi's view, the border dispute between Cambodia and Vietnam was more complicated because it became part of China's strategy to cause divisions among Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam and to control Indochina. In fact, throughout 1977, Beijing counseled the CPK leadership to negotiate with Vietnam and offered "qualified support" to Pol Pot's regime (Richardson, 2010, p. 95). The Khmer Rouge escalation of attacks deep into Vietnam's territory and massacre of Vietnamese civilians in 1977-78 provided the justification for Vietnam to invade Cambodia in December 1978.

VI. The People's Republic of Kampuchea, 1979-1989

As early as January 1978, the Central Military Command of the Vietnamese People's Army proposed a decisive military action to defeat Pol Pot as the only option to put an end to the Khmer Rouge attacks and racial hatred against Vietnam. To rally the population around the new regime and justify the invasion, Hanoi saw the need to create a Khmer revolutionary front as a "political solution." On April 21 the Vietnamese Politburo issued Resolution No. 34 to establish Committee No. 10, headed by Vice Minister of Defense Tran Van Quang. The Committee was given two specific tasks: (1) recruit Khmer revolutionary armed forces among Khmer refugees and defectors, and (2) research and advise the Central Military Command on the plan to assist the Khmer revolutionary army (Vietnamese Ministry of National Defense, 2010, pp. 38–39). On May 12, at Camp 977 in the Thu Duc district of Ho Chi Minh City, Hanoi established the Kampuchean United Front for National Salvation and appointed comrade Hun Sen as commander of the first unit of the Kampuchean revolutionary army. This first unit consisted of only 125 officers and soldiers (Vietnamese Ministry of National Defense, 2010, p. 10). On November 3, 1978, Hanoi signed the Soviet-Vietnamese Friendship Treaty. On December 23 Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Van Dong made the case for all-out war against the Pol Pot regime and invasion of Cambodia to the fourth session of the sixth Plenum of the National Assembly (Pham Van Dong's Speech on December 23, 1978, pp. 1-3). His entire speech was aimed at convincing his comrades that with the full backing of the Soviet political, economic, and military might, Vietnam was assured of victory and that China, which Vietnam described as a "paper tiger", would not dare to attack Vietnam. But Hanoi was wrong. In February 1979, Beijing launched a punitive war against Vietnam from the north, but the main purpose was not to save the Khmer Rouge regime. Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping went to war to secure capital and technology from the United States and other Western countries to support his new national priority of economic reform and modernization of China (Zhang, 2015, pp. 4, 55). Beijing also expected that China's brief invasion of northern Vietnam would force Vietnam to withdraw its troops from Cambodia. However, with Soviet backing, the Vietnamese were determined to fight a two-front war in Cambodia and against China in the north.

Under Vietnam's occupation from 1979 to 1988, Cambodia under the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) was isolated by the West, reducing its survival to the mercy of the Vietnamese and the Soviets within the socialist bloc. After its invasion of Cambodia in 1978, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam attempted to establish the People's Republic of Kampuchea in its own image. Not long after Vietnam's liberation of Cambodian people from the Pol Pot genocidal regime and saving them from mass starvation in 1979, Hanoi's moral high ground and sacrifice quickly dissipated as the Vietnamese occupying forces stayed longer and sought greater control over the PRK's political and military affairs. Against this backdrop of regional conflict, Hanoi exercised dominant influence over Cambodia's domestic and foreign policy, but not without resistance from the Cambodian side. During this period, the rise and demise of Cambodian leaders primarily depended on the extent to which they supported or resisted Hanoi's policy preference in Cambodia.

Under its leadership, Vietnam attempted to create its sub-regional order in Indochina, causing a clash with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which feared Hanoi's old plan for an Indochinese federation (Acharya, 2013, p. 183). Like Laos, Cambodia was reduced to the role of a satellite state within the hierarchical structure of the Soviet Union-dominated socialist bloc and, as such, was drawn into confrontation with China, ASEAN, and the United States. In response, China pursued a counter-hegemony policy, aiming at bleeding the Vietnamese in Cambodia and resisting Soviet geopolitical domination in the region (Acharya, 2013, pp. 190-191).

By 1985, the Soviet Union lost interest in its strategic alliance with Vietnam as it sought to improve relations with China and other Asian countries. As Hanoi began to plot an exit from its costly intervention in Cambodia, the PRK gradually asserted its influence over the direction of its domestic governance and foreign relations (Gottesman 2003). Without the Soviet aid, coupled with the worsening economic crisis at home, Vietnam was forced to withdraw its troops from Cambodia in 1988[4] and endeavored to normalize relations with China, the United States, and ASEAN over the ensuing years (Elliot, 2012, p. 28). On September 26 of that year, the last Vietnamese troops withdrew from Cambodia. The normalization of Sino-Soviet relations and a gradual warming between China and Vietnam in 1989 created critical conditions for a resolution to the Cambodian civil war.

VII. A Rocky Road to Peace and Political Stability, 1990-1998

In August 1990, the permanent five members of the UN Security Council drafted a framework agreement, laying the foundation for the peace accord that was later signed in Paris on October 23, 1991. The landmark 1991 Paris Peace Agreement (PPA) provided a political solution to the Cambodian conflict, laying the groundwork for Cambodia's first democratic election in 1993, and restored international recognition of Cambodia as a sovereign nation. Unfortunately, the PPA did not end the civil war in Cambodia as the Khmer Rouge hardliners were determined to fight to their last breath. The newly established coalition government led by the First Prime Minister Norodom Ranariddh and Second Prime Minister Hun Sen was marred by increased factional struggle for dominance and ended up with the bloody breakdown of the coalition in 1997.

1998 marked a major turning point in Cambodia's search for peace and unity. In July of that year, the Cambodian People's Party won the national election, allowing the CPP to consolidate its power, restore political order, and implement its vision of the country; Prime Minister Hun Sen's "Win-Win" policy which focused on national reconciliation, national unity, and transformation of the battlefields into economic development zones, effectively brought an end to the Khmer Rouge political and military organization and total peace to Cambodia for this first time in nearly thirty years (Nem, 2012, pp. 257-261).[5] Since then the CPP has consolidated power and concentrated on government reforms and economic development to soar up its legitimacy as the opposition party has mounted an increasingly formidable challenge to its rule.

Since 1999, Cambodia has increasingly diversified its international relations, beginning with an official entry into ASEAN in April of that year and continuing to diversify its strategic relations with many countries and international organizations including China, Japan, South Korea, India, Russia and the European Union. Notably the Royal Government of Cambodia today prioritizes its special relationship with China to guarantee Cambodia's long-term economic development and national sovereignty. Yet, Cambodia has also attempted to steer clear of the entanglement in the South China Sea dispute between China and other claimants, which is bound to complicate Cambodia's relations with its strategic great power ally, China, and the CPP's traditional ally, Vietnam.

VIII. Conclusion

Throughout the modern history of Cambodia's foreign relations from 1950 to 1979, this small country often fell victim to the power play of great powers and more powerful neighbors. Inherently, the distribution of power in regional and international hierarchies at particular points in time produced both structural constraints and opportunities for Cambodia to pursue its national interests. One recurring pattern that emerges from this overview of the political history of Cambodia's domestic politics and foreign relations is that elite ideas, national identities, and preferences for social order played a major role in Cambodia's foreign policy decisions. From 1953 to 1970, in Sihanouk's vision, Cambodian neutrality dominated the country's small-state identity. Sihanouk sought to use this identity as a bridge-builder between East and West and to elevate Cambodia's standing in international affairs.

However, Sihanouk's realpolitik decision to ally himself with North Vietnam and China to balance against the United States and its allies, South Vietnam and Thailand, from 1964 to 1969 in the face of political costs and serious military risks can largely be attributed to his perception of threats posed by the United States and South Vietnam to his power and to Cambodia's national sovereignty and his preferred social order in his *Sangkum Reastr Niyum* (People's Community) movement. Specifically, he attributed the cause of Cambodia's domestic social disorder to Western-style democracy. In retrospect, because of Sihanouk's decision to support the Vietnamese communists at the insistence of his "great and powerful friend" China in exchange for Vietnam's promise of recognizing Cambodia's territorial sovereignty between 1964 and 1968, Cambodia paid a high price for it—i.e. Cambodia was dragged into the Vietnam War. In spite of these dramatic shifts and endurance, King Sihanouk was determined and continuously fought during the prolonged war for his country's cause and consequently ensured his political survival as a peace maker and then as monarch of Cambodia, following the Paris Peace Agreements of October 1991.

To Lon Nol and the elites of the Khmer Republic, Khmer purity and greatness had been contaminated and threatened by the Vietnamese, Chinese, and French parasites for too long. Their quest for racial purity and security turned into persecution of minorities, especially the Vietnamese, at the expense of relations with South Vietnam. Lacking economic endurance,

the Khmer Republic was at the mercy of South Vietnam and the United States for assistance. Pol Pot and his inner circle forged narratives of Khmer greatness and anti-Vietnamese irredentist nationalism to justify their war with a more powerful neighbor, Vietnam. Pol Pot's war-mongering against the Vietnamese—unsuccessfully restrained by its powerful ally, China—were fueled by the regime's metanarrative of Khmer collective identity under threat from its archenemy, the Vietnamese, and the superiority of its communist revolution vis-à-vis the Vietnamese communists. In the end, the Khmer Republic from 1970 to 1975 and Democratic Kampuchea became pawns of the United States and China as they pursued their respective agendas during the Vietnam War and the Third Indochina War.

Today Cambodia pursues multi-lateral and diversified relations with all countries while tilting more heavily toward China. Cambodia under the leadership of Prime Minister Hun Sen has returned to relying on its traditional great and powerful friend, China, to boost Cambodia's economic development and national security as relations between Cambodia and the West have deteriorated over the issues of human rights and democracy. This is somewhat reminiscent of Prince Sihanouk turning to China in the 1960s in response to the threat posed by the United States and its Western allies and their criticism of his autocratic rule. One important lesson from this chapter in Cambodia's history is that if Cambodia is not strong enough to survive as a distinct economic player, then its political survival is threatened. Additionally, Cambodia's traditional reliance on a great and powerful friend, although useful as a short-term strategy of adaptation and balance of influence, should not be allowed to become a strategic dependency. Cambodia's position of inferiority in the hierarchical structure of power inherently leads to one recurring outcome: Cambodia's foreign policy is subjected to great powers' changing its politics without considering her core interests. It is no longer true that Cambodia today is endowed with abundant national resources, and therefore, its national resilience will depend on building economic strength through other means including a talented workforce, technological innovation, entrepreneurialism, sustainable development, and good governance.

Endnotes

1 I would like to thank Julio Jeldres, Youk Chhang, Sok Udom Deth, Sun Suon, Laura McGrew, Ear Sophal, Sim Vireak, and Nhem Boraden for their very helpful comments on draft versions of this chapter.

2 Son Ngoc Thanh's reputation as a Cambodian nationalist was based on his prewar affiliation with the pro-independence newspaper *Nagaravatta* and with the Buddhist Institute, where he promoted his democratic ideas. Thanh was most worried about a French return to power; unlike Sihanouk, Thanh did not welcome the return of the French protection. Unlike other Cambodian nationalists, he was not particularly anti-Vietnamese and saw Cambodia's independence linked with Vietnam's independence movement.

3 During the crucial three years (1966-68), a total of 115,385 tons of material aid passed through Cambodian territory to the frontline. 27,103 tons of Chinese material aid (of which weapons and ammunition comprised 21,247 tons) passed through the Sihanoukville Port of Cambodia to the NLF along the border. The Communist Logistics Division 17 purchased and transported 88,282 tons of material aid including 57,376 tons of rice and 17,882 tons of weapon and ammunition to the frontline in the South (Vietnamese Ministry of National Defense Archive, File No. 623, p. 14).

4 According to David Elliot (p. 69), who cited Major General Tran Cong Man, the economic costs of the Cambodian occupation were heavy. About 20,000 Vietnamese died and more than 47,000 were wounded in the border fighting between 1977 and 1978. Approximately 15,000 more died among the further 50,000 casualties in the following decade. The financial costs were estimated at 2 million dollars a day throughout most of the 1980s, mostly covered by the Soviet aid.

5 For more details about the origins and process of Prime Minister Hun Sen's "Win-Win" strategy from the insider's perspective see Nem Sowath, *Civil War Termination,* 2012. Nem Sowatch was a key member of the working group who conducted negotiations with former Khmer Rouge commanders in the first half of the 1990s.

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AN OVERVIEW OF CAMBODIA-THAILAND RELATIONS: FROM HOSTILITY TO HARMONY?

Dr. DETH Sok Udom

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Dr. DETH Sok Udom | Chapter 2

AN OVERVIEW OF CAMBODIA-THAILAND RELATIONS: FROM HOSTILITY TO HARMONY?

I. Introduction

After mid-July 2008, Cambodia and Thailand attracted global media coverage as cross-border tensions between the two countries grew following Cambodia's successful inscription of the Preah Vihear Temple as a UNESCO World Heritage Site on July 8, 2008. Diplomatic relations between the two nations would remain inimical until July 2011. During this period, in addition to the diplomatic setbacks, resurgence of nationalistic antagonism was noticeable in both countries. And as Pou Sothirak suggested, the military standoff damaged "not only the bilateral relations between the two countries, but also threatening ASEAN's unity and affecting its credibility to form a community by 2015" (2016, p. 10). It is therefore not surprising that recent academic writings on Cambodian-Thai diplomatic relations tended to focus mainly on the Preah Vihear temple and Cambodian-Thai border conflicts (Pawakapan, 2012); (Kasetsiri, Pou, & Chachavalpungpun, 2013); (Var, 2017); (Ngoun, 2017); and (Jenne, 2017).

In analyzing Cambodia-Thailand relations, it is necessary to point out the existence of nationalism and historical antagonism factors in the two countries' relations. Thai historian Charnvit Kasetsiri (Kasetsiri, 2003), for instance, characterized Khmer-Thai relations as a "love-hate" relationship. Yet, it is equally important to recognize the interplay of domestic politics and the regional/global powers' influences as factors shaping the relationship

of Cambodia and Thailand as well. Against this background, this chapter intends to provide a concise summary of Cambodian-Thai relations, particularly since Cambodia's independence in 1953, after which successive regimes and governments have come to power in both Cambodia and Thailand. In doing so, it addresses the following related questions: How did regime and government changes affect the two countries' relations during and after the Cold War period? Why did Cambodia-Thailand relations become cooperative at some points, and yet reversed to tensions at other times? What were the domestic political impacts, and what are the implications for future relations of Cambodia and Thailand in the forthcoming years?

II. Khmer-Thai Relations in Pre-Colonial Times

Khmer-Thai relations date back to the 13th century, notably since the emergence of the Sukhothai and Ayutthaya kingdoms, which eventually challenged the Khmer Empire's dominance in mainland Southeast Asia. Following the gradual decline of the Khmer Empire in the 15th century, Cambodia experienced prolonged internal dynastic power struggles that went hand in hand with foreign interference and subjugation by its two increasingly more powerful neighbors—namely Siam (as Thailand was officially called until 1939) and Annam (Vietnam)—particularly during the 18th and 19th centuries. National histories written in both Cambodia and Thailand covering these periods generally tended to project negative images of one another. As Leang Sim Onn pointed out, "Khmer-Thai historical writings contain a large pool of discrepancies, distortions, ambiguities and traces indicating that the new past has been constructed in a way that induces divergent historical interpretations conveying hereditary enmity to each other" (2014, p. ii).

Even after Cambodia was placed under French protectorate from 1863 to 1953, Siam remained an important actor in Cambodia's external affairs. This was highlighted, for instance, by the fact that King Norodom was crowned at Udong in June 1864 in a ceremony presided over jointly by both the French and the Siamese (Tully, 2005, p. 84). During the same period, a number of treaties concerning Cambodia-Thailand's boundaries were also signed, such as the Franco-Siamese treaties of 1904 and 1907, which by and large became the bases for present-day border demarcation between Cambodia and Thailand, as well as the roots of the Preah Vihear conflict during the 1950s, and more recently, after 2008. As John Burgess eloquently put it:

> In this tragic way, Preah Vihear links past and presence. The struggle at the temple can be seen as the latest round of a process that has been reshaping Southeast Asia since the peak of Khmer imperial glory in the Twelfth Century: the expansion of Thai and Vietnamese states at the expense of the Khmer state. The history colours the consciousness of today's Cambodians, who tend to see the temple as their generation's hold-at-all-costs front in the long conflict. Across the border, a vocal segment of Thai society contends that the temple

> is Thai property stolen by Cambodia through the World Court and is worth going to war to regain (Burgess, 2015, pp. 10–11).

At the outset of World War II, under a pro-Japanese and nationalist military government of General Phibunsongkram, Thailand reclaimed territories it had ceded to Cambodia in 1904 and 1907, but was forced to return them in 1948. By 1950, the United States recognized Cambodia as an autonomous state within the French Union. Thailand followed suit in that same year, becoming the first Asian country to recognize Cambodia as such. Soon after, Thailand offered some assistance to Cambodia in rehabilitation work and provided scholarships to Cambodian officials to receive training in Thailand in the fields of education, health, forestry, and meteorology etc. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kingdom of Thailand, 1958, p. 1). However, for much of the next two decades, relations between Cambodia and Thailand were strained due to a combination of reasons, including territorial dispute, ideological differences, and interferences in domestic affairs, as discussed in the next section.

III. Relations under Prince Sihanouk (1955–1970)

Prior to gaining political power in 1955, King Sihanouk had resented Thailand's cold stance on his royal crusade for independence against the French when he was not cordially received during his trip to Bangkok in June 1953; he was told that he was only to regard himself as a "plain political refugee" while in Thailand (Osborne, 1994, p. 79). The Thai government had probably feared its support for Sihanouk could be considered provocative by the French, and more importantly, by the Americans—who did not wish to see Cambodia's independence lest it eventually fell under communist control. The incident was the first sign of distance between Sihanouk and the Thai government and was not the only one in the years to come.

Thai historian Khien Theeravit once remarked that "First, although Sihanouk was more sympathetic to the Thais than to the Vietnamese, in the end he had more disputes with Thailand than with Vietnam" (1982, p. 565). Sihanouk's concern about the possibility of Thailand's irredentist ambition proved accurate when the latter moved to occupy Preah Vihear temple only twenty days after Cambodia's official declaration of independence from France in November 1953 (Jeldres, 2015, p. 297). Afterward, relations between the two countries became largely hostile. As U.S. Foreign Bureau Service officer in Cambodia Roger Smith wrote in his book: "most of [Cambodia's] relations with Thailand have revolved around a series of incidents involving press and radio attacks on each other, cattle rustling, piracy, mutual charges of false arrests, armed forays by the police forces of both countries, violations of airspace, and Thai territorial claims" (1965, p. 145).

Preliminary talks between the two countries in 1959 and 1960 were not fruitful. In 1959, for example, Cambodia suggested two possible solutions to the Preah Vihear problem: the joint-administration of the temple by the two countries, or the submission of the case to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) at The Hague. The proposal did not receive any concrete

response from Thailand, and it was a widely-held belief in the Phnom Penh government at that time that it was Thailand's intention to drag on the issue until Thailand's judicial commitment to the ICJ would expire in 1961 (Son, 2011, p. 94). Following Thailand's failure to provide a response, Cambodia unilaterally submitted the Preah Vihear case to the ICJ on October 6, 1959, and despite Thailand's objection, the Court decided on May 26, 1961, that it had the jurisdiction to adjudicate this dispute. On June 15, 1962, almost three years after the case was brought to the Court, the ICJ ruled on a 9-3 vote that the temple belonged to Cambodia, and ordered Thai troops to leave temple and its vicinity, as well as to return the relics belonging to the temple back to Cambodia (International Court of Justice, 1962).

Besides the Preah Vihear dispute, other factors also contributed to the hostility between Cambodia and Thailand. It should be noted that Sihanouk began to have a strong grip of power in Cambodia when Thailand was under the control of the military, which was a strong ally of the U.S. against communist expansion in Southeast Asia. Influenced by his contemporaries like Chou Enlai of China and Nehru of India who called for a neutralist position in the Cold War period, Sihanouk turned down all efforts by the U.S. and its Southeast Asian allies (namely, Thailand and the Philippines) to join anti-communist blocs (SEATO and ASEAN). While Cambodia considered Thailand an irredentist state because of its occupation of the Preah Vihear temple, Thailand's mistrust of Cambodia as a pro-Communist state grew much stronger after Cambodia under Sihanouk recognized the People's Republic of China in July 1958.

Furthermore, Sihanouk was also resentful of Thailand and South Vietnam's support for the Khmer Serei, a resistance movement led by Son Ngoc Thanh, who had been a staunch political opponent of Sihanouk, as well as other factions of the Khmer Issaraks along the border (Jagel, 2015). The distrust was deepened after Sihanouk uncovered what came to be known as "the Bangkok Plot"—whereby Sihanouk's dissidents were hatching a plot (with the support of the Thai government) in 1959 but failed to overthrow him. As a result, relations were strained throughout the 1960s, and it was only after Sihanouk was deposed in March 1970 that relations improved.

IV. Cambodian-Thai Relations during the Civil Wars (1970–1991)

Immediately after the coup against Prince Sihanouk in March 1970 by General Lon Nol, Thailand took a cautious stance. As Julio Jeldres suggested, the Thai government wanted to "see how the wind would blow before making a decision. Was Lon Nol going to survive or would Sihanouk return with the help of China? What were the intentions of the United States?" (2015, p. 334).

Eventually, as Cambodia forged a closer tie with the United States after the coup, relations with Thailand also improved. Although the new leaders in Phnom Penh were not entirely indifferent about the border problems with Thailand in the recent past, their new prioritized security concern was the presence of the Vietnamese communist troops in

Cambodia. Therefore, the leaders in both Cambodia and Thailand now shared a common security interest. In May 1970, Thai Deputy Prime Minister Prapass Charusathiera led a goodwill team to Phnom Penh (Phuangkasem, 1984, p. 26). Cambodian Foreign Minister Yem Sambaur then returned the visit to Bangkok and met with his Thai counterpart Thanat Khoman, who declared that the previous break of diplomatic relations between the two countries "was due to one man" (i.e. Sihanouk), and now that "that man was gone, all objections disappeared" (Jumsai, 1970, p. 219). On May 13, an agreement to reopen diplomatic relations was signed. As historian Khien Theeravit rightly observed, "To remain in power, Lon Nol relied heavily on United States and its Thai neighbor on the west. The regime's lifeline depended on the supply lines from Thailand" (1982, p. 566). Except for South Vietnam, Thailand provided more assistance to the Lon Nol government than any other Asian country: The Thais trained thousands of raw Cambodian recruits; provided at least 361 technical advisers, nine patrol boats, and clothing and equipment kits for 50,000 soldiers; and transferred American-supplied military equipment to the Cambodian armed forces (Clymer, 2004, p. 39).

Prince Sihanouk, who was still in exile in China after the coup, declared the establishment of the Gouvernement Royal d'Union Nationale du Kampuchea (GRUNK). During the period 1970-75, there was no diplomatic engagement at all between Sihanouk's GRUNK and the Thai government, which the Prince often referred to as the "fascist regime of Bangkok" (Jeldres, 2015, p. 336).

By 1973, relations between the Khmer Republic and Thailand became less cordial, when popular students' protest throughout Bangkok had forced the military to withdraw from politics, and paved the way for a civilian government that subsequently attempted to distance itself from heavy involvement in the Indochina war. The new government called for a reduction in Thai-U.S. military cooperation and opted for an emphasis on economic and technical cooperation instead. Similarly the Lon Nol government had little sympathy from Thai public opinion at this point (Theeravit, 1982, p. 566), most likely because it was seen as another militarist puppet regime of the U.S. In fact, as early as 1970, the prospect of sending Thai troops into Cambodia had already deeply divided the Thai government and the larger society. According to Kenton Clymer, "A rare public discussion of the matter at Chulalongkorn University resulted in 3,000 students filling all seats, packing aisles and sitting on available floor space. Military leaders made the case for armed assistance, while others spoke in opposition. Student reaction was overwhelmingly opposed to the use of Thai troops" (2004, p. 39).

By early 1975, the Khmer Republic was about to collapse. Many parts of the country were lost to Khmer Rouge control. On April 17, 1975, Phnom Penh was taken over by the communists, and several of the Khmer Republic leaders were executed by the new rulers of Cambodia as soon as they took power. But as John Burgess interestingly noted, "the republic lived on for five more weeks on the [Preah Vihear] mountaintop" (2015, p. 184). In fact, the remnants of the Khmer Republic army were able to flee to the Thai border. They were later to become the backbone of the non-communist resistance movement against the Khmer Rouge, and later the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia during the 1980s.

In the very early days after the Khmer Rouge victory, Democratic Kampuchea-Thailand relations were in a state of uncertainty and confusion, perhaps due to a lack of clear communications between the highly secretive Communist Party of Kampuchea (CPK) headquarter in Phnom Penh and the local/regional leaders along the Cambodian-Thai border. Different factions among the Khmer Rouge did not have a clear idea yet about who was in power in Cambodia in those early days. On higher diplomatic levels, however, Democratic Kampuchea's relations with the Thai civilian government were more amicable. Responding to both domestic sentiment and the re-ordering of regional power position following the U.S. disengagement from Southeast Asia and U.S.-China détente, the Thai government under Kukrit did not view Democratic Kampuchea as a threat but as a neutral neighbor that Thailand had to reckon with (Phuangkasem, 1984). Despite the occasional clashes along the border, both countries expressed a desire to resolve their border conflict (Theeravit, 1982, p. 568).

By October 1976, however, border tensions intensified following the military coup in Thailand which brought about a sturdily anti-communist military government under Thanin Kraivixien. Both sides accused each other of violating each other's territorial sovereignty. Conciliation occurred only after another coup in Thailand in 1977 replaced the Thanin's right-wing government with a more moderate government under Kraingsak Chomanan. Even if border skirmishes still occurred occasionally, both governments showed mutual interest and intention to normalize their relations and settle their disputes through peaceful mechanisms. With encouragement from China, the conciliation process became even more desirable after Cambodia was engulfed in border conflicts with its now "number one enemy"—the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to the east. When Vietnam finally took over Phnom Penh in January 1979, the Khmer Rouge fled west and embarked on an even stronger tactical alliance with the Thai military government to counter the Vietnamese.

The toppling of Democratic Kampuchea by Vietnamese forces in January 1979 created a new juncture of Cambodia-Thailand relations. The presence of some 150,000 Vietnamese troops in Cambodia hastened the normalization of relations between the Khmer Rouge and Thailand as a frontline state. Allying with China, the U.S., and other ASEAN members at the time, Thailand's military-dominated government under Prem Tinsulanond between 1980 and 1988 adopted the policy of supporting the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (which was comprised of the Khmer Rouge, the royalist FUNCINPEC, and the republican Khmer People's National Liberation Front) in fighting against Vietnam's occupation of Cambodia and in opposing the Vietnam-Soviet Union's "hegemonic expansion" in the region. Thailand's foreign policy during this period was driven by the military's perception of Vietnam's occupation of Cambodia as a threat to Thailand's border security, but also because alliance with China helped deprive the Communist Party of Thailand of China's aid. Furthermore, the Thai military and border patrol police were also benefiting from their increased share of the national budget as well as from the prospering border trades with the various Khmer resistance factions and cross-border traders.

With the rise of the Thai businessmen-turned-politicians and MPs, however, the military's power was finally eclipsed when Chatichai Choonhavan was elected prime minister in 1988.

The Chatichai government's new foreign policy was then re-oriented to turn Indochina "from battlefields into marketplaces" (despite opposition from the military and bureaucrats in the foreign ministry), reflecting the changes of social, economic, and political forces in Thailand in the late 1980s. Lindsay French attributed Thailand's changes in foreign policy at this point to three factors: Vietnam's subsequent troop withdrawal from Cambodia, Cambodia's reforms and the demise of the Thai Communist Party, and most importantly, Thailand's market search for its booming manufactured-export-led economy of the 1980s as well as the exploitability of untapped natural resources (gems, timber, oil and water power) in the Indochinese region (2002, pp. 448–449). The Soviet's decline and its inability to sustain Vietnam's control over Cambodia prompted the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) to adopt social and economic reforms as well. In January 1989, a Thai delegation led their first visit to Cambodia. At the end of that same month, Cambodia's Prime Minister Hun Sen paid an unofficial visit to Bangkok and met with Chatichai Choonhavan and other senior Thai officials. In mid-February, Cambodia established the Committee for Cambodian-Thai Cooperation with the aims of attracting Thai investments, and in May, a ceasefire agreement was reached between the two governments (Puy, 2010, pp. 144–146).

V. Cambodia-Thailand Relations in the Post-Cold War Era

After the end of the Cold War, the relationship between Cambodia and Thailand appeared to be heading toward normalization and cooperation. In October 1991, all the Cambodian factions agreed to a ceasefire and peaceful settlement of disputes by signing the *Agreement on a Comprehensive Political Settlement of the Cambodian Conflict* (more commonly known as the Paris Peace Agreements). Eighteen foreign states (including Thailand) were also signatories to these agreements, which stipulated that a free and fair national election was to be supervised by the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) in mid-1993. The UNTAC was also responsible for facilitating the repatriation of some 300,000 Cambodian refugees from the Thai border.

Following the signing of the Paris Peace Agreements, Cambodia-Thailand's diplomatic relations were officially re-established. Yet, while the global post-Cold War politics paved the way for improved relationships between the two nations, domestic politics of both countries were not equally conducive. Although the Khmer Rouge (outlawed in 1994) no longer received aid from the major global powers (especially China) that had backed them during the 1980s, they were able to sustain and launch their guerilla attacks on Cambodians throughout the 1990s from their strongholds in the western parts of Cambodia thanks to their gemstone and timber trade deals with Thai business-military groups. As Lee Jones pointed out: "Officially, Bangkok [i.e. the Thai civilian government then headed by the Democrat Party's Chuan Leekpai] pledged to respect UN sanctions, but this was simply ignored by the powerfully entrenched state-business networks along the border" (2012, p. 169). Thailand was denounced by the international community for permitting such transactions. The Thai civilian governments at the time were under even stronger pressure from the local

military-business interest groups who had business deals with the Khmer Rouge at stake. At the same time, however, restored diplomatic relations also ushered in much needed aid, cross-border trades, and direct investments, from Thailand into Cambodia. Under such circumstances, the Cambodian government was willing to overlook Thailand's business ties with the outlawed Khmer Rouge. It was only in late 1998 that Cambodia's Prime Minister Hun Sen's Win-Win strategy was able to take advantage of the internal divisions within the rival Khmer Rouge factions and opened the process for their subsequent reintegration into the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces.

The rise of Thaksin Shinawatra in Thai politics in the late 1990s, and Hun Sen's emergence as the dominant political figure in Cambodia after 1998, helped forge closer ties between the two countries. Thaksin's pro-business foreign policy in the region was received warmly by Hun Sen's government in Cambodia. Despite such close personal ties between Thaksin and Hun Sen, however, Thailand's close relations with Cambodia came to a halt in early 2003. The problem stemmed from the appearance of an article on January 18, 2003 in the *Rasmei Kampuchea* Newspaper, which alleged that a popular Thai actress by the name of Suvanan Kongying (known as *Pkay Prek* or "Morning Star" among Cambodians) had said in an interview in Thailand that "she would only ever accept an invitation to perform in Cambodia if the famous Angkor Wat [temple] was returned to Thailand and she looked down [on Cambodians] by saying that if she was reincarnated, she would rather be a dog than be a Khmer national" (Hinton, 2006, p. 446). The alleged interview could not be verified, even if many Cambodians believed that it was true. The immediate impact of the story was infuriation among many Cambodians, eventually leading to riots that resulted in the burning of the Thai embassy and destruction of several other well-known Thai business establishments, such as the Elephant Cement factory, Red Bull M150 factory, Royal Phnom Penh Hotel and Julia Hotel, as well as Thaksin's telecom companies, among others. Thailand, in response, condemned the riots and decided to close the border with Cambodia. Thailand's response was swift and firm: diplomatic relations were downgraded, the border was closed, and thousands of Cambodian traders, beggars and laborers were evicted from Thailand. Thailand also demanded an apology, an investigation, arrests, and compensation for the damages incurred. Cambodia was apologetic and agreed to pay compensation worth about USD 50 million. Still, normalization did not happen instantly. At first, Thailand reopened the border but forbid Thai people from entering Cambodia to gamble at the border casinos or visit tourist sites. Frustrated, Hun Sen lashed out at Thailand for having a "superiority complex" and threatened to pursue trades with other Southeast Asian countries. But after Cambodia made the initial installment of the compensation sum, compromise was reached and relations were normalized (Hinton, 2006).

Once diplomatic relations were restored, investments and cross-border trades resumed. While bilateral trade in 2002 reached USD 445 million, the figure rose to USD 1 billion in 2006 (Chheang, 2008, p. 12). Even after Thaksin was ousted by the coup in late 2006, relations between Thailand and Cambodia were not severely affected, given that the successive Thai governments under Somchai Wongsawat and Samak Sundaravej were effectively led by Thaksin from abroad. In fact, even after he was ousted, Thaksin allegedly continued to have

meetings with Hun Sen over the business opportunities he was eyeing for in Koh Kong province (Chambers & Siegfried, 2010). In December 2007, the two countries agreed in principle to introduce the "Single Visa" scheme to facilitate tourists' entry, whereby tourists need to apply for their visa at a single place only in order to visit Cambodia and Thailand. It was not until December 2012, however, that the plan was actually implemented between Cambodia and Thailand under Yingluck's administration. As the tourism industry was booming in Siem Reap during the 2000s, Thailand also became a major supplier of electricity and tourism-related foodstuff and products (Chheang, 2009).

In July 2008, Cambodians celebrated the successful enlistment of the Preah Vihear temple as a World Heritage Site (UNESCO). During the application process, Cambodia's proposal was supported by the Thai government under Thai PM Samak Sundaravej, with the condition stated in the Joint Communiqué (signed on June 18, 2008) that "In the spirit of goodwill and conciliation, the Kingdom of Cambodia accepts that the Temple of Preah Vihear be nominated for inscription on the World Heritage List without at this stage a buffer zone on the northern and western areas of the Temple." But as Helaine Silverman (2011, p. 7) rightly observed:

> [this] official Thai support for the Cambodian nomination was made within the context of fractious Thai internal politics, which subsequently exploded when the Thai government was thrown into disarray as the Central Administrative Court ruled that 'the entire cabinet had violated the charter by not seeking parliamentary approval for a deal with Cambodia over [the] disputed temple' Foreign Minister Nappadon Pattama had to resign (on 10 July 2008).

Tension between Cambodia and Thailand intensified further after December 2008, when the leader of the Democrat Party, Abhisit Vejjajiva, became prime minister following the removal of Somchai Wongsawat (Thaksin's brother in law) by the Constitutional Court of Thailand. Once in power, the Thai government under Abhisit also took a hard line on the border issue against Cambodia. The disagreement eventually shifted from the ownership of the temple itself to the 4.6 square-kilometer "vicinity" area, as both sides claimed sovereignty over it. To the chagrin of the Thai government, Hun Sen appointed Thaksin, who was in exile, as an economic advisor to the Cambodian government in November 2009, in defiance of Thailand's request for Cambodia to extradite Thaksin to Thailand based on the extradition agreement signed between the two countries in 1999. Cambodia cited political motivation behind the trial of Thaksin, who had been sentenced to two years imprisonment in absentia by Thailand's Supreme Court for violating the conflict of interest rules over a corrupt land deal. In protest, Thailand recalled her ambassador from Cambodia on November 5, 2009; Cambodia followed suit the next day. On November 10, the Abhisit Vejjajiva administration approved Thailand's foreign ministry's proposal to revoke the 2001 MoU on overlapping maritime boundaries. There were hopes of improved relations in late August 2010 when Thaksin decided to quit his post as an economic adviser to the Cambodian government, citing his personal difficulties in fulfilling his role effectively.

Immediately afterward, ambassadors to both countries were reappointed. Early that month, to mark the 60th anniversary of the two countries' relationships, both sides agreed to waive visa requirements for each other's citizens.

Before long, problems erupted in February 2011 (and later again in April), as deadly clashes took place along the border. Both sides accused each other of initiating the attacks. The February clashes "resulted in casualties and large displacements of villagers on both sides, as well as damage to the temple itself" (CCHR, 2011, p. 14). As Nelson Rand pointed out, "the fighting also coincided with protests in Bangkok by the ultra-nationalist 'yellow-shirt' movement, which called on the government of Abhisit Vejjajiva [their former ally] to take a tougher stance on the border dispute with Cambodia" (2011, p. 1). After frustration with the UN's and ASEAN's inability to intervene, and as bilateral negotiations proved fruitless, Cambodia submitted a request in April 2011 to the ICJ to interpret the court's 1962 ruling with regard to the disputed territory around the temple (D. M. Jones & Jenne, 2015).

Between late 2008 and July 2011 (when the Democrat Party held power in Thailand), nationalist rhetoric intensified in both countries. Diplomatic press releases, the media, and comments expressed by users on social-networking sites reflected mutual dislike and distrust between the two nations. Statistics from the Cambodian Ministry of Tourism between 2008 and 2012 also showed that while the total international arrivals to Cambodia were on the rise, the number of arrivals from Thailand experienced a decline between 2008 and 2011. Yet, Kimly Ngoun also interestingly pointed out that the military dispute with Thailand during this period helped "spurred the acceleration of nation-building projects, infrastructure development and connectivity in Preah Vihear province" (2016, p. 215), and that as a result, "These spatial and socioeconomic transformations have influenced both the older and newer residents to adopt benign views of the Thai–Cambodian border conflict" (ibid., p. 223).

Relations eventually improved again after Thaksin's sister's party, Pheu Thai Party, won a landslide victory in Thailand's national election in July 2011. The electoral victory of Pheu Thai was warmly welcome by the Cambodian government. Upon becoming Prime Minister, Yingluck declared that her government's urgent task would be to restore bilateral relations with neighboring countries. Although she did not say explicitly, it was widely believed that her reference was made to Cambodia. Under Yingluck's premiership, Cambodian-Thai relations were by and large amicable.

In November 2013, the International Court of Justice ruled that the Preah Vihear temple and the promontory over which it is located is within the Cambodian territory, but fell short of ruling entirely in Cambodia's favor over the disputed 4.6 km^2 area (Raymond, 2014). According to John Ciorciari:

> [The] flexibility [of the ICJ's ruling] also has its role. The exercise of caution on setting strict boundaries and deciding on Phnom Trap has helped insulate the Court from charges of overreach. It has also enabled both sides to claim a partial victory, which is especially important in Thailand, where the incumbent government has faced intense campaign of opposition protests organized by nationalist "yellow shirts" with strong links to the military. A more decisive ruling in favor of Cambodia would have risked a significant backlash in Thailand (2014, pp. 7–8).

Given the domestic political turmoil in Thailand at the time, discussion over the ICJ's ruling was put on hold, and as it turned out, Yingluck was deposed in yet another coup in May 2014. Thailand has since been placed under military control, led by General—now Prime Minister—Prayuth Chan-ocha.

VI. Relations since the 2014 Coup

The coup in Thailand created an immediate spillover effect to Cambodia, as hundreds of thousands of Cambodian migrant workers fled Thailand due to the Thai military government's crackdown on illegal migrant workers in the country. Paul Chambers suggested that the message of the crackdown was clear: "the Thai military could create migrant instability for Hun Sen if it wanted to" (2014, p. 62). Erich Molz, however, attributed the crackdown to other political calculations, whereby the crackdown "potentially weakened the rivaling po¬lice force that had benefitted from the trafficking business and threatened the military's power," while at the same time, "Thai authorities could finally prove their commitment to fighting human trafficking and to promoting human rights to the international community —albeit unsuccessfully" (2015, p. 40). Whatever the primary intention of the Thai junta was, the crackdown and the ensuing exodus of migrant workers (both illegal and legal) reminded the leaders of both countries of their economic interdependencies. The abrupt departure of almost half a million workers from Thailand into Cambodia would create economic burdens for both countries. Both countries have since then pursued collaboration in facilitating and encouraging the legalization of Cambodian migrant workers who wished to seek jobs in Thailand.

Interdependencies of economic development and political stability, as well as the need to foster regime legitimacy in both countries, have prompted Cambodia and Thailand to forge good relations with one another, despite Hun Sen's previously close ties to Thaksin. Marking the 65th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two kingdoms, Hun Sen paid an official visit to Bangkok in December 2015, which was seen by many to be "a milestone in enhancing previously frayed diplomatic relations with Cambodia's largest neighbor and will also pay off economically" (May, 2015). In 2015, the total trade volume between the two countries stood at USD 5.5 billion. In a meeting in June 2016, the foreign ministries of both countries agreed "to work toward tripling the current level of bilateral trade, targeting

USD 15 billion a year by 2020" (Phnom Penh Post, 2016). In 2016, almost 400,000 Thai tourists visited Cambodia, making Thailand the 3rd largest source (after Vietnam and China) of tourist arrivals in Cambodia with 7.9% of total market share (Ministry of Tourism, 2016). In early November 2016, the departments of border affairs of the two kingdoms agreed to cooperate on fighting cross-border human trafficking and drug smuggling, protecting migrant workers' rights, as well as refraining from extra-judicial killings of illegal border trespassers.

Overall, the relations can be said to be stable and cooperative, especially compared to the period 2008-2011. Nonetheless, apart from the land border dispute, an issue of particular contemporary concern is the issue of the Overlapping Claims Area (OCA) in the Gulf of Thailand, which measures approximately 26,000 km2, and is estimated to contain up to 11 trillion cubic feet of natural gas and an underdetermined quantity of oil (Open Development Cambodia, n.d.). Cambodia and Thailand had signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 2001, setting a joint-development regime over certain areas of the OCA, as well as defining a maritime border, though final agreements have not been reached and have been disrupted thanks to disagreement over the revenue shares and diplomatic problems that ensued (Var, 2017, p. 164). On this matter, Greg Raymond argues that "While Thailand can defer the demarcation of the Preah Vihear temple environs indefinitely with little cost, the same cannot be said of the overlapping maritime zones. Thailand's appetite for energy continues to grow," and he therefore predicts that Thailand would be more willing to reach a deal with Cambodia, "including by investing in power line construction between the two countries" (Raymond, 2016). But despite the economic imperatives, he further warns that:

> For now the virulent nationalism that derailed Thai–Cambodian relations during the temple crisis remains quiescent. But the narratives of Thai territorial loss, manipulated to great political effect during the crisis in 2008, remain a latent force. Activist Veera Somkwamkid is the current nationalist thorn in the government's attempts to rehabilitate the relationship. Veera, who was imprisoned between 2010 and 2014 in Cambodia for trespassing and espionage at the Preah Vihear temple, remains a popular figure and symbol of integrity in Thailand. (Raymond, 2016).

VII. Conclusion

Relations between Cambodia and Thailand have been in oscillation between warm cooperation and hostile conflicts since 1950 to the present. Government and regime changes in either Cambodia or Thailand tended to have an effect in the shifts of relations between the two countries. Rather than constantly pursuing nationalist foreign policy and holding on to historical animosity in engaging with each other, elite political forces in both countries conduct bilateral relations based on their strategic interests that bolster their power position domestically. This sometimes entails invoking nationalist rhetoric and "othering" of the neighboring regime to win a sizeable segment of societal support during times of domestic uncertainty, and other times adopting economic and political cooperation with one another when their mutual interests of political stability and economic benefits merge. As the cliché goes, "there are no permanent allies or enemies, only permanent interests." This observation holds true especially for the post-Cold war periods as ideology becomes less of a factor in international relations.

At present, relations between Cambodia under Prime Minister Hun Sen and Thailand under former General Prayuth Chan-ocha seem to be cautiously cooperative. Despite the recent speculations that Yingluck may have made her escape via Cambodia, relations between the two countries remained unaffected. After the coup in 2014, the Cambodian government has demonstrated its ability to work with both civilian and military governments in Thailand, and a change of government or political turmoil in Thailand in the future may not necessarily disrupt the ties, although spillover effects to some degree (especially on tourism and import-export sectors) may be inevitable. With mutual economic interests and political legitimacy at stake, it looks plausible that the Cambodian government and its military counterpart will continue to cooperate on most aspects and avoid highly sensitive issues that may jeopardize the two countries' relationship in the immediate run. Yet, while the maritime OCA could eventually serve as a win-win platform through joint-development by the two nations, the Thai military's (as well as civilian elites') past rhetoric about "protection of Thailand's national sovereignty" over the Preah Vihear area means that the issue will probably remain unaddressed for the foreseeable future. Still, with the ASEAN Economic Community underway—albeit not without hurdles—it is not unreasonable to suggest that maintaining positive relations between Cambodia and Thailand is within reach.

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3

A HISTORY OF THE FUTURE IS WAITING TO BE MADE: CONTEMPLATING THAI-CAMBODIAN RELATIONS-A THAI PERSPECTIVE

Dr. Morakot MEYER

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Dr. Morakot MEYER | Chapter 3

A HISTORY OF THE FUTURE IS WAITING TO BE MADE: CONTEMPLATING THAI-CAMBODIAN RELATIONS-A THAI PERSPECTIVE

I. Introduction

Even though Thailand and Cambodia are direct neighbors linked by numerous political, economic, social and cultural ties, the relations between the two countries have never been an easy affair; nor has writing about the two countries remained unaffected by the troubles and tensions between the countries. Since the 1990s, when the volume of transnational exchanges and trade between Thailand and Cambodia began to increase (Battersby, 1998-1999), growing demand for foreign labor in the Thai construction industry and service sector attracted a large number of Cambodian migrants (Chaisuparakul, 2015). As the roads connecting the two countries improved and airfares became more affordable in the 2000s, an increasing number of Thai tourists visited Cambodian historical and cultural sites (Chan, 2016). Following Cambodia's accession to ASEAN in 1999, bilateral relations between Thailand and Cambodia have also intensified as a result of the mutual commitment to ASEAN economic integration. Paradoxically, increased exchange and closer contacts went hand in hand with simmering distrust and recurrent episodes of open conflict between the two countries. Both the Thai and Cambodian sides mobilized feelings of antagonism towards the neighbor in attempts to defuse domestic tensions. Examples include the 2003 arson attack on the Thai embassy in Phnom Penh (Hinton, 2006) and the border disputes centering on Preah Vihear Temple from 2008 to 2013. The two incidents expose the sensitive and fragile nature of Thai-Cambodian relations and cast a shadow on their future.

From 2000 to 2017, the conflict over the ownership of Preah Vihear Temple and other border issues have dominated the literature on Thai-Cambodian relations produced in Thailand and abroad. One group of scholars analyze the dynamics of the conflicts with a focus on domestic politics in Thailand (Singhaputargun, 2016; Grabowsky, 2014; Pawakapan, 2013; Kasetsiri, Pou & Chachavalpongpun, 2013; Chachavalpongpun, 2010, 2011). A second group studies the interpretation the International Court of Justice gave in November 2013 of its 1962 verdict on the case of Preah Vihear (e.g. Riesenberg, 2015). A third strand in the literature examines border practices in the disputed areas following the ICJ decision of 2013 (Hauser-Schäublin & Missling, 2014; Ngoun, 2016). Finally, a cluster of publications analyzes Thai-Cambodian relations as an arena of conflicts driven by popular history, memory practices, and nationalism in Thailand (Strate, 2015; Croissant & Chamber, 2011; Chachavalpongpun, 2012; Kasetsiri, 2003).

This chapter contributes to the discussion promoted by this last cluster of studies. More specifically, it examines four related areas: memory practices in Thai domestic politics, Thai popular culture, the knowledge of Cambodia in Thailand, and the role of Thai-Cambodian relations in the context of ASEAN's cultural politics.

The first part of this chapter focuses on authoritarian politics and practices of memory in Thailand, where Preah Vihear Temple often turns into *'Pra Viharn.'* The symbol of the temple has come to play an important role in the domestic agenda of Thai nationalists. The second section of the chapter examines the myth of *'Pra Viharn'* in Thai popular literature and TV productions—a topic which remains unexplored by Thai scholars, despite its significance for understanding Thai cultural practices and perceptions regarding Cambodia. In its third part, my chapter reviews the knowledge politics and practices in Thai higher education and argues that the myth of *'Pra Viharn'* and the bitterness in Thai-Cambodian relations result partly from ignorance and from the slow development of Cambodian and Southeast Asian Studies in Thailand. The fourth part of my chapter argues that politics and practices of memory, popular culture and knowledge have also had an impact on the politics of ASEAN Community at large, inserting themselves into the broader context of ASEAN's cultural politics. In closing, I suggest some ideas for promoting peaceful and constructive Thai-Cambodian relations.

II. In the Shadow of *'Pra Viharn'* Myth[1]

Thailand's long struggle for democracy has suffered many setbacks and failed to achieve lasting success. In the course of this struggle, politics and social space have often been manipulated through rumors, political myths, and propaganda. Public life exhibits an irrational streak as demonstrated by regular newspaper reports on the role of fortune tellers in Thai politics. Civilian and military governments alike have promoted nationalism in attempts to foster unity in the face of social discontent and democratic deficits. Thais are expected to give unquestioning allegiance to their nation and to take pride in protecting national heritage and in safe-guarding the territories of the kingdom. In this context, *'Pra Viharn'* has emerged as one of the key political myths of modern Thailand and become an

essential ingredient in the construction of Thai identity. Along with external factors, Thai politics and practices of memory surrounding the *'Pra Viharn'* myth have come to constrain and harm Thai-Cambodian relations.

On 15 June 1962, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague decided that Preah Vihear Temple was located on Cambodian territory. Not long after, a new myth was constructed in Thailand. In a speech addressed to the Thai public on 4 July 1962, Thai prime minister Marshall Sarit Thanarat described the ICJ judgement as a disastrous loss for the Thai nation:

> […] Today I talk to you in tears. To the spirits of our brave Thai ancestors, my tears are tears of a 'look phu-chai' [gentleman], of blood, of distress, and of a desire for vengeance that will last through the rest of my life into the next. […] My dear fellow Thais, one day in the future, we will take Pra Viharn back for the Thai nation. […]
>
> Sarit Thanarat (1962, pp. 18-21)

Sarit's speech became an essential source for the myth of *'Pra Viharn'* in contemporary Thailand. A close reading of the address reveals three related themes of this myth:

1. The *'Pra Viharn'* case is of vital importance to Thailand because of territorial integrity of the kingdom.
2. *'Pra Viharn'* and the land on which the temple stands were unjustly taken away from Thailand; in other words, Thailand was robbed of its territory and heritage.
3. The Thai government and the Thai people disagree with the verdict of the ICJ and reserve the right to challenge its decision.

The *'Pra Viharn'* myth is characterized by a combative tone. Sarit's speech contains words and expressions like 'win' and 'lose', 'ways of fighting', 'brave,' and 'smile in times of danger.' Forty-eight years later, Sarit's message and its semantics of struggle still resonated with parts of the Thai public. In 2010, a user of the website "Thailandsusu.com" [Thailand-fight-fight.com] posted Sarit's speech as a patriotic gesture during the ongoing Thai-Cambodian conflict over Preah Vihear and other border issues. Responding to the post, one user comments: 'All Thais still believe that *'Pra Viharn'* Mountain belongs to the Thais' (Siao, 2010). Another response reads: 'Heroes of the Thai nation… the Thai nation is owned by Thais… do not let anybody invade [Thailand]' (Baodee, 2010).

The birth of *'Pra Viharn'* myth was, to a certain extent, an incident. The Sarit regime was far more interested in combating communism at home and abroad. His premiership marked an important shift in modern Thai politics. As David K. Wyatt (2003) observes, Sarit and his close comrades were all home-grown products of the Thai cadet school and, unlike their predecessors in the 1930s, did not commit to western democratic values and a close link between nation and constitution. Instead, the new generation of Thai military leaders were active advocates of a Thai national ideology expressed by the trichord 'nation, religion, and monarchy.' Notwithstanding this difference, the notion of territorial loss played a central

role in Thai nationalism in the 1930s and the 1950s alike. When, in 1959, Cambodia took the dispute over Preah Vihear Temple to the International Court of Justice, Sarit continued the older practice of using territorial loss as a tool for national fostering unity under his dictatorial rules.

The case of Preah Vihear allowed Sarit to whip up nationalist sentiment and mobilize public support. The regime portrayed the ICJ as a third party in the conflict, which evoked the specter of the 1893 crisis, seen as a western threat to the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The nationalistic master narrative features the 1893 incident as an episode of 'territorial loss'—one of the key themes of Thai history from this perspective (Winichakul, 1995). Strate argues that 'territorial loss' emerged as a constructed memory of pain and has subsequently contributed to a Thai history of embarrassment (2015).

In 1959, a letter to the editor of a Thai newspaper called for Thais to donate one Baht each for the team of Thai lawyers who were to argue the country's position before the ICJ in The Hague. The appeal met with an overwhelming response (Strate, 2015, pp. 173-175). The Thai public very much cherished the hope of winning the case. In 1962, when the Court reached a decision in favor of Cambodia, these hopes came to naught. Sarit's impassionate speech rallied Thais around the myth of *'Pra Viharn.'* Cambodia had not invaded Thailand, but Thai government propaganda construed the case before the International Court of Justice as a threat to the Thai motherland. When the ICJ decided against Thailand, the verdict could be seen as a humiliation of Sarit's new military government. The regime had failed by its own standards as it had promoted the registration of *'Pra Viharn'* and its surroundings as Thai national heritage.

The *'Pra Viharn'* myth could live on in part because the demarcation of the Thai-Cambodia border remained an unfinished business. From 1959 to the late 1980s, political turbulence in Cambodia sidelined the issue of border demarcation. In the following decades, however, the *'Pra Viharn'* myth has been resurrected. The resurgence of military and conservative rule in Thailand since the 2006 coup went hand in hand with increasing nationalistic propaganda (Dalpino, 2011; Chambers, 2013; Pawakapan, 2013; Chachavalpongpun, 2010). As a result, Thai domestic politics interfered when Cambodia applied with UNESCO for the inclusion of Preah Vihear on the world heritage list (Pawakapan, 2013; Chachavalpongpun, 2010).

III. In Love and War at Preah Vihear

First published in 1969, the Thai novel *'Khemarin-Inthira'* by K. Surangkanang (1911-1999) exemplifies the cultural politics and practices that have been at play in Thailand's relations with Cambodia. K. Surangkanang is the pen name of celebrated female novelist Kanha Kiangsiri. *'Khemarin-Inthira'* tells the story of a Cambodian prince and a Thai lady who fall in love at first sight during a brief encounter at Preah Vihear—a scene set in the late 1950s, just before the International Court of Justice heard the Preah Vihear case. A sequel continues the story of the couple under the title *'Teacher Inthira'*.

'Khemarin-Inthira' and its career in Thailand's publishing industry reflect a short-lived

thaw in Thai-Cambodian cultural relations following the ICJ verdict of 1962. In 1969, literary magazine *'Piyamit'* serialized *'Khemarin-Inthira'* for readers mainly in urban areas. In the same year, the publishing house *Klangwittaya* released the novel as a book. The publication of the novel coincided with a Thai-Cambodian film project and with the appearance of Cambodian films in Bangkok cinemas.

In the late 1960s, Thailand experienced significant political change. Field Marshall Thanom Kittikachorn, who had replaced Sarit in 1963, could not maintain as tight control of the country as his predecessor. In 1973, mass demonstrations led by university students overthrew Thanom's regime and ushered in a period of democratization. But the tide soon turned against the progressive forces in the country. After Communist regimes gained control of Laos, Cambodia, and the former South Vietnam in 1975, Thailand experienced a conservative backlash, which culminated in the massacre of students at Thammasat University in October 1976 and led to a further round of military rule. No longer insisting on the *'Pra Viharn'* myth, government propaganda now only emphasized the threat from domestic communists to the country's internal security and the Vietnamese aggression along the Thai-Cambodian borders. At the same time, the Khmer Rouge's regime in Cambodia and the subsequent period of political turmoil in the country (ca. 1975-1989) put a stop to Thai-Cambodian cooperation in the area of entertainment. Against this backdrop, Klangwittaya republished *'Khemarin-Inthira'*. It would take more than a decade for another edition of the novel to appear. Odeon Store Publishing made *'Khemarin-Inthira'* available again in 1988 as Thailand experienced breath-taking economic growth and Cambodian politics and society slowly re-emerged from the trauma of the killing fields.

The career of *'Khemarin-Inthira'* in Thai entertainment industry exhibits memory politics and practices surrounding the *'Pra Viharn'* myth. Adaptations of the novel have appeared only on TV, but not on the silver screens. From 1969 to 2017, two TV series were based on 'Khemarin-Inthira.' The first production was shot and aired in 1980. At this time, rising living standards allowed households across Thailand to afford television sets as state and military TV channels became available in high quality throughout the country. As a consequence, *'Khemarin-Inthira'* became part of the country's cultural memory-scape more generally. The second TV adaptation of *'Khemarin-Inthira'* appeared on Channel 5 in 1997 just before the Asian Financial Crisis hit the country in the same year. This version shows stunning views of Preah Vihear and Angkor; its opening sequence acknowledges assistance from the Cambodian side.

Although in Thailand popular novels are often turned several times into TV series, the entertainment industry has not revisited *'Khemarin-Inthira'* since the 1997 production. It is likely that two factors played a major role in preventing further TV productions based on the novel: (1) the development of Thai nationalism from 1997 to 2017 and (2) the critique of Thai and Cambodian nationalism offered by the novel itself.

From 1997 to 2017, Thailand experienced recurrent surges of nationalism. In late 1997, the Asian Financial Crisis, which began in the country, stirred up nationalist sentiments among Thais that were directed, in particular, against the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The Fund offered rescue packages to shore up the Thai economy but provoked resentment

by making its aid contingent upon painful reforms in the country. Against this backdrop, the aftermath of the financial crisis saw a rise in nationalist soap operas and films (Meyer, 2014). Moreover, since 2006, the return of military rule came with a concerted promotion of nationalism and brought, between 2008 and 2013, a revival of the Pra Viharn myth.

A close reading of *'Khemarin-Inthira'* shows the novel to include a critique of the cultural politics and practices of Thai and Cambodian nationalism. First, K. Surangkanang's novel gives a human face to the Thai-Cambodian conflict over Preah Vihear. The novel tells the story of Inthira, a young lady from an upper middle-class family in Bangkok, who makes a trip to Preah Vihear with her classmates before their graduation from Chulalongkorn University. During her visit to the temple, Inthira gets lost and wanders around the site. When a stranger bumps into her at a remote corner of the temple, Inthira drops her belongings and falls. The man apologizes for his clumsiness and helps her to gather her possessions. In this short moment, the two young people fall in love before going their separate ways. They are only reunited by chance and much later when Inthira teaches Thai to two of Khemarin's cousins in the palace of his aunt in Phnom Penh.

Second, the novelist skillfully portrays the ambivalent feelings of Thais towards Cambodia and Cambodians through the sad love story of Khemarin and Inthira. The love of the couple has no future because of two factors: (1) nationalism and the conflict between the countries over Preah Vihear, and (2) the presumed national and cultural differences, which members of Inthira's family and even Inthira herself emphasize time and again (Surankanang, 2011, pp. 459-613). Through conversations between the protagonist and minor characters, the novel evokes the ridiculous nature of nationalist rhetoric and highlights the problems caused by nationalism in the private and social lives of Thais and Cambodians.

Third, K. Surangkanang's novel experiments by creating the character of a modern Thai woman who dares to love a Cambodian man—a love which is incompatible with Thai nationalism. Inthira stands for a new generation of modern and well-educated Thai women in the 1960s. This new generation faced the challenge of reconciling their aspirations to an autonomous, individualistic life style with the demands of family duty and the motherland. For the sake of the nation, Inthira heeds her mother's wish that her marriage with a Cambodian man should not take place at a time of conflict between their countries (Surankanang, 2011, pp. 618-619). Seeing her beloved mother's ailing health, Inthira renounces her decision to accept Khemarin's marriage proposal and to move to Cambodia. As required by Thai traditions, Inthira submits to the duties of a good daughter. At the same time, she holds on to Khemarin as the love of her life and asks him to wait for the right time for marriage. The novel ends as Thai-Cambodian tensions over Preah Vihear escalate, which hastens Khemarin's departure from Bangkok.

In nationalist projects, women's bodies and loves are often associated with the nation. Women serve as subjects and representations of the nation as imagined and constructed in nationalist discourses and practices (Yuval-Davis, 1997). K. Surangkanang is well aware of this gender dimension of nationalism. She criticizes the subordination of women to the supposed interests of the nation in *'Teacher Inthira'*, the sequel to *'Khemarin-Inthira,'* which sees the protagonist remaining true to her love and looking forward to marrying

Khemarin. At the same time, K. Surangkanang acknowledges that women cannot easily escape the burden of gendered nationalism. As Inthira learns, the tide of life knows no return. Khemarin cannot withstand the pressures of Cambodian nationalism even in his private life, and the couple is unable to reunite.

IV. Overcoming Ignorance and Catching up with the Old Yet Unfamiliar Neighbor

As late as the start of the new millennium, Thai academia had developed only limited expertise on Cambodia. Kian Theeravit, a renowned professor at Chulalongkorn University's Faculty of Political Science, poignantly laments this state of affairs in his book entitled 'Cambodia: History, Society, Economy, Security and Foreign Affairs' (2000, p. 1):

> I have taught the class on 'The Politics and Governments in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos' at Chulalongkorn University's Faculty of Social Sciences for more than 20 years. Moreover, I have extensively worked and exchanged ideas with both Thai and international academics on the issue of Cambodia. Throughout these years, I had immense pity for our Muangthai (Thailand). Despite being an immediate neighbor of Cambodia, Vietnam, and Laos, Thai people know very little about these countries. [Thai] academics who study and conduct research on the three countries are very small in number. This is also the case for good academic publications for teaching and learning at higher education level.

Kian's comments reflect the differences between Thailand and its neighbors which result from the Cold War in Southeast Asia, the development of the Thai state, and from the construction of Thai national identity. Throughout the Cold War years, Thailand did not only subscribe to American ideologies and lifestyle but also cooperated closely with the US's military interventions in the region (Phillips, 2015). During the same period, Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos, and Burma fought for independence and struggle through existential crises even as they had to cope with the challenges of state-building. The Cold War thus set Thailand apart from its neighbors. Thai public discourse not only developed a distinctive outlook on domestic politics and on Southeast Asia but also expressed special pride in the country's history of independence and avoidance of communism. (Phillips, 2015). At the same time, Thailand came to rely politically and economically on its American allies, which allowed the country afford ignorance of its immediate neighbors.

As Cambodia suffered under the murderous rule of the Khmer Rouge (1975-1979) and then fell under Vietnamese influence (1979-1989), Thailand faced two challenges in its relations with its neighbor. First, Thailand had to cope with a massive influx of Cambodian refugees, a problem frequently appearing in headline news during the period. Second,

Vietnam's military policies and intervention along the Thai-Cambodian border stimulated the fear of communism that had kept haunting Thailand since 1973 (Battersby, 1988-1999). During this period, Thais associated Cambodia with news about the killing fields, with the images of refugees in distress, and with military clashes along the border. In the 1980s, the political turmoil in Cambodia and the Vietnamese aggression along the border were framed as external threats, which helped to stabilize the so-called semi-democratic government in Thailand under the eight-year premiership of Prem Tinsulanon.

In the 1980s, Thailand experiences double-digit economic growth, giving the country a position of economic leadership in mainland Southeast Asia. Against this backdrop, Chatchai Chunhawan, who replaced Prem in 1988, introduced a new policy towards Thailand's immediate neighbors that aimed at 'transforming the battlefield into the marketplace' (Battersby, 1988-1999, p. 8). Even though a military coup ousted the Chatchai government in 1991, this regional-economic vision remained a guideline of Thai policies towards Cambodia, Vietnam, and Laos.

The Paris Peace Accords of 1991 did not only mark a fresh start for Cambodia but also the beginning of a new era in Thai-Cambodian relations. Shortly after the two countries had formally re-established their links in 1993, "the border [became] the focus of a frenzy of commercial activity and transnational trade […] (French, 2002, p. 430). Middle-class Thais felt re-assured by the presence of a UN peacekeeping mission in Cambodia, offering hope for stability in the country. Thais found the doors to Cambodia suddenly open after the long period of political upheavals and tragedies. The legacy of Angkor and the lure of an old, yet strangely unfamiliar neighbor began to attract groups of Thai tourists to Cambodia, but visiting the country remained difficult for common Thais.

At the time, monks from a temple named *Plengsitaram* in Bangkok organized religious trips to Siem Reap. I had the chance to join one of the very first visits. It is worth mentioning this experience. Upon returning to Bangkok, two members of the group responded with creative work that can be considered a re-discovery of 'the old yet unfamiliar neighbor'. The Angkor journey inspired Danu Huntrakul, a famous song composer and musician of *Mhai Thai* (Thai Silk) to compose a song entitled *'Apsara'*. Another member of the trip, Kwanjai Aimjai, who has now become a well-known Thai novelist, wrote a documentary on *'Apsara'* for the magazine *'Sarakadee'* (Documentary). To a certain extent, their works stand in a tradition of travel writing about Angkor and Cambodia established by Thai intellectuals of the early twentieth century and of the 1950s.

Against this backdrop, the Thai academia has been slow in catching up with geopolitical and economic changes in the region and with the intensification of Thai-Cambodian people-to people relations. Since the early 1990s, however, the requirements of Thailand's further economic development and the kingdom's international standing made learning about neighboring countries a pressing issue (Battersby, 1988-1999). The research grant the Thai government awarded to Kian Theerawit for his book on Cambodia demonstrated a new awareness of this need. The growing interest in the region was also reflected by the launch of Southeast Asian studies programs at Mahidol, Chulalongkorn, and Thammasat Universities in the late 1990s.

In spite of these positive developments, a lack of expertise on Cambodia and Southeast Asia persists in Thai academia more generally. This chapter cannot answer the question whether this problem finds a parallel in Cambodia. On the Thai side, however, promoting good relations will benefit from enhanced education and research on Cambodia, on Thai-Cambodian relations, and their Southeast Asian setting and context. Ironically, the interest of Thai scholars in Thai-Cambodian issues seemed to increase during the most recent round of conflict between the countries. The momentum, however, does not extend to issues relating to the future of Thai-Cambodian relations. In Thailand, the challenges of understanding Cambodia and Thai-Cambodian relations in a broad sense are once again met with an uneasy silence.

V. Thai-Cambodian Relations as Cultural Politics of ASEAN Community[2]

The EU's experience from the 1950s to the 2010s reveals how regional integration can help promote peace and prosperity, in spite of domestic disagreement and periodic problems of disintegration (Berend, 2016). The cultural politics of integration often pose considerable challenges to regional integration projects. The troubled Thai-Cambodian relations, which originated from the politics and practices of memory, popular culture, and a lack of expertise at the national level have also impacted on the cultural politics of ASEAN Community.

In retrospect, both Cambodia's initiative to have Preah Vihear listed as world heritage and the Thai government's support in 2008 appear as responses to the development of ASEAN. In 2003, the ASEAN Summit in Bali set the goal of achieving ASEAN Economic Community by 2020. At the time, however, ASEAN did not yet have a legal system that could be enforced against the member states. Only in 2008, a binding legal agreement came into force with the new ASEAN Charter. As a result of the push for further regional integration, the governments of the member states are now bound to take actions for developing AEC as planned. One aspect of AEC is realizing fast-track economic integration in eleven priority sectors. Thailand has committed to tourism and air travel as its priority sectors. The Samak government's support for Cambodia at the World Heritage Committee in 2008 can, therefore, be seen as one of Thailand's first steps in fulfilling its obligations. The government at that time still observed Thaksin Shinawatra's approach towards regional development. Thaksin, who was ousted by the military coup of 2006, had planned to expand Thailand's export market and investment in neighboring countries and to develop the country's tourism and air travel business through cooperation with Thailand's neighbors. The Samak government, which supported by groups allied to Thaksin, intended to work with Cambodia in developing the areas surrounding Preah Vihear with Cambodia. However, the revival of the *'Pra Viharn'* myth in the wake of the 2006 coup blocked this cooperative approach and thus posed a threat to the development of ASEAN Community.

The World Heritage Convention opens a platform for trans-boundary cooperation in cultural and heritage management as a means of promoting peace. Thailand, however, has never taken advantage of this opportunity even though it is a party to the World Heritage Convention. The stance of the Thai government has resulted in unreasonable demands of Thai representatives at sessions of the World Heritage Committee (WHC) (Pawakapan, 2013; Chachavalpongpun, 2010, 2012). Ignoring the fact that the inscription of a site on the World Heritage List is not at all related to border rights, Thailand's recent military regimes and Thai conservatives tried to convince the domestic and international public that it was ultimately Preah Vihear's listing by the WHC that caused the military clashes with Cambodia. The modern myth of *'Pra Viharn'* that draws on the themes of territory and heritage as two key elements of Thai national identity has thus come to play a central role in Thailand's domestic politics as well as the country's external relations in recent years.

The escalation in Thai-Cambodian relations from 2008 to 2014 demonstrates the dangers of the heritage myth created by Thailand's authoritarian regimes. In contrast to the Thai approach, examples of cross-boundary sites in Europe and elsewhere demonstrate that heritage sites and territories can have a meaning beyond an exclusive national association. The promotion of the *'Pra Viharn'* myth has gone hand in hand with the growth and development of Thailand as an authoritarian state. Therefore, democratization may contribute not only to the growth of ASEAN Community but also to the liberation of heritage from the exploitation of military regimes and conservatives in the name of narrowly defined nationalisms.

Since the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s, ASEAN's evolution proceeded in tandem with the demands of globalization and global actors. As a result, ASEAN adopted a charter setting the goal of ASEAN economic community to be achieved by 2015. To many observers, however, ASEAN's integration process appears to stagnate. This assessment may result in part from insufficient attention to the dialectic relationship between the principle of non-interference and the 'ASEAN way', on the one hand, and the prospect of ASEAN Economic Community, on the other. The principle of non-interference does not only regard political and military affairs but also has a significant impact on economic, cultural, educational and environmental cooperation. Therefore, deepening economic integration can be seen as ASEAN's endeavor to overcome the 'ASEAN way' and the principle of non-interference in the economic realm. Furthermore, as is illustrated by the European example, advances in economic integration may later spill over into other areas such as culture, education, environment and social policies.

In Southeast Asia, the dynamics of the integration process will be complicated by democratic deficits and the stark disparities in economic development within and between the member states, which are even larger than in the European Union. At the same time, advances in economic integration and its spill-over effects hold out the promise of a fairer distribution of wealth, of better social protection and opportunities, of democratization, of a higher standard of human-rights protection, and last but not least of peaceful and constructive border management. Moving beyond nationalism is never easy. More often than not, nationalistic rhetoric and rituals serve as a cover for the political interests of

particular groups. Nor is Southeast Asia an exception to this rule. The regimes in the region have long employed nationalism to mask democratic deficits and economic inequalities by appeals to nation unity.

Promoting constructive Thai-Cambodian relations may serve as a flagship project for changing politics and practices of memory, popular culture and knowledge that will not only be beneficial for Cambodia and Thailand, but also for ASEAN integration.

VI. Conclusion

This chapter has inquired into the recent round of conflicts between Thailand and Cambodia over Preah Vihear and other border issues. It argues that, since the late 1950s, Thailand's politics and practices of memory, of popular culture and of knowledge have led to unproductive relations between the two countries. These domains of politics which are at play in Thai-Cambodian relations have also impacted the cultural politics of ASEAN integration. The essay suggests, on the basis of the Thai example, some ideas for promoting peaceful coexistence and cooperation between Thailand and Cambodia that may help to improve the relations between the two countries:

1. Novel approaches to border managements may help the two parties to deal with border demarcation and management in a more constructive manner.
2. Increased contacts between young Thais and Cambodians through educational cooperation, study programs, and cooperative pop-culture initiatives will help reduce the mutual animosity and preconceptions by antagonistic nationalism.
3. Social media platforms open up new contact zones that may help to involve young people, artists, environmental activists, and civil society more generally in Thai-Cambodian relations.
4. The promotion of critical history and heritage studies in Thailand and Cambodia will likely contribute to the growth of mature civil societies and thus help to counter interpretations of history and heritage in the service of antagonistic nationalism.
5. The promotion of research on the respective neighbor and on Thai-Cambodian relations will contribute to the mutual knowledge Thais and Cambodian have of one another and will thus counter impact of nationalistic propaganda in their relations.
6. Promoting transboundary heritage projects as magnets for tourism will likely benefit both countries. Transboundary heritage sites may also have potential for the cooperation between other member states of ASEAN.
7. Constructive, cooperative and friendly migration policies will contribute to more advantageous interdependence between the two parties.

Thai and Cambodian prejudice and discrimination against one another may also diminish with the promotion of ASEAN multicultural competency among their citizens. ASEAN will have to make greater efforts to serve as a platform for more regional, cultural and economic cooperation between the two contenders. Above all, the Thai-Cambodian case demonstrates that the cultural politics of integration are a vital issue for ASEAN and thus need to be more directly and openly addressed together with other domains of politics.

For better and constructive Thai-Cambodian relations, a history of the future is waiting to be made.

Endnote

1 In everyday language, Thais use the phrases *'Prasart Pra Viharn'* for Preah Vihear Temple and *'Khao Pra Viharn'* for the mountain on which the temple is located or to refer to the temple and the mountain collectively.

2 The heading "Thai-Cambodian Relations and ASEAN Community" is an abridged version of my article "Thai-Cambodian Dispute Has Implications for AEC" published in the *Bangkok Post* on 22 February 2011.

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4

CAMBODIA'S RELATIONS WITH VIETNAM: PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES

KRY Suyheang & CHY Terith

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KRY Suyheang & CHY Terith | Chapter 4

CAMBODIA'S RELATIONS WITH VIETNAM: PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES

I. Introduction

Cambodia shares the longest land border with Vietnam to the east and has had a long, at times contentious, history with this eastern neighbor. The rise of China and its growing influence over Cambodia in recent years appear to place Cambodia-Vietnam relations on a somewhat different playing field. While the flow of China's aid, loan and investment has continued to bring billions of US dollars to this small and fledgling state, lifted up its economy and rebuilt its infrastructure, it has given room for Cambodia to shift alliances and diversify its relations. As a small and relatively underdeveloped state, pivoting to China has provided Cambodia not only with economic benefits but also more leverage in regional affairs (especially vis-à-vis the neighboring countries). In recent years, the country is seen as moving much closer to China and, at the same time, shaking up its traditional alliance with its neighbor Vietnam (Strangio, July 30, 2015). Recent events including the growing influence of China, the dispute in the South China Sea, an ongoing border dispute, and Cambodia's domestic politics have effectively been testing this traditional alliance. Although at times, it seems the relations between these two neighbors appear to be put into question, a closer look at the dynamics in their relations tend to show, despite some frustrations, a strong and deep friendship.

This chapter provides an overview of Cambodia-Vietnam relations up to the present time. The chapter begins by looking at the complex relations between the two countries before, during, and after the French colonial era. Then, it moves on to review the more recent relations of the two neighbors by delving into the contentious issues of the South China Sea and Cambodia's domestic politics, the defense relation, and last but not least, bilateral trade and cooperation. Finally, the chapter reviews the main challenges that exist in their relations which include the issues of border dispute and anti-Vietnamese sentiment in Cambodia.

II. A Historical Overview of Cambodia-Vietnam Relations

1. Pre-Colonial Period: Tributary and Colony

Throughout the 17th, 18th and mid-19th century, Cambodia was in between two powerful expansionist neighbors, Thailand and Vietnam, who continued to invade and enforce their domination over Cambodia. After the fall of Lovek city to the Thai in 1594, Cambodia began to seek assistance from Vietnam to counterbalance the Thai's influence and invasion. During the early phase of the Vietnamese Southward Expansion movement, called *Nam Tien*, Cambodia's relation with Vietnam in the 17th century was initially in a position of mutual dependency (Nguyen, 1999, p. 17). To strengthen the two countries' tie, Khmer King Cheychesda married a Vietnamese princess in 1620. Cambodia then approved the Vietnamese request for permission in 1623 to settle down their troops and occupy the seaport in the lower Khmer territory of Kompong Krabei and Prey Nokor (present-day Ho Chi Minh City) for only five years in order to fight against China (MoE's History Textbook Grade 11, p. 143). However, the occupation continued rigidly and that effectively meant "Cambodia was now cut off from maritime access to the outside world" (Chandler, 1998, p. 95).

Firstly, spearheaded by individuals/families and a century later by the authorities, the *Nam Tien* was attributable to Vietnamese political instability and civil war, the defense of Southern Champa colonies, and the understudies of population pressure (Cotter, 1968, p. 14). The *Nam Tien* was gradually expanding forward and ended up close to the Khmer Kingdom in the mid-eighteenth century (Nguyen 1999, p. 18). In the early 19th century, Cambodia-Vietnam relation was mainly founded on tributary dependency, Vietnamese migration, and forced mobilization of labor (Chandler, 1975). While the period also saw sporadic popular attacks against Thai control, there were more frequent revolts against Vietnamese occupation, the most well-known of which was the "holy man's" rebellion against the Vietnamese in 1820-21. The revolt took place nearby the Vinh Te Canal, in response to labor exploitation and harsh mistreatment of the Khmers (Chandler, 1998, p. 120).

After suppressing the revolt, the Vietnamese Emperor, Minh Mang, pursued further the Vietnamization policy in a more systematic and intense manner throughout Cambodia (Chandler, 1975, p. 24). Such practices aiming to "standardize" or "modernize" Cambodia

ranged from administrative reforms (for instance, the adoption of a Vietnamese taxation system and changing names of the provinces into the Vietnamese language) to cultural reforms (for example, putting on trousers instead of skirts and having to learn the Vietnamese language) (Chandler, 1998, pp. 125-129).

These reforms were seen by the *Okya* (Cambodia's high ranking officials) as threats to the very survival of the Khmer kingship, Buddhism, and social structure and culture (Tarling, 1992, p. 586). Consequently, the *Okya* mobilized the people to revolt against the Vietnamese in wide-ranging rebellions in September and October of 1840 with the support, and later invasion and occupation again, from Thailand. The conflict continued until several years later when both Vietnam and Thailand agreed to a ceasefire in 1845, and Vietnam's eventual withdrawal of troops from Cambodia in 1847. Still, Cambodia was forced to pledge dual allegiance to the "traditional enemies", Thailand and Vietnam (Chandler, 1998, pp. 133-136). Sandwiched by such dominant neighbors, Cambodia was forced to align itself with a more powerful protectorate.

2. French Colonial Period (1863–1953)

The presence of the French protectorate changed the dynamics in the Cambodia-Vietnam relationship. While Thailand was made to return some provinces and give up its power over Cambodia, Vietnam became a colony of France in 1874 and was later under the French Indochina in 1887, which also encompassed Cambodia and Laos. During the colonial period, the French brought in ethnic Vietnamese to work in administration service and rubber plantations in Cambodia, and in the process, the Vietnamese eventually "monopolized lake and river fishing and small businesses in the cities, much to the detriment of the Khmers" (Pouvatchy, 1986, p. 441). This further worsened ethnic friction and was seen as a divide-and-rule strategy by the French, who "would make opportunistic use of it when it suited, just as they played off the Khmer Krom minority against the Vietnamese in Cochin-China" (Tully, 2005, p. 103).

On June 4, 1949, despite the constant claims of sovereignty from Cambodia over Cochin-China or Lower Mekong Delta, the French decided to turn over Cochin-China to South Vietnam's Emperor Bao Dai instead. The French at that time was trying to twist from the French-Viet Minh war into a civil war between the South and North Vietnam and was thus "obliged to give assurances of genuine Vietnamese independence and an early transfer of authority to Bao Dai government" (Hess, 2007, p. 340). It is worth noting that since the 1940s, the underground communist movement of Khmer Issarak, as well as its successors, was cooperating with Vietnamese communists toward the same cause of anticolonial resistance.

3. The Cold War Period (1954–1989): A Troubled Relation

Although there was a moment of "brothers in arms" in the anti-colonial struggle among the Indochinese communists, the successor of the Cambodian communist movement continued to view Vietnam as the "acute enemy" (quoted in Morris, 1999, p. 56). Pol Pot, who was then the Secretary of the Workers' Party of Kampuchea, decided to change the party's name in 1965 to the "Communist Party of Kampuchea" because he "resented the idea that his party had to continue to be subservient to Vietnam [and wanted] to lessen Vietnamese influence" (Dy, 2008, p. 9). Since 1971, the Khmer Rouge (KR), as the Cambodian communist came to be known, began their campaigns to expel and attack the Vietnamese troops in Cambodia while also fighting their war against the Lon Nol regime (Morris, 1999, pp. 59-65).

For the state-to-state relation during the second Indochina War, however, the Cambodian independence brought about a new dynamic in the Cambodia-Vietnam relationship, as Cambodia attempted to maintain its neutral stance toward both South Vietnam (Republic of Vietnam or ROV) and North Vietnam (Democratic Republic of Vietnam or DRV), which were engaging in conflict at the time. To ensure Cambodia's nonalignment and to defend its independence and sovereignty in the cold war context, Cambodia under Prince Sihanouk opted for closer relations with China, which was not welcomed by South Vietnam. As the Vietnam War flared up in the 1960s, Cambodia was concerned and appealed again for the recognition of the common frontier demarcation from South Vietnam. After such appeals were repeatedly ignored, coupled with the fact that South Vietnam was supporting the Khmer dissidents against Sihanouk, Cambodia broke off diplomatic relations with South Vietnam in 1963 (Pouvatchy, 1986).

On the other hand, the DRV and its controlled National Liberation Front of South Vietnam recognized and respected the territorial integrity of Cambodia and soon on June 24, 1967, the diplomatic relation was established formally between DRV and Cambodia. As Prince Sihanouk was ousted in 1970, DRV recognized his government in exile in Beijing. The civil wars both in Cambodia and Vietnam during the 1970s resulted in a complex relationship between various Khmer and Vietnamese factions. Lon Nol's anti-communist republican regime (1970-75) pursued anti-Vietnamese campaigns while being officially an ally of South Vietnam under the umbrella of US support. And when the Khmer Rouge took over Phnom Penh in April 1975, skirmishes soon took place along the borders between Cambodia and a now-unified communist Vietnam, even if they were both communist states and were previously fighting on the same side. Although the Vietnam embassy was reopened in 1976, ethnic Vietnamese living in Cambodia during the KR regime were soon deported and, from 1977, the remaining ethnic Vietnamese were targeted for severe mistreatment and killing (ECCC Closing Order, pp. 57-58). Ultimately, mounting border disputes and bilateral tension led to large-scale armed conflict between Cambodia and Vietnam in mid-1977, and on December 31, 1977, Cambodia officially broke off diplomatic relations with Vietnam.

Together with 150,000 Vietnamese troops, the United Front for National Salvation of Kampuchea (UFNSK) entered Phnom Penh on 7 January 1979 and forced the KR to retreat to the Thai border. The People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) was then established in Phnom Penh, and the Vietnamese troops remained in Cambodia until 1989. However, due to the geopolitics of the Cold War, it was the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK), comprised of three factions opposed to PRK and led by Prince Sihanouk, who managed to secure Cambodia's official seat at the United Nations from 1982 to 1991. While many saw such Vietnamese intervention as a 'historical fact' liberating Cambodia from the brutality of the KR regime and securing the country from KR's return, others view it as an invasion serving "Vietnamese interests", by dominating Cambodia over economic and political affairs (Deth, 2011, p. 7). With both local and international pressure as the Cold War was drawing to a close, Vietnam finally withdrew their troops from Cambodia in 1989 and became one of the signatories to the Paris Peace Agreement in 1991. The bilateral and multilateral cooperation between Cambodia and Vietnam has since increased and strengthened.

III. Current Cambodia-Vietnam Relations

1. Political Relation

The relation between Vietnam and Cambodia on the governmental level has since been cooperative and amicable until recently when the latter's foreign policy appears to be moving closer to China. Cambodia's move towards China with regard to the conflict in the South China Sea is of particular importance to the dynamic relationship between the two countries.

For the first time in 45 years, in July 2012, ASEAN chaired by Cambodia, failed to issue a joint communiqué due to the controversial South China Sea maritime disputes between China and a number of ASEAN members including the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia and Brunei (Kung, 2015). Four years later in July 2016, Cambodia was again thrown into the controversies in ASEAN meetings, when it was reported that Cambodia had again blocked any references to the Hague-based Permanent Court of Arbitration and militarization in the regional body's joint statement scheduled to be released ahead of an ASEAN meeting in Laos. On 12 July 2016, the Court of Arbitration had ruled against China's territorial claims in the South China Sea. The decision had angered China, which just three days later, had pledged more than USD 500 million in aid to Cambodia, leading to the accusation that it was buying influence (Willemyns, July 25, 2016).

Cambodia's apparent support of China in the South China Sea dispute appeared to have enraged the people in Vietnam. A few Vietnamese citizens went to Prime Minister Hun Sen's Facebook page and blasted him, claiming their comments reflect the mood in their country. "Cambodia eats the porridge then pisses in the bowl," wrote one of the comments in Vietnamese using an idiom from Vietnam (quoted in Piviour, September 2, 2016). The

comment continued that "Vietnam has sacrificed both our blood and money to save the Cambodian people from genocide. Now Hun Sen is turning his back on Vietnam," referring to Vietnam's help in stopping the Khmer Rouge's brutality. Such comments had drawn responses from Prime Minister Hun Sen, who has recently been highly active on Facebook. "If you or your country has a problem with China, please solve it peacefully," the Prime Minister responded. He added, "Do not blame me and do not involve Cambodia to your country's internal issue. Of course, I am faithful to my nation, my King and my own wife." The conversation had reportedly been deteriorating from there, with references to the fact that the Prime Minister would not have been sitting in his position without Vietnamese help. "May [I] ask if this is your own word or from [your] leader's suggestion to attack me?" PM Hun Sen asked rhetorically.

Following such exchanges on the Facebook page of the Prime Minister, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement condemning the Vietnamese citizens for "insulting" the leader of Cambodia. A few days later, the Vietnamese government distanced themselves from the Facebook comments. Such a move by PM Hun Sen was seen as catering to domestic politics rather than a stance against the bigger neighbor (Piviour, September 2, 2016). These were not the only instances where the incumbent government, repeatedly accused by the opposition of being under the influence of Vietnam (Chheang, December 21, 2016), appeared to manifest its stronger stance against Vietnam. At the same time, the Cambodian government has also tried to stabilize and maintain a good relationship with Vietnam (Leng 2017). As such, the political relations between Cambodia and Vietnam appear to remain intact with many mutual reassurances of peaceful relations and exchanges of high-level visits between governments of the two countries, including a state visit of Vietnamese President in June 2016 and Prime Minister Hun Sen's official visit to Vietnam in December 2016. Vietnam's Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc paid three visits to Cambodia in early 2017, including attending the ground-breaking ceremony of the Chrey Thom-Long Binh Bridge connecting the two countries, carrying out a state visit and participating in the World Economic Forum on ASEAN (Chheang, June 22, 2017).

2. Defense and Security Relations

Despite the controversies of Cambodia's role in the South China Sea, military relations between Cambodia and Vietnam remain strong. And for economic and security reasons, Cambodia cannot afford to sour its relation with its eastern neighbor (Leng, 2016). And for Vietnam, Cambodia is considered a special country that Vietnam should never cease to maintain good relations due largely to shared traditions and its political and economic interests (Trung & Vu, November 10, 2016). Therefore, a more subtle and balanced approach of pivoting to China while maintaining a strong tie with its eastern neighbor appears to be the most favorable option for Cambodia (see also, Var and Po, 2017). This appears to be the position the Cambodian government is taking. On 24 June 2017, Cambodia and Vietnam celebrated the 50th anniversary of diplomatic ties and this has provided an opportunity for

the two neighbors to nurture and deepen their relationship. In recent years, top leaders of the two countries have on multiple occasions continued to reassure each other of their good spirits in their relations in light of the South China Sea issue (Var & Po, March 16, 2017).

In January 2017, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sar Kheng led a delegation to Vietnam, during which a cooperative agreement was signed, focusing on security cooperation and interventions on cross-border crimes including human trafficking, and drug smuggling. In that same month, Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Tea Banh also began his official trip to Vietnam, where he met with a high ranking delegation from Vietnam's Ministry of National Defense, headed by Minister Ngo Xuan Lich (*The Voice of Vietnam,* January 9, 2017). The two ministers were reportedly pleased with the results of their bilateral military cooperation in 2016, particularly in delegation exchanges, personnel training and border security. The two sides have committed to close cooperation in delegation exchanges, deputy ministerial level-defense policy dialogues, joint marine patrols, border work and the search for and repatriation of the remains of Vietnamese military experts and volunteer soldiers killed in Cambodia during the war.

This visit happened in less than one month after a high-level visit in December 2016 in response to the invitation by Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc, led by Prime Minister Hun Sen and his top ministers including the Defense Minister Tea Banh. Three cooperative agreements were signed, namely 1) *Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters between the Kingdom of Cambodia and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam,* 2) *Treaty on the Transfer of Sentenced Persons between the Kingdom of Cambodia and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam,* and 3) *Agreement on Bilateral Cooperation between the Ministry of Cult and Religion of the Kingdom of Cambodia and the Committee of for Ethnic Minorities of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam*. The two Prime Ministers also issued a joint statement where they were committed to, among others, "long-lasting stability" (Joint statement, 2016). In addition to reassuring each other's commitment to observe previous joint statements between 1999 and 2016, the two countries agreed "to respect independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, non-interference in each other's internal affairs; to ensure one's territory is not used by hostile forces to menace the other's security; and to settle problems arising between the two countries by peaceful means".

In April 2017, the Vietnamese Prime Minister, at the invitation of PM Hun Sen, led a high-level visit to the Kingdom, reinforcing the reassurance between the two countries (Joint Statement, 2017). In addition to inaugurating the bridge linking the two neighbors, four Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) were signed on road projects, drug rehabilitation centers, fisheries, and the construction of Phnom Penh-Hanoi Friendship Boulevard. Reiterating the previous joint statements, both countries continued to commit to resolving any emerging issues by peaceful means. On the issue of immigration, Vietnam hoped that Cambodia would continue to treat Vietnamese residents in Cambodia as equally as other foreign residents in the country.

These repeated reassurances of the two countries' deep commitment to continuing to be friendly and peaceful neighbors are needed more than ever, due especially to the South China Sea issue and the outcome of recent elections. During the national election in 2013,

National Assembly seats of the Cambodian People's Party (CPP) had declined from 90 to just 68 out of a total of 123 seats. The commune election in 2017 also saw the opposition's dramatic increase, from only 40 communes in 2012 to 489 communes now. Such decline has forced the ruling party to take a stronger position to address the issues of illegal Vietnamese immigrants amidst the ongoing anti-Vietnamese nationalism (Strangio, July 2015). Between 2014 and 2016, the General Department of Immigration (GDI) had deported 11,661 illegal immigrants from Cambodia, of which 84% were Vietnamese. Whether or not anti-Vietnamese nationalism was a major factor in the opposition party CNRP's increasing popularity, the ruling party appeared to react to this domestic dynamic. Vietnam, on the other hand, seems to understand the domestic demand of the Cambodian politics (Strangio, July 2015). The relationship between Vietnam and Cambodia has in recent years been tested, mainly by the issue of the South China Sea in which Vietnam has a great interest and by the demand of domestic politics to cater to nationalist voices in Cambodia. It has been proven that the relationship between the two countries, even during this challenging time, has survived the test.

3. Bilateral Trade and Investment

After the establishment of a coalition government following the UN-administered election in 1993, Vietnam and Cambodia began their joint efforts in addressing their remaining issues—namely border dispute and the situation of Vietnamese ethnics in Cambodia—and strengthening their bilateral cooperation. There were exchanges of high-level visits by top leaders of the two countries, resulting in agreement on economic and trade cooperation. On 3 April 1994, the two countries signed their "economic and trade cooperation and on transits of goods between Cambodia and Vietnam", paving the way for much stronger bilateral trade and investment cooperation (Amer, August 1997, p. 82).

From 1994 to 2011, Vietnamese foreign direct investment (FDI) totaled at USD 812 million and sharply increased to USD 2.5 billion in 2012, to USD 3 billion in 2013 and to USD 3.1 billion as of August 2014 (Leng, 2016, p. 11). Currently, Vietnam is ranked the fifth largest investor in Cambodia after China, South Korea, the European Union and Malaysia (Chan, September 23, 2016). The total Vietnamese investment is projected to reach USD 6 billion by 2020, which means Vietnam is expected to remain as one of the top foreign investors in Cambodia. In 2015, bilateral trade between the two neighbors had reached USD 3.37 billion. Cambodia's export to Vietnam was worth only USD 954 million while imports from Vietnam amounted to USD 2.41 billion. Despite the huge trade volume, imports from Vietnam amounted to more than double the amount of Cambodia's export.

In the first half of 2016, however, there was no registration of inflow of Vietnamese investment (Chan, September 23, 2016). Such drop has led to various speculations. While some attributed this drop to the ongoing border dispute and Cambodia's position in the South China Sea, others pointed to the economic situation, political reasons and the slowdown in the agricultural sector (Hunt, October 3, 2016). While all of these could explain

the decline in Vietnamese investment, it is also possible that the upcoming elections may have partly contributed to this outcome. It appears to be consistent that every pre-election cycle in Cambodia, business and trade would somehow become stagnant and eventually pick up speed once the situation becomes normal (Barrett, December 29, 2016).

IV. Challenges in Cambodia-Vietnam Relations

1. On-going Border Dispute

The ongoing land border and maritime dispute has always been an irritant throughout the history of bilateral relations between Cambodia and Vietnam and has also become a contentious and sensitive issue in Cambodia's domestic politics. The issue could be traced back to the French colonial period. The 1939 Brévié Line divided the island administration, with reservation of its sovereignty, between the Cochin-China and Cambodia, making Cambodia to administer all of the islands to the North of the Line, while Cochin-China administered the islands South of the Line, including the controversial island of Phu Quoc in Vietnamese or Koh Tral in Khmer language (Mom, 2005, cited in Gerstl and Strašáková, p. 116). After Cochin-China was ceded to South Vietnam in 1949 and France's decision to grant all of the islands to the North of the Line to South Vietnam in 1953 (Vu Le, 2007, p. 18), Cambodia claimed for the recognition of its sovereignty by adopting the administrative 1939 Brévié Line as the maritime boundary between Cambodia and Vietnam (Gerstl and Strašáková, p. 118) and depositing the map with the United Nations in 1964 (Main Statement of PM Hun Sen, August 9, 2012, p. 24). While South Vietnam ignored the claim leading to its subsequent diplomatic breakdown with Cambodia, the then-North Vietnam declared its recognition of Cambodia's claim in May 1967; yet, in 1969 it "backed off … seeking more generous sea lanes around the islands" (Mudrick, 2014).

The following years (1970-75) then saw "increased controversy over maritime claims and oil exploitation" between both countries in which "the most heated discussion revolved around the ownership of Phu Quoc (Koh Tral)" (Gerstl & Strašáková, 2016, p. 120). In May 1975, an armed clash broke out on both the common land border and islands between the new Democratic Kampuchea regime and Vietnam. Even following the high-level meetings, the negotiation during that time had failed, leading to armed clashes again in 1977 and the two countries broke-off diplomatic relations in December 1977.

The border negotiation resumed during the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) period with the signing of the following agreements in the 1980s (Thayer, 2012, p. 68), namely, *The 1985 Treaty on the Delimitation of State Border, The Treaty on the Principles of Land Boundary Settlement and The Convention on the Status of the Boundary* (both dated 20 July 1983), and *The 1982 Treaty on Historical Waters*. The treaties recognized the Brévié Line as the dividing line for island sovereignty, and yet, not as the maritime boundary (Main Statement of PM Hun Sen, 2012, p. 22) leaving the two countries to find appropriate time

to "negotiate the determination of the maritime boundary in the historic water" (Historic Water Agreement, 1982). The treaties were also based on the international principles of "uti possidetis" (accepting the inherited colonial boundary as the boundary of the independent states) as defined on the 1:100,000 scale map in use before 1954 published by the Geographic Service of Indochina (GSI).

The status of these treaties was "uncertain" during the 1990s when there was a change in the political leadership in Cambodia after the UN-sponsored election in 1993 (Amer, 1997). The issues of border and ethnic Vietnamese were at that time the hottest topics of discussion between the two countries. A Joint Border Commission was created in January 1999, followed by the signing of the *Supplementary Treaty to the 1985 Treaty on the Delimitation of the State Border* in 2005. Soon, a respective commission on border demarcation and marker planting was established. A MoU on the demarcation of the remaining area of the land boundary was signed in April 2011.

Despite such development, the border issue between Cambodia and Vietnam is seen beyond technical and, often, politicized. Opposition leaders have since accused the government of inaction and favoring Vietnam during border negotiations. In December 2009, the opposition party leader Mr. Sam Rainsy and his supporters removed wooden border poles in protest, resulting in a legal charge against him. In August 2012, Prime Minister Hun Sen spent five hours at the National Assembly to explain the technical aspects of the border issue. However, the border issue continued to linger with the opposition party accusing the government of using "a fake map" for Cambodia-Vietnam border demarcation (Leng, 2017, p. 141). The issue was soon tackled as the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) in August 2015 managed to validate its currently used GSI map with the one deposited at the UN.

The Cambodian government has recently taken a firm position by sending more than 23 diplomatic notes, as of August 2016, against the territorial violation by Vietnam who constructed ponds, roads, and military outposts along the contested "no-man zone". The joint border commission then met in late August 2016, but failed to issue a joint statement since the Cambodian delegation insisted that the principle of *uti possidetis juris* be used as the starting point of discussion while their Vietnamese counterparts rejected and preferred to use the 1980s agreements and current land use and occupation as bases of negotiation instead (Niem, September 2016; Prak, August 31, 2016). Nonetheless, the 2017 joint statement reported that the joint border commission had accomplished approximately 84% of the land border demarcation and marker planting based on the border delimitation treaties.

Unlike in Vietnam where power is concentrated in the Communist Party of Vietnam, Cambodia can be much more complex with more actors influencing the domestic political affairs (Gerstl and Strašáková, 2016, p. 135). A good political relation, however, seemed to be the prerequisite for a "smooth negotiation and rapid conclusion of border agreement" (Vu Le, 2007). Nonetheless, the maritime boundary has not yet been discussed and will undoubtedly continued to become a challenge in the search for a solution through bilateral relation.

2. Anti-Vietnamese Sentiment in Cambodia

Akin to the border dispute, anti-Vietnamese sentiment in Cambodia is a longstanding issue with deep historical layers that continued to affect people-to-people relations. Currently, although there is no exact figure, according to the 2013 population survey, 0.42 percent of the total population identified their mother tongue as Vietnamese. Geopolitics, history, and domestic political and social dynamics have deeply shaped contemporary relations between the people of the two countries. A number of researchers, on the other hand, regarded this issue as a result of a targeted scapegoating strategy in Cambodian politics (Frewer, September 6, 2016 & Oesterheld, June 2014).

Anti-Vietnamese sentiment stemming from nationalism can be seen as emerging in the 1820s and 1830s "when Vietnam's assault on Cambodia was systematic and intense" (Chandler, 1996, p. 69). A substantial increase in the number of Vietnamese immigrants during that period corresponded to large-scale anti-Vietnamese rebellions taking place in 1820 and 1840-41. One story, which some historians call a folktale, recalls the 1811 Vinh Te Canal incident often referred to as "Master's Tea." The story describes three captured Khmer prisoners who were buried close together up to their necks to arrange their heads as a stove base for boiling tea for the Vietnamese master. Such a story has "remained inscribed in the memories of generations of Cambodians" and even being employed by politicians, particularly by the Khmer Rouge "in their anti-Vietnamese propaganda" (Jeldres, 2015, p. 206). The resentment, and even antipathy toward Vietnamese, however, continued to be "sustained during the period of the French protectorate" (Leifer, Michael, as quoted in Jeldres, 2015, p. 207). The number of the ethnic Vietnamese population in Cambodia sharply increased from 5,000 in 1874 to 150,000 in 1921 and to 230,000–250,000 in 1951 (Amer, Sept 1994, p. 213).

In the early years of Sihanouk's reign, ethnic Vietnamese residents were treated like other foreigners living in Cambodia who were subject to the law on naturalization, nationality, and immigration. Given the domestic context and the geopolitics of the 1960s, the issue of the ethnic Vietnamese and anti-Vietnamese sentiment in Cambodia re-emerged as Vietnamese were "accused of conducting subversive activities and of lending support to foreign forces operating in the country [leading to] arrest by the authorities" (Amer, September 1994, p. 216). In March 1970, Prince Sihanouk was removed from power partly owing to deviation from neutralist policy by allowing for the presence of more than 450,000 Vietnamese in the country by the beginning of 1970 (Migozzi as cited in Amer, September 1994, p. 214). Such propaganda immediately caught fire throughout the country resulting in violent attacks and a massacre of over 4,000 Vietnamese (Jackson, 1989, p. 154) while nearly 250,000 were 'repatriated' to Vietnam. When the country fell under the rule of the Khmer Rouge, many ethnic Vietnamese were deported. Those who remained were subject to mistreatment and massacre with an estimation of 20,000 ethnic Vietnamese being purged by the Khmer Rouge between 1975 and 1978 (Kiernan, as quoted in Demographic Expert Report 2009, ECCC, p. 49).

During the PRK period, there saw another advent of ethnic Vietnamese migration, both returnees and newcomers, to Cambodia. The sizeable movement across borders drew both domestic and international concerns about "demographic changes" in Cambodia during such a politicized context (UN Resolution 38/3, 27 October 1983) and to some, it "recalled certain aspects of past Vietnamization or colonization" (Pouvatchy, April 1986, p. 449). By then, there were approximately 300,000–500,000 Vietnamese residents in Cambodia (Nguyen & Sperfeldt, 2012, p. 15). Such political and social factors added to the increasing rise of deeply-rooted anti-Vietnamese sentiment in the Cambodian public and even among the senior PRK leaders themselves throughout the1980s (Declassified CIA file, 2011). Mainstream Cambodian politics in the early 1990s, however, continued to hold on to anti-Vietnamese sentiment and the perceived threat of Vietnamese expansion and demanded to repatriate a wide-scale ethnic Vietnamese out of Cambodia (Berman, 1996, pp. 825-827). On the other hand, the Khmer Rouge instead turned to employ an extreme approach toward the ethnic Vietnamese living in Cambodia using both anti-Vietnamese political rhetoric and violent attacks. Between 1992 and 1993, it was reported that 130 Vietnamese were massacred, 75 were injured, and a number of others were abducted (Amnesty International, September 1993).

Anti-Vietnamese rhetoric and violent attacks against ethnic Vietnamese re-emerged in the run-up to the second national election between 1996 and 1998, while their legal status and living conditions remained a critical challenge (Ang, Weill, & Chan, 2014, and Nguyen & Sperfeldt, 2012, pp. 18-19). In 1998, rumors of ethnic Vietnamese poisoning water and food items destined for Khmer consumers led to a mob killing of four ethnic Vietnamese bystanders. Political opposition leaders were subsequently denounced by the UN Special Representative for their role in igniting sentiments with anti-Vietnamese campaign rhetoric just before the July 1998 election. The 2013 election campaign ignited the collective fury once again when an age-old expression, "yuon", a questionably derogatory Khmer term to refer to the Vietnamese, was employed to rally supporters (Hyma 2016). Messages were relayed, including in social media, describing Cambodia's historical grievances and Vietnamese immigrants entering Cambodia to occupy land, illegally vote and influence the election, and to destroy forests. Ethnic Vietnamese businesses were ransacked in the aftermath when anti-government protests took to neighborhoods. An ethnic Vietnamese man was beaten to death by a mob who identified him as a "yuon" during the attack (Hyma, 2016). Such patterns seems to suggest that as long as the current political context is concerned, political discourse could once again make references to Vietnam and ethnic Vietnamese living in Cambodia, particularly during the election cycle. The vulnerability to manipulation, polarization and politicized anti-Vietnamese nationalism, and/or possibly, violence, might remain high, especially among those following politics and the potentially divisive narratives circulating in traditional and social media.

V. Conclusion

Cambodia-Vietnam relations can be characterized as "bitter-sweet relations". Despite the recent evolving regional context and domestic political challenges, the political relations between the two governments remain strong even as Cambodia is appearing to reorient its foreign policy. Cambodia is seen moving much closer to China mainly for economic reasons and political protection. The move has brought into the country significant Chinese investment, loans and aid. China is currently the country's biggest donor and largest investor. Growing Chinese influence over Cambodia, Cambodia's repeated move to block ASEAN joint statements with regards to the dispute in the South China Sea, ongoing border dispute, and Cambodia's domestic politics, have put to test Cambodia's traditional alliance with Vietnam. Nonetheless, it has proven that, as long as the incumbent government remains in power, this traditional alliance will continue to be strong, regardless of some frustrations. Despite the government-to-government's strong relations, however, challenges remain when it comes to improving the tie between people to people of the two countries, especially in regards to the status of ethnic Vietnamese residents in Cambodia. Moreover, the border and maritime disputes may remain an irritant in the bilateral relation between the two countries.

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5

VIETNAM-CAMBODIA RELATIONS: AN ANALYSIS FROM A VIETNAMESE PERSPECTIVE

Dr. NGUYEN Vu Tung

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VIETNAM-CAMBODIA RELATIONS: AN ANALYSIS FROM A VIETNAMESE PERSPECTIVE

I. Introduction

Due to similar anti-colonial and war-time experiences as well as close ties between ruling parties in Vietnam and Cambodia, the relationship between the two countries is considered as "special." (MOFA, 2016, p. 19; Pham Binh, 2015b, p. 169). Vietnamese President Truong Tan Sang called the relationship "traditional" and "fraternal." (MOFA, 2012) and King Sihamoni of Cambodia sees the two countries as "brotherly" ones (BNews, 2016).

Yet, relations between neighbors have always been complicated. Vietnam and Cambodia are no exception. Geographical proximity, which mostly results in territorial disputes and the flux of trans-border activities, and the power asymmetry, which results in the long-held "bigger- and smaller-power" mentalities from Vietnam and Cambodia respectively are the main factors contributing to the uneasiness in the relationship that has experienced feudal, colonial and contemporary times. Of equal importance, this bilateral relationship has always been influenced by external factors, especially the US and China, through their continued policies toward Southeast Asia as well as those toward Vietnam and Cambodia. Last but not least, domestic political factors in both countries have always influenced the policy choices for Hanoi and Phnom Penh.

This chapter's goal is to provide a description of the current state of the relationship between Vietnam and Cambodia from a Vietnamese perspective. In order to do so, the chapter will look into the new developments in the internal and external contexts against which the bilateral relationship evolves. It then updates the state of affairs in the bilateral relationship in various fields. In the explanation of recent ups and downs in Vietnam-Cambodia relations, this chapter will make a case that unfolding domestic politics in Cambodia, China increased influence in Cambodia, and evolving Sino-US relations are the main factors that give rise to greater challenges for Vietnam and Cambodia to manage their bilateral relations.

II. The New Domestic Contexts

The greater need to ensure sustained economic growth that could generate more resources for national defense, social advancement and regime survival was recognized in both Vietnam and Cambodia. The end of the Cold War with the resultant relaxation of global and regional tensions, and especially the solution to the Cambodia problem by the 1991 Paris Agreement, allowed the two countries to adopt new modes of economic and diplomatic alignment. Both have followed new foreign policies prioritizing their respective national interests. Both Vietnam and Cambodia have opened up their economies, adopting new growth models inspired by the "East Asian miracles" which requires a peaceful, stable, and cooperative external environment as a prerequisite (Sarith, 2011; Dareth, 2015; Pham Binh, 2015; Nguyen Vu, 2011). Vietnam in 1986 initiated a foreign policy of multi-lateralization and diversification of foreign relations that portray Vietnam as a friend to all and enemy to none (Pham Binh, 2014, p. 76). In a similar vein, according to Heng Sarith (2014), Cambodia, in 1991, adopted a new foreign policy of "permanent neutrality and non-alignment as well as co-existence with its neighbors and other countries."[1] Indeed, both Vietnam and Cambodia have been strictly following their foreign policy lines, which suggest that peace and cooperation between the two countries have been put on a more constructive and stable basis.

Yet, Cambodia's foreign policy and relations have been more influenced by domestic factors than is the case for Vietnam. Indeed, when internal power struggles in Cambodia intensify and coincide with Cambodia's national elections, especially the national election in 2013, Vietnam becomes the convenient target for the opposition parties to attack the ruling party so as to consolidate their political positions among voters. Unsolved territorial disputes, the existence of Vietnamese residents in Cambodia, and even business dealings are put under opposition parties' greater scrutiny, thus giving rise to nationalist and anti-Vietnamese sentiments and discourses among sectors in the Cambodian population, (Nguyen Sy, 2014, p. 17; Nguyen Thanh, 2015, pp. 14–15). Traditional feuds and mutual distrust are cultivated in such environments. To be more specific, the perception about Vietnam bullying its smaller neighbor as well as that about Cambodia being untrustworthy, even ungrateful, to Vietnam has intensified (Nguyen Vu, 2016). Against this context, the

management of a bilateral relationship has become more difficult although in general and in official terms, the relationship is considered by both as traditionally friendly and brotherly as mentioned earlier. As Tran Xuan Hiep (1994, p. 292 and p. 296), a Vietnamese expert on Vietnam-Cambodia relations noted, the bilateral relationship is characterized by instability and unpredictability because it is "directly and strongly influenced by the periodically fluid domestic political context in Cambodia." According to Ciorciari and Weiss (2016), CNRP leader Sam Rainsy had long stirred nationalist ire towards Vietnam, calling CPP leaders "*yuon* (Vietnamese) puppets" to criticize their close historical ties to Hanoi, threatening to expel Vietnamese immigrants, pressing for a harder stance on border demarcation talks, accusing Vietnam of trying "to swallow our land," and uprooting border demarcation posts in protest. Some researchers and diplomats in Hanoi, that the author interviewed, are of the view that Sam Rainsy and other CNRP leaders are "playing the Vietnam card" in order to gain popularity. They point out that it is bad that CNRP leaders hold negative views about Vietnam; but it is worse that their views enjoy "domestic consumption," in a sense that cynicism and hostility, which have deeper historical and socio-economic roots, are still harbored among some walks of life in Cambodia (Nguyen Vu, 2016a).

III. The New Regional Contexts

External conditions have also influenced Vietnam-Cambodian relations in a number of ways. Firstly, ASEAN membership has placed relations between Vietnam and Cambodia in more positive contexts. Vietnam and Cambodia joined ASEAN in 1995 and 1999 respectively. The ASEAN guiding principles that emphasize non-interference in domestic affairs and peaceful solutions to disputes, the ASEAN way that prioritizes consensus building and regular meetings, the sustained collective effort to build a political, economic, and social community, and a sense of "we-ness" among the ASEAN members, all seem to have consolidated peace and cooperation between and among Southeast Asian states (Nguyen Vu, 2007). In addition to that, ASEAN as an organization as well as all of its members enjoys increasing engagement from the part of extra-regional actors, including all the big powers of the world.

Such a regional condition has been conducive for Vietnam and Cambodia to improve and develop their multi-faceted relations in a number of ways. The ASEAN membership, the ASEAN principles and standard norms of behavior have informed both Vietnam and Cambodia that armed conflicts are unacceptable among its members and negotiated solutions to disputes are encouraged. Moreover, it helps to mitigate the long-held perception about Vietnam's hegemonic foreign policy goals towards Cambodia (and Laos, too) and in the same vein, about the competition between Vietnam and Thailand over spheres of influence in Cambodia. About Cambodia's ASEAN membership, the then Foreign Minister of Vietnam Nguyen Manh Cam said that it realized the long-held idea of an ASEAN comprising "all the Southeast Asian nations living in peace, stability and prosperity" (Tran Xuan, 2014, p. 248). As a direct result, Vietnam and Cambodia now appear to be more

sober in judging the nature of their bilateral relationship in both bilateral and multilateral contexts. In addition, ASEAN since 1991 has introduced a number of free trade schemes that include the ASEAN Free Trade Agreements (AFTA) and ASEAN free trade agreements with such dialogue partners as the US, China, and Japan. At the same time, other measures for trade facilitations among ASEAN members help to build ASEAN as a single market for foreign direct investment in Southeast Asia. Economic relations between Vietnam and Cambodia and between the two countries with third parties have been boosted (Intal et al., 2014). In other words, membership in ASEAN allows Vietnam and Cambodia to develop their relations on a new basis of greater equality, mutual benefit and expanded external relations with third parties. Indeed, Vietnam was the most active country in pushing for Cambodia's membership in ASEAN in 1998 and 1999 (Nguyen Vu, 2007; Pham Binh, 2015b; Tran Xuan, 2014, pp. 246–248).

Secondly, the growing Chinese presence and influence in Cambodia have become more visible. According to Millar (2016), China has become Cambodia's biggest aid donor. Since 2011, aid volume from China amounts to between USD 500 million and USD 700 million annually—a significant increase from less than USD 100 million in 2007. Non-refundable aid and loans at low-interest rates worth about USD 2 billion have been provided to Cambodia. At the same time, China is believed to lavishly assist the CPP and royal forces. More than 550 Chinese FDI projects in Cambodia since 1994 have reached USD 14 billion in 2016, making China the biggest investor in Cambodia. China is the largest exporter of Cambodia, accounting for 36.80% of its total imports in 2015 (Thailand ranks second with 14.64%). 70% of 330 factories in the textile sector in Cambodia are Chinese FDI funded. With the Chinese help, Cambodia has improved its infrastructure that includes 2,700 kilometers of high-way and 6 major bridges (MOFA, 2015a). In both public and private talks, Hun Sen mentions China as a "great friend," even the "most trustworthy friend," (Kynge et al., 2016). This description is quite in line with the foreign policy adopted by the 2016 CPP Congress that prioritizes "big donors, big countries, and neighboring ones." In other words, Phnom Penh's foreign policy choices have been influenced by Beijing. Var (2015; 2016a), a former Cambodian Armed Force Brigadier General and presently a PhD student in Political and International Studies at the University of New South Wales (UNSW) Australia, noted that "Cambodia's excessive dependency on China has placed Cambodia's foreign policy under China's influence." Cambodia's position in the South China Sea dispute is a case in point. In 2012, under the Cambodian chairmanship, for the first time in its history, ASEAN failed to produce the Joint Statement following the ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting which held a critical view on China's assertiveness in the South China Sea. Since then, Cambodia's position on the dispute is visibly influenced by Beijing, according to the views of diplomats in Vietnam that the author interviewed. The resultant concern that Cambodia has been tilting to China, due to massive Chinese economic aid and investment, has become greater in Vietnam. The concern does not originate from the feeling that Vietnam is losing its traditional influence over Cambodia nor that Cambodia is harboring an anti-Vietnamese policy and thus seeking China's support to counter Vietnam. Yet, when Cambodia is believed to get closer to China, and when Vietnam's relations with China turns sour, mostly as a result of the South China

Sea dispute, the public sentiment in Vietnam seems to be uneasy with the fact that China's presence and influence have been consolidated on Vietnam's southwest flank, (Nguyen Vu, 2016b). Moreover, Phnom Penh getting closer to China couples with its more critical view about US engagement in the region in terms of Washington's rebalancing strategy. The political report delivered at the CPP 39th National Congress, held in January 2016, read in part that some countries, including the big ones, try to "prevent the People's Republic of China from rising in the region and the rest of the world." Phnom Penh is not enthusiastic about the Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement (TPP) but quickly supports the Chinese, such initiatives as One Belt One Road (OBOR)—now as Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), Boao Forum, and Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) (China Daily, 2016).

At the same time, however, Vietnam and the US have been consolidating their relations in the framework of a "comprehensive partnership" established in 2013, a process that is very much in line with the US rebalancing strategy. Lastly, when China enjoys greater influence over Cambodia, the prospect of Phnom Penh turning into a Chinese Trojan horse in ASEAN makes Hanoi more concerned, especially as Hanoi starts to invest more diplomatic recourses to the organization and pledge to become its "proactive member," and when Washington shores up ASEAN's central role in the Asia-Pacific. This concern is not Vietnam's own but also shared among other ASEAN members. In short, Cambodia's pro-China stance has highlighted the differences between Hanoi and Phnom Penh in terms of foreign policy priorities and choices.

Thirdly, and related to the earlier point, strategic competition between the US and China has negatively influenced the relations between Vietnam and Cambodia. As Var (2015) observed that "Chinese and U.S. strategic interests in Cambodia are conflicting," Beijing and Washington are supportive of competing political parties in Cambodia. Washington has provided support to the CNRP and Sam Rainsy Party as well as local NGOs to push for more democracy, accountability, and political freedom in Cambodia, while official, including economic and military, ties between Washington and Phnom Penh have improved. According to the U.S. Department of State (2016) in 2014, U.S. foreign assistance for programs in health, education, governance, economic growth, and demining of unexploded ordnance totaled over USD 77.6 million,—a small sum as compared to Chinese aid to Cambodia as mentioned earlier. According to Var (2015), "the key strategic interests of the two nations in Cambodia are that the United States seeks to strengthen democracy and the rule of law, whereas China places greater emphasis on natural resources, business, and political advantage. Moreover, U.S. aid is subject to strict conditions, while Chinese aid has 'no strings attached'." In other words, growing Chinese and American presence and influence in Cambodia has been informed by the Sino-US strategic competition. As Var (2016b) observed, both ruling and opposition parties have used China and the United States for their political objectives. The pro-American forces are both anti-government and anti-Vietnamese, while the ruling party is seen as pro-Chinese. The dichotomy, which is somehow over-generalized, has further complicated the domestic politics of Cambodia, and as a result, also complicated its policy choices with regards to Vietnam.

In short, the end of the Cold War has provided a new and more positive context for Vietnam and Cambodia to conduct their bilateral relations. The relaxation of regional tensions and especially the ASEAN membership help the two countries put their relationship on a basis of more equal footings and mutual benefits, thus mitigating the negative aspects of geographical proximity and power asymmetry between them. Yet, a combination of big power competition between the US and China on the one hand and political instability in Cambodia, on the other hand, have complicated the policy choices in Phnom Penh with regards to Vietnam.

IV. The Bilateral Relationship's State Of Affairs

In Vietnam's foreign policy, Cambodia is categorized as one of the neighboring countries with which good relations must be prioritized and cultivated (Pham Binh, 2015c). For its part, as noted earlier, Cambodia attaches great importance to neighboring countries, big powers, and donors (Dareth, 2015). Since 1999, relations between the two countries have been guided by the principles of "good neighborliness, traditional friendship, comprehensive cooperation, and long-term stability," and the two sides pledge to respect independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, non-interference in domestic affairs, while allowing no hostile forces to use their territory to pose security threats to the other party, and trying to solve existing and ensuing problems through means of peaceful negotiations (BNews, 2016). And against the above-mentioned internal and external contexts, Vietnam -Cambodia bilateral relations have been developing in many fields. Yet, they also face a certain level of uncertainty and even unpredictability. Guided by national interests, the bilateral relationship between Vietnam and Cambodia, have strongly developed over the last decades, of course with ups and downs.

In political and diplomatic fields, the two countries conduct frequent top-level exchanges and maintain bilateral cooperative mechanisms. In 2015, for example, King Norodom Sihamoni and Cambodia's Senate Chairman Say Chhum visited Vietnam in October and December respectively. Cambodian Parliament Chairman Heng Somrin visited Vietnam in March 2015 and January 2016. Vietnam's President Tran Dai Quang visited Cambodia in May 2016, while other top leaders of Vietnam, including General Secretary of the Communist Party Nguyen Phu Trong, Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc, and National Assembly Chairwoman Nguyen Kim Ngan plan to visit Cambodia in 2016. The meeting of the 14th Joint Committee for bilateral cooperation to boost economic, cultural, and scientific cooperation was convened in October 2015. The 5th consultative meeting between Cambodia and Vietnam MOFAs was held in May 2016 at the Deputy Minister level. Cooperation has been active among provinces across the border. These high-level exchanges aim at maintaining channels of communication, intensifying interactions for greater mutual understanding, building trust, and also for the purpose of managing differences. In addition, these exchanges serve as tools for policy consultation and coordination through which Hanoi and Phnom Penh share information and form common positions on a variety

of issues (Tran Xuan, 2014, p. 331). In fact, the two sides have forged common views on a number of issues of common concerns and interests. For example, on the construction of dams on the Mekong River, the two countries are able to build a common position raising concerns to Laos on the grounds of protecting the environment and ecological systems and diversities in the river. Yet, there are areas where their views largely diverge, most notably on the South China Sea issue.

The South China Sea dispute complicates the bilateral relationship in a number of ways. It reinforces the belief held by some quarters in Hanoi that Phnom Penh has been closer to Beijing in the Sino-US competition for influence in Southeast Asia. Phnom Penh has been silent about China's land reclamation and militarization activities in the South China Sea as well as the PCA rulings in the legal case between the Philippines and China, but vocal against US Freedom of Navigation Operations (FONOPs) in the area. As such, Cambodia's position with regards to the South China Sea disputes is closer to that of China, which obviously affects Hanoi as a claimant in the dispute. Further, in support of such a position, Cambodia has been seen as not only preventing ASEAN from forging a collective position that insists the emphasis on the legal and diplomatic processes in managing the disputes but also weakening ASEAN cohesion. ASEAN's failure in 2012 to issue a joint statement following its 45th AMM meeting was a case in point through which Cambodia was "viewed with suspicion by its neighbors," according to Var (2016b). Bower was more specific that "China has revealed its hand as an outlier on the question of ASEAN unity. It seemingly used its growing economic power to press Cambodia into the awkward position of standing up to its ASEAN neighbors on one of the most important security concern for the grouping and its members. China's overt role seems to suggest Beijing's hand in promoting ASEAN disunity. Thus, the most important message coming from Phnom Penh is that China has decided that a weak and splintered ASEAN is in its best interest," (Millar, 2016). Last but not least, Hanoi seems to be uncomfortable with the facts that Hun Sen, on the one hand, has an absolute bearing in the formation of Cambodia's stance on the South China Sea dispute, imposing his pro-Chinese position on the matter; yet on the other hand, he manages to maintain his close personal relations with Vietnamese leaders who still consider him as the most viable leader of Cambodia (Nguyen Vu, 2016b). Even a sense of hostility has also been detected in Vietnam about Hun Sen, especially among social media and Facebook users in Vietnam, who have even accused him of "betraying" Vietnam. [In response to the accusation, Hun Sen posted a comment on his Facebook page, telling both Cambodian and Vietnamese audiences that "Vietnam is neither my dad nor my King," and "I am loyal to my Cambodian people, the King, and my wife. Vietnam is not my boss. I am the leader of an independent and sovereign Cambodia, and I am equal to Vietnamese leaders in terms of rank," (BBC, 2016). Mutual trust between the two sides seems to suffer while suspicion grows from developments related to the South China Sea.

In the economic field, the bilateral relations have been fast developing. Cambodia's growing economy, ASEAN free trade agreement and trade facilitation schemes, infrastructure improvements especially in the border areas, and especially proactiveness from the part of Vietnamese enterprises that are encouraged by both Hanoi and Phnom Penh are the main

factors behind the boost in the bilateral economic relations.

In 2001, according to Pham Quang Vinh (2012), trade volume between the two countries increased from USD 372 million in 2001 to USD 2.8 billion in 2011 and reached USD 3.37 billion in 2015. Vietnam enjoys a trade surplus as its exports to Cambodia in 2015 reached USD 2.4 billion while its imports from Cambodia is worth USD 953 million (a 53% increase as compared with 2014). Vietnam is Cambodia's 3rd biggest trading partner after Thailand and China (MOFA, 2015a). Vietnam's major export items to Cambodia include petroleum, steel, garments, farming machinery, fertilizer, and chemicals. Vietnam imports rubber, timber and cigarette materials from Cambodia.

By the end of 2015, direct investment from Vietnam to Cambodia reached USD 3.361 billion with 172 projects; Vietnam is the 5th largest FDI provider among 50 foreign investors in Cambodia (MOFA, 2015b). By the end of May 2016, there have been 183 FDI projects from Vietnam in Cambodia with the total capital increasing by 8 times compared to that in 2009. The two countries hope to reach the target of USD 6 billion of FDI from Vietnam by the end of 2020, (Truong Son, 2016). About 10% and 8% of Vietnamese FDI capital are invested in the financial/banking and telecommunication sectors in Cambodia respectively. Other areas include civil aviation, mineral exploitation, manufacturing, logistics, construction, health care, and tourism. Tourism is also expanding between the two countries. In 2015 alone, about 1 million Vietnamese tourists visited Cambodia—a 10% increase as compared with 2014, while about 210.000 Cambodian tourists went to Vietnam (MOFA, 2015a).

However, economic relations between Vietnam and Cambodia are recently suffering from certain setbacks. By the end of August 2016, bilateral trade volume shrank 14% as compared with the same period of 2015 (Truong Son, 2016). The two sides failed to achieve the goal of reaching USD 5 billion targets for bilateral trade by 2016. Vietnamese companies suffer from economic slowdown at home as well as the lack long-term strategy in their business in Cambodia, especially in coping with fiercer competition from China and Thailand (Nguyen Huy, 2015). But business doings by Vietnamese companies in parts of Cambodia has been affected by Cambodia's domestic politics. Opposition parties tend to exploit the fact that 70% of Vietnam's FDI is in the agricultural sectors and that the FDI sites are mainly located in the neighboring provinces of Vietnam to fan anti-Vietnamese sentiment for their political purposes. The charge that Vietnam tries to "swallow our land" has been frequently used by CNRP (Mech, 2015; Mydan, 2011). Some Vietnamese companies also believe that they have not been prioritized as compared with Chinese and American companies. Vietnam Petroleum Company is a case in point. Since 2004, it has tried to bid for oil and gas exploitation in Cambodia and was not successful, while two Chinese companies (Zhenzhou and Haiyang) and American company Chevron have been granted oil and gas concessions on Cambodia EEZ, according to Tran Xuan Hiep (2014, p. 45).

In terms of border demarcation, large amounts of work have been finished. In December 1985, Hanoi and Phnom Penh signed a National Border Demarcation Agreement and established a Joint Commission on Border Demarcation and Marker Plantation. This agreement was amended in 2005. These documents represented an effective guide for the settlement of bilateral border issues. According to the Vietnam 2015 Diplomatic Blue

Book, by the end of 2015, the two sides had completed 83% of the work related to the land border demarcation and marker plantation. On December 26, 2015, a ceremony was held to mark the inauguration of Marker 275 (An Giang-Takeo) with the presence of the two Prime Ministers, demonstrating "strong determination of the leaders and people of both countries in building a Vietnam - Cambodia borderline of peace, friendship, cooperation and development," (MOFA, 2015, p. 29).

However, on the issues related to maritime demarcation, especially on historical water on the Gulf of Thailand, progress has been limited (Nguyen Minh, 2009). Between 2006 and 2013, 280 border markers were planted; between 2014 and 2015, 32 border markers were planted. Yet, none was planted in 2016 due to differences in identification of sites and land-swap solutions (MOFA, 2016). Domestic politics in Cambodia is indeed a factor in the slowdown of the negotiations between Hanoi and Phnom Penh to settle the remaining differences. Opposition parties accuse the CPP of compromising Cambodian territory to Vietnam and use the border issues with Vietnam as a rallying point, especially during elections in 2013 and 2017. In such an environment, Phnom Penh sees "no rush" in speeding the negotiations and even plays the card of domestic politics to seek negotiating advantages (Nguyen Vu, 2016b). The positive sign, however, is that both Hanoi and Phnom Penh are able to effectively manage the situation and stick to the ASEAN principle of seeking peaceful resolutions to remaining territorial disputes.

The legal, economic and social status of Vietnamese residents in Cambodia remains a thorny issue between the two countries. Some statistics indicate that about 5 percent of Cambodia's 15 million people are ethnic Vietnamese who do not hold citizenship and are barred from access to basic rights to own land, vote, and go to school and subjected to domestic violence and discrimination in Cambodia (IRIN, 2013). Others suggest that about 40% of them have been granted voting rights, and the bilateral negotiations now focus on the status of between 170.000 and 300.000 people, according to Nguyen Sy Tuan (2014) and Tran Xuan Hiep (2014). Officially, Cambodia acknowledges only 160,054 cases of ethnic Vietnamese in need of residence permits. According to statistics given by Cambodia's Ministry of Home Affairs in August 2016, these people, who came to live in Cambodia since the mid-1970s, include 69,414 ethnic Vietnamese, who are qualified to apply for residence permits while 90,640 have incomplete or no documentation to be qualified for a residence permit application (MOFA, 2016). In March 2003, the Cambodian government allowed them to organize the Vietnamese Cambodians Association that now has 19 branches among 24 provinces in the country and, to some extent, did improve their legal and living conditions (Tran Xuan, 2014).

Yet, the discrimination against Vietnamese in Cambodia is still prevalent, so much so that Ou Virak, President of the Cambodian Center for Human Rights urges: "We need to address this racism" (IRIN, 2013). Apart from the deeply rooted anti-Vietnamese sentiment in Cambodia, the country's dividing domestic political context is the contributing factor to the plight of ethnic Vietnamese, which according to the interviewed Vietnam MOFA officials, is "worst among ethnic Vietnamese living overseas." The debate about their citizenship and their right to vote becomes hot during the election times. Similar to the

border issues, progress to solve the problems has been snagged, due to increasing scrutiny by opposition parties and the Cambodian government's reluctance to solve the problem under domestic pressures. It is expected to become more complicated as the 2018 national election in Cambodia draws near.

In the meantime, the process of naturalization and granting residence permits is "very slow," according to Vietnam MOFA officials that the author interviewed. Apart from political sensitivity related to this issue, red tapes, lack of financial and human resources, and even corruption are cited as reasons for sluggishness in the process. In addition, Cambodia's Ministry of Home Affairs also notes the recent flow of undocumented Vietnamese labor migrants seeking job and employment opportunities in Cambodia. For this group, Cambodia has introduced a deportation policy: by August 2016, more than 9,000 people have been forced to return to Vietnam (MOFA, 2016).

In military and security areas, ties between Hanoi and Phnom Penh have been enhanced. The two sides commit to the policy of non-interfering in each other's internal affairs, not allowing any hostile forces to use the territory of one country to threaten the security of the other (BNews, 2016). Hanoi and Phnom Penh have been coordinating joint patrol missions along land borders and maritime zones for managing the border lines and coping with criminal and smuggling activities. More importantly, the two sides have been able to maintain exchanges for Cambodia's ranks and files while Vietnam provides equipment, military maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) as well as medical facilities and training for Cambodia's military and public security forces, worth USD 21 million (Prashant, 2015a). There is hope in Hanoi that the assistance would help to sustain the strong ties and cooperative mechanisms as well as positive feelings among Cambodia's armed and policy forces at all levels towards Vietnam.

Yet, military cooperation with Vietna m stands pale as compared to that with China - Cambodia's biggest military aid provider. In 2012, after China and Cambodia established the framework of comprehensive strategic partnership, Beijing provided Phnom Penh with a USD 195 million soft loan to purchase 12 China-made Harbin Z-9 military helicopters, (Prashant, 2015b). In February 2014, China announced a package of developmental aid worth of USD 140 million that includes the provision of 26 trucks, 30,000 uniforms and other unidentified military equipment (Information Office of the State Council, 2014). In June 2015, Beijing and Phnom Penh signed a comprehensive defense cooperation according to which China provides Cambodia with 120 million Yuan (equivalent to USD 19 million) for military training and medical services. About 30% of Cambodian armed forces officers are trained in China in various programs. All Cambodia's high-powered weapon systems including missiles, telecommunications and radio systems, military education and training schools have been associated with China's aid. In addition, China helps Cambodia in the areas of intelligence sharing and military facility development (Lim, 2015). This would explain the growing perception that Cambodia is an ally of Beijing's (Nguyen Vu, 2016b).

V. Conclusion

The case of Vietnam-Cambodia relations seems to suggest a more optimistic case about international relations in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War. The relaxation of tensions in big powers' relations, together with the trend towards greater economic interdependence in the world and especially in Asia Pacific, the recognition of ASEAN as an important regional organization to boost peace, stability, cooperation and prosperity in Southeast Asia, and the subsequent Vietnam's and Cambodia's association with it have informed the foreign policy choices that Hanoi and Phnom Penh made with regards to engaging themselves with the rest of the world. In that process, they have been improving their bilateral relations in all fields while overcoming the differences and disputes that remain in the relationship. Over the last decade, however, fast-changing developments in the global strategic landscape, particularly in the Asia-Pacific and Southeast Asia, largely influenced by the evolving Sino-US relations and domestic politics of Cambodia, have produced new complicated elements in this bilateral relationship, thus posing greater challenges for the two countries in the management of their relations. Evolving scenarios related to the South China Sea, policy adjustments in Washington and Beijing following the presidential election in the US late this year and the 19th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party in 2017, and the 2018 national elections in Cambodia all would serve as the main signposts along the winding road in which relations between Vietnam and Cambodia would develop.

Endnote

1 Heng introduced the six foreign policy principles described in Article 53 of its Constitution that Cambodia is following. First, it follows a strict policy of permanent neutrality and non-alignment. Second, Cambodia maintains a policy of peaceful co-existence with its neighbors and with all other countries. Third, it will not invade any country, nor interfere in any other country's internal affairs, and shall solve problems peacefully. Fourth, Cambodia is prohibited from having any military alliance or military pact with any other country that is incompatible with its policy of neutrality. Fifth, it shall not permit any foreign military base on its territory and shall not maintain its own military bases abroad, except within the framework of United Nations Peacekeeping missions. Sixth, it reserves the right to receive foreign military assistance and training of its armed forces for self-defense purposes.

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CAMBODIA'S RELATIONS WITH LAOS: IN THE SHADOW OF CHINA

Ambassador Julio A. JELDRES, Ph.D

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CAMBODIA'S RELATIONS WITH LAOS: IN THE SHADOW OF CHINA

I. Introduction

Cambodia's relations with Laos have always been ambiguous. Not much has been written about the topic, yet King Sihanouk very early in his career became interested in the affairs of the Lao Kingdom.

When it comes to Laos, Khmer historiography likes to recall that it was a King of Angkor who provided King Fa-Ngum not only with a royal wife but also with asylum and an army of 10,000 Khmer soldiers to reclaim his throne at Luang-Prabang, reigning over a kingdom that extended on both banks of the Mekong from the border of China to Cambodia (*Bulletin Mensuel de Documentation,* July 2008, pp. M6 and M7).

Khmer history also likes to detail how it vanquished a Lan Xang era Lao king who tried to conquer northern Cambodia but the Lao have made a strong effort to ensure that the above events do not form part of the mainstream historiography of their country.

Because of their geographical positions, both kingdoms were at the receiving end of enormous pressures placed on them by their Communist and anti-Communist neighbors which tried to get them to align with one or the other blocs existing during the Cold War.

In such atmosphere, it was natural that relations between the two neighbors wavered between good and tense because of external occurrences often alien to their own national interests.

II. Cambodia-Lao Relations prior to the Protectorate

An Aide-memoire from Laos addressed Cambodia in October 1964, and referred to the relationship between the two kingdoms in the following terms:

> The fraternal friendship that links the Kingdom of Cambodia to the Kingdom of Laos is legendary. Our glorious monarch Fa-Ngum, architect of the territorial and spiritual unity of Lane Xang (the old name for Laos) could only have accomplished his brilliant deeds as a National Hero with the aid of the filial affection and of the support in supplies and troops on the part of the Cambodian throne. Since then the centuries have never tarnished this grand friendship, confirmed above all others by the ties of the same royal blood which perpetuates itself in the hearts of our respective courts up to the present.

The Aide-Memoire was given by the Lao Foreign Minister, Pheng Phongsavan, to his Cambodian counterpart, Huot Sambath, during a Non-Aligned meeting in Cairo, but it was later on repudiated by the Lao side arguing that its Foreign Minister had conveyed the Aide-Memoire to the Cambodia side without the King's or Prime Minister's approval.

Laos did not present any danger to Cambodia and the relations between the two countries were less conflictive than in the case of Thailand and South Vietnam. Both countries considered that France had not favored them within the Indochinese framework and, last but not least, there were dynastic links between the two Royal Houses of the two countries, as the daughter of the King of Angkor had been married to King Fa-Ngum, and in the fifties King Sihanouk had also taken a Laotian wife (Mam Manivan Phanivong, 1934-1975).

Laos, like Cambodia, was granted complete independence by France in 1953 and the following year the Geneva Conference was held, during which the Royal Lao government and the Pathet Lao (Martin Stuart-Fox, 2008, p. 249) were given representative status at the conference, in effect dividing Laos into two administrative zones: The then Northern part administered by the Royal Lao government and the southern part administered by the Pathet Lao.

III. Cambodia-Lao Relations during the Sangkum Reastr Niyum Period (1955–1970)

In the period, which followed the 1954 Geneva Conference, relations between Cambodia and Laos were close and friendly. At the Bandung Conference, in April 1955, the Lao delegation sided with Prince Sihanouk when the latter expressed Cambodia's willingness to steer an "independent and neutral course provided that more powerful nations (and Sihanouk probably had Communist North Vietnam and China in mind) were willing to give proofs and guarantees to smaller nations."

It should be pointed out that King Sihanouk's first interactions with the neighboring kingdom were more of a personal nature. For instance, during his first visit to Laos, in 1944, Sihanouk took back with him to Cambodia a grandson of King Sisavang Vong, Prince Souphanthavongransi (Tiao Noy), who became his adopted son, and stayed in Phnom Penh at the Royal Palace for the next five years.

Sihanouk returned to Laos in 1949, this time to marry a Lao beauty whom he had become fond of during his previous visit. The marriage produced two daughters but did not last long.

The two countries established diplomatic relations in June 1956 at Legation level. A Cambodian Ambassador, Oum Chheang Nguon, was appointed in December 1957 but did not take up his post until December 4, 1958, when fully-fledged Embassies began operating in each capital.

The long-serving Lao Prime Minister, Prince Souvanna Phouma, had many affinities with Sihanouk. They both loved gourmet food, music and were fond of the great wines of France. A Time magazine issue of 30 May 1970 referred to both Princes as "The Royal Jugglers of Southeast Asia," because both believed in neutrality, both wanted their respective countries to become the "Switzerland of Asia" and both were prepared to have Communists serving in their respective governments in order to keep national unity intact.

Sihanouk felt that the United States unfairly distributed its assistance to the countries in the region in response to a so-called threat from Communist China, adding that Laos, which was two times smaller and two times less populated than Cambodia, received almost three times more aid than Cambodia, while the ratio of aid to South Vietnam was nine times greater.

It is not unfair to suggest that Prince Sihanouk was also guided by the expectation that the neutrality policy he had crafted for Cambodia's unique situation and to protect its territorial integrity could be held out as a model for Laos and even for other Southeast Asian countries. This neutrality which Prince Sihanouk held out as a model for others, was the same policy which he consistently advocated for Cambodia but which he was accused of not always consistently applying.

The opportunity for Cambodia to get involved in such an international crisis came about when Captain Kong Le and his Paratrooper Battalion, supported by armoured units, launched a coup d'état on 9 August 1960 and seized the capital, Vientiane, while the pro-West Premier, Tiao Somsanith and most members of the royal government were in the royal capital of Luang Prabang, discussing plans for the funeral of King Sisavang Vong who had died several months before.

Sihanouk was increasingly worried by events in Laos. During the course of a three-month long tour, which included visits to the United Nations, Washington, Peking, Paris, and Prague, the Prince began calling for international action in the neighboring kingdom that would preserve its neutral status. On September 29, Sihanouk put forward a proposal at the United Nations General Assembly suggesting the establishment of a neutral zone in Southeast Asia consisting of Cambodia and Laos, whose inviolability would be guaranteed by all interested powers in both blocs (AKP, No. 3389, 28 June 1960).

Bernard Fall felt that Sihanouk was trying to obtain an agreement by which the two blocs would agree to remove Cambodia and Laos from the list of their zones of rivalry and to consider the two states as buffer states intended to avoid direct contact which was a constant source of conflict (Fall, 1969, p. 210).

Basically, Sihanouk did not envisage a Communist Laos but opposed a Laos that was under the tutelage of the United States in general and of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in particular and this is why he had made his proposal. Furthermore, this initiative of the Cambodian leader, even with its anti-American tone, was not intended, to extend support to the Communists but rather to reinforce the centre-neutralist position of Prince Souvanna Phouma, whom Sihanouk saw as the representative of a patriotic neutralism who strived for national reconciliation and the preservation of the traditional Laos.

However, Sihanouk's proposal received no immediate support during that session of the UN General Assembly as there were other more pressing political crises such as Congo and Algeria.

Thailand, an important player in Laotian affairs, opposed any mention of "Laotian neutrality" because while it did not believe that Souvanna Phouma was pro-Communist, the Thais felt that the Lao leader "had no basis of strength in the country which would enable him to withstand the Communists!" (Australian Embassy-Bangkok, Savingram 14, 9 June 1961).

IV. The Geneva Conference on Laos

The International Conference on the Settlement of the Laotian Question was held in Geneva from 16 May 1961 to 23 July 1962, eight months after Prince Sihanouk had first proposed such gathering.

The Conference was attended by Burma, Cambodia, Canada, the People's Republic of China, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, France, India, Poland, the Republic of Vietnam, Thailand, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The 14 signatories pledged to respect Laotian neutrality, to refrain from interference—direct or indirect—in the internal affairs of Laos, and to refrain from drawing Laos into a military alliance or to establish military bases in Laotian territory (Czyzak & Salans, 1966, pp. 27-47).

Relations between the two Royal Jugglers began to deteriorate when Souvanna began to side with the Americans and supported their war effort in Vietnam, which Sihanouk strongly opposed. In addition, right-wing personalities in Laos with close links to the United States began suggesting that the province of Stung Treng was part of Laos and that the large Lao- speaking community was maltreated by the Cambodian authorities.

Sihanouk took offense at this and began a series of public denunciations of Laos and of Souvanna Phouma personally, which the Lao leader considered offensive, and he began referring to Sihanouk as "ce prince mal élevé" or this badly raised Prince (ADST Oral Interview, Pratt, p. 89).

In May 1966, during an audience given to the Cambodian Charge d'Affaires in Vientiane, Souvanna denied reports by the French News Agency to the effect that the Royal Lao government had claims over parts of the Cambodian province of Stung Treng, telling the Cambodian diplomat that Laos had never claimed that province because it was well known that by decree of Governor General Beau, Stung Treng had been reintegrated with Cambodia. Therefore, this question of the borders had been definitely settled, he claimed, adding that "We had many other things to do than to go back in time!" (Le Sangkum, June 1966, p. 27).

In March 1969, the Laotian right-wing daily Xat Lao published a commentary on the intention of the Lao government to make an official declaration recognizing the borders between Laos and Cambodia. However, the article proceeded to give its own interpretation of the origins of the province of Stung Treng, which again caused a furore in Phnom Penh and prompted the Royal Government to issue yet another impetuous statement critical of "certain Laotian circles for having territorial ambitions" (Kambuja, April 1969, No. 49, p. 30).

Cambodia-Laos relations were probably chilliest in 1964 and then warmed up in 1967, with another deterioration happening in 1969, over questions of substance such as the neutrality question, the Cambodia-Laos boundary and the Lao community in Stung Treng, as well as differences in style and personality between Prince Norodom Sihanouk and Prince Souvanna Phouma.

V. Relations after the March 1970 Coup in Cambodia

The question of the recognition of Cambodian borders became an irritant in the State and personal relations between Prince Sihanouk and Prince Souvanna Phouma, particularly as it touched the latter's "amour propre." Sihanouk had insulted him publicly and was behind the continuous articles in the Cambodian press criticizing the Laotian prince for his refusal to recognize the borders between the two countries following his last visit to Cambodia in early 1964 (Personal correspondence, May 2000).

For Souvanna the question was a simple one, as he had explained to foreign diplomats in Vientiane: There could be no progress towards improvement of relations between the two countries until Sihanouk apologized (Australian Embassy-Vientiane, Telegram 75, 14 February 1967). However, an apology was not in the nature of the Cambodian leader, and the attacks against Souvanna continued in the official press of Cambodia. For instance, the Sihanouk-managed magazines Le Sangkum and Kambuja published articles and cartoons distressing to Souvanna (Le Sangkum No. 10, May 1966, p. 31, and Kambuja No. 49, April 1969, p. 31).

Souvanna and other Lao leaders received the news that Sihanouk had been deposed in March 1970 with "relief", but without making any statement on the issue. Privately, Souvanna told the British Ambassador that he had a house that he would make available to Sihanouk "should he wish to come and live in Laos", but again, no statement was issued

about this proposal *(British Embassy-Vientiane, Letter, 25 March 1970)*.

The feeling in Vientiane was that Sihanouk's departure should make for better diplomatic relations between the two countries but, at the same time, there were fears that events in Cambodia might encourage the right wing in Laos to take a similar action against Souvanna, which did not eventuate even though the Cambodian coup, coming as it did on the heels of North Vietnamese military pressure in Laos, added an additional element of uncertainty to the Laotian situation.

However, the glee which existed immediately after the coup in Cambodia quickly disappeared when the Laotians learned that the new leadership in Phnom Penh was planning to abolish the monarchy and install a republic instead. Such a move presented the Laotians with difficulties in accepting the constitutional legality of the new institution and thus the question of the recognition of the Lon Nol regime, which had been avoided until then, would arise.

The British Embassy reported that Souvanna Phouma was so worried by developing events in Phnom Penh that at a diplomatic dinner he had asked rhetorically: "Why could not Sihanouk have come straight back from Paris instead of fooling around in Moscow and Peking?" (British Embassy-Vientiane, Letter, 1 April 1970). Additionally, the Laotians thought that it was unlikely that Sihanouk would wish to regain power in Cambodia through Vietnamese support while expecting the former monarch to return to his capital in two or three years (Record of Conversation, Australian Minister of External Affairs and Prince Sisouk Na Champassak of Laos, ADEA-Canberra, 2 September 1970).

However, at the insistence of the United States, and to show solidarity with Cambodia, the Laotians provided small arms—principally M16 rifles and mortars, enough to equip one battalion—as well as undertaking the training of four battalions, of approximately 600 men each, from the Cambodian Army in Laos.

Interestingly, while on a visit to Australia, Prince Sisouk Na Champassak told his Australian hosts that the training was being done at a secret location at a camp with a capacity of 4,000 men, but that the existence of the facility and the training of the Cambodians were a very closely guarded secret unknown to most of the Laotian Government and military.

Years later, it was disclosed that the training facility was located at Khong Island, in the Mekong River, opposite the Stung Treng province of Cambodia. This was one hour's drive from Pakse, a province run by the Champassak family, who's most prominent member Prince Boun Oum Na Champassak worked for the CIA and had been involved in CIA activities affecting Cambodia (Le Monde, 2 December 1974).

Furthermore, Khong had been a CIA-run centre for many years and Cambodian soldiers had also been trained there prior to the March 1970 coup; indeed, when the Khmers Rouges began taking over the land of Stung Treng province, the military governor of the province moved his general staff to Khong Island, from where military actions were undertaken against the Khmers Rouges (Le Monde, 2 December 1974). The island ceased to be a CIA-run training facility after the formation of the Lao Coalition government in early 1974.

During a farewell visit to Pakse by the British Ambassador in April 1970, Prince Boun Eua Na Champassak, younger half-brother of Boun Oum, told the British diplomat that he

had known that a coup was to take place in Cambodia three months before the actual event happened and that he had been "worried for his friend Prince Sirik Matak to whom he had advised caution" (British Embassy-Vientiane, Letter, 15 April 1970).

In November 1970, worried by the lack of news about Queen Sisowath Kossamak of Cambodia, Prince Souvanna Phouma, now firmly established as Prime Minister with strong American support, told the US, Soviet and French Ambassadors, during a social gathering, that he was planning to write to the Queen to offer her asylum in Laos (US Embassy-Vientiane to Secretary of State-Washington, Telegram 7439, 12 November 1970). However, the American Ambassador, on instructions from Washington, counselled Souvanna against such a course of action, telling the Laotian Premier that in the United States' judgement the government of the Khmer Republic was exceptionally sensitive to such matters and that if he was to address himself to the Queen such action on his part might be misunderstood by the Khmer government (US Embassy-Vientiane to Secretary of State-Washington, Telegram 7468, 15 November 1970).

While Souvanna Phouma controlled foreign affairs in Laos, because of his personal dispute with Sihanouk, he tended to side with the Khmer Republic. This influenced events when a new Laotian Ambassador was dispatched to Phnom Penh while a Cambodian Ambassador took residence in Vientiane after more than fifteen years of absence. At the United Nations, when a vote came up on the credentials of Lon Nol's delegation or Sihanouk's delegation, Laos supported invariably Lon Nol.

In March 1974, Prince Souvanna Phouma suggested to Lon Nol to send Prince Sisowath Monireth to China, ostensibly to visit his sister, Queen Kossamak, but in reality, to discuss with Prince Sihanouk how to end the conflict in Cambodia. Souvanna felt that Monireth could serve "as an honest and reliable link between the two sides" (US Embassy-Vientiane to Secretary of State-Washington, Telegram 2275, 20 March 1974). But Lon Nol did not take up the suggestion of the Lao Prince.

VI. Cambodia-Lao Relations during Democratic Kampuchea (1975–1979)

As the Khmers Rouges advanced towards the Cambodian capital, Souvanna Phouma felt he should call a meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Coalition Government to discuss recognition of the Royal Government of National Union of Kampuchea (GRUNK). Souvanna had raised the issue with King Savang Vatthana on 10 April 1975 but the King bluntly refused and told Souvanna that Laos should adhere strictly to its policy of neutrality based on the 1954 and 1962 Agreements and to not recognize a new government in Cambodia, or Vietnam until such a government had taken physical control of its capital (CIA, Information Cable, 18 April 1975, pp. 4-5).

Until then, relations between Cambodia and the Pathet Lao, the Lao Communist political movement formed in the mid-20 century, were of anything of an opportunistic nature by

which Prince Sihanouk could put pressure on the Royal Lao government to recognize the border between the two countries.

The Pathet Lao or Lao Patriotic Front, which became in 1972 the Lao People's Revolutionary Party and took over the country in December 1975, was led by Souvanna Phouma's half-brother Prince Souphanouvong, also known as the "Red Prince". Sihanouk disliked Souphanouvong because in 1954 he had endorsed the North Vietnamese delegation to the Geneva Conference's call for Khmer Communist representatives to participate in the Conference.

Between 1954 and 1970, the Sangkum's Cambodia relations with the Pathet Lao were less than cordial with continuous misunderstandings over border issues. However, after the March 1970 in Cambodia, the relations improved as the exiled Prince Sihanouk became the titular leader of Cambodia's resistance movement against "American imperialism".

Prince Sihanouk visited the Lao liberated zone in 1974 and met most of the Pathet Lao's senior leadership, yet after the formation of the Lao coalition government in 1973, there was no movement for the recognition of the Sihanouk government in exile, the Royal Government of National Union of Cambodia.

It was left to Prince Sisouk Na Champassak, the Minister of Defence of the Laotian government, to call on the Provisional Government of National Union to extend recognition to GRUNK on 18 April 1975 (US Embassy-Vientiane to Secretary of State-Washington, Telegram 2660, 19 April 1975).

During Democratic Kampuchea, Cambodia's relations with Laos were entertained at two levels: State to State and Party to Party, with the latter, often of a secret nature, taking precedence over State to State relations.

A Lao Party delegation which visited Cambodia, for instance, had the visit scheduled by the Democratic Kampuchean side in several sequences: Firstly, an open one in which officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs participated, including official luncheons and dinners, visits to Angkor and other historical sites and artistic representations. Secondly, a semi-open one in which non-Party officials could still participate to discuss economic or trade exchanges and; thirdly, a final one of a complete secret nature which excluded all non-Party officials in which political, diplomatic and military exchanges and decisions were addressed and restricted to senior cadres and top leadership of the Party.

This system was also used for Democratic Kampuchea's relations with China, Vietnam and North Korean, the other "fraternal" Asian socialist countries. For these relationships, the Party used their own cadres and never called upon the services of the more seasoned diplomats working in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Newly appointed Deputy Prime Minister in charge of Foreign Affairs of Cambodia, Ieng Sary, attended the Lao National Day celebrations in October 1975 and began a discussion on the re-opening of embassies in both capitals (Le Monde, Paris, 21-22 December 1975).

Following the abdication of King Savang Vatthana on 2 December 1975 and the establishment of the People's Democratic Republic of Laos, a Laotian delegation led by Politburo member and newly appointed Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Phoune Sipaseuth, visited Cambodia and signed a very effusive communiqué describing the

friendly links between the two countries and peoples but avoiding any reference to the issue of diplomatic relations between the two states (US-Embassy-Vientiane to Secretary of State-Washington, Telegram 6699, 31 December 1975).

With the arrival of Ambassador Mek Touch of Democratic Kampuchea in early March 1976 and, the establishment of an officially sanctioned Lao-Cambodia Friendship Association also in early March 1976, Vientiane became one of two posts, the other being Peking, where Democratic Kampuchea conducted negotiations with foreign countries to establish diplomatic relations but where also it released news from "Democratic Kampuchea" through French language information bulletins (Personal Correspondence, 2 April 2007).

Relations between Cambodia and Laos remained friendly, in spite of the increasing tension between Democratic Kampuchea and Vietnam. Laos adopted a position of staying out of the conflict without impairing the friendship with either Vietnam or Cambodia. In December 1977, Lao President Prince Souphanouvong visited Cambodia but failed to mediate between Phnom Penh and Hanoi with Phnom Penh using the visit to proclaim that "it would resolutely preclude any foreign country from stationing its forces on Cambodian soil" (FEER, Hong Kong, 6 January 1978).

Laos maintained its Embassy in Phnom Penh until the arrival of the Vietnamese forces on 6 January 1979, but without an Ambassador. As the Khmer Rouge forces retreated from Phnom Penh they caused a serious incident by shooting at the Embassy's chancellery, causing damage to the diplomatic mission but fortunately not injuring any of the diplomats still working there (Private Correspondence, 3 February 1978).

However, when the Japan Times reported on January 16, 1978, that Vietnamese troops had been despatched to North Cambodia through Laos, a formal and rare denial was issued by the Pathet Lao News Agency (Khaosan Pathet Lao), dismissing the report as "pure fabrication".

Following the rupture of diplomatic relations between Cambodia and Vietnam, Laos sided with Vietnam while maintaining a correct diplomatic presence in Phnom Penh. Lao officials tried without success to get Democratic Kampuchea's leaders to accept Vietnamese negotiation proposals, in particular, those of 5 February 1978.

VII. Relations with the People's Republic of Kampuchea

Once the Kampuchean National United Front for National Salvation was established on 2 December 1978, Laos reported the news without comment, reflecting its general restraint in official rhetoric.

However, upon the fall of Phnom Penh and the establishment of the People's Republic of Kampuchea in early January 1979, Laos was one of the first countries to extend diplomatic recognition to the new regime on 9 January 1979 and a new Ambassador was promptly despatched to Phnom Penh.

In the 1980s, the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia and the presence of a large number of Vietnamese soldiers on Lao soil made both countries more and more the victims of

circumstances which both the Cambodian and Lao government were unable to influence and thus their relations were circumscribed to a flow of external pressures.

Laos became a sort of decoy for Vietnamese diplomatic efforts regarding the Cambodian conflict, often acting on behalf of the new People's Republic of Kampuchea, which did not enjoy the same level of diplomatic recognition which Laos had, particularly at United Nations level.

For instance, on 28 September 1981, Laos submitted for circulation to the United Nation's member states a document entitled "Principles governing the Peaceful Coexistence between Indochina and ASEAN", drafted by Vietnam and which basically offered nothing new and simply resurrected old-Vietnamese positions already rejected by ASEAN.

In 1983 several PRK's delegations visited Laos, including a military delegation led by Bou Thang in January 1983; a Party Propaganda delegation the same month and a Political Department of the PRK Armed Forces' delegation led by Meas Kroch in April that year and reached an agreement on joint operations against anti-Communist resistance movements in the border areas as well as on the repatriation of 2000 Khmer refugees from Southern Laos.

Cambodia and Laos also participated in several tripartite Foreign Ministers and Summit meetings with Vietnam held alternatively in each of their respective capitals between 1980 and 1990. Initially created to give each other political and diplomatic support in later years the meeting focussed more on economic development and trade issues and they included Burma and sometimes other developed or developing countries such as Japan and South Korea.

VIII. Relations since the Paris Agreements on Cambodia 1991–Present

Laos participated in both sessions of the Paris International Conference on Cambodia, 1989 and 1991, but did not play a major role. Laos was one of the 18 countries that signed the Paris Agreements on Cambodia in October 1991.

Soon after the formation of the new Cambodian government, both countries agreed on the setting of the Cambodia-Laos Joint Boundary Commission (CLJBC) and the Laos-Cambodia Joint Boundary Commission (LCJBC) which held an inaugural meeting in Vientiane on 20-22 November 1995. However, the demarcation of the border has yet to be fully settled.

There was good cooperation between the two countries over the relocation of the Mekong River Commission (MRC) from Bangkok to Phnom Penh, with the latter in the spirit of friendship, flexibility and compromise relinquishing her candidacy in favor of Vientiane, where the main MRC headquarters remains today.

Laos joined ASEAN in 1997 and Cambodia in 1999, after the end of the Cold War, in order to become members of a regional club that provided them with legitimacy as well

as acceptance by the wider international community while trying to protest their status as independent sovereign states.

Prime Minister Hun Sen has paid a number of official visit to Laos during this period. In October 1999, during one of such visits, Cambodia and Laos signed an extradition treaty and agreements on energy cooperation and land transport. During this visit, an informal Summit of the Prime Ministers of Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam, the first of several, was held in the Lao capital.

However, relations became tense again in May 2007 over the signature by the Lao government of a memorandum of understanding with Thailand's CH. Karnchang Public Company for the development of hydropower dam project on the Lower Mekong, 350 kilometers north of the Lao capital. Known as the Xayabury Hydroelectric Power Project, the USD 3.8 billion dam, slated for completion in 2019, would generate 1285 megawatts of electricity -enough to power a medium-sized Southeast Asian city- mostly for export to Thailand. (Science magazine, 12 August 2011, Vol. 333, p. 814).

The proposed dam's construction should had been submitted, prior to any signature, for assessment by the Mekong River Commission (MRC), which includes Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam (and China and Burma as observers), as any project of such magnitude may affect the sustainable development of the Lower Mekong Basin. Cambodia and Vietnam expressed concern that the information they had received from Laos was not enough to form a satisfactory view of the project (Ibid).

A series of misunderstandings followed over this issue, as Cambodian fishermen complained that the dam in Laos and also dams constructed by China on the Mekong had disrupted vital fish migrations, causing a substantial drop in the fish population of Cambodia's Tonle Sap Lake, often described as the "Heart of the Mekong" (Radio Free Asia, 19 April 2012).

In April 2014, Laos announced that Cambodia had given its agreement for the opening of a Lao Consulate General in Siem Reap, as the number of Lao visitors to Angkor had reached 300.000 in 2013, this was followed by the opening of a Consulate in the border province of Stun Treng, which has a large Lao-speaking population. On 1 July 2016, Cambodia opened a Consulate in Champassak province of Laos.

In June 2016, the two countries celebrated the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations with renewed assurances from both sides Cambodian representatives at a celebration in Vientiane were highly appreciative of "Laos' important contribution to the peace process in Cambodia over the past decade". While Lao representatives highlighted Cambodia's contribution to "Lao national re-construction and defence" (The Jakarta Post, 9 June 2016).

Trade exchanges between the two countries have not been satisfactory after the signature of a trade agreement in 1998. Since 2013 the two countries have been having joint meetings to promote the extension of trade and eliminate barriers that would prevent trade exchanges from increasing. Trade between the two countries in 2015 amounted to USD 25.5 million while investment by Cambodian enterprise in Laos amounted to USD 84 million.

In July 2016, at the ASEAN Summit chaired by Laos, Cambodia and Laos were alleged

to have sided with China on the issue of the South China Sea, an issue which has divided ASEAN for several years as some of its members are claimants to the South China Sea, with an ASEAN diplomat telling the press that "Cambodia has taken a hard line. Laos is hiding behind its role as ASEAN chairman and not saying anything but at the same time it is careful not to offend China" (AFP, Vientiane, 23 July 2016).

China's rising regional influence has eclipsed for some years now Vietnam, which used to be a traditional regional power and close political and ideological ally of Cambodia and Laos, at the expense of both countries' longstanding friendship with Hanoi. China has invested heavily in both countries as well as providing generous grants and loans for the national reconstruction and development of the two countries and Chinese assistance comes with no strings attached for the promotion of democracy, good governance or the respects for human rights, as assistance provided by the European Union, the USA and other countries does.

Cambodia and Laos, no doubt recognize, as Vietnam surely does also, that they each need to live with a big and strong neighbor recognized as the world's largest economic power.

In early 2017, the Cambodian and Lao Prime Ministers inaugurated the first international border checkpoint between the two countries at Nongnokheane-Trapeang Kriel. However, in February, just before the visit of the new Lao President -Bounnhang Vorachith to Cambodia as guest of King Norodom Sihamoni, the Cambodian press reported that there had been a build-up at the border with Laos and alleged that up to 400 Lao soldiers had crossed the border into Cambodia to block Cambodian military engineers from constructing a road (The Cambodia Daily, 20 February 2017).

However, officials in Phnom Penh were quick to downplay the incident and the visit of the Lao President, according to a communique issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was successful on many fronts, including, the use of Cambodian ports by Laos, trade, border demarcation and bilateral cooperation on drug trafficking and illegal logging (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Phnom Penh, 24 February 2017).

The situation remained serious with reports suggesting that Lao and Cambodian soldiers remained "face to face" while the new Lao Prime Minister was paying an official visit to Cambodia in early May 2017 (Phnom Penh Post, 15 May 2017).

IX. Conclusion

Cambodia and Laos have enjoyed ancient links for many centuries with different variants of friendship, brotherly affection between the two kingdoms and at times misunderstandings over different interpretations of international affairs. Yet, one issue has always been an irritant to the relationship, that of the border. As long as the issue of the demarcation of the border between the two countries remains unsolved tension will remain present at the border area in spite of statements by Cambodian and Lao government officials suggesting that relations are normal, close and friendly.

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CAMBODIA AND MARITIME SOUTHEAST ASIA

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CAMBODIA AND MARITIME SOUTHEAST ASIA

I. Introduction

While the maritime states of Southeast Asia—Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei Darussalam, the Philippines, and Timor-Leste—are not in Cambodia's immediate neighborhood, they remain of great importance for the study of Cambodia's foreign relations. In the geostrategic context, Cambodia's support for China has entangled Cambodia in China's fractious South China Sea disputes with the maritime Southeast Asian claimant states of Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam, and the Philippines. Looking further back in history, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which counts the maritime Southeast Asian states of Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Singapore among its founding members, was involved in the Cambodian civil war and peace process. Looking even further back in history, we find that the pre-colonial kingdoms of today's Cambodia and maritime Southeast Asia had significant dealings with one another. It is from that early period that we shall begin our survey of Cambodia's relations with maritime Southeast Asia.

II. The Pre-Colonial and Colonial Eras

The powerful Sailendra dynasty of Java, which flourished in the eighth and ninth centuries CE, claimed to be descendants of the older Cambodian kingdom of Funan (Middleton, 2005, p. 817). Funan, which was founded in the first century CE, was "the first powerful kingdom in the region," and its territory at its greatest extent "encompassed much of what is now Cambodia, southern Thailand and the northern part of the Malay Peninsula." By the fourth century, the Funanese port of Oc Eo had become a major node in the trade and missionary networks of the maritime Silk Road between India and China (Sen, 2014, pp. 40-45). Hall (1981) notes that the archeological site of Oc Eo "bears evidence of maritime relations with the coast of the Gulf of Siam, Malaya, Indonesia, India, Persia and, indeed, directly or indirectly with the Mediterranean" (p. 25). In 612, Funan, which had gone into decline by then, fell to the rising Cambodian kingdom of Chenla. Chenla subsequently suffered a succession crisis in 657, when its king Jayavarman I died without a male heir. The crisis led the kingdom to split into Upper and Lower Chenla, and "so great was the turmoil that the realm became an arena for invading armies … For the next two centuries, armies from Champa and Java ravaged the land, exerting influence or domination over various Chenla princes" (DiBiasio, 2013, pp. 11-12).

By the eighth century, almost a century after the demise of Funan, the Sailendra dynasty had come into power in Java, and they began the construction of their famed monuments, including Borobudur temple. The Sailendras, who claimed descent from the royal house of Funan, based their dynastic name, which means "King of the Mountain," on the old Funanese royal title (Cœdès, 1966, p. 96; Saunders, 2013, pp. 7-8; Middleton, 2005, p. 817). Intriguingly, the royal family of Brunei Darussalam also claims descent from Funan. Their claim is based on an old Bruneian legend which recounts how the surviving members of the Funan royal family who had escaped from Chenla had settled in Borneo around 680, whereupon they reestablished their kingdom and a new royal lineage that eventually became the royal family of Brunei Darussalam (Yunos, 2007; Saunders, 2013, p. 17).

In 770, Jayavarman II, a Khmer prince who had been raised as a royal hostage at the Sailendra court, returned to the divided lands of Chenla and began a rebellion of the Khmer people against Sailendra rule. At Ba Phnom he performed an "auspicious magic rite" to make it "impossible for Java to control holy Cambodia," and in 802 he held an elaborate ceremony at Phnom Kulen to declare himself *chakravartin* (universal monarch), in which he pledged that he would "ensure that the country of the Kambujas would no longer be dependent on Java" (Chandler, 2008, pp. 39-40; SarDesai, 2010, p. 26; Wolters, 1973, p. 21). Jayavarman II's "country of the Kambujas" would become the Cambodian empire of Angkor, and Jayavarman II himself would spend the rest of his life travelling around his kingdom, which some historians believe indicates "a life on the run" from the Javanese (Chandler, 2008, p. 40; DiBiasio, 2013, p. 2). Indeed, it was during this period of Jayavarman II's rebellion that the Sailendras captured Lower Chenla as their vassal state (Taylor, 2007, p. 282). SarDesai (2010) recounts the gruesome legend:

> According to a tenth-century Arab traveler-writer, Sulayman, a Chenla king expressed the desire to have the head of a Javanese king brought before him on a dish. News of this reached the Sailendra king of Java, who in 790, under the pretext of a pleasure cruise, armed his fleet, invaded Lower Chenla, killed its king, appointed a successor to the throne, embalmed the decapitated head, placed it in an urn, and sent it to the king of Upper Chenla.
> (p. 26)

Despite the eventual end of the Sailendras' influence over Cambodia and the subsequent rise of the Angkor empire, Javanese influence would persist in Cambodian culture, for example in the royal cult of the *devaraja* (god-king) (Chandler, 2008, pp. 41-42; Widyono, 2012, p. 49).

Another precolonial linkage between Cambodia and maritime Southeast Asia can be found in Cambodia's Cham minority, as their history is entwined with that of the Malay sultanates of maritime Southeast Asia. Experts believe that the Cham originated from a population of Malayo-Polynesian-speaking migrants from Borneo who settled on the coast of Vietnam around 1,000 BC. These migrants formed the Sa Huynh culture which eventually became the kingdom of Champa. After the fall of the Cham city of Vijaya in 1471, a Cham diaspora emerged, with Cham communities eventually settling across the region, including Cambodia, Hainan Island, and the Malay sultanates located in Java, Sumatra, the Malay Peninsula, and the Southern Philippines (Bray, 2014; Scupin, 1995, pp. 304-305). Unlike the Cham who remained in Vietnam and eventually converted to Shia Islam, the Cham who settled in Cambodia had greater contact with Sunni Muslim settlers from the Malay sultanates, and the Cambodian Cham eventually developed a patriarchal Sunni Muslim culture similar to that of the Malay Muslims (Kersten, 2006, p. 10; Scupin, 1995, pp. 309-310).

Malay settlements in Cambodia date back to the fourteenth century when traders and Muslim preachers from "Borneo, Sumatra, Singapore, Terengganu and from the kingdom of Pattani" began settling in Cambodia. Portuguese and Spanish accounts from the sixteenth-century record that "Malay merchant ships frequently visited Khmer ports," while "the Khmer chronicles also mention the services of Malays as guards to the Khmer monarchs." Malay settlers, "mostly teachers of the Islamic faith," continued to arrive in Cambodia during the French protectorate period, but there were also trade relations, with ships from Malay ports including Johor and Terengganu visiting the Cambodian ports of Kampot and Kompong Som (Musa, 2001, p. 4). Chandler (2008) reminds us of the cultural impact of the Malays on Cambodian life, including the common use of Malay loan words like *kompong* ("landing place") and *psar* ("market") in the Khmer language (pp. 94-95).

The period of European colonialism in Southeast Asia saw early contact between the Cambodian court and the Portuguese and Spanish colonies of Melaka and Manila. Worries over the looming threat posed by Siam led the Cambodian king to seek military aid from the Portuguese and the Spanish. In exchange for this military aid, which Chandler (2008) notes "never arrived," the Cambodian court delivered "gifts of rice" to the new European

colonies and allowed their Catholic missionaries to preach on Cambodian soil. By 1593, the Siamese threat was sufficiently imminent for the desperate Cambodian king to beg the Spanish governor-general of Manila for military aid in exchange for his royal conversion to Christianity. However, the appeal was sent too late, and the Cambodian capital city of Longvek fell to the Siamese in 1594 (p. 100).

Following the fall of Longvek, the Spanish and Portuguese conquistadors Bias Ruiz de Hernan Gonzales and Diego Belloso, assisted by the Catholic friar orders in Melaka and Manila, attempted to restore the deposed Cambodian king—who had since fled to Vientiane—to the throne. However, both were killed in 1599 during a counter-insurrection led by the Malay community. The Malay community in Cambodia had indeed grown in influence during this moment of interregnum, and the Laksamana, the community's leader, "was even able to carve out a position for himself as an independent warlord." When the deposed king's exiled brother was installed by the Siamese as the new Cambodian king in 1602, the influence of the Catholic friar orders finally ended, although the European traders were permitted to remain (Kersten, 2006, pp. 6-7).

Cham and Malay political influence in Cambodia reached their apex in 1642 when a violent palace coup led to the ascension of a Khmer prince, Reameathipadei I, who converted to Islam and adopted the Muslim name Ibrahim (Kersten, 2006, p. 1). The Cambodian chronicles of the period record that while Sultan Ibrahim "forgot about Buddhism and neglected temples, monasteries and the scriptures," the Cham and Malay Muslims "used the opportunity to build Muslim 'viharn' (temples) at various locations in the realm." Cambodia's brief period of Muslim rule ended in 1658 when a rebellion led by Ibrahim's cousins restored Khmer Buddhist rule to the land (pp. 11-15). By the 1800s, Cambodia's Cham and Malay Muslim populations had settled into small niches within the majority Khmer Buddhist population, specializing in trades like "cattle trading, weaving, and commercial fisheries" (Chandler, 2008, p. 120).

After Cambodia became a French protectorate in 1863, Cambodian relations with the Philippines reemerged at the royal level when a detachment of Filipino troops who had originally been sent by Spain to assist with the French conquest of Indochina found themselves "assigned as palace guards and cannoneers" to the court of Cambodia's King Norodom. Norodom's subsequent royal visit to Manila in 1872 saw his recruitment of "a group of Filipino musicians to form the Royal Brass and Reed Band" (Embassy of the Philippines, n.d.). This band may be seen as the forerunner of the Filipino musical troupes who regularly perform at international hotels and other entertainment venues in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap.

III. The Sihanouk Era

After Cambodia gained independence from France in 1953, King (later Prince) Norodom Sihanouk cultivated relationships with the leaders of other states, including those from maritime Southeast Asia. In 1967, Sihanouk hosted Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Kuan

Yew during his state visit to Cambodia (Lim, 2013, p. 24). As Turnbull (2004) recounts:

> Cruising along the capital's elegant boulevards in his Mercedes convertible, the Singaporean Premier turned to his host and mused, "I hope, one day, my city will look like this. (p. 38)

In 1956, during his state visit to the Philippines, Sihanouk met Philippine President Ramón Magsaysay, and made a public statement of Cambodia's Cold War position of neutrality, despite reportedly being pressured during this trip to bring Cambodia into the US-led South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO). Sihanouk had developed his position of neutrality a year earlier during the 1955 Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung, Indonesia (Leifer, 1962, pp. 127-131). It was also during the Bandung Conference when Sihanouk first met Indonesian President Sukarno, who also espoused the position of neutrality. As Widyono (2012) notes, Sihanouk and Sukarno quickly developed a close friendship, and they subsequently "visited each other's countries a total of five times and they called each other brothers" (p. 49).

Prior to the establishment of diplomatic relations between Cambodia and Indonesia in 1962, Sihanouk and Sukarno signed a Treaty of Amity in 1960 which "called for permanent peace and friendship" between their states. In their domestic politics, both Sihanouk and Sukarno attempted but failed to "maintain a political balance between a right-wing military and a growing Communist movement." In 1965, Sukarno was ousted by General Suharto in a military coup that was accompanied with mass killings of suspected communists, and just five years later Sihanouk was ousted from power by General Lon Nol. The main difference between these events of regime change was that Lon Nol's regime only lasted until the 1975 Khmer Rouge revolution, while Suharto's regime ended up lasting over three decades (Widyono, 2012, pp. 49-50).

IV. After the Khmer Rouge

Cambodia's relations with maritime Southeast Asia during the revolutionary years of the Khmer Rouge and the following period of Vietnamese occupation would occur primarily through its Cold War struggle with ASEAN. ASEAN, which was in the US orbit, became an ally of communist China following the Sino-Soviet split. Vietnam, being in the orbit of the Soviet Union, was opposed by ASEAN, the US, and China, as was its client regime in Cambodia—the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK). Hence in 1982, ASEAN, the US, and China supported the formation of an anti-PRK resistance front which consisted of the ousted Khmer Rouge, Sihanouk's royalist FUNCINPEC movement, and the remnant forces of the ousted Lon Nol regime. The Indonesian government and ASEAN would subsequently pursue a comprehensive settlement of the Cambodian civil war, and these diplomatic efforts culminated with the signing in 1991 of the Paris Peace Agreements (Widyono, 2012, pp. 51-55).

The actions undertaken by ASEAN against the PRK during the 1980s "had the effect of isolating the country … from foreign aid and prolonging destabilizing and debilitating armed conflict." The devastating impact of ASEAN intervention makes Cambodia's subsequent reconciliation with ASEAN all the more remarkable. Lee Jones has described himself as "surprised by how much all the Indochinese states have moved on, given how viciously their non-communist ASEAN neighbors behaved toward them" (Pavior, 2016). However, moving on is not the same as forgetting, and as we shall shortly see, Cambodia's current lack of concern with maintaining the public display of ASEAN's principle of consensus indicates that Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen and his colleagues have in fact not forgotten how ASEAN treated the PRK in the 1980s.

Cambodia's relations with Indonesia grew during the 1990s. Following the signing of the 1991 Paris Peace Agreements, Indonesia contributed over 2,000 soldiers and police officers to the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), the UN-led international body which was formed to implement the Paris Peace Agreements in Cambodia. Later, in 1995, Indonesia's Special Forces began a training program for the Cambodian military as well as Hun Sen's bodyguard regiment. ASEAN made another intervention in Cambodia's domestic affairs following factional clashes in 1997. The mediation of the ASEAN Troika, consisting of the foreign ministers of Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand, persuaded the Cambodian government to organize elections the following year. Once these elections were held in late 1998, Cambdoia achieved accession to ASEAN as a full member on April 30, 1999 (Widyono, 2012, pp. 55-59)

Cambodia's relations with Malay Muslim communities in maritime Southeast Asia likewise resumed and grew after the Paris Peace Agreements, and in the 1990s, Malay Muslim merchants and missionaries resumed their settlement in Cambodia (Musa, 2001, p. 4). At the NGO level, Muslim groups from the Middle East and maritime Southeast Asia have directed their efforts toward helping Cambodia's Cham community rebuild its Islamic culture, which had suffered great damage under the Khmer Rouge. Such assistance includes the construction of mosques and religious schools, the provision of scholarships for overseas study, and funding for Cham Muslims to undertake the *Haj*. While significant funding has come from Arab charities from Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Kuwait, the Cham have also benefited from charitable projects from Malay Muslim organizations from Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei Darussalam (Osman, 2002, pp. 2-5; Lim, 2017a, p. 361; Cain, 2008; Sofri, 2008; Kamari, n.d.).

Malaysia emerged during the 1990s as the largest source of foreign direct investment (FDI) in Cambodia, accounting for "31.2% of all investment and 79% of ASEAN investment over this period." Malaysian firms enjoyed the first mover advantage in Cambodia as Malaysia was "the first country to sign a bilateral visa exemption agreement with Cambodia in 1992," which allowed Malaysian businessmen and entrepreneurs to obtain "a great many investment concessions, including concessions in mining and forestry" (Runckel & Associates, 2005). Indonesians have also invested in Cambodia, in sectors like telecommunications, garment manufacturing, and real estate development (Widyono,

2012, p. 59). Compared with Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia, Cambodia's trade and investment relations with Brunei Darussalam have yet to take off. Despite the signing of agreements on rice and aviation, there has been little progress made in implementing these agreements, or of expanding their economic cooperation into other areas (Hajar, 2015).

Between 2011-15, Malaysia and Singapore were among the top 10 sources of FDI in Cambodia (Council for the Development of Cambodia, 2016). Malaysians have invested in a broad range of sectors including "telecommunications, banking, construction, garments, hotels, food and beverages, energy, entertainment and agriculture," while Singaporeans have invested in "property development, hospitality, energy, lifestyle business, garments, agriculture and logistics" (May, 2016; Straits Times, 2014). In the Islamic business sector, Malaysia and Cambodia are cooperating on the development of halal food exports. For Malaysian investors, Cambodia is attractive as "halal food exports originating from Cambodia will also enjoy duty-free entry into otherwise highly protected EU markets." Malaysian investors are also interested in new sectors like "utilities, infrastructure, and road development, as well as renewable energy and high-value services" (Rui, 2016). In addition, Malaysia and Singapore have developed employment pipelines for the recruitment of Cambodian women for work as domestic maids in their countries. However, abuse of these maids by employers could lead to restrictions on such recruitment, as happened in 2011-15 when the Cambodian government banned the supply of maids to Malaysia following a series of cases of severe abuse and death (Au-Yong, 2016; Handley and Lay, 2016).

Apart from investment, Singapore has promoted the human resource development of the Cambodian government with its provision of training for Cambodian officials in key fields including public administration, civil aviation, information technology, public finance management, and trade promotion. The Cambodia-Singapore Training Center in Phnom Penh was established in 2002, and between 2002-09 it trained over 4,500 Cambodian government officials, thereby strengthening "the quality of public administration in Cambodia." Apart from Cambodian government officials, Singapore has also offered scholarships to Cambodian students (Sok, 2012, pp. 4-9). Singaporean President Tony Tan Keng Yam's state visit to Cambodia in January 2017 expanded this cooperation in human resource development with agreements signed in the field of healthcare, with the expansion of an existing training program for Cambodia's Calmette Hospital, and in the field of vocational training, under which "Cambodian technical and vocational 'master trainers' will be trained in the areas of infocomm technology, electronics and automotive technology" (Lim, 2017).

Given the cultural differences between the Filipino and Cambodian people, it is remarkable that the Philippine entertainment industry has made great headway into the Cambodian market, with "Philippine movies and dramas, dubbed in Khmer language," being popular with Cambodian audiences. This entertainment trend started more than a decade ago when the Philippine soap opera *Pangako Sa 'Yo* ("The Promise") was screened on Cambodian television. The Filipino actors and actresses in these TV shows and movies have since become celebrities in Cambodia, and they have been "invited to Cambodia to meet and perform for their Cambodian fans" (Sar and Oum, 2016). Apart from such contact

through the medium of popular culture, Philippine relations with Cambodia have also developed at the people-to-people level, with Filipino teachers and professionals discovering Cambodia to be a place where they can build well-remunerated expatriate careers (Esteves, 2007; Boniol, 2011).

This cultural affinity between the Filipino and Cambodian people has echoes in the parallels between their leaders Hun Sen and Rodrigo Duterte. Both leaders are political strongmen who have effectively deployed plain-spoken styles of communication to connect with the masses and to establish their populist images as representatives of the common man. Both are also experienced in confronting the West. During Duterte's state visit to Cambodia in December 2016, "the first stand-alone, bilateral visit of a Philippine leader to Cambodia in 20 years," Hun Sen's "deep admiration" for the Philippine leader was revealed, as was his recognition of Duterte as "an ally in terms of standing up against Western countries." While Hun Sen had stood up to the pressure of Western sactions following the political crisis of 1997, Duterte has stood up to the Western condemnation of the deadly war on drugs that was launched shortly after his 2016 election. As a consequence of their antipathy towards the Western powers, both Hun Sen and Duterte have realigned their countries with Beijing. Indeed, apart from establishing greater cooperation between both countries in the fields of education, tourism, trade, labor, sports, and the fight against transnational crime, Duterte's state visit has been interpreted by some experts as a signal to the international community of the Philippines' alignment with Cambodia in the pro-Beijing group of states within ASEAN (Millar, 2016; Salaverria, 2016; Khy and Surrusco, 2016).

V. The China Factor

Cambodia's close relationship with China has emerged in recent years as a prime source of conflict with maritime Southeast Asia, especially with the South China Sea claimant states of Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam, and the Philippines. This tension has arisen from Cambodia's decision to advocate for China's interests in ASEAN proceedings, and in particular to use its veto to prevent ASEAN from achieving consensus on issues involving the South China Sea disputes. This occurred in 2012 when Cambodia used its position that year as ASEAN chair to block the group from issuing a joint communiqué—the first such instance in ASEAN's history. Cambodia did the same again in 2016, leading some observers to call for Cambodia's expulsion from ASEAN. This call for expulsion echoed Singaporean Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew's private comments to US diplomats in 2007 that Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam should not have been admitted into ASEAN in the 1990s given their lack of "shared values with the bloc's founding members" (Baliga and Vong, 2016; Gillison, 2010; Loh, 2016; Strangio, 2010; Wai, 2016).

While the suggested expulsion of Cambodia from ASEAN is unlikely to happen, the dispute highlights the difference in importance the Cambodian government places on its relations with China as opposed to its relations with the states of Southeast Asia. This is not surprising given China's largesse to Cambodia, especially during periods when the

Cambodian government has found itself facing sanctions from the West for its various infractions against international norms of conduct. One such moment happened in 2009 when the Cambodian government forcibly deported twenty Uighur refugees to China, even though they had been seeking asylum from China. This was a blatant violation of Cambodia's obligation of non-refoulment under the UN Convention on Refugees and the UN Convention on Torture, and Cambodia quickly suffered criticism and sanctions from the West, including the cancellation of a scheduled supply of military aid from the US. However, these sanctions and the harsh criticisms from the West were promptly eclipsed by China's 1.2 billion USD grant to Cambodia (Ear, 2013, pp. 28-30; Lim, 2015b). In July 2016, China similarly extended to Cambodia 600 million USD in aid for its "diplomatic support over the South China Sea issue," and the following month the Chinese ambassador to Cambodia officially extended China's gratitude to Cambodia for its support over the South China Sea disputes, stating that "not only the government of China but also millions of our people appreciated Prime Minister Hun Sen's stance" (Hean, 2016; Sok, 2016). Apart from grants, aid, and debt cancellation from the Chinese government, Cambodia has also benefitted from work done by Chinese companies, which over time have developed "a reputation for delivering crucial infrastructure projects quickly and without delays caused by human rights and environmental objections" (Kynge, Haddou, and Peel, 2016).

Cambodia's reliance on China's largesse may be expected to increase as its garment sector, which "accounts for 80 percent of Cambodia's total export revenue," retrenches (Better Factories Cambodia, 2017). Rising wages in this sector have prompted manufacturers to consider moving their factories to countries with cheaper labor costs, such as Bangladesh or Vietnam. Indeed, almost 70 garment factories ended their operations in Cambodia in the first 9 months of 2016, as compared with just 35 in all of 2015 (Kun, 2016; Hawkins and Kang, 2016). In the longer term, African countries like Ethiopia—whose garment workers have a starting wage of just 21 USD per month—could attract cost-conscious manufacturers to remove their garment factories from Asia entirely (Passariello and Kapner, 2015). The ultimate transition for the garment sector is expected to occur when the industry achieves full automation of the garment manufacturing process, allowing Western fashion houses to set up automated factories in their home countries "and eliminate their overseas factories altogether" (Minter, 2016). Given the predicted loss of revenue from the garment sector, it is expected that aid and investment from China will become even more important for the Cambodian government. At the 2016 East Asia Summit in Vientiane, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang announced that China will increase its economic cooperation with Cambodia in "industrial capacity, trade, agriculture, water conservancy, infrastructure, education as well as tourism," while Chinese President Xi Jinping's state visit to Cambodia in October 2016 saw China offering 237 million USD in grants and loans, 15 million USD in military aid, and 90 million USD in debt cancellation (Khy, Paviour, and Khuon, 2016; "China wants," 2016). The scale of Chinese largesse suggests that the Sino-Cambodian partnership will continue to be Cambodia's most important bilateral relationship, perhaps at the expense of Cambodia's relations with the states of Southeast Asia.

VI. Conclusion

Despite the tensions arising from its support for the Chinese position in the South China Sea disputes, Cambodia has not turned away from maritime Southeast Asia. This can be seen in the Cambodian government's cultivation of maritime Southeast Asia's youngest nation: Timor-Leste. Hun Sen visited Timor-Leste in August 2016, during which he reaffirmed Cambodia's support for Timor-Leste's applications to join ASEAN and the World Trade Organization. The visit also saw Cambodia and Timor-Leste signing agreements to expand their bilateral agricultural cooperation in rice and coffee, as well as their economic cooperation in sectors like energy and mining. The Cambodian government also committed to assisting with Timor-Leste's human resource development with its provision of scholarships for Timorese students to study in Cambodia. Given that China has also been cultivating its relations with Timor-Leste, the Cambodian and Chinese outreach point to the future growth of the number of pro-China member states within ASEAN (Lim, 2015a, p. 10; Parameswaran, 2016).

Indeed, Chinese largesse in 2016 to the newly-elected Philippine government of Rodrigo Duterte and the beleaguered Malaysian regime of Najib Razak has effectively tempered Philippine and Malaysian opposition to China's continued activities in the South China Sea. This was clearly seen in the meek response of the Philippine and Malaysian governments to the satellite imagery released in December 2016 which revealed China's installation of weapons systems on the disputed Spratly Islands. China's strategic cultivation of improved relations with Malaysia and the Philippines—two of Southeast Asia's South China Sea claimant states—has enabled it to continue its non-recognition of the July 2016 award issued by the Permanent Court of Arbitration which invalidated China's historic claims to the South China Sea. Hence, while Cambodia's unpopular advocacy of Chinese interests at previous ASEAN meetings may have hurt its standing within the group, the repositioning of Malaysia and the Philippines towards China in 2016 will normalize China's growing influence within Southeast Asia and help restore Cambodia's standing within ASEAN (Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative, 2016; Hunt, 2016; Lim, 2016; Lim, 2017b).

In addition, the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) which was launched in late 2015 could prove to be an economic catalyst for Cambodia's reengagement with ASEAN, and through ASEAN, the states of maritime Southeast Asia. Through the transformation of ASEAN into "a single market and production base," the AEC intends to "lift aggregate output by 7 per cent" and "generate around 14 million new jobs by 2025" (Woo, 2015). This process will occur over a decade, with ASEAN member states gradually "lowering tariffs and allowing a freer flow of labor, services and capital" (Parikh, 2015; Otto and Moss, 2015). In addition, experts expect the benefits of economic integration through the AEC to be boosted by the synergies arising from the participation of ASEAN member states in future regional trade agreements like the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership and the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific (Lehmacher, 2016).

For Cambodia, the regional economic liberalization that will take place under the AEC is expected to bring in a fresh wave of foreign investment, which could, in turn, help Cambodia diversify its economy away from the declining garment sector (Hunt, 2015). There has already been interest from maritime Southeast Asia of opportunities in Cambodia arising from the AEC, including the investment in shopping malls in Phnom Penh by Malaysia's Parkson Group ("How Cambodia's real estate," 2016). Should the promise of the AEC be fulfilled, the increase in investment and trade from the region could prompt the Cambodian government to focus on strengthening its relations with ASEAN and the states of Southeast Asia. However, heterogeneity in the economic development levels of the ASEAN member states poses a significant challenge to the success of the AEC. As Das (2016) notes, "in total FDI flows into the region, Singapore currently attracts a lion's share of 51 per cent, whereas Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar are able to attract only 1-2 per cent." For these latter countries, China's largesse remains attractive, especially funding from its "infrastructure development schemes such as One Belt, One Road (OBOR) and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)." On the other hand, even if infrastructure development is funded by China and constructed by Chinese firms, the newly-constructed infrastructure will still provide the physical connectivity needed to facilitate economic integration within the AEC (pp. 4-6). As such, Cambodia's economic cooperation with China could ironically help repair Cambodia's relations with maritime Southeast Asia that had been damaged over Cambodia's support for China in the South China Sea disputes. Given Cambodia's long history of relations with maritime Southeast Asia—a history that can be traced back to pre-Angkorean times—the economic integration of Cambodia and the states of maritime Southeast Asia through the AEC, and the concomitant rebuilding of their bilateral relations and their multilateral relations through ASEAN, remains the ideal scenario for these countries to work towards.

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EUROPEAN UNION-CAMBODIA RELATIONS

Robert HÖR

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EUROPEAN UNION-CAMBODIA RELATIONS

I. Introduction

The relations between the Kingdom of Cambodia and the European Union (EU) are, compared to countries like Thailand, Vietnam, Australia, Japan or China, rather young and less based on traditional as well as longstanding historical ties. Nevertheless, there have been longstanding relations between Cambodia and member states of the European Union since long before the EU came into existence. A case in point is France, which has cultivated deep cultural and political relations with Cambodia since King Norodom and Napoleon III approved the protectorate in 1863. The main reason for Cambodia to approach France was to protect Cambodia against their neighboring countries: Thailand and Vietnam. After the end of the protectorate in 1953, the French influence decreased, in particular, due to the nationalization of commerce. However, French played a key role in facilitating the Paris Peace Accord in 1991 and still remains one of the largest diaspora communities of Cambodians, largely because of the Khmer refugees escaping the Khmer Rouge regime.[1] Another relevant European state operating in Cambodia is Germany. Even if the Federal Republic of Germany suspended diplomatic relations with Cambodia from 1969 until 1993, still the Federal Republic contributed financially to the completion of the Railways to Sihanoukville, which opened later in 1969. The German Democratic Republic maintained their diplomatic, educational and economic relations with Cambodia, suspended during the

Khmer Rouge time, until the reunification of Germany started in 1989. Today, Germany actively supports the development and democratization process in Cambodia via diverse institutions. Both, France and Germany,[2] maintain close economic, political and cultural relations with Cambodia. Despite the relevance of these relations, this chapter only refers to the relation between the European Union as a supranational institution and the Kingdom of Cambodia. The relations between member states of the European Union and Cambodia and the relations between European States and Cambodia before the existence of the European Union will be neglected.

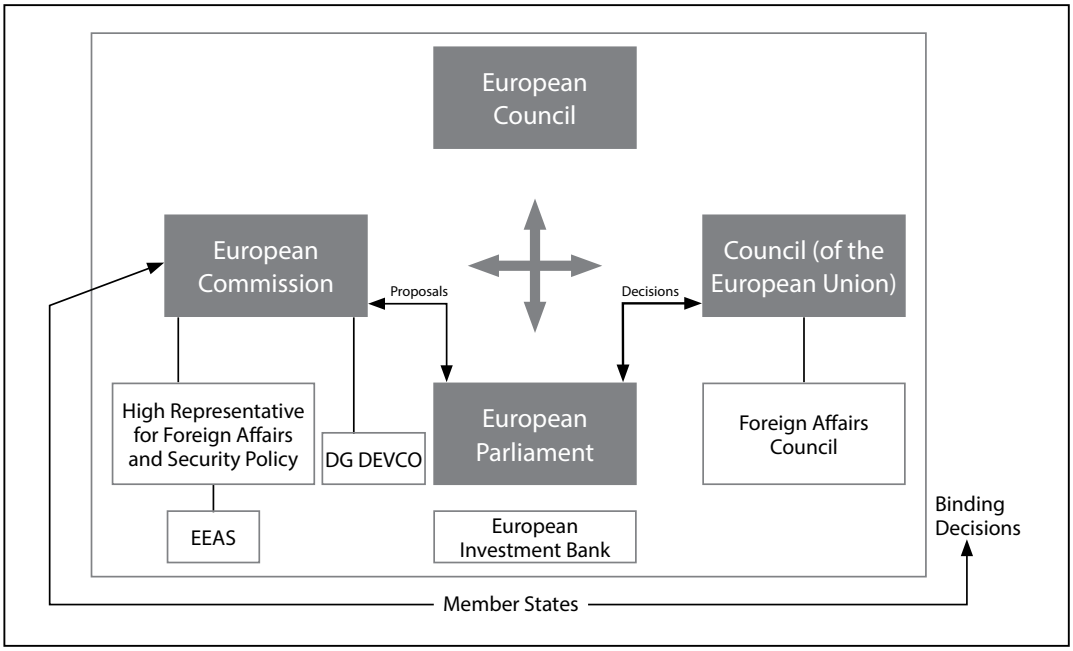
There are several reasons for the relatively young relation between the European Union and Cambodia. The geographical distances as well as the evolution process of the EU and pertinent historical circumstances like the cold war are, inter alia, one of them. Hence, over the last 20 years, (since the signing of the European Community (EC)-Cambodia Co-operation Agreement in 1997), the cooperation has been deepened and extended, in particular with regard to trade and development cooperation. In this light, the EU has been part of a rapid changing environment in which Cambodia could achieve persistent economic growth, several global development targets as well as key reforms in diverse sectors, for instance health and education, the rule of law and decentralization. Nevertheless, under close inspection there still remains the need of reforms in multiple sectors. The European Union provides budget and technical support to work on these challenges, whereby the close cooperation goes far beyond development cooperation and also covers trade and investment.

Regarding the relations between the EU and Cambodia the questions arise how the EU as one the most important trading partners of Cambodia and one of the main donors, with European partners the largest grant aid donors, is operating and against which normative background. The question of how the portfolio of the EU looks and on what kind of programs and conditions it is based shall also be outlined. Set in this context this chapter outlines the EU foreign policy and historical ties with Cambodia, in particular with regard to normative aspects, institutions and modus operandi. The second chapter takes up the role of the EU as a value promotor in Cambodia, which can be seen under closer inspection of the implemented projects. The third chapter deals with the trade relations between the EU and Cambodia. The fourth chapter touches on the relevance of security and stability policies as they are directly linked to prosperity and development. Nevertheless this seems to be a rather young and secondary operation field of the EU. The paper also takes a look at the aid mechanisms and aid dependency.

II. The EU Foreign Policy and Cambodia-Institutions and History

The Foreign Policies of the European Union are underlying a permanent development caused by domestic developments within the Union itself and its member states. In this regard, domestic policy turns of EU member states, caused by recent crisis or trends, can lead to policy shifts on the supranational level. From the very beginning the Union has been subject to a constant flux of deepening laws and institutions, economic spillovers[3] and enlargements. In this light, the European Union is often seen as a role model for regional integration as well as the overcoming of conflicts between states. However, Europe has undergone devastating times of war, like World War I and II, and deep distrust among European national states. From the ashes left behind arose the vision of establishing regional institutions that minimize the risk of war, facilitate dialogue and enable stability and economic prosperity for Europe. In doing so, the integration was a process led by decisions and actions related to the approach of form follows function.[4]

Set in this context a multiplicity of agreements and laws has been adopted, which led to the primary and secondary law of the EU. The primary law is mainly described in the Treaty on the European Union (2007) and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (2007)[5] which distributes and defines competencies between the Union and its member states. They define the overarching principles and objectives and set the power of the institutions operating along the competencies given by the member states to the supranational level. The so-called secondary law, which includes the specific agreements regarding the cooperation with Cambodia, consists of agreements between the Union and outside organizations or third countries. Article 21 of the Treaty on the European Union (Eur-Lex, 2009) describes the values of cooperation, namely democracy, the rule of law, the universality and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for human dignity, the principles of equality and solidarity, and respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter and international law. The values bound by contract were meant to be spread in order to prevent another war on European soil. When the European Union engages in development cooperation its action is obviously connected to the intention of spreading European values in aid receiving countries. The Guidelines on the EU's Foreign and Security Policy in East Asia (Council of the EU, 2012) adopted on 15 June 2012 state the condition for developmental support: the preservation of peace and strengthening of international security, in accordance with the principles of the UN Charter, the promotion of a rule-based international system, the development and consolidation of democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, the promotion of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the promotion of regional integration, the promotion of cooperative and sustainable policies to meet global challenges such as climate change, energy security, environmental protection, poverty, economic imbalances and health issues.



Graphic: *Own research*

The political system of the European Union has several institutions regarding the implementation of development policy. The European External Action Service (EEAS) which was founded in 2009 , is a diplomatic service which is headed by the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, currently Federica Mogherini, and operates through 139 delegations worldwide. The role of the EEAS is, firstly, to represent the European Union, its people worldwide and their values. Insofar the EEAS operates as a diplomatic service and thus fortifies the management of networks and partnerships in various fields between the EU and Cambodia, creates mutual understanding and awareness, conducts negotiations and increases the visibility of the EU. Accordingly, the delegation to Cambodia is responsible for all policy areas between the EU and Cambodia, for instance trade, economic cooperation, political development and human rights. Additionally, the delegation gathers data and information and publishes reports on political development. To achieve the objectives the EEAS is cooperating with other EU institutions such as the European Council, the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Foreign Affairs Council (EEAS: 2016a). As a part of the European Commission the Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO) defines development policy and implements aid. The European Parliament is a co-legislator regarding policy and expenditure related to development aid and is involved in approving general policies in financial perspectives and budgets, regulations and funding decisions. Furthermore, the Council of the European Union adopts the policy framework in which the DG DEVCO operates upon proposals by the Commission and also approves the EU's budget together with the Parliament. Concerning development policy the European Council serves as superordinate institution in order to find compromises among the member states. The EU budget and the European

Development Fund provide the funds for the external assistance programmes and the European Investment Bank (EIB) supports European development cooperation policies by offering loans or grants, as well as through specific mechanisms such as the FEMIP (Facility for Euro-Mediterranean Investment and Partnership) and the EU-Africa Infrastructure Trust Fund. Funding is offered on a project-by-project basis demanding that the project has to achieve the EU's objectives. Checking each project for the fulfillment of EU goals, EIB can decide independently whether to grant a loan. However, EIB cooperates with other EU institutions, especially with the European Commission, the European Parliament und the European Council (EU, 2017). In addition, the European Court of Auditors verifies Commission accounts and examines budgetary management, in particular regarding the proper use of resources according to agreed standards (European Commission: 2017a).

As European development policy is premised on different horizontal (the different EU institutions) and vertical (EU level and national governments) levels, it is necessary to follow the principles of coherence and consistency. Coherence thereby means the harmonization of political measures; the EU stakeholders should coordinate and communicate effectively with each other in order to avoid crossing areas of responsibility and to clarify on respective actions. At the same time consistency serves as the second important principle of the EU development cooperation. The principle aims to ensure that different measures by different EU member states or institutions do not oppose each other, as contradictory action can determine failure (not only) in this policy area. To comply with these key principles, the Commission proposed a voluntary "Code of Conduct for better division of labour between the EU donors[6] in developing countries" in 2007 and the "Increasing the impact of EU Development Policy: an Agenda for Change" in 2011. The first milestone regarding the cooperation between the EU and Cambodia is, without doubt, the assistance for Cambodian refugee camps at the Thai border between 1986 and 1993, followed by the Paris Peace Agreement of 23 October 1991. It put an end to Cambodia's intractable civil war after more than a decade of negotiations between different stakeholders and with intensive participation of the United Nations. The main contents of the Accord, signed by Prime Minister Hun Sen and Prince Norodom Sihanouk as well as 18 other nations[7] in the presence of the United Nations Secretary-General, were the implementation of a constitutional democracy and the establishment of free and fair elections, so that the Cambodian people can exercise their right of self-determination.

The Paris Peace Agreement was not signed by the European Community (EC) itself, but by the two EU member states France and the United Kingdom[8]. However, this historical moment paved the way for a deeper cooperation. The EC enhanced its cooperation with the Cambodian Government in 1997 by signing the EC-Cambodia Framework Co-operation Agreement, which entered into force in 1999. Since then, the agreement has formed the legal basis between the EU and Cambodia and has led to a continuous deepening and enlargement of cooperation issues and institutional cooperation. In the course of this, a Joint Committee has been established in order to ensure the smooth operation and effective implementation of the agreement. The committee meets every two years, alternatively in Phnom Penh and Brussels. Sub-groups focusing on key areas of mutual interest such as the

cooperation portfolio, governance, human rights and trade relations meet ahead of the full Joint Committee meeting. Hence it is obvious that cooperation consists of the tiers, one by contract and one by joint work, characterized by regular meetings.

Further milestones are the EC-ASEAN Cooperation acceded by Cambodia in July 2000 which allows participants to be involved in EC-ASEAN activities and the Everything But Arms Initiative (EBA) from 2001. Cambodia benefits from the latter regarding duty-free and quota-free access to the EU markets. Other major contracts are the EC-Cambodia Country Strategy Paper 2000-2003, the EC-Cambodia Community Strategy Paper 2007-2013, the European Development Cooperation Strategy for Cambodia 2014-2018 and lastly the Multiannual Indicative Programme 2014-2020. The three EU focal sectors for development cooperation with Cambodia selected for the period 2014-2020 are agriculture/rural development, education/skills and good governance. The agreements are based on the Kingdom's National Strategy Papers, referring to the national priorities, and common values.

III. The EU as value promoter

The goal of the European Union in Cambodia regarding development cooperation is to support the Royal Government of Cambodia by realizing their self-imposed strategies, currently the Royal Government's Rectangular Strategy and the National Strategic Development Plan. This takes place against the backdrop of the overarching priority of poverty alleviation and meeting basic needs, but is also expressed in fostering democracy, rule of law, gender equality, rural development, food security, climate change prevention, human rights and to create common markets as well as peace and stability. These objectives correspond to the Sustainable Development Goals and are firmly set in several legal documents of the European Union. The Lisbon Treaty itself demands support for human rights and democracy in all external actions. This can be illustrated through initiatives on good governance, democratic participation and decentralization, gender equality, health, sanitation, food security, public finance management, climate change, rural development and so forth. Increasing policy coherence in foreign affairs, development cooperation and trade becomes not only an option, but rather an obligation. The Guidelines on the EU's Foreign and Security Policy in East Asia adopted in June 2012 cite, for instance, the development and consolidation of democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms as condition for developmental support. Also the official documents of the Kingdom of Cambodia reflect these challenges. The National Strategic Development Plan for 2014-2018 shows the government's demand for "a credible and stable legal and judicial system that promoted human rights and dignity, strengthened the rule-of-law principle of a liberal democracy [and] ensured social justice" (RGC: 2014a, p. 9).

EU-supported projects show that there is a serious interest of the EU in improving the situation in Cambodia regarding democracy, human rights and the reduction of poverty. This goal is also confirmed by recent statements by the European Union ambassador to

Cambodia, George Edgar, stating in July 2016 that "equitable and sustainable development is only possible if human rights and the rule of law are respected and in that context we look to the Cambodian authorities to ensure an environment in which all political parties and civil society can carry out their legitimate roles freely and without fear of harassment or intimidation" (Narim, Sovuthy & Kohlbacher: 2016). For instance, the EU is currently funding a project which focuses on the reforms of the National Election Committee (NEC). The NEC´s mandate is to organize national and local elections in Cambodia. The European Union provides EUR 10 Million of financial support to the election reforms in the form of equipment, technical assistance and policy advice. Another example is the funding of the Advocacy and Policy Institute which contributes to sub-national governance practice (EU: 2014b). The project aims to support active and effective participation, to raise accountability of commune government officials and to improve access to information for local citizens. Through the support to the MIGRA ACTION project the EU promotes safe migration by helping migrants to protect their rights in order to avoid becoming a victim of human trafficking and abuse.

The condition of partnership commitment, (whereby the EU follows the OECD principles,) shows that the European Union makes a concerted effort to drive forward the political and social development of the developing countries. The ownership principle stated in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005) is one pillar of the development policy of the EU requiring self-responsible action from the partner countries in order to receive funding: the demands are the exercise of leadership in developing and implementing their national development strategies through broad consultative processes, the translation of national development strategies into prioritized results-oriented operational programmes as expressed in medium-term expenditure frameworks and annual budgets as well as the co-ordination of aid at all levels together with other development resources in dialogue with donors and including the private sector and civil society. To put it in a nutshell, the European Union has undoubtedly a strong interest in fostering democracy, human rights and the eradication of poverty. However, the Union remains divided when it comes to agreeing on conditionality for development aid. While the EU, as shown above, certainly engages in fostering democracy, good governance and the human rights situation in Cambodia and thereby also relates to the Cambodian National Development Plans, so far there were no withholds of development aid because of human rights violations in the country. Calls by the European Parliament to make further assistance funding dependent on human rights were not followed by concrete actions, leaving doubt about the honesty of the EUs approach to conditionality (Euractiv, 2015). The European Parliament itself has no means to directly sanction.

Apart from the reflection on the EU's activities as a donor in Cambodia and in the world one should not pass over the Cambodian perspective. The fact is that the Cambodian government allows the European Union to carry out development aid, also with regard to democratization and the promotion of human rights, on the country's territory. When looking at the reasons for such an acceptance one might think that shared values (between Cambodia and the EU) and the willingness to change (by the government) serves as a basis

for the government's readiness to cooperate. This implies that the Cambodian government and the EU shared a common understanding of values and needed actions.

Common values and a will to change are at least part of the legal framework of the Kingdom. The Cambodian Constitution is based on values such as the rule of law, human rights, democracy and power separation deep embedded into the Kingdom's legal and political system. Its relevance and importance for ordinary Cambodian citizens covers varying aspects, ranging from freedom of religion, freedom of expression and access to information to fundamental rights such as labor, economic, women's and social rights as well as the right to education and institutional protection. For instance, article 31 contains the recognition of and respect for "human rights as stipulated in the United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration of human rights, the covenants and conventions related to human rights, women's and children's rights" (Constitution of Cambodia: 1993). The National Strategic Development Plan for 2014-2018 shows the government's focus on change. Announced in this document is the continuing implementation of seven strategic objectives of Legal and Justice Matters such as the strengthening of the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms. Moreover, a reform of the public administration in support of good governance as well as of institutional and human capacity and decentralization reforms in order to promote grass-root democracy is stated in the document. While the government performed well in reforms and achieved notable improvement in almost every policy field[9], there still remains a lack of implementing human rights and fundamental freedoms into Cambodia's reality. Several human right organizations, and scientific institutes criticize the human right situation in Cambodia. Several resolutions adopted by the parliament of the EU deal with the problematic situation in Cambodia. Most recently the European Parliament has expressed its "deep concerns about the worsening climate for opposition politicians and human rights activists in Cambodia", urged "the Cambodian authorities to revoke the arrest warrant for, and drop all charges against, opposition leader Sam Rainsy and CNRP members of the National Assembly and Senate" and called for the government "to drop all politically motivated charges and other criminal proceedings against (…) Cambodian human rights defenders"(EU Parliament: 2016). Despite the condemnations by the EU, the Cambodian government dismissed the European Parliament's Call to withhold millions of Euros in development funding unless the government releases five detained activists and rescinds an arrest warrant for former opposition party leader Sam Rainsy in June 2016 (RFA: 2016). However, not all EU institutions are that critical. Usually the EU parliament can, due to its position and distance, express more harsh criticism and often calls for decisive action, while EU players in the country (e.g. the delegation and ambassador) mostly speak and act more reserved and diplomatic. One explanatory factor is that the operating institutions in Cambodia depend on good relations with governmental institutions in order to conduct their activities.

A concern for human rights and democracy in Cambodia is also reflected by ongoing EU election observation in Cambodia. Since 1998, the EU has deployed four full Election Observation Missions (EOMs) to Cambodia, for the National Assembly Elections of 1998, 2003 and 2008 and for the first-ever Commune Council Elections of 2002. For the July

2013 National Assembly Elections the EU deployed a two-person Expert Mission (EEM) to follow the electoral process, largely as it was felt that inadequate progress had been made in addressing the concerns and recommendations made in 2008 (EEAS: 2015). With regard to the commune elections 2017 the EU ambassador to Cambodia, George Edgar, stated on 17 March 2017: "We are very keen to see […] an environment that allows genuine electoral competition because it is an important aspect of multi-party democracy, which Cambodia set out in its constitution" (VOA Cambodia: 2017).

IV. Aid and Aid Dependence?

The European Union has played a central role in the development of Cambodia since the Paris Peace Accords were signed in October 1991. Between 1991 and 1999 an estimated EUR 262 million (USD 282 million) were provided by EC assistance to the Kingdom of Cambodia. In addition EU Member States have funded bilateral cooperation programmes worth another EUR 590 million (USD 635 million). Following the first democratic elections in 1993 the EC Rehabilitation Programme for Cambodia (PERC) was established with a budget of EUR 88 million (USD 94.5million). Moreover initial EC assistance programmes sought to facilitate the reintegration of 375,000 former refugees and were mainly implemented through NGOs and international organizations (EC: 2007).

The funding for the EU development cooperation is regulated within the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF). It determines the ceilings for the EU's annual budget for the time frame of the MFF, which is based on a proposal by the European Commission (2014a). For the current time frame (2014-2020) the tentative budget is 410 million euros (European Commission: 2014b). It aims to support the national policies, namely the "Rectangular Strategy for Growth, Employment, Equity and Efficiency in Cambodia" and the "National Strategic Development Plan" (NSDP). At the same time, it follows the overall EU policies, notably set out in the "Agenda for Change", which main objective is to fight poverty more effectively around the globe (European Commission: 2011).

The European Union and its partners are Cambodia's largest donors of grant development aid. In 2014, the amount of EU aid contributed through the European Commission reached over EUR 40 million. Additionally, EU financial assistance is channeled through bilateral cooperation. This forms the biggest share of EU aid. Overall development assistance to Cambodia by the European partners for the period 2014-2018 is estimated to be of EUR 892 million in grants and of EUR 478 million in loans, which sums up to a total of EUR 1.37 billion (EU Delegation to Cambodia: 2015).

EU donors currently active in Cambodia include the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Sweden, Spain, the United Kingdom and the EU Delegation. In 2015, the EU Member States and the EU paid out a total of EUR 139 million in support of Cambodia's development agenda (EEAS: 2016b). Of that, Germany provided an amount of EUR 36.74 million as development aid to Cambodia (BMZ: 2017).

The first EC-Cambodia Country Strategy Paper, covering the years 2000-2003, and the National Indicative Programme (NIP) 2002-2004, established poverty reduction as the main objective for EC aid. Focal areas of intervention addressed urgent issues such as humanitarian aid and mine clearance as well as long term measures including rural support, basic education, health, support to the reform of public administration, and actions in support of human rights and the consolidation of democracy. The NIP 2002-2004 expenditures (total EUR 68.7 million) focused on five main aspects: Rural development (EUR 30.7 million), education (EUR 20 million), governance and democratization (EUR 10 million), health (EUR 5 million, plus thematic) and trade (EUR 3 million) (EC: 2007).

With regard to environmental issues during this time the EC financially supported the Cambodia Fuelwood Savings Project and the Integrated Biodiversity Conservation and Development of the Cardamom Mountains Project. The project commitments total just under EUR 2.6 million, with an annual disbursement of approximately EUR 830 000 in 2003.

The NIP 2005-2006 (total EUR 29.3 million) focused on pro-poor economic development (EUR 15–17 million), support of the social sector (EUR 9–11 million) and governance as a cross-cutting issue (EUR 2.5–3.5 million) (EC: 2007). Aid also addressed trade related development issues. From 2004 until 2006, the Multilateral Trade Assistance Project (MULTRAP) provided support to Cambodia in implementing international trade agreements, specifically with reference to the WTO to which Cambodia acceded in 2004. Furthermore, the EC-Cambodia Standards, Quality and Conformity Assessment Project (SQCAP) was established as the national implementation of the EC-ASEAN Economic Co-operation on Standards, Quality and Conformity Assessment Project. The project aimed for major improvement regarding food safety and industrial standards, that would allow increased opportunities for international trade. Another project addressed Intellectual Property Rights (EC: 2007).

For the period from 2007-2013 EU funded development aid to Cambodia reached a total of USD 191.1 million. USD 68.1 million were invested in education, USD 25.7 million in governance, USD 20 million in agriculture, USD 18.8 million in public finance management, USD 5.9 million in trade and USD 4.6 million in general budget support. However during the same period total international development cooperation funding to Cambodia reached USD 8.23 billion. Only 2.32% of that amount is directly linked to EU delegation aid. China alone contributed USD 1.6 billion during the same period. Aid Development cooperation from the US reached a volume of USD 443.4 million in the same time and Australia contributed USD 411,2 million (EU Delegation to Cambodia: 2013; RGC: 2014b).

For the period 2014-2020 the EU will spend a total of EUR 2,870 billion in the whole region of North and Southeast Asia. Thereby Cambodia will receive 15.67 % of all EU Delegation grants to the region. For the period 2014-2020 development cooperation increased tremendously, more than doubling from EUR 170 million between 2007 and 2013 to EUR 410 million between 2014 and 2020. Of the total spending EUR 144 million will be invested in agriculture/natural resource management (fisheries & forestry), EUR 140 million will be spent on education/skills and EUR 120 million on Governance and Administration (of which 10 million for the ECCC for the period 2014-2015). EUR 6 million are additional

support measures (EU: 2014b).

In 2016 the EU Delegation to Cambodia increased its development grants by 50% compared to the previous year. It climbed from about EUR 40 million in 2015 to almost EUR 60 million in 2016 (Kossov: 2016). Nonetheless, it is noteworthy that the share of direct EU funding of total European development cooperation aid has decreased compared to funding granted by single EU member states: While EU Delegation funding reached 30.8 % of spending granted by the EU institutions (EU Delegation spending and member states cooperation), the share dropped to 25% for the period between 2014 and 2018.

In general, the benefit of development cooperation is seen as a controversial issue among scholars[10]. The vast amounts of EU development aid reflect the aid dependency of Cambodia. Efficient agriculture, infrastructure, healthcare and security, among others, could not be guaranteed without the engagement of foreign players. As long as the international community takes responsibility for social matters in the country, the Cambodian government is more and more willing to become proactive in change. This is also linked to the pressure evoked by elections. However, the EUs engagement and Cambodia's aid dependency do not lead to a loss of sovereignty of the country. First and foremost the principle of ownership ensures that EU engagement follows the Cambodian National Development Plans and thereby relates to policies that were developed by the legitimate government. This prevents the powerful EU from simply forcing measures onto the Cambodian administration. Further the Union's political influence in Cambodia is little in general. Cambodia's principles of non-interference, partly socialist leftovers, partly retrieving from the experiences of colonial times, as well as the fact that there are alternative international donors like China, the US, Japan and Korea, ensure the country's freedom to make its own choices. Prime Minister Hun Sen has repetitively strongly opposed any indications of foreign intrusion into internal affairs (Xinhuanet: 2017).

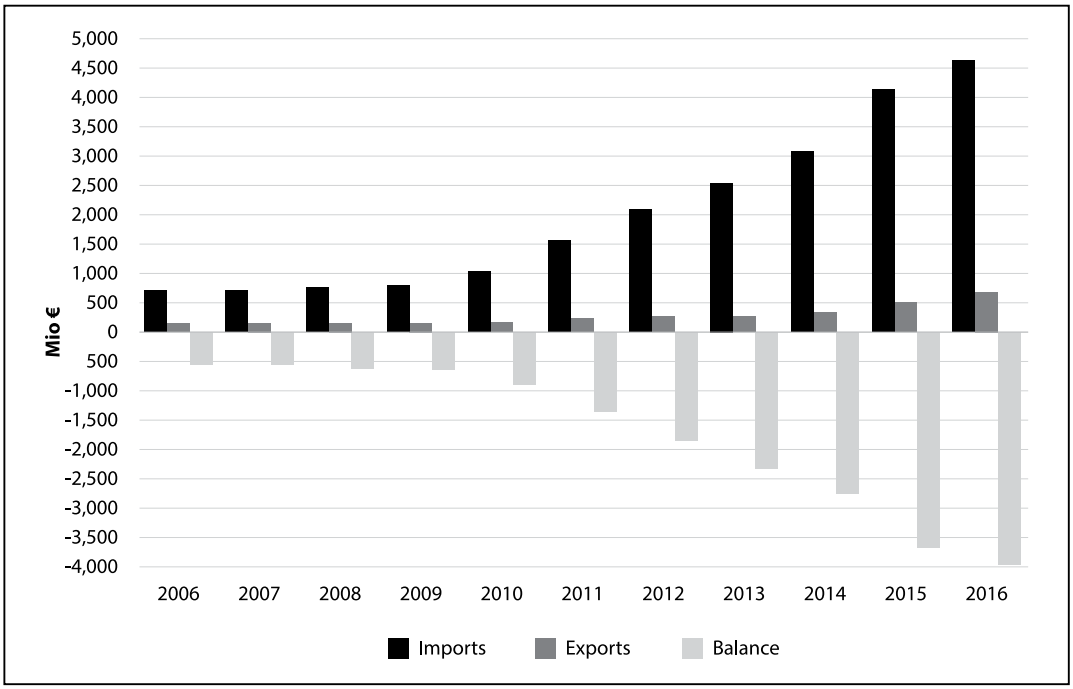
V. The EU and Cambodia as Trading Partners

In general the economic integration of a country into regional and global markets aims to eliminate tariff and nontariff barriers to the flow of goods, services, and factors of production between a group of nations, or different parts of the same nation. This leads first and foremost to open markets, which can be illustrated by the four freedoms of the European Union namely the free movement of goods within the European internal market, the freedom of movement of workers to work and stay freely within the Union, the right of establishment and freedom of providing services as well as the free movement of capital. Inspired by these liberal principles, the European Union is promoting liberalization and open markets all over the world and is committed to fair trade and creating conditions in which trade can prosper.

European Union, Trade with Cambodia

Total goods: EU Trade flows and balance, annual data 2006-2016

(Source Eurostat Comext - Statistical regime 4)



Source: *European Commission 2017*

The table illustrates how the trade between the European Union and Cambodia has significantly increased over the last ten years. Besides a value-based cooperation that aims to promote and establish the principles of good governance, human rights and democracy in Cambodia, economic motivators certainly play a role in the EU–Cambodia relations as well. The EU-Cambodian trade volume has been growing from EUR 661 million in 2005 up to EUR 4 billion in 2015 (the increase only between 2014 and 2015 was of 34 %) (EU Delegation to Cambodia: 2016a). In 2015, the EU single market was the prime export market for products from Cambodia with 34,6 percent of all exports going there, whereas garment, footwear and textiles make up more than 80 percent of the exports (Textiles 72.7 percent; Footwear 12.5 percent). Germany alone imported Cambodian goods worth USD 1.3 Billion in 2015. The increase of Cambodian exports to the EU certainly also derives from the EU trade scheme that applies for Cambodia: As one of the 48 least developed states, Cambodia falls under the EU's Generalized Scheme of Preferences (GSP) and therefore benefits from the most favorable regime available, called *Everything But Arms* (EBA) scheme. Accordingly, Cambodia is able to export goods duty-free and quota-free to the EU, with the exception of weapons, ammunition and arms (European Commission: 2013). In compliance with the EBA scheme, Cambodia is also benefiting from regional accumulation, describing the process of finishing textile products from other ASEAN countries in Cambodia and then considering

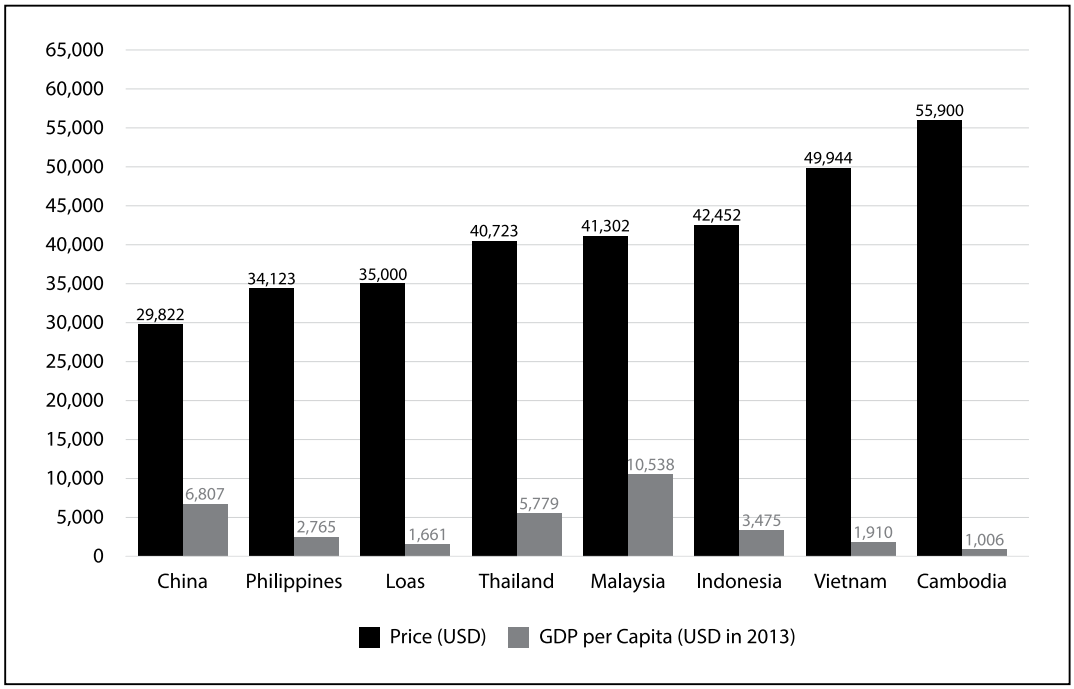
these products as Cambodian origin, which eases the access to the European market. In 2016 EU–Cambodia trade reached a total volume of EUR 5.1 billion (For comparison: estimated Cambodia-China trade in 2017: USD 5 billion). In the case of imports, the EU is ranked 8th for Cambodia, while for the EU, Cambodia is ranked 47th (0,2 %) in cases of imports and 122nd (>0,1 %) in cases of exports (European Commission: 2017b). Various EU efforts aim to optimize the EU–Cambodia trade framework: The EU is the largest donor of trade-related assistance in Cambodia. Support has contributed to simplifying export and import procedures as well as the implementation of an ambitious program of customs automation. The European Commission's "Export Help Desk" is a free and user-friendly online service providing information on how to access the EU market: EU import requirements, tariffs (and preferences), customs documentation, rules of origin, and much more (EU Delegation to Cambodia: 2016a).

Cambodia is one of the 10 members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and among the four least developed countries in the region. The ASEAN country group is the EU's third largest trading partner outside Europe, following the United States and China and characterized by a dynamic market with some 580 million consumers. The EU co-operates closely with the ASEAN region as a whole, foremost through the EU-ASEAN Dialogue which includes discussions on trade and investment issues at ministerial and senior economic official's level (European Commission: 2017c). However, earlier negotiations about a regional free trade agreement between the EU and ASEAN in 2007 had been put on the back burner because concrete results could not be reached. A major obstacle to the signing of a free trade agreement between the EU and the ASEAN countries was the difficult political and human rights situation in several ASEAN countries (Woolcock: 2007; Xianbai: 2015). Further differences among the ASEAN countries (GTAI: 2016) with regard to economic performance (BIP) (Lexas: 2016), economic diversification (high-tech, industrial branches, product range) as well as product and working standards and connection to world markets prevented an EU-ASEAN free trade agreement so far (Singapore Government: 2017). Subsequently it came to a strategically change. Therefore, the EU focuses first on bilateral trade agreements (Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand) with the possibility that these bilateral trade agreements can be consolidated to a whole regional free trade agreement later (BMWI: 2017). According to the Australian government, benefits from such a contract would not only result in the reduction of tariffs and non-tariff barriers, economic development and alignment of economic imbalances, the improvement of market access for foreign companies, legal security and investors' protection, but would also increase ecological and social standards (Australian Government: 2017).

In order to pursue the liberalization process and particularly support European businesses in market entry and the elimination of trading barriers, EuroCham Cambodia was inaugurated on 2 June 2011 with the support of the three founding European Business Organisations: the French *Chambre de Commerce Franco-Cambodgienne (CCFC)*, the *British Business Association in Cambodia (BBAC)* and the German *Arbeitskreis Deutsche Wirtschaft (ADW)*. EuroCham was established with the objectives of promoting the interests of European businesses operating in Cambodia, facilitating the entry of European

companies into the market and creating an extensive support network among corporate and individual members alike. In this context, EuroCham activities include partnerships with the Cambodian government in the areas of taxation and dispute resolution, the creation of sector-specific Committees under the EuroCham umbrella and provision of a range of services to European Businesses (EuroCham Cambodia: 2017). Furthermore, Cambodia acceded to the 1980 EC-ASEAN Cooperation Agreement on 28 July 2000. Participation in the agreement allows parties to be involved in EC-ASEAN cooperation activities. Both sides are working on a number of projects designed to enhance trade and investment between the two regions and to promote mutual understanding (EU Delegation to Cambodia: 2016b). The 2016 EuroCham Cambodia White Book contains a number of recommendations that would, according to the EuroCham, contribute to the elimination of trading barriers, foster economic growth and thereby help to reduce poverty. Issues addressed in the EuroCham White Book foremost deal with human resources (skills, trainings, work permits for foreign employees), customs questions, transport and logistics, as well as taxation and import regulations in general. For example the port fees in Cambodia are much higher than the regional average, leading to high costs of international shipping to and from Cambodia. Under the current Cambodian taxation system, high import tariffs on automobiles contribute to an affordability problem in the Kingdom. The EuroCham Cambodia found that while it needs 7 years of income to afford a Toyota Camry in Thailand, 12,2 years of income in Indonesia and 3,9 years in Malaysia, the average Cambodian needs 55,6 years of income to afford the same car. High taxation on import products and other obstacles to effective free trade are a main concern for the EU to address. In general the EU trade and investment efforts can certainly be considered as interfaces between self-serving economic interests and the EU strategy to foster economic development in order to reduce poverty.

PRICE OF TOYOTA CAMRY VS GDP PER CAPITA



Source: *EuroCham Commission 2017*

However, while from 2003-2013, access to the European market under the EBA allowed Cambodia to more than double its exports to the EU, providing direct employment to more than half a million Cambodians. Over the past decade for instance the European Commission has repetitively earned criticism for resisting the calls by civil society organizations and the European Parliament to withdraw trade preferences from agricultural products when producer companies are implicated in land grabbing and human rights abuses. Over the years there has been numerous case of forced displacement of rural and indigenous communities resulting from large-scaled land concessions granted by the Cambodian government for agro-industrial development. Displacement, severe livelihood impacts and violent evictions have all been documented and linked to land concessions issued to companies intending to produce sugar for export to the EU (The Cambodia Daily: 2014; ETI: 2016). Another problem is certainly the imbalance between the EU and Cambodia with regard to economic diversification and Cambodia's limitation to low-value-added garment production that leaves the country at the bottom of the global value chain. Cambodia's limitation further exposes the economy to demand disruptions and price shocks. The global financial crisis cut into garment production and exports, revealing the country's vulnerability to its narrow industrial focus. Moreover, about 80% of merchandise exports go to slow-growing markets in the EU, Canada and the United States (ADB: 2014).

Despite these issues the EU-Cambodia trade relations are characterized by interdependence and mutual interests: The growing Cambodian export rates to the EU made access to the European market essential to the Cambodian economy.

VI. The EU as Security Actor and Peace Guarantor

While the EU is mainly seen as an economic super power and first and foremost relevant in the fields of trade and development cooperation, the Union's policies have broadened in the post 9/11 era. The events of the September 11 attacks in 2001 and the threats of international terrorism, with the fear that Southeast Asia could become a second front in the war against terrorism, also provided the EU with new opportunities for greater involvement on non-traditional security issues of terrorism, piracy and money laundering. The European Commission's Communication in 2003 called for revitalizing of EU's relations with ASEAN and the countries of Southeast Asia. This Communication identifies six strategic priorities of the EU towards ASEAN:

1. Supporting regional stability and fight against terrorism
2. Promoting human rights, democratic principles and good governance
3. Mainstreaming justice and home affairs issues such as migration, organized crimes, and piracy
4. Injecting a new dynamism into regional trade and investment relations
5. Continuing to support the development of less prosperous countries
6. Intensifying dialogue and cooperation in specific policy Areas (Hwee: 2010).

The responding EU action, namely the EU-UNODC Joint Initiative for Supporting Southeast Asian Countries to Counter Terrorism, has existed since 2012 and strengthens counter-terrorism measures in Cambodia and certain Southeast Asian countries as a whole. This initiative supports a research project to analyze policy and program implications of radicalization. It strengthens the collaborative investigation and prosecution of terrorist cases through training. Moreover, it contributes to the drafting of laws on counter-terrorism and counter-financing of terrorism in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam. Also the EU benefits from the initiative as commercial ties between enterprises in Southeast Asia and enterprises situated in the EU are tight. Terrorist attacks in Southeast Asia would not only harm the safety and security of EU citizens in the region, but also create economic damage (European Commission: 2015).

According to "A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign And Security Policy"(EU: 2016) published in June 2016 the EU speaks up for the promotion of a rule-based global order as it has an interest in promoting agreed rules to provide global public goods and advocates a peaceful and sustainable world. It is also clear from the document that the EU considers peace beyond its borders as an essential factor to guarantee security within its own borders. The strategy paper shows the European Union regards internal and external security as ever more intertwined stating: "Our security at home depends on peace beyond our borders" (p. 7). The EU refers also to the Asiatic region which is, especially against the background of the Chinese expansive geopolitical approach and non-compliance with the Hague Tribunal in the South China Sea Conflict and the generally unstable political situation, of high importance. Freedom of navigation, respect for the international law, including the Law of the Sea and its arbitration procedures as well as the peaceful settlement of maritime disputes will be, in the light of the paper, the key areas for

East and Southeast Asia (p. 38). The assistance in building maritime capacities and support on ASEAN-led regional security architecture, cooperation on counter-terrorism, anti-trafficking and migration and the promotion of human rights and democracy in order to stabilize the entire region are also mentioned in the document (p. 38). There is an EU-wide consensus, that sustainable development is not possible without peace and security in this region. Therefore, these two challenges cannot be considered separately.

More particularly, the stabilization of peace is one pillar of the EU's engagement in Cambodia. According to the European Development Cooperation Strategy for Cambodia 2014-2018 (EU: 2014) the EU works in areas especially in cooperation with ASEAN as they share the same goals for their citizens, namely peace, stability and prosperity, in order to bring the two regions closer together through different cooperation programmes, for instance on regional integration and institution-building (p. 34). Also the Treaty on the European Union states in Article 2 (5) that the EU shall contribute to worldwide peace and security. Furthermore, according to Article 10 (2c) of the treaty the EU shall "preserve peace, prevent conflicts and strengthen international security, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, with the principles of the Helsinki Final Act and with the aims of the Charter of Paris, including those relating to external borders".

However, even as the fostering of peace in Cambodia and the region is one important condition to actually being able to engage with the country, it is only one pillar of the EU's operations. The economic aspects as well as the promotion of democracy and human rights are seen as relatively more important, which is reflected also by the corresponding documents. While the EU has included a security policy in its approach towards foreign policy over the past decade, the Union does not play a significant role in ASEAN or Cambodian security affairs. Peace and security in the region are rather placed under the umbrella of the US and China, whose confrontation in the South China Sea certainly gives cause for concern, also for the respective regional allies. However, bilateral security cooperation in combination with regional agreements remains the leading concept for Southeast Asia, even as the EU tries to further engage in the field.

VII. Conclusion

The different areas of operation underline the relevance of the EU in Cambodia and the region. Even though the EU can be rather considered as a development partner focusing on the promotion and realization of values like democracy, human rights and good governance, there are policy turns caused by domestic agendas, which may reshape the development area. For instance, as a result of the EU refugee crisis the German government will probably focus more on geographical areas like Africa and the Near East. The new focus of strong EU member states may lead to turns and shifts as the big line of EU development as is decided by the head of states. In this regard it remains to be seen how strong the European Union will continue to operate in Cambodia.

Regarding the economic ties between Cambodia and the European Union, it remains to be seen what kind of impacts the loss of trade facilitations provided by the Everything but Arms Initiative will have. It is worth noting that this is likely to take at least ten years and that it depends on the re-classification by the UN as a low middle income country. This also includes an EBA grace period. As Cambodia depends on its textile industry and low-tech products, the achievement of a lower middle-income country status, one goal of the government that may lead to challenges. The benefits of duty- free and quota-free exports to the European Union member states will be dropped, which could lead to an exodus of international textile producers to other countries.

Another relevant factor is the growing influence of China. Althernatively, the EU and its partners are about to be overtaken by China in areas of trade and investment as well as the supply of grants, loans, and technical cooperation. Compared to the EU, China focuses less on values like democracy, rule of law, human rights and good governance. It rather seems that China follows a practical approach with a main focus on the creation of infrastructure and the development of new markets. In addition to that the current US foreign policies in the form of cuts in aid as well as decreasing engagement may foster the role of China.

Nevertheless, these are just some interesting questions to examine and observe. For the time being the European Union remains a key player with regard to trade, development cooperation and regional integration. And there is no doubt that the European Union will continue its promotion of values as well as its support to countries committed to these values with a willingness to realize them in joint efforts.

Endnotes

1 For further reading on the France Cambodia relations, I recommend the book "Cambodia: Progress and Challenges since 1991" (Sothirak et al, 2012), especially chapter 11: Cambodia's Relations with France since the Paris Agreements of 1991 by Julio A. Jeldres.

2 At this point it is important to note that Hungary, Ireland, Sweden, Italy, Finland, Switzerland, the Czech Republic as well as all other European countries maintained or still maintain diplomatic relations with Cambodia. Furthermore they cooperate in political, economic and development-related fields.

3 Economic spillover describes the development of cooperation within one specific industrial, economic or political area, which leads to cooperation within another area.

4 Form follows function is defined as an approach which primarily focuses on the functions, cooperation within policy fields, and then shapes the forms, in the EU case institutions.

5 The current version of the Treaty on the European Union entered into force in 2009 and followed the Treaty of Lisbon (2007) and the Treaty of Maastricht (1992).

6 EU donors can also encompass non-member states of the European Union from Europe. In case of Cambodia, the European Union has set up a European Development Cooperation Strategy with following member states, Czech Republic, Germany, Finland, France, Ireland, Italy, the United Kingdom, Sweden and one non-member state, namely Switzerland. This does not preclude that there are other donors from either Europe or the European Union operating in Cambodia.

7 Australia, Brunei, Canada, China, France, India, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Soviet Union, Thailand and United Kingdom, USA, Vietnam, Yugoslavia

8 Relations between Cambodia and the two EU states have existed before the Paris Peace Agreement. France and its former protectorate Cambodia have enjoyed close relations. The second-biggest community of Cambodians lives in France today, largely because of Khmer Rouge refugees. After the end of the protectorate in 1953, the French influence decreased, in particular due to the nationalization of commerce. The UK was the first country to condemn human rights under the Khmer Rouge in 1978; today it is a significant contributor to the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC).

9 The socio-economic achievements of Cambodia form the basis for further programmatic steps. The Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP) 2014-2020 summarizes key challenges and achievements (EU: 2014b).

10 Criticism of development aid or cooperation is not a new phenomenon. Criticism has been voiced by diverse authors from different continents. Among the authors are Dambisa Moyo (Dead Aid: Why Aid is not working and how there is another way for Africa, 2009), Hayter Teresa (Aid as Imperialism, 1971), Easterly William (The White Man's Burden: Why the West's efforts to aid the rest have done so much ill and so little good, 2006), Sophal Ear (Aid Dependence in Cambodia: How Foreign Assistance undermines Democracy, 2013).

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9

AUSTRALIA'S ROLE IN CAMBODIA: MORE THAN A PEACEMAKING ARCHITECT

LENG Thearith

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AUSTRALIA'S ROLE IN CAMBODIA: MORE THAN A PEACEMAKING ARCHITECT

I. Introduction

Australia played an indispensable role in Cambodian peace process in the 1980s-1990s through its peacemaking initiative called 'Red Book' and its direct involvement in peacekeeping operations led by the United Nations in the early 1990s. Canberra's engagement has increasingly become more discernible in other areas ranging from aid, economics, to defense. Such expanded roles played by Canberra have been mainly driven by an Australian intention to further engage in Asia and to mitigate the Chinese influence in this region. For Cambodia, fostering good ties with Australia is significant given the latter's important contribution to the peacemaking in the 1980s-1990s, and increasing roles played by Australia in the realms of aid, economic development, and defense. The article also highlights Cambodia's policy responses towards Australia, and the rationales underlying those responses. Lastly, the author sheds light on factors that hinder the current bilateral relations between the two countries. To begin with, the article will give a broad-brush overview of security problems Cambodia encountered in the 1980s-the 1990s. These security challenges formed a foundation for the Australian involvement in Cambodia.

II. Security Challenges in Cambodia in the 1980s and 1990s

Cambodia encountered serious security threats ranging from chronic civil war to a foreign interference in the late 1970s-1990s. All the Cambodian disputants faced huge challenges in reaching a genuine ceasefire agreement and forming a legitimate government independent from external powers. All of these problems were particularly witnessed in the period that followed the Khmer Rouge regime.

The Khmer Rouge who seized power in Cambodia from 1975 to 1979 committed a mass genocide that killed millions of their own people. The regime was, however, overthrown by Vietnamese forces in January 1979. In June 1982, the Khmer Rouge joined forces with the other Cambodian factions known as FUNCINPEC (led by Prince Sihanouk), the Khmer People's National Liberation Front (KPNLF) to form the so-called Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK) in order to stage guerrilla warfare against the Vietnamese forces and the People's Republic of Kampuchea [PRK], which had been backed by Hanoi (Berry, 1997). Despite being militarily toppled by a much more superior Vietnamese army, the Khmer Rouge forces demonstrated a disturbing ability to carry out armed attacks and to inflict reverses on the PRK and the Vietnamese forces. Neither the PRK nor the Khmer Rouge took decisive control of all Cambodian territory during the 1980s and 1990s.

Cambodia's security was further complicated by interference from external powers. China still shored up the Khmer Rouge by providing military arms and backing the latter's seat at the United Nations. Thailand, in addition, continued harboring the Khmer resistance forces [including the Khmer Rouge] in an attempt to counter the threat from Vietnam and its proxy government—the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK)– until 1993. Despite its official announcement of the end of official contacts with the Khmer Rouge in 1993, the Thai military still provided clandestine support for them, as was clearly articulated by the then Australian Senator Gareth Evans:

> It is unacceptable I believe for the Khmer Rouge leaders still to be harbored in Thailand. I believe it's unacceptable for the Khmer Rouge still to be able to cross the [Thai-Cambodia] border more or less with impunity when they are put under pressure by the Cambodian forces (Brown, 1994, p. 4).

In short, all of the aforementioned security challenges were beyond the capacity of a small state, like Cambodia, to resolve without significant external assistance. But it begs a question as to who would undertake a mission to resolve these huge security problems? Australia was, in this regard, the pioneer of the Cambodian peacemaking process, as will be illustrated below.

III. Australia as a Peacemaker in the Cambodian Conflict

1. Australia as an Architect of Cambodian Peace

Australia's role in the Cambodian conflict became apparent in November 1989, during which the then Australian Foreign Minister, Gareth Evans, suggested an enhanced United Nations administrative engagement in the peacemaking process in Cambodia. Australia developed this idea into a 155-page plan called the "Red Book". The plan was introduced at the Jakarta Informal Meeting in February 1990. One of the core elements of the plan was to shore up the UN's role in overseeing the functioning and the administration of a temporary government in Cambodia, the Supreme National Council (SNC) which comprised four Cambodian disputants, namely the People's Republic of Kampuchea, FUNCINPEC, KPNLF and the Khmer Rouge (Evans, 2012).[1] Another important element of the proposal was the enhanced support of the UN's electoral role in Cambodia. The Red Book initiatives were later accepted by the 'Permanent 5' members of the UN Security Council, being incorporated in a framework document for a comprehensive political settlement in August 1990.

Although the conflicting Cambodian parties basically accepted the framework document in September 1990, the process to gain actual agreement over the Cambodian problem made slow progress until Prince Sihanouk hosted a meeting of the Supreme National Council in June 1991 in Pattaya, Thailand, where a significant agreement was reached. Subsequent meetings were held in August and September. Eventually, at the Paris Conference in October 1991, the Agreements on a Comprehensive Political Settlement of the Cambodian Conflict was officially signed. Notably, the major elements of the agreements were adopted from the Australian proposals in the Red Book:

- The formulation of a United Nations Transnational Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) to oversee the functions of government in the fields of foreign relations, national defense, finance, public security, information and civil police;
- The Supreme National Council would act as the temporary government. The SNC would give advice to the UNTAC which would obey the advice if it was in tandem with the Agreements;
- The UN peacekeeping forces were to supervise the ceasefire;
- The UN peacekeepers were to supervise the demobilization of 70% of each of the four parties' troops, whereas 30% of them were to hand in their arms to UN peacekeeping forces and be grouped in cantonments;
- The UN was to run and supervise elections.

Canberra was not only actively involved in the peacemaking process that resulted in the above historical peace agreements, but also in actual UN peacekeeping operations following the conclusion of the agreements. Concretely, Australia contributed 40 Australian Defence Force personnel [through the United Nations Advance Mission in Cambodia, UNAMIC] to strengthen the ceasefire by establishing contacts between the Supreme National Council in Phnom Penh and soldiers of the four conflicting parties. Further, Australia contributed

around 1.51% of the total cost of the UNTAC, formed by the United Nations Security Council in February 1992. The UNTAC was composed of 15,900 military personnel, 3,600 civilian police, and 2,400 civilian administrators. The cost totalled USD 1.9 billion. Canberra's specific contributions to the UNTAC's operations were as follows;

- The UNTAC Force Commander, Lieutenant-General John Sanderson;
- 495 Australian Defence Force personnel as a signals contingent and 6 headquarters staff;
- 10 Australian Federal Police officers;
- 6 Blackhawk helicopters, supplies and 100 Australian Defence Force personnel for a six-week deployment during the election period; and
- 9 Australian Electoral Commission officers including Michael Maley as Deputy Electoral Commissioner, and 69 election observers.

In short, Australia was the main architect of the Cambodian peacemaking process thanks to its active engagement in the preparation of the so-called "Red Book". The concept of the Red Book was later elaborated into a full draft negotiating text which eventually resulted in the 1991 Paris Peace Agreements. Senator Evans portrayed the Australian role in Cambodia at that time as a "role of mapmaker" (Bonnor, 1994, p. 7). Canberra, moreover, dispatched its peacekeeping forces to undertake the peacekeeping operations under the United Nations umbrella. This begs a question as to why Australia made such tremendous efforts to resolve the Cambodian crisis.

2. Rationales for the Australian Involvement in Cambodia

The Australian engagement in Cambodia was driven by its foreign policy objective to be a "Middle Power". Evans and Bruce Grants made it clear that Australia's role in Cambodia illustrated "a major development in Australian Diplomacy". Evans considered the engagement in Cambodian peacekeeping as a vindication of middle power diplomacy—that is, effective coalition building with 'like-minded' countries to achieve a selected, realistic goal (Evans, 1994a). The goal of middle power diplomacy, according to Senator Evans, was to increase the maximum influence that can be brought to bear by Australia (Evans, 1993, pp. 2-3).

The key elements of middle power diplomacy encompass the identification of a proper opportunity, an adequate physical capacity to follow the issue through, intellectual imagination and creativity, and credibility. It was the last element- credibility- that induced Australia to actively contribute to the peace settlement in Cambodia. Australia did not earn the regional credibility it had longed for in Asia. Thus, seeking conflict resolution to the Cambodian crisis would promote Canberra's image as a player in the region. Further, the Cambodian issue gave Australia a good opportunity to work closer with ASEAN countries, particularly Indonesia. This paved the way for Australia to further engage with ASEAN economically and politically in the long term.

Another important reason for Canberra's active involvement in the Cambodian

peacekeeping process was its interest in regional stability. Senator Evans postulated that the Cambodian problem had been the greatest source of instability in the region (Evans, 1994a, p. 9). Such instability did not derive solely from the Cambodian disputants *per se*, but also from confrontations between the regional countries, especially the great powers (namely China, the USSR, and the US). This tension hampered a conducive environment for economic cooperation among countries in the region and triggered an exodus of refugees. This would, in turn, jeopardize Australian national interests.

Lastly, the Australian engagement was significantly influenced by the motives of the Australian decision-makers, particularly the personal attributes of Senator Gareth Evans who served as the Foreign Minister from 1988-1996. Evans once stated that "for myself… of all the many issues I've dealt with as Foreign Minister, it's been the search for peace in Cambodia about which I've felt most strongly in personal terms" (Evans, 1994b). Evans visited Cambodia in 1968 as a student, during which he felt attached to this country. This led him to devote a significant amount of his own energy and his department's resources in the quest for a resolution to Cambodia's conflict. In addition to his personal motives, it was also in the interest of the Australian Labor Party to consistently engage in the Cambodian problem, since this would show Australian voters that Australia, under the Labor government, was repositioning itself well in Asia.

IV. Australia's Roles in Cambodia: More Than a Peacemaker?

Although Cambodia-Australia relations in the 1980s and 1990s mainly centered upon the peacemaking/peacekeeping activities, the ties have flourished remarkably, especially from 2000 onwards. Such positive trends in the bilateral relations can be discerned in a number of areas ranging from aid, economics, politics, and defense.

1. Aid Provision

Even though Cambodia recorded a high economic performance with 7 per cent of annual GDP growth, its people' welfare remains largely weak. Many Cambodian families, particularly those living in the rural areas, are extremely vulnerable to slipping backward economically. They are very susceptible to external shocks such as the 2015 drought, to severe health problems, and to the sudden loss of jobs. Such a vulnerability has been exacerbated by limited social welfare protection, high rates of unofficial employment and a shortage of education and skills. Thus, Cambodia still, by and large, relies on external aid to improve its economic performance. Australia has been one of the leading foreign donors to Cambodia, and its Official Development Assistance priority is to improve infrastructure, agricultural productivity, health and education in Cambodia.

Australia has supported the development of Cambodia's needed physical infrastructure in the recent years. For example, Canberra backed Phnom Penh's efforts to restore its national railway system in an attempt to connect Cambodia with the rest of the ASEAN countries and China. Australia provided AUD 27.1 million to the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in order to realize this railway project which cost around AUD 143 million in 2009-2015 (DFAT, 2015a). It is worth noting that the ADB has been tasked to provide funding for ASEAN countries which commit to realizing the ASEAN Connectivity Plan. Australia further donated AUD 12.6 million for an emergency flood rehabilitation project in Cambodia (DFAT, 2015a), aimed at restoring critical national infrastructure assets, such as roads and irrigation systems, and strengthening emergency capacity for natural disasters. Cambodia frequently experiences flooding which claims human lives and significantly damages the country's physical infrastructure.

Table 1: Australia's Official Development Assistance (ODA) to Cambodia and its Ranking

Year	Australia's ODA to Cambodia (AUD Million)	Australia's ODA Ranking in Cambodia
2011	74.3	3
2012	84.0	3
2013	77.2	3
2014	92.0	5
2015	90.1	-

Source: *Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, accessed 07-September-2016*

Australian aid has not only been poured into the development of Cambodia's physical infrastructure but also into the development of agricultural productivity. To do so, the Australian Government donated approximately AUD 59.85 million to back the Cambodian Agricultural Value Chain Program (CAVAC) aimed at restoring or building seven irrigation schemes in Cambodia (DFAT, 2015b). In 2014, the irrigation system backed by CAVAC contributed to a significant increase in Cambodian rice production worth around USD 24.4 million (DFAT, 2015b). In addition to this, CAVAC assists Cambodian peasants by introducing them to modern farming techniques.

Besides agricultural productivity, Australia assists Cambodia in promoting the healthcare system through various programs such as the Health Equity and Quality Improvement Initiative (HEQII), and Partne ring to Save Lives Program (PSLP). In relation to HEQII, approximately USD 55.04 million has been allocated for the period of 2016-2021. For PSLP, USD 19.75 million has been allocated for 2013-18 (DFAT, 2016b). According to the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Australian aid facilitated 2.6 million of poorest Cambodians to access free health care (DFAT, 2016b).

Apart from infrastructure and agricultural productivity, the Australian government has concurrently provided its assistance to develop Cambodia's human resources. Since 1994, Australia has, for instance, supported more than 600 Cambodian students under the Australia Award Scholarship program. Based on a tracer study done by the DFAT for the period of 1996-2013, awardees chose their fields of study related to society and cultures (30%), management and commerce (30%), health (12%), and agriculture and environment (11%) (DFAT, 2014). The study illustrates the significant contribution of those awardees upon their return to Cambodia. The research showed that nearly half of the award recipients were promoted to managerial or decision-making level upon their return home, suggesting that those students have had strong impacts on Cambodian development.

2. Economic Cooperation

Even though economic cooperation between the two countries was negligible prior to the 1990s, it became very significant after 2000. Cambodia and Australia signed a bilateral trade deal as a part of Cambodia's accession to the World Trade Organization in 2004. Canberra has increasingly intensified its economic ties with Phnom Penh in the areas of trade and investment following the conclusion of the Agreement Establishing the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area (AEAANFTA) in 2009. This agreement came into effect on 1 January 2010 (DFAT, 2016a). Following the conclusion of the agreement, one can observe a positive trend in Australian Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows into Cambodia as well as in surges in bilateral trade between the two countries.

There has been a remarkable surge in the Australian FDI in Cambodia since 2011. For example, Australian investment in Cambodia stood only at USD 1.2 million in 1998. However, the figure jumped to USD 24.5 million in 2011, making Australia the 8th highest foreign investor in the country after China, Vietnam, the United Kingdom, Malaysia, South Korea, the US, and Japan (CDC, 2015). Australia slipped back to 10th position, behind Thailand, in 2014. Nonetheless, the share of Australian FDI in the total FDI inflows into Cambodia increased from 0.43% in 2011 to 0.51% in 2014 (CDC, 2015).

Apart from Foreign Direct Investment, Australia's trade with Cambodia has increased remarkably in recent years. The bilateral trade volume between the two countries was only USD 13.53 million in 2004, but dramatically surged to USD 48.18 million in 2011 and USD 156.11 million in 2015 (ADB, 2015). The Australian market has increasingly become a significant export destination for Cambodia, as can be illustrated by the increasing share of Cambodian exports to Australia compared to its total trading with the rest of the world. This export share stood only at 0.11% in 2004 but rose to 0.39% in 2010 and 1.02% in 2015.

Table 2: Cambodian exports to Australia as a fraction of its Total Trade, Asian Development Bank, 2004-2015.

Year	Total Trade with Australia (USD, millions)	Cambodian Exports to Australia as a fraction of Total Trade
2004	13.53	0.11
2005	20.79	0.17
2006	19.74	0.18
2007	24.14	0.28
2008	27.89	0.25
2009	46.23	0.35
2010	37.56	0.39
2011	48.18	0.48
2012	61.17	0.47
2013	80.22	0.65
2014	150.02	1.00
2015	156.11	1.02

Source: *Asian Development Bank 2004-15, Integration Indicators, accessed 16 September 2016 (https://aric.adb.org/integrationindicators)*

3. Defense Cooperation

Australia has not only provided assistance to Cambodia's economic and social sectors, but also to the field of defense. For example, in the area of maritime security, Canberra has actively assisted Phnom Penh in developing the latter's naval capability since 1995. The assistance can be witnessed in the building of a navy workshop facility and the provision of English training classes to Cambodian naval officers. Further, Australia also convened maritime security workshops in 2006, 2007, and 2011 to enhance the capacity of Cambodian naval officers (Australian Embassy to Cambodia, 2016).

Australia is also keen to transform the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces (RCAF) into an effective security apparatus by giving opportunities for Cambodian soldiers to undertake study or training at prestigious institutions such as the Australian Defence Force Academy, Australian Defence College, Royal Military College and Australian Command and Staff College. Moreover, Australia has actively supported the Cambodian RCAF in developing, publishing, and disseminating the latter's Defence White Paper under the Defence Cooperation Program (DCP) (Australian Embassy to Cambodia, 2016).

Under the DCP, RCAF personnel likely to engage in peacekeeping operations have also received training either in Cambodia or in Australia. In 2006, Australia helped the RCAF to

run its first peacekeeping operation course designed to assist the RCAF in participating in United Nations peacekeeping operations. More and more, Canberra assists the funding of Cambodian peacekeepers who join in a yearly International Peacekeeping Exercise called PIRAP JABIRU.

V. Cambodia's Foreign Policy towards Australia

As described above, Australia has significantly engaged its Cambodian counterpart in multi-faceted areas ranging from aid to economics and defense cooperation. Given this increasing Australian assistance, Cambodia has positively responded by demonstrating its support for various Australian policies. For example, Phnom Penh backed Canberra's candidature for a judicial position within the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for the term 2015-2024. The nomination of the judges was conducted by election in New York in 2014. Apart from this, Cambodia also backed Australia's membership of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) for the term 2015-2018. The membership was selected by election in a congress of the ITU in October-November 2014 in Busan, South Korea. In the meantime, Phnom Penh supports Canberra's candidacy on the Human Right Council (HRC) for the term 2018-2020, an election for which will be held in New York in November 2017.

More noticeably, Cambodia supports a controversial deal over the resettlement of refugees from various nations in Australia to Cambodia. Cambodian Interior Minister Sar Kheng and Australian Minister of Immigration and Border Protection Scott Morrison signed a Memorandum of Understanding Relating to the Settlement of Refugees in Cambodia on 26 September 2014, under which Cambodia was expected to accept refugees sent from Australia (Hawley, 2014). The Royal Government of Cambodia accepted the deal with Australia although it encountered a remarkable protest from Cambodian civil societies, human rights groups, and the opposition Cambodian National Rescue Party (CNRP). Those activists consider that Cambodia should not receive refugees given the country's bad record of human rights violations, corrupt practices, and inability to resettle its own landless people (Crothers, 2014). Nonetheless, the government still insists on welcoming Australian refugees who wish to resettle in Cambodia.

The motives behind this insistence are threefold: humanitarian grounds, the need for Australian economic aid, and an exchange for political support from Australia. In relation to humanitarian reason, Cambodia apparently feels indebted to the Australian contribution to Cambodian peacemaking in the 1980s and 1990s and seeks to demonstrate its appreciation by accepting the refugees from Australia. The second rationale for Cambodia's willingness to accept the Australian refugees is that the Cambodian government needs broad economic and political support from Australia. As a small and poor country, Cambodia needs external economic assistance from Australia. As mentioned earlier, Australia has provided substantial economic aid to Cambodia in many areas for years. Hence, the refugee intake is likely to motivate Australia to continue providing aid in order to support this impoverished

economy. It is believed that Cambodia accepted the refugees in exchange for AUD 40 million in aid to Cambodia (Hawley, 2014).

The third reason is that Cambodia, which has been ruled by the Cambodian People's Party (CPP) for about three decades, is apparently in need of overseas diplomatic recognition. According to some CPP critics, the CPP has in recent years been criticized by the international community for its mishandling of human rights, land ownership, and corruption issues, and for the persecution of the opposition party as well as civil society groups. Therefore, admitting the Australian refugees may, at least, help to neutralize the Australian stance towards the CPP-led government's mishandling of the aforementioned problems. Australia has been known as a world's middle power whose voice is quite influential in the international arena.

VI. Rationales for Australia's Intensified Relations with Cambodia

Since the 1990s, Australia has further intensified its ties with Cambodia in particular as well as Asia in general. Almost all Australian prime ministers, with the exception of John Howard, have seen Asia as a source of Australia's future growth. The rise of China, India, and Southeast Asian economies has drawn Australian attention to this region. If Australia ignored Asia, its economy would have lagged behind others in the course of time. Paul Keating, for example, suggested that world economic markets would be transformed by the rise of Asia and that Australia should place emphasis on learning Asian languages (Johnson, Ahluwalia, & McCarthy, 2010, p. 65). Similarly, Kevin Rudd, Prime Minister from 2007 to 2010, underlined the significance of engaging with Asia, suggesting that Australia needed to wake up to the new economic and political realities of the Asian Century (Elias & Johnson, 2010, p. 3).

Australia has engaged Asian economies by becoming one of the founding members of the East Asian Summit in 2005. The East Asian Summit, at its outset, contained 10 ASEAN countries plus, Australia, China, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand, and India. It now embraces two more members: the US and Russia. Thus, engaging with Asia will help Australia enjoy dynamic growth in Asia and other strong economies in the world. Australia's engagement with Cambodia is a means to realize its Asia-centric policy objective. Otherwise, Australia will be left out as former Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew argued in 1994 that: "Australia [would have] risked becoming the 'Poor White Trash of Asia'…[had it distanced from Asia]" (Johnson et al., 2010).

Australia's engagement with Cambodia is also driven by its need to counter the rising Chinese influence in Southeast Asia. Although Canberra has involved itself in the development of Asia in general, it is not comfortable with Chinese domination of the region. Australia reckons that the rise of China as the dominant power in Asia may upset the power balance crucial to the maintenance of the peace and stability in this region. Therefore,

Australian policy engagement with Cambodia will at least help to minimize the growing Chinese influence in this small country as well as in the region as a whole. Cambodia has increasingly been leaning towards China in recent years by supporting the Chinese position on the South China Sea issue.

VII. Challenges to Australia-Cambodia Ties

Despite the continuing constructive engagement of Australia in Cambodia in recent years, both countries are facing obstacles in elevating these relations into a strategic partnership and beyond. There are two main obstacles that prevent this elevation: strategic consideration and the different political systems of the two countries. Firstly, considering the strategic aspect, there is still a big gap between the two countries' strategic calculations. Australia, while willing to engage economically with China, does not want Southeast Asia to be politically dominated by the latter. In other words, Australia, to a certain extent, wishes to contain Chinese influence in the region. On the contrary, Phnom Penh regards Beijing as a counterweight against its larger neighbors, Vietnam and Thailand. Although Cambodia is, overall, on good terms with these neighbors, it still somehow remains skeptical about their intentions. In addition, China has been the top donor and investor in Cambodia for several years. Therefore, from the Cambodian perspective, Chinese influence in the region is perceived as a source of opportunity rather than a threat to Cambodian growth. Such a divergent calculation of strategic interest appears to constrain both parties from further upgrading their ties into a strategic level.

Secondly, the divergence of the political systems of the two countries makes it hard for both sides to elevate its relationship into a strategic one. Cambodian leadership has, as mentioned earlier, allegedly engaged in persecuting the opposition party, civil organizations and human rights activists. The adoption of such a hard stance by the Government apparently predisposes Canberra against forging closer ties with Phnom Penh since a close relationship would require the former to turn a blind eye to the latter. If Canberra opted this way, its leadership would be under fire by domestic political opponents. In short, the apparent democratic deficit in the Cambodian political system is likely to prevent the elevation of its bilateral relations with Australia into a strategic relationship.

VIII. Conclusion

Australia began engaging with Cambodia as a peacemaker in the 1980s and 1990s through its initiative of the so-called "Red Book" which included a detailed peacemaking roadmap for war-stricken Cambodia. The main concept of this Red Book was later incorporated into the 1991 Paris Peace Accords. Furthermore, Australia sent its forces to Cambodia as part of the United Nations peacekeeping operations in the early 1990s. Such a gesture rendered Australia an outstanding peacemaking architect of this war-torn country. The factors

leading to Australian involvement in the Cambodian crisis were: Australia's aim for "Middle Power" status in the world, its desire for regional stability, and the personal preferences of Australian policy makers, particularly former Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans.

Australian engagement in Cambodia has evolved over time, spiraling into other areas such as development aid, economics, and defense cooperation. In terms of development aid, Australia has become one of the leading external donors to Cambodia in recent years, and its aid significantly contributes to the betterment of the physical infrastructure, agricultural productivity, health and education inside this impoverished economy. Similarly, there has been a dramatic increase in Australian FDI inflows into the Cambodian economy, as well as in Australia's trading volume with Cambodia. In relation to defense cooperation, Australia continues to assist Cambodia in building the capacity of its armed forces through various training programs and scholarships granted to Cambodian military personnel.

These increasing Australian contributions to Cambodia have prompted Phnom Penh to actively support Australian policies, including the resettlement of Australian refugees in Cambodia, although the issue has triggered a backlash against the Cambodian government by the opposition party and civil groups which continue today. Phnom Penh's positive responses have been importantly driven by its indebtedness to Canberra for its peacemaking engagement in the 1990s. They are also due to Cambodia's expectation for Australia's continuing economic and political support. Moreover, one cannot rule out the fact that the CPP-led government is also in need of Australian recognition of its ruling legitimacy which has increasingly been challenged by its internal political rivals.

Australia's increasing engagement with Cambodia is attributed to Australia's Asian-centric policy which demands Canberra to further link itself with Asia for its future growth. Australia's active involvement in Cambodia is also driven by its desire to counter the rising Chinese influence in Cambodia and the region in general. For Canberra, the power balancing between the US and China is crucial for maintaining Asian regional peace and stability, whereas Chinese domination has been perceived as a threat. Therefore, Canberra needs to ensure that Cambodia will not become a Chinese proxy, or the region will succumb to Beijing's domination in the course of time. Australia's long-term strategic interest will be consequently at stake.

Despite Australia's intention to further engage with Cambodia, the two countries still encounter certain challenges that prevent them from elevating their ties into strategic ones. These challenges encompass different strategic calculations over China and the differences in political systems of the two countries. Strategically, while Canberra seeks to mitigate Chinese influence in the region, Phnom Penh pursues the matter in the opposite direction. Phnom Penh at times reiterates its position that Beijing is a source of the growth of Cambodia and the region. In terms of the differences in political systems, democratic Australia may find it hard to completely invest its trust in Cambodia's single-party dominated system, for doing so is likely to instigate a political backlash within Australian domestic politics.

Endnotes

1 The idea of engaging the United Nations in overseeing Cambodia's transitional government was indeed not totally new. It was originally proposed by the late King Norodom Sihanouk in March 1981 in which he suggested the creation of the UN Trusteeship. However, the idea was not fully elaborated, thus being largely ignored by the US until late 1989 in which Gareth Evan decided to adopt Sihanouk's proposal and further elaborated. See Evans, G. (2012). *Cambodia: The Peace Process and After.* Paper presented at the Cambodia's Roundtable, Canberra. Presentation retrieved from http://www.gevans.org/speeches/speech498.html

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CAMBODIA-JAPAN RELATIONS: THE BUMPY AND WINDING ROAD TO THE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP AND BEYOND

Dr. LEANG Sim Onn

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CAMBODIA-JAPAN RELATIONS: THE BUMPY AND WINDING ROAD TO THE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP AND BEYOND

I. Introduction

The Kingdom of Cambodia and Japan share a long history of relations, which can be traced back to the ancient trade between the two peoples of the late sixteenth century resulting in subsequent socio-political and cultural exchanges. This long-standing relationship has been marked by a mixture of transcendental reality of socio-political and symbolic changes, occupation and alignment, reciprocity and harmonization, disruption and concession, and has been improved and strengthened over time since the decolonization period. In terms of formal diplomatic ties, the two countries have so far enjoyed over 60 years of a strong relationship, which has enabled both peoples to establish and preserve a tradition of mutual trust and understanding and enthusiastic support over a wide range of areas.

Through this tradition, the two countries have nurtured and promoted cordial bilateral ties and maintained close and constructive dialogue and cooperation at various levels to the point that the words "heart-to-heart" has been used by the leaders of both countries to describe their relations to the representation of their conviction, certitude, and sincerity. This vivid depiction is not only part of the tradition itself but also the backbone of the second principle of the so-called "Fukuda Doctrine"—that Japan seeks a "heart-to-heart" relationship with the region of Southeast Asia. Since the Paris Peace Agreement, Japan has contributed a great deal to the peace process and national reconstruction of Cambodia and has always been the top donor through its official development assistance (ODA). The culmination of

this tradition, alongside with the fundamental shifts in politics and diplomacy in the regions of East and Southeast Asia, was the upgrading of their bilateral relations to a strategic level in December 2013, which also marked the 60th anniversary of their official diplomatic ties. This new advancement has also placed Cambodia into a tough position at a time of growing rivalry and confrontation between Japan and China, a major rising power that also has a significant role in the socio-economic and political development in Cambodia.

In light of this reflection, the long-standing bilateral relation between Cambodia and Japan has the crucial centrality and substance, such that it demands focused attention and serious study. This chapter, employing historical chronological methodology, deals with the issue by providing a thorough review and analysis of this endeavor. It then examines and analyzes the factors, challenges, and interests behind the strategic partnerships in Cambodia-China-Japan relations and its future prospect as well as the significant roles it plays in the context of East Asian regional integration and community building and the structural force for the stability of East and Southeast Asia in general.

II. The Inception of Relations and the Occupation

The relationship between Cambodia and Japan dates back to the post Angkor period when the two peoples engaged in inter-regional trade. The exact time of the bilateral trade establishment can be proved by the Japanese script on one of the walls of Angkor Wat Temple, believed to have been written by Japanese businessmen and travelers. This has been confirmed in the remarks by His Majesty Tsugunomiya Akihito, the Emperor of Japan, at a state banquet in honor of His Majesty the King of Cambodia on May 17, 2010 that the relationship between the Kingdom of Cambodia and Japan began in 1569 when a Cambodian merchant ship landed on the shore of Kyushu island seeking to establish contact with Japan, who was going through a period of transition from the age of rival warlords toward the birth of a new unified government. Also from the Japanese side, as many as 44 Japanese merchant ships sailed to Cambodia with travel certificates issued by the Japanese government between 1604 and 1635, the years when overseas travel by Japanese was banned. Among the products imported from Cambodia to Japan those days included high-quality sharkskin and chaulmoogra. Japanese communities were established in two locations in Cambodia during this period, and writing in India ink by the Japanese who visited Angkor remains to this day (Tsugunomiya, 2010).

This short term momentous bilateral relation ended when Japan implemented the policy of national seclusion, which was maintained for more than 200 years. Japan decided to revert this policy to an open-door policy in the mid-19th century, around which time Cambodia became the protectorate and colony of France in 1863. So, it was only during the Second World War that the two peoples came into contact again when, in 1940, the Japanese government sought special concessions in Indochina from the French colonial authorities after negotiating a treaty of friendship with Thailand, and, in August 1941, the Imperial Japanese Army entered the French Protectorate of Cambodia.

The Japanese Occupation of Cambodia

The Japanese occupation of Cambodia lasted between 1941 and 1945, but there were in general no brutalities inflicted by the Japanese occupiers over Cambodian civilians. This occupation came after the Japanese forces moved into Vietnam in 1940 to displace the Vichy administration, the Hanoi-based, colonial government of France, who, under pressure from the German government, agreed to sign an agreement with Tokyo that allowed the Japanese military transit and permitted the movement of Japanese troops through the transportation hubs of the French Indochina. Tokyo's policy in Indochina was to leave the colonial government nominally in charge. So, the French colonial officials were allowed to remain at their administrative posts, although the Japanese army had established a garrison that numbered 8,000 troops in Cambodia by August 1941 (Nelson, 2003).

The Thai government, under Prime Minister Field Marshal Luang Plaek Phibunsonggram, advanced its "Pan-Thai' ideology, putting forward its historic claims to the weakened Vichy government requesting that the Cambodian and Laotian territories formerly belonging to Thailand be returned to Bangkok's authority. The request was rejected, so Thailand turned to take advantage of both its friendship with Japan and the weakness of the French military in Indochina by launching an invasion of Cambodia's western provinces in January 1941. The Franco-Thai war remained indecisive until Japan decided to intervene and arrange a treaty. Tokyo hosted the signing of the treaty in March 1941, compelling the French to concede to Thailand the Cambodian provinces of Battambang, part of Siem Reap, Kampong Thom and Stoeng Treng in exchange for a small compensation. The Cambodians were allowed to retain Angkor, but remarkably Cambodia lost one-third of its territory and nearly half a million citizens (Osborne, 1994).

The nationalistic upheaval in Cambodia began in 1941 and took a more overt form in July 1942 when there was a major anti-French demonstration in Phnom Penh led by a respected Cambodian intellectual named Pach Chhoeun, who was later arrested and sentenced to life imprisonment, and Son Ngoc Thanh, a Paris-educated magistrate. The Japanese failed to support these leaders as expected, and the repressive reaction by the French colonial authorities resulted in many injuries and mass arrests. Son Ngoc Thanh fled to Japan, where he was trained for three years and commissioned a captain in the Japanese army. On March 9, 1945, there was a coup de force by the Japanese army to topple the French Vichy administration, and within the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, Japan encouraged local rulers to proclaim independence. Four days later, King Norodom Sihanouk, who had been chosen by the French instead of Prince Monireth to be the crown prince, decreed an independent Kingdom of Kampuchea at the Japanese request.

The Japanese government nominally ratified the independence of Cambodia and established a consulate in Phnom Penh. Son Ngoc Thanh returned to Cambodia in May 1945 and was appointed foreign minister. During the period of Japanese-sponsored independence of Cambodia, there was a plan to create 5 volunteer units of 1,000 indigenous troops each. The creation of this native force was to preserve public order and internal security rather than to fight wars alongside with the Japanese troops, but the plan died out

with the conclusion of World War II. A new government was established in Phnom Penh with Son Ngoc Thanh acting as prime minister. The Cambodian puppet state of Japan lasted from March to October 1945, when Son Ngoc Thanh was arrested by the Allied Force on an accusation of collaboration with the Japanese and was sent into exile in France to remain under house arrest (Osborne, 1994). The Japanese occupation of Cambodia ended with the official surrender of Japan in August 1945.

III. The Post-Independence Relations

1. The Initial Harmonization

As remarked by the Emperor of Japan Tsugunomiya Akihito, it was only after the Second World War that both countries simultaneously regained their respective independence, followed by the official establishment of their diplomatic ties. On September 4, 1951, Cambodia, under the French colony, and Japan signed a peace treaty at the San Francisco Peace Treaty Conference. It was from this treaty that the French Ambassador wrote a formal letter, dated January 9, 1953, to the Japanese Foreign Minister Okazaki to inform Japan that the three Indochinese countries—Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam—had responded positively to Japan's intention to establish diplomatic relations with them and that France is pleased to endorse the establishment. This letter has been considered the formal expression from the government of Cambodia with Japan, and its date has been taken to be the official date of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries (Embassy of Japan in Cambodia, n. d).

After achieving independence from France on November 9, 1953, King Norodom Sihanouk started to strengthen diplomatic relations with Japan, with Prince Norodom Kantol being appointed the first diplomatic envoy to Japan who arrived in Tokyo on May 19, 1954 after Cambodia and Japan established a diplomatic litigation in each other's country on March 19 and May 4, 1954 respectively. On November 27, 1954, the Cambodian government informed the Japanese litigation in Cambodia of its official position that it would not claim war damages from Japan, and thus, one month later, Japan informed Cambodia of its readiness to assist the Cambodian people through economic and technical cooperation. On December 4, 1955, King Norodom Sihanouk paid an official visit to Japan and met with the Emperor Showa. During the visit, the House of Representatives of Japan passed a resolution to express gratitude to Cambodia for the decision to renounce its rights to claim war reparation from Japan. Five days later, King Norodom Sihanouk and the Japanese Foreign Minister Mr. Shigemitsu signed the Friendship Treaty to promote eternal friendship and peace. Cambodia's renunciation of the rights to post-war reparation was more than expected for Japan as the former even provided the latter with rice at a time when Japan was in desperate need to rehabilitate the country after the defeat in World War II and was struggling to restore trust from other Asian nations. The Cambodian government warmly

welcomed various official visits from Japan to Cambodia during this period. For instance, the welcoming of Prime Minister Nobusuke's 1957 official visit was so attentively prepared and beautifully decorated that it was mentioned in Japan's Diplomatic Bluebook 1957 that "Prime Minister Kishi Nobusuke's delegation was welcomed by Cambodian government as well as Cambodian people as if the whole country was welcoming the delegation" (The Diplomatic Bluebook, 1957)

Cambodia decided to cut off relations with the US in May 1965, adhering to the 10-point "Declaration on the Promotion of World Peace and Cooperation", the non-alignment principle of the Afro-Asian Conference (Bandung Conference) taking place on April 18-24, 1955. But for the major centrality of Japan-US alliance, this decision could have deteriorated, if not jeopardized, Cambodia's relations with Japan on both diplomatic and economic matters as well as prevented Japan from providing more development assistance to Cambodia. However, Cambodia-Japan relations were not restricted, let alone terminated, by the influence of Japan-US alliance when, on September 16, 1968, Japan responded positively to the Cambodian request by offering recognition to Cambodia's most important diplomatic goal: "Territory Integrity within the Present Border"—Cambodia's aspiration to gain regional and international recognition for its national sovereignty and independence. Furthermore, due to the post-war Japanese policy to consider economic and political relations separately, the economic relations between the two countries as well as development assistance from Japan were maintained, and Cambodia-Japan trade agreements had been made every year until the late 1960s. The US recognized the Cambodian border in April 1969, and as a result, the bilateral relations between the two countries were restored, after 3 years of break-up. An unexpected political turmoil took place in Cambodia in early 1970, throwing the country into the hands of the US (Sihanouk/Burchett, 1973).

2. Cambodia in the Capitalist Bloc

The beginning of political unrest and civil war in Cambodia was when Prince Sihanouk's government got toppled by a March 18, 1970, coup d'état led by General Lon Nol and Prince Sisowath Siri Matak, who formally declared the Khmer Republic on October 9, 1970. Three days after the coup, the US declared its recognition of Lon Nol's government. The Khmer Republic, while adhering to the non-alignment policy, had been strengthening ties with the US and strongly supported the latter's military strategies in Indochina. As noted by Prince Sihanouk, the CIA, along with Son Ngoc Thanh and Prince Siri Matak, wished to install a more US-friendly regime in Cambodia. Thus, this republican government of Cambodia was a right wing, pro-US, and military-led government that put an end to Prince Sihanouk's period of covert cooperation with the North Vietnamese regime and the Viet Cong and aligned Cambodia with South Vietnam, the US and its allies. This Western bloc identity was proved by the so-called "Cambodian Campaign" of April-July 1970, in which the US-backed South Vietnamese army entered eastern Cambodia to attack the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces operating there (Sihanouk & Burchett, 1973).

Putting himself in exile in Beijing, Prince Sihanouk created various social movements and appealed for resistance against Lon Nol's government. On March 23, 1970, the *Front Uni National du Kampuchea* (FUNK) was created. Later in May 1970, Prince Sihanouk joined forces with local resistance of Khieu Samphan and Ieng Sary, members of the Communist Party of Kampuchea or the Khmer Rouge insurgents who had until this point been fighting Prince Sihanouk's regime, to form the Royal Government of National Union of Kampuchea or GRUNK. This establishment was thus a Beijing-based, relatively broad alliance between Prince Sihanouk, his supporters and the Communist Party of Kampuchea. With this resistance and Lon Nol's weak government, Cambodia had plunged into civil war, when the US Army General Alexander Meigs Haig told Lon Nol that American ground forces would not be employed to assist the Cambodian army (Shawcross, 1981 & Kiernan, 2004).

Japan, whose diplomatic principle was based on US-Japan alliance in the Western bloc, gave de facto recognition to Lon Nol's government by continuing diplomatic ties with the regime. Because both countries share the same ideologies within the bloc, Japan had put a lot of effort to support Lon Nol's regime both politically and economically, but due to the civil war and influence of the Vietnam war, bilateral trades were relatively under-nourished, and Japan's ODA was reduced mainly to technical training. The bilateral trades between the two countries fell from USD16.77 million in 1970 to USD5.85 million in 1974. During this period, Japan's diplomatic policy toward Indochina was to prevent the Indochinese war from deteriorating. Japan had shown proactive diplomatic actions participating in the foreign ministers' meeting in Jakarta on May 16-17, 1970 to discuss emergency situation in Cambodia. To push forward for conflict resolutions, representatives from Japan, Indonesia and Malaysia decided to visit the countries concerned, and a joint declaration was made in an attempt to pursue any peaceful means possible in addressing the conflicts in Cambodia. Finally, Lon Nol resigned on April 1, 1975, and fled the country into exile when a ceasefire negotiation with the Khmer Rouge failed. GRUNK finally entered the capital on April 17, 1975, and had executed many representatives of the old regime in a few days. This marked the end of the Khmer Republic, whose final area was the Preah Vihear Temple in Dangrek Mountain, which its army, the Khmer National Armed Forces, still occupied in late April 1975. The Khmer Rouge finally took it on May 22 of the same year—the gateway to the killing field.

3. The Years of Silence

The bilateral relations between the two countries were interrupted during this period as the Embassy of Cambodia in Tokyo was closed while the Embassy of Japan in Phnom Penh ceased operations at the same time following the Khmer Rouge takeover of the capital. The Khmer Rouge then abolished GRUNK, and thus, Cambodia did not have any sort of government until the promulgation of the Constitution of Democratic Kampuchea on January 5, 1976, which also laid out the abolishment of the monarchy. However, they continued to use the head of state Prince Sihanouk as a figurehead for the government

until April 2, 1976, when Prince Sihanouk, together with Penn Nouth's cabinet, decided to resign. Prince Sihanouk remained under insecure house arrest in the Phnom Penh Royal Palace until late in the war with Vietnam when he departed for the US where he brought the regime's case before the UN Security Council before eventually relocating to China. Pol Pot and his associates occupied the most important positions in the Communist Party and state bureaucracy, with Pol Pot becoming prime minister, former deputy prime minister Khieu Samphan head of state, and Nuon Chea president of the parliament. The nearly four-year period of this regime cost nearly two million Cambodian lives through combined result of political executions, excessive forced labor, and starvation, famine, and diseases (Locard, 2005)[1].

Article 21 of the constitution defined Democratic Kampuchea's foreign policies in terms of "independence, peace, neutrality, and nonalignment" and pledged the country's support to anti-imperialist struggles in the Third World. Due to this principle, the regime sealed the countries off from the outside world, a part from a dozen communist allies in the Eastern Bloc. On April 19, 1975, soon after the fall of the Khmer Republic, the Japanese government declared in Beijing its recognition to the Democratic Kampuchea, but the latter was still suspicious of Japan, previously supporters of Lon Nol's regime and a member of the Western Bloc, and did not respond until September 20, five months after the notice from Tokyo. Following Japan's recognition of the Democratic Kampuchea and Cambodia's subsequent expression of gratitude in September for the recognition, Japan restored diplomatic relations with the regime on August 2, 1976, but Japan did not consider reopening its embassy. Instead, Japan added a concurrent post to its ambassador to China who would also serve as ambassador to Cambodia. Provided this normalization of relations, exchange of official visits was almost none, but, according to the Diplomatic Bluebook 1976 and 1977, Cambodian Deputy Prime Minister in charge of Foreign Affairs Ieng Sary paid unofficial visits to Japan three times in June, September, and October 1976 and met with various Japanese officials such as Foreign Minister Miyazawa to discuss future relations between the two countries. Japanese ambassador to China and Cambodia Masaji Sato visited Cambodia only once to present the letter of credence on September 2, 1978. During this period, bilateral trades were almost nonexistent while Japanese ODA to Cambodia was halted. In 1977, there was recovery of small-scale import from Japan, which amounted to USD3.91 million, and Cambodia's export to Japan amounted to USD0.456 million (The Diplomatic Bluebooks, 1976, 1977, &1978).

Japan's foreign policies during this period - the decline of détente and the heating up of the Cold War - were based on the so-called "omni-directional peace diplomacy" promoted by Prime Minister Fukuda in order to maintain or save cooperative relations Japan had tried to build during the détente period. This diplomacy was known as the "Fukuda Doctrine", which comprised the following principles: 1) Japan will not become a military power; 2) Relations with Southeast Asian countries will be built based on "heart-to-heart relations of mutual trust", not only of economic and political fields but also of social and cultural; 3) Japan will cooperate actively with ASEAN countries as equal partners in their efforts to link each other and to strengthen community and will work to build relations of mutual

understanding with Indochinese countries, and eventually will contribute to peace and prosperity of the whole region (Iokibe, 2000). It is from these principles that one can explain why Japan put in great efforts to normalize relations with any governments, let alone the Democratic Kampuchea, and to build peaceful diplomacy toward all nations in Southeast Asia regardless of what they had done.

4. Foreign Interventions and the Transition

In the late 1970s, dispute between Democratic Kampuchea and Vietnam escalated as the former feared of the domination of the Vietnamese communists believed to be scheming to form an Indochinese federation. Small-scale fighting continued between the two sides throughout 1978 as China was trying to mediate peace talks. The Kampuchea United Front for National Salvation, wholly supported by Vietnam, was established in December, and after that, a major offensive against Cambodia was launched with heavy involvement of Vietnamese troops. The Khmer Rouge fell on January 7, 1979, and one day later, the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) or Heng Samrin's administration was set up, marking the beginning of a ten-year Vietnamese occupation in which Cambodia had to rely first on Vietnam's assistance completely and later on the assistance from the Soviet Union and others in the Socialist bloc. The PRK concluded a treaty of peace, friendship, and cooperation with Vietnam in 1980 and sought to consolidate their control over various areas with help from the Vietnamese troops heavily deployed in the country. However, this regime failed to win representation in the UN General Assembly and thus fell short of international recognition. The government of Democratic Kampuchea continued resistance by guerrilla warfare mainly in the western and northern part of the country, calling for a united front against Vietnam and at the same time tried to secure international support for their cause. Unlike the PRK, this government was recognized as having the right to be represented in the UN (The Diplomatic Bluebooks, 1978-1980).

Based on Japan's post-war peace diplomacy, reflected in the principles of the Fukuda Doctrine, Japan would have given de facto recognition for Heng Samrin's administration like it previously did for the Lon Nol's and Pol Pot's. However, Japan did not recognize this new government and continued to maintain diplomatic relations with Democratic Kampuchea. With its policy of striving to restore peace in Indochina and particularly of seeking the earliest possible peaceful settlement of the Cambodian conflict, and in compliance with the requests made by ASEAN countries, Japan called on Latin American and African countries, during Foreign Minister Ito's visit to Thailand in 1981, to support Democratic Kampuchea's seat in the UN from the standpoint of non-recognition of Vietnam's armed intervention in Cambodia, which was considered an act of invasion and a breach of the international norm and rule of law. Furthermore, in total support of ASEAN's stance toward this matter, Japan called for an immediate total withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Cambodia and also supported the anti-Vietnamese movement called "Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea," a coalition government in exile created on June 22, 1982 and composed of three

Cambodian political factions, with Prince Sihanouk as President, Son Sann of the Khmer People's National Liberation Front (KPNLF) as Prime Minister, and Khieu Samphan of the Democratic Kampuchea as Foreign Secretary. At the Japan-ASEAN Foreign Minister's Conference, then Japanese Foreign Minister Sonoda presented the Japanese view and put forward the following points as one of the avenues to the resolution of the Cambodian problem: (1) in the military aspect, the introduction of peacekeeping forces and the phased withdrawal of Vietnamese forces; (2) in the political aspect, the holding of a free election under the supervision of a UN team, international guarantee by major nations concerned, and the establishment of a demilitarized zone along the Vietnam-Cambodia border; (3) in the humanitarian aspect, the promotion of repatriation of refugees, and assistance for the reconstruction of Cambodia (The Diplomatic Bluebooks, 1978-1980).

Throughout the 1980s, according to the Diplomatic Bluebooks, Japan had made various pledges to support the consolidation of peace by providing financial and humanitarian aid as well as economic and technical cooperation for the reconstruction of Indochina. This policy received little attention, as the condition was not right. Only toward the end of the 1980s when the Cold War was coming to an end did the condition become favorable for Japan's mission when new developments were in place, such as the drying up of Soviet foreign aid to Vietnam as a result of poor economic conditions of the USSR and Vietnam's own desire to defuse Chinese pressure after getting a bitter experience in the Third Indochina War in early 1979 and its desire to concentrate on its own domestic economic reforms. Also, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, coupled with the US foreign policy of countering Soviet and Vietnamese involvement in Cambodia, the so-called "Reagan Doctrine", the opposition forces of Prince Sihanouk and Son Sann, then known as the National United Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful and Cooperative Cambodia (known as FUNCINPEC), could draw some military and financial support from the US. This right condition had created opportunities for the international community to successfully push for peace settlement for Cambodia. Japan decided to dispatch a fact-finding team to Phnom Penh in February 1990 and then initiated the Tokyo Conference on Cambodia in June of the same year. This historical moment marked the beginning of Japan's post-war proactive diplomacy in action.

5. Japan's Post-Cold War Proactive Diplomacy and the Peace Process and National Reconciliation of Cambodia

As mentioned earlier, Japan has played a central role in contributing to the peace process and progress in Cambodia. The writings of three Japanese diplomats who played crucial roles in this matter help us better understand how Japan maneuvered its proactive diplomacy[2]. Since the 1989 Paris Conference and the June 1990 Tokyo Conference, Japan, treating the Cambodian problems crucial to regional peace and security and a gateway to building trusting relations with ASEAN, had made great efforts to facilitate dialogues among Cambodia's warring parties, played a prominent role in the preliminary negotiations that led to the Paris International Conferences on Cambodia, co-chaired with France, Indonesia,

and Australia successfully conclude the peace process with the signing of the Paris Peace Agreement in October 1991, and eventually contributed greatly to the realization of the first-ever democratic, free and fair general election in 1993 sponsored and supervised by the United Nations Transitional Authority In Cambodia (UNTAC).

Japanese Cooperation to the Cambodian Issue (First Half of 1991)

February	– Mission led by Minist er Imagawa to Phnom Penh (explained Japan's unofficial view on peace on Phnom Penh government) – Mission led by Minister Ikeda to Beijing (explained Japan's unofficial view on peace to the three parties of the National Government).
March	– Mission led by Minister Ikeda to Beijing (consulted with the three parties of the National Government). – Visit to Japan by Prime Minister Son Sann of the National Government on Japanese invitation; Meetings with Prime Minister Kaifu and Foreign Minister Nakayama.
April	– Meeting between Foreign Minister and Prince Sihanouk in Beijing. – Unofficial visit by "Prime Minister" Hun Sen and meeting with Foreign Minister Nakayama in Bangkok.
May	– Meeting between Prime Minister Kaifu and leaders of the National Government
June	– Meeting between Foreign Minister Nakayama and "Prime Minister" Hun Sen in Ho Chi Minh City.

This cooperation was a significant progress that followed the June 1990 Tokyo Conference on Cambodia, which relatively expanded to include all the four Cambodian factions in conflict. However, the most notable result of this conference was a shift in the power-sharing formula from an equal sharing among the four factions to a one of 50-50 between the Phnom Penh government and the other coalitions including Prince Sihanouk, Son Sann and the Khmer Rouge. Also from this meeting, Prince Sihanouk and Prime Minister Hun Sen (Phnom Penh government) signed a joint communiqué advocating the establishment of the Cambodian Supreme National Council (SNC) with a balanced composition consisting of an equal number of representatives of the two governments. It was not created until September 1990 due to opposition from the Khmer Rouge. The Paris International Conference on Cambodia was reconvened on October 21, 1991, and the agreement for the comprehensive settlements of the Cambodian conflict (Paris Peace Agreement) was signed on October 23, 1991, by all Cambodian delegates and representatives of 18 countries. Accompanied by State of Cambodia (SOC) Prime Minister Hun Sen, Prince Sihanouk, the President of the SNC, returned to Phnom Penh from Beijing in November 1991 after roughly 12 years. The United Nations Advance Mission in Cambodia (UNAMIC) also launched its activities in the same month.

Western countries, as well as Japan, which had not had diplomatic relations with the Phnom Penh government, sent their permanent representatives to the capital. On November 10, 1991, Ambassador Imagawa flew to Phnom Penh to assume the post of Ambassador and Head of the Japanese Delegation to the SNC, whose office was changed to the Embassy of Japan in Cambodia on March 25, 1992. Formerly, the Japanese Embassy in Phnom Penh was closed in April 1975 when the last Ambassador Otori Kurino accredited to the Lon Nol government a few days before the Khmer Rouge occupied the capital. Thus, the diplomatic relations were normalized after roughly 17 years of suspension. In January 1992, Mr. Yasushi Akashi, UN Undersecretary-General, was appointed the Secretary-General's Special Representative, Head of UNTAC, and on March 15, 1992, he arrived in Phnom Penh with Australian Lt. General John Sanderson, as Commander in Chief of the Military Contingent of UNTAC. Thus, the structure of Cambodia, under the Paris Peace Agreement, was composed of UNTAC led by Mr. Akashi, the SNC chaired by Prince Sihanouk with membership divided equally among the Phnom Penh government, which was the actual administration headed by Hun Sen, and the three factions in the coalition, to serve as the unique legitimate body and source of authority which enshrined the sovereignty of Cambodia until the new government was established through the general election in May 1993 (The Diplomatic Bluebook, 1992).

Japan's post-war diplomacy was considered to have shifted from *Passive* to *Proactive Pacifism* with this successful diplomatic mission and Japan's human resource contribution to the UN Peace-Keeping Operations (PKO) under UNTAC activities in Cambodia by way of sending its Self-Defense Forces (SDF)'s construction unit, military observers and civilian police officers. This was possible after an intense and acrimonious domestic debate over the constitutionality of the International Peace Cooperation Law enacted in June 1992. Apart from considerable Japanese financial support for the UN efforts in Cambodia, the Japanese SDF comprised over 600 personnel out of an international combined force of about 22, 000 personnel. Unfortunately, in April and May 1993, two Japanese, a UN civilian volunteer and a policeman, were killed by the Khmer Rouge, causing controversy and trepidation within Japan whether a precondition to the dispatch of the SDF—peaceful settlement and cessation of hostilities by all parties involved—had been broken when the Khmer Rouge embarked on acts of violence and disruption. However, Japan's steadfastness and perseverance in not withdrawing from Cambodia added another flavor to its proactive pacifism and its international image as a peacemaker, albeit pubic criticisms of the country as a passive state with low threshold of casualties as Mr. Akashi had withdrawn the Japanese police to safer areas.

Japan's Mediating Role during and after the July 1997 Crisis

The successful UNTAC-supervised May 1993 election paved way for a new constitution promulgated and adopted in September of the same year, with the new administration being formed under the name "Kingdom of Cambodia" and Prince Sihanouk ascended to the throne. This new constitution adopted a dual-prime minister system as an interim

measure for the period of five years. This unprecedented government system came as a result of a political compromise proposed by King Sihanouk to avoid further civil strife - the conflict between the FUNCINPEC Party of Prince Norodom Ranariddh and the Cambodian People's Party (CPP) of Hun Sen over the disputed result of UN-sponsored election. Since 1996, there had already been marked discords between the two parties, who competed for power and tried to cultivate residual Khmer Rouge forces. Their tensions were increased by the forthcoming 1998 election. This led to a series of political unrests in 1997, including the March "terrorist incidents" in Phnom Penh.

The Japanese government had already had State Secretary for Foreign Affairs Masahiko Koumura visit Cambodia in April to urge both sides to work toward stabilizing domestic politics and implementing an election in 1998 as scheduled, and to engage in domestic cooperation. At the G8 Denver Summit in June, Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto expressed his regret at the critical situation in Cambodia and proposed the dispatch of a special emissary to stabilize the situation. French President Jacques Chirac and US President Bill Clinton supported the proposal, with envoys from Japan and France accordingly being dispatched to Cambodia on behalf of the G8 Countries. Former Ambassador to Cambodia Yukio Imagawa was appointed Japan's envoy. Despite the appeals from both special envoys, the forces of both parties clashed again on July 5-6. Japan dispatched Self-Defense Forces Transport Aircraft C-130 to the Utapao Royal Thai Navy Air Field in order to evacuate Japanese citizens in case fighting in Cambodia intensified (The Diplomatic Bluebooks, 1998-1999).

As a result, Prince Ranariddh escaped overseas, and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ung Hout was appointed the new First Prime Minister in place of Prince Ranariddh in August. A new administration led by Second Prime Minister Hun Sen was strongly criticized by the international community. Due to this, accession to ASEAN was postponed, Cambodia's UN seat was withheld, and foreign aid was suspended. Japan took a different stance from the US, who condemned "Hun Sen's coup", and was one of the first countries to recognize the new government. Japan's position encountered both domestic and international criticisms, but Japan's experiences in Cambodia became a major force for a resolution to the conflict. To break through this situation, Japan prepared the "Four Pillars" of a political solution for the Cambodian issues, which State Secretary Koumura put forward to both sides in February 1998 (The Diplomatic Bluebook, 1999).[3] Both sides accordingly accepted the Japanese proposal, and the deal led to the internationally recognized election in July, the first ever election organized by Cambodians with financial and technical support from Japan. As a result, Hun Sen's CPP won 41.1% (64 seats) of the votes against Ranariddh's FUNCINPEC's 31.7% (43 seats) and the Sam Rainsy Party (15 seats). The second legislature royal government was formed. Cambodia could retrieve the withheld UN seat in December 1998 and was finally admitted to ASEAN in April 1999. The "total peace" in Cambodia was achieved after this election when the Khmer Rouge organization accepted integration into the united royal armed forces in late 1998.

By helping to restore peace in Cambodia, Japan has fulfilled its long-standing vision stipulated in the Fukuda Doctrine and has realized its policy of proactive pacifism. The

bilateral relationship between the two countries has been promoted and strengthened over times by this long historical tradition of mutual trust and understanding, and from 1999 until recently, exchanges of official visits by the prominent leaders from both countries reflect this tradition[4]. Since then, Japan has consistently been supporting Cambodia and the welfare of its people in all fields for Cambodia's national reconstruction and rehabilitation, and has been the biggest donor to Cambodia for the reconstruction process as Japan's ODA from 1993 to 2003 totaled USD 720 million (on a net disbursement basis), which accounted for 25% of all assistance to Cambodia (Embassy of Japan, 2017). Therefore, the Japanese ODA and its contribution to the reconstruction and development of Cambodia must receive special attention.

IV. Historical Development of Japan's ODA and Its Contribution to the Reconstruction and Development of Cambodia

1. The Dawn of Aid Relations

Japan embarked on government-to-government economic cooperation with developing countries, particularly Asian, on October 6, 1954, when it joined the Colombo Plan—a regional organization originally born out of a Commonwealth Conference of Foreign Ministers in Colombo, Sri Lanka, in January 1950, embodying the concept of collective inter-governmental effort to facilitate and strengthen economic and technical cooperation among member countries of the British Commonwealth of Nations (Japan's Annual ODA Report, 1994). It is this commitment that Japan began aid to Asian countries, including Cambodia, as post-war sub-reparation, but as previously mentioned, Cambodia had renounced its rights to claim war reparation from Japan and also signed a treaty of friendship with Japan on December 9, 1955. This wholehearted behavior of Cambodia toward post-war Japan was the solid foundation for the eternal friendship and peace between the two countries, and Japan has, since then, adopted a resolution of gratitude and tried to return to Cambodia through its ODA in various manners.

Both countries exchanged diplomatic notes during the official visit of Japanese Prime Minister Kishi Nobusuke on November 21, 1957, concerning "Japan-Cambodia Economic and Technical Cooperation Agreement," which was later signed in Phnom Penh on March 2, 1959, and finally came into effect on July 6. Through this agreement, Japan provided sub-reparation grant aid of 1.5 billion yen (approximately USD 4.17 million then) worth of products and services ended on July 5, 1966, and also a 1.5 billion yen loan for the Prek Thnort dam construction project as well as technical assistance to three sectors including agriculture, animal husbandry and healthcare in 1968. This was the first grant aid and

loan provided by Japan to Cambodia, albeit the lowest among Southeast Asian countries. However, due to the interruption during the Lon Nol and Khmer Rouge eras from 1970 to 1979, Japan's loan aid was suspended after the Prek Thnort dam project was halted in the wake of the attacks from communist resistance in Cambodia. However, the number of grant aid increased, compared to that of the 1960s, the abundant share of which was devoted to refugee relief instead of development assistance (Nagano & Kondo, 1999).

2. The Suspension

As mentioned earlier, due to the escalating political unrest, civil strife and security problems in Cambodia, Japan decided to suspend bilateral aid to Cambodia in 1974. Therefore, assistance activities were restricted to technical issues through acceptance of trainees in such important fields as agriculture, transportation, postal service and administration. The number of experts dispatched was limited to the minimum in the early 1970s, and to support Cambodia's weakening productivity, other forms of non-ODA economic packages were provided to the Khmer Republic by those member countries in the Capitalist bloc, including Japan who contributed USD 5 million in 1972 and USD 7 million in 1973 and 1974. Through the Cambodian Red Cross, the Japanese Red Cross had provided assistance in goods twice amounting to USD 3.7 million to help Cambodian refugees. At the request of the Cambodian government, Japan provided grant aid in rice several times to deal with the food shortage caused by damaging transportation networks and bad weather during the war in Cambodia[5].

After the collapse of the Khmer Rouge regime in 1979 until the transition in 1991, there was no formal aid to Cambodia, but Japan extended support to assist Cambodian war refugees along the Cambodia-Thailand border through international institutions and the Thai government. Economic exchange during this period was also low compared to that before the war. In 1979, Japan's export to Cambodia amounted to USD 754.000 (Cars and spare parts) and imports worth USD 316.000 (oils and fats and precious stones), while in 1969, export and import amounted to USD 243.50 million and USD 6.55 million respectively. Technical assistance through acceptance of Cambodian trainees was not made through the Phnom Penh government but through the coalition government of Democratic Kampuchea, as Japan did not recognize the former but maintained relations with the latter. However, once again, the number was still limited to the minimum (The Diplomatic Bluebook, 1980).

3. The Aid Resumption

After the signing of the Paris Peace Accords, implementation of Japan's grant aid to Cambodia was resumed. Before the implementation, Japan dispatched a study team to grasp the real situation and needs in Cambodia, holding that the system was not ready for aid provision. Apart from the financial and manpower contribution to UNTAC, Japan

successfully convened an International Conference on the Reconstruction of Cambodia in Tokyo in June 1992, participated by representatives from 33 countries and 12 international organizations, in which USD 800 million in total was pledged, with Japan being the lead with its contribution of USD 150-200 million. At the same time, adopted as a cabinet decision, the "ODA Charter" was approved, which demands the observance of several important implementation principles, assistance ideals and priority areas with a bearing on the provision of aid.[6] Based on this policy, the Japanese Government has been providing development assistance for hard and soft infrastructure and promoting public and private partnership in Cambodia. Among the large-scale projects implemented through the grant aid from 1992 to 1997, this included (but not restricted to) the Cambodia-Japan Friendship Bridge (Chroy Changwa Bridge) project and the project for the rehabilitation of National Road 6A (ODA White Paper, 1998, pp. 62-63).

After the 1997 political incident in Cambodia, there was a paradigm shift in Japan's ODA philosophy from quantity to quality, which was the by-product of scholarly debates and evaluations supporting ODA's quantity decrease but demanding for improvement of its quality and efficiency[7]. As a result, there was a significant cut of Japan's ODA in the late 1990s. However, Japan's aid to Cambodia remained the same albeit such changes in principle. Furthermore, to further peace and stability in Cambodia after 1998, Japan organized and hosted the Third Consultative Group meeting on Cambodia in February 1999 under the World Bank's auspices in Tokyo, in which Japan pledged new assistance measures totaling USD 100 million. In the same year, Japan decided to resume loan aid to Cambodia after an approximate 30-year interval. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, the financial assistance provided to Cambodia from 1992 to 2010 amounted to 189.36 billion yen (approximately USD 1.76 billion) under Japan's ODA bilateral grant aid for the peace process and rehabilitation of Cambodia. Japan's ODA disbursements to Cambodia from 2011 to 2015 totaled USD 2517.69 million, with USD213.97 million as loan aid, USD 1476.71 million as grant aid, and USD 827.01 million as technical cooperation.[8]

4. Japan's Assistance Policy toward Cambodia

As seen earlier, Japan's open-handed aid programs and assistance policy over the past two decades have brought about peace and development to the people of Cambodia, a country dependent on the international community for its annual state budget. Japan's ODA funds have been provided by the Japanese government through Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in line with Japan's aid policy and in conformity with the Country Assistance Program for Cambodia, in which Cambodia has been one of the priority countries. Japan's assistance has been formulated based on policy dialogues and close consultations with the Cambodian government and thus, is in line with the Cambodian Socio-Economic Development Plan (SEDPII) and Cambodia's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), which is based on its National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP).

Japan's assistance program for Cambodia focuses on the following objectives: (i)

development of social and economic infrastructure, (ii) improvement of basic social services like health and medical care, (iii) promotion of agriculture and rural development, and (iv) human resource development. Policy priorities of the Japanese government toward the development of Cambodia are to assist the latter to achieve its development goal described in the "Rectangular Strategies", to promote ASEAN integration, to strengthen ASEAN connectivity, to narrow the development gap in the region and to ensure human security and environmental sustainability. The four priority areas of Japan's assistance policy include (1) the realization of sustainable economic growth and a stable society, (2) support for the socially vulnerable, (3) measures to respond to global issues, and (4) support to rectify disparities among the ASEAN countries. Based on these priority principles, Japan's ODA covers a wide range of areas including good governance, creation of an environment conducive to economic growth, consolidation of economic and social infrastructure, strengthening of health and medical care network, strengthening of the education system, agriculture and rural development, clearing of anti-personnel mines and aid for the disabled, and management of environmental resources.[9]

Since 1999, Japan has also been active in the areas of administrative and fiscal reforms, demobilization of armed force and forest preservation, and the preservation of Cambodian cultural heritage. The Japanese Government Team for Safeguarding Angkor (JSA) was created under the framework of UNESCO-Japan Trust Fund to assist the Cambodian authorities to develop the International Program for Safeguarding Angkor for the restoration and conservation of the whole Bayon and Angkor Temple complexes. In addition, Japan has been the single largest donor to support the Extraordinary Chambers in the Court of Cambodia (ECCC), the Khmer Rouge tribunal, providing financial assistance of about USD 67 million, which is equal to 49% of the total pledges and contributions. In 2011, Japan contributed USD 11,705,975 to the operation of ECCC, which is equal to 25% of the annual operation cost (Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia, 2017). More importantly, numerous Japanese NGOs have been in operation in various related sectors, as mentioned earlier, to help alleviate poverty and improve the livelihood of Cambodian people as well as enable Cambodia to play better roles in the promotion of peace and prosperity in ASEAN and the world at large.

V. The Strategic Partnership and Its Future Prospects

As previously seen, the cordial bilateral relations between the two countries can be attributed to the historical tradition of mutual trust and understanding, in which both seem to show no political interests in each other but rather focus on the long-term prospect for betterment in relations, prosperity, and harmony of their respective country and ASEAN at large. With this excellent prospect, both countries decided to officially start a bilateral investment agreement negotiation in December 2006, and in June 2007, the "Agreement for the Liberalization, Promotion, and Protection of Investment" was signed by Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe during the former's visit

to Japan. This agreement, which symbolizes the first step of strengthening the economic relations between the two countries and entered into force on July 31, 2008, was followed by another milestone in the history of Cambodia-Japan relations: the upgrading of bilateral relations to a "strategic partnership" in December 2013, in which Japan signed up for another USD134 million in new loans to Cambodia in support of a trio of projects and agreed to help with the electoral reforms upon requested by the Cambodian counterpart.

This strategic partnership covers a wide range of issues, the new elements of which focus on the security and defense cooperation, which includes the unprecedented military cooperation and cooperation among the police of both countries, and most significantly, Cambodia's decision to join ASEAN neighbors in a "freedom of overflight" pact with Tokyo—the joint communiqué promoting the right to a freedom of overflight in the region. From this point, the partnership can be considered the culmination of the above-mentioned tradition in principle and is in practice a new form of political and security alignment, which involves to some degree mutual expectations of policy coordination under certain circumstances. The fact that the details of the memorandum on the above-mentioned cooperation were not made publically available may reflect, to some extent, not only Cambodia's diplomatic flexibility and foreign policy diversification but also the vague and ambiguous nature, functions, and dynamism of the security alignment itself.

The growing geo-economic competitions and geo-political rivalry concerning the suzerainty issues and administrative jurisdiction over the territorial and maritime resource, airspace and navigation claims in the East China Sea between China and its neighbors, Japan and South Korea, as well as in the South China Sea between China and some ASEAN member states, have not only pushed Japan, under Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's doctrine of "proactive pacifism", to pass a Cabinet decision on July 1, 2014 to fundamentally change the interpretation of war-renouncing Article 9 of its Constitution and allow the exercise of the right of collective self-defense but also drawn the presence of other major powers such as the US, India, and Australia in the regions. ASEAN itself cannot afford to ignore these new developments and merely focus on its own prosperity through the 2015 economic community-building project, the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC). The higher risk of military confrontation resulting from such a situation and the division and polarization it brings out among ASEAN members have directly undermined not only the East Asian regional integration and community building efforts but also the structural force for stability of East and Southeast Asia in general, especially the ASEAN+3 framework, in which the cooperation between China and Japan is crucial to continued economic dynamism in the region. These latest developments have fundamentally made things tougher for ASEAN and its member states when it comes to the issues of strategic alignment, and it is no exception for a small state like Cambodia.

The latest development of Cambodia-Japan relations can be attributed to these fundamental regional shifts in politics, diplomacy, and economic competitions, especially between Japan and China, two East Asia's major powers who have a thousand year history of hostility toward each other. Japan has recently been trying to prevent any further deterioration of its geopolitical and economic roles partly due to the controversial rise of

China. In light of this, it goes without saying that the 10 strategic partnerships, including both with ASEAN and the European Union, that Japan had concluded as of 2015, as well as the investment agreements or economic partnership agreements that Japan has signed with all ASEAN member states, are a by-product or side effect of China's earlier move—including the ASEAN-China Free Trade Area (ACFTA) or China-ASEAN Free Trade Area, the largest free trade area in terms of population and third largest in terms of nominal GDP whose initial framework agreement was signed in Phnom Penh on November 4, 2002 and came into effect on January 1, 2010, and the strategic partnerships China had signed with 47 countries and three international organizations, as of 2014, as part of its Belt and Road Initiative (B&R) unveiled in September and October 2013, including one with Cambodia in December 2010—a 'Comprehensive Strategic Partnership of Cooperation'.

Thus, it is apparent that the strategic partnership overreaches Japan's vital economic roles in an assistance policy for Cambodia. In spite of the fact that it is not a military alliance but a binding alignment principle, Japan has been seen as trying to lessen or neutralize China's enormous influence over Cambodia through its strategic alignment policy toward Asia, along with an all-out military containment policy by the US toward China. From this point, potential conflicts of interests between China and Japan in Cambodia might be something looming large. For instance, China is likely to interpret the joint communiqué as a challenge to its November 23, 2013 declaration of an Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) on the East China Sea, an overlapping area of the Daioyutai/Senkakus disputed with Japan, although the Cambodian government has already justified that the overflight agreement with Japan will not upset China as it merely reiterates the principles in the Declaration of Conduct (DOC) that has already existed among ASEAN members, which also covers navigation in the South China Sea.

For Cambodia, the strategic partnership with Japan serves its own strategic vision and is an important source of legitimacy. First and foremost, Japan has been chosen to be the first strategic partner besides China due to Japan's good will and its significant roles in the kingdom as previously elaborated in this paper, and due to the concerns over the asymmetric relations with China and a sense of mistrust of China's diplomatic and foreign policy flexibility and fluidity, such as China's past experience of supporting the Khmer Rouge, China's hedging strategy toward political development in Myanmar since 2011 after a landslide victory in the 2010 general election of the then-Myanmar opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy, and China's maintaining deliberate silence over the anti-government protests by the opposition Cambodian National Rescue Party (CNRP). Second, Cambodia seeks to secure its full foreign policy autonomy and sovereignty and to defend its neutrality and non-alignment principles due to its perceived image as a "proxy" or a "client state" of China in Southeast Asia in the aftermath of its ASEAN chairmanship and the failure of ASEAN Foreign Minsters' Meeting in Phnom Penh in July 2012. Thus, a strategic partnership with China's rival, Japan, can be part of Cambodia's diplomatic efforts to rectify this image and to reduce heavy dependence on and domination of China as well as to avoid conflicts of interests with Vietnam and alienating other ASEAN members with claims to the South China Sea and such major powers as the US, India, and

Australia in strategic rivalry with the rising China.

Last but not least, the strategic partnership with Japan will be a gateway that opens up Cambodia's foreign policy doors to the world beyond its prioritized ASEAN role. In nurturing its foreign policy diversification goals, Cambodia's prospective strategic partners could be: (1) India, an emerging key player in Asia under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's upgrading "Look East" foreign policy stance to the more proactive "Act East" strategy, as it seeks to challenge China's established influence in the region; (2) Australia, a key player in the peace process of Cambodia and a key to US containment of China; and (3) South Korea, a current key player in Cambodia's economy and an East Asian actor rankled by China's assertiveness in the East China Sea. However, the tradeoff of simultaneous strategic alignments is that a small state like Cambodia will have to confront strategic dilemmas and the problems of genuine and unwavering commitment to help from these major powers. Thus, the long-standing commitment and good will Japan has been displaying as previously illustrated in this paper can all explain why the strategic partnership with Japan has been prioritized.

Everything considered, however, in geopolitical and strategic as well as economic terms, Cambodia will still need China for its economic development and security protection both from traditional and non-traditional threats albeit compromising its own foreign policy autonomy and sovereignty, because this small and poor country still faces its own enduring internal political problems and the long-standing threats resulting from the political behaviors of its two more powerful and historically antagonistic neighbors, Vietnam and Thailand. Thus, strengthening strategic relations with China is believed to be the best strategic option for Cambodia, given the security and development objectives. This China syndrome is reflected in Cambodia's latest endorsement of China's position in the South China Sea Arbitration brought by the Republic of the Philippines at the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) in The Hague, the ruling of which was issued on July 12, 2016, in favor of the Philippines. In light of this geographic proximity and threat assessment, Cambodia's alignment, and/or even bandwagon, policy preferences will depend mainly on how its security, sovereignty and pursuit of prosperity are ensured.

Therefore, in order for Japan, as well as other major powers, to draw Cambodia out of China's hands, they should focus their assistance not only on its economic development but also on the security concerns this small state could feel as well as its capabilities to stand its ground against the perceived threats from its more powerful neighbors. Specifically, Japan should provide more capacity support as well as share its experience and expertise in the implementation of security sector governance and reforms involving multi-stakeholders including the military, police and gendarmerie, parliament and judiciary, private security bodies and civil society alike. To meet this prospect, Cambodia must also be able to accelerate effective, far-reaching reforms by eliminating corruption, building transparent and accountable public institutions and services, and developing qualified manpower. A stronger and more confident Cambodia will play better roles in not only ASEAN but also East Asian regional integration and community building efforts, and this prospect was confirmed when Prime Minister Hun Sen, during his meeting with Prime Minister Shinzo

Abe in Tokyo in December 2013, expressed his concerns over the tense situation in the East China Sea and told the latter that he was pleased to hear that Prime Minister Shinzo Abe had been trying to improve relations with China.

VI. Conclusion

The bilateral relations between the Kingdom of Cambodia and Japan have a solid and unbreakable foundation. Both countries seem to share special historical affinities in the wake of their simultaneous independence after the Second World War—a natural liking for and understanding of each other. Unlike bilateral relations with other Asian countries, Cambodia-Japan bilateral relations have never been clouded by WWII legacy and have never been totally restricted by the US foreign policy and all the tensions and challenges in both regions of East and Southeast Asia. This reflects Japan's diplomatic maturity and perseverance, tenacity and determination in pursuing its economic diplomacy in a separate manner from its political diplomacy toward Cambodia. Although this long-standing relationship has been marked by a mixture of transcendental reality of socio-political and symbolic changes, occupation and alignment, reciprocity and harmonization, disruption and concession, it has been improved and strengthened over time since the decolonization period and will continue to flourish, from this excellent bond of friendship of over 60 years, in the years to come both for mutual interests and for the greater good of the region and the world at large.

It is important not to forget Cambodia's renunciation of the rights to claim post-war reparation from Japan and support for the Japanese people in the aftermath of the war, and not to forget that it is the Japanese, among others, who have always supported Cambodia through all those years of difficulty and guided Cambodia out of the mire of civil war and political unrest toward an era of peace, democracy, and development. Japan's proactive diplomacy and its significant roles in the peace process and national reconciliation of Cambodia after the Cold War as well as Japanese ODA to Cambodia and its contribution to the national reconstruction and development of this war-torn country have lightened the burdens, touched many lives in many ways, and empowered many Cambodian citizens to play better roles not only in ASEAN but also at inter-regional and international fora through its frequent contributions to the UNPKO and the like.

The fundamental regional shifts in politics, diplomacy, and economic competition resulting from the recent growing geo-political and geo-economic rivalries in both the East and the South China Sea have not affected and will not cloud the long-standing bilateral relations between the two countries. Even if China will remain the best strategic option for Cambodia in the short or medium run, as Cambodia is having stronger economic ties with China than Japan and as China has become the single largest provider of external development cooperation to Cambodia since 2010 (CDC, 2016), Japan will remain in the long run an important and inexorable strategic partner of Cambodia, thanks to their time-honored and well-established tradition of mutual trust and understanding. Even if

Cambodia, just as Japan, will need to diversify its foreign policy and diplomatic strategy to rectify its own image and to ensure its own foreign policy autonomy and sovereignty as well as to defend its neutrality and non-alignment principles, the bilateral relations with Japan will remain unaffected and unchanged. And, this tradition has been cherished and reinforced by the historic launch of the first ever direct flight between the two countries on September 1, 2016.

Endnotes

1 Some other sources claim the death toll runs into 3 million, but the author maintains that the number is only an estimated number and remains questionable.

2 The three Japanese diplomats who played important roles and wrote memoirs of their experience: See Imagawa Yukio. (2000). *Kambojia to Nihon* (Cambodia and Japan). Tokyo: Rengo Shuppan; Ikeda Tadashi. (1996). *Kambojia Wahei e no Michi* (The road to peace in Cambodia: Testimony, Five years of lessons for Japan's diplomacy). Tokyo: Toshi Shuppan; Kono Masaharu. (1999). *Wahei Kosaku: Tai-Kanbojia no Shougen* (Maneuvering peace: Testimony of diplomacy toward Cambodia). Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten.

3 The Four Pillars of a Political Solution for Cambodian Issues:
   1. Suspension of military cooperation between Prince Ranariddh and the Pol Pot Faction
   2. An immediate ceasefire between government forces and the forces of Ranariddh faction
   3. Early implementation of Prince Ranariddh's trial and issue of a pardon by King Sihanouk
   4. Election participation by Prince Ranariddh

   The Diplomatic Bluebook (1999). Retrieved from http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/other/bluebook/1999/note.html#4

4 For a detailed list of official visits made by the various prominent leaders from both countries, visit the homepage of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan: Japan-Cambodia Relations, at http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/cambodia/index.html

5 For more details on Japan's aid to Cambodia from 1968 to 1973, see *ODA Hakusho* (ODA White Book) (1989), p. 55.

6 The basic ideals and implementation principles of Japan's ODA Charter are accessible at http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/summary/1998/12.html

7 To make sense of this line of intellectual influence on Japan's ODA Policy, see for example Blacker, M. Evaluating Japanese diplomacy performance. In Curtis, G (Ed.). (1993). *Japan's foreign policy after the cold war: Coping with change.* New York: M.E. Sharpe; Drifte, R. (1998). *Japan's foreign policy for the 21st century: From economic superpower to what power?* London: Palgrave Macmillan. Inoguchi, Takashi, & Jain, P. (2001). Japan's foreign policy today: A reader. London: Palgrave Macmillan; Lehmann, Jean-Pierre. (1997). Japanese attitudes toward foreign policy. In Grant, R.L. (Ed.). *The process of Japanese foreign policy: Focus on Asia.* London: Royal Institute of International Affairs.

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9 For more details Japan's Assistance Policy for Cambodia, available at http://www.kh.emb-japan.go.jp/economic/cooperation/japc/japc.htm; and Country Assistance Policy for Cambodia, available at http://www.kh.emb-japan.go.jp/economic/cooperation/Assistance%20Policy.pdf

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11

CAMBODIA-KOREA RELATIONS: BILATERAL COOPERATIONS AND THE CHANGING DYNAMICS OF TRIANGULAR AFFAIRS

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CAMBODIA-KOREA RELATIONS: BILATERAL COOPERATIONS AND THE CHANGING DYNAMICS OF TRIANGULAR AFFAIRS[1]

I. Introduction

With the aim of achieving its socio-economic development goals, Cambodia has established diplomatic relations with numerous countries with which major cooperation has been built in the framework of development assistance, trade, tourism, and investment —including ASEAN countries, South Korea, Japan and those important actors of the Paris Peace Negotiations 1991-1993, such as France, the US, Russia, and Australia. South Korea, which was a very poor recipient country of international Official Development Assistance (ODA) in the 1950s and 1960s, managed to catch up with other developed nations and became one of the economic powers in Asia. Sharing the similar experience of building up a war-torn country, South Korea provides extensive development assistance to Cambodia. South Korea has been known to be a "highly industrialized economy" with remarkable economic development, while Cambodia still has a limited capacity in resource management and needs major foreign investments and development assistance. To that end, Cambodia has maintained good cooperation with South Korea in recent years.

Significant flows of development assistance aimed at helping Cambodia began to pour in following the signing of the Paris Peace Agreement in 1991. Sharing a similar wartime experience, South Korea jumped in to support Cambodia in many different sectors. Meanwhile, Cambodia-South Korea relations have also generated discussion. On the one hand, this strong economic cooperation indicates a progressive development of the two-country partnership. Despite showing the Country Partnership Strategy in the region, on the other hand, observers also find it hard to explain why Korea zoomed in on a country that is not particularly close to it, either geographically or culturally. It is interesting to look into Korean investments in Cambodia and examine the reality of their impact. This tied aid also creates "South Korea in Inter-Cambodian foreign policy affairs" a discussion in which the controversial notion that South Korea attempts to influence Cambodia's foreign policy in the Korean peninsula—given the on-going issue with North Korea. This chapter, therefore, aims to not only explore Cambodia-South Korea economic relations but also discuss the three-way relationship between North-South Korea and Cambodia. In addition, it seeks to provide a basis for discussions on the role and impact of Cambodia in the peninsula conflict.

The chapter, firstly, will be a discussion of the historical relations between Cambodia and South Korea, followed by outlining the economic relations, including trade, foreign investment, tourism and people-to-people relations. Then, Cambodia-South Korea development assistance in various projects and the Korean government agency (KOICA) will be elaborated in the chapter as well. Moreover, given the popular trend of Cambodian labor workers in South Korea, this chapter also focuses on benefits, policies, and challenges related to this movement. Finally, the triangular relationship between the Korean peninsula and Cambodia will be outlined.

II. Historical Relations: Cambodia & South Korea

The Kingdom of Cambodia and South Korea established diplomatic relations in 1970, but Korea severed the relations in 1975 when the Khmer Rouge subsequently came to power. After the collapse of the Khmer Rouge Regime in 1979, Cambodia was slowly making efforts to stabilize itself. Simultaneously, Cambodia re-connected with the international community by officially becoming a member of international organizations such as the UN and the World Bank as well as signing bilateral agreements with foreign countries, especially with ASEAN member states. In the meantime, the two countries, Cambodia and South Korea, re-established their relations in 1997 and since then the bilateral relations have intensively developed. While diplomatic relations officially resumed in 1997, the two countries had made contacts previously. It was during the Korean War (1950-1953) that the Cambodian government sent material aid to support the South Korean people under the UN framework (Som, p. 1). At the time in 1997, however, the cooperation was built on a low profile where there was only a Korean Representative's Office in Phnom Penh. This low-profile cooperation continued until 1998 when the Korean Representative's Office was transformed into an embassy. Similarly, Cambodia set up its embassy in South Korea in

2001 on an official and high-profile cooperation (Som, p. 1).

This elevation to high-profile cooperation was indeed the result of a push from the top leaders of the two countries. As a matter of fact, the relationship between Phnom Penh and Seoul became more attached from the year 2000 onwards when Lee Myung-bak served as a special economic adviser to Prime Minister Hun Sen from 2000 to 2008 (Som, p. 1) and then became president of South Korea in 2008. Later in 2008, President Lee Myung-bak was elected and served from 2008-2013 (Som, p. 1). Initially, it was through this personal tie between Prime Minister Hun Sen and former President Lee Myung-bak that the amplified cooperation reached a landmark and continues as of today. Cambodia and South Korea have resumed the relations in which the two countries built a deeper level of social, political and economic cooperation. Besides their bilateral relations, the ASEAN+3 and ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) are also major areas whereby Cambodia and South Korea work jointly towards the same end. Current cooperation derived from the past relationship results in visits in both countries by high-ranking government officials. Significant meetings between leaders of both countries were organized to strengthen its strategic partnerships in the past years. For instance, one significant meeting was when Prime Minister Hun Sen met with former President Park Geun-hye on December 15, 2014, to discuss a wide range of issues including the Korean Peninsula conflict (Var, 2016, p. 2). As a result, this close cooperation allows Cambodia and South Korea to excel the scope of project activities and support on various topics encompassing several areas from economics to security issues. Specifically, Cambodia and South Korea maintain a close dialogue on bilateral, regional and international issues through existing mechanisms such as ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), ASEAN+3 (APT), East Asia Summit (EAS), ASEAN-ROK Submit, ASEAN Defense Ministerial Meeting Plus (ADMM Plus), and other Ministerial Meetings (Som, p. 2). In short, Cambodia has already constructed a concrete foundation for the relationship with South Korea based on the well-established historical interaction and current economic activities.

III. Cambodia and South Korea Economic Relations

The Southeast Asian neighbors are considered important for the economic partnership of South Korea and *vice versa*. South Korea's presence in the region does not create controversy as South Korea is often viewed as a soft power, who uses mainly economic and cultural tools as instruments of foreign policy. Officially known as the Republic of Korea (ROK), South Korea has been one of the key partners in operating economic activities with the Kingdom of Cambodia. Over the past two decades, Cambodia and South Korea have developed strong economic ties, which is in line with Cambodia's economic-oriented foreign policy and South Korea's move towards a regional partnership with ASEAN. Cambodia's economic-oriented foreign policy, in line with the *Rectangular Strategy, Phase III*, considers the long-term vision for the structural transformation of the industrial sector as a key driver of its sustainable and inclusive high economic growth. Therefore, the Cambodian government

considers it as "New Economic Growth Strategy"[2] that stresses importance on "economic diversification, strengthening competitiveness, and productivity enhancement in line with the structural transformation of the domestic economy and the evolving global and regional economic architecture" (RGC, 2015, p. 7). These also refer to global and regional economic cooperation combined with the geopolitical landscape that is seen as an opportunity for Cambodia's industrial development. Likewise, although Korea is not geographically close and culturally linked to Cambodia, Korea's move toward ASEAN is considered important for its economic development in the long run. On this basis, Cambodia and South Korea economically share the prospect.

Based on this mutual interest, the bilateral ties and the significant growth in current political, economic development and cultural cooperation between the two nations are undeniably strengthened. Cambodia and South Korea's increasing economic interdependence is likely to remain. The heads of both governments have expressed interest in pursuing and expanding areas of economic cooperation during their 2014 meeting in Phnom Penh (AKP, 2014). As stated earlier in the chapter, the meeting between Korea's former President Park Geun-Hye and Cambodia's Prime Minister Hun Sen was to boost their cooperation and to upgrade the level of bilateral ties, from a partnership to a strategic partnership (AKP, 2014). Follow-up meetings between the two countries' administrations were also noticed in the following years.

Trade between South Korea and Cambodia

Taking a look at every component of economic partnerships, we witness an exponential growth of partnership development. Specifically in the trading area, Cambodia and South Korea are also tied by the ASEAN-Korea Free Trade Agreement (AKFTA) whereby Cambodia and Korea signed the Agreement on Trade in Goods under the Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Cooperation between the Governments of the Member Countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations and the Republic of Korea[3] in 2008 (Som, p. 6). Significantly, the ASEAN-Korea FTA was signed to advance the free market system, bolster and multiply exchanges in goods, services, and investments by eliminating tariffs and non-tariff barriers among all the parties. Under this agreement, Article 3: Tariff Reduction and Elimination outlined that "all tariff lines are subject to the tariff reduction and elimination program under this agreement and shall be categorized as Normal Track and Sensitive Track" (Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Cooperation). This Free Trade Agreement, of course, allows Cambodia to receive dynamic trading benefits and as a result, an increase in bilateral trade volume between Cambodia and South Korea. This is partly the reason why the bilateral trade volume has increased over 15 times between 1997-2015 from USD 54 million to over 1 billion (Som, p. 6). According to Korea International Trade Association (KITA.Org), the value of export (January-July 2017) is USD 353,497,942 while the value of import (January-July 2017) is USD 152,802,758.[4] In the same year, Cambodia's export to South Korea stood at USD 137.42 million (Som, p. 6). Cambodia's exports to South

Korea include garment related products, rubber, and agricultural products while importing back garment materials, used cars, cell phones, cosmetic products and medical products.

Year	Korean's Import Value from Cambodia (Unit: USD Million)	Korean's Export Value from Cambodia (Unit: USD Million)	Year	Korean's Import Value from Cambodia (Unit: USD Million)	Korean's Export Value from Cambodia (Unit: USD Million)
1970	0	0	1998	1	62
1971	0	0	1999	5	80
1972	0	1	2000	2	96
1973	0	7	2001	7	102
1974	0	0	2002	3	115
1975	0	0	2003	4	106
1976	0	0	2004	7	126
1977	0	0	2005	6	144
1978	0	0	2006	5	205
1979	0	0	2007	9	281
1980	0	0	2008	14	294
1981	0	0	2009	18	273
1982	0	0	2010	43	333
1983	0	0	2011	87	451
1984	0	0	2012	126	593
1985	0	1	2013	136	615
1986	0	0	2014	194	654
1987	0	0	2015	217	653
1988	0	0	2016	240	573
1997	2	52	2017	153	353

Source: *Statistics from Korean International Trade Organization (KITA.org)*

Investment and Tourism between South Korea and Cambodia

Besides being a trading partner with Cambodia, South Korea appeared to maintain interests in investment opportunities in Cambodia (Lee, 2012, p. 5). Expanded joint investment projects between Korean and Cambodian companies are rapidly growing in the capital city of Cambodia. Generally speaking, Cambodia attracts many Korean investors and others because of the low-cost labor. Secondly, the rate of economic growth has increased

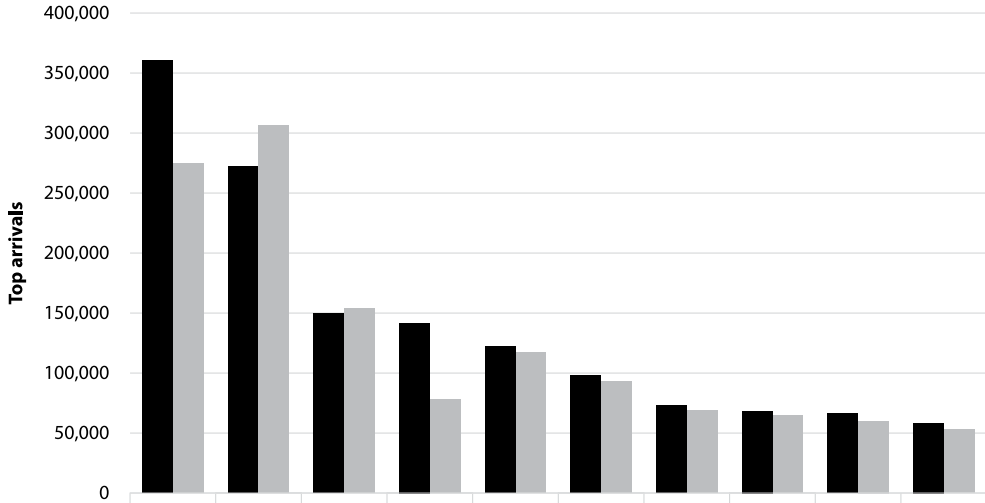
and so the general economic outlook is positive. In addition to that, the country has little discrimination against foreign investors (Lee, 2012, p. 30). Last but not least, the fact that the country is located in a strategically beneficial zone as the center of the Indochina peninsula attracts more investors (Lee, 2012). South Korea appears to be one of the biggest investors in Cambodia while its main investment fields are in property, construction, manufacturing activities (garment and electronics) and many start-ups. According to the data of the Korea EXIM Bank provided during the interview with the Korean Ambassador, there were around 748 Korean investment activities operating in Cambodia in 2015. South Korea was ranked the second largest investor with USD 4.46 billion, following China in 2014 (Som, p. 2). Examples of the visible investment project of South Korea are: the redrawing of Phnom Penh's skyline, the development project of a satellite city (namely Camko City), the building project of two construction companies (skyscrapers), Hyundai Assembly Plant in Koh Kong Province and many other small-medium companies in the country (Lee, 2012, p. 24). Recently, there is also growing investment in the banking and finance as well as the agriculture sector. In the area of agriculture, a South Korean group known as MH Bio-Energy Group is operating the first bio-ethanol plant in Kandal province with daily production capacity of 130-300 tons (Som, p. 5). Besides these successful investment projects, there were also two noticeable failed construction projects: Gold Tower 42 and Booyoung Town where the development process has been put on hold and stalled (Som, p. 6).

In the field of tourism, the movement between the two countries is rapidly growing at a high pace. Direct flights between Cambodia and South Korea have also increased economic activities between the two countries, with Koreans becoming the third biggest tourist group in Cambodia after Vietnam and China (Ministry of Tourism, December 2016). The number of Korean tourists to Cambodia stood at 378,337, accounting for 9.5% of total arrivals, according to the Cambodian Ministry of Tourism (Ministry of Tourism, December 2016). The major destination of Korean visitor is Siem Reap Province (Ministry of Tourism, 2016). Recent Korea Tourism Organization's monthly statistics show that the total Cambodian visitor arrivals to Korea are 3000 of which 1, 898 are male, 1, 099 are female and 3 are crew members (Korea Tourism Organization, 2017).[5] The statistics also provide age ranges of the Cambodian visitor arrivals as follows: 343 (0-20), 1,792 (21-30), 575 (31-40), 132 (41-50), 105 (51-60), 50 (and Over) and 3 (crew) (Korea Tourism Organization, 2017).

This number suggests that Korea receives mostly a young tourist population and that could mean the population might consist of young Cambodians with the economic means to visit Korean attractions, Cambodian students, and/or migrant workers as well.

Whereas the most recent statistics by the Cambodian Ministry of Tourism in its April report 2017 shows that Cambodia receives 149, 618 Korean arrivals over the period from January-April 2017 and 153, 934 in 2016 (table below). Of the mentioned statistics, Korean arrivals to Cambodia contribute to 7.8% of the share of the top ten arrivals (Ministry of Tourism, 2017).

Top ten markets arrivals in January - April 2017



	China (RPC)	Vietnam	Korea (ROK)	Lao PDR	Thailand	U.S.A	Japan	U.K	France	Germany
2017	360,783	272,410	149,618	141,689	122,319	98,036	73,305	68,406	66,365	58,344
2016	274,836	306,002	153,934	78,053	117,120	92,701	68,554	64,321	60,025	53,185
Share (%)	18.8	14.2	7.8	7.4	6.4	5.1	3.8	3.6	3.5	3.0
Change (%)	31.3	-11.0	-2.8	81.5	4.4	5.8	6.9	6.4	10.6	9.7

Source: *Cambodia's Ministry of Tourism, Executive Summary Report in April 2017: Top Ten Markets Arrivals in January-April 2017)*[6]

IV. South Korea's Development Assistance to Cambodia

In addition to being one of Cambodia's biggest economic partners, South Korea is currently one of the largest bilateral aid and loan providers. Korea's development grants to Cambodia are mainly administered by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), which was founded in 1991 with the aim of being an implementing agency of the Korean government's development aid abroad. KOICA established its first office in Phnom Penh, Cambodia in 2003. Since its inception in 1991, the total volume of KOICA's grant aid to Cambodia had reached USD105 million as of 2012 (KOICA, 2012). In 2014 alone, the South Korean government provided additional development grants of USD 21 million to Cambodia to implement in four main sectors including rural development, securities market development, waterway improvement for port logistic development research, and health sector support (KOICA, 2014). According to Kim Won Jin, the current South Korean ambassador to Cambodia, Korea's development aid focuses mainly on these four sectors. These were set based on the Country Partnership Strategy (CPS), which reflects the Cambodian government's National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) and Korea's experience of economic development and poverty reduction (2015). The four priority sectors include:

1. Agriculture and rural development (technical cooperation in agriculture, and the transmission of the New Village Movement),
2. Health and medical sector (construction of hospitals and medical facilities, support to development of health policies),
3. Transport and green energy infrastructure (development of a master plan study on various industrial fields), and
4. Human resources development (support to the development of high-level human resources, focusing on skilled labor forces), (Country Partnership Strategy, 2015).

KOICA's thematic working fields are to provide technical assistance and grant aid focusing on priority sectors in Cambodia. Those priority sectors include: agriculture, rural development, infrastructure, human resource development and health (Mao, 2015). Since its implementation in Cambodia to the present day, KOICA has provided 47 bilateral and 4 multilateral projects, sent 2,218 trainees to Korea and deployed 326 volunteers (Hawkins, 2017). Besides, there are also collaborations between Korean and Cambodian universities among researchers, scholars, and students. Noticeably, the Korean government provides scholarships to Cambodian students to study in South Korea as well as student exchange programs between the two nations.

Korea Funded Civil Aviation Training Centre in Cambodia & Military Aid

In the framework of additional Korean development assistance, First Cambodia's Civil Aviation Training Centre was inaugurated on March 23, 2017, in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. The establishment of Cambodia's Civil Aviation Training Centre is the effort

of the Korea Airports Corp. (KAC) and the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) who teamed up in 2013 and financed the cost of approx. 10 million US dollars of the project (Jung, 2017). Korea hopes the training center will provide Cambodia with facilities and education programs to train its future aviation experts without depending on overseas training programs in the future (Jung, 2017). For instance, management control and technology within aircraft and on the ground will be taught for aviation staffs. With cutting-edge air traffic control simulators installed at the center, trainees can prepare for emergencies, such as misleading information, foreign objects, lightning and bird strikes (Jung, 2017). At the same time, the KAC and KOICA recalled the support of USD 600,000 that Korea received from the United Nations in 1984 to build its civil aviation training center, KAC President Sung Il-hwan said he is glad to "give back" (Jung, 2017). Adding to that, the importance of the tourism sector for Cambodia's economy nowadays is another motive to support the project—while Cambodia absorbs tourists from different countries to its cultural heritage attraction, Angkor Wat. Therefore, aviation management programs have become increasingly crucial for the tourism industry (Jung, 2017).

We have also seen that Korea offers direct support to Cambodia's military affairs in strengthening its defense capabilities. For instance, South Korea's third round of military aid was delivered to Cambodia in 2017. The military aid includes 208 military trucks, 14 engineering vehicles and other military equipment are expected to arrive separately from South Korea in July and in coming years (Parameswaran, 2017). These economic activities and military assistance demonstrate the maximized development of the partnership between the South and Cambodia.

V. Cambodian Labor Migration to South Korea

1. Benefits and Challenges

South Korea is one of the preferred countries of destination among Cambodian workers due to the country's comprehensive labor law and relatively high salaries. South Korea's Labor Law - which is applicable to all foreign nationals working in Korea—provides basic principles of employment law particularly on: minimum wage, working conditions, special welfare protections, forbidding gender discrimination in employment and collective bargaining contracts for all foreign employees[7] (Lee, Chang, Kim & Lee, LLC, 2017). These legislative principles of employment would legally safeguard Cambodian workers in the event of any dispute and incident. Additionally, in managing migration Korea is running the so-called EPS (Employment Permit System)[8] for the foreign migrant workers, which includes Cambodia as a sending country to Korea. The Korean Government annually decides the total number of migrant workers, considering the labor market conditions. Then, it allocates a proportional number of countries which want to send their workers to Korea. In the process, another affiliated sub-organization of the Korean Labor Ministry, the

Korean Human Resource Development Service (HRD) holds the Korean language test (the so-called "TOPIK") in cooperation with the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training in Cambodia to recruit migrant workers. Working conditions in South Korea have gained recognition for being better than in some of the destinations Cambodian migrants chose to go (Khuon, 2015). For example, there were often reported issues among migrant workers working in Thailand and Malaysia a few years ago in the media. Speaking on the same issue, Mr. Ya Navuth, executive director of Coordination of Action Research on AIDS and Mobility also claimed that "most workers would rather work in Korea than countries such as Thailand or Malaysia, because they think they will have more success and less likely to fall victim to exploitation" (Sen, 2014). Similarly, Dy Thehoya, a program officer at the labor rights group Central, said that South Korea offers Cambodian migrant workers a better salary than they could hope for at home, although the opportunity comes at a cost (Sen, 2014).

Statistically, Cambodia is ranked 6th out of 15 countries that send workers to South Korea (Hor, 2017). As of 2017, there are 44,229 Cambodian workers in South Korea, sending a total remittance of approximately USD 37.2 million back home annually (Hor, 2017). Last year the number of properly registered Cambodian workers stood at only 10,000 but the number of applicants may rise due to illegal workers (Kong, 2016). This year, according to the Korean Immigration Office's statistics in March 2017 alone, the number of Cambodians applying to work in Korea rose to around 35,000 applications. The competition among Cambodians applying to be workers in Korea is quite intense. Cambodian workers who were selected to work in South Korea are mostly males intending to occupy positions in heavy industrial jobs, agriculture, and construction. Generally, in the Republic of Korea, the minimum wage is 1,015,740 South Korean Won (about USD 922) per month, based on the hourly minimum wage and the average number of 40 working hours per week[9] (Korea's Labor Migration Policy). Under the Employment Permit System (EPS) foreign workers are afforded equal rights and treatment to Korean workers under Korean Labor Law and regulations. In other words, according to the Embassy of Korea in Phnom Penh, legal migrant workers are protected by the Korean Labor Law and are granted the same working conditions including the minimum wage, around 6 dollars per hour in 2017. Based on the minimum wage and the overtime charge, the Cambodian workers in Korea normally receive between USD 1,500 to USD 2,000 per month (2017).

Despite the benefits Cambodian workers receive in South Korea, cases of abuse and mistreatment by employers continue to occur. Stories of abuse towards Cambodian workers in the agricultural industry were reported in the media. In the rural areas, migrant workers often face discrimination from the local residents and in the worst case; they are sometimes treated like "slaves" (Board, 2015). The main complaints from agricultural migrant workers include abuse or assault, working overtime without pay, inadequate shelter, and threats of deportation (Board, 2015). The South Korean government admitted agricultural workers work under tough conditions but it is working to double its careful inspections and is providing extra incentives and training program to improve the welfare of the worker (Board, 2015). Cambodia, on the other hand, faces challenges to create a legal framework

that could safeguard migrant workers and deal with migration issues. The problem could also derive from when the migrant workers arrive in South Korea the working conditions in many circumstances are a lot different from what they've been promised by the recruitment agency (Sen, 2014). Now the situation is that migrant workers have to pay back the loans that they took to process all the procedures for the journey to South Korea and normally it costs them some months of their domestic salary to pay back (Sen, 2014). As a result, it might have been too late for them to realize the told conditions were not true as they've expected. Over the years, the cases of mistreatment have improved through the commitment of both governments but there are problems left to be tackled as taking actions against exploitation.

2. Migration Policy and Safety Deals

Since 2011, the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training (MOLVT) has paid significant attention to increasing the protection of migrant workers prior to their departure. The "Labor Migration Policy for Cambodia 2015-2018" has been launched in December 2014, which includes key policy areas of labor migration governance (Mom, 2016). This Policy was built on the basis of the previous "Policy on Labor Migration for Cambodia 2010-2015", by expanding on the three main objectives of:

1. Formulation and implementation of rights-based and gender-sensitive policy and legislation through social dialogue at all levels;
2. Protection and empowerment of men and women migrant workers regardless of their status through all stages of the migration process; and
3. Harnessing labor migration and mobility to enhance social and economic development in Cambodia recognizing that migrant workers are agents of innovation and development.[10]

In an effort to seek further resolution for migrant worker issues, Cambodia and South Korea recently signed the 3rd Technical Cooperation Agreement on Occupational Safety and Health for 2017-2019 (Mom, 2016). According to Mom (2016) reported that the agreement puts emphasis on three important sectors[11]:

1. Industrial sector: ensuring safe work environment, sanitation, safety system in the workplace, transportation of the worker and the safe use of liquid chemicals
2. Construction sector: sharing experience to ensure labor safety on construction projects and technical aid in the format of training
3. Mining sector *(further details were not disclosed on this sector)*, (Mom, 2016).

Through this agreement, there will be technical aid and short training courses for staff at the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training in Cambodia provided by Korean experts and additional study tours to South Korea (Mom, 2016). From the Cambodian side, the Minister is convinced that both parties will exchange information on sanitation systems, health protection and labor safety for workers (Mom, 2016). This agreement has shown the commitment of South Korea to improve the relationship between both countries in the future. It is suggested the agreement is signed on the level of government-to-government,

it is better than authorizing a third party or recruitment agency to take care of the matters (Mom, 2016). If the recruitment of migrant workers is processed at the governmental level, there is a high chance of better protection for migrant workers. During the visit of the Cambodian Minister of the Labor in April 2017 to South Korea, his request was also to ask Korean officials to take steps to better accommodate Cambodian migrant workers, provide information on benefits available for Cambodian migrant workers, create vocational education programs and establish a relationship with the Cambodian social security provider to better manage the distribution of benefits, among other things (Mom, 2016). These official requests and bilateral agreements maximize the development of the labor migration governance for Cambodia and South Korea.

VI. Cambodia-North Korea Relations and the Korean Peninsula Conflict

Throughout the chapter, South Korea and Cambodia relations are intensively outlined and now before further deliberating the subject of Cambodia's role in the conflict of the Korean peninsula, it is also necessary to look partly into crucial elements of Cambodia-North Korea relations: its historical relations as well as current affairs.

The long-standing friendship between Cambodia and North Korea was initially built based on a personal friendship between Cambodia's late king Norodom Sihanouk and the former supreme leader of North Korea Kim Il-sung in 1965 (Sun, 2017). It was the time when the late King Norodom Sihanouk took refuge abroad to lead a resistance movement known as the Royal Government of the National Union of Kampuchea (GRUNK) and at the same time was offered a residence in Pyongyang by North Korea in 1974[12] (Sun, 2017). Since then, Cambodia and North Korea became friends and started to build a relationship on diplomatic levels. Primarily, Cambodia's and North Korea's bilateral agreement was to set up embassies in Phnom Penh and Pyongyang, which were realized later. Today, embassies are operating in each respective country. Despite the establishment of embassies, the relations are yet limited. For instance, when it comes to trade and investment Cambodia and North Korea did not have a deep relationship. So far, North Korea's major investment in Cambodia is the construction and management of the Angkor Paranoma Museum in Siem Reap[13] (Strangio, 2016). Besides that, there are only a few North Korean restaurants running in the city. The relationship between North Korea and Cambodia is also weakening since the death of North Korea's supreme leader Kim-jong il and later the death of Cambodian King Norodom Sihanouk (Inbaraj Krishnan & Chheang, 2017).

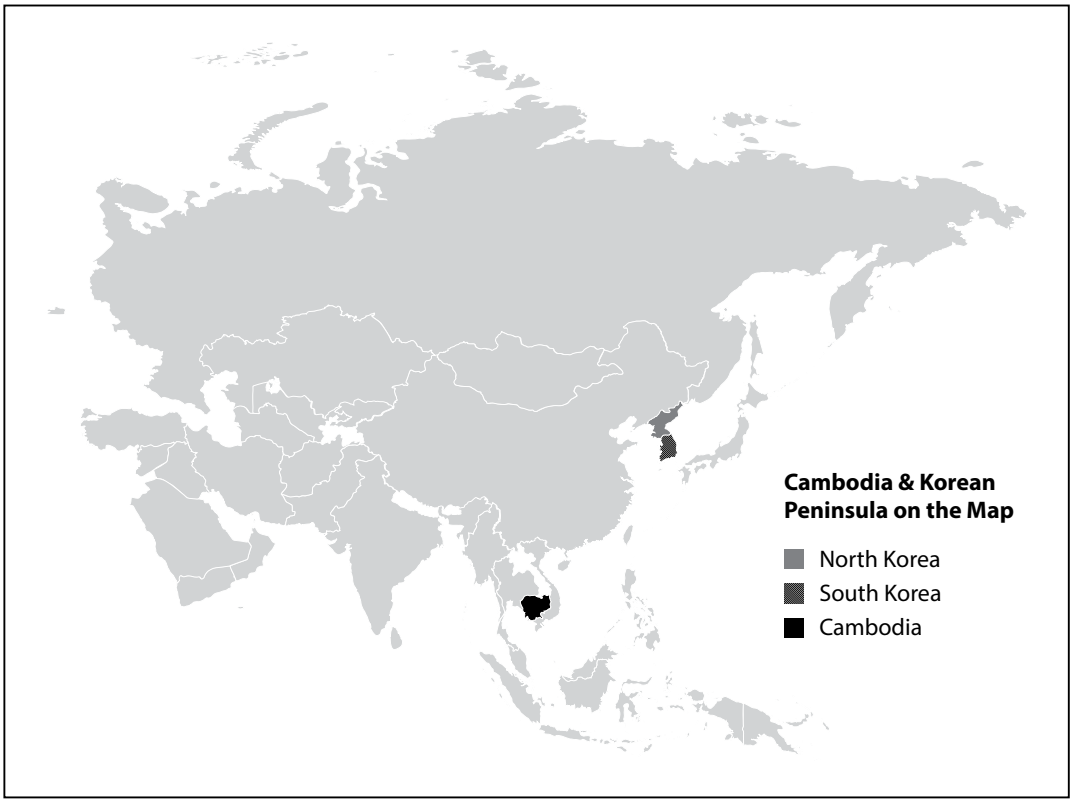
On the spectrum of political relations, North Korea reciprocates the cooperation by standing alongside Cambodia on the political front. For instance, this could be seen when OHCHR released a report in 2015 regarding the situation of human rights in Cambodia. North Korea's ambassador in Cambodia took the position to buttress Cambodia in saying that OHCHR' activities are unauthorized due to an expired Memorandum of Understanding and that it had intervened in domestic affairs, which contradicts the principles of non-

interference and respect for state sovereignty (Vong, 2015). Cambodia's reciprocal relationship with North Korea is also presented when Cambodia took all immediate actions to ban the distribution of Hollywood's controversial comedy *The Interview,* which featured the fictional assassination of North Korean leader Kim Jung-un, in response to the request by North Korea (Vong, 2015). This give-and-take relationship nevertheless may affect the image of Cambodia because generally speaking North Korea has been criticized by the West on the international level. Especially, the fact that North Korea is still continuing to carry out their nuclear tests creates many negative consequences enforced by the international community on North Korea such as economic sanctions. For example, the recent North Korean threats of nuclear proliferation and mass military exercise have of course created a huge concern among the international community and thus, negative actions to North Korea. On the regional level, this international crisis is also potentially posing threats to international peace and security and as a result, creating a great deal of uncertainty with regard to making difficult foreign policy choices among involved countries.

VII. Cambodia in the Context of the Korean Crisis

Cambodia's close relations with the Korean Peninsula pose discussions about Cambodia's potential role in the Korean crisis. For instance, during the public lecture on the topic of *Peace and Security on the Korean Peninsula*" organized by the Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace (CICP) on July 17, 2017 in Phnom Penh there were questions raised by professors, media representatives and representatives from relevant institutes on Cambodia's potential role as mediator[14]. Meanwhile, this suggestion might bring up a diplomatic question that if Cambodia is suggested as a candidate of a mediator—can it be accepted by all the regional and global powers involved in the conflict? Moreover, when it comes to offering Korean peninsula crisis mediation it would be very challenging diplomatically. Switzerland; for instance, just offered the mediation role in the Korean crisis, given the fear of the potential escalation of the peninsula again. Despite the fact that Switzerland possesses substantial experience and knowledge in mediation skills to address many crises around the world over the past decades, Switzerland was still confronted with many challenges along with mixed results of success. (Nebehay, 04 September 2017; Mohdin, 04 September 2017).

Figure 1: Cambodia, South Korea & North Korea on the World Map



Regarding Cambodia, in the context of the Korean crisis, we must also recall the past proposal of almost two decades ago related to the proposed role. South Korea's president at the time, Kim Dae Jung, similarly asked the Cambodian late King Sihanouk for help to mediate in talks with the North in the early 2000s (Sun, 29 March 2017). Chheang Vun, Southeast Asian nation's ambassador at that time from Cambodia to Seoul, quoted late King Sihanouk saying that "we can only be the mediator if the two countries agree [to talk]," (Sun, 29 March 2017). That meant that Cambodia could only play the role if the talk is initiated by the peninsula and if Cambodia is asked.

Likewise, the general nature of Cambodia's multilateral diplomacy, particularly on the issue of the conflict, seems to almost always go alongside with the international community. Reflected on the conflict; for example, Prime Minister Hun Sen commented that the United Nations Security Council's adoption of any resolutions shall be with prudence and shall encourage security on the Korean peninsula and that all relevant sides should settle this issue in a peaceful way (Po& Var, 2017). Furthermore, Prime Minister Hun Sen also expressed his concern over the recent North Korean nuclear tests in April 2017 by calling for "patience and negotiation" (Sun, 14 April 2017). The Cambodian government seems to have maintained the same political attitude towards the peninsula. The position of Cambodia in support for the UNSC Resolution (2375) adopted by the UNSC in connection with the repeated nuclear test conducted on 3 September 2017 by North Korea, urges, among others

things, that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea fully comply with all relevant UNSC resolutions and its international obligations and to cease all nuclear and missile tests in order to safeguard peace and stability, among others (Sun, 13 September 2017). A respondent from the Cambodian government stated that Cambodia had no plans to specifically get involved in the issue and Cambodia's stance is not to take sides but to see peace, stability, and security in the Korean peninsula (Sun, 13 September 2017). If Cambodia would be asked to take a "more active role" in the conflict of the peninsula, Cambodia's commitment to the role would be restrained by the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries and it is unlikely that Cambodia could take a stance while the conflict is rather heavily dominated by members of the six party talk (Sun, 13 September 2017).

VIII. Conclusion

To conclude, as a developing country, Cambodia's survival mainly depends on direct investments and development aid from foreign countries. South Korea's economic assistance to Cambodia leads to a bigger interest in national policies. Diplomatically, Cambodia has maintained good relationships with the South and the North, although it seems that each country enjoyed each other's benefits on different levels. From Cambodia's side, it builds a stronger relationship with the South through various operating economic activities and development projects, although both governments must tackle problems and work towards improving the welfare of labor worker's issues. It is highly predictable that in the event of an extreme escalation of the conflict, Cambodia's foreign policy towards the peninsula might no longer be a balanced one. Cambodia would have to position itself alongside the international community (ASEAN, UN).

Endnotes

1 I would like to take this opportunity to thank the editors: Ambassador Sun Suon, Dr. Deth Sok Udom, KAS for the valuable comments and support on the draft version of the chapter.

2 Particularly, the rapid transformation of global and regional architecture combined with the geopolitical landscape has visibly highlighted the opportunity for Cambodia's industrial development. As a matter of fact, in the framework of regional economic liberalization and integration, in particular with the establishment of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), Cambodia will secure its physical and institutional connectivity, along with its full economic integration, which will contribute toward opening new market opportunities, attracting investment, and securing technology transfer to Cambodia. Retrieved from http://www.mih.gov.kh/File/UploadedFiles/12_9_2016_4_29_43.pdf

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8 The Employment Permit System allows employers who have failed to hire local workforce, to legally employ foreign workers. (The Korean government or public institution that administers the management of the foreign workers retrieved from https://www.eps.go.kr/ph/index.html)

9 https://www.colomboprocess.org/images/pdfs/Labour_Migration_Policy_for_Cambodia_2015-18.pdf

10 Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training of Cambodia, ILO & GMS Triangle Project, *"POLICY ON LABOUR MIGRATION FOR CAMBODIA"*, Phnom Penh, December 2014

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12

CAMBODIA-CHINA RELATIONS: WHAT DO CAMBODIA'S PAST STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS TELL US?

CHEUNBORAN Chanborey

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CAMBODIA-CHINA RELATIONS: WHAT DO CAMBODIA'S PAST STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS TELL US?

I. Introduction

It is common wisdom that the international system leaves small states less room for maneuver and that survival is always their most fundamental foreign policy goal. Cambodia is not excluded from such wisdom. Since the collapse of the Khmer Empire in 1431, Cambodia has been on a persistent quest for survival, rather than the revival of its past glory. To this end, Cambodia's foreign policymakers during the past centuries have adopted various approaches—including balancing against threats, seeking French protectorate, proclaiming neutrality, and aligning with external powers—with mixed results at best.

At the dawn of the 21st century, China emerged as a regional and global power. Economically, China has bypassed Japan to be the second largest economy in the world as its GDP reached USD 5.8 trillion compared to USD 5.4 trillion of Japan (BBC, 2011). By the same estimate, China's economy is expected to reach the size of that of the US within the next decade or so (Patton, 2016; Colvin, 2017). China's power and influence can be felt in all corners of the globe, most evidently in continental Southeast Asia. Against this backdrop, the Cambodia-China bilateral relationship has experienced remarkable transformation over the last decades. The bilateral ties have been noticeably consolidated and elevated since 1997. In December 2010, the two countries upgraded their ties to a "Comprehensive Strategic Partnership of Cooperation".

Due to China's rapidly growing influence in Cambodia, quite a number of commentators have jumped to the conclusion that Cambodia is actually "China's de facto proxy" in Southeast Asia and that Cambodia has been bought by Chinese largess (Mahbubani, 2012; Ciorciari, 2013.). The commonly cited basis for their judgment is the failure for the first time of the foreign ministers of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to issue a joint communiqué during their meeting in Phnom Penh in July 2012, under's Cambodia chairmanship of ASEAN that year. However, such a judgment fails to deeply comprehend strategic interests and security concerns with which Cambodian foreign policymakers have been preoccupied.

Therefore, this chapter attempts to explain Phnom Penh's apparent move towards China based on Cambodia's historical perspective. In doing so, the author attempts to answer four fundamental questions:

1. What were Cambodia's past strategic options? Why did Cambodian leaders adopt those choices?
2. What was China's role in Cambodia's foreign policy in the past?
3. Are the compelling factors that had shaped Cambodia's foreign policy behavior over the last seven centuries still relevant in a contemporary context?
4. What is and will be the role of China in Cambodia's strategic direction?

II. China in Cambodia's Past Strategic Options

Cambodia is what remains of the once splendid Khmer or Angkor Empire. At its zenith from the eleventh to the twelfth centuries, Khmer kings ruled vast areas of mainland Southeast Asia, which included parts of Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, and the northern portion of the Malay Peninsula today (Smith, 1965). The dominance of the Khmer Empire eventually ended as internal conflicts erupted and Angkor suffered successive attacks by the Siamese (today's Thai) in the 14th and early 15 centuries. This marked the starting point of Cambodia's persistent quest for security and survival from its increasingly dominant neighbors—the Siamese and the Vietnamese, especially after the 18th century. The history of Cambodia suggests that in order to overcome its geopolitical predicament, Cambodian leaders had played one rival against the other. Cambodia has also sought support and assistance from external power(s). As far as China is concerned, its role had been less significant for Cambodia's search for survival from its predatory neighbors in the early stage. However, in post-independent Cambodia, China became increasingly more crucial for Cambodia's strategic calculation.

1. Cambodia's Balancing Game against Powerful Neighbors

Thai attempts to impose its suzerainty in Cambodia started immediately after the capture of Angkor in 1431, for the kingdom was directly ruled by the son of the Ayutthaya king—

Nagar Indra (Smith, 1965). The Khmer's resistance against Thai dominance took place from time to time. However, the Khmer attempt to permanently relinquish the Thai hegemony was unsuccessful due to the imbalance of military forces and the absence of a countervailing power against the Thai. The Ming court in China adopted an inward foreign policy due to the domestic political crisis between Confucian scholars and the eunuchs and its preoccupation with the Mongol military threats (Stuart-Fox, 2003). At this point, the Vietnamese had not yet established a threatening presence for Cambodia. Although they had just cast off Chinese rule in 1428, they remained in the Chinese tributary system (Silverman, 1974). The Khmer also looked for help from Western powers. Initially, Khmer kings allowed Catholic missionaries to "preach and send gifts of rice to the recently colonized centers of Malacca and Manila in exchange for promises of military help", which never arrived (Chandler, 2008, p. 100). Interestingly, there is no evidence to suggest why Khmer kings did not forge an alliance with other kingdoms, especially the Lao and the Burmese, who considered the Thai as a common threat. It was probably because Khmer kings believed that alliance was an unhelpful notion in the external relations at that time since all kingdoms were predatory, waiting for the opportunity to expand their territory and power.

At the beginning of the 17th century, the Vietnamese started to move southward. The Nguyen warlords gradually absorbed the Kingdom of Champa and eventually annexed the entire kingdom by the late eighteenth century, and continued to move southward to control the Mekong Delta region of Cambodia, including the trading center of Prey Nakor, which is Saigon today (Leifer, 1967). Smith (1965, p. 10) argued that the Vietnamese settlement was partly supported by Khmer kings, who saw the presence of the Vietnamese as "a means to cast off the Thai influence and control." In response to the demonstration of Thai suzerainty in Cambodia by enthroning Ang Chan II (1806-1834), Emperor Gia Long demanded recognition from the new Khmer king of the Vietnamese dominance in Cambodia as well (Smith, 1965). King Ang Chan II complied with the demand, primarily because he felt that the Vietnamese would be a countervailing force to Thai suzerainty in Cambodia. Chandler (2008, pp. 139-240) notes that Ang Chan's alignment with Vietnam was to "deflect some pressures" from the Thai; and that the equilibrium of influence of the two predatory neighbors in Cambodia provided him "more bargaining power with his patrons."

However, Cambodia had to pay a price for adopting this strategy. Firstly, Cambodia was effectively trapped between two powerful competing neighbors, which generated profound effects on Cambodia's domestic power struggle. Chandler (2008, p. 113) asserts that "a side effect of the advent of Vietnamese power was that the Cambodian royal family and its elite supporters were now liable to split along the pro-Thai and pro-Vietnamese lines." Depending on which power supported an incumbent, his rivals would seek support from the other to overthrow him. Secondly, with their intention to drive out Thai domination, Khmer kings risked their country's security and survival to another predatory power—the Vietnamese. In fact, 21 provinces of Cambodia were completely annexed to Vietnam; and the kingdom almost became a province of the Vietnamese in the 19th century as Vietnamization was unfolding.

2. French Protectorate: Undesired Option for Cambodia's Survival

The enthronement of Ang Duong in 1848 marked a turning point in Cambodia's search for survival. Unlike his brother, King Ang Chan, who allied with the Vietnamese to gain some strategic maneuvers against the Thai, Ang Duong made no attempt to improve relations with the Vietnamese, partly because he was frightened by the precedent of Vietnamization during the 1830s. Seeking the protection of an external great power was his preferable choice (Smith, 1965). King Ang Duong chose France, which had already succeeded in making its influence felt on the Indochinese peninsula. Cambodia had almost no alternative at that time. The Spanish and Dutch were remote. Besides France, the only other European power that exerted a strong influence in mainland Southeast Asia was Britain. However, due to strong British-Siamese ties, especially their military alliance leading to the first Anglo-Burmese war in 1824-25, seeking the protection from the British was not and could not be a choice for Cambodia. Meanwhile, the Qing court of China was in decline due to anti-dynastic rebellions and, particularly, the expansionism of the European powers. The first Opium War of 1839-42, followed by the lease of Hong Kong to Britain in 1842 ushered the Chinese into a century of humiliation (Stuart-Fox, 2003).

In 1853, King Ang Duong sent an official note to Napoleon III, "asking for his protection and assistance in regaining the lost provinces in the Mekong delta" (Smith, 1965, p. 16). Napoleon responded positively. However, due to the lack of understanding Cambodia's relations with Siam, a French envoy, Charles de Montigny, "imprudently exposed to the Thai a French plan" to enter into negotiation with Cambodia, during a stopover in Bangkok in 1856. Shortly thereafter, according to Smith (1965), the Thai "threatened Ang Duong with war if he signed the treaty with France." The threat forced King Ang Duong not to receive the French envoy. Ang Duong died in 1859 without realizing his goal. However, Duong's desire to seek external power's protection was further carried out by his son and successor —King Norodom, who successfully sought the French protectorate in 1863. Although being a French protectorate ensured Cambodia's survival from its predatory neighbors, this small state had to pay a high price of losing its sovereignty for almost a century. Moreover, the Cambodians had to live in a long period that Langlois described as "exploitative, and negligent and often rapacious" (Langlois, 1966). As a result, Cambodian rebellions against French protectorate occasionally took place. The anti-French movement gained more momentum in the twentieth century. Eventually, young King Sihanouk, who was enthroned by the French due to a belief that he would be easily manipulated, forced France to grant Cambodia independence on 9 November 1953.

3. Sihanouk's Foreign Policy Choices

A newly independent Cambodia emerged in the context of the Cold War as well as the Vietnam War at its doorstep. Economically poor, militarily weak and vulnerable, Cambodia initially sought assistance and protection from the West, particularly the US. In order to

cope with the Viet Minh threat, Leifer (1967) argued that there seemed almost no alternative to the US commitment to Cambodia's security due to King Sihanouk's belief that Cambodia's former colonial master, France, was neither willing nor able to provide security protection for Cambodia. In addition, renewed military ties with France would definitely have negative internal repercussions as they would provide a pretext for the Democrats and the Khmer Issaraks to amplify their attacks against the King for his collusion with the former colonial power (Leifer, 1967).

Consequently, Cambodia sought the assurance from the US for Cambodia's independence and territorial integrity (Clymer, 2004). However, the US had turned away from specific commitments because it did not want any deployment of its military forces in mainland Southeast Asia. When the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) was created in September 1954, Cambodia was not invited to membership of this treaty organization, because "accord between the powers at the Geneva Conference on Indo-China in 1954 rested on the neutralization of the successor states of that region" (Leifer, 1962, p. 122). In any case, Cambodia already demonstrated reluctance to be a part of the regional security pact, evident in its final declaration at the Geneva conference : "The Royal Government of Cambodia will not join in any agreement with other states, if this agreement carries for Cambodia the obligation to enter into a military alliance not in conformity with the principles of the U.N. Charter, or, as long as its security is not threatened, the obligation to establish bases on foreign territory for the military forces of foreign powers" (Leifer, 1962, pp. 122-123). King Sihanouk doubted the US-led SEATO's effectiveness and commitment as a security guarantor, and after having met Chou Enlai and Nehru at the Bandung Conference in 1955 was eventually convinced to pursue a neutralist stance instead.

As the Vietnam War and leftist-rightist competition in Cambodia intensified, King Sihanouk saw a need to strike a balance between China and the US. Thus, he adopted the foreign policy of neutrality. Strategically, the rationale for Cambodia's neutrality, according to Leifer (1967, p. 18), was the fact that King Sihanouk viewed close association with China as a "counter to any predatory ambitions of Thailand and South Vietnam" while a symbolic American presence together with its economic assistance as a means to "maintain internal security and preserve a certain freedom of maneuver in dealing with Communist countries." Moreover, Cambodia's close ties with China could check the behavior of Communist Vietnam and the Cambodian left wing and similarly its relations with the US would keep its allies (Thailand and South Vietnam) in order.

However, King Sihanouk gradually lost this balance in the early 1960s, as his relationship with Beijing was increasingly tightened mainly due to his conviction that the US would no longer be a countervailing force in Indochina to check growing threats from the communist Vietnam as well as from the US allies—Thailand and South Vietnam. During his visit to Beijing in February 1956, Prince Sihanouk signed the Sino-Cambodian "Declaration of Friendship", which marked the beginning of Cambodia's association with China. Cambodia became the recipient of China's first ever grant aid of USD 22.4 million to a non-communist country (Sagar, 1989). Eventually, King Sihanouk established diplomatic ties with Beijing in July 1958. Sihanouk's association with China alienated the US and its allies in the region. The

deterioration of Cambodia-US ties was inevitable. The diplomatic relationship between the two countries was severed in May 1965. Consequently, King Sihanouk had to pay a heavy price—the 1970 coup against his regime—for the deviation of Cambodia's foreign policy direction from neutrality. Marshal Lon Nol and other coup leaders established the Khmer Republic on 9 October 1970 as a new regime in Cambodia.

4. Cambodia's Strategic Illusions: A Victim of the Great Powers Politics

The 1970 coup effectively ended Cambodia's neutrality and allowed the full effects of the Vietnam War to be felt in Cambodia. The end result was civil war and destruction. Despite King Sihanouk's turn toward Beijing, Cambodia had never completely cast off its neutrality. King Sihanouk had consistently equated the concept of neutrality with Cambodia's security and survival. In stark contrast, with the backing of the US, the Khmer Republic embraced the strategic illusion that it would be able to meet the security challenges of the Khmer Rouge resistance and Viet Minh penetration. However, as the US embarked on a massive bombing campaign in Cambodia to push out the Viet Minh, the Vietnamese communists were forced to move deeper into eastern and southern parts of the country. It was estimated that between February and August 1973, around 257,000 tons of bombs were dropped over almost all regions of the country (Sagar, 1989). Unfortunately, the bombing paved the way for Pol Pot's rise to power as the pro-Pol Pot hardliners gained more political leverage within the revolution, which it might never have had otherwise (Shawcross, 1979). Kiernan pointed out that if the revolutionary forces had been allowed to overthrow Lon Nol in 1973, the Cambodian people might well have been spared the excesses of the Khmer Rouge regime or the Democratic Kampuchea (DK) that took power in 1975 (Kiernan, 1985).

Similarly, the DK adopted another type of illusion—an isolationist Maoist ideology—to revive Cambodia's past glory based on agricultural collectivism, which resulted in the killing fields. Internally, due to suspicion and extreme hatred towards the Vietnamese, Pol Pot carried out a purge against his pro-Vietnam comrades. Such extreme hatred and excessive confidence in Chinese support motivated the DK to launch an unwinnable war in Vietnam from 1977 to 1978. In the eyes of Chinese leaders, Cambodia was a "conveniently radical ally" to confront Vietnam—a "pro-Soviet threat along their southern borders" (Kiernan, 1985, p. 18). Consequently, China supplied a large number of arms, ammunition and military equipment to the DK. Pol Pot's visit to China in 1977 further strengthened the DK-PRC alliance. However, this was viewed by Hanoi as a strategic threat (Chandler, 2008). Following DK attacks, Vietnam responded militarily in mid-December 1977 by penetrating deep inside Cambodian territory. After the failure of the last attempts at the negotiation table, both sides increased their military forces along the border. On 3 November 1978, Vietnam signed a twenty-five year treaty of friendship with the Soviet Union, which was an assurance from Moscow to balance against the Chinese threat and, in the meantime, began "grooming some defectors from DK as a government in exile" and gave them military training (Chandler, 2008, p. 274).

On Christmas Day of 1978, over 100,000 Vietnamese forces attacked DK on several fronts. The DK abandoned the capital city on 7 January 1979, marking the demise of the regime. Cambodian fighting factions embarked on a costly struggle that played into the hands of the great powers. The great powers, in turn, were not prepared to take risks. The evidence was that Pol Pot requested that the Chinese provide volunteers; but that request was turned down (Chandler, 2008). It is worth noting that the last days of DK and those of Lon Nol's regime in 1975 were strikingly similar. Both regimes were abandoned by their respective patrons—China and the US. Soon after capturing Phnom Penh, the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) was established with support from Hanoi. The Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia turned the country into a battleground of the great powers that supported different factions in the Cambodian civil war. The PRK was supported by Vietnam and the Soviet Union, while the anti-Vietnamese factions by China, the US, and ASEAN. Throughout the 1980s, the Cambodians no longer determined the fate of their country. In fact, it became a pawn in the great power politics of the Cold War.

The compromise by the great powers paved the way for the signing of the Paris Peace Agreements on 23 October 1991. Under the terms of the agreements, a temporary government was established comprising representatives of all factions. The UN peacekeeping forces—the United National Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC)—were deployed to monitor the Paris Peace Agreements and to supervise the elections on 23 May 1993. Although the FUNCIPEC party (Front Uni National pour un Cambodge Indépendant, Neutre, Pacifique et Coopératif) led by Prince Norodom Ranariddh won the elections by a small margin, he was pressured to share power with Hun Sen who became Second Prime Minister in a co-premiership government. The Kingdom of Cambodia was officially restored

III. Cambodia-China Bilateral Relations since 1993

The long history of Cambodia's search for security and survival provides interesting insights on how the foreign policy of this small state has been shaped. The author finds that there are two main characteristics in Cambodia's strategic culture. Firstly, Cambodia's geography of being sandwiched by two powerful, historically antagonistic neighbors—Thailand and Vietnam—has been a persistent compelling factor shaping the country's strategic direction. This factor continues to shape Cambodia's foreign policy, particularly after the eruption of Cambodia-Thailand border disputes in 2008-2011. Second, whenever necessary and available, the Cambodian leaders had also sought support and assistance from external power(s) to address their geopolitical predicament as illustrated by the acceptance of the French protectorate in 1863, the attempt to seek the US military commitment shortly after independence by Prince Sihanouk and by the Lon Nol regime in the aftermath of the 1970 coup, and the strengthening of the Democratic Kampuchea's alliance with China in the second half of the 1970s.

The option that Cambodia took depended primarily on distribution of power among major powers in Asia and a conviction that the great power(s) in question was willing and

able to render credible support for the security and survival of both Cambodia and its ruling elite. Recently, as China has emerged as a regional and global power, Cambodia's northern giant has become the most important partner of the kingdom, at least for Prime Minister Hun Sen's regime. Cambodia's uneasy relations with its neighbors and China's increasingly important role in the survival of the Hun Sen regime further push Phnom Penh's alignment with Beijing.

1. Phnom Penh-Beijing Ties: From Mistrust to Partnership

With the re-establishment of the new government following the UNTAC-sponsored election in May 1993, Beijing immediately took the diplomatic offensive towards Phnom Penh in order to re-establish a position of influence in the country, with regular high-level meetings between leaders of both countries. Between 1993 and 1997, there were at least thirty-two high-level meetings in Beijing, Phnom Penh, or New York (Richardson, 2010). Beijing increasingly cultivated closer links with its former foes-Hun Sen and other leaders of the Cambodian People's Party (CPP). Richardson (2010) argued that Beijing's rapprochement with Hun Sen was not an endorsement of the CPP, but rather because FUNCINPEC's performance had "not inspired confidence" and often disappointed due to a perception in Beijing that FUNCINPEC leaders tended to look for support from outside the country, particularly the US. However, Hun Sen remained skeptical about Beijing's intentions due to Beijing's support of the Khmer Rouge in the past and its close ties with the royalists. Therefore, although the relationship between the CPP and Beijing slowly improved the ties remained fragile and uncertain. Prime Minister Hun Sen's close aide pointed out that, "China is like fire… If you get too close you get burnt, if you are too far you feel the chill" (Chanda, 2001).

The Cambodia-China relationship experienced a remarkable transformation following the armed clash between the loyal forces of the first Prime Minister Norodom Ranaridh and the Second Prime Minister Hun Sen on 5-6 July 1997. Although his forces crushed his opponents, Hun Sen had to pay a heavy price. First, Cambodia was isolated again from the international community. ASEAN delayed the admission of Cambodia, which was supposed to join the grouping along with Laos and Myanmar in July 1997. This gave the appearance that Cambodia was a pariah in its neighborhood (Zasloff, 2002). Worst still, the United Nations Credentials Committee decided to leave Cambodia's seat vacant. Cambodia was not able to assume its seat in the UN until December 1998, following the formation of a new government (Peou, 2000). Secondly, major foreign donors froze a large part of foreign assistance—which provided about half of Cambodia's annual government budgetary revenue. The World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and Asian Development Bank (ADB) curtailed their country programs for Cambodia (Kevin, 2000). The US adopted a tough approach, and not only blamed Hun Sen and the CPP for the military clashes but also suspended its USD 25 million aid program (Strangio, 2014). Clearly, Cambodia was hit hard, especially in the area of budgetary aid and the balance of payment support. According

to ADB figures, Cambodia's gross domestic product (GDP) grew only 2% in 1997, and zero growth in 1998 compared to 7 percent in 1996 (Kevin, 2000).

Beijing's response to the July 1997 military violence was subtly different as it provided legitimacy, aid, and political support to Phnom Penh. China was the first country to recognize the change of government after the armed clashes (Jeldres, 2012). Chinese leaders reiterated the principles of non-interference, highlighting the will of the Cambodian people (Peou, 2000). According to Peou (2000), China also opposed the imposition of international sanctions against Phnom Penh, urging Western countries to stay away from Cambodia's internal affairs. In December 1997, China delivered 116 military cargo trucks and 70 jeeps valued at USD 2.8 million in what both sides claimed was part of a deal that predated the event of 5-6 July (Marks, 2000).

Obviously, following the July 1997 crisis, China emerged as a major power that could provide Hun Sen's regime with political and economic breathing space while Phnom Penh was condemned and isolated again from the region and the world. China's political support and economic assistance were also crucial for Phnom Penh to address immediate and long-term security challenges, namely the threat from the Khmer Rouge remnants and potential Khmer Rouge-FUNCINPEC military alliance as well as the traditional threat from neighboring countries. Moreover, due to high expectations of ASEAN's role in Cambodia's security and prosperity, Phnom Penh believed that Cambodia's close ties with China might provide necessary leverage to assist Cambodia's quest for ASEAN membership sooner rather than later. Myanmar had shown Cambodia the entry road into ASEAN. Robert Cribb (1998) argued, which also shared by the former ASEAN Secretary-General Rodolfo Severino (2006), that Myanmar was admitted due to a fear in many ASEAN members that "Burma might fall into China's orbit if it were excluded." Therefore, Cambodia's closer ties with Beijing might create necessary pressure for ASEAN to admit the country sooner rather later, so as not push Cambodia into being a client state of China.

Despite Hun Sen's attempt to woo China in order to balance the West, particularly the US, and to cushion pressure from Cambodia's neighbors—Thailand and Vietnam—he was still ambivalent about Beijing. Phnom Penh's move towards Beijing had also been constrained by three main factors. First, the role of Vietnam for the political survival of Hun Sen and his CPP party throughout the 1990s and early 2000s could not be discounted. Hun Sen remained a frequent visitor to Hanoi and the CPP maintained close links with the Vietnamese Communist Party. Hanoi had tried to win back its influence in post-1997 Cambodia, through economic initiatives and strengthened personal ties with leaders in Phnom Penh. It is also argued that Hun Sen's friendship with Hanoi would enable him to "play China and Vietnam off against each other" (Storey, 2006). Second, after joining ASEAN on 30 April 1999, leaders in Phnom Penh were initially convinced that the new diplomacy of multilateralism and regional integration, rather than the realpolitik of the old diplomacy, would be a new approach for Cambodia to pursue its economic prosperity and to safeguard its sovereignty and autonomy (Kao, 2002). Phnom Penh placed its confidence in ASEAN with a conviction that it would be a crucial regional platform through which Cambodia could safeguard its sovereignty and territorial integrity as well as to promote its strategic

and economic interests. Third, although Chinese aid had remarkably increased since the late 1990s, it remained modest compared to the support and assistance from the West. From 1998 to 2007, about two-thirds of all ODA was disbursed by Japan, ADB, UN Agencies, the World Bank, the US and the EU (Chanboreth & Hach, 2008).

2. Revived Mistrust with Neighbours: Cambodia's Alignment with China

From 2008 to 2011, Cambodia went through tense relations with its bigger neighbor to the west, Thailand, due to the border conflicts surrounding the Preah Vihear temple. The conflict has reshaped Cambodia's strategic direction away from regionalism and an ASEAN-supported rules-based regional order towards an alignment with an external great power—China (Cheunboran, 2015a). Moreover, Cambodia's ongoing tensions with Vietnam further push this strategic alignment.

Cambodia's relations with Thailand can be categorized as historically mistrust and antagonism. Thailand, along with Vietnam, has been a persistent compelling factor shaping Cambodia's strategic direction. Mutual mistrust between Cambodia and Thailand reached a new high after Phnom Penh successfully enlisted the temple as a world heritage site on 7 July 2008. Months of growing bilateral tensions finally reached a new height in early February 2011 when Thai and Cambodian troops experienced their worst clashes, a violent conflict that included gunfire and artillery duels, killing at least two Thais and eight Cambodians. More than three thousand Thais were evacuated from a village close to where the incident took place. The temple itself was damaged by artillery fire from Thai guns (Kasetsiri, Pou & Chachavalpongpun, 2013).

The tension subsided after the election of Yingluck Shinawatra in July 2011 and the creation of the provisional demilitarized zone by the International Court of Justice on 18 July 2011. The border military clashes had at least three important implications for Cambodia's strategic outlook. First, the border armed clashes reminded Cambodian leaders that Cambodia remained 'bullied and intimidated' by its stronger neighbor(s). Second, the armed clashes also prompted Cambodian leaders to rethink ASEAN's role in maintaining peace and stability in the region. Cambodia's confidence in ASEAN faded due to the grouping's ineffective response to the Cambodia-Thailand border dispute. Third, the 'arrogance' and 'aggressiveness' of the Thai military and the ruling elite in Bangkok, along with ASEAN's ineffectiveness to help resolve the border dispute, pushed Phnom Penh closer towards Beijing, whose influence had already been apparent in Cambodia.

As the Cambodia-Thailand relationship improved, the tensions have shifted to Cambodia's eastern border since late 2013. Cambodia-Vietnam tensions are the reflection of historical suspicion and hatred of the Khmer towards the Vietnamese and domestic politics in Cambodia as well as strategic divergence between the two countries. In fact, the fear among the Cambodian people of their neighbor to the east—Vietnam—has generally been greater compared to their fear of Thailand due to the fact the Khmer and the Thai share a cultural affinity. The fear of the Vietnamese has been noted since the 18th century. Recently, the CNRP

has been quite successful in using the anti-Vietnamese card. During the 2013 election, the CPP's share of National Assembly seats fell to just 68 from 90 out of 123 following a surge of support for the CNRP, whose campaign mixed "crude anti-Vietnamese appeals" with pledges to end corruption and raise wages (Kasetsiri, et al., 2013). In response, Hun Sen according to Strangio (2015) has tried to take the initiative away from the opposition. Carlyle Thayer argued that "for Hun Sen, you have to be posturing against the Vietnamese up to a certain point to deflate the sails of the opposition" (Strangio, 2015).

Noticeably, Phnom Penh's position on Cambodia-Vietnam border issues and ethnic Vietnamese in Cambodia has been tougher in the aftermath of the 2013 election. In response to Vietnam's alleged violation of Cambodia's territory, including the digging of reservoirs, the construction of roads, buildings and military outpost, the Cambodian government called on Vietnam to "stop what it called encroachment on its territory" (Voice of America (VOA), 2016a). The Cambodian Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that since 2011, Cambodia has sent more than 20 diplomatic notes to Hanoi to protest against Vietnam's violation of Cambodian territories (VOA, 2016b). Responding to allegations by the opposition party that the maps being used by the Cambodian government in its border negotiations and demarcations are fake, Prime Minister Hun Sen wrote to France, the United Kingdom and the US to request for the original maps of Cambodia that were made by France during the colonial period (Chheang, 2015). Similarly, the Cambodian ruling party has adopted a tougher stance on the illegal ethnic Vietnamese in Cambodia. A campaign against illegal workers, mainly the Vietnamese, began in mid-2014. By the end of the year, the Ministry of Interior deported almost 1,300 illegal immigrants, 90 percent of which were Vietnamese (Khmer Times, 2014). The deportation of the Vietnamese increased markedly in 2015 whereby more than 6,000 illegal Vietnamese immigrants were deported, compared to approximately 2,500 in 2016 (The Cambodia Daily, 2017).

Moreover, Cambodia-Vietnam relations have been affected by the disagreement between Phnom Penh and Hanoi on the South China Sea. Cambodia has repeatedly refused to join Vietnam and some other ASEAN members in formally rebuking China's claims in the Southeast China Sea. Most noticeably, the maritime disputes caused a political crisis during the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Phnom Penh in July 2012 as the foreign ministers failed to issue a joint communiqué for the first time in ASEAN's history. The failure—known as the 'Phnom Penh Fiasco'—has allegedly been interpreted as the result of enormous Chinese pressure on Cambodia, which blocked any mention of the South China Sea in the joint communiqué. In the aftermath of the fiasco, Vietnamese diplomats privately expressed Hanoi's disappointment over Cambodia's attitude towards the South China Sea. For his part, Hun Sen, according to a source at the Cambodian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, lashed out at visiting Vietnamese leaders during closed-door meetings that "true friends do not put one other's image to shame."

IV. Cambodia: A Proxy of China?

Historically, China has been paying great attention to Cambodia during and after the Cold War. Chanda (2002, p. 2) observed that "since the demise of the Soviet Union, a relatively unencumbered China has paid much greater attention to Southeast Asia, and Cambodia in particular." Traditionally, China's security objectives in Southeast Asia (especially mainland), had been to keep the countries in the region divided and weak (Wang, 1991). Chanda (2002, p. 3) posited that the modern manifestation of China's traditional policy of keeping neighbors in check has remained a "leitmotif of Beijing's approach to Indochina." Recently, it is argued that China has acted as a trading partner and donor of Cambodia with an eye to buffering Vietnam's leverage in the region (Burgos & Ear, 2010). Moreover, China's increasing exports and growing demand for oil and other natural resources has been driving the Chinese strategists to pay more attention to Cambodia's strategic location which is crucial for Beijing to project its power into the South China Sea and the Pacific and Indian Oceans (Marks, 2000). In this regard, the Cambodian port of Sihanoukville would provide an excellent base for China to project its maritime power into the Gulf of Thailand and the Straits of Malacca. Equally importantly, Cambodia's membership in ASEAN has been crucial, as Phnom Penh's support would significantly serve China's interests in the region, including on the South China Sea.

As a result, China's influence in Cambodia has increasingly grown in all areas over the last decade. As of 2014, China has become Cambodia's largest foreign investor and economic benefactor, with cumulative investments of USD 10 billion and development assistance, including grant aid and concessional loans, of USD 3 billion (Cheunboran, 2015b). According to the Chinese figures in 2010, Cambodia was among the top 20 recipients of approved Chinese foreign direct investment. And in recent years, it is believed that Cambodia has been among the top ten. Chinese investments focus on the agriculture, infrastructure, hydropower projects, garments, and mining sectors. Bilateral trade between Cambodia and China has also increased remarkably over the past years, reaching USD 3.75 billion in 2014 (Cambodian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2014). The two countries have agreed to boost their bilateral trade to reach the target of USD 5 billion by 2017. Noticeably, while Cambodia has suffered from a crumbled rice sector, China pledged to buy 200,000 tons of Cambodian rice annually and promised to provide a USD 300 million loan to help Cambodia's rice sector (Khmer Times, 2016).

Similarly, Chinese aid to Cambodia has been steadily increasing in recent years. In November 2014, Chinese President Xi Jinping pledged that China would provide Cambodia development assistance worth between USD 500 million to USD 700 million annually–a significant increase from less than USD 100 million in 2007 (RFA, 2014). During his meeting with Prime Minister Hun Sen on the side-lines of the 11th Asia-Europe Meeting in Mongolia in July 2016, Chinese Premier Li Kegiang pledged about USD 600 million for a period of three years from 2016 to 2018 (The Cambodia Daily, 2016). Cambodian leaders, particularly Prime Minister Hun Sen, frequently praise China's assistance for having 'no strings attached'. They enthused that "Cambodia's development could not be detached from Chinese aid" and

that "without Chinese aid, Cambodia goes nowhere" (Hutt, 2016). Moreover, Cambodia stands to benefit from China's Belt and Road Initiative that will connect countries in Asia to Europe. To implement the BRI projects, China established the Silk Road Fund in December 2014, with Chinese investment of USD 40 billion. More assertively, China initiated the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) with the authorized capital of USD 100 billion. Chheang Vannarith (2017) argues that "the BRI creates huge opportunities for Cambodia to develop and catch up with other regional countries, especially by leveraging on its bilateral trust with China to attract more investments and development assistance", which is key to the performance legitimacy of the ruling party. As far as security is concerned, leaders in Phnom Penh do not see the rise of China as a threat but a useful offshore balancing potential against security threats from immediate neighbors. Beijing has occasionally affirmed its commitment to Cambodia's security and sovereignty. For instance, while Phnom Penh was hosting the Cambodia-Vietnam Joint Border Commission Meeting in July 2015, Cambodian Defense Minister Tea Banh was assured by Chinese Vice-Chairman of the Central Military Commission Xu Qiliang that China and Cambodia would offer firm mutual support on issues of sovereignty, security, and development (Cheunboran, 2015b).

However, there are three factors that have somewhat decelerated Cambodia's alignment with China. First, Cambodia's foreign policymaking has been diffused to accommodate the increasingly important role of various actors, such as the opposition parties, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society organizations (SCOs), think tanks and the public as a whole. Apparently, there are about 3500 registered NGOs in Cambodia, even though not all of them are currently active. Few of those, along with think tanks, academic researchers, and activists of all sorts have been vocal not only on domestic political and socio-economic domains but also sensitive foreign policy issues, including China's growing influence in Cambodia. Strangio (2009) highlights concerns among NGOs, civil society organizations and international analysts that the rising Chinese influence could "wean the government off Western aid burdened with human rights and good governance conditions—rolling back democratic reforms implemented since the early 1990s." Noticeably, demographic change has been taking place in Cambodia in favor of political polarization. Around 70 percent of the population is under the age of 35. The young voters have been active in political life as seen in the last election in 2013. Their voice has been echoed by information and communication technology. According to Ministry of Post and Telecommunication, the number of phone subscribers and Internet users reached 20 million and 3.8 million respectively in 2013. Generally, this young, dynamic generation has been inspired by Western values. They have also advocated for Cambodia's foreign policy diversification. On social network platform and at public forums, they have expressed their concern over Cambodia's overdependence on China and a risk that Cambodia would lose its foreign policy autonomy.

Second, Cambodia's historical experience had led its leaders to consider state sovereignty and independence as an essential element of the national security. Cambodia's historical memories have been highlighted by its colonial past and foreign interventions. Saddest of all, Cambodia became a victim of great powers' rivalry during the Cold War. As a result, the Cambodians very much appreciate the notion of sovereignty and independence; and do not

want Cambodia to be a victim of the great powers politics again. As a result, those national memories have shaped Cambodia's fundamental principles in the post UNTAC era, with the stress of the country's neutrality and non-alignment, non-inference into international affairs of the other, and non-participation in any military alliance or pact, as stipulated in the constitution of Cambodia. Cambodian leaders across the political spectrum, at least in public, have claimed to be supporters of the principle of neutrality and non-alignment. This might constitutionally limit or loosen Cambodia's alignment with China. Similarly, think tanks and NGO activists have called upon the government to continue to uphold non-alignment as the fundamental of Cambodia's foreign policy. For instance, on 9 November 2015, a Cambodian think tank, Cambodia's Future Forum, sent open letters to the Prime Minister Hun Sen and the opposition party president Sam Rainsy calling on Cambodia to adopt a non-aligned foreign policy, emphasizing the need to balance its relations with China and the US, invest in ASEAN, and improve relations with neighbouring countries and key players in the region, including India, Japan, South Korea and Australia (The Phnom Penh Post, 2015).

Thirdly, in all periods in Cambodia's history, there have always been strategic choices and dilemmas for Cambodia. The 21st century has witnessed China's rise to be a global power that has also profoundly transformed the geopolitical landscape in Asia and beyond. In response, other major powers in Asia, including the US, Japan, Russia, and India, have tried to exert their influence in the changing balance of power in Asia. As a result, strategic misalignment and even competition among the major powers have emerged. In this context, although China appears to play a crucially important role in Cambodia's security and development, Cambodia also attaches importance to other powers, particularly Japan as seen by the upgrading of the Cambodia-Japan bilateral ties into a strategic partnership in December 2013. However, Phnom Penh's alignment with Tokyo is constrained by the perception of Cambodian foreign policymakers that Japan's military and strategic role in the region are limited by its pacifist constitution and not being a permanent member of the UN Security Council.

Cambodia has also attempted to diversify its relations with other majors, noticeably, France and Russia, as illustrated by frequent visits by Cambodian leaders to the two countries. Phnom Penh's relations with France and Russia are based on long traditional friendships and strong bonds of personal ties as well as the historical role of these two powers in Cambodia. However, it can be argued that Phnom Penh's attempt to revitalize its relations with France and Russia is more a tactical move than a genuine strategic direction for Cambodia due to the conviction that Paris and Moscow are neither willing to nor capable of supporting and protecting Cambodia's sovereignty. On top of that, these two powers lack economic leverage in Cambodia. More interestingly, the US has been an indispensable force for regional peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific. The US has been placed high in the strategic calculus of most countries in the region. Some Cambodian scholars have been advocating that Phnom Penh adopt a balanced foreign policy towards China and the US; and some even suggest that Cambodia should develop a strategic cooperation with the US (Var, 2015; Chheang, 2011). The fact of the matter is that a balanced approach toward Beijing and Washington

is inconceivable for Cambodia, at least for the near future, as there remains a huge gap in Cambodia-US relations. This gap is the result of a strategic misalignment between the two nations. Phnom Penh is of the view that Cambodia has never been in American strategic interest in Asia and that the White House has always preferred Thailand and Vietnam to Cambodia. Moreover, the suspicion and misperception among the Cambodian leadership towards Washington remain strong due to the US involvement in Cambodia's civil war from 1970 to 1991 and a belief in Phnom Penh that the US has been engaged in a "regime change" campaign in Cambodia since 1993, through Washington's support for Cambodian opposition parties and the anti-CPP NGOs and media.

Lastly, although Phnom Penh's confidence in ASEAN has diminished due to ASEAN's ineffective response to Cambodia-Thailand border dispute, the grouping remains relevant in Cambodia's foreign policy. In fact, countries in the region, especially small states like Cambodia, have benefited tremendously from the dividends of relative peace and prosperity that ASEAN has generated. Moreover, regional institutions, such as ASEAN, can be of importance in addressing potential threats by the great powers, not by traditional military means, but by the institutionalization of norms and rules that collectively constrain the behavior of the threatening powers. In this context, the South China Sea disputes constitute today's most difficult foreign policy dilemma, since China and ASEAN are almost equally important to Cambodia's security and development. If Cambodia unites with ASEAN, especially the four ASEAN claimants, it may face punishment from Beijing. If Cambodia fails to unite behind ASEAN and its claimants, regional grouping's relevance and reputation in the region may be seriously damaged. These are hard choices that rise with China and the evolving geopolitics of Asia for Cambodia's foreign policy establishment. Cambodia might risk being once again a victim of the realpolitik of the great powers if a strategic mistake is made.

V. Conclusion

The long history of Cambodia, especially after the collapse of the Khmer Empire, provides interesting insights on how the foreign policy of this small state has been shaped. Cambodia's geography of being sandwiched by its two powerful historically antagonistic neighbors—Thailand and Vietnam—has been a persistent compelling factor shaping the country's strategic direction. To address this geopolitical predicament, Cambodian leaders have frequently adopted alignment politics with external great power(s). Therefore, it can be argued that while Chinese largesse strongly influenced Cambodia's alignment with China, Beijing appears to be a trustworthy friend that Phnom Penh can rely upon to ensure the kingdom's sovereignty and territorial integrity as well as the survival of the current regime. That said, there are other factors that pull back and prevent Cambodia from having a tight alignment with China. Those include the diffusion of Cambodia's foreign policy-making process, the fundamental principles of Cambodia's foreign policy, and strategic dilemmas Cambodia is facing in the dynamic strategic landscape of the Asia-Pacific. It could be argued

that the future prospect of Cambodia's alignment with China will depend on: (1) foreign policy behaviours of Thailand and Vietnam, and Cambodia's security perception towards the two regional powers; (2) Cambodia's expectation towards ASEAN; (3) China's approach towards Cambodia; and (4) political developments, including leadership change, in Cambodia. The last factor is a complex one. Sam Rainsy, the former leader of the opposition party, has been known as a close friend of the West, especially the United States. However, when it comes to foreign policy, his views are more complex. In an interview with Phoenix TV from China on 9 January 2014, he said, "CNRP is the ally of China. CNRP fully supports China in the assertion of her sovereignty over the Xisha and Nansha islands in the South China Sea… We are not allying with the US because it supports Vietnam... The presence of China is necessary to counterbalance against the influence of Vietnam [in Cambodia]. Now, Vietnam has many allies—the U.S. and Japan—in order to confront with China. But CNRP stands with China."

The current leaders in Phnom Penh are very much aware of the risk arising from Cambodia's overdependence on China. However, it seems that Cambodia has very limited strategic maneuverability. Due to ASEAN's ineffectiveness on the security front, Cambodian leaders have attempted to shift the country's foreign policy direction towards alignments with the great powers. Again, Cambodia's alignment options are also limited. Besides China, Cambodia has placed its bet on Japan with the establishment of the Cambodia-Japan strategic partnership in 2013. However, Phnom Penh's strategic configuration is a challenging task because its alignments with China and Japan have different values. This challenge will be more pronounced if the relations between these two powers deteriorate. Another challenge in Cambodia's alignment politics is the fact that having strategic partnerships with many major powers at the same does not guarantee their unwavering commitment to extend their support for Cambodia. Therefore, Cambodia can be expected to follow the current trajectory of pursuing close relations with China while, whenever possible, pursue relations with other regional and global powers so long as they allow Cambodia to benefit from these relations and maintain the status quo.

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CAMBODIA-UNITED STATES RELATIONS: FROM EARLY ENCOUNTERS TO POST-COLD WAR

Serkan BULUT

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CAMBODIA-UNITED STATES RELATIONS: FROM EARLY ENCOUNTERS TO POST-COLD WAR

I. Introduction

The United States has been a dominant force in world politics in the 20th century and assumed a global leadership role after the fall of the Soviet Union. World War II shattered the old political structures and the two superpowers that rose from the ashes of the past set out to create a new world in their own images. Especially after the 1950s, the whole world became a competition ground for the Soviets and the Americans. It was the side effects of this ideology-driven geopolitical rivalry that brought Cambodia into the picture and made it pay a heavy price as collateral damage in the Soviet-American proxy war in Vietnam. Like many other small states in the international structure, Cambodia found itself in a game that it did not start nor was it ready to play. This chapter will provide an overview of Cambodia-US relations from the curious first encounters to the destructive Cold War years and the reconstructive post-Cold War relations.

II. Early Encounters

The United States generally describes present Cambodia as a developing country with a vibrant market economy, young and dynamic population and sees it as a small yet strategically important country in Southeast Asia due to its location, history and diplomatic relations (Lum, 2007). Despite the recent troubles and setbacks, the bilateral relations are experiencing; the positive view of the Cambodian society still holds. However, the first American encounters with Cambodia and Cambodian people were far from positive.

Cambodia, today one of the smallest countries in Southeast Asia, once was the largest empire in the entire region. After the fall of the Angkor Empire, Cambodia was pushed and squeezed by its more powerful neighbors and fell victim to the regional competition. The period under French protectorate, starting from 1863, stood out as a break from the constant and piecemeal expansion of the neighbors at Cambodia's expense. The work of French naturalist Henri Mouhot in Cambodia made Angkor Wat a desired exotic destination and attracted westerners among which was Frank Vincent, Jr; a New Yorker who decided to pursue the tales about a lost city of monasteries in the jungles (Albright & Kunstel, 1999). The first American account of Cambodia was Vincent, Jr.'s book; *The Land of the White Elephant* which recounted Vincent's trip through Burma, Siam, Cambodia, and Cochin China (Southern Vietnam) in 1871–1872. His main purpose in setting out on that journey was to visit the fabled temples of Angkor for which he traveled from Bangkok to Angkor by boat, horse, bullock cart, and elephant. While he found the temples to be "stupendous" and "splendid", his tone was much bitter when it came to describing the natives of the land (Clymer, 2004).

From the decline and fall of the empire to French colonization and the impact of the two World Wars, Cambodia had seen many changes. Yet one thing remained the same: the Cambodian fear for survival and the struggle to become masters of their own fate.

III. Cold War Years

Since the fall of the Angkor Empire in the 15th century, Cambodia has been wary of her larger neighbors; Thailand and Vietnam. These two countries have attempted to dominate Cambodia politically and to expand into her territory. It was with such perception of constant threats that King Norodom Sihanouk assumed responsibility for Cambodia's foreign affairs. Seeking independence and maintaining neutrality came to define his choices in the early years of the Cold War. The fables of the Khmer empire and the history of its decline and eventual fall have had long-lasting impacts on the making of Cambodian foreign policy. An important example of this can be seen in a segment of a speech made before the United Nations in 1957 by Penn Nouth, a prominent Cambodian statesman. He stated that:

> at the time when Cambodian civilization attained its highest point, about the twelfth century, it seemed impossible that an empire as great and as powerful could be reduced to undergo a long period of decline. But after five centuries of glory, the Khmer empire succumbed before the attacks of its neighbors and ended by crumbling away until it became a second-rate power in the nineteenth century. It is this lesson of history which we do not wish to forget. (Lasater, 1969, p. 5)

When King Norodom Sihanouk set out on his Royal Crusade for Cambodian Independence, he approached the French numerous times with letters and meetings to make them understand how the French policy was leading to disaster in Cambodia (Rust, 2016). The French were far too preoccupied with the Viet Minh to show any willingness for such a discussion and they were worried that such moves would undermine domestic support for the French military presence in Indochina. Disappointed but not dispirited, Sihanouk departed for the US where he met with Secretary of State John Foster Dulles of the Eisenhower administration.

Sihanouk told the Americans that French policies were making a Viet Minh victory inevitable not only in Vietnam but in Cambodia and Laos as well. As a memorandum distributed by the King concluded:

> If a political solution is not found, the military effort, even though considerably augmented thanks to U.S. aid, will not lead to a happy ending....No success is possible if the populations in question do not take part with conviction in the struggle, that is to say, if these populations do not believe that this struggle is leading toward their well-being....Giving real independence to these Indochinese states would oblige them to take full heed of their responsibilities in this struggle, the issues of which interests the entire democratic world. (Lasater, 1969, p. 18)

He was trying to convince Washington that the success of the struggle against communism in Indochina would not come easily if the people of Indochina did not believe in the struggle. For Sihanouk, the most effective way to make people believe was to give them the responsibility and the chance to be masters of their own fate. Neither Vice-president Nixon nor Secretary Dulles was sympathetic to his cause. While Nixon and Dulles argued that any break in unity between Cambodia and France would only benefit the Vietnamese communists and thought that King Sihanouk was totally unrealistic about the problems Cambodia was facing, the King believed that Dulles and Nixon's comments demonstrated their ignorance of the situation in Cambodia, where the lack of independence opens the gates for communism by validating its anticolonial propaganda (Rust, 2016). Interestingly, when Nixon became the president and declared what came to be known as the Nixon doctrine, he was arguing for local countries to take charge in the struggle against communism, take care of themselves, and expect aid from the US but not her direct involvement. In the end,

history proved Sihanouk right as Cambodia eventually achieved independence but constant outside interference and spillover effects of the war next door rendered Cambodia impotent and paved the way for coups, civil war, and genocide.

With prudent diplomacy and bold moves like self-exile to Thailand and voicing ideas on popular guerrilla movements against the colonial authority, the King outmaneuvered the French and successfully turned the French fear of "facing another uprising" into Cambodian independence. All the while the Americans were watching, observing and contemplating what the appropriate move would be. The situation put the Americans in a rather uneasy position of "supporting France's fight against the Viet Minh without opposing Sihanouk's quest for independence" (Rust, 2016, p. 27). The French believed that the US stance encouraged and emboldened Sihanouk, as they assumed that he would approach the United States to provide military and economic assistance to Cambodia if France withdrew its aid (Rust, 2016). Within 5 months of his brief self-exile to Thailand and less than a year of his strong appeal to the French and the Americans, the King achieved what many believed to be unattainable in 1953. "The sight of these thousands and thousands of villagers and peasants, dressed in simple uniforms which each individual had personally paid for, was one which foreign observers would have believed impossible a short year ago," wrote one American diplomat in his cable to the State Department, describing the great emotional and psychological impact the King's mobilization proved to be for the citizen volunteers (Rust, 2016, p. 35).

Even though the United States recognized the Kingdom of Cambodia as an independent state within the French Union on February 7, 1950, the level of diplomatic relations remained relatively low until after Cambodia gained independence. While Donald R. Heath became the first ambassador appointed to Cambodia, he remained in Saigon. It was not until 1954 that Robert M. McClintock presented his credentials as a resident Ambassador in Phnom Penh on October 2, 1954 (Public Affairs Section US Embassy, 2010). The diplomatic and political relations started to develop slowly but steadily until the bilateral relations were officially broken in May 1965.

Cross-border incursions of the South Vietnamese in pursuit of Viet Cong, territorial dispute with Thailand over Preah Vihear which resulted in Cambodia winning the international case but Thai refusal to recognize the result, the divided American mind on Cambodian neutrality all put significant pressure on the newly independent Kingdom. Worried about the developments in the region, fueled by historic and traditional fears, Sihanouk insisted that the US provide international guarantees on the protection of Cambodia's territorial integrity and neutrality. However, the United States argued in favor of bilateral agreements with Cambodia's neighbors "and to ease the Cambodian fears, President Kennedy sent Sihanouk a letter reiterating his commitment to Cambodia's security" (Public Affairs Section US Embassy, 2010). This assurance came a little too late and did not prevent the collapse of diplomatic relations later. Despite being far below the expectations, in its search for protection without compromising its neutrality, Cambodia signed a military aid agreement with the US in May of 1955. Worried about how it might have been perceived by other powers, especially the Soviet Union and China, the Cambodian government made

it clear that the agreement was by no means a military alliance and that the United States would not acquire bases in Cambodia, all the while emphasizing its commitment and respect to the Geneva agreement of 1954 (Leifer, 1962).

The success of neutrality has always depended on the attitude of the great powers. If they respected it, neutrality had a chance to achieve its goals, if not, then it was futile or very costly. For the small countries trying to practice neutrality it was important to know the United States' position and better yet score a certain level of understanding from it (Gabriel, 1988, p. 6). However, in the Cold War atmosphere, neutrality was a concept not favored by Americans and non-alignment was met with extreme suspicion. The view that non-aligned countries usually sided with communist states and Sihanouk's trips to China and the Soviet Union for military and economic aid reinforced the perception of a left-leaning Cambodia. By the early 1960's, American policymakers were already divided on the position of Sihanouk and Cambodia. While some believed he was aligning himself with the Communists and turning his back on the West, others saw him less of a communist in-the-making and more of a leader trying to keep his boat afloat. They argued that it was better for the US not to leave Cambodia isolated which would push it further into China and the Soviet Union's orbit. In the following years, things looked even bleaker and on July 9, 1964, Randolph A. Kidder, who was appointed as U.S. Ambassador to Cambodia, was not granted an audience to present his credentials (Kidder, 1989). By the end of 1964, the US diplomatic presence diminished to a dozen diplomats from around three hundred a year earlier, and in May of 1965, the situation took a turn for the worse as the diplomatic relations were officially broken (Public Affairs Section US Embassy, 2010).

Shortly after the break in relations, the United States explored its options as to which country would represent it in Phnom Penh. Britain and Japan were considered but only two days after the relations were broken the Americans asked Australia to undertake the task while the French assumed the role of maintaining Phnom Penh's connection to Washington (Clymer, 2004, p. 128). With the break in relations and the increasing American presence in the region, tension grew between the two countries and so did the American suspicion of the prince and the situation in Cambodia in general. Americans believed that Vietnamese communists were sending supplies into South Vietnam through the Cambodian port of Sihanoukville. They suspected that the Cambodians had struck a deal with the Chinese and North Vietnamese for weapons, medical supplies, and food that passed through the port. The CIA reported to Washington on the weapons and food transactions and pointed the finger at Sihanouk as they believed the process was taking place with Sihanouk's knowledge and permission (Central Intelligence Agency, 1972).

When Richard Nixon took office in the winter of 1969, the Vietnam War was draining resources, becoming heavily unpopular and was being waged without any end in sight. He needed to diminish the US military presence without compromising the war effort which meant greater reliance on the local allies and forces on the ground. In that context, it was not surprising to see the U.S. Embassy reopened on August 16, 1969, as both Cambodian and American sides were eager for reengagement.[1] That same month, to demonstrate Washington's new commitment to Cambodia, Senator Mansfield returned to Phnom Penh

for the third time for a friendly meeting with Prince Sihanouk, who called the Senator, "one of the greatest and most loyal friends to Cambodia." Mansfield would further contribute to the restoration of relations (Public Affairs Section US Embassy, 2010). After a hiatus of 4 years, the relations were on the path to restoration, but the Cambodian political context was less conducive. The breakdown in 1965 was not going to be the last one as Lon Nol, who took over the government by overthrowing Sihanouk[2] and forcing him to exile could only hang on to power for 5 years before the Khmer Rouge swept across Cambodia and finally entered Phnom Penh, effectively ending Lon Nol's Khmer Republic and establishing the infamous Democratic Kampuchea (DK).

The rise of the Khmer Rouge had its roots in Cambodian domestic politics, but American policies at the time and its activities in Cambodia facilitated the process (Shawcross, 2014). Between October 2, 1965 (when the first bombing started) and August 15, 1973 (when the US Congress cut funding for the war and imposed an end to the bombing campaign), the US flew 230,516 missions in Cambodia, dropping a total of over 2.7 million tons of munitions which represents nearly half of all munitions dropped during the entire Indochinese War (Owen, 2006). The devastating effects of American bombing campaigns, the destabilizing effects of US involvement in Cambodian affairs, the military coup of General Lon Nol and his inept management of political and military affairs from then on,[3] all contributed to the rise of Saloth Sar or more commonly known as Pol Pot, whose utopian political and economic policies devastated Cambodia and millions suffered at the hands of Angkar.[4]

Pol Pot and Lon Nol, notwithstanding the many differences they had from each other, seemed to share a common strategic and military fallacy when it came to their eastern neighbor. As W. R. Thompson remarked: "both Lon Nol in the early 1970s and Pol Pot in the mid-1970s, apparently came to believe they could compete with Vietnam, despite a capability ratio of roughly 10:1 in the Vietnamese favor when the Vietnamese invaded Kampuchea" (Thompson, 2001. p. 565). The result was disastrous for both and they dragged the country down with their regimes, with the former paving the way for one of the cruelest regimes to come to power, and the latter destroying the country and its people and leaving it vulnerable to external intervention and decades of war and trauma.

The fall of Democratic Kampuchea and the end of the Khmer Rouge's grip on power led to a decade-long Vietnamese occupation in Cambodia. After years of war, violence, starvation, and despair, Cambodians were hoping for a semblance of stability to heal their social, political and psychological wounds. The US had a difficult time reconciling the new status quo in Cambodia with Vietnam in charge. The Carter administration who referred to Pol Pot as "the worst violator of human rights in the world," for a variety of reasons, chose instead to publicly condemn the Vietnamese invasion and began aiding resistance forces camped out in Thailand (Hallsey, 2007). The People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) was not considered as an independent state by the US and its allies, but rather as a tool of Hanoi and an extension of Soviet hegemony in the region. Once again American values and American interests were at a conflict and the Cold War lenses made the US interpret the situation differently. The troubling aspect of the situation was not the action (removal of Khmer Rouge from power), rather it was the actor (Vietnam).

With Thailand nervous about a Vietnamese presence in Cambodia and the remnant bitterness in the US about Vietnam coupled with the US inclination to build closer relations with China, eventually led the US to move against the People's Republic of Kampuchea, which was already isolated by the international community. The US bloc supported the various Khmer resistance forces (collectively known as the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea, or CGDK) who were fighting against Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia. "I encouraged the Chinese to support Pol Pot. I encouraged the Thais to help Democratic Kampuchea. Pol Pot was an abomination. We could never support him, but China could" were words attributed to the National Security advisor of Carter and came to represent the U.S. acquiescence to Chinese policy in resuscitating the Khmer Rouge (Kiernan, 2004, p. 18). The U.S. policymakers clearly had no love for the Khmer Rouge, and the United States claimed repeatedly during the 1980s that it was aiding only non-communist elements of the CGDK, yet the distinction was largely irrelevant as the non-communist resistance was allied with the Khmer Rouge, and the latter was then the most powerful faction within the coalition (Hallsey, 2007).

Following the Vietnamese withdrawal from Cambodia in 1989, a United Nations brokered peace settlement officially ended the war in October 1991 and led to elections for a 120-seat Constituent Assembly in May 1993. Prince Sihanouk returned to Cambodia once again as King (Lum, 2007). By the early 1990s there was a different world and different strategic environment; Berlin Wall down, the Soviet Union off, Cold War over and Vietnam out of Cambodia. It is safe to assume that without two inter-linking elements: the end of Cold War and P5 compromise- it is hard to imagine that peace, though a fragile one, would finally be achieved in Cambodia. The Cambodians were ready to move forward and the US was ready to restart and re-engage Cambodia under much different circumstances.

IV. Post-Cold War Relations

The turbulent years of the 1960s, the great struggle for survival in the 1970s, the Vietnamese presence in the 1980's with the Khmer Rouge defeated yet remained part of the political equation until well into 1990's, all created a fragile yet hopeful background for Cambodian-American relations in the post-Cold War years. Normalization of the relations came slowly, as the US restored its economic ties with Cambodia in 1992 by lifting the embargo on Cambodian goods (Le Billon 2000) and established full diplomatic relations in September 1993. The military, economic and political relations have been maintained since then though with differing levels of intensity and harmony.

1. Military Cooperation

In spite of the push and pull in the relations in the 1990s and yet another setback with the break in 1997 due to domestic political developments in Cambodia, the heightened

security needs of the US after the September 11 terrorist attacks and the relative stability in the political landscape in Cambodia paved the way for reengagement and renewal especially in counterterrorism, peacekeeping, prevention of narcotics smuggling, disaster relief and humanitarian and development assistance. Direct Military-to-Military (Mil-to-Mil) relations between the United States and Cambodia were suspended in July 1997 but by 2004, many of the restrictions were eased, facilitating a greater number of military to military activities with Cambodia. As relations between Washington and Phnom Penh matured and evolved in a way that allowed a much more direct path of engagement between the U.S. military and RCAF. It enabled the Cambodia military to adopt rational approaches to institutional growth, civil-military relations, human rights practices, and modernizing requirements (Stern, 2009). Cambodia started to participate in the Regional Defense Counter Terrorism Fellowship (RDCTF) Program. Under the Excess Defense Articles (EDA) and Humanitarian Assistance Program, the US started to donate military equipment to Cambodia mostly in the form of support vehicles like heavy trucks or ambulances (Office of Defense Cooperation, 2006). From demining to disaster relief training, explosive ordnance disposal, and eventually joint military drills the cooperation expanded since 2004 until recently.

Up until 2010, the officer exchange, training programs, integration of Cambodian officers in multinational programs continued. Yet in April of the same year, the United States decided to halt shipment of 200 military trucks and trailers to Cambodia in a move to punish Cambodia's actions over the involuntary return of ethnic Uighur asylum seekers to China in December 2009. When the US wanted to use diplomatic or economic tools in the arsenal to steer Cambodia in a certain direction or away from a certain action, China quickly filled the void. Within a few days of the US cancellation, China and Cambodia inked deals estimated to worth around USD 900 million. A month later, 257 military trucks from China rolled into Phnom Penh along with 50 thousand uniforms. When the US announced it would not forgive the 300 million USD owed from the Khmer Republic era, China announced that it forgave the several million dollars debt accrued in the same period (Cáceres & Ear, 2013).

Despite the tension, both sides were still interested in maintaining a constructive relationship. In July 2010, Cambodia and the United States hosted the first large-scale peacekeeping exercise known as Angkor Sentinel. It kicked off in Phnom Penh with the participation of more than 1,000 soldiers from 26 countries. This is the first time Cambodia has hosted such a multi-national military exercise. This training program which constituted a cornerstone in military cooperation between the two countries continued as scheduled every year until 2017, when the Cambodian government announced in January 2017 that the exercise would not be conducted in 2017 and 2018, citing domestic law enforcement efforts and political developments necessitating the time and efforts of the armed force to be focused elsewhere (Global Security, 2017). More cancellations came that same year as the U.S. Navy Mobile Construction Battalion known as the Seabees' activities were put on hold indefinitely and were asked to depart from the country upon the Royal Government's notification to the US Embassy in Phnom Penh. The termination of the program that started in 2008 which mostly focused on civilian construction, hospital and school improvement

projects, met with surprise and disappointment by the American side who expressed sadness over the end of a program whose outstanding accomplishments were a source of pride (Burke, 2017). The final blow came when the US started to impose a visa ban, particularly on the members and families of the Cambodian foreign policy bureaucracy. The Cambodian side retaliated with termination of cooperation with the US in the search for missing soldiers' bodies from the Vietnam War and asked the US to withdraw Peace Corps volunteers from the country.

2. Economic Relations and Financial Assistance

In January 2002 when the US and Cambodia signed a memorandum of understanding to extend the bilateral textile trade agreement till 2004, the U.S. Trade Representative Robert B. Zoellick portrayed the renewal as "an excellent example of the way trade agreements lead to economic growth and promote a greater respect for workers' rights" (Office of the United States Trade Representative, 2002). Cambodia became the first "least-developed country" (LDC) to join the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2004 and The United States and Cambodia signed the "Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA)" in 2006 to set up the United States-Cambodia Joint Council on Trade and Investment jointly chaired by the Minister of Commerce on behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia and the United States Trade Representative (USTR) on behalf of the Government of the United States of America. The parties have held regular meetings since the establishment of the joint council, the latest of which took place in Phnom Penh in February of 2016 (U.S. Commercial Service, 2016).

From 16 million USD in 1992 to 3.2 billion in 2016, the trade between the two countries has shown a praiseworthy development. Just in the last decade alone, the two-way trade between the United States and Cambodia has grown 60 percent reaching 3 billion USD for the first time in 2013 and has stayed above that figure since then. The U.S. exports to Cambodia, growing nearly five-fold to USD 362 million, include vehicles, machinery, animal feed, fur and nonwoven textiles, while Cambodian exports consist of knit and woven apparel, footwear, plastics, and leather and agricultural products. Being the biggest importer of Cambodian goods (The United Kingdom is a distant second) the U.S. deficit in trade with Cambodia was USD 2.5 billion in 2016 (Office of the United States Trade Representative, 2017).

Despite the occasional tug of war between Cambodia and the US on the diplomatic and political side of the relations, pragmatism prevailed on the economic side as the numbers indisputably point out. While trade relations took off and showed a steady growth, the financial and humanitarian assistance of the US has been far from problems, controversy, and fluctuations. Even though with the USD 22.4 million it received in 1956 Cambodia became the first non-communist beneficiary of Chinese grant money, "US financial assistance programs predate Chinese initiatives, where between 1955 and 1963 Washington provided USD 409.6 million in economic aid mostly to repair the damages of first Indochina war" (Deth, Moldashev, & Bulut, 2016, p. 24). This "rebuilding assistance" ended in 1964

due to broken relations between the two countries and no US assistance was received until 1970 when the US started to provide financial assistance to the Lon Nol government both in the form of aid, grants and loans, mostly for military build-up. The years from the fall of the Khmer Republic to the first democratic elections in 1993 again was a quiet period for aid and assistance (Oxfam America, 2009). The reopening of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) permanent mission to Cambodia in 1992 was strong and a positive move towards development aid and the agency went on to spend more than 200 million USD in the coming years on rebuilding roads, meeting the basic humanitarian, health and education needs of the Cambodian people. Economic and development aid that started in 1993 included contributions to UNTAC's budget (Public Affairs Section US Embassy, 2010). Unfortunately, the year 1997 marked another troublesome period both in the country and in Cambodian-American relations.

In reaction to the political turmoil in the country and the way the Cambodian government handled events in 1997, the US Congress prohibited direct or government-to-government assistance to Cambodia in 1998 in order to pressure Prime Minister Hun Sen while the U.S. assistance to NGOs and some humanitarian programs in Cambodia were allowed to continue. The ban was lifted in 2007 and programs were restored until they faced another setback in 2013. Before the parliamentary elections in Cambodia that year, U.S. lawmakers had threatened to cut financial assistance to the Kingdom unless the election was deemed fair and started a process that could lead to a substantial cut in aid to Cambodia. Prime Minister Hun Sen, referring to the US-funded projects, argued that the proposed cut would not affect the government since that money goes to NGOs or to projects managed by US agencies and entities. He added that "if USD 1 million of U.S. military aid was also cut, that wouldn't be a problem. The last time they (the US) cut our aid, they were going to give us 100 old trucks. The Chinese saw this and gave us 257 trucks" (The Economist, 2013). The Kingdom continued to receive U.S. assistance in 2014 and after as the US side agreed that Cambodia met the conditions imposed by Congress around the 2013 parliamentary elections (Lum, 2015).

Today Cambodia is the fifth-largest recipient of U.S. foreign aid in Southeast Asia after Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam, and Myanmar, and the second-largest beneficiary per capita after Timor-Leste. The Kingdom receives around 70 million USD per year provided as Development Assistance (civil society; political parties; mass communications; trafficking in persons; food security; nutrition; early education), Global Health Programs (HIV/AIDS; tuberculosis, malaria, maternal and child health, family planning and reproductive health, nutrition), International Military Education and Training (English-language education, leadership training, military professionalism, human rights awareness) and Nonproliferation, Antiterrorism, Demining and Related Programs (unexploded ordnance and explosive remnants of war clearance, border security) (Lum, 2015)

V. The US "Pivot to Asia" and Cambodia

Realist scholars (certain variants of it) subscribe to the idea that history repeats itself as they believe both the players (the States) and the game (realpolitik) mostly remain the same regardless of what point on the timeline of history they take place. Actors with the same nature, shared vision of gain and loss, same choices, similar pitfalls and conflicting goals, paint a familiar and often violent picture. While true repetition of history is never possible, it is noteworthy that similar debates on US circles concerning Cambodia's place in US strategy took place half a century ago as well, at a time again the US was concerned about containing a powerful entity in the East and Cambodia was stuck in between the two rivals. Today, the US and China are far from what it used to be between the US and the Soviet Union, however, the competition for influence, resources, and security is placing the two against each other and the US is facing challenges in addressing the rising influence of China particularly in the Asia-Pacific region.

The challenge for the US is to ensure cooperation of China on global problems while pushing back against Chinese assertiveness and challenges to international laws and norms. The U.S. response to a more muscular Chinese foreign and military policy will have to be carefully calibrated as ignoring greater Chinese assertiveness would fuel the belief that the United States is in inexorable decline or no longer strategically interested in regions it used to be. Yet a hostile and overbearing U.S. response would confirm Chinese suspicions that the United States seeks to dwarf its rise, which could cement the emergence of a U.S.-China Cold War. Furthermore, it would further alarm regional states who seek at all costs to avoid having to choose between the United States and China (Glaser, 2012). In this context, the "Pivot (to Asia)" as colloquially referred to, was one of the Obama Administration's central foreign policy initiatives, and it was meant to be a strategic "re-balancing" of U.S. interests from Europe and the Middle East toward East Asia.

"The Pivot" turned out to be another one of International Relations concepts that is hard to agree on as to what it means, when it started or how it will unfold to achieve what specific goals. "One of the most important tasks of American statecraft over the next decade will, therefore, be to lock in a substantially increased investment-diplomatic, economic, strategic, and otherwise-in the Asia-Pacific region," said then-Secretary Clinton in her article "America's Pacific Century." She even compared the Pivot to the post-WWII efforts of the US in Europe and argued that "the time has come for the United States to make similar investments as a Pacific power" and outlined the "key lines of action as strengthening bilateral security alliances; deepening our working relationships with emerging powers, including with China; engaging with regional multilateral institutions; expanding trade and investment; forging a broad-based military presence; and advancing democracy and human rights" (Clinton, 2011). The question was; Hasn't the US been doing most of that already? An important example to that effect is the creation of Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) in 1989 with the US and 11 other Asia-Pacific countries. Another is the Lower Mekong Initiative (LMI) which was spearheaded by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and created in 2009 with the participation of the Foreign Ministers of the Lower Mekong

Countries -- Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and Vietnam. Yet another is the US signing of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) with ASEAN that same year (The US State Department, 2009). The list of such programs, initiatives and organizations is a long one. The US has been present and active in Asia but it was looking to further expand on its commitment in the region and was trying to do it without making it look like a move against any actor in the region, especially China.

While the US was devising ways to buttress its presence in Asia and reinforce its image as a Pacific power, the debates in policy circles revolved around two competing views on how to position the US engagement with Cambodia. One view was calling for restricted US support for Cambodian development and bilateral trade to push the Cambodian government to guarantee civil and political liberty. While another view was in favor of expanding the level of US engagement through aid, trade, diplomacy and educational exchange to not only achieve US interests and promote values but also to counterbalance China's influence in Southeast Asia in general and Cambodia in particular (Lum, July 2007).

VI. The Future of Relations

To understand what the future holds for Cambodia-US relations we need to look into what each side expects from each other and how likely for those expectations to bear fruit under current political and economic contexts.

Despite its small size, Cambodia is strategically important to the US. At least that was how it used to be described. The American interests include "counter-terrorism, promotion of democracy, respect for human rights, facilitation of trade, control of spread of infectious diseases, anti-human trafficking measures, development of civil society, and better fiscal policies". In addition, oil resources and growing influence of China push the United States to engage with Cambodia (Lum, July 2007). Despite the stable growth in economic relations with increasing trade numbers, starting with the second Obama term in the office, the US took a harder stance on human rights issues, and started to express its concerns more openly and with a stronger language. The only meeting between the President and the Prime Minister ended without a press conference and the US officials labeled the meeting as "tense" as the President brought about the issues on election fairness, democratic development and political prisoners which drew the ire of Prime Minister Hun Sen who protested the claims over human rights as exaggerated, and that Cambodia had a better record than many countries (Spetalnick, 2012).

Coupled with the domestic political developments like the unexpected rise of the opposition party in the national election of 2013, the tension remained but the relations were maintained with relative stability. The enactment of a law regulating NGO activities became another clash point between the sides and the talk of "change" by the Western governments, especially by the US for Cambodia, was not perceived as "well-intentioned". As the US ambassador to Phnom Penh William E. Todd was finishing his term, Prime Minister Hun Sen expressed his frustration of the demands for change and argued that Cambodia is

managing its pace of change well as its transformation from a planned economy to a market one has been a great success and the progress Cambodia has shown deserves respect from foreigners not criticism (Sokchea, 2015).

During the US presidential election of 2016, many foreign leaders announced their support for Trump including Prime Minister Hun Sen. Trump's business-minded approach to foreign policy and simplification of relations to tangible material exchanges, and posing as he would free the American foreign policy from the strings it attaches to promotion of values made him more appealing. However, not unlike his domestic affairs, Trump foreign policy faced mixed reactions and when it comes to Cambodia there seems to be a "benign indifference" with the Trump agenda regarding the Kingdom. However, with the Cambodian reluctance to accept the deportees from the US, which triggered the visa restrictions on Cambodia and put it among countries like Eritrea, Guinea and Sierra Leone and the Cambodian response with the termination of a series of cooperation programs and shuttering of the National Democratic Institute; a US non-profit non-governmental organization which had been active in Cambodia since 1992, the hopes for improved relations under the new US administration began to fade. In the latter half of 2017, the critical rhetoric of the Cambodian Government on the US has intensified with the Prime Minister describing the American democracy as "bloody and brutal" and accused Washington of being the "third hand" interfering in Cambodian politics (Wallace, 2017).

Cambodia's priority in the bilateral relationship has been to promote the country's development and to alleviate poverty through US aid, bilateral trade, counter-terrorism, and anti-trafficking (Men, July 2010). The welcoming of the US military programs focusing on counter-terrorism training, disaster relief assistance, demining, civilian construction projects, American investments in the garment sector and the increasing level of exports to the US have been indicators of the fluctuating but steady development of the relations between the uneasy partners. Yet the history and domestic realities have always lurked in the background and occasionally surfaced as can been seen in the recent words of the Cambodian Premier referring to the American bombing of Cambodia, not apologizing for the damage and destruction and top off that still asking for Khmer Republic era debt (Strait Times, 2017).

Cambodia expects the continuation and further development of trade between the two countries. The US is expected to be less focused on Cambodian domestic developments but rather more focused on country-to-country, government-to-government relations. It was in this line that Trump's candidacy and later election to office was hailed by the Cambodian government as he was expected to be more trade and business oriented. The developments proved otherwise. The ongoing tension between the Kingdom and Washington has both systemic and contextual reasons both of which will affect the future direction of the relations though for different durations. The perceived Chinese influence in Cambodia being a systemic factor will remain a constant in the background of the relations in the foreseeable future. The impact of the parliamentary election in 2018 as contextual determinant will depend on which path the US will choose in the debate on Cambodia's position in US strategy and the pertaining action; pragmatic engagement or pursuit of values.

VII. Conclusion

There are numerous ways to look at the complex and multilayered structure of American foreign policymaking as well as the strategies and doctrines it entails but amidst all that complexity it all comes down to promoting American values and protecting American interests. While this is the official mantra of the US, oftentimes American policymakers find themselves facing hard choices that put value promotion at odds with interest pursuit. This ongoing tension between values and interests influenced American relations with foreign nations and the US-Cambodian relations have not been an exception to this.

For the Kingdom of Cambodia, the stakes in foreign policy have always been far greater than for most Third-World states. Cambodia's relatively small size, its weaker institutional and governmental structures compared with those of Vietnam and Thailand, and the regional conflicts of the 1960s and 1970s centering on its powerful eastern neighbor have all made it highly vulnerable to external intervention and, ultimately, the loss of its independence (Porter, 1990). Cambodian efforts for national survival, territorial integrity and to become the masters of their own fate, especially during the Cold War years, was fraught with challenges, each bigger and more destructive than the other. Squeezed by the expansionist policies of its neighbors, threatened by prolonged domestic political unrest, dragged into global rivalry of the superpowers that manifested itself as regional proxy wars, ravaged by protracted civil war, and shaped by extended presence of foreign military forces, Cambodian state had to act very carefully in the realm of foreign relations as it meant survival or destruction for the Kingdom.

Descendants of the once mighty Angkor Empire, who ruled over vast lands of Southeast Asia and determined the fate of numerous nations, had to put up a hard fight for national survival and territorial integrity in the Cold War world. The decline and eventual collapse of the empire, the loss of land and pride, existential threats to the very nature of the nation created important lessons which shaped the path Cambodia took in the final years of French rule and in Cold War relations with superpowers.

Today while US–Cambodian relations are still haunted by the nightmares of the 1970s and 80s, the current relationship is one of economic pragmatism, with human rights issues lurking in the background (Deth, *et. al.*, 2016, p. 24,). Considering the 60 years of modern history of the relationship between the two countries, it is not surprising to see the relationship as fragile with its high and low points whose direction is not just determined by the two but rather were shaped within the context of time and an important third party; China. Like in the early 60's when the relationships soured, Cambodia looked to China to compensate and balance the US. While the Cold War is no more, the delicate game of balance between China and the US is still prevalent for Cambodia and history is a good source to draw lessons on what happens when the balance is lost. It is in the interest of both countries to adopt reasonable approaches so that the relationship can continue to be friendly and constructive. Cambodia, having endured so much, deserves no less (Clymer, 2004).

Endnotes

1 Despite the formal break in the relations, the private and personal visit of Jacqueline Kennedy 1967 was welcomed instance. International media covered the trip as the former first lady traveled through the Kingdom. American's were hopeful that visit would ease the tension and soften Phnom Penh stance. Details on the background and process of Ja Kennedy trip can be found in "The United States and Cambodia, 1969-2000: A Troubled Relationship" by Kenton Clymer and "Jackie: Beyond the Myth of Camelot" by K.L. Kelleher.

2 An in-depth analysis of the causes of the military takeover by Lon Nol can be found in the "Explorations" (Vol 09, Spring 2009) article by Dr. Deth Sok Udom "The Geopolitics of Cambodia during the Cold War"

3 "American officials have made no secret of their unhappiness with Marshal Lan Nol. For several years, in private, they have accused him of a lack of leadership, a tolerance of corruption in high places and an inability to use American aid effectively." Bernard Gwertzman, March 3, 1975, The New York Times "The Us Aides Doubt Lon Nol will Resign in Cambodia"

4 Angkar was a key symbol of the Khmer Rouge regime. According to Alexander Hinton (Hinton, 2004, p. 127-129), it constituted "a Khmer Rouge ideology palimpsest, linking high-modernist thought, communist ideology, and local understandings, to idealize a new potent center". Throughout several of the radio broadcasts, everyday discourses, and speeches, Angkar was created as an imageless entity, which people were encouraged to believe in, ultimately love. In ideology training sessions, recruits were told that Angkar had provided for the people and was master of the land and earth. This constant reminder of Angkar being an entity to be looked up to made Angkar as if it were an omniscient and omnipotent impact on everyone's minds. Recruits and revolutionary trainees were told that "Angkar has the eyes of a pineapple", thus Angkar knew everyone's actions, always watching. More information on Angkar and Khmer Rouge can be found in Documentation Center of Cambodia publication "Khmer Rouge: Recruitment and Selection & Training and Development" available at: http://www.d.dccam.org/Projects/Genocide/pdf/KR_RecruitmentSelectionTrainingDevelopmentRetention.pdf

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14

CAMBODIA-RUSSIA RELATIONS

Dr. TENG Delux

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CAMBODIA-RUSSIA RELATIONS

I. Introduction

This chapter describes the evolution and dynamic change of Russia-Cambodia relations from 1979 to 2017 by looking at the cooperation and restoration of Cambodia after the establishment of the People's Republic of Kampuchea and analyzes the role of the Soviet Union in the Cambodia conflict settlement process, reaching the Paris Peace Accord, and the new development of relations between the two countries.

II. Cambodia-Soviet Union Relations

Diplomatic relations between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and Cambodia were established on 13 May 1956 with the signing of a protocol on the opening of embassies in Moscow and Phnom Penh. The following year Cambodia became a member of the UN. The Soviet Union provided substantial assistance to Cambodia. Between the years 1956-1960, the USSR built a hospital and in the years 1962-1964 the they established the Institute of Technology as a present to Cambodia.

In the second half of the 1970s, relations between the USSR and the countries of Indochina entered a new stage. Relations between the USSR and Cambodia were greatly influenced by

Vietnam.[1] This was primarily due to the US defeat in the war, as well as with the process of unification of Vietnam and the coming to power of new regimes in Laos and Cambodia. One of the main objectives of the USSR's strategy in relation to Indo-China was to promote stable and prosperous states that could serve as role models to neighboring countries. The goal of the foreign policy interests of the USSR in the region was not achieved, but instead, the position of the USSR was quite shaken by the emergence of "the Cambodian problem" which exacerbated disputes between the USSR and China (PRC), and also exacerbated the already deteriorated relations with the US. This conflict erected a barrier to the development of relations between the USSR not only with ASEAN countries but also with other Asia-Pacific countries[2] (Bektimirova, 2010).

The Cambodian people acquired an opportunity to return to a normal life, when the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) appeared in January 1979 after the Khmer Rouge's defeat by Vietnam military intervention in Cambodia. However, most countries which verbally condemned the Pol Pot genocide did not recognize the PRK. The USSR and other socialist countries were the only exceptions. The concept of "humanitarian intervention" had not yet been invented. Vietnam was denounced for its "occupation" of Cambodia. There were demands to withdraw the Vietnamese troops immediately.[3] On 17 February 1979, the Chinese launched an invasion of Vietnam "to teach Vietnam a lesson", (as Deng Xiaoping put it in January 1979), and then subsequently withdrew. It was to be a brief and limited operation: the Chinese planned to go deeply enough into Vietnam to destroy three to five divisions of the People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN) and threaten Hanoi, but withdrew within three weeks without actually having gone near Hanoi (Xiaoming, 2016). The international isolation of the PRK only enhanced its orientation to the Soviet Union, Vietnam and their partners and increased its political and economic dependence on them. The annual volume of aid granted by the socialist countries to the PRK reached USD 100 million, more than USD 80 million of which came from the USSR (Bektimirova, 2010). Maletin N.P. (2004) argued that the conflict that flared up around Cambodia was a product of the confrontation between the USSR and the USA and between the USSR and the PRC, a typical Cold War era phenomenon. The proclamation of the PRK and the events preceding it were interpreted in Washington and Beijing as a drastic violation of the regional balance of forces and a crude manifestation of "Soviet hegemonism".

Cambodian conflicts had seriously destabilized the situation in the Southeast Asia region splitting it into two hostile camps. One of them included the states of East Indochina—Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV), People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) and the Lao People's Democratic Republic (LPDR), which were supported by Moscow. The other was formed by the ASEAN countries allied with the USA and China. In the autumn of 1980, the UN General Assembly approved an ASEAN proposal, which envisaged the holding of an international conference on Cambodia that was to take place in New York on July 17-18, 1981.[4] Lee Kuan Yew (Ang, 2013) said such a conference would be the first step towards a solution to the Kampuchean problem. Lee projected that the likely outcome of a free and fair election would be an independent and neutral Kampuchea, neither anti-China, anti-Vietnam, nor anti-Thai. If an Indochina Federation was indeed established by

free choice, ASEAN would accept it as a counterpart economic grouping. In keeping his view that ASEAN countries should not take sides, Lee believed that ASEAN should jointly and separately urge China, Vietnam and the Soviet Union to leave it to the Kampucheans to resolve their problems themselves. In July 1982, three Khmer groups[5] opposing the PRK were officially formed with the active assistance of the PRC, as well as the USA and the ASEAN countries. These groups set up the "Coalition government of Democratic Kampuchea" (CGDK). Sundararaman S. argued that the raison d'etre behind the formation of the CGDK were two. First, it managed to bring together all the resistance factions under one collective umbrella, thereby giving it some semblance of solidarity and unity. Secondly, it greatly legitimized the position of the Khmer Rouge which until then had been isolated by the other groups for its genocidal policies.

The Civil War in Cambodia continued for over ten years. China was the chief sponsor of the Khmer Rouge, whereas the two "non-communist" groups were sponsored by the United States. External support allowed the CGDK forces to wage a stubborn armed struggle. In the first half of the 1980s, ASEAN tried hard to secure international recognition of the CGDK (Chan Hiep, 2002). Lee Kuan Yew (Ang, 2013) explained the benefit of forming a coalition government: by forming a coalition and by receiving ASEAN support, Sihanouk's and Son Sann's forces could offer the Kampuchean people alternative leaderships to Pol Pot or Heng Samrin. Although the CGDK would help the Khmer Rouge gain international acceptability, in the longer-term, it would increase the likelihood of the non-communist forces returning to Phnom Penh through free election and political settlement acceptable to both Vietnam and China and diminish the chances of the Khmer Rouge returning to power by force. Lee emphasized that ASEAN would not be a party to any plan to restore the Khmer Rouge to power by force and against the will of the Cambodian people.

ASEAN representatives continued to pursue this course at their own various meetings as well as at sessions of the UN General Assembly. At the same time, a trend to take into account the political interests of Vietnam began to take shape, due to the efforts of Indonesia and Malaysia. Meanwhile, Moscow rendered moral and material support to the PRK, approved the Vietnamese course in Cambodia and denounced the position of the West, the PRC, and the ASEAN countries on the problems of Cambodian settlement. Soviet propaganda formed an utterly negative image of all leaders of the Cambodian opposition, including Norodom Sihanouk. Although classified publications sometimes contained information urging readers to look critically at the processes going on in Cambodia, they did not change the essence of the official Soviet approach to the conflict right up to the mid-1980s (Bektimirova, 2010).

Since his assumption of power in 1985, Gorbachev placed special emphasis on improving Soviet relations with China as China continued to say that Cambodia was the most important obstacle to improved Sino-Soviet relations. Some Soviets may have believed that the Chinese simply seized on the Cambodia issue for negotiating purposes, for Soviet movement on Cambodia could put the Chinese in a position where they would have to respond. The Soviets may have also believe that anti-Soviet feelings among the ASEAN countries provoked by the Cambodian situation may lead to an expansion of Chinese

influence in the region. In his July 1986 speech in Vladivostok on Asian Affairs,[6] Gorbachev referred to Cambodia as an area of tension. He called for the improvement of Vietnam's relations with China and ASEAN as necessary steps toward normalizing the situation in Cambodia (Directorate of Intelligence, 1987).

During Soviet Foreign Minister, Eduard Shevardnazde's visit to ASEAN in March 1987 and Thai Foreign Minister Sitthi's May visits to Moscow, ASEAN made Cambodia a dominant issue. Bektimirova (2010) described that Eduard Shevardnadze tried to promote initiatives aimed at a political solution in Cambodia, as well as a general improvement of the regional situation. While in Thailand in March 1987, Shevardnadze (2009) stated that the withdrawal of the Soviet troops from Afghanistan could be a pattern for similar measures in Cambodia. Subsequently, he recalled: No matter where I'd been—Thailand, Australia or Indonesia—everywhere I heard the words: "The key to a settlement of the Cambodian problem is in your hands." During his trips to the region, the Soviet minister met leaders of Laos, Kampuchea, and Vietnam and explained to them that "the view of the Soviet Union on the Cambodian problem had changed," and that Moscow was intent on actively moving to a settlement.

The situation in Cambodia was discussed during visits to the USSR of the Foreign Minister of Thailand Siddhi Savetsila (1987), the Premier of Thailand Prem Tinsulanond (1988), the Foreign Minister of Indonesia Mochtar Kusumaatmaja (1985), and the President of Indonesia Suharto (1989). After negotiations, the foreign ministers of Thailand and Indonesia officially admitted that a better atmosphere emerged for solving the Cambodian problem and that they felt a sincere desire of Moscow to improve its relations with the ASEAN countries (Fomicheva, 1991). As to the consultations on the Cambodian problem with the states of Eastern Indochina, they were especially intensive in the summer and autumn of 1987 when Moscow was visited by the top leaders of Vietnam, Laos, and Kampuchea. All these efforts ensured a "breakthrough" in the Cambodian direction of regional and international politics. In August 1987 the government of Kampuchea proclaimed the course of "national reconciliation," putting forward a five-point peace proposal including (a) Meeting with Sihanouk and the other members of the CGDK, with the exception of Pol Pot and his close associates. Sihanouk was to be offered a high position in the governmental setup. (b) The PRK was ready to allow for the withdrawal of troops from Cambodia simultaneously with the cessation of support to the resistance. (c) After the Vietnamese withdrawal elections were to be held under the supervision of international observers. (d) It expressed its desire to start negotiations with Thailand so as to change the border into one of peace and friendship, which in turn would allow for the easy and safe repatriation of the refugees along the border. (e) It sought to convene an international conference on Cambodia (Justus, 1988).

On 14 October 1987, the United Nations General Assembly, for the ninth consecutive year, passed a resolution demanding that the SRV withdraw of the estimated 160,000 military occupation forces from Cambodia, and urging that the latter's inhabitants be allowed to exercise democratic self-determination. This resolution won a 117 to 21 majority (with 16 abstentions), the largest ever since the Cambodian question began to be raised in the United Nations (Justus, 1988). After the resolution, we noticed that all parties tried pushing the

peace deal reaching two unofficial meetings between Sihanouk and Hun Sen.

The first unofficial meeting between Norodom Sihanouk and the Premier of Kampuchea Hun Sen took place in France in December 1987 and a joint communique was signed that stated: (a) the Cambodian conflict had to be politically settled through talks among the various concerned parties, in order to end the war and carry out national reconstruction. (b) An agreement was made to call an international conference if the two parties could reach a consensus, which would act as a guarantor for both the accord as well as the future independence of Cambodia. Both parties also agreed to meet for the second round of discussions in January 1988 and during the second meeting, they discussed five principal issues that would usher in the setting for free and fair elections in the country such as (a) the timetable for the Vietnamese withdrawal, (b) the establishment of the coalition government, (c) the future political system in Cambodia, (d) the principles upon which an independent, neutral and non-aligned Cambodia was to be based, and (e) international guarantees to ensure its security and independence. In spite of the obvious gains which had been made these meetings ended in a deadlock, especially over the issue of the timetable for the Vietnamese withdrawal and the formation of the coalition government. Initially, Sihanouk insisted on a complete and immediate withdrawal but later agreed to Hun Sen's plan of a phased withdrawal. As far as the coalition government was concerned, Sihanouk wanted it to be in place before the elections, while Hun Sen was keen that it should be formed after the elections (Sundararaman).

At about the same time, a series of exchanges of views on the Cambodian problem between the USSR and the USA had convinced them that military aid to all participants in the conflict should be stopped. The USSR expressed readiness to change its policy toward Vietnam accordingly.[7] In turn, the United States promised to persuade Thailand to expel the Khmer Rouge from its territory (Bogaturov, 2009). The activity aimed at searching for a political solution to the conflict was stepped up by the ASEAN countries, especially Indonesia and Thailand.[8] The two informal meetings called "cocktail parties" had been important stages in the search for a settlement (Justus, 1988). The Hun Sen—Sihanouk meetings acted as a prelude to one of the most significant diplomatic moves that ASEAN initiated. This was the Jakarta Informal Meetings (JIM) which became the blueprint upon which the solution to the Cambodian conflict was built. ASEAN's diplomatic initiatives, particularly that of Indonesia, was noteworthy in evolving the JIM process. This took place in two stages—the JIM I, held at Bagor in July 1988. It was attended by representatives of all conflicting Cambodian factions, the ASEAN countries, as well as Vietnam and Laos, and resulted in direct exchanges of views between the regional forces involved in the Cambodian affairs.

This meeting laid out two crucial factors that were linked to an overall political settlement, that is, the withdrawal of the Vietnamese which was within the framework of a political solution to the conflict and the prevention of genocidal policies as that practiced by the Pol Pot regime. Apart from this, the meetings aimed at ending the suffering of the Cambodian people, establishing an "independent, sovereign, peaceful, neutral and non-aligned Cambodia on the basis of self-determination and national reconciliation", which

was to be achieved under effective supervision by international observers (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Jakarta, 1990).

The first meeting established a working committee of senior officials comprised of all participants who were to examine the specific aspects of a political solution and then give its recommendations to the second meeting. The JIM II took place in Jakarta in February 1989, and in July-August, on the strength of the agreements reached there an international conference on Cambodia was convened in Paris. It was attended, apart from the four Cambodian factions, by representatives of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, all ASEAN members, Vietnam, Laos, Australia, Canada, India, and Japan, as well as the nonaligned movement and the UN represented by its Secretary-General. The co-chairmen of the conference were the Foreign Minister of Indonesia Ali Alatas and the Foreign Minister of France Roland Dumas. Although it was premature to talk of any comprehensive settlement, the conference mapped out a strategy for restoring peace.

In February 1989, as a result of Soviet-Chinese negotiations, the positions of the two countries on the question of the foreign military presence in Cambodia became closer, and Beijing renounced its course of supporting Pol Pot's men. The normalization of relations between the USSR and China, and the visit of M.S Gorbachev to Beijing in May 1989, contributed to the warming of the positions of the Indochinese states. "Cambodian problem" in the bilateral dialogue was at the top of the agenda, as China considered it one of the main obstacles to the normalization of relations with the USSR. In a joint communiqué issued after the meeting, it was noted that the normalization of relations between the USSR and China will also contribute to the normalization of relations between Vietnam and China to resolve "the Cambodian conflict." At the same time, Deng Xiaoping declared that China will not object to the use of the Soviet Union military bases in Vietnam. Right after that, in September 1989, the last Vietnamese military units left Cambodia.

The Soviet government acted to support the initiatives of the Indochinese states aimed at resolving "the Cambodian conflict" in order to stop the bloodshed in Cambodia through the framework of the UN Security Council (Bektimirova, 1989). It assumed the role of representative of their interests in negotiations with ASEAN countries, China, the United States and other countries directly or indirectly involved in the conflict, or have expressed an interest in its settlement (Belokon, 1991). For example, the USSR supported the idea of convening an international conference under the auspices of the UN to address "the Cambodian problem" (Bektimirova, 2010). Moreover, the Soviet Union expressed that they were prepared to join the other permanent members of the United Nations Security Council in "guaranteeing" any settlement. According to the US consulate in Shanghai, Soviet diplomats said that Moscow's guarantee would include no Vietnamese colonization of Cambodia. Nevertheless, the Soviets would be unlikely to support the removal of Vietnamese settlers already in Cambodia (Directorate of Intelligence, 1987).

A series of high-level consultations held in New York and Paris in January 1990 was of major importance. The main subject of discussion was the plan put forward by the Foreign Minister of Australia Gareth Evans shortly before that. He proposed to set up a civil administration in Cambodia which should have worked under UN control right up to the

coming to power of a government formed on the basis of election results. The Australian diplomat Ken Berry paid special attention to the Soviet promotion of the "Evans plan", both in the Security Council and in the diplomatic circles of Hanoi and Phnom Penh (Berry, 1997).

In February 1990 representatives of the Cambodian factions, the ASEAN countries, Vietnam and Laos, as well as Australia and France, gathered in the Indonesian capital once more. They reached an agreement on how to form the Supreme National Council (SNC), the highest body of power in Cambodia for the transition period. Hun Sen and Norodom Sihanouk met at the Thai resort Pattaya in May and agreed to the termination of military hostilities. In August the permanent members of the Security Council published a settlement plan, which entrusted the UN with a special role for the transition period, and the Supreme National Council was set up in Jakarta in September (Bektimirova, 2010).

The agreement on a comprehensive political settlement was drafted during the autumn of 1990. In October 1990 the USSR proposed to introduce a moratorium on military supplies to all Cambodian factions, and in March 1991, they announced an 80 percent curtailment of all kinds of assistance to Hun Sen's government (Berry, 1997). The long-term diplomatic efforts culminated in peace agreements on Cambodia signed at the second session of the Paris Conference on October 21-23. Among the 19 states which signed the agreements were all members of the Security Council and ASEAN. Boutros Boutros Ghali, who became the UN Secretary-General in 1992, emphasized that these agreements were a result of the termination of the Cold War, the rapprochement of the USSR and the USA and the improved relations between China, the ASEAN countries, and Vietnam (Boutros-Ghali, 1995).

III. Cambodia-Russia Relations

On 27 December 1991 Chairman of the Supreme National Council, the King of Cambodia Norodom Sihanouk, declared recognition of the Russian Federation as the successor of the former USSR. The Soviet Union, and later Russia, took an active part in solving "the Cambodia Conflict", drafting and signing of the Paris Agreements on Cambodia (October 1991), in carrying out the UN peacekeeping operation in Cambodia (1991-1993). However, in this operation, Russia sent only 52 military contingents, Indonesia–1779, Malaysia–1090, Thailand–716. There was not a single Russian in the UN civilian police, whereas Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines dispatched 224 men each (Boutros-Ghali, 1995).

In September 1993, Russia formally recognized the newly formed state - the Kingdom of Cambodia. Russia is a party to the International Committee for the reconstruction and restoration of Cambodia. In 1995 Russia and Cambodia signed the Joint Declaration on the Foundations of Friendly Relations, the intergovernmental Agreement on Trade and Economic Relations, the intergovernmental Agreement on Cultural and Scientific Cooperation, and the Protocol on consultations between the ministries of foreign affairs of both countries (The Royal Embassy of Cambodia, 1999 & 2004). Cambodia's debt to Russia

is about USD 1.5 billion. According to the Paris Club agreement 1995, the amount of debt resettlement will be reduced 70% to about USD 458 million.

During the 1990s, relations between the two countries were not strong due to the obstacles of the post-Soviet transition including political reform, civil war, economic restructuring and the redrawing of political boundaries. The struggle for power in post-Soviet Russia culminated in a political crisis and bloodshed in the fall of 1993. The transitional period in post-Soviet Russian politics came to an end when a new constitution was approved by referendum in December 1993. After the initial turmoil and euphoria of early privatization, Russia's economy sank into deep depression by the mid-1990s due to botched reform efforts and low commodity prices globally. Russia's economy was hit further by the financial crash of 1998. Structural reform and a severe devaluation of the ruble lowered the standard of living for most segments of the Russian population. This is the reason why Russia did not get involved too much with Cambodia's development and cooperation assistances. However, the peace-making contribution of Russia as a member of permanent Security Council should not be downplayed.

The 'Concept for the foreign policy of the Russian Federation' signed by Vladimir Putin in June 2000 at the onset of his first presidency also spoke about the necessity of paying greater attention to the Asian vector in Russia's foreign policy, linking this with the need to ensure economic development in Russia's Far East. Since 2010 Russian officials and experts have regularly called for Russian foreign policy to strengthen its 'Eastern vector' by becoming more actively involved in political and economic processes in the Asia-Pacific region.[9] A direct stimulus for this was provided by a special meeting held in Khabarovsk on 2 July 2010 by the then-president of Russia, Dmitry Medvedev. During this meeting, he set two goals: intensifying economic cooperation with countries from the Asia-Pacific region, and strengthening Russia's role in regional organizations. Medvedev ordered the development of a "comprehensive action plan to reinforce Russia's position in the Asia-Pacific region" (Rodkiewicz, 2014).

With Russia's Far East and Eastern Vector Policies, Cambodia as a member of ASEAN and old friend of Russia, took these opportunities for more cooperation and collaboration both bilateral and multilateral framework in the ASEAN context. In May 2001 Hor Namhong paid an official visit to the Russian Federation. During the visit, Hor Namhong said there is a common political will and resolve between Russian President Vladimir Putin and Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen to strengthen bilateral relations. He called for developing closer commercial and economic ties between the two countries. The two sides agreed that the relations between the two countries had reached a new level. Russia regards Hor's visit as "an important stage in the development of bilateral relations," Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov said (People's Daily, 17 May 2001).

In July 2010 in Hanoi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Sergey Lavrov held a meeting with Hor Namhong within the framework of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) on Security. In April 2011 Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Alexey N. Borodavkin took part in consultations in Phnom Penh with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Cambodia. 19-20 November Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov as head of the

Russian delegation took part in the 7th East Asia Summit (EAS) and other high-level ASEAN meetings in Phnom Penh. Sergey Lavrov met with the Prime Minister of Cambodia, Hun Sen.

Cambodia participates in a series of consultative meetings with Russia under the ASEAN-Russia dialogue mechanisms and cooperation frameworks to discuss and exchange views on political and security issues of mutual interest and concern. These include ministerial meetings, senior officials' meetings, expert level meetings, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the Post Ministerial Conferences (PMCs) 10+1, ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting Plus and the East Asia Summit.[10]

In May 2016, Cambodia and Russia celebrated the 60th anniversary of their relationship, Cambodian Foreign Minister Prak Sokhonn (2016) remarked that "despite the profound and complex changes that have transformed the world over the past six decades, our ties have stood the test of time, ties that are based on long-standing traditions of solid friendship, partnership, mutual trust, and understanding". Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen held bilateral talks with Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev to strengthen economic linkages between Moscow and Phnom Penh. These talks resulted in the two countries signing a landmark agreement to cooperate on peaceful nuclear energy development. At the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) summit in Sochi that followed, Russia and Cambodia announced cooperation in numerous economic sectors and took major steps toward the establishment of a durable economic partnership.

1. Cooperation in the Field of Defense and Security

Bilateral military cooperation is also steadily developing. On 8-13 September 2011 several Russian Pacific Fleet ships headed by a big anti-submarine ship, Admiral Panteleev, docked at the port of Sihanoukville for a friendly visit. The captains of the ships had meetings with the commanders of the Naval Base Ream. The Minister of National Defense, Mr. Tea Banh, visited the ship. On 24-27 April 2016, several Russian Pacific Fleet ships headed by a big anti-submarine ship "Admiral Vinogradov," ocean rescue ship "Photius Krylov," and tanker "Irkut" called at the port of Sihanoukville. On 26-28 April 2016 Tea Banh visited Russia, during which he met with Defense Minister General Sergei Shoigu and the Secretary of the Security Council Nikolai Patrushev. In addition, he participated in the first informal meeting of the Russia-ASEAN defense ministers and Fifth Moscow international security conference. On 17 May 2016 in Moscow an intergovernmental agreement on military-technical cooperation was signed (Embassy of Russia in Cambodia).

Sar Kheng, Minister of Interior of Cambodia visited the Russians in April 2004 and May 2015 on working visits. 23-25 May 2016, Deputy Minister of Interior of Cambodia Teng Savong took part in the VII International Meeting of High Representatives in charge of security issues, in Grozny. On 17 May 2016 in Moscow there was an agreement signed that provided for cooperation between the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia and the Ministry of Interiors of Cambodia (Embassy of Russia in Cambodia).

2. Cooperation in the Field of Law Enforcement

In 2003 the two sides signed the intergovernmental Agreement on Cooperation in the Control of Illicit Trafficking of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. In April 2006 Vyacheslav M. Lebedev, Chairman of the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation, was on his first visit to Cambodia. The sides agreed to establish cooperation between judicial authorities of both countries. In May 2007 Dith Munti, President of the Supreme Court of the Kingdom of Cambodia, made a reciprocal visit to Moscow and signed the agreement on interagency cooperation. In September 2004 a delegation of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation headed by Y. Medvedev, Vice-Chairman of the State Duma Committee on Economic Policy, and Business and Tourism, attended the 25th session of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organization in Phnom Penh. In January 2007 a delegation of the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Cambodia headed by Heng Samrin attended the 15th Session of the Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum (APPF) in Moscow. In November 2008 Valery A.Yazev, Vice-President of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, visited Cambodia. In January 2009 Sergey M. Mironov, Chairman of the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, had a meeting with Heng Samrin, President of the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Cambodia, at the 17th Session of APPF in Vientiane, Laos. In October 2009 Oum Sarith, Secretary-General of the Senate of Cambodia paid a visit to Moscow. In November 2009 and April 2016 Heng Samrin, President the National Assembly of Cambodia, visited Russia (Embassy of Russia in Cambodia).

3. Cooperation in the Field of Information and Communication Technologies

A Cooperation Agreement in the field of information exchange between the ITAR-TASS and the central Cambodian information agency AKP was signed in Phnom Penh on 22 December 2010 and a Cooperation Agreement between the RIA NOVOSTI and AKP was signed in Moscow at the World Media Summit on 4 July. A. Malinin, Deputy Minister of Telecommunications of Russia met with Khieu Kanharith, Minister of Information of Cambodia in Phnom Penh on 24 July 2012, during the ceremony of launching a pay digital television project was fulfilled by the General Satellite (Saint-Petersburg, Russia) and the Royal Group of companies (Cambodia). A MOU between the Information Agency "Russia Today" and the National Radio of Cambodia; Agreement on cooperation between "Russia Today" and information agency "Cambodia's press" were signed in November 2015. On 17 May 2016 a MOU between the Ministry of Relation and Mass Communications of the Russian Federation and the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications of the Kingdom of Cambodia on cooperation in the field of communication and information technologies was signed (Embassy of Russia in Cambodia).

4. Cooperation between Russian Cities and Cambodian Cities

Both countries have made an effort to strengthen direct links between their capitals. In September 2005 the Phnom Penh Municipality delegation headed by Kep Chuktema, Governor of Phnom Penh, visited Moscow. In December 2010 a Memorandum of Understanding on establishing sister city relations between the Russian town of Veliky Novgorod and Cambodia's Siem Reap province was signed. In November 2014 Deputy Prime Minister Sok An, who was in Kazan for participation in the forum "Eurasian Economic Integration: Achievements and Challenges," held talks with the President of Tatarstan Rustam Minnikhanov, and in September 2015 "on the margins" Eastern economic forums met with the plenipotentiary representative of the Russian President in the Far Eastern federal District Yury Trutne (Embassy of Russia to Cambodia).

5. Cooperation in the Field of Trade and Investment

The Russian-Cambodian Intergovernmental Commission for Trade, Economic, Scientific and Technical Cooperation has been functioning since 1997 and The Seventh Meeting of the Intergovernmental Commission (IGC) was held in April 2013 in Phnom Penh. The activity of the Commission focused on such matters as coordination of trade and economic cooperation, and the review of legal and commercial aspects of bilateral interaction. The IGC has recently concluded its 9th session, culminating in the successful conclusion of a wide range of productive bilateral cooperation arrangements. In the economic sphere, our bilateral trade has risen substantially over the last decade. In 2015 bilateral trade turnover between the two countries amounted to USD 110,85 million, where Russian export was USD 4,52 million and import – USD 106,33 million (International Trade Centre, 2017). Trade expansion in the agricultural sector has provided a powerful precedent for deepened Russian investment in Cambodia's energy facilities, mining equipment, and telecommunications industry. Hun Sen praised this diversification in a statement on 20 May 2016, arguing that Russian private sector investment could play a vital role in Cambodia's economic development process (Sputniknews, 2016). Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Igor Morgulov responded to Hun Sen's statement by suggesting that Cambodia, Singapore, Indonesia, and Thailand could create a Southeast Asian free trade zone linked to the Russian-led Eurasian Economic Union (EEU). This trade agreement, if realized, would substantially elevate Russia's position as an economic competitor with China and the United States in Southeast Asia (Samuel, 2016).

In a meeting between Hun Sen and Dmitry Medvedev on 24 November, 2015 they agreed in principle on debt settlement through the single-step approach. The Russian side suggested Cambodia prepare the list of priority investment projects with details and conditions so that Russia can make an assessment for debt settlement through the debt-for-investment/equity mechanism. Four priority sectors were suggested by Cambodia and include: energy (oil and gas), agriculture, tourism, and construction, wherein the agricultural sector, Cambodia

provides economic concessional land and Russia do the plantation and production. Meanwhile, Cambodia is seeking more investment from Russia, as well as opportunities for direct flights between the countries, scholarships for Cambodian students, and markets for rice and garment products. Both sides signed six agreements in 2015 and eight agreements in 2016, including information exchange to combat money laundering and terrorist financing; political cooperation between the Cambodian People's Party and the All-Russian Political Party United Russia; an understanding on cooperation for future nuclear power use; and other investment deals.

In this regard, the initiative to establish a Cambodian-Russian Business Council would assist Russian firms in close cooperation with the relevant Cambodian institutions to explore concrete economic opportunities and develop partnerships with the Cambodian private sector. Already, the Joint Statement on the List of Project Proposals for Cambodian-Russian Trade, Economic and Investment Cooperation up to 2020 was endorsed at the recent meeting of the High-Level Working Group on Priority Investment Projects (Prak Sokhonn, 2016). While specific details have yet to emerge on the framework of the agreement, numerous Russian businesses have conducted investment tours throughout the Kingdom. In March, 16 Russian firms alone visited Cambodia, including the state-run firm JSC Russian Railways, and Inter Rao—an energy holding company. Since Medvedev's first state visit last November, the two countries have been trying to hammer out a bilateral trade deal. Medvedev added that Russia has good prospects for investing in the construction of energy facilities, supplying cargo lifting equipment, and drilling and mining tools. He also highlighted that there was room to develop the agriculture and telecommunications sectors (Kotoski, 2016).

6. Cooperation in the Field of Tourism

The cooperation in this area is steadily developing: in March 2011 a Cambodian delegation headed by Minister of Tourism Thong Khon visited the Intourmarket Exhibition in Moscow. The signing of a bilateral joint action work plan on tourism cooperation for 2012-2014 with the Russian counterpart has become an important outcome of the visit. In 2012 nearly 100,000 Russian tourists visited Cambodia, which constitutes 46 % growth over 2011 and 131,675 Russians visited Cambodia in 2013, but has recently starting falling from 108,601 in 2014 to 53,164 in 2016 (Tourism Statistics Report, (2013, 2014, 2015 & 2016)).

The Tourism Ministry has outlined the potential of tourism services and investment opportunities to Russia, hoping to attract tourists and investments to Cambodia. Cambodia is aiming for a bigger share of the 30 million Russian tourists around the world, while the number of Russian travelers to Cambodia is decreasing year by year. Speaking to the Russian Ambassador to Cambodia, Dmitry Tsvetkov, Tourism Minister Thong Khon said Russia is one of the main markets in the European region for ASEAN and for Cambodia in particular. Cambodia is preparing four main points, including pushing for direct flights between the countries, promoting tourism services particularly in the coastal provinces for Russians,

organization of low-cost trips for travel agents or consultants, and organization of business match forums for Russian investors and businessmen in Cambodia (Chea, 2017).

The most promising for attracting massive Russian tourists to Cambodia is the province of Sihanoukville. Recently, the airport was reconstructed, expanding the terminal building and increasing the runway, which, in turn, will lead to an increase in its air travel capacity. Russian investors recommended continuing work on expanding and modernizing the airport so that it could receive wide-body aircraft with a capacity of 250-300 seats. It will not only benefit Sihanoukville but also Siem Reap and other potentially attractive places for tourists. Now Russian tourists fly to Cambodia on regular flights through Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, Bangkok or Dubai. Cambodia is often combined with other countries. For example, tourists visit the country as part of a beach holiday in Vietnam, where the offer for a numbered fund is much more diverse. Experts noted that Cambodia's advertising in Russia, as well as training of specialists for local tourism products, is extremely necessary. It can be not only promotional tours, but also seminars for professionals, exhibitions, and Cambodia's days in Russia. Yulia Frundina mentioned that the number one task is to develop the infrastructure of the country's tourist regions. "Infrastructure of Cambodia is not yet ready to receive a mass tourist. Every tour to Cambodia is now collected individually, they cannot be "stamped" in large numbers - like tours to other popular countries of beach holidays" (Travel Russian News, 2017).

Thong Khon said that tourism services and infrastructure in the country, especially in coastal provinces, should be improved taking into account the needs of tourists from Russia. Cambodia understands the need for study tours for tour operators and travel agents from Russia so that they can explore the direction, in particular, of the country's beach resorts and joint tourism projects concerning land and sea transport, while development of hotel and excursion infrastructure should be launched (Subbotin, 2017). In addition to Cambodia's friendly visa regime, it is clear that the signed Agreement on Air Services and the Joint Action Program between the tourism ministries of the two countries would help attract more visitors to both countries. Closer economic ties and the Russian government's increased attention to Cambodia should expedite the growth of tourism further.

7. Cooperation in the Field of Education, Culture, and Information

Cultural cooperation has also witnessed a strong revival. Progress is visible in cinematography and filmmaking. The Cambodian government has allowed the construction of Russian Orthodox churches in Sihanoukville, Siem Reap, and Phnom Penh. Furthermore, the continued operation of the Russian Center for Sciences and Culture will give an impetus to boost the people to people exchange between our two countries. More than 8,000 Cambodians have studied in both the former Soviet Union and Russia. These educational linkages will help ease distrust of Russian intentions amongst the younger generation of Cambodians. It also will impact long-term policy decisions, as Cambodians educated in Russian academies are disproportionately represented in senior government positions in the

Cambodian government, could be forming the basis for maintaining and strengthening the long tradition of educational cooperation, by way of increasing the number of scholarships for Cambodian students and encouraging other institutional partnerships in the field of education.

IV. Conclusion

Qualitative changes of the situation in Southeast Asia began after Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in the Soviet Union and began to take steps in the spirit of "new political thinking." The lowering levels of military confrontation between the USSR and the USA, measures to normalize the Soviet-Chinese relations, attempts to resolve a whole number of regional conflicts have radically changed the world political climate. The meeting of the permanent five members of the Security Council in August 1990 laid out the formula for the UN's role in the transitional period in Cambodia. With the acceptance of the P-5 formula in its entirety by four main Cambodian factions, the final move towards a resolution of the conflict was reached and the UNTAC mandate in Cambodia came into force with the signing of the Paris Peace Accord in October 1991 bringing back the restoration of a democratic government in Cambodia. The process of Cambodian settlement drew the USSR, and later Russia, closer to Cambodia and the ASEAN countries and helped overcome certain negative stereotypes on both sides by improving Russian and Cambodian as well as ASEAN relations.

Russia's strengthening of ties with Cambodia is a key component of President Vladimir Putin's broader goal of expanding Russian influence within the ASEAN bloc. Medvedev's historic trip to Phnom Penh in November 2015 further underscored the importance of Cambodia to Putin's Southeast Asian strategy. Medvedev's trip was the first official visit of any Russian leader to Cambodia since Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze traveled to Phnom Penh in 1987. A quarter of a century later Shevardnadze (2009) described the situation as follows: "Apart from extensive military and financial assistance, we exported to Southeast Asian countries our own economic mismanagement, the political regimentation of the economy and Utopian views which made the already poor countries still poorer". Russia's diplomatic overtures toward Cambodia are a crucial step towards establishing Moscow as a major player in the ASEAN trade bloc. Ultimately though, the success of Russia's outreach will depend on Moscow's ability to overcome Cambodian disdain for Moscow's alliance with Vietnam and Cambodia's willingness to make sweeping economic reforms that will bolster its viability as a trade partner (Samuel, 2016).

Cambodia's strategic location in Southeast Asia makes the country a cost-effective hub as well as an ideal transit point for exporting products to the region. With such a good prospect, Cambodia can enhance its concerted efforts to develop various mechanisms to broaden the trade, investment and economic ties to the fullest. Cambodia stands to benefit from Moscow's "Turn to the East" policy. Cambodia should play a proactive role in effectively bringing this major power into ASEAN's cooperation mechanisms. This will benefit not

only ASEAN in its attempt to promote a central role in Asia-Pacific multilateralism, but also Cambodia's endeavor to diversify its foreign relations with major powers (Cheunboran, 2016). Cambodia's status as a Dialogue Partner at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) provides another platform for the two countries to strengthen the growing partnership in advancing bilateral and regional economic development. Moreover, Cambodia has expressed its interest to engage with the Eurasian Economic Union, which would open up new business opportunities for the respective private sector to enter the ASEAN and the Eurasian markets (Prak, 2016).

It is quite clear that over the past six decades, Cambodia-Russia traditional friendship has grown from strength to strength in various fields. However, Cambodia-Russia trade is still not significant and does not seem to be changing either. The initiative to establish a Cambodia-Russia Business Council would be an important step to explore economic opportunities including food security, climate change, disaster management, energy and renewable energy, connectivity, infrastructure development, transport, ICT, industry and minerals, SMEs development, narrowing the development gap, research and development, tourism, education, youth, and infectious diseases. It requires more commitment and joint efforts to fulfill the agreements of productive cooperation between the two countries. Cambodia should improve the regulatory and planning bodies of the Cambodia economy through a joint process of public and private partnership and cooperation.

Endnotes

1 In November 1978 it signed an agreement on friendship and cooperation between the Soviet Union and Vietnam, where USSR provided Vietnam great economic and military aid. With the active support of the USSR, Vietnam managed to substantially strengthen its foreign policy positions. However, the presence of Vietnamese troops in Cambodia, Vietnam aggravated relations with other countries of the world community. Despite widespread economic aid from the USSR, Vietnam was still lagging behind in terms of national income per capita.

2 Soviet great-power rhetoric, South East Asian countries' fears of communist subversion, as well as Cambodian and Afghan problems, prevented Soviet contacts with ASEAN from expanding. Undoubtedly, the Soviet-American confrontation and pro-American orientation of the majority of South East Asian countries also negatively influenced further development of contacts. The only allies of the USSR in the Asia-Pacific region were Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, North Korea, and Mongolia - the countries following the Soviet socialist model of development (Rakhmanin, 1996).

3 The core of ASEAN's policy hinged upon its perception that Vietnam's intervention was illegal and unjust. Immediately after the Vietnamese intervention, the ASEAN standing committee issued a statement that deplored the escalation and enlargement of the conflict in Indochina and called for conformity to the principles of the UN charter as well as the Bandung Declaration. The ASEAN further urged the UN Security Council to discuss the issue and take appropriate measures (ASEAN Secretariat, 1986).

4 The Conference adopted a declaration which called for a ceasefire by all parties to the conflict in Cambodia, withdrawal of foreign forces, arrangement of measures to ensure that armed factions do not disrupt elections under UN supervision and an assurance on the maintenance of law and order (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bangkok, 1983).

5 Opposition factions were represented by the National United Front for Sovereign, Independent, Neutral, and Peaceful Cambodia, open for cooperation (FUNCINPEC) headed by N. Sihanouk, the Khmer People's National Liberation Front (KPNLF) headed by Son Sann, and the Party of Democratic Kampuchea headed by Khieu Samphan.

6 The main ideas of this programme were as follows: the Soviet Union is an Asian and Pacific state and should play an important role in the region; the USSR stands for the early and fair resolution of regional conflicts (Afghanistan, Cambodia, Korea); long-term security in the region can be provided only by collective efforts; radical reduction of armed forces and armaments, including nuclear, down to reasonable sufficiency is of great importance; ecological security is an important part of regional security; the USSR is interested in participating in regional economic integration (Rakhmanin, 1996).

7 The heightened Soviet interest in a settlement probably stems from at least two factors; Moscow realized that its association with the problem would continue to harm its relations with other countries in the region, and also was increasingly dissatisfied with having to bear the burden of Vietnam's ruined economy. A soviet diplomat said that peace in Cambodia would help Vietnam's economy and ease the heavy aid burden on the USSR. In addition, the Soviet have complained repeatedly about Vietnamese misuse of Soviet aid—aid which supports, directly or indirectly, Vietnam's activities in Cambodia. Soviet dissatisfaction with the status of Cambodian problem, while sufficient to excite concern, nevertheless is not yet as important to Moscow as its good relations with Vietnam. USSR was primarily interested in continued access to the naval and air bases at Cam Ranh which act as a partial counter to the US bases in the Philippines. Good relation with Vietnam also greatly expand Soviet in the rest of Indochina and have the potential, if Cambodia conflict reaches a diplomatic solution, to help Moscow's efforts to block the expansion of Chinese influence in Southeast Asia. For these reasons, they believed that USSR was unlikely to take drastic action, such as threatening to cut-off aid, to force Hanoi to leave Cambodia. If negotiations never get started, or if they fail, the Soviets were likely to urge Hanoi privately to hold its promise to withdraw its troop in 1990. If it failed, it would result in a loss of international credibility for both Hanoi and Moscow (Directorate of Intelligence, 1987).

8 Chatchai Chunhavan, who became Prime-Minister of Thailand in August 1988, called for turning Indochina "from a battlefield into a market place" and gained positive shifts in the relations with the three Indochinese neighbors. His statements and actions, as the Cambodian diplomat and scholar Kao Kim Hourn (2002) noted, not only brought the former enemies closer but also contributed to the strengthening of the regional vector in Thailand's foreign policy (Bektimirova, 2010).

9 The intensification of Russian discourse concerning policy towards the Asia-Pacific region seen since 2010 has been accompanied by a major evolution in the Russian elite's perception of the balance of powers in the international arena. The key stimulus for this evolution was provided by the economic crisis of 2008–2009, and more precisely by the conclusions, the Russian political elite drew from it. They saw the crisis as a manifestation of fundamental changes in the global economy, the essence of which is the approaching decline of the global domination of the West. According to this interpretation, East Asia is gradually becoming the center of the global economy by increasing its share in industrial production, trade, and financial assets, at the expense of the West. As one report prepared by prominent Russian experts put it, "The Asia-Pacific region is increasingly becoming the engine of global civilization, taking over the role which Europe has been playing over the last five centuries." (Rodkiewicz, 2014).

10 The dialogue mechanisms and cooperation frameworks include: Russia dialogue mechanisms include: The ASEAN - Russia Joint Cooperation Committee (ARJCC), The ASEAN - Russia Dialogue Partnership Financial Fund (DPFF) and The Russia - ASEAN Business Council. The ASEAN - Russia Joint Cooperation Committee (ARJCC) was created to promote multifaceted cooperation between ASEAN and Russia. The Committee's objectives include increasing the efficiency of ongoing activities and identifying promising directions and means to enhance such cooperation. The ASEAN - Russia Dialogue Partnership Financial Fund (DPFF) was established in June 2007. The fund is used exclusively to finance the activities and programs that have been adopted by the ASEAN - Russia Joint Cooperation Committee (ARJCC). The DPFF is managed through the ASEAN-Russia Joint Planning and Management Committee (ARJPMC) (ASEAN - Russia Summit, 19-20 May 2016).

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15

CAMBODIA-INDIA RELATIONS

Anirudh S. BHATI & Dr. Bradley J. MURG

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CAMBODIA-INDIA RELATIONS

I. Introduction

While India has experienced massive economic growth over the last two decades and is expected to overtake China in population within seven years according to the latest United Nations estimates (PTI, 2017), Delhi's diplomatic footprint and influence outside of its "near abroad" (i.e., among the various members of SAARC, the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation) remains lacking.[2] While India is considered to be one of the "BRICS" (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), its impact has regularly been understood to be limited, i.e., maintaining pre-eminence in parts of South Asia rather than either entering the ranks of the global, top-tier powers or expanding its influence in neighboring regions (e.g., Southeast Asia).

This is particularly interesting in the context of Cambodia, considering the enormous impact that Indian culture has had in the country: from the Sanskrit and Pali languages to soap operas and Bollywood films. On the surface, India would seem to hold something of a comparative advantage in soft power in the country. India does not evoke the memories of an imperialist past among Cambodians, and at the same time can claim credit for shaping the Cambodian psyche through Indic philosophy, political ideas, religion, arts and language over a period of two millennia. This transmission and assimilation of culture occurred without political or military domination (Suryanarayan, 1978). Nevertheless, that soft

power has not been sufficient to (as of yet) build a strong strategic partnership between the two states, and Indian efforts will need to be significantly strengthened, particularly at the track two level, if Delhi is to deepen its relationship with the kingdom over the medium to long-term. Nevertheless, we do expect to see the economic relationship between the two states continue to strengthen, along with India's role in ASEAN, providing a new, stronger foundation for the future development of Indo-Cambodian relations.

This chapter proceeds as follows: (i) a summary of the historical development of Indo-Cambodian political relations, concentrating primarily on the post-independence era; (ii) a brief discussion of India's approach to ASEAN and the implications of its more active engagement with the region in recent years; (iii) an overview of the contemporary development of Indo-Cambodian economic relations as both states continue to experience rapid GDP growth; and (iv) conclusions and outlook for future development.

II. Indo-Cambodian Political Relations: From Funan to Independence

India and Cambodia are somewhat unique among the countries discussed in this volume; in that, these two states have maintained nearly two millennia of direct and indirect relations, with the latter significantly influencing the cultural development of the former as depicted through the national symbol of Angkor Wat. Granted, these relations have been less than consistent and at times have been broken off entirely. Two eras mark the pinnacles in the history of the relationship. The first of these stretches back to the earliest recorded history of Cambodia itself, with the Kingdom of Funan as both the oldest and strongest Indianized kingdom in the region. The second, as noted above, was the era of the Khmer Empire (800-1400 CE), a constituent, albeit independent part of greater Indic civilization; the influence of which stretched from the outer reaches of present-day Afghanistan to Tibet, Sri Lanka and the eastern extremities of the Indonesian archipelago. Since that time, relations between the two civilizations have never quite managed to reach such a level of cooperation and partnership.

However, even during the period of decline following the heights of the Angkor era, sporadic contact between the two continued. The literature on the era remains spartan, but records do exist of trade relations between India and Cambodia during the pre-colonial era, primarily through the operations of the English East India Company. Bassett (1962) notes the re-opening of some small-scale trade as early as 1613, highlighting a brief uptick in the mid-1650s as the East India Company sought new markets. Nevertheless, just as India succumbed to the gradual expansion of European influence, culminating in the establishment of the British Raj in 1858, so was Cambodia subsumed into the French *Union Indochinoise* in 1887. As constituent components of competing mercantilist empires, relations between the two remained minimal until independence. Nonetheless, Indian academics began to examine the role of India in the historical development of Cambodia, as seen in the work of scholars such as Chatterjee (1928) during the colonial era. In the final stages of British rule,

the leaders of India's independence struggle and several of its leading strategic thinkers had already begun to devote serious attention to Southeast Asia in general, if not Cambodia in particular (Naidu, 2004).

Due to the economic costs deriving from World War II, the opposition of the US and the USSR towards European colonization, and the growing clamor among local elites for independence in Europe's Asian colonies (which had contributed significant resources to the aid of the Allied Powers), Indian and Cambodian independence was achieved relatively quickly. Concerning the former, the Government of India Act of 1935 was passed by the British Parliament to accord self-governance to some provinces of British India. Ultimately, under the leadership of Mohandas Gandhi, a bust of whom stands on one of Phnom Penh's main boulevards, India achieved independence and dominion status in 1947 and became a full-fledged republic in 1950. Similarly, under the leadership of King Norodom Sihanouk, Cambodia achieved limited self-rule in 1946, had its protectorate status abolished in 1949, and became an independent state in November 1953.

Even as Cambodia and Laos gained independence, France chose to maintain its presence in Vietnam resulting in conflict with Vietnamese nationalists led by Ho Chi Minh. The nationalists routed the French troops at Dien Bien Phu, ending the First Indochina War which had significant and adverse spill-over impacts on Cambodia and Laos. Subsequently, the Geneva Conference in 1954 was organized, in part, to discuss the question of peace in Indochina. Following a proposal by Zhou Enlai, the International Control Commission (ICC) was constituted to supervise the cease-fire. India assumed the chair of the commission (reflecting its non-aligned stance), with Poland and Canada representing the communist and western bloc countries (Miller & Wich, 2011). After the ICC was shut down owing to India normalizing relations with North Vietnam, India assumed membership of the International Commission of Supervision and Control (ICSP).

The United States, acting on a modified version of the Truman Doctrine, entered talks with Cambodia resulting in the extension of a US military aid package for Cambodia. In a projection of the "positive neutrality" doctrine, India, along with other members of the ICSP, advised Cambodia in a special report that its acceptance of the Military Assistance Agreement with the US would compromise its commitments under the Geneva Accords. This resulted in a reversal of the Cambodian government's decision, and in a letter to the Commission, Cambodia declared its continued adherence to the Geneva Accords, stating that it would join no military alliance. As a result, Cambodia faced a severe economic blockade from the United States and its allies. Skirmishes at the South Vietnamese and Thai borders also took place.(Nasarenko, 1977; SarDesai, 1968).

India's relationship with Cambodia began to blossom soon thereafter. Responding to an invitation from Nehru, Sihanouk visited India in March 1955, formally accepted the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence *(Pancasila)*, and the two states officially established diplomatic relations (Nasarenko, 1977). However, it would not be until 1961 that Cambodia formally became a member of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). India's encouragement of the "anti-colonial struggle" in Asia, and its position of non-alignment (together with the policy of "positive neutrality") resonated with Sihanouk at the time. Delhi's non-alignment

policy was informed by fidelity to the doctrine of *ahimsa* (non-violence). This approach maintains a lengthy pedigree in Indian political philosophy and has been adopted by influential figures in Indian political life, ranging from Emperor Asoka to Gandhi.

In April 1955, Nehru and Sihanouk met again on the sidelines of the Bandung Conference, where Nehru also formally introduced Sihanouk to Zhou Enlai, marking the beginning of what could be considered the "closest" era of modern, post-colonial Indo-Cambodian relations (Janardhan, 2009; Patnaik, 2012). Sihanouk's experience with the French colonial authorities and his subsequent leadership of Cambodia's independence movement led him to believe that the presence of the United States in Southeast Asia would be relatively brief. Thus, for Sihanouk, China's acceptance of his overtures served as a vital signaling mechanism to dis-incentivize any Vietnamese or Thai designs on Cambodian territory (recalling the gradual diminishment of Cambodian territory by its neighbors prior to the establishment of the French protectorate).

As the friendship between the two leaders grew, Sihanouk inaugurated the Jawaharlal Nehru Boulevard in Phnom Penh on 10 May 1955 and said:

> When we refer to the two-thousand-year-old ties which unite us with India, it is not at all a hyperbole. In fact, it was about two thousand years ago that the first navigators, Indian merchants, and Brahmins brought to our ancestors their Gods, their techniques, their organisation. Briefly, India was for us what Greece was to the Latin occident. (Singhal, 1971)

Sihanouk also expressed his admiration for Nehru in his memoirs and described him as "my greatest friend." At a dinner in his honor in 1963 at the Rashtrapati Bhawan (Presidential Palace) in India, Sihanouk said:

> I have pointed out that Cambodia is deeply indebted to India; and I will add that 1, for my part, am much indebted personally to India's great leader Shri Jawaharlal Nehru. For it was by studying his methods and teachings, and by following his sage counsels that I was able to decide upon a course of action which has assured our independence, and national unity, together with peaceful internal conditions and the respect of our sovereignty. And I ascribe the unanimous and enthusiastic support commanded by this policy to the far-sighted wisdom of our well-loved and respected Indian friend. (Ministry of External Affairs, 1963)

Ultimately, it was the Sino-Soviet split, leading up to the 1962 Sino-Indian war (in which India suffered a humiliating defeat), that precipitated the end of this period of partnership. Indo-Cambodian relations began to move in a more negative direction. With Nehru's health failing in the aftermath of the conflict, in 1962 the Indian government refused to support Cambodia's proposal to convene an international conference to set out safeguards for Cambodia's neutrality and security. This severely irked Sihanouk. Furthermore, Delhi

refused to come to the aid of Cambodia when it clashed with Thai and South Vietnamese forces (Nasarenko 1977). Conversely, in 1963, the Indian government was encouraged when Sihanouk, while in India, chose to intervene with Beijing, encouraging the Maoist regime to accept the Colombo Proposals (a conference to settle Sino-Indian territorial disputes, which was highly amenable to India's national interests). However, Nasarenko notes that when Sihanouk subsequently traveled to Beijing, he stated: "Cambodia will always be on China's side," resulting in severe displeasure in "the South Block" (the home of India's Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Defense, Ministry of External Affairs, etc.). Following these events, under the leadership of the new Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, India was pulled closer into the Soviet orbit.

In 1970, when Lon Nol came to power and established the Khmer Republic, India granted recognition in accordance with its policy of recognizing sovereignty based on "effective control of territory." Similarly, in 1975, when the Khmer Rouge took over the country, India granted recognition to the Democratic Kampuchea regime. However, because of its prior realignment towards the Soviet Union, India subsequently went on to support the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) regime. While at that time the PRK did not have effective control of the entire territory of Cambodia, it did control the largest share of the country.

This action caused significant controversy and outrage within India, among opposition groups, including the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) (also the largest faction in the ruling coalition in the lower house of the parliament since 2014) as well as the media, and also outside India where its credentials as a non-aligned country were called into question, particularly by ASEAN states (Reddy, 2000; Sridharan, 1993). India's foreign policy was guided by its own security interests due to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan that had brought the Cold War to its own doorstep. This new reality combined with the fact that the United States was providing significant military and economic aid to India's long-standing rival, Pakistan, causing significant concerns among India's ruling elite. Soon after recognition, Heng Samrin, the leader of the PRK, sent a message of appreciation and gratitude to the Prime Minister of India, stating: "I am elated to learn that the Indian government has diplomatically recognized People's Republic of Kampuchea." He hailed the decision of the Indian government to extend recognition as a "decisive contribution to peace and security in Southeast Asia" (Reddy 2000).

This course of events put further strain on relations between Delhi and Sihanouk, who was then heading the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK), an alliance between royalist forces, the Khmer Rouge, and other guerrilla factions. Datta-Ray (2009) relates an incident that occurred during the Seventh Non-Aligned Summit held in New Delhi in 1983, which well summarizes the state of the relationship at the time:

> New Delhi followed the Havana precedent and kept Cambodia's seat vacant. Dith Munty, the PRK ambassador, who had presented his credentials four days earlier, was spotted driving to the inaugural in a Japanese car with a temporary 'CD [corps diplomatique] registration applied for' plate. Prince Norodom Sihanouk must have been grievously wounded since he had sought

> an invitation and been fobbed off with the excuse that India had no mandate and it would be up to the conference to invite him if it wished. 'There was no question of even allowing Sihanouk to even come to Delhi, let alone speak,' according to Natwar Singh, the conference secretary-general. If the prince did arrive, 'he would be flown out by the next available flight.' Norodom Sihanouk responded with a pained letter saying this was no way 'to treat an old friend.

The South Block did, eventually, recognize Sihanouk's importance in the peace and reconciliation process and attempted to make amends. Natwar Singh, who later served as India's Minister of State for External Affairs (1986-1989) met Sihanouk in New York in October 1987 acting as a go-between and facilitating the first meeting between Cambodia's Prime Minister Hun Sen and Sihanouk in December 1987. In February 1988, the Indian Ministry of External Affairs explained that: "India was working towards a peaceful settlement of the Cambodian conflict. Any solution entailed withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Cambodia and to allow Cambodians to determine their own future" (Reddy, 2000). The precarious political and economic situation in the Soviet Union had a considerable impact on Vietnamese foreign and defense policy which relied, extensively, on Soviet military and economic aid. Maintaining troops in Cambodia had become exceedingly costly for Vietnam, still recovering from decades of conflict. Reddy (2000) relates that the meeting between Singh and Sihanouk in New York in October 1987 was an "important confidence-building measure which paved the way for the Paris meeting between Sihanouk and Hun Sen in December." He also notes that Hun Sen chose to visit New Delhi for talks with Rajiv Gandhi a few days before he met Sihanouk in France for the second time in January 1988. In September 1989, Hanoi pulled its troops out of Cambodia, paving the way for the resolution of the status of Cambodia.

In October 1990, Hun Sen embarked on a five-day visit to India where he proposed that India remain involved with UNTAC and contended that Delhi had a military role to play in ensuring security in Cambodia in the run-up to national elections. Sihanouk also praised India's role in the peace process and expressed hope that India would play an active part in the reconstruction of Cambodia, stating: "India's role heralded a new era of hope and optimism" (Reddy, 2000). The 1991 Paris Peace Agreements, of which India was a signatory, brought together the leadership of PRK; Prince Sihanouk and the royalists under the FUNCINPEC banner; Democratic Kampuchea; as well as other minor factions to resolve the country's long-running internal conflicts.

During the UNTAC period, India contributed military (1,373 individuals) and non-military personnel for the peacekeeping mission to support the conduct of Cambodia's general elections (Permanent Mission of India to UN, 1985). India was also one of the first contributors towards de-mining efforts in the country and has provided de-mining equipment and annual training to de-mining companies of the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces for nearly a decade (Parameswaran, 2016).

Upon the intervention of Prince Sihanouk and the request of the PRK government, the Archeological Survey of India (ASI) received a mandate to begin conservation and

restoration work on the Angkor temple complex in 1986 (Sen, 2013; Sokhon, 2016). The office of Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC), launched in 1981, was the primary channel through which the Ministry of External Affairs channeled economic and technical assistance to Cambodia, including USD 4 million in funds earmarked for ASI. This ASI-led project was carried out when the security situation in the country remained unsettled, and Khmer Rouge and other anti-government guerilla forces were reported to be operating near the complex where restoration work was taking place (Gray, 1989). Several French and Khmer experts were critical of ASI's approach towards conservation and asserted that the Indians had used techniques, chemicals and materials that were not up to international standards and had caused irreparable harm to the temple (Ciochon & James, 1989; Shenon, 1992), ASI has repeatedly and vigorously pushed back against these allegations (D'Monte, 2001).

Relations between Cambodia and India improved further upon the departure of the UNTAC mission; the two sides built on several bilateral agreements that formed the basis of their new relationship, as well as commitments at the multilateral level. According to the Embassy of India (Bilateral Brief, n.d.), recent years have seen "expansion of cooperation in diverse fields such as institutional capacity building, human resources development, extension of financial assistance in infrastructure projects, security and defense." Moreover, during the past two decades, there have been high-level visits from both sides. Two prime ministers of India, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, and Manmohan Singh, visited Cambodia in 2002 and 2012, respectively. Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen has also visited India on multiple occasions from the 1980s through to the present day. Hun Sen's most recent visit to India was to attend the ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit in December 2012 (Ministry of External Affairs, 2013). Indian Vice President Hamid Ansari visited on 15-17 September 2015 and the then-governor of India's Bihar state, Ram Nath Kovind (the current President of India), called on Deputy Prime Minister Hor Namhong during his visit to Cambodia in February 2017 (Agence Kampuchea Press, 2017).

In terms of aid, India has contributed USD 1,050,000 to the establishment and operations of the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC), i.e., the Khmer Rouge Tribunal (Charles, 2016). Additionally, the Indian government donated indelible ink for use in elections to Cambodia. This special ink, manufactured by a public corporation—Mysore Paints and Varnish—is used to mark those who have voted to prevent fraud. Mysore has been manufacturing this ink for more than fifty-five years and has supplied ink for elections not only in India but in various Asian and African countries as well (Gardner, 2009). During the 2017 commune elections, the Cambodian government placed an order for USD 790,000 worth of ink which was then utilized successfully across the country (Amaro, 2017).

During the state visit of Prime Minister Hun Sen in 2007 (Ministry of External Affairs, 2007), seven agreements related to transfer of sentenced persons, lines of credit, defense cooperation, water resource management, agricultural development, the oil and gas sector, and foreign office consultations were signed. Under the credit line item, India extended a line of credit worth USD 65.2 million to Cambodia on concessional terms for the building of an electric transmission line from Stung Treng to Kratie, the Stung Tassal Irrigation project,

and for the installation and supply of 180 water-pumps (Embassy of India - *Lines of Credit Grants*, n.d.). The ASI began preservation and restoration work at the Ta Prohm temple in 2003 and the project is currently ongoing with numerous ASI officials and technicians on site. In Kampong Cham province, an India-Cambodia Friendship School was renovated through a donation of USD 246,000 and was handed over to the Cambodian authorities during the visit of Vice President Hameed Ansari in September 2015 (Bhasin, 2010; Royal Embassy, 2015). Currently, India is supporting other projects that directly benefit local communities in a diversity of policy areas, including women's empowerment, tackling malaria and tuberculosis, as well as supporting local communities through provision of drinking water, better farming techniques, and educational facilities (Srivastava, 2016).

III. India, Cambodia, and ASEAN

Cambodia has also supported India in its quest to enhance its relations with other ASEAN states, and we expect the deepening of India-ASEAN ties to further buttress the future of Indo-Cambodian relations. Initiated in 1991, India's "Look East" policy has aimed at enhancing Delhi's strategic and economic partnership with countries in East and Southeast Asia. Faizal Yahya (2003) has argued that the development of this policy was moved forward by the failure of India to strengthen its economic relations with its nearer neighbors despite the creation of SAARC and has emphasized how the expansion of ASEAN to incorporate the CLMV states has "pushed" India into developing closer relations with ASEAN. The incorporation of Myanmar has resulted in a shared land border, further incentivizing Delhi's increased engagement with ASEAN and increasing its potential influence. In his address at the 8th India-ASEAN Summit, former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said: "India believes that ASEAN is the core around which the process of economic integration of the Asia-Pacific region should be built." In his speech at the 9th India-ASEAN summit in 2011, he stated: "Our partnership with ASEAN is one of the cornerstones of our foreign policy, and the foundation of our 'Look East' Policy" (Muni & Mun, 2012). At the same time, India has been advancing its foreign policy objectives based on its interests through other multilateral mechanisms such as the Mekong-Ganga Cooperation Initiative, the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) and the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM).

When India extended diplomatic recognition to the PRK in 1980, this action was widely viewed among the ASEAN countries as being "unhelpful," leading to the suspension of India's previously approved request for Dialogue Partnership with the bloc (Muni & Mun, 2012). However, in 1984, former Prime Minister of India, Rajiv Gandhi, undertook a tour of Southeast Asian countries to bring ASEAN, and Cambodia and Vietnam to the negotiating table as an attempt to improve relations. India's role as a mediator in the region soon came to be appreciated by the ASEAN nations. Cambodia has reciprocated its appreciation of India's intervention and has been a consistent advocate of India's interests at various ASEAN forums (Ministry of External Affairs, 2013). Cambodia also played an important role as ASEAN chair when it hosted the first India-ASEAN Summit held in Phnom Penh in November

2002 (and again in 2012). Cambodia extended support for India's participation, along with other ASEAN nations at the 2002 East Asia Summit. Phnom Penh has, additionally, played host to numerous international events designed to promote ASEAN-India ties at all levels including people to people contacts, e.g., the first meeting of the ASEAN-India Eminent Persons Group (AIEPG) which was organized on 3 August 2011. The AIEPG has made recommendations as to next steps in the process of deepening ASEAN-India cooperation. These were adopted at the ASEAN-India Summit in November 2012 (Ministry of External Affairs, 2013).

Concomitantly, Cambodia has consistently supported India's candidature for permanent membership of the United Nations Security Council. Cambodia's Prime Minister Hun Sen formally declared his country's support for India's permanent membership at the South Summit Conference in Havana in 2000 (Ministry of External Affairs, 2013). Similarly, Cambodia recently confirmed its support for India as a non-permanent Member of the United Nations Security Council for the 2021-22 term. Under the Mekong Ganga Cooperation (MGC) initiative, the establishment of the MGC Asian Traditional Textiles Museum was announced by Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee during his visit in 2002 through the extension of a grant of USD 1.772 million. The construction of the museum building was completed in December 2011 (Embassy of India—Bilateral Brief, n.d.). On regional security and crime prevention, India and Cambodia signed an Agreement on Combating International Terrorism, Organized Crime and Illicit Drug Trafficking in December 2005 (Ministry of External Affairs, 2013).

It should also be pointed out that despite the generally positive relationship between India and Cambodia in the recent times, there have been noticeable "hiccups." In 2012, a Hindu organization based in India—the Bihar Mahavir Mandir Trust—was reported to have attempted to construct a full-size replica of Angkor Wat. This resulted in significant debate in Cambodia's traditional media as well as social media, and a highly negative response by the Cambodian public against the Trust, and by extension resulting in negative perceptions of India itself and fresh public diplomacy issues for Delhi. Cambodian government spokesperson Phay Siphan was quoted as saying: "They are raising this to be confrontational (and) it is provocative of the World Heritage principle. We won't let anyone confuse the world that there are two Angkor Wats." (DPA, 2012) When news of the construction plan resurfaced in 2015, Cambodia's Foreign Affairs Ministry sent a diplomatic note to India's Ministry of External Affairs expressing its concern and insisted that the construction of the replica be halted. Prior to the state visit by Indian Vice President Hamid Ansari's to Cambodia in September 2015, it was reported that Delhi had persuaded the trust to drop its plans to construct a replica of Angkor Wat, thereby defusing the diplomatic tension between the two states and attempting to mitigate the harm caused to the perception of India among the Cambodian public (Kasturi, 2015). As a further goodwill gesture, India offered USD 4 million to conserve the Preah Vihear temple complex on the Cambodian-Thai border (Rogers, 2015). On this issue, a regular irritant in Cambodian-Thai relations, the Indian government is now serving as a co-chair on the International Coordination Committee for the Conservation and Enhancement of the Temple of Preah Vihear, established to ensure

that the temple premises/structure do not suffer inordinate harm during the process of de-escalation and the settlement of the ICJ judgment/ruling (Bagchi, 2014; UNESCO, 2015).

In a significant gesture, Prime Minister Narendra Modi extended an invitation to all ten ASEAN heads of government to join India's 68th Republic Day celebrations as "chief guests" in 2018 (Business Standard, 2017). This will be the first time that so many global leaders will assemble in a place where India's military strength will be on full display. As a regional bloc, ASEAN has sought greater involvement of and contribution from India's naval forces towards the maintenance of peace and security in the region (Das, 2013). In this context, Indian naval ships have calls at Sihanoukville over the past decade (Embassy of India—Defence Cooperation, 2015).[3] India's deepening engagement with ASEAN, together with a firmer set of economic ties will provide a stronger basis for the subsequent development of the relationship.

IV. Indo-Cambodian Economic Relations

As the Soviet Union implemented reforms under the leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev, the basis was set for changes in the structure of global politics as well as the eventual need for deep reform in the economies of both India and Cambodia. India, having developed its import substitution industrialization system as part of Nehru's policy of economic nationalism, accepted by the early 1990s the need for change, to take advantage of its comparative advantage in various areas, to make better use of its enormous English speaking population in the context of the globalization of the tertiary sector, and to privatize significant portions of its economy. By 1991, India was undergoing a balance of payment crisis and was compelled to airlift its entire gold reserve out of the country as collateral against loans sought from the IMF with a pledge to undertake fundamental market-reforms, consistent with the Washington Consensus, including: greater openness towards foreign direct investment, privatization of state enterprises, and the elimination of regulatory burdens that had crippled industry. The process of economic reform began earlier in Cambodia. By 1989, Cambodia had transitioned from the PRK to the State of Cambodia and steadily attempted to enact market-oriented reforms, with mixed results considering lingering security concerns and an unstable political equilibrium.

In terms of growth, following the subsequent decades of reform, Cambodia and India became two of the fastest growing economies in the world, expanding at a rate of 6.9% and 7.1% respectively in 2016. It is important to note the difference in the economic fundamentals and relative positions in the global market of the two states; with India maintaining enormous domestic demand, while Cambodia found it necessary to focus on regional economic integration and climbing the ladder of production through the utilization of its reserve of low-cost labor in the garment industry. This is, in fact, an area where India and Cambodia compete, i.e. for contracts with foreign firms, Cambodia having an advantage owing to consistent problems in India's labor market and preferential trade access for its products in the United States and the European Union.

Both countries have seen steady increases in per capita income over the last two decades which has facilitated significant gains in living standards in both countries as demonstrated by the improvements in their respective HDI rankings (UNDP—Human Development Reports, 2016). Concerning the deepening of bilateral economic integration and trade, the Embassy of India has posted the following figures with the caveat that actual figures may be higher due to goods routed via ASEAN trading partners rather than directly. Thus, it is likely that bilateral Indo-Cambodian trade is in fact significantly higher than the numbers indicated below while remaining relatively small with significant room for expansion.

Trade with India	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	Jan-Nov 2015
Total Trade	107.07	124.18	153.98	160.49	168.38
Exports	7.62	11.90	12.72	17.96	36.33
Imports	99.45	112.28	141.76	142.53	132.05
Growth	**48.90%**	**16.00%**	**24.00%**	**4.20%**	**4.90%**

In line with the goals of the Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration 2005, the Government of India has implemented the Duty-Free Tariff Preference Schemes for countries classified as "Least Developed Countries," and extended these advantages to Cambodia in August 2008. Although Cambodian exports to India remain relatively marginal as an overall component of the country's trade balance, the steady increase in the past few years can likely be attributed to the preferential treatment meted out under the scheme described above. Non-ferrous metals remain the import of choice for Indian firms, necessary inputs for India's burgeoning heavy industry sector. India's major exports to Cambodia are drugs, pharmaceutical products/fine chemicals, cotton, staple fibers, rubber articles, precious stones, transport equipment/machinery, and instruments. Recent figures published by the Indian embassy in Phnom Penh show Indian exports to Cambodia stood at USD132.05 million for the January-November 2015 period.

Several major Indian conglomerates have set up representative offices and subsidiaries in Phnom Penh including Tata and Bajaj Auto, in addition to numerous SMEs from India operating trading enterprises and retail operations in the country, although annual revenue figures broken down by firm/sector are not currently available. While Tata is marketing to the agricultural sector with a range of farming equipment and tractors, Bajaj Auto has set up retail outlets nationally showcasing its Pulsar series of motorcycles, and three-wheelers. These are the ubiquitous "auto-rickshaws" found in every city, town, and village in India and, in 2017, are an increasingly common sight on the streets of Phnom Penh.

In 2009, Bank of India, an Indian state-owned public enterprise, became the first bank from the subcontinent to open a branch in the Kingdom to serve Indian firms operating in Cambodia as well as the local market (Hab, 2009). Indian companies continue to explore further opportunities and are increasingly showing interest in the tourism and hospitality fields; healthcare; and mining and agro-industrial sectors. Moreover, several are currently in

discussions with prospective partners in Cambodia. Additionally, various trade delegations from New Delhi, Mumbai, Calcutta and other parts of India have visited Cambodia to explore business opportunities and to build partnerships—although these remain at a relatively low rate of frequency. In 2012, the Indian Ministry of External Affairs and the Embassy of India supported the establishment of the Indian Chamber of Commerce in Phnom Penh to facilitate greater cooperation in business, and to foster improved understanding among entrepreneurs with the expectation that this will serve to deepen and to diversify economic relations between the two states.

Given that trade between India and Cambodia is still quite low relative to overall trade volume of either country, there remains significant room for near-term expansion of the economic partnership between the two states. In our view, India has laid the institutional and organizational groundwork for that trade relationship to increase and it is in the domain of economic relations where the most interesting developments will likely be found in the near term. Utilizing a revealed comparative advantage index, Chandran (2010) has illustrated the significant scope for increased trade between India and Cambodia in agricultural products and for increased Indian exports of steel, electronics, and chemical based products. Ultimately, the two governments grasp that it is through a deeper economic partnership that the two states can develop the common interests and shared trust required for further collaboration in the political realm and other arenas.

According to the *Annual Report on Tourism* published by the Ministry of Tourism, Cambodia (2016), tourist footfalls from India amounted to 46,131 in 2016, a significant 25% increase in the number of tourist arrivals compared to the previous year. However, this only accounts for 0.9% of total tourist arrivals in Cambodia during that year and India does not appear to be a market identified as a priority by the Cambodian Ministry of Tourism. The absence of direct flights to India is an impediment to the expansion of Indian tourism and greater "people to people" Indo-Cambodian cultural diplomacy. National data on tourist arrivals from Cambodia into India are difficult to find, and the Indian Ministry of Tourism has not published data covering this area.

The Indian Embassy estimated in 2012 that the Indian expatriate community, countrywide, is approximately 1,500. However, this number is likely higher in that most Indian citizens do not register with the embassy. Most Indian nationals working in Cambodia are involved with NGOs and the private sector, working as small-scale entrepreneurs and professionals (Thieman, 2012). Since 1993, Indian Association-Cambodia has organized cultural events, celebrates festivals and hosts social events for the Indian community. Curiously, a large community of wandering salesmen from the northern state of Uttar Pradesh, has existed in Cambodia since the 1980s. These individuals first came to Cambodia through Thailand and are found across the country, typically selling mosquito nets and clothing, thereby earning the epithet "mosquito-net sellers" (Shruti, 2012).

Finally, the new administration in Delhi under Prime Minister Narendra Modi leaders has changed tack (as noted above) from the earlier "Look East" policy to an "Act East" policy, emphasizing the urgency of building closer relationships through not only an enhanced economic partnership but also through infrastructure development contributing

to closer India-ASEAN economic ties and trade expansion. The Council of Ministers of India, upon the recommendations of the Ministry of Commerce, passed a cabinet note in 2015 with a mandate for the Export-Import Bank of India to allocate USD 80 million for a Project Development Fund to create a subsidiary to support and to facilitate Indian investments in the CLMV states (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam). The fund will be used for establishing facilities for Indian firms inside Special Economic Zones in the CLMV countries (EXIM Bank, 2015). On the Cambodian side, it is viewed positively both as an opportunity for Cambodia to enhance engagement with its fellow states in the Mekong Subregion as well as for India to expand its role as a key regional partner in the medium to long-term development of the region.

V. Conclusions: Continuity is the Order of the Day

India and Cambodia have one of the oldest inter-civilizational relationships in the world, as is apparent to any visitor to Angkor Wat or a simple glance at Cambodia's omnipresent Buddhist pagodas. Moreover, in the post-war era, through the efforts of Sihanouk there existed close relations between the two states as part of the Non-Aligned Movement. However, part of the goodwill was earned during that period rapidly dissipated as the states joined rival camps following the Sino-Soviet split between 1975 and 1978. However, since that time, India's efforts in both Cambodia and ASEAN have begun to bear fruit in the form of a nascent yet sound Indo-Cambodian economic relationship and increased levels of trust on both sides as depicted through extensive political and diplomatic cooperation between the two countries.

Nevertheless, there remain several areas of soft power that Delhi could more effectively exploit in building the image of the country in Cambodia, particularly highlighting its long historic relationship stemming back to the age of Angkor and its role in the development of Buddhism. A more active program of cultural diplomacy by Delhi, highlighting its twin advantages as a heavily English speaking nation (overseas study) and as a center of global Buddhism would be encouraging to see. At the same time, we do expect to see improvements in economic relations with anticipated growth in bilateral trade and investment. We expect to see "cordial continuity" in the relationship between the two states.

Endnotes

1 Anirudh S. Bhati, Executive Director, Greater Mekong Research Center, Bradley J. Murg, Assistant Professor of Political Science, Seattle Pacific University. We are particularly grateful for the assistance of Sok Udom Deth and various individuals in India and at the Embassy of India in Phnom Penh. However, the views expressed in this chapter are those of the authors.

2 Although, India continues to maintain certain close links with the states of the former USSR, including with Tajikistan where it has its sole overseas military base.

3 "INS Ranvir, a guided missile destroyer, and INS Kamorta, an anti-submarine corvette visited Sihanoukville on a five-day goodwill tour from 23-27 June 2015 which included joint training exercises with the Royal Cambodian Navy and a medical camp for local communities. An Indian Coast Guard Ship 'Samrat' paid a goodwill visit to Sihanoukville from 7-10 November 2015 and conducted naval exercises with the Royal Cambodian Navy.

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CAMBODIA IN THE ASEAN CONTEXT

SAM ATH Sambath Sreysour & Dr. OUM Sothea

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CAMBODIA IN THE ASEAN CONTEXT

I. Introduction

This chapter provides a background discussion about the formation and functioning of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) as a regional bloc and examines Cambodia's relations with ASEAN until attaining membership in 1999. In addition, the chapter assesses ASEAN's roles in the changing political, economic, security, and socio-cultural landscapes of Cambodia, as well as Cambodia's roles in this regional organization. The chapter concludes by reflecting on whether ASEAN has been the best option for Cambodia.

II. ASEAN as Regional Bloc

Following the unsuccessful formation and functioning of the Association of Southeast Asia (ASA) in 1961 and MAPHILINDO in 1963, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) came into existence on 08 August 1967 with five founding members: Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, and Singapore.

Designed to be informal, this regional organization has largely functioned on consensual norms rather than legally binding rules and regulations; ASEAN's unique features of working norms and decision-making processes are commonly known as the ASEAN Way (Khong, 2014). The norms of ASEAN can be categorized into procedural norms and substantive norms. The key procedural norms are consensus, informalism, and voluntary compliance (Achaya, 2011). This consensus based decision-making procedure is designed to protect sovereignty, ensure non-inference in domestic affairs of member states, and produce the lowest denominator outcomes (Komori, 2009). The ultimate goal is to accommodate all members regardless of their level of economic development, technical working capacity, and political circumstances. The general avoidance of formal and legalistic rules of ASEAN is also different from other regional institutions in Europe and Africa, where cooperation is highly formalized. ASEAN's policy-making practices and documents do not have binding power over their implementation or enforcement (Komori, 2009). ASEAN does not have any material forces or a system of collective security, which implies members are only subject to peer pressure (Komori, 2009). The compliance of members is, thus, largely dependent on their willingness.

In addition to the procedural norms, ASEAN is distinctive for its substantive norms. These can be divided into four main categories, according to Acharya (2009). First, ASEAN relies on the non-use of force and the peaceful settlement of disputes. Second, ASEAN is based on regional autonomy and collective self-reliance. Third, there is non-interference in domestic affairs of member states. Fourth, ASEAN rejects military pacts and prefers bilateral defense cooperation. Such set of norms to govern relations among members has been incorporated in various documents such as the ASEAN Declaration of 1967, the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN of 1971, the Declaration of ASEAN Concord of 1976, the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) of 1976, the Declaration of ASEAN Concord II of 2003, and the ASEAN Charter of 2007 (Tavares, 2010).

These procedural and substantive norms continue to be enduring features and key characteristics of ASEAN development. Despite the adoption of the ASEAN Charter in 2007, slow institutionalization remains to be seen in this unique regional organization (Acharya and Johnston, 2007).

III. Cambodia's Road to Its Membership in ASEAN

Cambodia joined ASEAN as its tenth member on April 30, 1999, following its status as an ASEAN guest from 1993 to 1995 and as an ASEAN observer from 1995 to 1996. The road to this membership had been difficult as Cambodia has faced external and internal challenges since 1970 and until 1996. Nevertheless, ASEAN has played an important role in the settlement of Cambodia's political conflicts and the peace process in the past decade, even before its membership to the regional group, during the post conflict period, as ASEAN had been partly concerned about Cambodia's political instability that could cause region-wide instability.

The modern history of Cambodia was filled with civil wars and armed conflicts. In the 1960s, Cambodia faced a critical security threat from the spillover of the second Indochina War. The war initially erupted in Vietnam and later spread to Cambodia. The bombardment of the Ho Chi Minh trails on Cambodia territory rapidly worsened the political fragmentation and intensified ideological competition in this small nation. In 1970, a coup against Prince Norodom Sihanouk was staged. In the next 30 years, Cambodia's history was painted with civil wars and frequent regime changes. Supported by the US, the Lon Nol government ran Cambodia from 1970 until 1975 as the Khmer Republic. The Khmer Republic of Gen. Lon Nol was ousted by the Khmer Rouge in April 1975. In less than four years, a new group, the United Front for National Salvation of Kampuchea (UFNSK), launched a full-scale military offensive against the Khmer Rouge regime. Within just weeks, the Khmer Rouge was overrun, and a new government, the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK), was installed in Phnom Penh. This period was at the height of the Cold War in which different armed fractions of Cambodia were supported by regional and extra regional powers. The Soviet Union, its allies, and Vietnam were on one side and China, the US, and the West on the other side.

Noticeably, ASEAN was siding with China and the US during the conflict. In response to Vietnam's intervention in Cambodia, ASEAN swiftly called for the immediate withdrawal of all foreign troops in Cambodia and for the establishment of a new government through democratic election (Nguyen, 2002). In 1979, ASEAN issued a joint statement demanding a comprehensive solution for Cambodia through the withdrawal of the Vietnamese troops, disarmament of all conflicting parties, and an election under the supervision of the United Nations to form a new democratic government (ASEAN, 1979). More importantly, ASEAN helped facilitate the unification of three military factions operating along the Cambodia-Thai border: the Khmer Rouge, the National United Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful, and Cooperative Cambodia (FUNCINPEC), and the Khmer People's National Liberation Front (KPNLF). The Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK) of these three factions held the seat at the UN General Assembly, which meant that it was legitimately endorsed by the international community. In the late 1980s, ASEAN made significant and positive contributions to Cambodia's peace process by offering good office to all factions in Cambodia's conflicts. The first round of the Jakarta Informal Meeting (JIMs) in July 1988 was an important breakthrough as all Cambodian factions met in a neutral setting (Widyono, 2008). A year later, in February 1989, the PRK in Phnom Penh softened its position by making concessions to accept the election to determine the future government (Nguyen, 2002). In that same year, during the third Jakarta Informal Meeting (JIM), Indonesian Foreign Minister, Ali Alatas, proposed the formation of Supreme National Council for Cambodia to settle the power-sharing disagreement and to move forward the peace process, which then led to subsequent peace processes including the general election in 1993.

Shortly, following the 1993 UN-sponsored election, Cambodia began to reactivate its membership into the international community as a full legitimate state being capable of conducting sovereign foreign policy. In the eyes of many states, however, Cambodia was still

considered one of the least developed countries (LDCs), a poor and post-conflict country emerging from its recent past of tragedy and conflicts. Its political and security situations remained fragile at the time, after UNTAC departure. The Khmer Rouge continued to wage guerrilla war, and there was even brief factional fighting that took place from 5-6 July 1997 between the two groups loyal to the first Prime Minister Prince Ranariddh and the Second Prime Minister Samdech Hun Sen. These short armed clashes forced ASEAN to suspend the accession of Cambodia's membership to the organization.

As experienced in the 1980s, political instability and conflict in Cambodia had the ability to trigger negative effects and create instability to the region. As a matter of urgency, ASEAN Troika was set up to help address these clashes of 5-6 July. With the Indonesian foreign minister's intensive and complex negotiations and pressure from international community, the Phnom Penh government allowed Troika to fully function leading to the 1998 elections with full participation of key political forces inside the country, which led to the formation of a new government in November 1998 with Samdech Hun Sen as the sole Prime Minister (Widyono, 2008). After political stability finally returned, the Phnom Penh government managed to convince ASEAN to reconsider its membership. At the ASEAN Summit in Hanoi in 1998, ASEAN officially admitted Cambodia to be its tenth and youngest member on April 30, 1999.

IV. ASEAN's Roles in Changing Political, Economic, Security and Socio-Cultural Landscapes of Cambodia

1. ASEAN's Roles in Cambodian Political Landscapes

These decades of civil wars and political struggles had resulted in a lot of casualties and destruction, not least, to Cambodia's legitimacy and image as a state. The accession into ASEAN has served as a pragmatic approach that carries significant political implications and responds to the need, among others, to rebuild Cambodia's image and legitimacy and equip the country with considerable diplomatic power.

Membership in ASEAN has yielded Cambodia image and legitimacy benefits. This accession served as an important implication that Cambodia has been accepted by its neighboring countries and a regional organization representing the Southeast Asian nations. To the eyes of international observers, Cambodia is a rightful state entitled to an equal status, privilege, and capacity to engage in regional and international affairs like other countries in the region and around the globe. It is a country that is stable for further cooperation and development, for one of the important criteria to become a member of ASEAN is to have internal political stability. Besides, Cambodia's image and sovereignty are also protected by ASEAN. Cambodia is entitled to the protection of existing ASEAN treaties and covenants. Among these international agreements, the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) is an important core document, which binds not

only the ASEAN member countries but also other extra regional powers that acceded to the treaty, including China, Australia, France, Japan, and the US. This legal agreement places an emphasis on sovereignty of member states, non-interference policy, and the non-use of force in addressing conflicts. The legal effect of such a treaty is now extended to Cambodia as ASEAN's youngest member.

In addition, through ASEAN membership, Cambodia wields the same power like the other nine fellow members based on equal footing in the conduct of negotiation and the adoption of the outcomes of discussions both regionally and globally within the relevant institutional frameworks of the Association. As a member of ASEAN, Cambodia has the diplomatic power to chair important meetings and facilitate regional discussions, which is the privilege Cambodia would not have been able to enjoy by staying outside the regional grouping.

Evidently, since its accession in 1999, Cambodia has acquired considerable diplomatic power and has been increasingly active in its participation in and contribution to the Regional Grouping as well as in other regional initiatives. As a rotating chair of ASEAN, Cambodia has been able to receive important regional leaders on its soil and steer important regional discussions during ASEAN Summits and related meetings in 2002 and 2012, (as discussed in "III.iii. ASEAN's Roles in Cambodia's Security Landscapes" section below). Such leadership roles of Cambodia in regional stages, indeed, reflect the greater confidence of the international community placed on Cambodia and thus its increased diplomatic power on the international stage.

In this line, speaking for ASEAN's 50th Anniversary, Senior Minister Prak Sokhonn, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Cambodia, emphasized that, "Integration into international community has always been the interest of Cambodia's foreign policy and national development strategy following long-term suffering from civil war, international isolation and economic embargo" (Prak, 2017, p. 2).

ASEAN has, thus, helped pave the way for Cambodia to get back into the international community by strengthening its legitimacy and image and boosting its diplomatic power since its membership in 1999.

2. Economic Outcomes

The guiding principle for economic integration efforts is the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint (AEC). The AEC Blueprint was adopted by the ASEAN Leaders in 2007 in Singapore. The AEC Blueprint stemmed from the ASEAN Vision 2020 and Bali Concord II which envisioned an ASEAN Community by 2020. The leaders agreed to hasten the establishment of the ASEAN Community by 2015 and to transform ASEAN into a region with free movement of goods, services, investment, skilled labor, and freer flow of capital. The AEC Blueprint is a single and coherent blueprint for advancing the AEC by identifying the characteristics and elements of the AEC by 2015, consistent with the Bali Concord II with clear targets and timelines for implementation of various measures as well as pre-

agreed flexibilities to accommodate the interests of all ASEAN member states (AMSs).

The AEC has 4 main characteristics: (a) a single market and production base, (b) a highly competitive economic region, (c) a region of equitable economic development, and (d) a region fully integrated into the global economy.

- ***A single market and production base***. An ASEAN single market and production base is comprised of five core elements namely, free flow of goods, free flow of services, freer flow of capital and free flow of skilled labor. Free flow of goods involves the elimination of tariffs, elimination of Non-Tariff Barriers, Rules of Origin (ROO), trade facilitation as well as standards and conformance. Free flow of services involves liberalization of services under the ASEAN Framework Agreement on Services (AFAS) especially of priority services as well as financial and air services. Free flow of investment was implemented through the ASEAN Investment Area (AIA) cooperation framework and later on by the ASEAN Comprehensive Investment Agreement (ACIA) which cover all industries, including manufacturing, agriculture, fishery, forestry, and mining. The freer flow of capital in principle is aimed at strengthening ASEAN capital market development and integration as well as allowing greater capital mobility. Lastly, the free flow of skilled labor is aimed at facilitating entry of natural persons engaged in trade in goods, services, and investments subject to prevailing regulations in the receiving country
- ***A highly competitive economic region.*** Priority actions under this characteristic are competition policy, consumer protection, and Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs).
- ***A region of equitable economic development.*** Areas of cooperation are Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI). The Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) was launched in 2000, seeking to narrow the intra-regional development gap by providing assistance to Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Viet Nam or the CLMV countries in accelerating their integration and development.
- ***A region fully integrated into the global economy.*** ASEAN will maintain all ASEAN + 1 Free Trade Agreements (FTAs with China, Japan, Korea, India, Australia, and New Zealand), and at the same time, consolidate them all under a single Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RECP) framework.

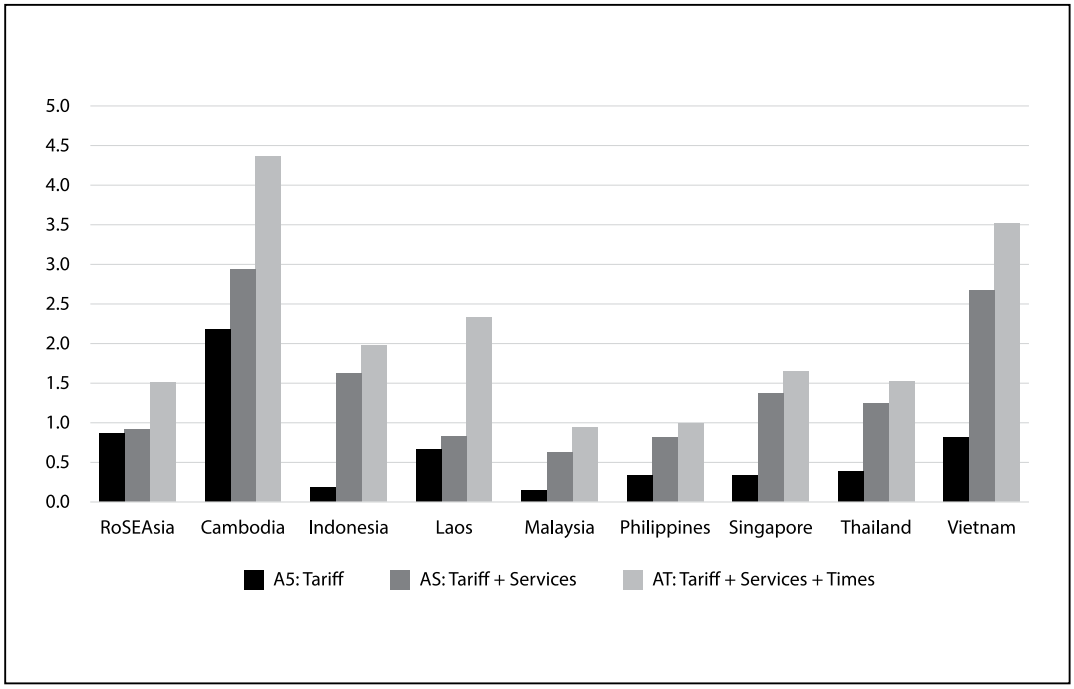
ASEAN has achieved significant success in tariff reductions. Tariffs in ASEAN-6 (Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand) are virtually zero and nearly as low for Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Viet Nam (CLMV). However, removing non-tariff barriers (NTBs) achieves less success. Harmonization of standards and conformance results in a mixed performance that may require much greater policy emphasis. Trade and investment facilitation is the top priority for the private sector and there is substantial progress in customs modernization and implementation of national single window (NSW) in most AMSs, (ERIA 2012).

With the wide range of measures undertaken toward the realization of the ASEAN

Economic Community by 2015, it can be expected that these measures have economy-wide effects. Simulations were conducted by ERIA to assess the impact of 3 scenarios: 1) remove all tariffs, 2), remove tariff plus 20% liberalization of services, and 3) 1+2+20% improvement of trade facilitation.

As shown in Figure 1, the impact on GDP of the complete tariff elimination is largely marginal for most AMSs, with the exception of Cambodia and to a less extent Viet Nam and Lao PDR. This is because the Common Effective Preferential Tariffs (CEPT)[1] were very low in the other AMS, while Cambodia had the highest average CEPT rate by 2004, which was the reference year for the simulations. As the figure suggests, the biggest percentage jump in GDP growth for Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam is the reduction in the tariff equivalent of service trade barriers; i.e., service trade liberalization. Reduction in time costs due to improved trade facilitation, infrastructure and logistics also has had a significant positive impact on the national outputs of AMSs, but most especially Lao PDR, Cambodia, and Viet Nam.

Figure 1. Impact on GDP (Cumulative Percentage Increase over Baseline 2011-2015 in 2015)



Source: *Calculated by Itakura (2012) for ERIA's Mid-Term Review Project (2012)*

Achievements of ASEAN in its regional integration efforts seem to pay off. Judging from main regional integration and national indicators, ASEAN is one of the most successful regions, Table 1. Though not all the indicators can be attributed entirely to the regional integration itself, ASEAN deserves praise for its achievements by any standard. Compared to 1998, before a full 10-country membership, ASEAN's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2015 increased more than five-fold and GDP per capita has more than quadrupled, while trade and intra-regional trade expanded by more than three and nine times respectively. Likewise, foreign direct investment (FDI) and intra-FDI recorded a very rapid growth.

Table 1. ASEAN Socioeconomic Landscape 1998-2015

	GDP (USDm)	Trade (USDm)	Intra-trade (USDm)	(%)	FDI (USDm)	Intra-FDI (USDm)	(%)	GDP per capita (USD)
1998								
ASEAN	480,912.6	576,108.0	120,918.0	21.0	22,958.8	2,727.6	11.9	956.2
Cambodia	3,130.1	1,967.8	688.2	35.0	243.0	95.7	39.4	253.1
Laos	1,226.2	922.3	666.9	72.3	45.3	28.3	62.6	251.0
Myanmar	5,925.8	3,771.9	1,189.4	31.5	683.6	153.9	22.5	134.1
Vietnam	27,209.6	20,861.0	5,406.6	25.9	1,700.0	398.7	23.5	360.9
2015								
ASEAN	2,431,969.5	2,270,309.8	1,182,031.0	24.0	120,818.8	22,232.2	18.4	3,866.8
Cambodia	18,463.0	19,676.2	8,838.5	22.7	1,701.0	425.4	25.0	1,198.5
Laos	12,639.3	6,763.5	3,714.3	64.4	1,079.2	221.8	20.6	1,831.2
Myanmar	65,391.8	29,104.0	12,197.2	39.4	2,824.5	2,230.6	79.0	1,246.1
Vietnam	193,406.7	327,743.8	162,013.9	12.8	11,800.0	2,153.5	18.2	2,108.8
2015/1998								
ASEAN	5.06	3.94	9.78		5.26	8.15		4.04
Cambodia	5.90	10.00	12.84		7.00	4.45		4.74
Laos	10.31	7.33	5.57		23.82	7.83		7.29
Myanmar	11.04	7.72	10.26		4.13	14.49		9.29
Vietnam	7.10	15.70	30.00		6.90	5.40		5.84

Source: *ASEAN Secretariat Statistics*

Cambodia is not an exception. The growth of the country's GDP, Trade, and FDI outperformed the ASEAN average. Since the 1990s, the Cambodian economy has experienced rapid growth through its openness and market-based policies to support trade and investment. The economy grew at the rate of 7% per annum from 1994-2015, one of the fastest growing economies in ASEAN. This is probably because of its low base after being ravaged with tremendous political conflicts before 1993.

Table 2. Real GDP and Per Capita Growth in ASEAN

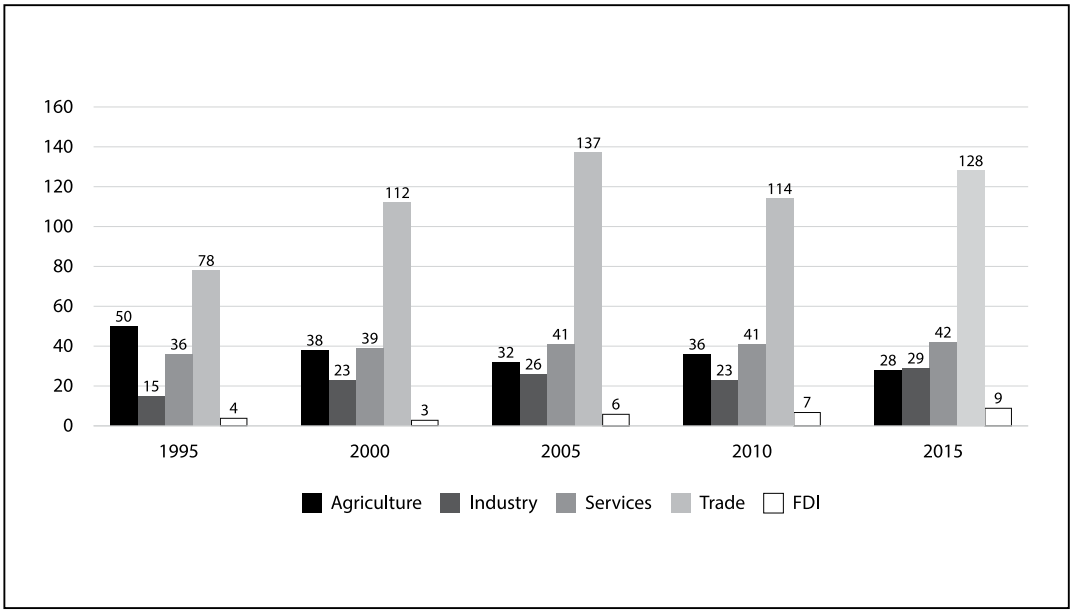
		GDP				GDP per Capita			
		1995-00	2000-05	2005-10	2010-15	1995-00	2000-05	2005-10	2010-15
1	Brunei Darussalam	1.87	2.21	0.63	0.38	-0.55	-0.40	-0.59	-1.17
2	Cambodia	7.19	9.27	7.83	6.98	4.40	7.28	6.25	5.31
3	Indonesia	2.23	4.77	6.01	5.66	0.97	3.34	4.52	4.15
4	Lao PDR	5.95	6.30	7.78	7.85	3.75	4.74	5.73	5.81
5	Malaysia	5.77	5.35	4.62	5.66	3.09	2.85	2.92	3.83
6	Myanmar	12.58	13.02	8.79	7.07		12.15	8.06	6.19
7	Philippines	3.77	4.57	4.93	6.19	1.40	2.76	3.14	4.17
8	Singapore	5.94	5.61	6.98	5.84	3.10	4.31	3.56	4.02
9	Thailand	2.07	5.29	3.85	3.65	1.08	4.38	3.13	3.17
10	Vietnam	7.39	7.24	6.52	6.00	5.76	5.95	5.50	4.88

Source: *IMF–World Economic Outlook Database, 2016*

The Cambodian economy is still an agrarian economy but is structurally shifting rapidly towards the manufacturing and services sectors. The agricultural sector is still a dominant sector in the economy and it is mainly focused on rice production. However, the output share of this sector has fallen over the years to around 30% of GDP in 2014 from 50% in the 1990s. In contrast, manufacturing has grown rapidly in recent years, by about 15% per annum, and accounted for 27% of GDP from about 15% during the same period. However, it is dominated to some extent by just one industry, the garments, and clothing industry that accounts for more than half of the manufacturing output and most of the Cambodian export.

The impact of economic liberalization of the 1990s as well as the granted MFS and GSP status is reflected in the high export and import shares of GDP for the Cambodian economy. The trade share of 128 percent in 2015 from a 78 percent share in 1995, whereas foreign direct investment (FDI) increased from 4 to 9 percent of GDP during the same period. Exports are narrowly concentrated in the merchandise trade with 80 percent of merchandise exports being garments. The other export commodities include timber, rubber, rice, fish, and footwear.

Figure 2. Cambodia's Economic Structure (% of GDP)



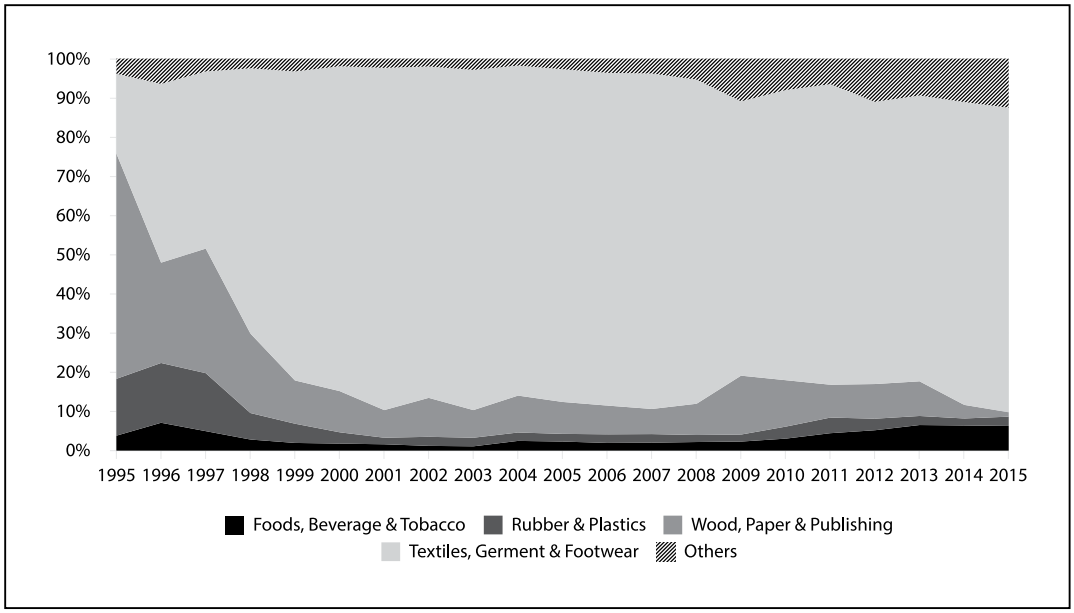
Source: *World Bank's World Development Indicators (2017)*

The growth of services has also been strong in Cambodia. This is primarily led by the tourism sector and ancillary services like transportation, hotels and restaurants, and booming housing and apartment construction in the last few years. Also, large, official development assistance (ODA) and private inflows have caused the growth of modern-sector urban services especially in the capital city of Phnom Penh.

There have been several challenges for Cambodia's membership in ASEAN. Tariff elimination and reduction would lead to loss of import revenues. Domestic reforms are required to comply with ASEAN Agreements and international standards to improve transparency and reduce the cost of doing business. Cambodia has to allocate limited financial resources to participate actively in all ASEAN Economic Activities, (Fukase and Martin, 2001 and Pich 2014).

More importantly, although the overall growth is stable, there are several challenges that exist in the Cambodian economy. Firstly, the industrial sectors are not well diversified as the sector heavily relies on the garment and clothing industry for growth and export (Figure 3). The agricultural sector is underdeveloped and is not competitive or productive. This makes Cambodia susceptible to both internal and global shocks. For example, failure of the rice crop due to adverse weather conditions can cause severe food shortage. In fact, it was observed that the global slowdown has greatly decreased the demand for tourism and exports of garments as these activities were highly dependent on the developed economies. The global financial crisis revealed the need for the Cambodian economy to structurally adjust to more competitive industries away from the traditional sectors such as garment manufacturing, tourism, and construction sectors.

Figure 3. Share of Key Exports of in Cambodia (%)



Source: *UNCTAD (2017)*

The need for the country to diversify domestic industries, to link them to the global production value-chain, and to increase their competitiveness to export markets is now becoming an important development strategy. The new strategy for industrial development is fundamental to avoid the "lower/middle-income trap" by developing human capital, technology, and infrastructure as envisioned in the Industrial Development Policy 2015-2025, (Royal Government of Cambodia, 2015).

3. ASEAN's Roles in Cambodia's Security Landscape

To Cambodia, its vital security challenges are maintaining internal peace and stability in responding to external threats. The experiences of the past decades have shown that alliances with strong military powers might not be a practical option to keep the country safe. Cambodia needs to seek a balance of its foreign policy when it comes to dealing with its own security challenges. While Cambodia is a relatively small state, ASEAN has seemed, so far, a quite relevant option for the country's security, although ASEAN Way is still very limited in its capacity and power.

Maximizing its foreign policy options has been Cambodia's strategic rationale behind its membership in ASEAN in the post-Cold War era (Kao, 2002). As Cambodia moved away from isolation and started to integrate itself into ASEAN, the country can utilize the organization's available mechanisms to deal with security challenges. In ASEAN, settlement of conflict of interests could be done through its own version of the ASEAN Way. After

the successful accession to membership in 1999, the uses of the ASEAN Way of addressing conflicts was put to test for the first time in 2008 when Cambodia faced a security challenge along the border with Thailand.

The border dispute started from a historical competition over the ownership of the Preah Vihear temple, in the Khmer language, or Pra Viharn temple, in the Thai language. Tension arose in 2008 when UNESCO listed the temple as a World Heritage site in response to Cambodia's request and left the nearby surrounding areas of the Preah Vihear temple unexplained. Following a period of military standoffs, Cambodia requested ASEAN's engagement through the formation of ASEAN Inter-Ministerial Group in 2008 (Lee, 2008) and through mediation with Vietnam being the then-chair of ASEAN in 2010 (International Crisis Group, 2011). However, since ASEAN has upheld the ASEAN way and used consensus as a method to make decisions, agreement could not be made because Thailand insisted on a bilateral settlement of the dispute. In this dispute, thus, ASEAN itself did not seem to have had any active involvement until fierce fighting broke out in 2011.

Amidst the outbreak of armed clashes in February 2011 as an indication that the bilateral approach would not work, Cambodia called for multilateral mechanisms from the UNSC though an immediate statement from the UN Secretary-general, Ban Ki-Moon did not mention any specific measures besides urging both parties to exercise utmost restraint (Tran, 2011). As tension reached its peak, the UNSC finally moved by delegating the task to ASEAN as a regional organization to address this dispute. A Security Council press statement on 14 February stated, "The members of the Security Council expressed support for ASEAN's active efforts in this matter and encouraged the parties to continue to cooperate with the organization in this regard" (UNSC, 2011). In responding to the call by UNSC, Indonesia as the chair of ASEAN in 2011, took the role as mediator and produced an agreement later in February 2011, which called for, among others, an unofficial ceasefire and the deployment of Indonesian observers to Thailand and Cambodia (Padden, 2011). However, the agreement was unsuccessfully implemented and pending as Thai high-level military officials rejected the deployment of the observers, claiming that such actions could undermine its sovereignty and threaten Thai security (Wagener, 2011). In this case, since ASEAN lacks an institutionalized body with legal authority to settle disputes, its roles have been very limited to conflict management and prevention through diplomacy (Haywood, 2011).

Cambodia finally sought a request for interpretation of the judgment of 15 June 1962 in the case concerning the temple of Preah Vihear on 28 April 2011, and while waiting for a verdict, the Court, on 18 July 2011, ruled out some provisional measures, including the request to allow observers appointed by ASEAN to access the provisional demilitarized zone (International Court of Justice, 2013). On 11 November 2013, the Court responded to the request by Cambodia by declaring "Cambodia had sovereignty over the whole territory of the promontory of Preah Vihear, and that Thailand is obligated to withdraw its forces from that territory" (UN News Center, 2013).

As shown, though ASEAN could not go beyond its diplomatic capacity embedded in its ASEAN Way, Cambodia at least had a chance to internationalize the issue and advocate

for certain international support through the ASEAN platform before it resorted to other options of pacific settlements, namely UNSC and ICJ.

4. ASEAN's Roles in Cambodia's Socio-Cultural Landscape

Under the concept of the Bali Concord II or Declaration of ASEAN Concord II, the ASEAN Community would be supported by three pillars, known as ASEAN Political -Security Community (APSC), ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), and ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC). The ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) has the primary goal to "Contribute to realizing an ASEAN Community that is people-oriented and socially responsible" in order to achieve "enduring solidarity and unity among the nations and peoples of ASEAN" (*ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint, 2009,* p. 1). To achieve its goal, ASEAN has committed to various frameworks and mechanisms for cooperation in numerous fields including, but not limited to, culture, development, and education.

Despite being the youngest member of ASEAN, Cambodia has received quite substantial support from ASEAN in its socio-cultural area. In this regional grouping, it is undeniable that much diversity has persisted among its member states. What has been a piece of good news for its members, including Cambodia, however, is the fact that ASEAN including the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community has based its activities on respect for sovereignty and differences. According to the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint (2009, p. 1), "The ASCC shall respect the different cultures, languages, and religions of the people of ASEAN, emphasize their common values in the spirit of unity in diversity and adapt them to present realities, opportunities, and challenges." As a country rich in historical and cultural heritages and embedded with its own way of living, the principle of the respect for sovereignty and differences have proven useful for Cambodia to gradually integrate with more confidence into the ASCC. Being a member of ASEAN and ASCC, likewise, seems to be quite beneficial to this country in its tourism sector as ASEAN has pushed for visa exemptions among its member states and Cambodia itself has been one popular tourist destination in the region.

Additionally, in order to narrow the development gap and to ensure development in harmony across ASEAN, the regional grouping has been providing some support to Cambodia, which is a part of the CLMV project. As evidenced, ASEAN has passed the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) Work Plan I (2002-2008) of 232 projects and IAI Work Plan II (2009-2015) of 182 actions to help narrow the development gap by providing special assistance to Cambodia and the other three countries, namely: Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Vietnam. While the implementation rate for actions was less than 45% (Initiative for ASEAN Integration Work Plan III, 2016), ASEAN decided to develop a more specific and focused IAI Work Plan III (2016-2020), which implies that as a member of ASEAN, Cambodia would not be left alone.

Besides, ASEAN has mobilized funds to create learning and working opportunities for "ASEAN" youth. With the support from ASEAN, the ASEAN University Network (AUN) came into existence in November 1995. It has, just to name a few, arranged meetings and discussions on credit transfer and quality assurance, created youth camps, and worked on collaboration among ASEAN members plus three universities to grant scholarships to students for in-bound exchange programs. In alignment with ASEAN priorities outlined in the framework of ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community, Cambodia has incorporated a number of key policies, such as, improving the quality of education services, building institutions and promoting capacity development for educational staff, promoting Information and Communication Technology (ICT), particularly in secondary and higher education, supporting the development of the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), and ensuring that there is equitable access to education services (Im, 2015). Besides, as a member university of AUN, Cambodia's Royal University of Phnom Penh, for instance, has also been able to send some of their students through the EU-ASEAN SHARE scholarship scheme, which is a collaboration project between the EU and ASEAN.

Additionally, ASEAN has provided hands-on training to young diplomats from CLMV countries, which has proved to be useful. Its Attachment Officer (AO) Programme has worked to enhance capacity building of young officers from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs by allowing them to witness the ASEAN Secretariat's activities and work-scope and become involved in high-level meetings, including ASEAN Ministerial and Summit meetings. Mr.Phay Kimthorng, a junior Cambodian official, stated that:

> The program is well regarded and very much appreciated by our Ministry. There is no better way to obtain an ASEAN perspective of regional and global issues than by being part of the ASEAN Secretariat (as cited in ASEAN, 2012d).

Thus, though big milestones are yet to be seen, the fact that Cambodia is a member of ASEAN has made it a recipient of some benefits, which would not have existed if Cambodia had chosen to practice isolationism.

V. Cambodia's Roles in ASEAN

1. Cambodia's Politico-Security Roles

Moving from a war-torn country, Cambodia has made, within its capacity, many significant diplomatic, moral, and resource contributions to ensure a stable and peaceful Southeast Asian region with forward-looking prospects through ASEAN. As a norm-based regional organization, ASEAN requires a lot of diplomatic effort from its member states for the organization to move forward. Within this diplomatic capacity, Cambodia has remarkably contributed to ASEAN through its roles as a member and chairperson of ASEAN. It is important to note here that even though Cambodia has only recently ended its internal armed conflicts and became a member in 1998, the country has made a lot of effort to host ASEAN Summits and related meetings and successfully contributed to the creation of many key documents for ASEAN.

Likewise, in 2002, Cambodia successfully managed to get ASEAN and China to jointly sign a bi-multilateral document of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC), which entails sovereign states directly concerned to, among others, resolve the territorial and judiciary disputes by peaceful means and be committed to self-refrain from, such as, inhabiting on the presently uninhabited islands, reefs, shoals, and other features (ASEAN, 2012). In addition, key accomplishments Cambodia had made, include, among others, the ASEAN Tourism Agreement, which aims to develop and promote ASEAN as a single tourism destination (ASEAN,2012b).

In its second chairmanship of ASEAN in 2012, Cambodia has met not only praises in terms of its contribution but also criticism. Cambodia has been criticized for an unprecedented failure in the adoption of the Joint Communique in Phnom Penh under its chairmanship in 2012 and was accused of its bias towards China, which is a major claimant in the South China Sea disputes. Regardless of such, Cambodia managed to get several key agreements in place, which include the Declaration of the 7th East Asia Summit on Regional Responses to Malaria Control and Addressing Resistance to Antimalarial Medicines, and the Phnom Penh Declaration on the East Asia Summit Development Initiative (ASEAN, 2012c). Furthermore, in addition to presiding over ASEAN's adoption of ASEAN Human Rights Declaration and the Bali Concord III Plan of Action (2013-2017), Cambodia convened the first ASEAN Global Dialogue after its chairmanship of the 21st ASEAN Summit in 2012. Under its chairmanship, the ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation was also launched, followed by the establishment of the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center in Cambodia and the launch of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) between ASEAN and its external partners, which are China, Japan, South Korea, India, Australia and New Zealand. The Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia was also acceded by the UK, the EU, and Brazil with Cambodia's diplomatic efforts. Furthermore, Phnom Penh also witnessed the adoption of the Six-Points Principles on the issues of the South China Sea on 20 July 2012, with the help of Marty Natalegawa, Indonesia's Foreign Minister (Heng, 2013).

In addition to Cambodia's efforts in its chairmanship in 2002 and 2012, Cambodia has also provided moral support to ASEAN in terms of its commitment and obedience to the guiding principles of ASEAN. Remarkably, Cambodia has largely exercised the ASEAN's core values in its foreign policy and diplomacy. As evidenced, Cambodia strongly upheld the principle of non-use of force and the pacific settlement of disputes in the Cambodia-Thailand border conflict in 2008.

Furthermore, Cambodia has also helped boost the image of ASEAN on the international stage with its contribution to global peace. Despite its geographically small size, Cambodia is currently known as one of the troops-contributing countries to the UN peacekeeping operations worldwide. These Cambodian peacekeeping forces have been closely linked with the ASEAN collective identity (Chheang, 2014). During the sending out ceremony of Cambodian peacekeeping forces on April 2013, Minister of Defense, General Tea Banh, stated that:

> You have to remember that your identity at this time is not only representing the Cambodian peacekeeping forces, but also peacekeeping forces for ASEAN. Therefore you have to behave well in order to maintain national dignity and to bring the fame of Cambodia to international arena (as cited in Chheang, 2014).

As a country that recently emerged from a protracted conflict, Cambodia has been playing an active role in some parts within its own capacity both in the region and on the larger stage as an ASEAN member.

2. Cambodia's Economic Roles

As the succession to the AEC Blueprint 2015, ASEAN Leaders at their 27th Summit in Kuala Lumpur on 22 November 2015 adopted "ASEAN 2025: Forging Ahead Together" to lay out the path for ASEAN community building over the next ten years. It is a forward looking roadmap that articulates ASEAN goals and aspirations to realize further consolidation, integration, and stronger cohesiveness—towards a Community that is "politically cohesive, economically integrated, and socially responsible" (ASEAN Secretariat, 2015).

ASEAN goals for its economic community are: "a well-integrated and connected economy within the global economic system; a business-friendly, trade-facilitative, market driven and predictable environment which inspires investor confidence; a region with a key role in global value chains and increasing participation in high value added and knowledge-based activities; a competitive and dynamic region that inspires innovation and where businesses of all sizes thrive, and where consumers' rights are protected; a community where the benefits from economic integration are equitably shared among and within ASEAN Member States, including with micro, small and medium enterprises, youth, and women entrepreneurs; and a connected region where improvements in transport linkages and infrastructure help peoples and businesses move efficiently and work more productively

across borders, expand market reach and strategically source goods and services", ASEAN Secretariat (2015).

These set goals and objectives of ASEAN would provide a platform and impetus for Cambodia to accelerate her domestic economic reform agenda. The country's ability to align domestic reform policies with ASEAN commitments is critical to remain competitive and attractive for regional trade and investment and sustain high and sustainable economic growth for the coming decade. The key challenges are to improve infrastructure, energy, logistics, an attractive business and investment environment, and most importantly highly skilled and competent human capital.

3. Cambodia's Socio-Cultural Roles

By 2017, eighteen years of ASEAN membership, Cambodia has extended quite substantial support to ASEAN particularly through its moral support and roles as ASEAN's chair in 2002 and 2012. It is important to highlight, again, that ASEAN has followed the ASEAN Way of consultation and consensus. Thus, without support from all ten member states, including Cambodia, a significant move in ASEAN would not be possible.

In the form of moral support, Cambodia has worked to adhere to principles of democracy, respect for and protection of human rights, and values of peace and national reconciliation though these are still being seen as works in progress along with the new challenges. For ASEAN's solidarity and development, Cambodia has also moved from being the youngest member of ASEAN to a founding member of the ASEAN Community itself, when Heads of States signed the Declaration of ASEAN Concord II, transforming the association of 10 member states in Southeast Asia to a regional community based on security, economic, and socio-cultural pillars.

In addition, Cambodia has hosted and prepared numerous ASEAN meetings and events leading to the adoption of many important declarations for ASEAN. As evidenced, at the 8th ASEAN Summit in Phnom Penh in 2002, Cambodia as the chair of ASEAN was able to facilitate the signing of the ASEAN Tourism Agreement, which is the foundation of the ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan 2011-2015 (ATSP) adopted later in 2011. Furthermore, at the 21st ASEAN Summit in 2012 in Phnom Penh, under the chairmanship of Cambodia, a long-awaited ASEAN Human Rights Declaration (AHRD) was adopted along with the ASEAN Leaders' Statement on the Establishment of an ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center (ARMAC) and the concept paper on the establishment of ARMAC itself.

Thus, despite being relatively small in terms of economic and military power, ASEAN has equipped Cambodia with some soft power, with which Cambodia has managed to help ASEAN, to a certain extent, to move forward.

VI. The best option for Cambodia?

Though a low institutionalized regional grouping itself, ASEAN has contributed quite significantly to the political and security landscape of Cambodia. The roles of ASEAN for the betterment of Cambodia's politics and security can be seen even before Cambodia's membership in ASEAN as this regional grouping has taken part in helping Cambodia towards the achievement of its internal political stability, in particular during the peace process which then led to the accession of Cambodia's membership to ASEAN itself. In addition, ASEAN has continued to play an important role in entrusting Cambodia with the legitimacy, image, and diplomatic power it has needed, especially after many decades of domestic political crisis and conflicts.

Undeniably, ASEAN is yet a powerful regional grouping. Its loose principles and norms have greatly constrained its ability to effectively and timely respond to its member states' conflicts including that between Cambodia and Thailand. However, it may not be unreasonable to ask "what if" questions about ASEAN-Cambodia relations. What if there had not been any involvement of ASEAN in Cambodia's political and security landscapes? Despite the limits of ASEAN, it may be safe to conclude that Cambodia has been, so far, better off with the regional organization. Though, that should not discount the fact that ASEAN needs to consider advancing its institutionalization process.

In economics, trade and social related areas, it is quite evident that Cambodia's membership in ASEAN has been fruitful, boosting the country's trade, investments, high economic growth and improving the well-being of the people. The challenges are dependent on how farsighted and effective domestic reforms for Cambodia to stay competitive and attractive for regional trade and investment, and maintain high and sustainable economic growth for the coming decade. In this context, it is equally important to place emphasis on key challenges that remain to be addressed in order to improve infrastructure, energy, logistics, attractive business and investment environment, and most importantly high skill and competent human capital.

Regarding the socio-cultural aspect, ASEAN has proven itself to be quite relevant due to its diversity. For Cambodia, this area will thus help advance the socio-cultural environment of the country and enhance the capacity of its people, for example, by trying, among other things, to narrow the development gap and improve the educational system although such efforts by ASEAN should still be taken as the first few steps among many more to be taken.

Endnote

1 The CEPT is the mechanism by which tariffs on goods traded within the ASEAN region, which meet a 40% ASEAN content requirement, will be reduced to 0-5% by the year 2002/2003 (2006 for Vietnam, 2008 for Laos and Myanmar, and 2010 for Cambodia)

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17

CAMBODIA AND THE UNITED NATIONS: A MULTILATERAL ENGAGEMENT

Ambassador SUN Suon, Ph.D

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CAMBODIA AND THE UNITED NATIONS: A MULTILATERAL ENGAGEMENT

I. Introduction

Historically, the relationship between Cambodia and the United Nations has been complex over the past six decades. This relationship can be divided into intertwined components of periods of peace, genocide, and protracted civil wars along with the country's post conflict period. The role and membership of Cambodia at the United Nations (UN) were consistently related to each of those events, especially during the negotiation of the peace process and afterward (i.e. during the post conflict period).

Cambodia at present is in a new phase of development transformation. It emerged from its tragic past conflict and is moving toward a relatively more stable developmental trajectory. The country has made steady progress in rebuilding institutions and establishing a stable socio-economic environment, under a political system of liberal democracy and pluralism enshrined in the 1993 Constitution. The international community of which the United Nations was one of the main actors, has played a key role over the past decades, especially during the peace process in Cambodia.

The chapter is intentionally limited in its scope and content. It attempts to shed light on some of most essential aspects of the relationship between Cambodia and the United Nations throughout those periods, including Cambodia's more prominent role and its active membership status as well as other related activities in the context of multilateral affairs.

II. Cambodia and the United Nations during the Cold War

1. Period of Peace and Neutrality Policy (1955 to 1970)

Cambodia was admitted as a member of the United Nations on 14 December 1955 following the country's gain of independence from France in 1953 (UN Doc. S/RES/109). From 1953 to 1970, Prince Sihanouk (first as King, then as Prime Minister /Head of State) was trying to steer Cambodia through a delicate policy of neutrality that aimed to maintain political balance of the country's foreign policy between the right wing and the left wing amidst the global powers rivalry in the Cold War, especially in order to prevent the country from being swept into the Vietnam War (Widyono, 2008, p. 3; Jeldres, Phnom Penh Post, 25 Oct, 2002; Cambacérés, 2013, pp. 121-125; Chandler, 1993, pp. 191-204). At the Fifteenth Session of the United Nations General Assembly of 1960, the Prince reiterated the firm position of Cambodia of its neutralist policy status in pursuance to the Geneva Conference of 1954.[1] This policy was also inspired by the Bandung Conference of 1955, where Prince Sihanouk attended together with prominent leaders from newly independent nations to consider setting out common grounds for cooperation on a third world perspective by upholding a non-alliance policy toward both West and East thereby paving the way for the formal creation of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), six years later (1961) in Belgrade.

In spite of the country's committed position toward upholding such a policy, Cambodia's neutrality was confronted with external and internal pressures, in particular in the latter years of the 60s until the coup d'état on 18 March 1970. This was due mainly to the country's geopolitical location where Cambodia saw itself strategically subjugated in the ongoing power struggles for hegemony in Southeast Asia during the Cold War (Widyono, 2008, p. 3). The Prince's efforts to keep Cambodia neutral were then undermined by this complex geopolitical situation" (Deth, 2009, p. 51). This led to an end of the period of peace in which Sihanouk had endeavored to secure for his country during the Cold War.

For 17 years, Cambodia was considered a peaceful country in spite of external and domestic challenges in the conduct of its foreign relations. Most of the Cambodian people of the old generations remembered that period (1954-1970), calling it the "Golden Age"–as Cambacérès described in his book (2013, pp. 101-156).[2] The country was at the time known as an "Island of Peace" (Deth, 2016, p. 318).

During the 1960s, Cambodia's participation in the United Nations was notable for its efforts to join the group of developing countries, to address many important global issues relating to peace and disarmament and other problems of social and economic development, including the country's support for the adoption of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples during the Fifteen Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 1960.[3] One of the notable facts in the earlier years of the 60s was the verdict over the case of the Preah Vihear Temple which the International Court of Justice (ICJ) concluded in favor of Cambodia in 1962 (ICJ Website).

2. Period of War and Internal Conflicts (1970-1991)

Since 18 March 1970, Cambodia entered into a period of devastating civil war and conflicts in the aftermath of the coup d'état by General Lon Nol. During five years of the Khmer Republic (from18 March 1970 to 17 April 1975), the country's neutrality status was non-existent. Cambodia was dragged into the conflict of global and regional powers; and as a consequence, it became a victim of their proxy war during the Cold War (Keller, 2005, pp. 132-133).

At the United Nations, the Government of the Khmer Republic continued to occupy the country's seat since 1970 (Ratliff, 1999; p. 1244). Meanwhile, Prince Sihanouk established a government-in-exile,—called the Royal Government of National Union of Cambodia (GRUNK)—and appealed to Cambodians to join the GRUNK forces along with the communist Khmer Rouge on the ground.[4] The contest for the UN seat began in 1973 when the GRUNK regained more support from many member countries, (especially within NAM), to challenge the accreditation of Lon Nol's government at the Twenty-Eighth Session of the UN General Assembly (Ratliff, 1999, p. 1245). However, by a close vote of fifty-three in favor and fifty opposed, the General Assembly postponed any decision on the issue of Cambodian representation until the following Session.[5] This result was affirmed in 1974, when the General Assembly again approved the Credentials Committee report, leaving the Khmer Republic as Cambodia's representative to the United Nations (GA Res. 3238 (XXIX)-UN Doc. A/9631) (1974). The country's UN seat remained occupied by the Khmer Republic only until 17 April 1975, the day that its government was removed from power by the Khmer Rouge (Ratliff, 1999, p. 1251). The new regime, known as "Democratic Kampuchea (DK)," then occupied the UN seat of Cambodia. Pol Pot as Secretary General of the Communist Party of Kampuchea became the effective leader of the new regime, while Prince Sihanouk (who had returned to Cambodia, but resigned as Head of State of Democratic Kampuchea briefly afterward) was held captive in the Royal Palace together with the royal family at that time (Cambacérès, 2013, pp. 221-236).

During the Khmer Rouge rule, an estimated two to three million Cambodian people were murdered through mass forced labor, persecution, disease or starvation, during Cambodia's infamous "killing fields" period. The regime was known as one of the gravest violations of human rights in the world since World War II. It was only until 1978 that the UN Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, for the first time, examined the Cambodian conflicts concerning particularly human rights violations in the country.[6] However, by the time of the UN investigation into the case, Cambodia's situation had rapidly changed in late 1978 following another crisis as the DK regime was on the brink of collapse. On 07 January 1979, the regime of the DK was brought to an end by the United Front of National Salvation of Kampuchea (UFNSK) established with the support of Vietnamese troops.[7]

Cambodia was then free from the Khmer Rouge tyranny and renamed "People Republic of Kampuchea ("PRK"—later renamed State of Cambodia "SOC"). However, these developments did not leave Cambodia at peace. Once again, Cambodia was divided into two camps of a renewed conflict, each of which was supported by regional and global powers. On one side, it was the PRK backed by Vietnam, the Soviet Union and its Eastern Bloc allies and some other countries (like India). On the other side, anti-PRK resistance groups emerged—namely FUNCINPEC, KPLNF and the remnants of the Khmer Rouge (DK),—which formed the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK).[8] The CGDK was backed mainly by the United States, China and ASEAN (Keller, 2005, p. 137; Chandler, 1993, pp. 227-239). This situation led to a regional crisis that began in 1979 with a massive flux of Cambodian refugees, mainly along the Cambodia-Thai borders. Then Cambodia was engaged in another decade of protracted civil war throughout the 1980s as it remained a cockpit of international struggles during the Cold War (McWilliams and Piotrowski, 1990, pp. 206-207).

At the United Nations, the issue of a legitimate seat for Cambodia was immediately discussed following the military intervention of Vietnam in Cambodia in January 1979. First, it was submitted to the UN Security Council (UNSC) for discussion. However, the draft resolution was paralyzed as it received a negative vote (veto) from the Soviet Union at the time[9]. Clearly, this was due to a period dominated by intense rivalry between the West and the East at the time of the Cold War (Widyono, 2012, pp. 51-52). Then, the issue was shifted to the attention of the General Assembly. In spite of human rights violations by the regime of the Khmer Rouge, most of the members of the Credential Committee of the General Assembly continued to support the CGDK as the legitimate representative of Cambodia.[10] The seat of CGDK was retained through the submission of a similar draft resolution which was annually adopted by the General Assembly until the political settlement of Cambodian conflict in 1991 (Ratliff, 1999, p. 1255; Jones, 2007, pp. 527-530).

III. Role of the United Nations in Cambodia's Peace Process (1979-1993)

1. Political Settlements of the Cambodian Conflict (1979-1991)

As said earlier, shortly after Vietnam's military intervention in 1979, the issue of Cambodia became an item agenda of annual debate at the United Nations,—both at the UNSC and UNGA (Keller, 2005, p. 138). Throughout the 80s, there were attempts, initiatives, and diplomatic campaigns from key and friendly countries to explore a political solution to the Cambodian conflict (Widyono; 2008, pp. 34-35; Jone, 2007, pp. 530-532). At the United Nations and elsewhere, all parties involved in the conflict, especially those of key, regional and other frontline countries, had entertained a relationship with one or more of the Cambodian factions to seek a solution (Widyono, 2008, pp. 33-34; Son, 2012,

pp. 166-170). A real breakthrough became visible when the Cambodians judged themselves ready for it too. This happened when Prince Sihanouk of the CGDK and Prime Minister Hun Sen of the PRK/SOC,—the leaders of the two opposing forces at that time—had direct meetings from 02-03 December 1987, in Fère-en-Tardenois near Paris (Cambacérés, 2013, pp. 304-305). According to Widyono, these two days of historical meetings helped break the stalemate (2008, p 33). However, the negotiations took two more years to make progress. In 1989, France and Indonesia, together with other key countries, advanced the process by convening the first Paris Peace Conference on Cambodia (Keller, 2005, pp. 144-145). The outcome, again, did not meet all the expectations yet at that time (1989).[11] To break the remaining impasses, negotiations were further pursued and intensified by many key actors and countries, in the region and beyond,—particularly within the United Nations among the permanent members of the UN Security Council (P5).[12]

In the meantime, several global events were emerging, mainly in connection with Gorbachev's duel reform plans ("perestroika" and "glasnost") in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe thus leading to the end of the Cold War in 1991. A number of Western and particularly Asian states, at the time, appeared to have a strategic change in their foreign policy agenda vis-à-vis the Cambodian conflict (Widyono; 2008, pp. 33-34; Cambacérés, 2013, pp. 310-312). With the disintegration of the Soviet Union and its allies (in the beginning of the 1990s) and along with the dramatic change in strategic relationships thereafter, the situation was more conducive to creating a confluence factor for all parties involved in the conflict to move a compromise settlement closer to reality. Finally, a political solution was reached by consensus to end the conflict in Cambodia with the support of the world community which included all permanent members of the Security Council (P5), and other key nations like Australia, Japan, Indonesia, other ASEAN countries, Lao PDR and Vietnam at the Second Conference in Paris in 1991.[13] Consequently, the Agreements on a Comprehensive Political Settlement of the Cambodian Conflict (called the Paris Peace Agreements or simply the Paris Peace Accords) were signed in Paris on 23 October 1991. Further, full endorsement by the Security Council (S/RES/718) and the General Assembly (A/RES/46/18) respectively was received the same year.

Under the framework of the Paris Peace Agreements, the United Nations established a large, multifaceted peacekeeping mission—the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC)—to operate for an interim period in Cambodia (A/RES/46/18). Along with UNTAC, a Supreme National Council (SNC) was established as a national body consisting of representatives of all four factions to the conflict with Prince Norodom Sihanouk being unanimously chosen to assume the chairmanship of it.[14] The SNC was formed to be a source of the legitimate authority of Cambodia to cooperate with UNTAC and to represent the country internationally throughout a transitional period.

The Paris Peace Agreements were in effect a product of political settlements; they constituted a comprehensive legal framework that was the culmination of more than a decade of protracted negotiations through intensive efforts of all parties involved in the process to make a compromise, in particular, in support of the spirit of national reconciliation of all Cambodian factions. These Agreements fundamentally consisted of key provisions

that aimed to end the conflict (along with the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from the country), to rebuild Cambodia internationally as a legitimate State through democratic elections and to adopt a political system of liberal democracy and pluralism. They also provided international normative guarantees of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Cambodia, among others.[15] The United Nations had been closely involved from the outset throughout the whole process of the settlements.

2. United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia-UNTAC (1992-1993)

In compliance with the UNSC Resolution S/745 (1992), UNTAC was mandated to conduct its peacekeeping mission in the country for a period not exceeding 18 months.[16] It was headed by Mr. Yasushi Akashi, an experienced senior diplomat of the United Nations who served as Special Representative of the UN Secretary General.

Overall, UNTAC was established as an unprecedented peacekeeping operation (PKO) in the history of the United Nations at that time (Watanabe, 2003, pp. 85, 88). It was designed as an operation of complex and multi-functions combined with more than traditional tasks as contained in the core provisions of the Agreements.[17] The mission was equipped with manpower of up to sixteen thousand military and several thousand personnel. (Akashi, 2012, p. 162; Findlay, 1999, p. 27). The operation itself was expensive, as Akashi noted that the total budget was estimated to exceed USD 1.8 billion, –larger than regular budgets at that time.[18] This was the largest financial support for a UN peacekeeping operation ever provided at the time by the international community to help end the conflict and restore a newly elected Government of the war-torn country through the UN sponsored election.

3. Assessment of UNTAC Mission

After the departure of UNTAC, there were divergent views in the assessments of mission operation outcomes (Akashi, 2012, pp. 153-154; Berry, 2012, pp. 174-175; Findlay, 1995, pp. 101-104). At its conclusion, while paying tribute to the work of UNTAC, the Security Council characterized the mission as a major achievement of the United Nations (S/RES/880). The evidence supporting such a conclusion was more assertive when the United Nations further re-evaluated other peacekeeping operations following the setbacks, for example, in Somalia, Rwanda and Bosnia, (throughout the subsequent years of the 90s). Then it could point to the success of its mission in Cambodia. However, most of the analysts believed that the mission fell short of its expected accomplishments. They qualified the outcome of UNTAC's ended mandate as a partial or flawed success (Berry, 2012, pp. 174-175; Keller, 2005, pp. 167-168, Ledgerwood, 2004; pp. 1-9). Some of the most notable facts of successful accomplishments included the following: UNTAC succeeded in organizing the UN sponsored election in spite of boycott by the Khmer Rouge during the electoral process. The result of the election paved the way for the establishment of a new Constituent Assembly that, in turn, reinstated

the monarchy with Prince Norodom Sihanouk, being crowned again as the King in 1993. Through an arrangement of political compromise, the Assembly elected a new coalition government led by Co-Prime Ministers (with Prince Norodom Ranariddh—as First Prime Minister, and Prime Minister Hun Sen of SOC—as Second Prime Minister).[19] Cambodia adopted a new Constitution that endorses the principles of liberal democracy and pluralism, along with its constitutionally committed foreign policy of permanent neutrality and non-alliance (Article 1). The Mission also brought home hundreds of thousands of refugees through a repatriation program. It helped to open up the Cambodian society and assisted three other factions in the conflict (except for the Khmer Rouge) to embark on basic rehabilitation programs (Keller, 2005; p. 170; Findlay, 1995; pp. 52-54).

Besides these, however, analysts took note of many shortcomings which were critically obvious during the UNTAC operation and afterward. They can be briefly described, among others, as different problems and challenges ranging from tardy deployment of the UN machinery to bureaucracy within the Organization and control deficiency over the key areas of cooperation with the government, from the lack of understanding of local culture (due to different nationalities of UNTAC) to some other related social relations (Uch, 2007, pp. 63-65; Ledgerwood, 1994; Berry, 2012, pp. 174-175).

One of its major failures was its inability to convince all parties to fully disarm according to its mandate, especially to prevent the Khmer Rouge from completely boycotting the peace process, in particular during the later phases (Vachon, Cambodia Daily, 3, December 2012). When the Khmer Rouge effectively withdrew from the peace process, it was said that the United Nations may have considered a few options of measures as response to the Khmer Rouge non-compliance, including a change in the peacekeeping to an eventual operation of peace-enforcement.[20] In the end, Akashi noted that the UN Secretary General refrained from doing so under the UN Chapter VII, which was authorized to enforce law (Akashi, 2012; pp. 157-159; Evans, 1994; pp. 24-27; Widyono, 2008, pp. 106-107).

A few other analysts even went further to indicate that the situation came very close to failing the Mission following the boycott from the Khmer Rouge (Alldén and Amer 2007, p. 9). This may have been true, if the other three factions in the peace process (in particular the local authorities), did not cooperate with UNTAC.[21] Therefore Akashi acknowledged in his own assessment, the cooperative efforts between UNTAC leaders and the Cambodian leaderships during that critical period (especially Prince Sihanouk as Chair, along with the leaders of the other three Cambodian factions of the SNC—except for the Khmer Rouge).[22]

In sum, it is fair to say that although UNTAC was endowed with significant multi-faceted functions along with an overly ambitious mandate, its operation was not completely successful in such a limited period of 18 months. In consequence, the UN efforts in Cambodia were obviously flawed as the UNTAC mission achieved only some of its primary objectives mainly to end the conflict within a transitional period of assistance framework and to establish an internationally legitimate State. Peace and stability could not be durable without the genuine efforts, for the most part, by Cambodians themselves to further participate in the process that begun to challenge the post UNTAC period.

4. UNTAC Experience

In spite of its flawed accomplishments, the experiment of UNTAC had significant implications on the PKOs' reforms for the improvement of the next PKOs' missions. This, in fact, already started proving to be the next stage of development in UNPKOs operations, even at the time of UNTAC operation, when Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, then Secretary General of the United Nations, presented his Report on the Agenda for Peace in June 1992 that subsequently influenced the follow-up process of PKOs' works (UN Doc. A/RES/47/120; UN Doc. A/50/60; S/1995/1). Since then there were other succeeding reports on reforms to strengthen the United Nations peacekeeping operations, by his successor Mr. Kofi Annan (also former UN Secretary General) including Brahimi Report that was adopted, during the Millennium Summit.[23] Further, the Security Council and the General Assembly recommended wide-ranging reforms that aimed to strengthen PKOs and make them more effective during the next process of peacekeeping missions (MacQueen, 2010, pp. 81-86).

IV. Country's Overview in a Multilateral Context of Post-Cold War Era

1. Beyond UNTAC

The post UNTAC period came in Cambodia at a high time when the world just began to evolve in the Post-Cold War era. During this period which began with the departure of UNTAC (since 1993) the international community, including the UN agencies, continued to support Cambodia on a regular basis through implementation of the country's rehabilitation and development programs as reflected in the Paris Peace Accords of 1991 (i.e. in the Declaration of the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of Cambodia). In the meantime, however, peace had not yet fully prevailed throughout the country. The newly elected coalition government of co-premiership had to face the continuing challenges of the Khmer Rouge rebellious resistance for a few years more until its final demise in 1998 as a result of the win-win policy of the Royal Government of Cambodia-RGC (Hang, 2012, p. 247). In addition, there was a short period of political crisis in the aftermath of armed clashes of 5-6 July 1997 within the two main political parties of the coalition government that caused international concerns at the time. Again, ASEAN was asked to mediate in the crisis; and subsequently, further UN intervention was carried out to help ease the situation in the post-conflict period (Jones, 2007, pp. 535-538). The UN seat at that point remained vacant (Widyono, 2008, pp. 264-265). Cambodia regained its seat only until the next Session of the General Assembly (by late1998) following the new national election held in July 1998 that subsequently led to the formation of a new government of coalition by the National Assembly of the second legislature.[24] A year later, on 30 April 1999 Cambodia was finally admitted as the tenth member of ASEAN.

2. United Nations Partnership at Country's Level

The UN cooperation began with the process of full completion of repatriation of Cambodian refugees and displaced persons after the departure of UNTAC. In 1994, the Secretary-General appointed Dr. Benny Widyono, former UNTAC provincial director in Siem Reap, as his first Political Representative for Cambodia to serve as a UN liaison with the Government, to monitor the political situation and report on developments relating to peace and security.[25] Following the UNTAC sponsored elections (1993), Cambodia subsequently held five national elections and four local/communal council's elections throughout the country's democratic process.[26]

To ensure measurable progress and achievements, including mobilization of resources and coherency, the UN side set up its own mechanisms of coordination within the UN system, called "the UN Country Team-UNCT" (UNDAF, 2016-2018; p. 28). On the Cambodian side, a Council for the Development of Cambodia (CDC) was created. One of the wings of the Council called Cambodia Rehabilitation and Development Board (CRDB/CDC) was in charge of coordinating with the United Nations and other Donor Groups (Development Partners) to work on the development support through their joint mechanism forum initially called "Consultative Group Meeting" over the past decades (Widyono, 2008, p. 191). Since 2007, this mechanism was replaced by the "Cambodia Development Cooperation Forum."[27] The UNCT is currently in charge of the implementation and monitoring of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for 2016-2018 (UNDAF 2016-2018) in partnership with the RGC and in collaboration with development partners and civil society (UNDAF 2016-2018, pp. 1-2).

According to the National and UNDP Reports, Cambodia is recognized as one of 193 countries that were committed to most of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015.[28] The UN system in Cambodia, on its part, is continuing to support the Royal Government in translating the commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into local implementation, as the country was to localize the 17 Goals, with the addition of mine action, within the context of the national vision, strategies and plans for sustainable development (UN website, The UN in Cambodia).

In economic terms, Cambodia has achieved a record of notable performance over the last two decades, with an average GDP growth of 8.2% from 2000-2010, and 7.4% from 2011-2013.[29] This year, Cambodia's economic growth is forecast to continue at seven percent for 2017-2018, according to the UN ESCAP report (Khmer Times, 09 May 2017). In spite of progress, however, it was reported that there are related shortcomings, such as a social gap and other related socio-economic problems, among others, that gave rise to new challenges in a context of ongoing country's developments.[30] This required further efforts from the government side to renew its commitments (along with other stakeholder's recommendations) toward addressing all those related challenges through the reforms process as envisioned in the country's relevant national plans, including within the SDGs strategic framework.

3. Cambodia's Membership in Multilateral Institutions

Following the UN Sponsored elections of 1993, Cambodia started moving ahead toward its greater integration into the community of Nations by reactivating its membership in key international specialized institutions such as the Breton Wood institutions (World Bank and IMF). Likewise, the country's resumption of and subsequent application for its membership to many other cooperative frameworks initiated in the process of regional integration—e.g. ASEAN, Mekong cooperative initiatives, Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD), Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) and many other regional framework initiatives—helped pave the way for the country's greater access to the world. The following is a summary of some of the most important memberships and activities of the country in the multilateral institutions.

a. WTO Membership[31]

One of Cambodia's milestones was its integration into the global trading system, namely its admission into the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2004.[32] The accession was driven by the fact that Cambodia, as a least developed country (LDC), was undergoing an economic process of transformation during the first decade of a new millennium (the 2000s), especially in the garment industry sector, while trade in the international quotas regime was expected to come to an end (Sok, 2005, pp. 3-4). The accession was, therefore, a key element in a trade-and-investment centered approach of Cambodia's policy to further promote growth, development and poverty alleviation. The country's accession to the WTO equally had a political dimension at that time. It offered a framework that was recognized internationally for Cambodia to carry out the necessary relevant programs, in particular, with respect to its own legal and institutional frameworks through a reforms process which remains even relevant at present for the government to pursue (WT/TPR/G/253/ on 27 September 2011, p. 9).

As a member of the Organization, Cambodia participated in the discussion of trade related issues within the WTO institutional framework (e.g. in WTO main bodies and its relevant committees). In that process, Cambodia was among countries keenly committed to successful completion of Doha Round negotiations, in particular on the fulfillment of the interests of the LDCs group.[33] Cambodia had so far benefited from the Organization, and other UN related and associated developments partners (such as UNCTAD, ITC, and many other countries) through the supports of various programs, such as those related to capacity building, Aid for Trade, in particular within the Enhanced Integrated Framework Program (EIF), among others (WTO Report, WT/TPR/G/253, on 27 September 2011).

As one of the first LDCs countries (along with Nepal) that became members of the WTO since the latter's formal inception of 1995, Cambodia had the privilege to host LDCs Round Tables to share the experience, namely on the country's accession to the WTO with the group of LDCs countries.[34] In February 2016, Cambodia ratified the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA).[35] The Kingdom was selected on 14 November 2016 to assume the chairmanship of the coordinating group of the LDCs at the WTO for a one-year term from February 2017 to February 2018 (Xinhua, 3 January 2017; Phnom Penh Post, 28 September 2016,).

b. Membership Status and related Activities in other Multilateral Affairs

Besides the country's integration into the WTO, the Cambodian delegations from relevant institutions were multi-laterally engaged in a variety of other related diplomatic activities within the UN system. Since 1993, Cambodia was elected to serve in several capacities in many multilateral institutions and related bodies such as Vice-President of UNGA for two separate terms, namely during the 49th Session of the General Assembly (1994-1995) and the 56th Session of the General Assembly (2001-2002) respectively.[36] The Kingdom was elected to assume the Presidency of the 11th Meeting of the State Parties to the Ottawa Convention (or Landmine Ban Treaty) for the term 2011-2012.[37] The country was also elected as a member to a number of UN subsidiary bodies and other boards of international specialized agencies. These include, but not limited to, the following: Trade and Development Board of UNCTAD (TDB/UNCTAD) (since 2010), Executive Board of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization–UNESCO (2003-2007), the Commission of the Status of Women-CSW (2007-2011), the World Heritage Committee-WHC (2009-2013).[38] Recently, Cambodia was elected as a member of the Governing Board of International Labor Organization-ILO (2014-2017) and member of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)/United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) for the term 2018-2020.[39]

At home, Cambodia hosted many multilateral forums of global and regional importance affecting the country's interest. These include, among others, the UN Conference of LDCs (2009 and 2017), the 11th Meeting of the State Parties (11 MSP) to the Ottawa Convention (2012).[40] Cambodia was designated to host the 37th Session of the World Heritage Committee (WHC) in 2013 which it presided over at the same time (Doc. WHC-13/37. COM/INF.2).[41] These activities earnestly contributed to the safeguarding of the common heritage of mankind thereby enhancing the country's standing on the international stage.

Cambodia's partnership with other UN specialized agencies (e.g. WIPO, WHO, ILO, UNIDO) covers a wider range of areas of interest (for example human trafficking, gender equality, social and health sectors, industrial relationship, tourism, good governance and promotion of capacity building). In addition, the UN related issues were also addressed within the framework of inter-parliamentarian institutions and related forums where Cambodian members of the National Assembly and the Senate were involved in several capacities.

According to the UNDP Report, Cambodia is among the top ten countries in terms of vulnerability to climate change (DP/DCP/KHM/3, 09 June 2015, para 6). To support the common cause of combating climate change, a first comprehensive national Strategic Plan of Climate Change (2014-2023) was launched in November 2013.[42] At the UN Conference of Climate Change (COP21) held at Paris in 2015, His Majesty King Norodom Sihamoni delivered an impassioned plea for a historic binding agreement on international climate change in an address to the delegates of 195 nations and the world's civil society (Phnom Penh Post, 2 December 2015). The country was among the first States that signed the Paris Agreement on Climate Change on 22 April 2016.[43]

Cambodia is among the first 60 States (and also the first ASEAN State) that signed and ratified the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court thereby contributing to the entry into force of the said Treaty on 1 July 2002.[44] This, in turn, paved the way for the establishment and operation of the International Criminal Court (ICC). It is noteworthy to mention that Cambodia took steps to join the Rome Statute in conjunction with the continuing process of negotiations between the RGC and the United Nations on drafting a law of the establishment of the Khmer Rouge Tribunal. The country's legacy was then one of the reasons for the government to consider supporting the Rome Statute at that time.[45] With respect to the Country's legislation implementation of the Statute, Cambodia took steps toward incorporating crimes against humanity, genocide, and war crimes, into the Criminal Procedure Code (2007) and the Criminal Code (2010), in accordance with the stipulations of the Rome Statute.

4. Peace, International Security and Disarmament

One of the core elements of Cambodia's foreign policy is to promote peace and maintain international security. This policy is reflected in the 1993 Constitution provisions stipulating, among others, that "producing, utilizing, retaining nuclear, chemical or bacteriological weapons are strictly prohibited" (article 54). As such, Cambodia was known as a State Party to a number of major global and regional treaties related to disarmament, arms control, and nonproliferation.[46] These include, among others, the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) (1972) and the Southeast Asian Nuclear Weapons Free Zone Treaty (SEANWFZ) or Bangkok Treaty (1995). The Kingdom endorsed many initiatives that ban all illegal activities of the use of nuclear and other related materials including those relating to weapons of mass destruction (WMD).[47] For example, Cambodia participated in the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) (Chheang, 2013, p. 12), and endorsed the Statement of Principles of the Global Initiative (PGI) to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (NTI Website). In 2009, Cambodia was re-admitted as a member to the IAEA, of which it was a former member (IAEA Website, Office of Legal Affairs). Despite the country's limited resources, there were reports of Cambodia's commitments toward the strengthening of its counter-terrorism capability through training and international cooperation both at regional and global levels.[48] At the national level, a number of relevant national institutions were established to coordinate related activities including enacting legislation and regulations to address the concerns of the country's compliance with relevant international legal instruments to which the Kingdom is a State Party.[49]

On conventional weapons, Cambodia was well known for its active role in the campaign for removal of landmines due to the country's legacy of wars. The country was an active State Party to the Ottawa Convention since 1998.[50] In that capacity, Cambodia has continued to cooperate with the United Nations and other partners, including civil societies to advocate for universalization of the instrument and for the implementation of existing legal frameworks relevant to mine action. Since 2006 the Government has dispatched thousands of Cambodian

de-miners to participate mainly in the UN peacekeeping. Cambodia was among the main co-sponsors of the bi-annual resolution of the General Assembly on the Agenda Item "Assistance in Mine Action" over the past decades. During Cambodia´s presidency of 11st Meeting of State Parties to the Ottawa Convention, (11MSP), the country assumed a leading role in the coordination of all related works and activities which had resulted in successful conclusion of its term (Website of the Ottawa Convention). To pursue the de-mining efforts and objectives, the Cambodia Mine Action Authority (CMAA) acting on behalf of the RGC, had developed and signed an instrument called "National Mine Action Strategy (NMAS 2010-2019)" with UNDP representative together with other development partners.[51] As an advocate for global mine action over the past decades, Cambodia was selected to host ASEAN Regional Mines Centre (ARMAC) at the 21st ASEAN Summit (Chheang, 2013, pp. 11-12).

On small arms, the RGC has been working over the past decades with the UNCT, other international partners (notably EU and Japan) and civil society to address reducing the supply of illicit weapons under various initiatives.[52] The assessment of the United Nations Small Arms Review Conference in 2006 indicated that Cambodia, as a post-conflict country, was among the 50 countries that have strengthened their national legislation to control the illegal trade in small arms.[53] Apart from the Ottawa Convention and small arms, Cambodia signed and ratified many other relevant conventional arms and humanitarian law instruments, including the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT).[54]

In 2006 Cambodia established a National Coordination Committee (NCC) to cooperate with the United Nations on Peacekeeping (Chheang, 2014, p. 2). Since then, the country has dispatched 4, 459 Cambodian troops to join UN peacekeeping operations in many countries across the world (AKP, 10 May 2017).[55] As a result of their peace mission, four Cambodian peacekeepers were lost in May this year (2017); and in spite of this, Prime Minister Hun Sen reaffirmed the government's commitment and contribution of Cambodian peacekeepers to World Peace (AKP, 10 May 2017).This PKOs role has become an essential part of Cambodia's diplomacy that helped elevate the country's standing on the international stage.

5. Cooperation on Human Rights

Since the end of the peace process of 1993, Cambodia and the United Nations had a record of longstanding cooperation on human rights through partnership with both the UN Center for Human Rights—later renamed the Office of High Commissioner of Human Rights based in Cambodia (OHCHR-Cambodia), and the mandate holders (Special Representative of Secretary General (SRSG)—later renamed Special Rapporteur).[56] They operated in Cambodia at the request of succeeding United Nations resolutions of the UNGA, and with the agreement of the host country through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Human Rights Center (Website of OHCHR-Cambodia).[57] From 1993 until now, the United Nations (Secretary General and later the Human Rights Council/HRC) has appointed six mandate holders (SRSG/SR) to work for human rights in

Cambodia.[58] Following the establishment of the Human Rights Council, the agenda Item of human rights in Cambodia was moved to be considered under the agenda Item 2 and 10 concerning "Technical assistance and capacity-building". It should be noted that OHCHR/ Cambodia is a member of the United Nations Country's Team (UNCT). However, unlike other areas of cooperation undertaken by the UN development partners, human rights is a cross cutting issue that normally requires dialogue-based approaches of constructive cooperation through monitoring, raising human rights awareness, offering critical concerns and shortcomings directly by the mandate holder with the host country. These approaches have globally applied to many countries in their past practices and along with other human rights engagements within relevant UN frameworks, although the relationship may have been tense and contentious on occasions in some cases. For Cambodia, in spite of a discrepancy of views and approaches in some areas related to human rights, the RGC continued to engage itself with the United Nations by periodically extending both,—the terms of the country's mandate-holder and the OHCHR-Cambodia, to promote and protect human rights in the country since the departure of UNTAC until the present day (as of 2017).

6. Establishment of the Khmer Rouge Tribunal

In view of the dimension of serious crimes of mass atrocity committed during the Khmer Rouge regime, the RGC finally considered the delivery of justice to the Cambodian people in 1997 through the establishment of a tribunal in cooperation with the United Nations.[59] In fact, this was a long-awaited tribunal to be set up. It was not until 1999, that a Task Force of the Royal Government was appointed to prepare the groundwork for negotiation with the United Nations for the trials.[60] Moreover, the negotiations were conducted in a long and complicated process. This was a complex diplomacy between Cambodia and the United Nations as both parties faced difficulties over the definition of structure, mandate and the scope of jurisdiction of the Court, including the question of compositions of foreign and national judges and prosecutors as well as their modality of decision-making, among others (Lavergne, 2012, pp. 195-196; Scheffer, 2008, pp. 2-15). The views of its discussion were mixed. From a legal perspective, as Whitley noted, the Tribunal has been one of the most hotly contested issues in international law (2006, p. 30). At one point, the UN Secretariat announced its withdrawal from that negotiation process (Keller, 2005, p. 172; Scheffer, 2015, p. 4). However, due to a good office of a core group of countries, the RGC and the United Nations agreed to continue the negotiations (Scheffer, 2008, pp. 9-10; Whitley, 2006, pp. 44-45). Finally, they set out the details of international participation with the formula of a mixed tribunal and then formally signed an agreement in June 2003.[61] This hybrid Court which is Cambodian by its design,—along with international participation, will apply an international standard (ECCC Website–Introduction). The Court was officially called the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia for the Prosecution of Crimes Committed during the Period of Democratic Kampuchea–ECCC (A/RES/57/228A). As a product of compromise,

the ECCC was endowed specifically with its constitutional structure along with a limited mandate and scope of jurisdiction that shall operate according to the agreement. The ECCC Law (Articles 1-8) permits the Court to try only "senior leaders of Democratic Kampuchea and those who were most responsible for the crimes and serious violations" within a period of Pol Pot's regime.[62] Since then the Court has made certain progress in conducting the hearings and legal process, in spite of a number of challenges concerning, in particular, the slow process coupled with the financial delay and other related difficulties and problems. The budget of the ECCC comes largely from voluntary contributions of donors, while the RGC shares its own part of the funds within the Cambodian side (mainly the local staff and related administration of the tribunal).[63]

The ECCC is currently handling four cases with case 01 being closed and case 02 recently concluded at the Supreme Court Chamber on 23 November 2016.[64] The fate of additional investigations has sparked controversy, in particular with respect to the allegation that the judicial process may damage the process of national reconciliation (Lavergne, 2012, p. 198). This was one of the reasons that obviously motivated the United Nations to advance the negotiations and to accept compromises with regard to the ECCC establishment.

Experiences have shown that since World War II a number of international tribunals that were set up to address most serious crimes of mass atrocities came with a range of models of choice along with varying responses and critical challenges, notably in terms of setting up the judicial structure, mass crime proceedings and delivering justice,—especially during the past practices of the Post-Cold War era (Lavergne, 2012, pp. 189-193; Ciorciari, 2006, pp. 13-19). They can be ranging from the Nuremberg and Tokyo Trials to the Ad Hoc International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, from the International Criminal Court (ICC) to the Special Court for Serra Leone and / or along with other kinds of mixed or hybrid criminal tribunals (Ciorciari, 2006, pp. 15-18; Lavergne, 2012, pp. 190-193).[65]

Cambodia and the United Nations has thus made their own choice to build this unique hybrid Court based on their compromise, recognizing that it was designed as one of the emerging transitional justice mechanisms and being part of a broader trend in international criminal law and politics. Analysts agree that the Court cannot be a panacea to all hardship and sufferings of Cambodian people, particularly in view of the legacy Cambodia needs to address in the overall context of the country's healing and reconciliation process. However, as its work is in progress, the advocates of the Court's creation believe that the Khmer Rouge Tribunal has a combination of many essential functions –such as accountability, justice and social healing, among others,– to accomplish in this context (Ciorciari, 2006, pp. 25-27; Scheffer, 2015). For example, the ECCC could help influence and develop the enhanced domestic legal and judicial capacity and disseminate the historical truth about the Khmer Rouge Regime. Ultimately, if the ECCC succeeds in completing its term of mandate by delivering some sort of justice according to the law, it would pave the way for Cambodian people to put the tragic episode of the Khmer Rouge behind them so that they can move on for the sake of national reconciliation, peace and development. As Ban Ki-moon, (then UN Secretary General), noted in one of his messages that " I hope the Extraordinary Chambers

are enabling the Cambodian people, who have been waiting for justice for so long, to bring a sense of closure to the darkest chapter in their history" (An Introduction to the Khmer Rouge Trials, 2004, p. 5).

7. Request for ICJ Interpretation of 1962 Judgment concerning the Case of Preah Vihear Temple

The Temple of Preah Vihear became a source of renewed conflict between Cambodia and Thailand following its inscription on the World Heritage list drawn up by UNESCO in 2008 (Deth, Chapter 2). The dispute has resulted in military skirmishes and tension along the border of the Temple area between the two neighboring ASEAN nations and has led to the mediation and intervention of ASEAN, UNESCO and the UNSC.[66] Finally, the issue was brought to the attention of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) at the request of Cambodia by way of interpretation in 2011. The request was then admissible by the Court under Article 60 of the Statute (Reports of Judgments, Advisory Opinions and Orders, p. 304, para. 57).

According to its decision (by way of ICJ interpretation of 2013), the Court reconfirmed Cambodia's sovereignty over the Temple and its surrounding area on the basis of the 1962 ICJ judgment, clarified the expression 'vicinity' used in the 1962 judgment and defined it as the whole promontory in which the Temple is situated.[67] In view of religious and cultural significance for the region, the Court further underscored the importance of international cooperation by recalling that "under Article 6 of the World Heritage Convention, to which both States are parties, Cambodia and Thailand must cooperate between themselves and with the international community in the protection of the site as a world heritage" (ICJ Website: The Summary of the Judgment of 11 November 2013/2, p. 8). However, as turning to the merits of the request for interpretation, the Court emphasized that its role under Article 60 of its Statute is to clarify the meaning and scope of what the Court decided in the judgment it is called upon to interpret, all within the strict limits of that original judgment.[68] The Court's judgment by way of interpretation has thus far helped contribute to the easing of tension through peaceful means in accordance with the UN Charter. This led to a normalization of the relations between the two neighbors and fellow members of ASEAN, by maintaining peace and security along the border, while they remain yet committed to continuing their negotiations in the future based on the 2013 ICJ interpretation.

V. Conclusion

The Cambodia-UN relationship was characterized through a complex process over the past six decades ranging from the period of the Cold War to the Post-Cold War era. As we have seen that during the Cold War, due to geopolitical interest and ideological hegemony, the global and regional politics predominantly impacted national politics that led to war and internal conflicts, including the contest and the challenges over the country's membership status within international organizations, such as the United Nations. The end of the Cold War was one of the important factors that contributed to the successful settlement of the Cambodian conflict thus leading to the signing of the Paris Peace Accords of 1991 for Cambodia.

The United Nations became one of the main actors that played a central role in Cambodia's peace process and beyond. The UNTAC experience indicated that UN peacekeeping was not able to address all the problems of conflict in Cambodia. Initially, the challenges after the post UNTAC period implied the imperative need for the government to pursue, concurrently, the agenda of peace and nation building coupled with other multi - functional tasks of long-term perspectives. During the process, the country was to overcome different stages of transition, development and challenges, namely further adapting to the culture of political dialogue and national conciliation, reconstructing and developing the country's economy, promoting good governance, democracy and rule of law, among others. All of these were not easy tasks in practice in light of the country's tragic legacy associated with war and conflicts over the past decades. However, the international community, of which the United Nations is one of the main actors, continued to assist Cambodia alongside its relevant agencies as well as other multilateral institutions, including civil societies that were actively engaged in advancing the process of nation-building.

Cambodia has steadily made progress in developing its diplomatic role and enhancing the country's capacity in multilateral affairs since the departure of UNTAC. The experiences from multilateral practices along with those of the country's legacy in the past would further contribute to Cambodia's efforts in identifying best approaches and prioritizing core national interests consistent with the constitutional principles and in line with the regional commitments toward shaping foreign policy into a future perspective on the increasing role of the country in the global affairs, in particular in the context of multilateral institutions.

Endnotes

1 See Speech by Prince Norodom Sihanouk at the General Debate of the Fifteenth Session of UNGA, 29 September 1960, UN Official Record, and Doc. A/PV.877, p. 221-222, retrieved from https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/NL6/007/04/PDF/NL600704.pdf?OpenElement.

2 This "Golden Age" was described in Cambacérès book. See Jean-Marie Cambacérés, Norodom SIHANOUK, Le Roi Insubmersible, Paris 2013, pp. 101-156.

3 UN Doc. Resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960.See UN Website, retrieved from: http://www.sfu.ca/~palys/UN-Resolution%201514.pdf.

4 The GRUNK consisted of different groups including a faction of the Khmer Rouge to lead the resistance movement against the Government of Khmer Republic; See Cambacérés, op.cit., 2013, pp. 163-165.

5 According to Ratliff, the General Assembly then effectively chose the Khmer Republic by default to represent Cambodia in the UN. See Suellen Ratliff, UN Representation Disputes: A Case Study of Cambodia and a New Accreditation Proposal for the Twenty First Century, California Law Review, (Vol.87, Issue 5, Article 8), 1999, pp. 1246-1247. For the record of votes, see UN. Doc. A/PV.2191) (1973).

6 Subsequently, it adopted a Resolution 4 B (XXXII) of 5 September 1978 that included observations and recommendations on the human rights situation in Cambodia. See Lucy Keller, UNTAC in Cambodia—from Occupation, Civil War and Genocide to Peace 2005. In Max Planck Yearbook of United Nations Law, Volume 9, 2005, Editor Armin von Bogdandy Rüdiger Wolfrum, p. 135; quoting UN Doc. E/CN.4/1350-E/CN.4/sub.2/435,47, and UN Doc. E/CN.4/1350-E/CN.4/sub.2/435,47, para.2. See also, Suellen Ratliff, op.cit., pp. 1252-1253; quoting UN Doc. E/1978/34-E/CN.4/1292 (1978);

7 There were groups of leading officials during the DK regime (including the current CPP leaders, –like current Chairman of the National Assembly Samdech Heng Samrin, PM Samdech Hun Sen, and other cadres)—fled to Vietnam in 1978. They formed a resistance movement against the Pol Pot regime, called "United Front for the National Salvation of Kampuchea (UFNSK). With the support of Vietnamese army, the United Front for the National Salvation of Kampuchea (UFNSK) quickly gained control of most of the territory of Cambodia. On 07 January 1979, the DK regime was defeated. See, David P. Chandler, A History of Cambodia, Westview, Inc. 2nd Edition, 1993, pp. 228-230.

8 FUNCINPEC is the French acronym of "Front Uni National Pour Un Cambodge Independent, Neutre, Pacifique et Cooperatif "(in English: United National Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful and Co-operative Cambodia). KPNLF is the acronym of "Khmer People's National Liberation Front". PDK-Khmer Rouge or DK is the acronym of "the Party of Democratic Kampuchea". The DK was pressured later to join other factions to form a Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK) that was officially established in 1982 with Prince Norodom Sihanouk as Head of State of the Cambodian Resistance Groups of Coalition (along with other Cambodian politicians in exile); The CGDK headquarters was located in refugee camps along the Thai border. See, David P. Chandler, op.cit. pp. 231-235; Jean-Marie Cambacérés, op.cit., pp.296-297. See, Ledgerwood, Judy L. UN Peacekeeping Missions: The Lessons from Cambodia, Analysis from the East-West Center, No.11, March 1994, pp. 2-3; retrieved from http://www.seasite.niu.edu/khmer/ledgerwood/PDFAsiaPacific.htm; Findlay Trevor, Cambodia: The Legacy and Lessons of UNTAC, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, SIPRI Research Report No. 9, Oxford University Press, 1995.pp. 1-3

9 The result of votes was as follows: 13 members in favor in adopting the draft, two opposed with USSR's vote thus serving as veto. For the details, see Suellen Ratliff, ibid. pp. 1253-1254; Benny Widyono, Dancing in Shadows: Sihanouk, the Khmer Rouge, and the United Nations: in Cambodia, New York, 2008, p. 28.

10 Finally, the General Assembly adopted the draft resolution submitted by the Credential Committee. The vote was: 71 to 35 with 34 abstentions and 12 absentees. See, UN Doc. A/34/PV.3; UN Doc. A/34/PV.4, and Cor.1, Official Records. See Benny Widyono, ibid., p. 29, quoting the same UN doc. ibid; See also, Ratliff, ibid. p. 1254

11 The Paris Conference was convened from 30 July to 30 August 1989 and co-chaired by the two foreign ministers, Ali Alatas from Indonesia and Roland E. Dumas from France. However it was not successful; there were certain disagreements regarding particularly the composition of a peacekeeping force, a comprehensive peace plan or the nature of the transitional authority to monitor the elections. See Benny, op.cit., p. 34; and Jean-Marie Cambacérés, op.cit., pp., 309-310.

12 According to UN report, in the source of their deliberations, the Five (P5) considered an Australian proposal to enhance the role of the United Nations in the settlement process, and took account of the discussions among the Cambodian parties, including those at an Informal Meeting on Cambodia in Jakarta (February 1990) and at a meeting held in Tokyo (June 1990), among others. See UN Website: 1991 Paris Peace Agreements Framework for a Comprehensive Political Settlement of the Cambodia Conflict, retrieved from UN Website (May 2017): http://www.cambodia.org/facts/?page=1991+Paris+Peace+Agreements. For the details concerning Australian Peace Plan proposal, see "Cambodia: The Peace Process - and After" (Presentation by Hon. Gareth Evans, Former Australian Foreign Minister, to Cambodia Roundtable, 2 November 2012, retrieved (June 2017) from : http://www.gevans.org/speeches/speech498.html. See also, Leng Thearith, Australia's Role in Cambodia: More Than A Peacemaking Architect (Chapter 9).

13 The final session of the Paris Conference on Cambodia held from 1 to 23 October 1991. Cambodia was represented by the Supreme National Council (SNC), with then Prince Norodom Sihanouk as its Chairman. Also present were the five permanent members of the Security Council, the six members of ASEAN, Australia, Canada, India, Japan, Laos and Viet Nam. Yugoslavia attended in its capacity as Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement along with other nations. 19 countries including Cambodia (consisting of the representatives of the four factions to the conflicts) crafted the compromise documents that were finally signed on October 23, 1991, at the Conference. The UN Secretary General signed the Agreements as witness. See, for example, Frederick Z. Brown, The Paris Agreements (in Introduction). In Rebuilding Cambodia: Human Resources, Human Rights and Law, The Johns Hopkins Foreign Policy Institute, 1993, p. 5. See also, Lucy Keller, op.cit., p. 120; Trevor Findlay, 1995. op.cit., p. 11 and so;

14 The SNC consisted of thirteen members, six representatives of PRK/SOC, and two each from the Khmer Rouge, FUNCINPEC and KPNLF, with Prince Sihanouk chairing and relinquishing his membership in FUNCINPEC. See Benny Widyono, Cambodia-Indonesia relations. In Cambodia: Progress and Challenges Since 1991, (Edited by Pou Sothirak, Geoff Wade, Mark Hong), Singapore, ISEAS 2012. p. 55; Trevor, op.cit., p. 58.

15 The Agreements consisted of a Final Act and three instruments: the Agreement on a Comprehensive Political Settlement of the Cambodia Conflict; the Agreement concerning the Sovereignty, Independence, Territorial Integrity and Inviolability, Neutrality and National Unity of Cambodia; and the Declaration on the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of Cambodia. See UN Website, Framework for a Comprehensive Political Settlement of the Cambodia Conflict, retrieved (June 2017) from: http://peacemaker.un.org/cambodiaparisagreement91 ;

16 Before the actual signing of the accords on October 23, 1991, the Council authorized the establishment of the United Nations Advance Mission in Cambodia (UNAMIC) to be dispatched to the country to serve as the UN liaison, among other things. See Lucy Keller, op.cit, pp. 154-155. For the detail, see Trevor Findlay, op.cit., pp. 22-26.

17 In sum, UNTAC was endowed with significant functions: military, electoral, civil administration, police, and human rights functions, along with ongoing repatriation, rehabilitation and reconstruction programs. See UN Website, (Homepage: Peace Agreements), Framework for a Comprehensive Political Settlement of the Cambodia Conflict, retrieved from : http://peacemaker.un.org/document-search?field_paregion_tid=All&field_paconflict_tid=All&field_pacountry_tid=Cambodia&keys=

18 There were slightly different data of the estimated cost of UNTAC operation by analysts. See Yasushi Akashi, An Assessment of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC). In Cambodia: Progress and Challenges Since 1991, (edited by Pou Sothirak, Geoff Wade and Mark Hong), ISEAS, Singapore, 2012, p. 162; Benny Widyono, Dancing in Shadows: Sihanouk, the Khmer Rouge, and the United Nations: in Cambodia, New York, 2008, p. 18; Trevor Findlay, op.cit., p. 33.

19 The election results were as follows: for the royalist FUNCINPEC party: 45.47 percent and the Cambodia People's Party CPP: 38.23 percent, along with smaller gains of 3.81% for the BLDP, 1.37% for MONILAKA and other parties 11.12%. Since no single party won the two-thirds majority needed to approve a new constitution, a coalition government was formed through a political arrangement that included all three parties. See Trevor Findlay, 1995, op.cit., p. 84. See also, Cambacérés, op.cit., p. 351.

20 For the details, see Trevor, op.cit., pp. 129-132; see also, Gareth Evans, Peacekeeping in Cambodia: Lessons Learned, Web Edition, No.4 -Aug. 1994, Vol.42- NATO Review, pp. 24-27 (also available on the Website: http://www.nato.int/docu/review/1994/9404-6.htm).

21 Some analysts observed that in fact UNTAC even obtained the collaboration of the major local actors, including the cooperation from SOC administration in many respects during that critical period. See Alldén, Susanne and Ramses Amer. The United Nations and Peacekeeping: Lessons Learned from Cambodia and East Timor, Umeå Working Papers in Peace and Conflict Studies, no 4 Department of Political Science, Umeå University, 2007, p. 9. Retrieved (June 2017) from http://www.diva-portal.se/smash/get/diva2:140573/FULLTEXT01.pdf. See also, Uch Kiman, op.cit., p. 62.

22 He also appreciated the effective communication between UNTAC leaders and the core group of P5 to settle the related problems they faced during the critical phases of the final mission, --e.g. during the election process and afterward until the final day of UNTAC departure. See Akashi, 2012¸op. cit., pp. 154-157;

23 In March 2000, Kofi Annan, then UN Secretary General appointed a Panel on UN Peace Operations, chaired by Lakhdar Brahimi, a former Foreign Minister of Algeria with a distinguished record of service for the United Nations; the Panel was in charge of undertaking a thorough review of UN peace and security activities in this area and subsequently produced a document called "Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (or commonly called the Brahimi Report) " that was adopted at the Millennium Summit. See UN doc. A/55/305-S/2000/809, New York: United Nations, 21 August 2000.

24 On 25 November 1998, the National Assembly was reconvened, and a deal was made, because the CPP could not obtain a two-third majority in the elections; a second coalition government between the CPP and FUNCIPEC was established with one Prime Minister, Samdech Hun Sen with Prince Ranariddh becoming President of the National Assembly. Sam Raingsy's party became the opposition. See Benny Widyono, Dancing in Shadows., op.cit., pp. 267-268; see also, Suellen Ratliff, op.cit., pp. 1260-1261.

25 Dr. Benny Widyono was a veteran UN diplomat from Indonesia. His mandate (as Political Representative of the Secretary General) ended in May 1997. His successor was Mr. Lakhan Mehrotra, an Indian veteran diplomat, who represented the UN Secretary General until his term completed by the end of 1999. See Benny Widyono., ibi., pp. 249-250. Kelly Mcevers., (As UN Chief's Office Closes Next Month, Its Head Reflects), Cambodia Daily, December 30, 1999.

26 Apart from this, in 1999 the Senate was established through the constitutional amendment with indirect elections held every 6 years.

27 At present there are more than 20 UN Agencies operating in Cambodia. See UNDP/Cambodia Website, retrieved (September 2016) from http://www.kh.undp.org/content/cambodia/en/home/operations/undp_un.html. See also, Executive Summary, United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF): 2011-2015, January 26, 2010, p. ii, https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/portal-document/Cambodia_UNDAF%202011-2015.pdf.

28 Cambodia was chosen by the United Nations to be one of the LDCs countries that made progress in achieving most of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). See, Keynote address of Prime Minister Samdech Hun Sen at the UN Summit for Post-2015 Development Agenda in New York (Cambodia is Proud of Progress), AKP, September 27, 2015. Also, see the Foreword of Prime Minister in the book: NSDP 2014-2016, p. iii.

29 See UNDP website: About Cambodia; retrieved (January 2017) from http://www.kh.undp.org/content/cambodia/en/home/countryinfo.html.

30 According to the UNDP data (2015), for example, it was indicated that despite improvement in income distribution, access to social services, particularly to health and education, remains unequal in Cambodia. The gender inequality Index ranks Cambodia 105 out of 149 countries. See, UN doc. DP/DCP/KHM/3, p. 2. Further, although the recent data of the World Bank shows a notable decline in the country's poverty rates from 47.8% in 2007 to 13.5 % in 2014, Cambodia may face other sweeping long-term challenges in the near-future in light of the country's eventual graduation from being a least-developed country (LDCs). See, Phnom Penh Post, 18, August 2017.

31 The WTO is not a UN specialized agency, but it has maintained strong relations with the United Nations and its agencies since its establishment. The WTO-UN relations are governed by the "Arrangements for Effective Cooperation with other Intergovernmental Organizations-: Relations between the WTO and the United Nations", signed on 15 November 1995. The WTO Director General participates in the Chief Executive Board which is the organ of coordination within the UN system. See WTO Website, retrieved (June 2017) from https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/coher_e/wto_un_e.htm.

32 Cambodia was endorsed along with Nepal by WTO Ministers at 5th WTO Ministerial Conference in Cancún in September 2003. The country officially became the 148th member of the WTO on 13 October 2004, (after completing the ratification process). See WTO Website, Accession of Cambodia, retrieved from https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/acc_e/a1_cambodge_e.htm.

33 Cambodia is committed to a successful completion of the Doha round of negotiations. These include, among others, the improvement of market access conditions for LDCs, mainly with respect to the commitments of completing "duties free and quota free" deal for the LDCs group. See the Statement by the Minister of Commerce of the Kingdom of Cambodia, at the General Debate of the 14th Ministerial Conference of the UNCTAD at 11:30, 20 July 2016, KICC, Nairobi, retrieved (June 2017) from http://unctad14.org/Documents/U14Stat_Cambodia_en.pdf.

34 The first LDCs Roundtable Meeting was held in September 2009, and the second LDCs Roundtable took place in March 2017; https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/acc_e/chinaround2017_e.htm (retrieved: April 2017).

35 See the Statement by Minister of Commerce of the Kingdom of Cambodia, at the General Debate of the 14th Ministerial Conference of the UNCTAD at 11:30, 20 July 2016, KICC, Nairobi, http://unctad14.org/Documents/U14Stat_Cambodia_en.pdf.

36 In that capacity, Cambodia became at the same time member of the General Committee of the General Assembly during those sessions.

37 Minister Prak Sokhonn, Vice Chairman of CMAA at that time was elected as the President of 11 MSP, while the Permanent Representative of Cambodia to the UN Office at Geneva was assigned as the President's Representative to ensure practical work and coordination during the whole process of Cambodia's Presidency mandate.

38 For UNESCO, see Doc. 33 C/NOM/2 23 September 2005; Item 12.1 of the provisional agenda, (General Conference, 33rd session Nominations), http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001409/140900e.pdf (retrieved: June 2017). Available also in, http://www.un.org/press/en/2001/ga9907.doc.htm. For CSW, see the Statement of Head of the Cambodia delegation at the 52nd Session of the Commission of the Status of Women, 25 February-07 March 2008, New York, retrieved (June 2017) from: http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw52/statements_missions/cambodia.pdf. For WHC, see the relevant Website of the WHC Convention, retrieved (June 2017) from http://whc.unesco.org/archive/2013/whc13-37com-20-en.pdf, Xinhua, 27 October 2009.

39 See, Mech Dara and Zsombor Peter, Cambodia Wins Seat on ILO Governing Body, Cambodia Daily, June 12, 2014. Cambodia was elected member of UNDP/UNFPA)/UNOPS Executive Board within the ECOSOC (to serve three-year terms beginning on 1 January 2018). See UN website, retrieved (May 2017) from https://www.un.org/press/en/2017/ecosoc6824.doc.htm.

40 The Meeting took place during Cambodia's Presidency of the said Meeting of the Ottawa Convention (11 MSP for 2011-2012);

41 The then Deputy Prime Minister Sok An was at the time elected as Chairperson of the 37th session of the World Heritage Committee (WHC) that was organized from 16-27 June 2013 in Phnom Penh/ Siem Reap, Cambodia, see Doc. WHC-13/37.COM/INF.2, retrieved (June 2017) from: http://whc.unesco.org/en/sessions/37COM/documents/.

42 Further, Cambodia adopted the "National Strategic Plan on Green Development for 2013-2030" along with the establishment of its National Council of Green Growth that aims to promote green economy (AKP, October 02, 2015). See also, Cambodia Climate Change Strategic Plan 2014–2023. See UNDP Website, Cambodia, retrieved (June 2017) from http://www.kh.undp.org/content/cambodia/en/home/library/environment_energy/cambodia-climate-change-strategic-plan-2014--2023.html.

43 On 22 November 2016, the National Assembly unanimously passed legislation on the Paris Agreement on climate change which is a step forward toward the ratification process as required by the Cambodia's Constitution. See Phnom Penh Post, 23 November 2016.

44 As of September 2016, 124 states have ratified or acceded to the Rome Statute. Cambodia signed the Rome Statute on 23 October 2000 and ratified it on 11 April 2002. See, ICC Website: https://asp.icc-cpi.int/en_menus/asp/states%20parties/Pages/the%20states%20parties%20to%20the%20rome%20statute.aspx.

45 The Rome Statute established four types of core international crimes: genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and crime of aggression under the ICC jurisdiction. The Court (ICC) became operational since 2003.The ICC is officially independent of the UN system, but reports its activities to the United Nations; it has observer status in the General Assembly and access to the UN conference and other services. Under the Statute, the concept of complementarity primarily applies in the context of the exercise of jurisdiction by the ICC. It means that the Rome Statute (article 17) allows the ICC to intervene only if states are unable or unwilling genuinely to investigate, prosecute and try an individual who allegedly committed the crimes foreseen in the Rome Statute. Under Article 13 of the Rome Statute, the Security Council may refer cases to the ICC, as it has done with two cases as of early 2011 (those of Sudan and Libya). See Karen A. Mingst and Margaret P. Karns, The United Nations in the 21st Century, Westview Press, 2012, p. 238-240.

46 A list of Cambodia's ratification, accession to or signing of most relevant important treaties and conventions on Disarmament, Arms Control and Weapons of Mass Destruction, can be retrieved from the UN Website for disarmament: http://unrcpd.org/region/cambodia/.

47 Consistent with its Constitution, Cambodia co-sponsored most important resolutions for peace, security and disarmament within the First Committee of the UN General Assembly, including its compliance with other important resolutions of relevant UN and regional forums. For example, Cambodia complied with the UNSC resolution 1373 by reporting to the UN Counter- Terrorism Committee. Retrieved from: http://www.un.org/en/sc/ctc/resources/1373.html. See UN Doc. S/2006/257, (25 April 2006), (Annex III, Member States submitting national reports as well as additional information), April 2006, p. 33, http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2006/257.

48 See UNODC Website, UNODC strengthens Cambodia's law enforcement capabilities on counter terrorist financing; retrieved (January 2017) from https://www.unodc.org/southeastasiaandpacific/en/cambodia/2015/02/counter-terrorist-financing/story.html. See also, Country Reports on Terrorism 2009, Chapter 2. East Asia and Pacific Overview, Global Security.Org. Released by the Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, August 5, 2010; retrieved (January 2017) from http://www.globalsecurity.org/security/library/report/2010/c-rprt-terrorism_2009-02b.htm. See, Regional Workshop on Implementation of Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004) Hosted by the RGC, retrieved (December 2016) from http://unrcpd.org. http://www.un.org/press/en/2014/dc3528.doc.htm.

49 See Country Reports on terrorism, United States Department of State Publication, April 2008, pp. 30-32, retrieved (January 2017) from http://www.iri.edu.ar/publicaciones_iri/anuario/CD%20Anuario%202008/Amnor/105904.pdf. See also, Statement by Permanent Representative of Cambodia at the Sixth Committee of the General Assembly, Agenda Item 108, 13, October 2015, retrieved (January 2017) from: http://papersmart.unmeetings.org/media2/7652570/cambodia.pdf.

50 The Ottawa Convention is formally called "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction". As of June 2017, 162 countries have ratified or acceded to the Convention (Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention). See, UN Website (UNODA), retrieved from http://disarmament.un.org/treaties/t/mine_ban;

51 The Agreement is called "Partnership Principles for the Implementation of the National Mine Action Strategy 2010-2019, retrieved from http://www.cdc-crdb.gov.kh/cdc/documents/Sector_Strategy/13_Mine_Action/Signed_Partnership_Prin ciples_MA.pdf.

52 See the Statement of Head of Cambodia Delegation at the United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Program of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, New York, (26 June-07 July, 2006), retrieved from UN Website of Review Conference 2006: http://www.un.org/events/smallarms2006/pdf/arms060628cambod-eng.pdf. http://www.un.org/events/smallarms2006/mem-states060628.html.

53 The country was recognized among the 60 countries that have collected and destroyed large amounts of illegal small arms under the "Flames of Peace "bonfires. See UN Website, Review Conference 2006, ibid.

54 These include, among others, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW or CCWC) and its relevant Protocols,—apart from the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Website of ICRC, Treaties for Cambodia); See, Cambodia Daily, 25 October 2013.

55 According to the government's estimates, as of May 2017, Cambodia has sent a total of 4,459 blue helmet troops to take part in UN peacekeeping missions in Sudan, South Sudan, Central African Republic, Chad, Syria, Lebanon, Mali, and Cyprus, AKP, 10, May 2017. See also, Prashanth Parameswaran, Cambodia Marks Milestone in UN Peacekeeping Contributions: It is the tenth year the ASEAN state has sent peacekeepers abroad, The Diplomat, 05, January 2016.

56 In compliance with the Paris Peace Agreements, the Commission on Human Rights at the time adopted the Resolution 1993/6 of the United Nations of 19 February 1993 that gave the then "United Nations Centre for Human Rights" a mandate which combined monitoring, protection and public reporting functions with technical assistance and advisory services. See the Report of the UN Secretary-General, –UN Doc. E/CN.4/1993/19. In 2006, the SRSG on Human Rights was renamed "Special Rapporteur" (called as country's mandate holder–SR) following the establishment of the Human Rights Council (HRC).

57 The work of OHCHR in Cambodia is originally guided by a biennial resolution of the Human Rights Council (24/29),—A Biennial Memorandum of Understanding signed with the Royal Government of Cambodia; OHCHR also supports the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation of Cambodia, appointed under successive HRC resolutions. See UN Website of OHCHR/Cambodia: http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Countries/AsiaRegion/Pages/KHSummary.aspx.

58 The current Special Rapporteur is Ms. Rhone SMITH from United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland appointed by the Human Rights Council. Before 2008, the Cambodia mandate-holder was held by a Special Representative of the Secretary-General for human rights in Cambodia (SRSG) and appointed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Formerly the mandate holder also reported to the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights/the HRC. The following are the former Special Rapporteurs/Special Representatives of the Secretary General: Mr. Surya Prasad SUBEDI, (Nepal), 2009-2015, Mr. Yash GHAI, (Kenya) 2005-2008, Mr. Peter LEUPRECHT, (Austria) 2000-2005, Mr. Thomas HAMMARBERG, (Sweden) 1996-2000, Mr. Michael KIRBY (Australia) 1993-1996. See UNHCHR Website: Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Cambodia, retrieved (December 2016) from http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/SP/CountriesMandates/KH/Pages/SRCambodia.aspx.

59 In June 1997, the then Co-Prime Ministers, Prince Norodom Ranariddh and Samdech Hun Sen, wrote a joint letter to Mr. Kofi Annan, UN Secretary-General at that time, requesting UN assistance in prosecuting the crimes of the Khmer Rouge. See, Jean-Marc Lavergne, Justice and Reconciliation in Cambodia. In the book" Cambodia: Progress and Challenges Since 1991", (Edited by Pou Sothirak, Geoff Wade, Mark Hong), Singapore, ISEAS 2012, p. 195.

60 Further, when Kofi Annan met with Prime Minister Hun Sen in Bangkok on 12 February 2000, he stressed the need for "minimum international standards" while agreeing to send a UN negotiating team to Phnom Penh in March of the same year. David Scheffer, KR Tribunal- *The Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia* Mayer, Brown, Rowe & Maw/Robert A. Helman Professor of Law Northwestern University School of Law, Chicago, Illinois, pp. 8-9, (2008), retrieved (June 2017) from http://www.cambodiatribunal.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/history_history-analysis-scheffer_english.pdf.

61 In its resolution 57/228 of 18 December 2002, the General Assembly welcomed the promulgation of the ECCC Law (A/RES /57/228B of 13 May 2003); Further, the Agreement between "the United Nations and the Royal Government of Cambodia Concerning the Prosecution under Cambodian Law of Crimes Committed during the Period of Democratic Kampuchea" was signed by then Deputy Prime Minister Sok An and United Nations Under-Secretary-General Hans Corell at Chaktomuk Theatre in Phnom Penh on 6 June 2003. See ECCC Website, (retrieved: June 2017): https://www.eccc.gov.kh/en/chronlologies/agreement-between-united-nations-and-royal-government-cambodia-concerning-prosecution. See also, The Khmer Rouge Tribunal, Edited by John D. Ciorciari, Documentation Center of Cambodia, 2006, pp. 186-201.

62 For the Khmer Rouge Tribunal, most important jurisdictional issues were temporal and personal. Under the ECCC Law (Articles 1-8) and the UN-Cambodia Agreement, the Court is limited to cover only "senior leaders of Democratic Kampuchea and those who were most responsible for the crimes and serious violations" falling within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Tribunal. The Court's temporal jurisdiction covers a period of Pol Pot's regime (i.e. between April 17, 1975, and January 6, 1979). For the details see, Kelly Whitley, History of the Khmer Rouge Tribunal: Origins, Negotiations, and Establishment. In the Khmer Rouge Tribunal, edited by Edited by John D. Ciorciari, Documentation Center of Cambodia, 2006, p. 47; pp. 168-169 and pp. 187-191. Also see David, Scheffer, op.cit., pp. 11-13.

63 Since its creation until 15 March 2017, the Court spent almost 300 Million (over $293.1 million). See ECCC Website: ECCC Financial Outlook (as at 15 March 2017). For the details, see also, Seth Mydans, 11 Years, $300 Million and 3 Convictions. Was the Khmer Rouge Tribunal Worth It, April 10, 2017, New York Time.

64 Case 001: Defendant: Kaing Guek Eav alias Duch; Case 002: on 23 November 2016, the Supreme Court Chamber of ECCC pronounced its judgment on appeals against the trial judgment in Case 002/01 against Nuon Chea, former Deputy Secretary of the Communist Party of Kampuchea, and Khieu Samphan, former Head of State of Democratic Kampuchea. Further, on 23 June 2017, the Trial Chamber of the ECCC concluded nine days of closing statements in Case 002/02 against Nuon Chea and Khieu Samphan. See ECCC Website, Closing Statements in Case 002/02 conclude; retrieved (July 2017) from: https://www.eccc.gov.kh/en/articles/closing-statements-case-00202-conclude.The other defendants: Ieng Sary (deceased), and Ieng Thirith (currently under judicial supervision after having been found unfit to stand trial); Case 003: Defendant: Meas Muth; Case 004: Defendants: Im Chaem, Yim Tith, Ao An. Note: on 22 February 2017, the Co-Investigating Judges issued a joint closing order in the proceedings against Im Chaem in Case 004/1. See ECCC Website, https://www.eccc.gov.kh/en/about-eccc/introduction. (Retrieved: July 2017).

65 East Timor and Kosovo Courts were set up as cases of example of a mix tribunal's model. Besides these, there were other forms of non-judicial procedure mechanisms –such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa –TRC.

66 At this time, the dispute concerned only "a small surrounding area" near the Temple. See, Luke Hunt, Cambodia Cheers ICJ Ruling on Preah Vihear, The Diplomat, 13 November, 2013.

67 In its decision, by way of interpretation, the Court declared unanimously that the Judgment of 15 June 1962 decided that Cambodia had sovereignty over the whole territory of the promontory of Preah Vihear Temple, as defined in paragraph 98 of the present Judgment, and that, in consequence, Thailand is obligated to withdraw its military and police forces or other guards or keepers stationed at the Temple or in its vicinity on the Cambodian territory. See UN Website (UN News Center), UN Court rules for Cambodia in Preah Vihear temple dispute with Thailand, (11 November 2013), http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=46461#.V_DyJnRXehA. See also, the Reports of Judgments, Advisory Opinions and Orders, p. 41, available in the ICJ Website: http://www.icj-cij.org/files/case-related/151/151-20131111-JUD-01-00-EN.pdf.

68 Therefore in the Report, the Court considered that it was concerned only with sovereignty in the "the region of the Temple of Preah Vihear. See paragraphs 76-78, in the Reports of Judgments, Advisory Opinions and Orders, in ICJ Website, ibid,.

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CAMBODIA'S DEFENSE POLICY AND STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT: CONTEMPORARY ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND THE WAY FORWARD

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CAMBODIA'S DEFENSE POLICY AND STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT: CONTEMPORARY ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND THE WAY FORWARD

I. Introduction

Cambodia has recently recovered from decades of civil conflict and remains one of the poorest countries in the region. The current political stability and peace in Cambodia have provided great opportunities for the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) to focus on national reconstruction and economic development. The Royal Cambodian Armed Forces (RCAF) is currently at a major crossroads with respect to reforming its forces which contribute to the government's grand strategy called the "Rectangular Strategy".[1]

This strategy lists reform of the RCAF as one of the outcomes needed to achieve national strategic objectives. It states that the RGC is strongly committed to military reform with the goal of rebuilding the armed forces to an appropriate size and quality to be able to defend the country in wartime and peacetime (Cambodia National Strategic Plan 2009). Although the RCAF has achieved its missions considerably and satisfactorily, it faces significant challenges with respect to its reform program. Cambodia faces a wide range of significant strategic challenges. These include geographical challenges-land and maritime territorial disputes with neighboring states, managing strategic relations with superpowers- China and the United States and balancing Cambodia's foreign policy with China and ASEAN with regards to the South China Sea disputes.

This chapter will discuss the RCAF's defense policy and strategy and its role in the achievement of Cambodia's national strategic objectives. It first traces the RCAF's evolution from Cambodia's independence in 1953 to the present. It then discusses Cambodia's national security challenges, both traditional and non-traditional as well as defense policy challenges with emphasis on international defense cooperation and Cambodia's military ties with China and the US. This discussion is followed by an analysis of Cambodia's strategic guidance and the RCAF's role and response to meet the government's strategic objectives. Finally, the chapter will offer some recommendations for Cambodia to develop the RCAF to achieve Cambodia's national strategic objectives in peace, conflict, and war in the 21st century.

II. A Brief History of the RCAF

The RCAF had its origins in the 1946 French–Khmer Arms Treaty prior to Cambodian independence from France in 1953. This Treaty declared that Cambodia would have its own armed forces. At the time, King Norodom Sihanouk, who ranked as the Highest Commander of the RCAF, claimed that the RCAF was to play a peace-keeping role. According to the brief history of the RCAF written in Khmer by the Information and Propaganda Department of the RCAF Commander-In-Chief (2000), the King emphasized that "We do not love war because we have endured it for centuries already" (p. 2). Moreover, the King stated that "history shows us that war has engendered only injustice, cruelty and anarchy in the region. However, "we are ready to fight to our last breath to protect our independence and our territorial integrity" (RCAF Information and Propaganda Department, p. 2).

The Treaty also declared the RCAF mission as maintaining the sovereignty of the Kingdom of Cambodia, respecting the rule of law, maintaining public order, and maintaining the kingdom's border integrity. From 1954 to March 1970, under the Sangkum Reas Neyum (Popular Socialist Community Regime), which was under the leadership of Sihanouk, the RCAF enjoyed professional development and unity, enabling it to fulfill its duty to effectively protect and maintain the integrity of Cambodia. At that time, Cambodia was referred to as an island of Peace in the Indo-China peninsula/region by the national and international community RCAF Information and Propaganda Department, 2000).

The Cambodian situation dramatically changed following the bloodless coup on March 18, 1970, during which Prince Sihanouk, hitherto Cambodia's Head of State, was removed by his Defense Minister General Lon Nol (Kingsbury, 2005). Cambodia had not only suffered from the spillover effects of the Vietnam War in the 1960s and 1970s, during which massive US bombing was conducted on Cambodian territory, but Cambodia had also endured devastating civil conflict–mainly during the destructive and totalitarian Khmer Rouge Regime under Pol Pot from 1975 to early 1979, during which about one million people were killed. For more than three decades of civil conflict, the RCAF has endured many bitter experiences and hard times in developing its professionalism, as it was divided into different groups with different political ideologies, military doctrine, and equipment, and was used

variously as a political instrument by its embroiled political leadership (Cambodia Defense White Paper (DWP), 2000).

The Paris Peace Agreements of 1991 brought new hope to the Cambodian people following almost forty years of suffering. A democratically elected government was established following UN-supported elections in 1993. A Cambodian Constitution was then promulgated which clearly articulated Cambodia's aspiration to become an independent, neutral, and liberal democratic state The Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia, 1993). The RCAF was also made into a unified national armed force by integrating all three military factions except for the Khmer Rouge forces.

The three Cambodian military factions which complied with UN requirements were integrated into a unified national force; they included the Cambodian People's Armed Forces (CPAF), the Khmer People's National Liberation Armed Forces (KPNLAF), and the National Army of Independent Kampuchea (NAIK). The Khmer Rouge army faction was named the National Army of Democratic Kampuchea (NADK) and it boycotted the peace process and continued fighting against the government along the Cambodian-Thai border. Among the four Cambodian military factions, the CPAF was the largest armed force with over 100,000 effective regular soldiers and militia, and it belonged to the State of Cambodia (SOC) (FitzGerald, 1996).

The integration of all the Cambodian military factions resulted in a total personnel number of around 203,821 (International Crisis Group, 2000). This force strength was assessed as being too large, considering the size of the Cambodian population. Therefore, a military reform program was initiated by the UN to contribute to poverty reduction by transferring some of the defense budget to other needed social services such as health and education and to reduce the size of the RCAF in line with available resources. Cambodia faced significant challenges as the Khmer Rouge military forces were still a major threat to the national interest. Therefore, the RCAF's primary role focused on the internal threat from the Khmer Rouge forces which occupied some areas of Cambodian territory, especially the area along the Cambodian-Thai border, and which continued to wage guerrilla warfare against the ruling coalition government (An, 2010).

The coalition government broke down as second Prime Minister Hun Sen and his counterpart Prime Minister Prince Norodom Ranariddh used their forces against each other to seize power in 1997, which led to international pressure and the withholding of foreign aid (Lum, 2009). As a result, the military reform program ceased. The government's status was restored after Hun Sen allowed Prince Ranariddh to return and held new parliamentary elections in July 1998, as a result of international coordination and pressure.

The defense policy of the RGC changed dramatically after the complete demise of the Khmer Rouge administrative and military organization in 1998, as peace prevailed throughout the country. The RGC's defense policy declared that there was no indication of external military threats to the Kingdom of Cambodia in the present time and in the short- to medium-term future (DWP, 2006). Consequently, Cambodia began reducing its large standing force. However, the consequence of rising tensions with Thailand on their maritime and land border issues led to Cambodia stalling its demobilization program in

2008. There was an increased emphasis on the defense of borders by improving military capability to meet the security threat primarily from Thailand. These events were a significant challenge to the RGC military reform program. Efforts to reform the RCAF faced significant challenges before success could be achieved. Among the many problems faced by the RCAF were issues that could undermine the reform program, such as the lack of a strategic reform framework, poor reform management, and constraints on budget, human resources, and international cooperation.

III. Cambodia's National Security Challenges

Cambodia faces a wide range of immense strategic challenges. Cambodia's main security issue, traditional security, is the geographic challenges to its national security and development. As stated earlier, land and maritime territorial disputes with the neighboring states of Vietnam, Laos, and Thailand are the obvious and longstanding security challenges in Cambodia's strategic environment. While border disputes with Vietnam and Laos are being in the on-going process of negotiation through bilateral frameworks mechanism, the recent border clashes with Thailand in the area of Preah Vihear presented another security challenge to Cambodia. The dispute has become particularly damaging not only for both neighboring countries, fellow ASEAN members, but it also undermined the spirit of ASEAN thus becoming potential threat to the sub-region.

Cambodia and Thailand border tension is further complicated by the maritime dispute known as the Overlapping Claims Area (OCA) following the discovery of oil and gas in the Gulf of Thailand. In 2009, Thailand unilaterally revoked the 2001 *MOU between Thailand and Cambodia regarding the Area of their Overlapping Maritime Claims to the Continental Shelf* as a result of its frustration with the failure to resolve the land border dispute. Cambodia remains highly optimistic that offshore natural resources may significantly boost its economy by as much as USD 1.7 billion per year by 2021 (International Monetary Fund (IMF), 2006). Therefore, this important security issue will determine Cambodia's future access to offshore resources.

Cambodia also faces several transnational security challenges. It shares borders with Thailand, Laos, and Vietnam, and has limited resources to adequately monitor its overland crossings, maritime security, and coastlines. As a result, Cambodia's most significant challenge can be observed along its porous border towns and waterways. Potential pandemics, terrorist threats, and illicit activities such as the trafficking of drugs, small arms, and people, are of grave concerns to the Cambodian government as people and goods continue to move easily across mainland Southeast Asia (Ear, 2010).

As for terrorism, although Cambodia is not threatened by significant organized domestic terrorist groups currently operating in the country, the government is nevertheless cautious about the regional threat and has classified terrorism as one of its top transnational security concerns. Cambodia may be used as a "safe haven" by terrorist groups in the Southeast Asian region such as Indonesia's Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) (Ear, 2010).

Cambodia also faces major strategic challenges which relate to economic security, and the requirement to balance the strategic competition between China and the US to gain influence within Cambodia. This external power competition has a significant impact on Cambodia's political and economic circumstances as Cambodia remains heavily dependent on foreign aid for political and economic development as can be seen today. The key challenge is that while China and the US are the largest providers, they are competing for their own interests and influence in Cambodia, and the wider South East Asian region.

Cambodia's strategic challenge with regard to domestic politics is that both ruling and opposition parties used China, the US, and the West for their political objectives before and after the election. For example, during the election campaign in 2013, the opposition party called on Washington and the West for political support, accusing the ruling government of not respecting democratic principles, violating human rights, as well as a flawed justice system, and corruption. Some US lawmakers threatened to cut aid to Cambodia if the election was not "credible and competitive" (Matthew, 2013). China endorsed the victory of the ruling party, stating that its success would ensure continuation of a healthy relationship (Radio Free Asia, 2013). In contrast, the US, UN, and other western countries criticised the government for using excessive and brutal measures in cracking down on striking workers and then banning demonstrations, seeing this as a significant setback in Cambodia's development of democracy and rule of law (Kevin, 2014). Both the US and the European Union (EU) have not recognized the result and called for Cambodia to independently investigate the alleged election irregularities.

Another challenge Cambodia faces is centered on managing its relationship with China and ASEAN claimants in the context of territorial disputes in the South China Sea. This environment presents one of the most challenging difficulties for the kingdom's contemporary foreign policy (Cheunboran, 2016). It has been argued that, since 2012, the South China Sea has re-emerged as the most significant challenging foreign policy dilemma for Cambodia. Although the South China Sea is not of direct concern for Cambodia as a non-claimant state, it holds great relevance to the country as a member of ASEAN. While ASEAN has always been a cornerstone of Cambodia's foreign policy, the latter has been accused of siding with China at the expense of ASEAN unity (Sukmawani, 2016).

This accusation is primarily based on the fact that China has become Cambodia's largest foreign investor and biggest economic benefactor. The giant is also the biggest military assistance provider to Cambodia. Thus, some analysts and commentators have portrayed Cambodia as a Chinese "client state" (Ciorciari, 2013). Some Cambodian political analysts conclude that among the strategic challenges facing Cambodia, balancing between ASEAN and China on the contentious issue of the South China Sea is and will continue to be the most significant strategic challenge for Cambodia's foreign policy in the 21st century (Heng, 2017).

Cambodia is seen to strongly support China's core interests on South China Sea disputes. This resulted in ASEAN's failure to produce a Joint Communiqué following its 45th Annual Ministerial Meeting in Phnom Penh in July 2012. It was the first time in the history of ASEAN there was no communiqué as arguably, Cambodia refused to play the customary role of

seeking agreement among the ten ASEAN members. A number of ASEAN members pointed the finger to Cambodia for rejecting a proposal by the Philippines and Vietnam mentioning their territorial disputes with China in a unified statement. As a result, Cambodia has been criticised by Vietnam, and other ASEAN members as well as the international community for lacking an independent foreign policy (Un, 2012). The failure would have disgraced Prime Minister Hun Sen's commitment to play a neutral leadership role in setting regional-related issues that, "Cambodia would fulfill its leadership role responsibly and would work to neutrally moderate and mediate all regional and international issues" (Chheang, 2012).

Cambodia, however, insists the failure to issue the communiqué was caused not by intransigence on its part or any lack of effort to find common ground among all parties concerned. Responding to this criticism, the Phnom Penh government claimed that, "Cambodia has, again and again, become a victim of the South China Sea issue because of unjust accusations" (Cheunboran, 2016). Prime Minister Hun Sen asserted that the failure of the bloc to have a unified communiqué known as the "Phnom Penh Fiasco" was not from Cambodia but from the claimant states, referring to pressure from the Philippines and Vietnam, to incorporate their strong wording in the joint communiqué. He also blamed some ASEAN claimant states for "trying to drag Cambodia into the dispute" stating that, "they have a dispute, but they get Cambodia to be responsible" (Cheunboran, 2016).

IV. International Defense Cooperation Challenges

The RGC recognizes the importance of assistance from the international community for the RCAF's future development. The assistance from friendly countries for the RCAF reform program in areas such as downsizing the defense forces, human resource training, technological development, and cooperative efforts against crime and international terrorism, and participating in multinational disaster relief operations are vital for developing the professionalism of the RCAF (DWP, 2006).

The DWPs and other RCAF policy documents regard international military cooperation as crucial to improving RCAF professionalism as set out in the strategic objectives of the RCAF. According to the Defense and Strategic Review 2013 published by the Ministry of National Defense of Cambodia, "The RCAF must continue to strengthen and expand cooperation with security partners in the region and in the international arena by using bilateral and multilateral mechanisms based on unbiased political or ideological grounds and in the spirit of mutual interests" (p. 25).

The Constitution clearly states that "Cambodia reserves the right to receive foreign assistance by way of military equipment and training of its armed forces and other assistance for self-defense and to maintain public order and security within its territory" (DWP, 2000, pp. 25-26). Accordingly, the RCAF has received military assistance from all friendly countries around the world without any consideration of political conditions by those countries. For example, the United States and China are the major military assistance providers for the RCAF, even though the two countries have different strategic interests.

However, DWP (2006) also admits that there are some challenges in effectively cooperating with friendly foreign militaries. The RCAF lacks a specific and clear coordination, mechanism and planning in managing a foreign military assistance program. As a result, the military cooperation program often centers on only one area which sometimes is not a priority for RCAF development. Sometimes, the assistance has overlapped with military cooperation from different countries.

Cambodia Military Ties: Between China and US

The US and China have been competing for influence over Cambodia as they have different motivations, policy characteristics, and interests in relations with Cambodia in particular in providing development assistance. As mentioned earlier, both China and the US are two of the most important defense partners contributing significantly to the RCAF's professional development and capability. However, the recent decision of the Cambodian government to postpone the important bilateral military exercise and some defense cooperation with the US, and more recently with Australia, has raised concerns about Cambodia's future defense cooperation with Washington and the West. Cambodia's move has caused controversy about whether Cambodia is making a pivot to China (Var, 2017). Some see Cambodia's decision coming as a consequence of a naval drill with China in February 2016 and the armed forces exercise called the Golden Dragon for humanitarian aid and disaster relief management in December 2016. The joint military exercises with the US and Australia have considerably bolstered RCAF's capability. Therefore, some defense analysts believe that such a move could have some negative impacts on Cambodia's interests for its defense sector (Srivastava & Singhal, 2017, pp. 7-8).

Things have changed since the official opening of the Angkor Sentinel exercise in early 2016 when US Army Major General Edward Dorman III-Commander of the 8th Theater Sustainment Command in charge of the exercise - stated that "exercises like this one are critical to our regional stability and security…when we join together, train together, and grow together now, we ensure that we are prepared together for whatever the future may bring'. At that time, Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen regarded the exercise as 'a symbol of the strong military ties between the US and Cambodia" (Var, 2017).

Strategic competition between the two superpowers for influence and the ongoing tensions between China and ASEAN claimant states over the South China Sea have pushed Cambodia closer to the Chinese sphere of influence (Micheal, James & Leila, 2016). China has now emerged as Cambodia's most significant military partner and recently China provided considerable military training to the nation, helping Cambodia's military to significantly expand its capabilities (Aubrey & Prak, 2015).

For China, Cambodia's location is geopolitically important, allowing for security and oversight in the South China Sea with Vietnam, Taiwan, and the Philippines-especially to secure its claim on the disputed Spratly Islands and their natural resources. Burgos and Ear (2010) argue that if conflict occurs, "China may need Cambodia as a strategic, sea-accessible

location from which to launch a response" (p. 620). Geoff Wade claims Cambodia is part of the Chinese 'port investments network' in Asia (Micheal, James & Leila, 2016).

The RCAF has committed to a long-term process of reform and force structure review. Cambodia has demonstrated its intention to enhance bilateral defense relations with the US with the expectation that the western superpower will contribute to the RCAF's modernization process. Washington and other major donors such as Australia committed to helping the RCAF to develop a new "forward-looking Cambodia Defence White Paper in 2006" (Lewis, 2009, p. 5).

By comparison, the US military aid to Cambodia is relatively small and has often been delayed as a result of political tension. This was evident when Cambodia decided to suspend some military cooperation with the US in 2013 after US congressmen criticized election irregularities and urged the country to conduct an investigation. Furthermore, the US has provided aid for military equipment and technical assistance worth only USD 4.5 million since 2006 (Blaxland, 2013).

The US provided support in a wide range of military cooperation areas to improve RCAF's capability such as humanitarian assistance, promote peacekeeping, increase maritime security and broaden Cambodia's counterterrorism strategy. According to the US Embassy in Cambodia:

> Our cooperation focuses on international peacekeeping, counterterrorism, counternarcotics, border and maritime security, humanitarian assistance, disaster relief operation and defense sector reform. Our goals are to develop the capabilities of the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces (RCAF) in these areas while encouraging Cambodia's commitment to the rule of law, transparency in governance, sustained democratic development, and respect for human rights (VOA, 2016).

Unlike the Chinese approach, all assistance is subject to strict conditions and if the principle of democracy is deemed to have been violated, its provision could immediately cease. This was evident during the internal political turmoil in the Cambodian government during July 1997. The turmoil resulted in the US suspending all aid programs, including military assistance because it considered the actions of the coalition government to be against the principles of democracy and human rights.

Although there is still some frustration and concern with Cambodia's human rights record, as part of its pivot to Asia, Washington has supported Cambodia with a wide range of assistance-most notably UN peacekeeping operations which align with Cambodia's strategic interest in promoting the country's prestige on the international stage through the deployment of the RCAF (Lum, 2013).

Since 2010, the joint exercise with the US has served Cambodia's national interest in regard to RCAF's UN deployment. The exercise has played an important role in not only strengthening RCAF's capability in the areas of UN peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance, disaster relief and professionalism but also improving military-to-military cooperation

between the two countries. According to the US Embassy spokesman Jay Raman, "Joint military exercises benefit both of our nations by enhancing our ability to work together to combat maritime piracy, protect trade and shipping routes, deter terrorists and provide humanitarian assistance during natural disasters (Associated Press, 2017).

In short, clearly, the US and China, as well as other countries, have been crucial players in contributing to the reform policy of RCAF. It is also clear that China and the US have different policies toward the kingdom which could eventually lead to a strategic dilemma for Cambodia in managing this relationship without compromising its sovereignty and integrity.

V. RGC's Strategic Direction and RCAF's Response

Cambodia's national defense policy and objectives are based on three main strategic factors: the RGC's political agenda, assessments of threats to national security, and the state's Constitution. The RGC's strategic interests and objectives have focused on international security, social order, national reconstruction, and international cooperation. As Cambodia is one of the poorest countries in the region, its primary national interests are economic development and reducing poverty (Cambodia National Strategic Development Plan, 2009). Cambodia's capacity to address its main challenge of achieving its poverty reduction target will be impossible without assistance from the international community.

As a result, one of the pillars of Cambodia's "Rectangular Strategy" is to integrate Cambodia into the regional and international communities. To achieve its goal, the RGC has embarked upon reforms in many fields of government, including military reform as one of the key fields of reform for the RGC. The Prime Minister has firmly committed to the necessity of reform by stating that "reform is a matter of life and death for Cambodia" (Office of the Council of Ministers, 2008).

The RCAF has played a significant role in achieving Cambodia's national security concerns and national interests. The RGC's defense policy changed dramatically after the demise of the Khmer Rouge administrative and military organization in 1998, as peace prevailed throughout the country. The RCAF's primary role was swiftly re-oriented from an inward-looking to an outward-looking policy. Emphasized in the Cambodian National Defense White Paper 2006, there are four basic roles of the RCAF: to defend the nation and its strategic interests; to contribute to national development; to maintain peace, stability, and social order; and to participate in international cooperation (DWP, 2006). All of these roles will remain relevant as part of the national effort to promote stability and achieve strategic objectives.

VI. The Defense Reform Program and its Implications

> Reform is a matter of life and death for Cambodia. Only if we jointly carry out reforms, then we will be able to get rid of the vicious cycle of poverty and bolster up a once strong and proud nation to get back its place. On the contrary, if we avoid carrying out reforms we will certainly miss the chance and opportunity, and the momentum that we are having today, and our people will continue to mire in poverty, endless conflict and instability (Prime Minister Hun Sen's Address, 2004).

Since 1993, military reform in Cambodia has been driven by the complete end of civil war. Moreover, the integration of all factions into a unified Cambodian military, the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces (RCAF), gave it a considerably large strength of around 203, 821 with more officers than enlisted soldiers (International Crisis Group, 2000). Under the UN transitional administration, only 36,000 soldiers out of the planned 150,000 were demobilized. Another objective for the reform of the military has been to lower military spending, as well as to transfer the savings from demobilization to the development of priority sectors such as health, education, and rural development.

In 2000, the RGC recognized the end of the civil war by releasing its first-ever Cambodian defense strategy document, the Defense White Paper (DWP) titled *Defending the Kingdom of Cambodia 2000: Security and Development.* The DWP advocates a significantly smaller and more effective military force in the future. To achieve this reform, the DWP calls for the demobilization of 55,000 troops from a total force of 160,000 and a restructuring of the defense organization. The government planned to downsize the RCAF from over 20 divisions to 12 brigades. It also aimed at training more young officers mainly abroad and establishing more military bases and barracks (DWP, 2000).

A consequence of the rising tensions with Thailand since 2008 has meant that the RGC has stalled the downsizing program. The "deep reform" program has refocused on the priority of border defense including maritime and land borders. Strategic roads, bases, communications facilities, and villages have been built along the border. The RGC has purchased new military equipment for the purpose of national defense. Military training exercises have been actively conducted at all levels. At the same time, more soldiers have been recruited.

Despite the longstanding border issues with Thailand, Cambodia did not think that it would be subjected to a physical threat from an immediate neighbor. The greatest security concern for Cambodia had been transnational security challenges along its borders. However, the 2008 border clashes with Thailand onward were a wakeup call for the Cambodian government and its armed forces to reconsider its defense capability.

While border disputes, threats from transnational criminals and international terrorism have recently become major concerns, the RCAF has strengthened its defense capability to protect its borders, especially through the sustainable presence of the RCAF at all strategically important points. Designating the RCAF as a border protection force has been intended not

only for the protection of the nation against any external intrusion into Cambodian territory but also to maintain peace and stability with neighboring countries. This has remained the top foreign policy priority of the government (National Strategic Development Plan 2009-2013).

Cambodia's protracted border dispute with Thailand since 2008 has had a significant impact on its strategic circumstances. The defense sector has now been prioritized following the border clash with Thailand over the small piece of land surrounding the Preah Vihear temple. The RGC has dramatically changed its military reform focus beyond the current downsizing program of its large forces to a "deep" military reform aiming at modernizing its military capability.

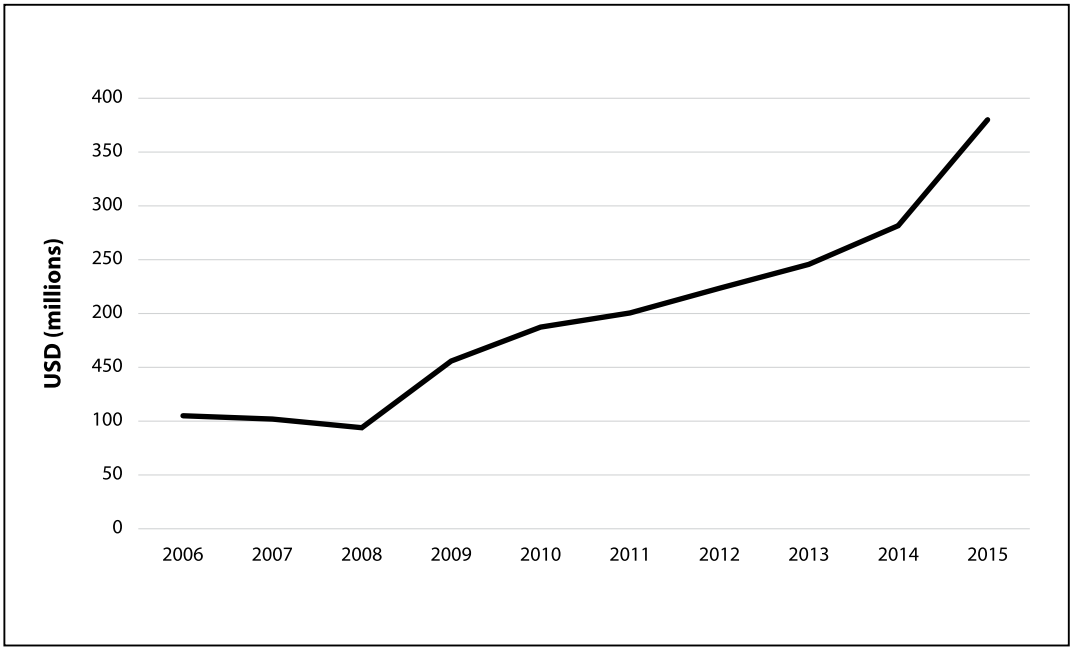
The RGC has made defense of its borders a priority and the 3rd, 4th, and 5th military regional commands are charged with the task. Since late 2008, a hundred buildings for military headquarters and military barracks have been built, and the defense communication system has been improved. Thousands of houses have been built along the Cambodian-Thai border for soldiers' families, and military strategic routes along the border have been constructed. Military training and exercises have been conducted nationwide including sending hundreds of troops to be trained abroad. Field exercises and live-fire weapons training which were almost non-existent, have been actively conducted. For example, in early 2010, hundreds of BM-21 multiple rocket launchers have been fired as part of military training exercises.

Recently, the RGC has purchased new military equipment such as almost one hundred of the new Eastern European-made tanks, combat vehicles, and Armored Personnel Carriers (APC) (Channelnesasia News, 2010), and most recently the government purchased a number of Chinese-built Zhi-9 utility helicopters (Reuters, 2011). More soldiers have been recruited. The RGC has increased its naval capability by increasing the size of the navy and purchasing more equipment in order to protect Cambodian maritime interests. As for security institutional building, the RGC has established counter-terrorism and maritime security to protect Cambodia's national interests. Cambodia's defense spending has increased considerably. The national budget increased 17 percent to USD 2.4 billion of which USD 300 million is allocated for the national defense sector. This is compared with the 2010 budget which was USD 1.97 billion, of which USD 276 million was allocated for defense spending (Voice of America, 2010).

According to the Australian Defense Force's Defense Economic Trends 2016 report (2016) as seen in Figure 1, the country's military expenditure increased yearly from just USD 100 million in 2008 to about USD 400 million in 2015. Defense spending continued to rise to USD 383 million in 2016 and USD 455 million in 2017 out of a USD 4.3 billion and USD 5 billion total national budget respectively. In defending its defense budget increase, the government asserts that the majority of the increase in defense expenditure has been allocated for the ever-increasing pension and salary costs for military personnel (Grevatt, 2016). As a result, military personnel salaries were increased. At the same time, more funds have been allocated for military facilities such as military barracks and equipment.

As part of its roles in contributing to the building and developing of the nation, the RCAF has been actively contributing to the rehabilitation of physical infrastructure, building and repairing roads for communication and irrigation systems, demining, rescuing people during natural disasters and participating in international peacekeeping missions. The RCAF has been in the process of developing its capability for rapid response to both domestic and international natural disasters (Chheang, 2010).

Cambodia's Defense Budget



Source: *Australian Department of Defense, Defense Economic Trends in the Asia Pacific 2016*

RCAF's Role in UN Peacekeeping

In addition to its role in addressing national threats, the RGC has committed to increasing its international credibility and prestige through increased RCAF participation in regional and international cooperation activities, including the deployment of the RCAF in support of UN operations. From being a country that had UN Peacekeepers from 1992-93, Cambodia is now one of the major contributors to UN peacekeeping operations for the maintenance of global order, security, and humanitarian assistance around the world, particularly on the African continent and the Middle East. The RGC is committed to UN Peacekeeping and this is one of the government's top priority policies. Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen has clearly stated that "Cambodia has been transformed from a war-torn nation grateful to receiving assistance from UN forces to one which now proudly contributes to UN peace-keeping missions in other troubled countries." (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Cambodia, 2012).

The RCAF has unique experience and capability in the field of demining. After emerging from decades of war, Cambodia is a country with millions of long-buried landmines and other explosives. This experience has placed Cambodia in a good position to contribute its niche capability in demining to UN peace support operations. As Irwin Loy explains:

> Cambodia is one of the most contaminated countries in the world when it comes to landmines and unexploded ordnance (UXO). But with almost two decades of experience slowly cleaning away that legacy from contaminated rice fields and jungle brush across the country, Cambodian authorities have also become reluctant experts. They are now hoping to use that expertise to help other developing countries afflicted with similar problems (Loy, 2010).

Since 1993, the RCAF's primary role had been overwhelmingly oriented toward inward-looking strategy- domestic security and development. Nevertheless, by the early 2000s, RCAF was designated to a new peacekeeping role in an attempt to serve Cambodia's foreign policy objectives and national interests. This was evident when in bidding for the non-permanent UN Security Council seat for 2013-2014, calling itself as "a proud candidate", Cambodia proudly used its successful peacekeeping contribution since 2006 as a case to bid for a non-permanent seat on the security council in 2013-2014 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Cambodia, 2012).

According to the DWP (2006), the Cambodian government has directed the RCAF to enhance Cambodian international credibility and national prestige through increased participation in regional and international cooperation activities, to include deployment of the armed forces in support of United Nations operations. Strictly adhering to the RGC's Strategic Guidance to integrate Cambodia into international community, RCAF has been actively trained and equipped its military under the auspices of Cambodia's friends and partner countries, in particular, the US Government's Global Peace Operations Initiative. As a result, Cambodia has sent its troops to a number of hotspots in the world.

Cambodia made its first successful contribution to a UN peacekeeping overseas mission in 2006. The strategic rationale for the RGC's expansion of the RCAF's international role was elaborated in the Cambodian defense strategic objective document of the Ministry of National Defense of Cambodia in 2006:

> With the evolution of global security trends and apart from its contribution to security and development for the nation, the RCAF must have another duty: engagement in international affairs. Therefore, the new objectives of the defense policy are Security, Development and International Cooperation. The objective of international cooperation is consistent with the Royal Government's policy of integrating Cambodia into the international community. (DWP, 2006, pp. 35-36)

Recently, Prime Minister Hun Sen stated that "the RCAF is the leading force in promoting Cambodia's prestige in the international arena through participation in peace and humanitarian missions within the framework of the United Nations request." (DWP, 2006, p. Introduction). The RCAF has actively engaged in peacekeeping operations under the framework of the United Nations since 2006 and thousands RCAF members have been sent to other countries such as Sudan, Chad, Central Africa, and Lebanon, where Cambodia led a second leading military UN mission among ASEAN nations (Thayer, 2014).

To realize this new important role, the RGC attaches significant importance of assistance from the international community for the RCAF's current and future capability development in general and peacekeeping development in particular. The 2006 White Paper explains: "The RCAF must also consider developing a number of capabilities to contribute to international cooperation … in order to enhance these capabilities more effectively, cooperation and support from experienced friendly countries are needed. The coordinating committee for force deployment to UN peacekeeping missions was established as a national mechanism to coordinate and liaise with the UN as well as various national and international agencies" (pp. 84-85).

VII. The Way Ahead for RCAF and RGC

As Cambodia's current and future defense policy and security/strategic challenges move forward, the RCAF must be prepared to meet the national strategic objectives in the 21st century. It is recommended that the following changes be made to the RCAF's mission. The RCAF, particularly the Army, has done particularly well. The RCAF is the largest standing force and has achieved its missions such as defending territorial sovereignty from external invasions and transnational security threats, performed UN peacekeeping operations and contributed to maritime security and disaster relief operations. At the same time, the RCAF has faced a wide range of challenges in terms of preparedness, readiness, and capability because of limited equipment and resources. The development of core skills and fundamental systems are required to focus and sustain a credible military force capable of ensuring the defense of Cambodia's national territory.

As for counter-terrorism, although there is no pressing terrorist problem in Cambodia, it is still important for the RCAF to build and retain the capability to deter any new or emerging terrorist threat. Peacekeeping operations align well with Cambodia's aspiration to participate in regional and international agreements to contribute to regional and global peace and stability as well as to enhance Cambodia's international credibility and national prestige through cooperation in peacekeeping operations.

As a poor country, the RCAF's transformation will be a challenge for Cambodia without foreign assistance. The RCAF must continue to strengthen and expand cooperation with security partners in the region and in the international arena by using bilateral and multilateral mechanisms based on unbiased political or ideological grounds and in the spirit of mutual interests as pronounced by RCAF defense policy documents. The RGC stresses

the importance of comprehensive cooperation in bilateral and multilateral frameworks in order to develop the RCAF's professionalism. Cambodia's Defense Strategy Review 2013 clearly states the need for RCAF's cooperation with security and defense partners:

> The RCAF must increase an in-depth cooperation with security partner countries to ensure the sustainability of scholarship offers and other skill courses to develop human resources. Efforts should also be made to seek other support for the defense force. The exchange of study tours, military students and intelligence information should be increased. Protocols, conventions, memorandums of understanding, agreements, joint statements, joint training exercise programs should all be expanded including humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, maritime security, peacekeeping operations, counter-terrorism (Cambodia's Defense Strategic Review, 2013).

As for the strategic challenges, Cambodia cannot afford to lose either support in this competition because both countries are playing a crucial role in assisting Cambodian development in general and RCAF in particular. Each superpower addresses part of Cambodia's development needs. Instead of taking sides to exclude either the US or China, Cambodia must balance the powers and their influence on its domestic economy, politics and society. The real issue is how the Cambodian government manages and implements solutions to its own domestic problems.

As far as China and ASEAN claimant states are concerned, it seems clear that the Cambodian government has a strategic dilemma in weighing the trade-off between ASEAN, a cornerstone of Cambodian foreign policy, and China, Cambodia's most important development partner. Cambodia needs ASEAN because the country's best long-term interests lie in regional initiatives like ASEAN; Mekong regional development; and working to harmonize foreign relations as far as possible with countries in the region and the world. ASEAN is the best platform for Cambodia's outreach to the world to reap political, security, and development benefits as it aligns with the Cambodian policy agenda for development. It has been argued that ASEAN provides a roadmap for advancing and protecting Cambodia's international interests and defines how the country engage with the world in the years ahead.

But Cambodia also needs China because the giant has been the strongest supporter for developing Cambodian infrastructures, such as roads, bridges, and public buildings, with less complicated conditions responding to Cambodia's development needs. While this is a tough choice for Cambodia, it does not mean that Cambodia will have to make a strategic binary choice between ASEAN and China.

The integration of Cambodia in sub-regional, regional, and global cooperation has significantly enhanced the prestige of the Kingdom of Cambodia in the international arena and created an enabling environment for the mobilization of external development assistance to Cambodia. Cambodia's capacity to address its main challenge of achieving its poverty reduction target — upper-middle income country status by 2030 and high-income status by 2050- would be unlikely to become a reality without foreign assistance from

diverse aid providers and integration into the international community. The South China Sea issue between China and ASEAN's claimant states is unlikely to end anytime soon. Therefore, it would be a great opportunity for Cambodia's long-term national interests if the country could be able to balance between the two. A collaborative approach between China and ASEAN would deliver the best outcome for Cambodia. Although Cambodia has close relations with China, as part of ASEAN it is important for the country to move towards increased major power engagement in the region and strengthening of relations with other countries in order to secure its own future.

VIII. Conclusion

The RCAF is in the process of transforming into a professional armed force that is outward-looking. The security outlook of the Kingdom of Cambodia has changed due to the evolving regional and global security environment. In the current external environment, the RCAF has played an increasingly important role as the leading force to support the nation's strategic objectives and in implementing national policy. Defending the sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of the country from external invasion and transnational threats, and contributing to national stability, safety, and security are primary roles of the RCAF. As part of its international obligations, the RCAF has a strong commitment to combating terrorism and participating in peacekeeping and humanitarian missions.

Cambodia is in need of assistance from friendly countries to actualize its RCAF reform program as elaborated in the Cambodian defense documents. As a small and poor state in the region, Cambodia usually makes practical choices for its people by seeking to capitalize on its relations with China, the US, and any other countries that may suit its interests (The Strategist, 2013). Therefore, the RGC should strengthen military cooperation with friends. Different friendly countries bring different defense cooperation to the improvement of Cambodia's military professionalism. For example, the US has provided support in a wide range of military cooperation areas to improve RCAF's capability in humanitarian assistance, peacekeeping, maritime security, and in broadening Cambodia's counterterrorism strategy. The RCAF should also develop an effective military defense cooperation plan that provides priority areas for international assistance. This will lead to effective international military cooperation.

Endnote

1 Rectangular strategy for growth, employment, equity and efficiency phase II is the "Socio-Economic Policy Agenda" of the Royal Government of Cambodia of the fourth legislature of the national assembly. It was announced by the Prime Minister at the Office of the Council of Ministers, Phnom Penh on 26 September 2008. The rectangular strategy phase II maintains the earlier structure and fine-tunes and sharpens the prioritized policies of the rectangular strategy in its first phase.

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GREATER MEKONG SUBREGIONAL COOPERATION (GMS) AND CAMBODIA'S FOREIGN POLICY

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GREATER MEKONG SUBREGIONAL COOPERATION (GMS) AND CAMBODIA'S FOREIGN POLICY

I. Introduction

The Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS), consisting of Cambodia, China, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam, is a natural economic region geographically bound by the mighty Mekong River. With a total population of around 326 million and an increasing middle-class population, GMS has a great potential to become a new growth center in Asia. This paper attempts to provide an overview of the GMS and analyzes Cambodia's foreign policy towards the GMS. It argues that sub-regional cooperation mechanism plays a significant role in concretizing regional integration and community building. The GMS is one of the core sub-regional cooperation schemes linking countries in the mainland Southeast Asia. Economic pragmatism defines Cambodia's interest in regional integration. Cambodia perceives GMS as an important sub-regional economic cooperation mechanism connecting the Mekong countries and beyond. However maintaining and advancing the development of such sub-regional cooperation require foremost win-win cooperation strategy and pragmatic economic cooperation.

II. Regionalism in Southeast Asia

Regionalism in Southeast Asia is generally understood as a multi-layered loose regional institution, involving various inter-connected and multi-level economic, political, security, social, and cultural factors. The nature and characteristics of regionalism in Southeast Asia are open and inclusive, welcoming all major global and regional actors to be part of the regional cooperation process. Southeast Asia's region-building process has been driven not only by formal state-led initiatives—referred to as "regionalism"—but also by the more informal "bottom up" process of "regionalization", brought about by globalization and complex networks of trade and production (Hurrell, 1995).

Regionalism in Southeast Asia has evolved from political cooperation to economic and socio-cultural cooperation. The main objective of the founding of ASEAN in 1967 was to mitigate the political and sovereignty differences between the Southeast Asian states and to deal with the spread of communism in the region. After the end of the Cold War, especially after Vietnam joined ASEAN in 1995, there was no ideological wall between ASEAN and Indochina. Regional cooperation and integration started to focus on economic integration, with the creation of the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA).

Sub-regionalism also evolves in Southeast, involving sub-regionally localized initiatives between government agencies, business, and civil society to advance sub-regional cooperation and integration. Compared with other regions, Southeast Asia has a high density of sub-regional cooperation mechanisms, also known as "growth triangles" or "growth quadrangles". These zones have become a defining feature of Southeast Asia's regionalism (Dent & Richter, 2011, p. 30). Sub-regionalism and regionalism assist countries in adapting to and moving towards multilateralism (Menon, 2005).

Sub-regional cooperation plays a significant complimentary role in ASEAN community building process by promoting functional cooperation and contributing to regional identity building (Chheang, 2013). A number of initiatives have been developed since early 1990s to promote sub-regional cooperation in Southeast Asia such as the Greater Mekong Sub-regional cooperation (GMS), Pan Beibu Gulf economic cooperation, Brunei Darussalam-Indonesia-Malaysia-The Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA), Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS), Cambodia-Laos-Myanmar-Vietnam cooperation (CLMV), Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT), and Cambodia-Laos-Vietnam Development Triangle Area (CLV-DTA). The key driving force of sub-regional cooperation is economic interest. It is believed that open cross-border cooperation is necessary for strengthening the flow of goods, services, investment capital, and tourists.

After the end of the Cold War, economic reform from a centrally planned economy to a market economy in Indochina was created. Modernization, industrialization, and economic liberalization have significantly contributed to the growth of cross-border trade, investment, and labor mobility (Chheang & Wong, 2014). In 1992, with the financial and technical assistance from the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the six countries entered into a program of sub-regional economic cooperation, designed to enhance economic

relations among the Mekong countries. The program has contributed to the development of infrastructure to enable the development and sharing of the resource base, and promote the freer flow of goods and people in the sub-region. It has also led to the international recognition of the sub-region as a growth area.

The following year, China expressed its interest in developing the Mekong sub-region. In 1993, Qiao Shi, chairman of the standing committee of the National People's Congress visited Thailand and supported the initiative to strengthen sub-regional cooperation. In August 1996, Vice-Premier Jiang Chunyun pointed out at the 6th GMS Ministerial Conference held in Kunming that the Chinese government reiterated its support in the sub-regional economic cooperation based on the principle of consultation, mutual benefit, and shared development. The joint statement between China and ASEAN on 16 December 1997, mentions the significance of the Mekong sub-regional cooperation. Since then the Mekong Sub-regional cooperation has been discussed at the annual ASEAN-China Summit (Zhu, 2010, pp. 4-5). In 2004, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region of China also joined the GMS.

As the sub-regional cooperation gained momentum, the ADB issued an assistance plan (2001-2003) in December 2000 to strengthen regional cooperation in cross-border trade, investment, tourism, energy, transport, telecommunications, environment, and human resource development (ADB, 2000). In 2001, four GMS countries signed a landmark cross-border agreement to facilitate the flow of people and goods. The agreement aims to simplify and harmonize legislation, regulations, and procedures relating to cross-border transport to facilitate speedy joint inspections. According to priority tourism connecting nodes in the region, there are eleven border checkpoints to facilitate tourist flows and tourism development.[1]

In the strategic plan 2012-2022 developed by the ADB, the GMS program covers multi-sector cooperation schemes including developing the major GMS corridors as economic corridors; strengthening transport linkages, developing an integrated approach to deliver sustainable, secure, and competitive energy; improving telecommunication linkages and information and communication technology applications among the GMS countries; developing and promoting tourism in the Mekong as a single destination; promoting competitive, climate-friendly, and sustainable agriculture; enhancing environmental performance in the GMS; and supporting human resources development and initiatives that facilitate the process of GMS integration while addressing any negative consequences of greater integration (ADB, 2011).

In addition to the overall cooperation framework, regional countries in the GMS, with the support from the ADB, initiated different economic corridors namely East-West, North-South and Southern Economic Corridors. It is designed to link infrastructure, transport, and logistics in order to facilitate the flow of goods, services and people, and promote investment. ADB is the main funding agency for the infrastructure development. China and Japan are the other two actors in providing loans and grants to support regional integration and the development of economic corridors in the GMS.

According to ADB, an economic corridor has the following characteristics, which are covering smaller, defined geographic space, usually, straddling a central transport artery such as a road, rail line, or canal; emphasizing bilateral rather than multilateral initiatives, focusing on strategic nodes particularly at border crossings between two countries; and highlighting physical planning of the corridor and its surrounding area, to concentrate infrastructure development and achieve the most positive benefits. Economic corridors connect economic agents along a defined geography. They provide important connections between economic nodes or hubs that are usually centered in urban landscapes. They do not stand alone, as their role in regional economic development can be comprehended only in terms of the network effects that they induce (Brunner, 2013).

Sub-regional cooperation in the GMS is driven by economic pragmatism dynamically practiced by the GMS countries. Functional economic cooperation leads to economic integration and connectivity. State capacity, especially with the financial and technical support from the ADB, has been enhanced to grasp the benefits generating from economic integration. Through regional cooperation, integration, and connectivity, the Mekong region has transformed from a divided to a connected region (Chheang, 2017). The development of the region contributes to narrowing the development gap within ASEAN, which subsequently leads to a stronger regional identity and a realization of an inclusive ASEAN community.

Challenges and Obstacles

As the gap between vision and implementation and between policy and concrete outcomes is widening, a sense of frustration is rising. Regionalism in Southeast Asia is mainly driven by elites—less participation from the people—although the regional leaders always claim that they are committed to realizing a people-centered and people-oriented ASEAN. Nair suggests that "providing greater support for non-elite grassroots regionalization may perhaps prevent regional projects from suffering the loss of credibility that expectedly comes with the growing deficit between great expectations and few results." (Nair, 2009, p. 136). Engaging and empowering civil society and local community organizations are critical to building a regional common identity among the people.

Development gap is one of the core issues of ASEAN community building and a detriment to the adoption of a regional common identity (Wu, 2013). Inequality is the main root cause of politico-social ills and conflicts. Failing to deal with inequality could cause public resistance against economic integration (Bourguignon, 2016). Unless a more inclusive and participatory regionalism is realized, the foundation of long-term regional peace, stability, and prosperity would not be stable. A two-tiered or multi-tiered ASEAN structurally constrains ASEAN in forging a consensus on certain sensitive issues such as the construction of controversial hydropower dams along the mainstream of the Mekong River and the disputes in the South China Sea. The Mekong countries (particularly Cambodia, Laos, and Myanmar) are relatively less developed compared with other ASEAN members.

Developing the Mekong sub-region is, therefore, necessary to realize an inclusive ASEAN (Chheang, 2016).

GMS is diverse in terms of the level of economic development, political system, peoples and historical cultures. Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Myanmar are the less developed economies in the region. Institutional capacity, human resources, and physical infrastructure are some of the key constraints and challenges in their regional integration. Moreover, the private sector particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in these countries face difficulties in exporting their products and services to the region due to the lack of market information, sources of financing, production capacity, and non-tariff trade barriers such as standard-related measures (Thanh et al., 2009).

The Mekong region faces a myriad of issues including water-food-energy security nexus, climate change and natural disasters, high poverty rate, inadequate attention to the special needs of ethnic minorities, gender inequities, lack of access to basic health and education, inadequate protection of the environment on which traditional livelihoods depend, pandemic diseases, migration and human trafficking. To address these issues, the Mekong countries in cooperation with the international development partners and financial institutions have come together with a vision to promote regional cooperation and integration. Economic cooperation leads to political and security cooperation, particularly cooperation in addressing non-traditional security issues, which in turn reduce conflicts (Dosch & Hensengerth, 2005).

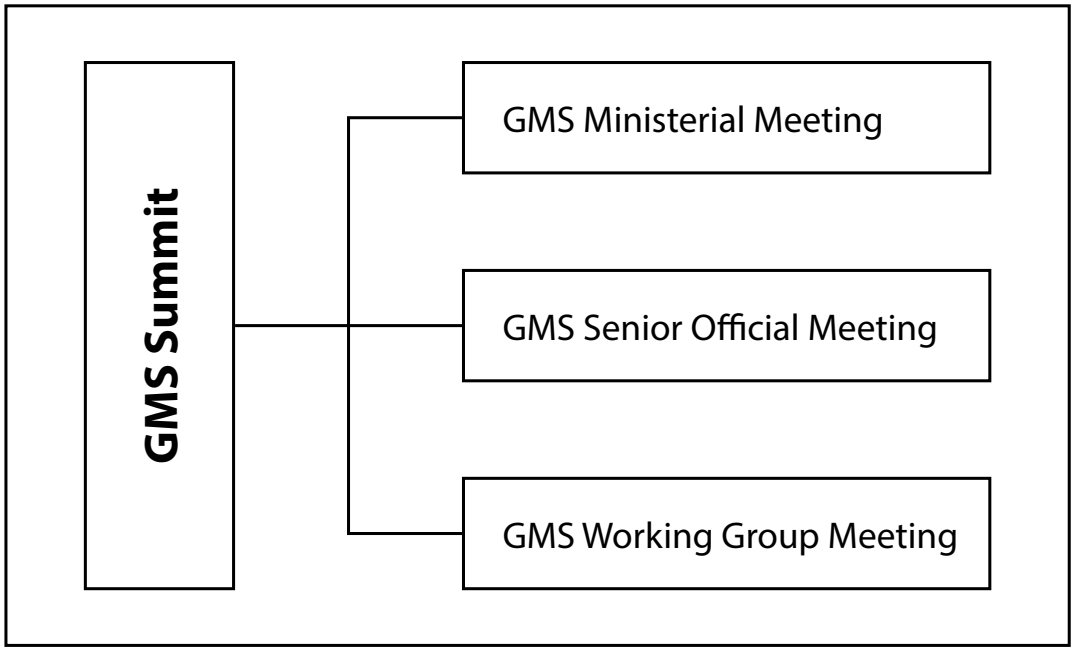
The main challenge facing Mekong sub-regional cooperation is the competition over the water resources and the weak link between national interests and regional public good with regard to trans-boundary water resource management. The tensions over the management of resources between upstream and downstream countries are tense. Hensengerth argues, "the national development interest does not translate into the creation of a regional public good as long as the Mekong River basin is viewed as a patchwork of national basins, which can be subjected to national development without acknowledgment of downstream concerns" (Hensengerth, 2009, p. 343).

China's water resource diplomacy in the Mekong region has been guided by two fundamental, realist principles "autonomy" and "security". Strategic and economic interest is above normative interest, norm socialization, and international institutional building. Menniken argues, "To China, transboundary cooperation is more a strategic option than a normative commitment." (Menniken, 2007, p. 114). The power asymmetry between China and downstream countries makes it difficult for the downstream countries to negotiate with China on an equal footing. China is reluctant to be bound by a rules-based international system.

1. Cooperation and Decision Making Mechanism

There are multi-layers of cooperation mechanisms under the GMS. Those include the GMS Summit, GMS Ministerial Conference, GMS Economic Corridors Forum, GMS Business Forum, and other functional cooperation schemes. The GMS Summit is the highest decision-making body, with the role of oversight and to give direction to government agencies in the implementation of the agenda. Three main supporting mechanisms include GMS Ministerial Conference, GMS Senior Official Meeting, GMS Working Group Meeting, and other forums such as the GMS Economic Corridors Forum and GMS Business Forum.

Figure 1: Institutional Mechanism



GMS Summit

The Summit, the top decision-making body, takes place every three years to examine the implementation progress and initiate new ideas and projects for the region. There are three main mechanisms in support of the summit, namely GMS Ministerial Meeting, GMS Senior Official Meeting, and GMS Working Group Meeting. At the summit, the heads of government of the GMS member countries normally issue a joint statement- which usually addresses emerging regional issues and calls for collective efforts to further deepen regional cooperation, integration, and connectivity. The summit provides the platform for the state leaders to leverage their cooperation for mutual benefits. However, effectively implementing a regional agenda is an issue due to the lack of technocratic capacity, institutional capacity, industrial capacity, infrastructure capacity, human capital, and sustainable development capacity (Dent & Richter, 2011).

The first GMS Summit was held in 2002 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. The Summit urged regional leaders to work more closely together to reduce poverty and promote greater sub-regional integration among the GMS countries. The Joint Declaration reflects the commitment to sub-regional economic cooperation and a shared vision of equal partnership in the pursuit of economic growth and greater prosperity. The statement reads: "Our most important achievement has been the growing trust and confidence among our countries, which has provided a favorable environment for trade and investment, economic growth, and social well-being" (GMS Summit, 2002).

The second GMS Summit was hosted by China in 2005 in Kunming. The Summit issued a Kunming Declaration reviewing the achievements and challenges of the sub-regional cooperation. It provided guiding principles for sub-regional cooperation and action plans towards sustainable development. The guiding principles include the principle of equality and mutual respect, consensus building in the decision-making process, pragmatism and an outward-looking orientation, and the step-by-step approach. For the action plans, it called for the reinforcement of the infrastructure development, improvement of trade and investment environment, strengthening of social and environmental infrastructure, and mobilizing resources and deepening partnership (GMS Summit, 2005).

The third GMS Summit, which was held in Vientiane, Lao PDR in March 2008, had the theme "Enhancing Competitiveness through Greater Connectivity". The GMS leaders issued the Joint Summit Declaration at the conclusion of the Third GMS Summit. This includes agreement on a comprehensive five-year Vientiane Plan of Action for GMS Development that aims to spur growth, reduce poverty, promote social development and enhance environmental protection in the subregion (GMS Summit, 2009).

The fourth GMS Summit, which was held in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar, in December 2011 was themed "Beyond 2012: Towards a New Decade of GMS Strategic Development Partnership." The Summit endorsed the new GMS Strategic Framework, 2012-2022, which while maintaining the pragmatic, action-based and results-oriented character of the GMS Program, proposed broad shifts in direction to enable the program to meet the challenges ahead. These include: (i) complementing hardware with increased focus on software; (ii) better selecting and prioritizing areas for intervention; (iii) strengthening multi-sector cooperation and cross-sectoral links; (iv) recognizing the spatial aspects of regional development and greater involvement of stakeholders at the subnational level (GMS Summit, 2011).

GMS Ministerial Conference

The GMS Ministerial Conference is a platform for the ministers from the sub-region and development partners to review the progress, achievements, and challenges of the implementation of the flagship programs under the GMS cooperation framework such as transport and trade facilitation, energy, agriculture, environment, tourism, human resource development, health, and urban development and economic zones. Future action plans and

development cooperation with dialogue partners of the GMS have been also discussed at the conference.

Over the past four consecutive years, the conferences have reviewed and set out a vision to further strengthen regional cooperation. The 18th Conference, which was held in Nanning, China, in December 2012, reviewed the interim outputs of the GMS Regional Investment Framework (RIF) process, including the completed and updated analytical/ sector/ thematic assessments, and tentative investment pipeline. The conference outlines strategies to actively engage development partners, the private sector and other stakeholders in the formulation of the RIF and in effectively supporting the new generation of GMS investments under the new GMS strategy; and take up other major issues, concerns, and plans in various GMS sectors of cooperation including future GMS cooperation mechanisms (GMS Ministerial Conference, 2012).

The 19th Conference was held in Vientiane, focusing on Regional Investment Framework (RIF), which identifies a number of GMS projects for future cooperation and provides a detailed and comprehensive planning framework to prioritize, implement and monitor projects (GMS Ministerial Conference, 2013). The 20th Conference was held in Nay Pyi Taw to review the achievements of RIF and discuss plans to implement the Regional Investment Framework Implementation Plan (RIF-IP) for 2014-2018 (GMS Ministerial Conference, 2015). The 21st Conference was held in Chiang Rai (Thailand) in December 2016, emphasizing sustainable and inclusive development in the region. The ministers reassert their commitment to "continue to refine and vigorously pursue this approach, which we believe is the best way toward achieving our overarching goal of inclusive and sustainable development for the subregion." (GMS Ministerial Conference, 2016).

GMS Economic Corridors Forum

The ECF provides a platform for multi-stakeholders dialogue in order to strengthen social and professional networks, exchange views, and recommend initiatives. Participants include representatives of national governments, provincial governments, the business community, and international development organizations. Within the ECF, the Governors' Forum brings together leaders of provinces located along corridor routes and offers an opportunity for those heading up border provinces to engage with counterparts across the divide. However, the Forum is rather demonstrative, not so much substantial and impactful. Realizing the economic corridors requires mobilizing stakeholders at the local level and incorporating the private sector and grassroots organizations (Wiemer, 2009).

There are five stages of realizing the economic corridors. The first stage focuses on physical infrastructure development. The second stage deals with cross-border transport operations and efficient border formalities. The third stage aims to develop and promote trade and logistic services. The fourth stage focuses on urban planning and development corridors. The fifth stage aims to increase private investment and well developed regional production chains. The annual Economic Corridor Forum (ECF), inaugurated in Kunming

in June 2008, is a platform for the relevant stakeholders to network, exchange views, and recommend initiatives to develop the economic corridors. As a sub-group of ECF, the Governors Forum was created to increase participation and secure commitment of the governors of the provinces along the GMS economic corridors to the development of economic corridors in the GMS.

In the opening statement of the 5th Economic Corridor Forum held in Bangkok in August 2013, the Vice-President of ADB stressed that in order to maintain regional economic momentum and dynamics, "it will have to include more complex and integrated multi-sector initiatives and interventions, which will require an appropriate institutional mechanism to monitor corridor performance. To better coordinate needed software, which will complement hardware, new sector institutional mechanism."(ADB, 2013). Institutional and legal reforms, including border reform, are vital to concretize economic corridors in the GMS.

At the eighth Economic Corridor Forum in August in 2016, the GMS member countries focused their discussion on the extension and better alignment of the corridors with trade and investment flows, transport and trade facilitation measures, physical and economic plans for specific sections along the corridors in border areas and development of Special Economic Zone and industrial cluster development. Institutional alignment, sectoral integration, and industrial agglomeration are the next crucial steps of regional economic integration.

GMS Business Forum

The GMS Business Forum founded in 2000 by the National Chambers of Commerce of the six GMS member countries plays a complimentary role in realizing the economic corridors in the sub-region through encouraging the active participation of the private sector. It is an independent organization with a role to promote and facilitate cross-border trade and investment in the region. The main task of the forum is to promote information sharing, networking, and public-private sector dialogue. The membership of the forum is open to businesses of all kinds (both international and national) operating in GMS countries. The forum is funded by corporate membership fees (GMS Business Council, 2017).

The forum also provides a platform for development partners, the private sector, and other stakeholders to share their respective program priorities and experiences on the indicative regional investment framework priority areas/projects, and to exchange ideas on suitable modalities and approaches for effectively harnessing external resources into the financing of Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) projects under the regional investment framework. Public-private partnership for regional development is critical for an effective regionalism.

2. Functional Cooperation Areas

GMS is a classic case of market internationalization, not institutional integration. There are no binding agreements but functional economic cooperation mechanisms (Menon, 2007, p. 257). There are a number of cooperation areas that have been prioritized under the GMS, including economic corridors, agriculture, environment, transportation, energy cooperation, and tourism cooperation.

Economic Corridors

Characteristics of Economic Corridors are creating links to major markets, extending the benefits of improved transport linkages to remote locations and integrates them with more prosperous areas, opening up investment opportunities, promoting synergies through the clustering of projects, providing demonstration effects, and facilitating prioritization of regional projects and coordination of national projects with regional implications (Steffensen, 2012).

Economic corridors help promote decentralization of development and inclusive growth by connecting the urban and industrial areas with rural areas. The regions located along the economic corridor benefit from economic transactions. Investment and economic development will need to go to smaller towns and rural areas along the corridor. However, the local government needs to be innovative in attracting investment to the rural areas by providing incentives and other enabling factors such as single window service. It is argued that "the success of an economic corridor will depend on its ability to attract investments (ADB, 2007, p. 6).

Moreover, to increase the impacts of economic corridors on rural poverty reduction, the regional governments, and local authorities must further reduce cross-border barriers, improve the utility of junctions and ports for exportation, analyze market demands and social needs, and transform border areas into economic zones (Ishida, 2008).

GMS economic corridors have evolved in three stages. The first stage, from 1992 to 1997, laid the foundations for the development of the corridors. Priority road projects identified during this time served as the backbone of the GMS economic corridors. The second stage, from 1998 to 2007, started with the adoption of the economic corridor approach and the designation of EWEC, NSEC, and SEC as priority corridors for transformation into economic corridors. The third stage, from 2008 onward, formulated the strategies and action plans (SAPs) for EWEC, NSEC, and SEC, and their implementation thereafter (ADB, 2016a).

In the GMS, there are three main interconnected economic corridors including the North-South Economic Corridor (NSEC), East-West Economic Corridor (EWC), and Southern Economic Corridor (SEC). The NSEC has the advantage of linking major urban areas in the richest nations of the GMS—Thailand and China. It starts in Nanning, Guangxi and travels along two different routes—one inland, one coastal—to Hanoi. From there

it directs back into China to reach Kunming in Yunnan. Turning south again, the route diverges at Jinghong with one leg passing through Myanmar, the other through Laos, to then reconnect in Thailand at Chiang Rai. Chiang Rai is a crossroads, the route splitting again as it continues south along two legs to Bangkok. The one major infrastructure project that remains for the NSEC is a bridge across the Mekong River on the border of Laos and Thailand (ADB, 2016a).

The EWEC stretches from the Andaman Sea on the western shore of the GMS to the South China Sea on the east, traversing less populated, more backward areas of Myanmar, Thailand, Lao PDR, and Vietnam. Major port infrastructure investment is needed at the western terminus of Mawlamyine to make this city a transport destination of any significance. The eastern terminus of Danang is in need of port expansion to accommodate corridor development. Much of the promise of the EWEC rests on the development of intersecting north-south arteries to create nodal points along the way. One such artery would link Hanoi to Bangkok via Vientiane, and by extension Nanning to Singapore using existing highways.

The SEC is actually a network of routes fanning out from Bangkok across Cambodia to arrive at three far-flung destinations along the Vietnamese coast. A link road through Cambodia and Lao PDR connects the system to the EWEC, and Bangkok itself serves as the connecting point to the NSEC. The SEC is at an earlier stage of infrastructure development —both hard and soft—than the other two corridors (see figure 2 on economic corridors in GMS).

Agriculture

The framework for the GMS agriculture cooperation is guided by the Core Agriculture Support Program (CASP) and implemented by the Greater Mekong Subregion Working Group on Agriculture (GMS-WGA) initiated under the 10th GMS Ministerial Conference in November 2001. CASP Work Plan 2011-2020 aims to increase sub-regional agricultural competitiveness and agribusiness investment in the economic corridors. This will be facilitated through modernized trading system that provides links to regional and global markets. The foundation of the strategy includes agricultural research and technology that emphasizes climate-friendly agricultural development, private sector involvement to ensure sustainability, and institutional mechanisms to enhance regional cooperation with incentives to achieve the vision.

There are three strategic pillars namely (a) building global competitiveness by promoting food safety and modernizing agricultural trade, (b) promoting climate-friendly agriculture via a market-based strategy to ensure food security while rewarding farmers for their ecosystem services, (c) promoting agriculture as a leader in providing clean rural renewable energy and cross-border eco-friendly supply chains (ADB, 2012).

Environment

The Core Environment Program and Biodiversity Conservation Corridor Initiative (CEP-BCI) was created by the GMS Members in 2005 in response to growing concern about the environmental impacts of rapid economic development. The vision is to realize a "poverty-free ecologically rich Greater Mekong Subregion". It aims to create a region where economic growth and environmental protection are approached in parallel, and in a way that benefits all who live there (GMS Environment Operations Center, 2017).

There are four main components in the work plan, namely (a) environment monitoring, planning, and safeguards; (b) biodiversity landscapes and livelihoods with the focus on the management of transboundary biodiversity conservation landscapes and local livelihoods; (c) climate change with the development of climate change-resilient and low-carbon strategies; (d) institutions and financing for sustainable environment (GMS Environment Operations Center, 2017).

Transportation

The development of transportation infrastructure and logistics supports regional production networks, facilitates the flow of trade and investment, and promotes people-to-people ties in the region.

> The transportation infrastructure is what connects production points to the market. If two production points are connected, then in accordance with the gravity model, if the population of each one increases, or their income level rises, or the distance between the two points becomes closer in both space and time, then the transportation infrastructure will become more effective. Thus the regional distribution of population and income is an important factor in locating the transportation infrastructure as well as the distance between points (Ishida, 2005, p. 2).

The GMS Cross-Border Transport Agreement (CBTA) is a compact and comprehensive multilateral instrument that covers all the relevant aspects of cross-border transport facilitation in one document. These include single-stop/single-window customs inspection, cross-border movement of persons (that is, visas for persons engaged in transport operations), transit traffic regimes, including exemptions from physical customs inspection, bond deposit, escort, and agriculture and veterinary inspection, requirements that road vehicles will have to meet to be eligible for cross-border traffic, exchange of commercial traffic rights and infrastructure including road and bridge design standards, road signs, and signals. However, there are challenges that need to be addressed in order to transform transport corridors into economic corridors. Banomyong observes "Trans-loading and border crossing still remain barriers to the seamless movement of freight, people and

vehicles within the GMS…The weakest link in the various economic corridors still remains the border crossing" (Banomyong, 2010, p. 38).

Energy Cooperation

Regional cooperation is an effective way to ensure cost-effective energy supply and mitigate climate change. The roadmap for expanded energy cooperation in 2009 provides policy guidance and action plans to deliver sustainable, secure, competitive, and low carbon energy in the Mekong sub-region. It aims to enhance access to energy of all sectors and communities, in particular, the poor in the GMS through promotion of best energy practices in the sub-region; development and utilizing more efficiently indigenous, low carbon and renewable resources, while reducing the sub-region's dependence on imported fossil fuels; improving energy supply security through cross-border trade while optimizing use of sub-regional energy resources; and promoting public-private partnership and private sector participation particularly through small and medium sized enterprises for sub-regional energy development (ADB, 2009).

The Work Plan (2009-2015) provides policy guidelines and action plans with regard to (a) new and renewable energy sources, (b) energy efficiency and conservation, (c) regional energy planning, policy and program coordination, (d) power, (e) oil and gas, and coal. In the power subsector, it focuses on the development of a regional power market through a two-pronged approach: providing the policy and institutional framework for power trading and developing the grid interconnection infrastructure to connect the various GMS power systems. In the oil and gas subsector, it aims to realize GMS segments of Trans-ASEAN Gas Pipeline (TAGP) and promotes the development of environmental friendly oil and natural gas logistics and network in the GMS. In the coal subsector, while recognizing its importance in meeting the countries' energy demand, it aims to promote clean coal technologies, including using IGCC for coal power plants (ADB, 2009).

Tourism Cooperation

The tourism sector was designated as one of the 11 flagship programs of the GMS Economic Cooperation Program in recognition of the important contribution it could make toward socio-economic development and the conservation of natural and cultural heritage resources. The GMS tourism strategy was elaborated under ADB technical assistance, at the request of the six countries to prepare within the overall 10 year GMS strategic framework (2005-2015), a strategy to optimize the benefits of sub-regional tourism in a more environmentally and socially responsible manner.

The GMS Regional Tourism Sector Strategy has five objectives, namely (i) develop quality subregional tourism products that spread the benefits of tourism widely; (ii) promote the GMS as a single destination; (iii) add to the tourism development efforts of

each GMS country; (iv) contribute to poverty reduction, gender equality and empowerment of women, and sustainable development; and (v) minimize the negative impacts of tourism (ADB, 2011b).

III. Cambodia's Involvement in the GMS

Cambodia's foreign policy, after gaining independence from France in 1953, has been shaped by the perceived persistent threats posed by its two big neighbors (Thailand and Vietnam) as history shows that Cambodia's borders had steady shrunk as a result of territorial encroachments of these two neighbors (Smith, 1965:217). Neutral foreign policy was adopted as a strategy to ward off adverse impacts caused by the Cold War. Prince Norodom Sihanouk was one of the leading figures in the non-aligned movement as featured at the Bandung Conference in 1955 (Leifer, 1962). However, Cambodia failed to maintain its neutrality and balanced foreign policy due to uncontrollable pressures and interventions from the superpowers, especially the United States.

After being toppled by the coup carried out by Gen. Lon Nol—it is generally believed that the US backed the coup—Prince Sihanouk had no choice but to align closer with communist China. Since then Cambodia fell into more than two decades of civil war and armed conflict. After the Paris Peace Accord in 1991, Cambodia was able to organize its first democratic election under the auspices of the United Nations in 1993. A new constitution was adopted with a clear reference to the principles of non-alignment and permanent neutrality of the kingdom's foreign policy. To transform a battlefield into a market place and to resolve conflict through a ballot box were the key foreign policy strategy in the early 1990s.

The 1993 Constitution sets out seven principles of foreign policy, namely (a) adopts policy of permanent neutrality and non-alignment; (b) follows a policy of peaceful co-existence with its neighbors and with all other countries throughout the world; (c) shall not invade any country, nor interfere any country's internal affairs, directly or directly, and shall solve any problems peacefully with due respect for mutual interests; (d) shall not join in any military alliance or military pact that is incompatible with its policy of neutrality; (e) shall not permit any foreign military base on its territory and shall not have its own military base abroad, except within the framework of a United Nations' request; (f) reserves the rights to receive foreign assistance in the form of military equipment, armaments, ammunitions, training of its armed forces and other assistance for self-defense and for maintaining public order and security within its territory; and (g) the manufacturing, use and storage of nuclear, chemical or biological weapons are absolutely prohibited.

Cambodia's foreign policy approach is mainly driven by "economic pragmatism", which refers to the perception and behavior of a state in aligning foreign policy with economic development interests, transforming the international environment into a source of national development agenda, and diversifying strategic partnerships based on economic calculation. International economic cooperation and regional integration are key principles of foreign policy. Shared development, win-win cooperation, and common destiny are the key words

in implementing economic pragmatism. Other strategies include "limited bandwagoning", "binding engagement", and "soft balancing" (Leng, 2017).

As a less developed economy in the region, Cambodia has a strong interest in promoting regionalism and multilateralism (Chap, 2007). Cambodia has focused most of its diplomatic efforts on ASEAN and other ASEAN-led regional forums (Heng, 2014). The Cambodian government has expressed strong interests in realizing a more inclusive ASEAN by narrowing the development gap between the new and old members of ASEAN, implementing a people-centered ASEAN policy agenda, and bridging ASEAN with the GMS. Linking regional integration with national economic development is critical to institutional harmonization and regional connectivity. Harnessing and synergizing various regional integration initiatives particularly linking ASEAN community blueprints with sub-regional cooperation agenda will further bolster regional integration and shared development (Chap, 2006).

Cambodia perceives regional integration as a means to further advance its national development interests. There are great economic potentials in developing the border areas between Cambodia and its neighbors as Thailand and Vietnam are the two regional production hubs in the Mekong region. Cambodia potentially can be a manufacturing base for some parts and components owing to its comparative advantage in cheap labor and preferential access to developed countries under the Generalized System of Preference (GSP) status (Yagura, 2013).

ASEAN and GMS are the main gateways for Cambodia to outreach to the region and beyond. GMS has been operated under the principles of non-interference, consultation and consensus, mutual interest and equality, win-win cooperation, shared development, and common destiny. GMS gives emphasis to practical or functional cooperation rather than institutional building. It aims at achieving concrete cooperation results in socio-economic development and poverty reduction. Sub-regional cooperation compliments ASEAN community building. Prime Minister Hun Sen stated at the opening of 7th ACMECS Summit and 8th CLMV Summit in Hanoi in 2016 that these two mechanism play "an important role in fostering ASEAN connectivity and strengthening ASEAN Community, particularly in narrowing the development gaps and promoting the welfare and livelihoods of our people" (Hun Sen, 2016a).

In the Rectangular Strategy Phase III in 2013, the Cambodian government sets out a vision that "by the end of the first decade of the 21st Century, Cambodia is to reclaim a full ownership of its own destiny, while becoming a real partner in regional and global affairs and a nation of genuine freedom and being free from poverty". It further states that Cambodia is now "actively integrating itself into the regional and global architecture, and playing a dynamic role in all regional and global affairs on equal footing and with equal rights as other nations." (RGC, 2013).

Speaking at the first World Economic Forum on the Mekong in October 2016, Prime Minister Hun Sen focused on regional peace and stability, regional competitiveness by developing physical infrastructure, energy and digital connectivity, free and effective movement of trade and investments, and human capital development. He said, "Cambodia is poised to cooperate with other [GMS] countries towards achieving this joint Mekong

vision—especially in the context of harnessing the fourth industrial revolution in this new millennium" (May 2016).

He further elaborated on physical connectivity at the 8th CLMV Summit (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam) in October 2016. He added developing transport and energy infrastructure was the most important to promote regional trade and tourism. He also called for expanding regional production bases and networks, strengthening regional cooperation and coordination in agriculture development, and enhancing regional cooperation on human resources development and high-quality labor force (Hun Sen, 2016b)

At the 7th ACMEC Summit (Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy) in October 2016, he urged regional countries to review and develop a cooperation mechanism to better manage the flow of labor with a particular focus on ensuring the respect for labor's rights, combating against human-trafficking, and provision of insurance services and other financial services. He also suggested that the Mekong countries strengthen cooperation in rice production and trade facilitation in order to contribute to improving the standards of livings the farmers. Creating an association of rice exporting countries will strengthen global position of the Mekong countries (Hun Sen, 2016c).

Hun Sen proposed that for the future objectives of ACMECS, there is a need to find means to effectively solve a number of key challenges in transport, and energy and digital connectivity, institutional and regulatory coordination. The regional countries must jointly map and develop sub-regional value chains of goods and services and promote mutual trust including strengthening and expanding cooperation among business people and between people and people (Hun Sen, 2016c).

It can be concluded here that Cambodia's foreign policy is mainly shaped by economic conditions and economic interests. The current government views foreign policy as a tool to serve national economic development poverty reduction. Regional integration is perceived to serve that purpose. The key task ahead for Cambodia, particularly amid rising geopolitical uncertainties and economic competition, is to transform external forces into a source of national strength and maximize the opportunities stemming from regional integration.

> To realize its vision to be a middle-income country by 2030 and a high-income country by 2050, Cambodia has to develop state-of-the-art foreign policy by investing more in building a strong institution with competent leaders, professional diplomats, and strategic thinkers (Chheang, 2014).

IV. Challenges

Although there are remarkable achievements over the last two decades in forging regional cooperation, integration and connectivity, there are several challenges that need to be overcome. Those challenges include development gap, weak institution and good governance, and the national capacity in implementing sub-regional cooperation and integration projects, remain the two key challenges of the GMS. Income disparity within

the regions and localities create a potential challenge of political instability, trans-boundary crimes, and illegal labor migration and human trafficking (UNODC, 2013).

Environmental degradation is another underlying concern in the region. Infrastructure construction, including the "connectivity corridors" affects biodiversity, forest cover and water systems. There is no consensus within the region on whether to have a binding regional environmental impact assessment (EIA) standard. Therefore, voluntary guidelines and compliance with EIA is currently a modus operandi (Wells-Dang, 2015).

Institution building based on good governance remains a key challenge to effectively implementing regional policies. The national capacity of each member countries of the GMS in transforming and integrating regional development agenda into a national development action plan is limited. The lack of resources in realizing regional development projects requires more investment and participation from the private sector. It is, therefore, necessary to forge a closer partnership between the public and private sectors, especially in infrastructure development and connectivity.

Local government plays a significant role in regional cooperation and integration. By delegating the power and resources to the local government at the commune, district and provincial levels, it not only contributes to national development per se but also links regional governments with neighboring countries especially at the border areas. Growth triangles are initiated to link border provinces between three countries in the Mekong Sub-region. For the case of Cambodia, it has developed two growth triangles with all three neighboring countries to promote economic development along the border areas.

Other challenges include transforming the GMS connectivity or transport corridors into genuine economic corridors, exploiting emerging opportunities in a resurgent and dynamic Asia, addressing global warming and climate change, addressing potential negative effects of increased connectivity, responding to changing demographics and increased urbanization, and increasing mobilization of private investments for the GMS program, including public-private partnerships (Steffensen, 2012).

Cambodia does not have sufficient institutional capacity and resources to effectively harness and implement regional cooperation and an integration agenda. The provincial governments along the border areas have a crucial role in linking regional economies and people ties with their counterparts in the GMS. The local authority in Cambodia does not have the budget to carry out infrastructure connectivity projects. Decentralization, delegating more authority to the local governments, is the key to national public administrative reform in the GMS member countries.

Inter-agency coordination, as well as the coordination between the government and other stakeholders, is not yet effective. Cambodia needs to double its efforts to strengthen the authority of the coordinators at the national and provincial levels. Multi-stakeholder collaborations among the government, private sector, and civil society, and cross-sectoral partnership are critical to implementing the national and regional development agenda, and more importantly maximizing the benefits deriving from regional cooperation.

V. Conclusion

Regionalism is the Mekong region focuses on functional cooperation on economic integration rather than institutional building and norms creation. GMS cooperation schemes and mechanisms have played significant roles in linking the six countries in the sub-region especially through infrastructure connectivity and economic integration. The development partners, especially the Asian Development Bank is the driving force supporting the sub-region through the means of financial and technical support.

The realization of the GMS cooperation flagship programs and projects will contribute to long term regional peace and development. It also substantially compliments to ASEAN connectivity and East Asian community building processes. However, the remaining challenges such as resources mobilization, strengthening of public-private partnership, and good governance principles need to be addressed in order to facilitate actions and results oriented regional cooperation.

The principles of good governance and decentralization can assist regional countries and localities in effectively implementing and facilitating regional cooperation and connectivity. Without a strong national and local government, it is impossible to implement and concretize regional cooperation agenda and schemes. It is, therefore, to expand sub-regional cooperation in the GMS to include information and experiences sharing on good governance and decentralization.

As a small and less developed economy, Cambodia must open up its economy for survival. Economic pragmatism is the guiding principle of Cambodia's foreign policy strategy. Cambodia has adopted a proactive approach towards regionalism. GMS is one of the regional cooperation mechanisms that provide economic opportunities for Cambodia to develop and catch up with other regional economies. However, to maximize the potential benefits deriving from regional integration, Cambodia needs to strengthen its governance, institutional capacity, and human resources.

Endnote

1 Bavet/Moc Bai on the Cambodian/Vietnam border; Lao Cai on the Vietnam/Yunnan border; Mengla/Mohan on the Laos/Yunnan border; Wanding/Ruili/Kyugok/Muse on the Myanmar/Yunnan border; Tachchilek/Mae Soi/Chiang Kong on the Laos/Thai border; Nong Khai on the Laos/Thai border; Mayawadi/Mae Sot on the Myanmar/Thai border; Lao Bao on the Vietnam/Laos border; and Savannakhet on the Lao / Thai border.

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CAMBODIA'S INTEGRATION IN GLOBAL ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL SYSTEMS

YOU Sokunpanha

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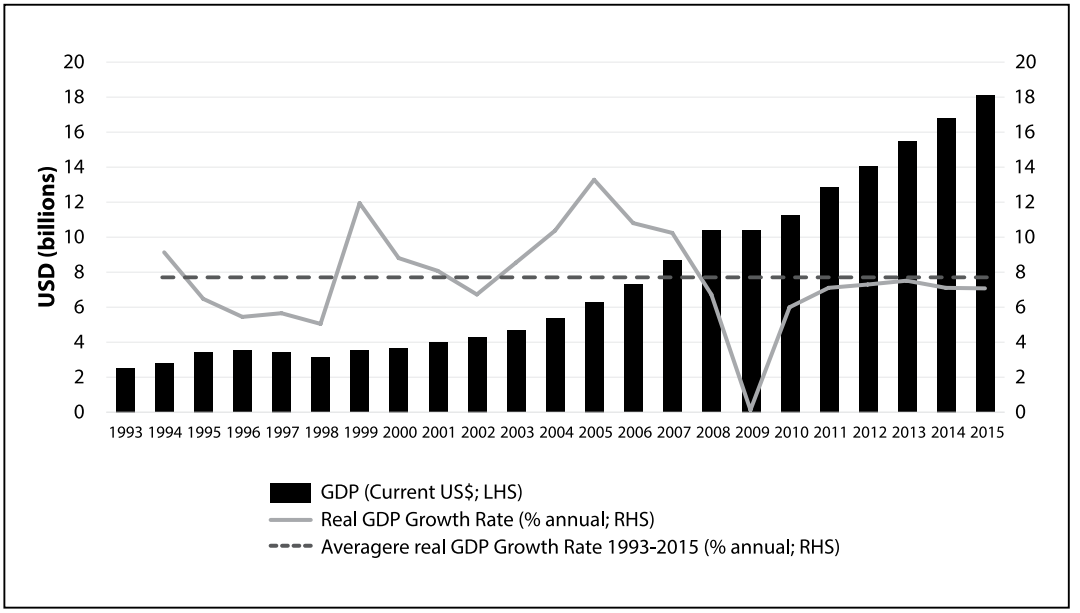
CAMBODIA'S INTEGRATION IN GLOBAL ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL SYSTEMS

I. Introduction

A quick stroll through Phnom Penh's affluent Boeung Keng Kang neighborhood offers first-time visitors to Cambodia a glimpse of some striking facts about the country and its close ties with the outside world. A short stretch of Street 51 south of Sihanouk Boulevard is now home to a string of modern condominiums; dozens of foreign-branded coffee shops and restaurant chains; two international schools; and a large United Nations complex housing, among others, the country office of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

The luxury apartment buildings, upmarket cafes and fashionable restaurants are a result of two decades of high and fairly constant economic growth. Between the watershed 1993 elections and 2015, Cambodia's gross domestic product rose more than seven times in real terms, suggesting an average annual growth rate of close to eight per cent (Figure 1). Cambodia was the world's sixth-fastest-growing economy between 1993 and 2013, leading the World Bank to label it an "Olympian of growth" (World Bank, 2014).

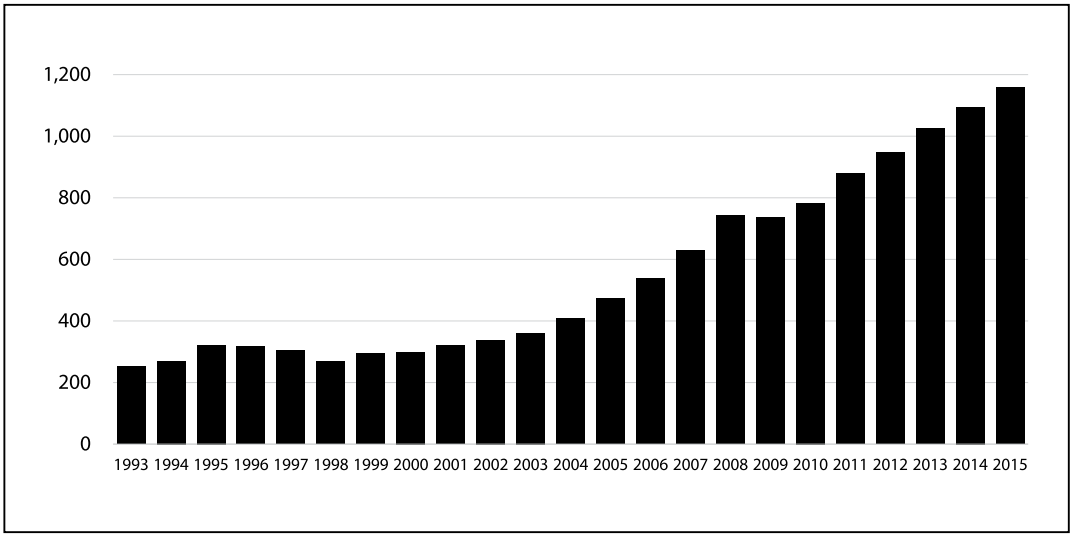
Figure1: GDP and Real GDP Growth Rate, 1993-2015



Source: *World Delvelpment Indicator (WDI)*

In current dollars, a Cambodian today makes close to USD 1,200 a year, or four and a half times what Cambodians did in 1993 (Figure 2). The World Bank officially revised Cambodia's economy from low-income to lower-middle-income status in July 2016 (McGrath & Hor, 2016).

Figure 2: GDP Per Capita, 1993-2015 (Current USD)



Source: *WDI*

The presence of international brands such as Burger King (an American fast food restaurant), KFC (a competing U.S. restaurant chain), and Costa (a British coffee franchise), and Gloria Jean's (an Australian coffeehouse) on Street 51 is testament to another salient characteristic of Cambodia's economy: its openness to trade and investment. In addition, the UN buildings down the street serve as a physical reminder that Cambodia has received significant assistance from the international community since the restoration of relative peace and stability in the early 1990s. UNDP, for example, has been active in Cambodia for more than 50 years: operating from 1958 until 1975 when the Khmer Rouge came to power, coordinating humanitarian relief efforts in the 1980s, setting up permanent offices in 1994, and more recently helping Cambodia reach the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (UNDP, 2017).

Though a brisk walk may suffice in giving outsiders a useful first impression, a deeper understanding of Cambodia's integration in the global economic and financial architecture requires further analysis. This chapter aims to discuss the extent and importance of this integration. Part 2 gives an overview of Cambodia's contemporary economic relations with the world and its membership in important regional and international institutions. It also examines the three major links between Cambodia's economy and the global community, i.e. aid, trade, and investments. Part 3 evaluates a range of pertinent issues that spring from this close integration. The final part sums up the discussion.

II. Cambodia's Contemporary Economic Relations with the World

1. Overview

Though it is easy to think that high growth and openness have always been permanent features of Cambodia's economy, they are in fact relatively recent phenomena.

From 1975-1979, the Pol Pot regime abolished money and private properties, banned commercial transactions, destroyed economic and financial institutions, and effectively cut Cambodia off from the outside world. After the fall of the Khmer Rouge in 1979, Cambodia (officially the People's Republic of Kampuchea or PRK) became a socialist republic with a command economy. Though private ownership of small businesses and farms were tolerated, the state maintained control of important industries, large-scale agriculture, and foreign trade. Moreover, because the PRK was not officially recognized by the West, Cambodia was economically isolated from large parts of the world until the early 1990s. During this period, most of the economic assistance, Cambodia received and the majority of its external trade was conducted with Soviet Bloc countries.

Three overlapping and interrelated episodes in the late 1980s and early 1990s marked the beginning of Cambodia's reintegration into the global economic order.

First, after the departure of Vietnamese troops and with political settlement in sight, the PRK changed its name to the State of Cambodia in 1989. A new constitution shifted Cambodia from a centrally planned to a market economy by restoring property rights, ending collectivization, and enabling the process of privatizing state-owned enterprises.

Second, the Cambodian economy was experiencing serious stress. With the fall of the Berlin Wall, economic assistance from the Soviet Bloc ceased. In 1989, the cancellation of credit facilities with the Soviet Union (who funded most of Cambodia's government expenditures in the 1980s) put significant pressure on Cambodia's national budget. According to Shawcross (1994), the financing gap was large in 1991 and deepened further in 1992 when more than 60% of total public expenditures were unfunded. This forced the government to resort to monetary financing of the deficit by printing new money to cover half of the 1991 budget. Civil servants were paid irregularly and Cambodia went through a painful period of high inflation running at 70% in 1989, 157% in 1990, and 121% in 1991 (Shawcross, 1994, pp. 75-76).

Third and most importantly, on 23 October 1991, the four major factions in Cambodia's civil war—as well as the UN and 17 participating states at the Paris Conference—put their signatures to the Agreement on a Comprehensive Political Settlement of the Cambodia Conflict (more commonly known as the "Paris Peace Agreement" or the "Paris Peace Accords"). The signatories agreed to the establishment of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC)—a UN mission tasked, among other things, with planning and organizing democratic elections in Cambodia. When it arrived in 1992, UNTAC was the UN's largest peacekeeping mission: it had a budget of more than USD 2 billion and at its peak employed 20,000 international military and civilian staff as well as a 60,000-strong local workforce (Slocomb, 2010, p. 231).

The Paris agreement also marked the end of two decades of international trade and economic embargo on Cambodia. International assistance to support humanitarian and rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts began to flow in. Trade and foreign direct investment (FDI) soon followed.

2. Membership in Important Regional and International Institutions

Efforts to gain membership in important economic and financial institutions took place during two distinct periods of Cambodia's modern history. After its independence from France in 1953, Cambodia joined the UN, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the two institutions that make up the World Bank (i.e. the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the International Development Association). Another joining spree occurred after the political settlement of the early 1990s. In relatively quick succession, Cambodia became a member of the International Finance Corporation (part of the World Bank Group), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Figure 3: Membership in Select Regional and Global Institutions

Organization	Year of Membership
United Nations (UN)	1955
Asian Development Bank (ADB)	1966
International Monetary Fund (IMF)	1969
International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)	1970
International Development Association (IDA)	1970
International Finance Corporation (IFC)	1997
Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA)	1999
Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)	1999
World Trade Organization (WTO)	2004
International Center of Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID)	2005

Source: *Council for the Development of Cambodia (CDC)*

Deeper economic ties with neighbors and with the world are now policy goals enshrined in official government documents. Regional and global integration was a core component of both the *Triangular Strategy* adopted by the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) in 1998 and the updated *Rectangular Strategy* announced after the 2003 elections. In a speech launching the *Rectangular Strategy* in July 2004, Prime Minister Hun Sen reiterated Cambodia's commitment to ASEAN integration, deeper collaboration with countries in the Greater Mekong Sub region, and legal and institutional reforms needed to meet WTO accession obligations. He also recognized that "free trade significantly contributes to the reduction of poverty and improvement of the living standards" and vowed that the RGC would "continue to liberalize trade and ensure free flows of goods and services both within the country and between Cambodia and other key partners in the region and the world" (RGC, 2004).

3. Foreign Aid

In media reporting and everyday conversation, the terms "aid," "foreign aid," "international aid," "foreign assistance," and "development assistance" are used interchangeably and often without explanation. Given the important role foreign aid plays in modern Cambodia, it is useful to define the term more precisely.

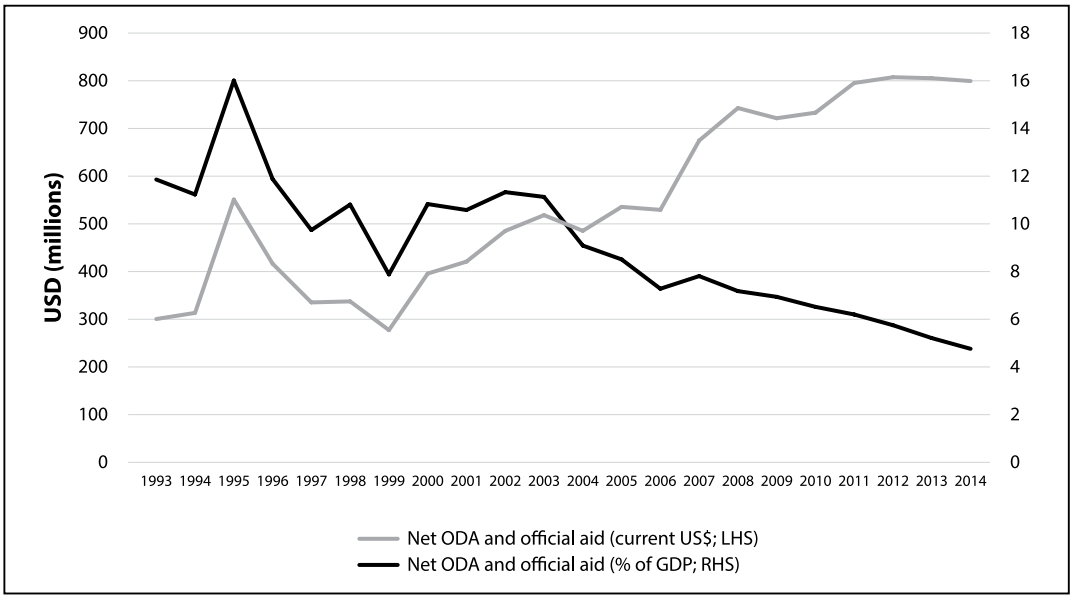
The most commonly used definition of aid was developed by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC), a consortium of major donor countries founded to coordinate aid efforts to developing countries. DAC, now part of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), has 29 member countries with the World Bank, the IMF, and UNDP as observers (OECD, 2017).

In 1969, DAC introduced the concept of Official Development Assistance (ODA), which is defined as "flows of official financing administered with the promotion of the economic development and welfare of developing countries as the main objective, and which are concessional in character with a grant element of at least 25 percent (using a fixed 10 percent rate of discount)" (OECD, 2003). This type of aid does not, therefore, include other official contributions (export credits, for example) or private financial flows (donations, investments, or commercial loans) (Commission of the European Communities, 1990).

In 1991, after the signing of the Paris Peace Agreement, then-UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar asked the international community to help pay for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Cambodia. At the Ministerial Conference on the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of Cambodia in Tokyo in June 1992, donors responded to the appeal by pledging USD 880 million. A year later, at the first meeting of the International Committee on the Reconstruction of Cambodia (ICORC) in Paris, additional pledges were made to raise the total commitment for 1992 and 1993 to USD 1 billion (CDC, n.d.).

Since then, aid inflows to Cambodia have been substantial. Available data suggest that Cambodia received USD 12 billion in external assistance between 1993 and 2014. Actual ODA disbursements—which usually reach 60 percent of originally pledged amounts (Slocomb, 2010, p. 25)—rose from USD 300 million in 1993 to USD 795 million in 2011 and have stabilized to around USD 800 million a year since then (Figure 4). Net ODA as a percentage of GDP has, however, decreased from a peak of 16% in 1995 to less than 5 percent in 2014—indicating that Cambodia's economic growth has outpaced growth in its foreign aid receipts. However, these figures likely underestimate Cambodia's reliance on foreign assistance since the data do not include aid flows from China (see discussion below).

Figure 4: Net ODA and Official Aid Receipts, 1993-2014



Source: *WDI*

Foreign aid has gone towards financing different pressing needs during different phases of Cambodia's development. From 1994 to 1998, as Cambodia focused on improving its poor infrastructure, the majority of ODA proceeds were spent on increasing power-generating capacity and water supply (Hang, 2012a, p. 53). Since then, spending priorities have expanded to cover more diverse sectors including governance and administration, transportation, education, health, rural development and agriculture (Ek & Sok, 2008).

The ODA receipts in Figure 4 offer an instructive but incomplete picture of total aid flows to Cambodia because of an important omission: official aid statistics currently do not include contributions from China (who is not a DAC member). Though China's overseas transfers, collectively dubbed "economic assistance", have an aid component—they promote development and provide economic benefits to recipient countries—they do not meet conditions for eligibility as ODA. These transfers also cannot be classified as FDI since they do not seek ownership of productive assets abroad. China is a minor actor in the aid arena if only development grants are considered. But when commercial and concessional loans, technical assistance, and state-sponsored or subsidized investments are counted, China is now a major provider of economic assistance, especially to Africa, Latin America, and Southeast Asia (Lum, 2009).

Available data, though incomplete, suggest that China has become an important source of finance for Cambodia. China formally joined the Cambodia Development Cooperation Forum (CDCF), a group of countries and international institutions providing development assistance to Cambodia, in 2007 when it made an inaugural pledge of USD 91.5 million (Ker, 2007). A year later China became Cambodia's largest donor by delivering USD 297 million, or close to one-third of the USD 952-million aid package from the international community. It leapfrogged Cambodia's more traditional development partners such as the European Union (USD 214 million), Japan (USD 113 million), and the United States (USD 57 million) (Ear & Burgos, 2010).

In addition to contributions through multilateral and institutional structures such as the CDCF, China's direct bilateral assistance to Cambodia has also been sizeable. At the sideline of the second summit of the Greater Mekong Subregion in Yunnan province in 2005, Prime Minister Hun Sen and then-Chinese premier Wen Jiabao inked five deals worth USD 400 million (Vong, 2005). In April 2006, on a weekend visit to Phnom Penh by Wen Jiabao, China pledged USD 600 million in aid and investments (Kazmin, 2006). When then-Chinese Vice President Xi Jinping visited Cambodia in 2009, he brought with him USD 1.2 billion in loans and grants through 14 bilateral cooperative agreements (Mydans, 2009). At the 11th Asia-Europe Meeting in Mongolia in July 2016, Chinese Prime Minister Li Keqiang offered Cambodia a funding package of USD 538 million over three years from 2016 to 2018 (Paviour & Kuch, 2016). And in his first official visit to Cambodia as head of state in October 2016, Chinese President Xi Jinping oversaw the signing of 31 bilateral agreements covering USD 238 million in loans, USD 89 in debt cancellation, and USD 15 million in military aid (Vong & Willemyns, 2016).

Financing from China has helped pay for major projects in Cambodia, especially those in energy, infrastructure, and agriculture. An illustrative but non-exhaustive sample of

these projects include the USD 300-million 180-megawatt Kamchay hydroelectric dam in Kampot (Strangio, 2010); several "Cambodia-China friendship bridges" (Yang, 2011) including two major bridges spanning the Tonle Sap and Mekong; expansions of national roads to the remote provinces of Ratanakiri, Preah Vihear, and Pailin (Ciorciari, 2015); and USD 436 million for irrigation and agricultural development projects (Ciorciari, 2015). China has also financed the construction of important public buildings in Cambodia such as the headquarters of the Senate and the Council of Ministers building (Ear & Burgos, 2010).

4. Trade

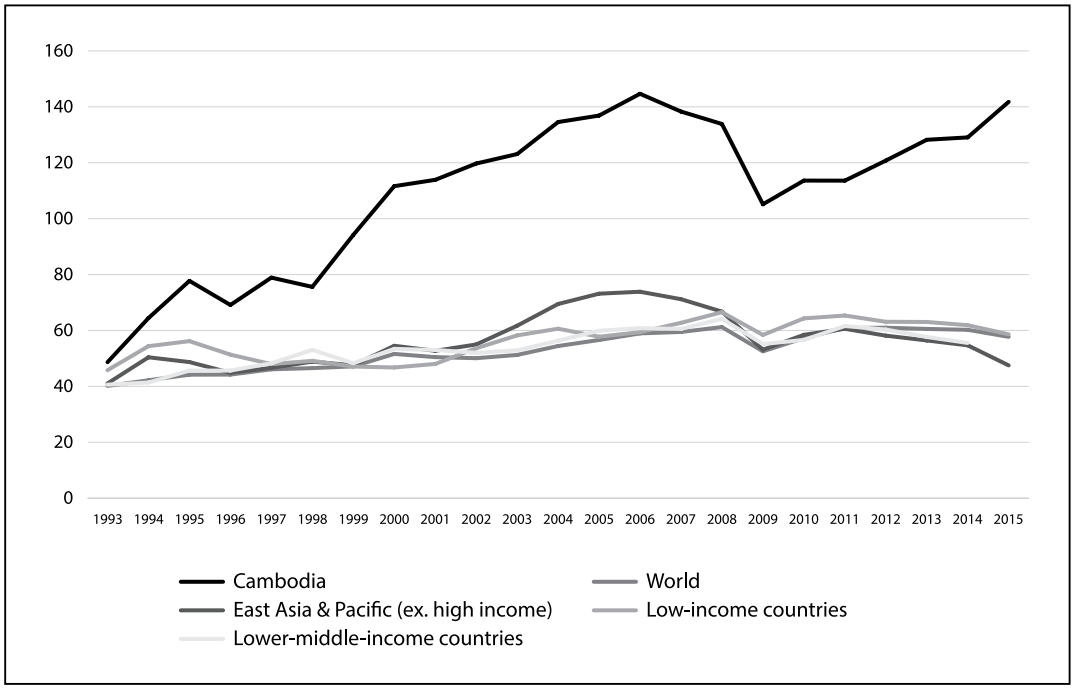
Cambodia's deep trade links with the outside world are enabled by its participation in regional and global bodies as well as preferential market access offered by its major trading partners. By virtue of its ASEAN membership, Cambodia is party to a number of Free Trade Agreements (FTAs). These include the ASEAN Free Trade Area, a tariff-free trade bloc covering the ten member states, as well as six FTAs between ASEAN and Australia, New Zealand, India, Japan, China and South Korea. Cambodia has also taken part in negotiation for the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), a proposed FTA between all ten ASEAN members and the six nations with whom the grouping has already signed so-called ASEAN+1 FTAs (ARIC, 2015).

Cambodia is also a member of the WTO. It applied for accession in October 1994. After a lengthy vetting process—which included submitting a Memorandum on Foreign Trade Regime to the WTO's Accessions Division in 1999, several rounds of negotiations at the meetings of the working party between 2001 and 2003, Cambodia's acceptance of membership terms and conditions set out in the accession protocol in 2003, and the National Assembly's and Senate's ratification of the accession protocol in 2004—Cambodia formally became the 148th member of the WTO on 13 October 2004. It was one of only two Least Developed Countries (LDCs) to have gained WTO membership since the organization's transformation from the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) in 1995 (Sok, 2005).

With its LDC status, Cambodia is a beneficiary of the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) offered by the U.S., European Union, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, South Korea, and the U.K. (Hing, 2013). Under GSP, many of the products Cambodia sells to these countries are exempted from import tariffs if requirements such as rules of origin are met. Since 2001, under the Everything But Arms (EBA) scheme, the EU has also allowed Cambodia to export thousands of products to one of the world's largest trading blocs tariff- and quota-free (Ministry of Commerce, 2014).

As a result, Cambodia's economy is highly open to trade. Trade-to-GDP ratio (a commonly used measure of trade openness) expanded rapidly from 46 percent in 1993 to 142 percent in 2015. The only break in this steady rise was a dip between 2007 and 2009 when Cambodia suffered from declining world trade volume caused by the Global Financial Crisis. Cambodia is much more open to trade than its immediate neighbors, countries at comparable stages of development, and the world overall (Figure 5).

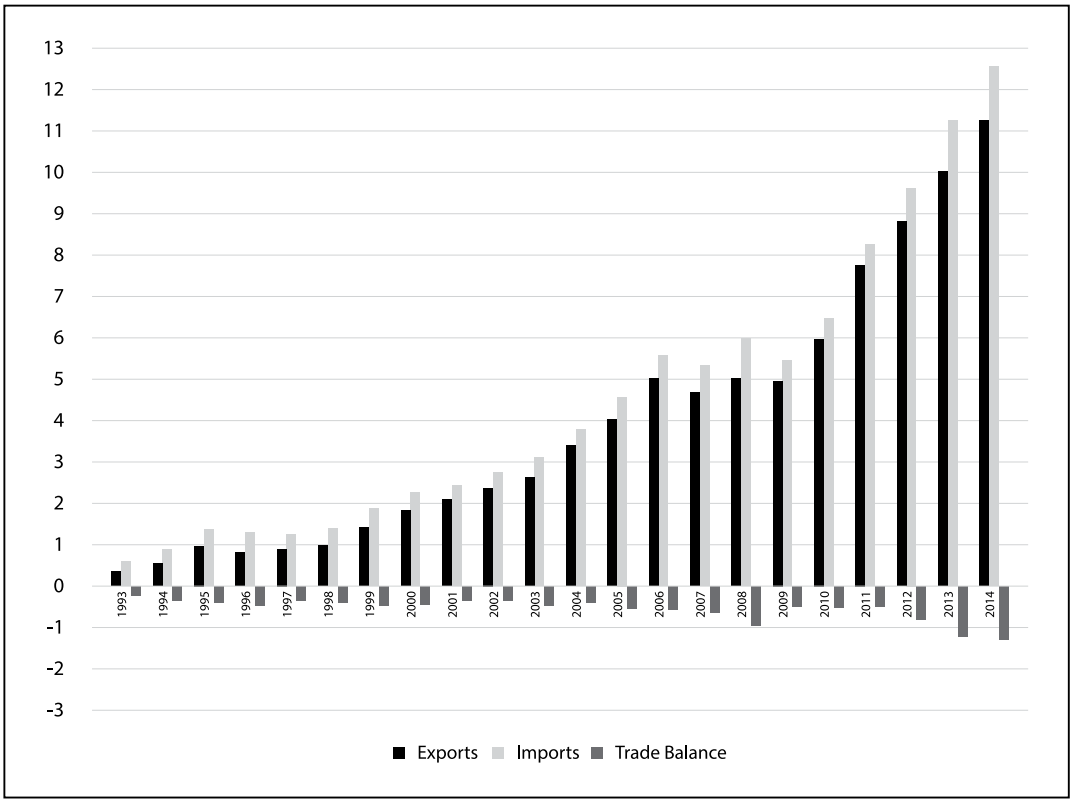
Figure 5: Trade, 1993-2015 (% of GDP)



Source: *WDI*

Trade volume has grown drastically over the past decades. Exports of goods and services grew from USD 347 million in 1993 to USD 11.26 billion in 2014 at a compound annual growth rate of 18 percent (Figure 6). Garments, with outbound shipments of USD 5.7 billion in 2015, account for the vast majority of Cambodia's merchandise exports (Baliga, 2016). Other major exports include rice, timber, rubber, tobacco, and fish (Central Intelligence Agency, 2017). The European Union is Cambodia's biggest export destination, buying nearly half of its garment shipments in 2015 and much of its rice exports in recent years. The U.S. is another major purchaser of garments and footwear from Cambodia (Refer to Figure 7 for Cambodia's other major trading partners). Between 1993 and 2014, imports also ballooned from USD 592 million to USD 12.55 billion. Cambodia buys petroleum, construction materials, food, machinery, motor vehicles, and pharmaceutical products from China, neighboring Thailand and Vietnam, and other trading partners (Central Intelligence Agency, 2017). Cambodia's spending on imports typically exceeds proceeds from exports resulting in a trade deficit that reached USD 1.3 billion in 2014.

Figure 6: Exports, Imports, and Trade Balance, 1993-2014



Source: *WDI*

Figure 7: Cambodia's Top Trading Partners, 2014

Top 5 Export Destinations		**Top 5 Import Origins**	
Destination	Share of Exports (%)	Origin	Share of Imports (%)
European Union	27.2	China	32.6
United States	23.5	United States	12.2
Hong Kong	17.2	Thailand	11.9
Singapore	8.6	Vietnam	10.7
Canada	5.2	Hong Kong	7.2

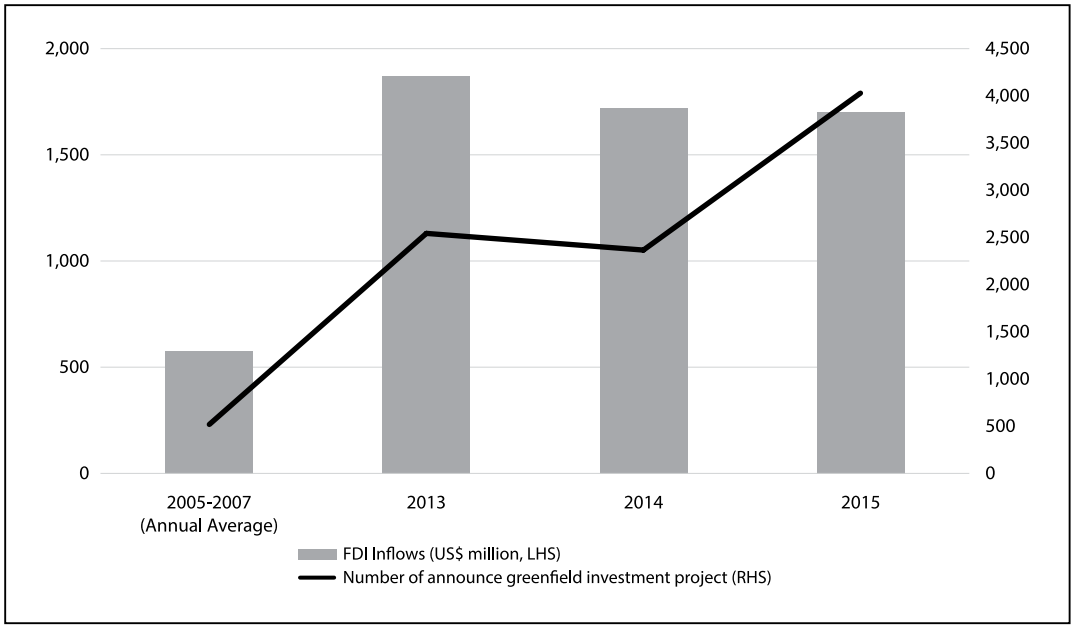
Source: *World Trade Organization*[1]

5. Foreign Direct Investment

According to a 2014 World Bank report, Cambodia has the most liberal foreign direct investment (FDI) regime in ASEAN (The Cambodia Herald, 2014). The Law on Investment—promulgated in 1993, amended in 2004 and being amended again as of this writing—is designed to encourage foreign investments by adopting the principle of non-discrimination. It also offers generous incentives to qualified investment projects (QIPs)—investment projects that apply for and receive this special designation from the Council for the Development of Cambodia (CDC), the government agency in charge of vetting and monitoring investments in the country. The law states that no industries are closed to foreign investments. It also allows full foreign ownership of businesses in most sectors and places few restrictions on the employment of foreign citizens. Also under the law, foreign and domestic investments are treated the same except for land ownership to which, according to the constitution, only Cambodian natural persons and legal entities are entitled. Furthermore, QIPs enjoy substantial investment incentives including exemption from corporate profit tax for up to nine years; full exemption from export taxes; and tariff-free imports of production equipment, construction materials, raw materials, intermediate goods, and production input accessories (CDC, 2017).

As a result, Cambodia is one of the world's top destinations for FDI. Before the Global Financial Crisis, just over USD 500 million of committed foreign investments were approved annually by the CDC. This number jumped to close to USD 2 billion a year between 2013 and 2015 (Figure 8).

Figure 8: FDI Inflows and Number of Announced Projects

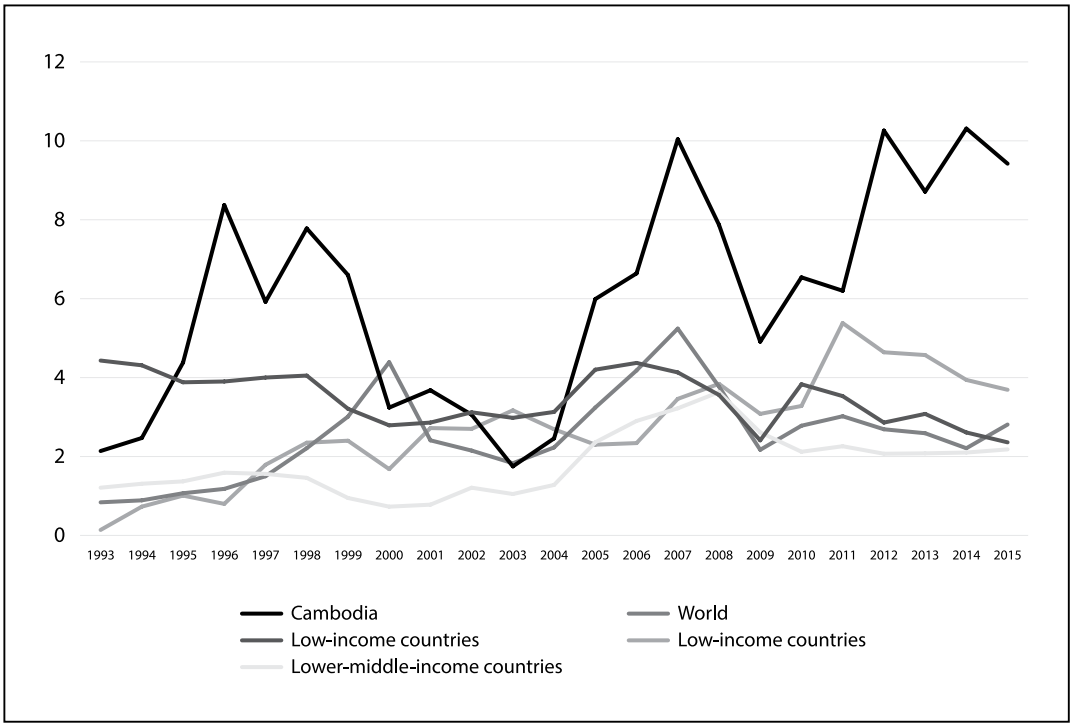


Source: *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)*

Caution should, however, be taken when interpreting committed investment figures that investors submit to CDC for approval as these numbers often differ from eventual investments. A comprehensive survey conducted by the National Bank of Cambodia and the National Institute of Statistics found that actual FDI spending in Cambodia between 1994 and 2014 was USD 19.2 billion. China (including Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan) accounted for 44 percent of this total, making it Cambodia's largest foreign investor. Other Asian countries invested another 46 percent while the rest of the world contributed the remaining 10 percent (Hor, 2016). Nearly a quarter of FDI went towards the manufacturing sector while real estate, agriculture, finance, energy, and services were other important sectors, each attracting more than 10 percent of total foreign investments during the past twenty years (Sok, 2016).

FDI (as a percentage of GDP) has increased markedly from a low base of 2 percent in 1993 to peaks of more than 10 percent in three different years (2007, 2012, and 2014). And given the size of its economy, Cambodia attracts relatively more foreign investments than its peers (Figure 9).

Figure 9: FDI, 1993-2015 (% of GDP)



Source: *WDI*

For example, among the ten ASEAN members, only Singapore received more foreign investment as a share of GDP than Cambodia in 2015.

Figure 10: FDI-to-GDP Ratio for ASEAN Countries

Country	2010-2014	2015
Singapore	20.99%	22.29%
Cambodia	8.40%	9.42%
Lao PDR	4.45%	8.75%
Vietnam	5.58%	6.10%
Myanmar	2.60%	4.84%
Malaysia	3.76%	3.70%
Philippines	1.22%	1.96%
Indonesia	2.43%	1.80%
Thailand	2.58%	1.79%
Brunei Darussalam	4.25%	1.12%

Source: *WDI*

III. Relevant Issues

Cambodia's integration into the global and regional economic and financial order has been one of the driving forces behind its economic success. At the same time, these close links have led to a number of vulnerabilities for the country and its economy. Four of the most relevant and pressing of these vulnerabilities are discussed below.

1. Sovereignty

A major challenge for Cambodia is the need to maintain productive economic ties with the region and the world while avoiding dependence and loss of sovereignty.

Foreign donors often fail to seek meaningful consultation with people on the ground in the planning and implementation of aid projects. They may also have agendas that are unrelated to the development and poverty reduction in recipient countries. Slocomb (2010) argued that the selection of development projects in Cambodia appears to be driven by "international, short-term issues and not necessarily local long-term needs" (Slocomb, 2010, p. 25). The outbreak of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI or "bird flu") in Cambodia in 2005 illustrates the case. Despite being one of the top recipients of aid to combat HPAI, the Cambodian government's response was ineffective. This resulted in four deaths by May 2005 (WHO, 2005) and significant economic loss as thousands of poultry died from the disease or were culled to halt its spread (Thet, 2005). Ear (2012) contended that a contributing factor to this weak response was a clash in priorities: what was good for Cambodia (preventing human deaths and harms to livelihoods of poultry farmers) was not

necessarily the same as what donors wanted (stopping the disease from reaching their own borders) (Ear, 2012, p. 88). In a 2005 speech to the UN General Assembly, Prime Minister Hun Sen expressed his frustration at what he perceived as donors' excessive focus on their own priorities and neglect of Cambodia's development needs. He made the plea that, "Politically driven hidden agendas and shifting ideologies to bring coercive influence on the recipients [of aid] must end. They serve only to punish the poor" (Shaw, 2005).

Erosion of a recipient country's sovereignty also arises from the fact that international assistance usually comes with conditions (also known as "conditionalities"). Since 2000, donors have linked aid to Cambodia with judicial, fiscal, and administrative reforms as well as a slew of other governance benchmarks (Slocomb, 2010, p. 277). Reforms undertaken by the current government during its second mandate (1998-2003) also appeared to stick closely to the "Washington Consensus" economic orthodoxy championed by international financial institutions (IFIs) such as the World Bank and the IMF (Hang, 2012a, p. 54). Another type of condition is aid tying, the requirement by donors that aid money be spent on goods and services bought from their countries. For instance, 45 percent of the total aid Cambodia received between 1993 and 2008 went towards paying consultants and specialists, many of whom were citizens of donor countries (Hang, 2012b, p. 280). Some donors also require aid projects to be carried out by companies from their own countries. Infrastructure projects (roads, bridges, hydroelectric dams, and so on) financed by Chinese soft loans and grants are often built and operated by Chinese construction firms. Tied aid means that disbursements do not necessarily get invested in the recipient's economy. According to Oxfam, tying lowers the purchasing power of aid by 15 to 40 percent (Green, 2011). In the same speech referred to above, Prime Minister Hun Sen pointed out that, "Aid has been given to meet the requirements of the donors, and at the end most of the aid money has been plowed back to benefit the economy of the donor countries or to benefit consultants from other countries even though they are incompetent" (Shaw, 2005).

Furthermore, gaining membership in economic and financial institutions requires lengthy legal and institutional reforms that are difficult to implement. To meet WTO accession conditions, for example, Cambodia had to pass 47 different pieces of legislations (Chea & Sok, 2017). While these laws and regulations may be valuable on their own, the fact remains that their introduction was externally imposed. And once membership is secured, Cambodia often has very little input on the governance and decisions of these institutions. Due to its minor shareholding in the World Bank, for example, Cambodia is represented by an Executive Director (ED) appointed by South Korea (who also represents Australia, New Zealand, Mongolia and nine small Pacific island nations) (World Bank, 2017). When important decisions (including the approval of loans) are under consideration by the board of directors, the ED is required to cast combined, undivided votes on behalf of the whole 14-country constituency (Suzuki, 2011). Consequently, as Cambodia does not have its own ED on the board, it is unable to express its preferences through separate votes.

Because of these risks to sovereignty, it is often argued that aid recipients (Cambodia included) prefer to seek support from newly established donors such as China as assistance from these sources comes with no or fewer strings attached. Because of China's increasing

cloud in Cambodia—it is now Cambodia's biggest donor and investor—we must give this argument serious attention.

It is important to distinguish between the *stated objectives* and *revealed objectives* of China's foreign aid program. In 2011, China released its first white paper on foreign aid. The paper's preface states that China's objectives are to "help recipient countries to strengthen their self-development capacity, enrich and improve their peoples' livelihood, and promote their economic growth and social progress," consolidate "friendly relations and economic and trade cooperation with other developing countries," promote South-South cooperation, and contribute to the common development of mankind. In addition, China committed to integrating the "Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence" (mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, mutual non-aggression, mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful co-existence) into its foreign aid policy (China Daily, 2011).

Scholars have, however, cast doubt on whether these stated objectives are the real raisons d'être of Chinese aid. Woods (2008) argued that the main objectives of China's foreign aid are the "quest for energy security, enlarged trading opportunities, and new economic partnership, coupled with rapidly growing strength and size in the global economy." In the case of Cambodia, Ciorciari (2015) noted that China has built strong ties with the Cambodian government as part of its "charm offensive" in Southeast Asia and that "China appears to be requesting diplomatic favors with increasing regularity and expanding its demands into more sensitive issues—namely the South China Sea disputes."

Foreign aid is an integral element of Chinese foreign policy. While we cannot completely discount the Chinese government's stated wish to improve the livelihoods of people in recipient countries, it is prudent to recognize that Chinese national interests, particularly its diplomatic and economic interests, play a non-negligible role in determining the direction of Chinese aid policy.

2. Aid Effectiveness

Critics have argued that foreign aid hinders rather than facilitates economic development and have called for reforms of the existing international aid architecture. Moyo (2009) examined the experience of Africa where billions of aid dollars from developed countries have poured in to help spur growth and reduce poverty. She showed that the outcomes have been quite the opposite: economies of aid recipients continue to stagnate and poverty levels have risen. The reason behind this, Moyo contended, is aid dependence: aid dollars enable corruption, unaccountable government, and market distortions in recipient countries which exacerbate development challenges and put them in a vicious cycle of needing even more aid.

In the specific case of Cambodia, Ear (2012) argued that human development indicators such as maternal, infant and child mortality rates in Cambodia have not improved despite billions in aid inflows. Corruption and governance challenges also remain stark and

income inequality worsened considerably between 1994 and 2007. According to Ear, the government's lack of political will to improve governance and curb corruption are the root cause of this poor record. But he suggested that development partners also deserve some of the blame. By writing Cambodia large checks, donors enable the government to pay for substantial portions of public expenditures without having to fund them through taxation. This ability relieves the government of accountability to the electorate. He concluded that Cambodia has become "a kleptocracy *cum* thugocracy and the international community, led by the UN, is its enabler" (Ear, 2012, p. 8).

3. Lower-Middle-Income Status and Loss of Trade and Economic Preferences

Cambodia attained lower-middle-income status when its Gross National Income (GNI) crossed the USD 1,045 cutoff point defined by the World Bank. This is a major achievement but it comes with some complications: the borrowing privileges and preferential trade treatments that Cambodia has enjoyed over the past 20 years are linked to its standing as a low-income country and the revised status will eventually preclude Cambodia from these benefits.

For instance, Cambodia qualifies for concessional lending from the International Development Association (IDA) where credits and loans are made at zero or low-interest rate and with a 10-year grace period and long maturity dates (30 to 40 years). Cambodia can still count on access to funding at these favorable terms in the short run as, first, it still lacks creditworthiness (which makes it eligible for IDA funding even after its economy has moved from low-income status) and, second, the graduation process from IDA usually extends over several years (IDA, 2016). But these privileges will eventually lapse. To prepare, Cambodia needs a plan for an orderly medium-term exit from concessional lending and build the capacity to seek financing at market terms either from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) or on the global capital markets.

Another significant advantage that will expire in the medium term is Everything But Arms (EBA), the scheme that offers tariff and quota exemptions to goods and services exported from Least Developed Countries (LDCs) to the EU's 28 member states. LDC is a United Nations measure that is defined using a broader set of criteria than the World Bank's lower-income designation. In addition to GNI, the UN also takes into account a country's level of human capital and its vulnerability to economic shocks. The UN reviews Cambodia's LDC classification every three years. The earliest possible transition is 2018 but, according to an economist familiar with the process, Cambodia is unlikely to graduate from LDC before 2024 (McGrath & Hor, 2016). And after being removed from the LDC list, countries are entitled to three additional years of full EBA benefits to help them with the transition. Similar to IDA funding, Cambodia will lose the EBA trade preference in the future. It needs to strengthen export competitiveness and seek new markets for its products to ensure that the negative impact from this eventual loss is minimal.

4. Dollarization

Cambodia's status as a major recipient of aid and foreign direct investment has contributed to its highly dollarized economy. In most major commercial transactions, the U.S. dollar now serves all the three primary functions of money, i.e. medium of exchange, unit of account and store of value. The use of the Khmer riel is mostly restricted to rural areas.

According to Menon (2008), Cambodia is Asia's most dollarized economy and has one of the highest levels of dollarization in the world. Dollarization, defined as the ratio of foreign currency deposits to broad money, rose from 60% in the 90s to 80% in 2010. Riel deposits in commercial banks accounted for only 3% of total bank deposits in 2010 while foreign currency deposits (most of which are in dollars) made up the remaining 97% (Menon, 2008). Apart from small lending made by microfinance institutions to borrowers in the provinces, the vast majority of commercial loans are denominated in U.S. dollars.

Because of dollarization, the National Bank of Cambodia (NBC) enjoys only partial autonomy over monetary policy. There is evidence that domestic lending and deposit rates, important monetary tools that are usually under the exclusive purview of the domestic central bank, move in tandem with fluctuations in the U.S. federal funds rates. An IMF study found that a 0.3 percent increase in the federal fund's rate leads to a rise of 0.46 percent in deposit rates and 0.4 percent in lending rates in Cambodia as local banks seek to stabilize the gap between offshore and onshore U.S. dollar interest rates (Duma, 2010). In other words, Cambodia effectively outsources part of its monetary policy decisions to the U.S. Federal Reserve.

And because Cambodia imports most of the goods it consumes and for which it pays in dollars, the country's terms of trades and price levels are affected by the dollar exchange rates—something over which Cambodia has no control. The dollar's values against other currencies change as U.S. monetary policy becomes lax or tight. These changes can have an impact on Cambodia's trade competitiveness and inflation rates. For example, the easy monetary policy adopted by the U.S. Federal Reserve after the 2007 Global Financial Crisis led to the dollar's depreciation against the currencies of Cambodia's major trading partners. As a result, Cambodia's imported goods became relatively more expensive while its exports got relatively cheaper in world markets. This led to a period of higher inflation in Cambodia, most noticeably in 2008, but may have helped keep Cambodian exports more competitive during a time of depressed world trade volume.

As Cambodia's macroeconomic and political situations improve, the argument for de-dollarization gets stronger. There is political consensus that the benefits of de-dollarization exceed its costs and that the time to de-dollarize is ripe. How to go about doing this seems less clear, though both the government and the NBC have introduced a few steps to get the process under way. These include requiring all tax payments to be made in Khmer riels, paying civil servants and government suppliers and contractors in riels, and setting a lower reserve requirement ratio for riel deposits to encourage commercial banks to raise local currency deposits more cheaply.

IV. Conclusion

Cambodia has been one of the most remarkable global growth stories over the past two decades. The capital Phnom Penh often feels like one huge construction site. The city's skyline has changed so much and so quickly that it is now unrecognizable from what it was several years ago. Its wide tree-lined colonial-era boulevards are chock-full of cars and motorcycles during rush hours and each weekend its swanky malls are filled to capacity with shopping crowds.

Reforms in the late 1980s and early 1990s and the country's embrace of free markets are some of the key factors responsible for this economic success. Cambodia is an active member of the global community having joined many of the most important international economic and financial institutions. It has and continues to receive significant foreign development assistance—an important source of funding for both hard infrastructure and crucial social services. Its economy is highly dependent on trade with a trade-to-GDP ratio of more than 140 per cent, a figure much higher than those for many countries in the same income bracket. And due to its plentiful natural resources and relatively cheap labor, Cambodia is a major destination for foreign direct investment.

Yet Cambodia will experience some headwinds in its next phase of development. The same openness to the outside world that allows the country to reap considerable advantages also exposes its economy to unique vulnerabilities. High level of dollarization acts as a straitjacket on the central bank, limiting its monetary policy autonomy exactly when an increasingly complex and open economy demands enhanced policy maneuverability. Cambodia's reliance—some say dependence—on foreign aid leads many to question whether this funding arrangement is effective and sustainable. And despite its membership in numerous international institutions, Cambodia's small size means it has little say on how these bodies are run. Further worsening the cost-benefit calculus, Cambodia's graduation from low-income status will eventually disqualify the country from preferential trade and lending treatments offered by some of these institutions.

Cambodia's leaders and policy makers must avoid complacency. The government has to strengthen domestic revenue collection to enable an orderly medium-term exit from foreign aid. Efforts to de-dollarize the economy need to pick up speed. And structural reforms are necessary to improve the country's export competitiveness and move the economy away from low-skilled, labor-intensive industries. If these are achieved, despite the risks, Cambodia's close links with the global economy will continue to provide a strong foundation for future growth.

Endnote

1 http://stat.wto.org/CountryProfile/WSDBCountryPFView.aspx?Language=S&Country=KH

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