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CAMBODIA POLICY: US ADRIFT, THAILAND MAY BE THE KEY

U.S. policy toward Cambodia continues to take a geopolitical, rather than a moral, line toward the fate of the 6,000,000 Cambodians. But the presumptions of this policy are vanishing fast and U.S. foreign service officers complain that they find it ever harder to explain.

In the past, we based our policy, in large part, on the preferences of that regional ally, China. But since China was supporting the genocidal Pol Pot forces, the Khmer Rouge, we had to explain our policy as one designed to drive the Vietnamese out of Cambodia at any price. Today, the Vietnamese forces have left. Today, China is the China of Tiananmen.

In the past, we based our policy, in equally large part, on the desires of ASEAN, that coalition of Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines and Brunei. ASEAN, like China, was not the least bit concerned about the fate of the poor Cambodians but only interested in keeping Vietnam out of Cambodia. Today, Vietnam is leaving and the real attitudes of ASEAN are no longer the same.

Political Cop-Out: The ASEAN Line

Thus, when our secretary of state tells observers that America just follows the ASEAN line, nothing could be more unreal; this is, for the secretary of state just a political shelter that makes decision-making easy. Instead, the ASEAN line is dictated by the Thai foreign minister who represents a crucial part of the ruling Thai political coalition and thus cannot be gain-said. It does not reflect what the Thai prime minister and Thai army are doing.

And the official ASEAN view certainly does not reflect the real views of the Indonesians and Malaysians. On the contrary, it reflects only the overwhelming consensus within ASEAN that unanimity is crucial, at any price, to the future of ASEAN upon which all depend for many regional benefits.

America being what it is, our foreign service could not, and cannot, openly admit that their policy is one prepared to fight to the last Cambodian. Accordingly, the possibility of some peaceful outcome, satisfying all parties, had to be held forth, no matter how contrived. In the past, believers in the tooth fairy put forth the view that: four ferociously combative Cambodian factions would sit down together in a completely unprecedented interim quadripartite government of Cambodia; next a democratic election, also unprec-

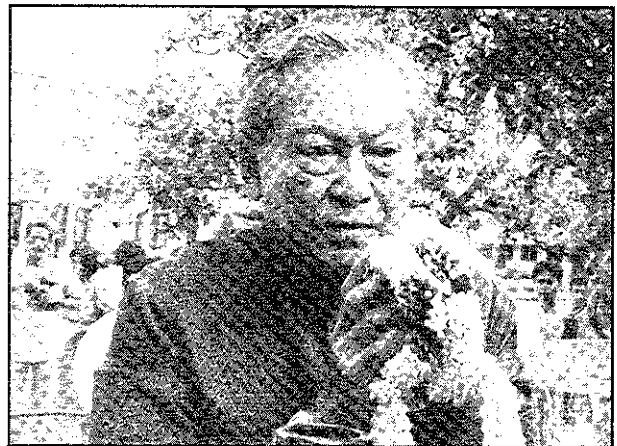
edented in Cambodia, would be held; and all of this would be held in place by a UN peacekeeping force of a kind which has not existed for four decades if ever, in particular of a kind prepared to take casualties.

There is hope, however, in the policies of Prime Minister Chatchai and the adaptive qualities of the Thai nation. He has held out to his nation the possibility of the economic benefits of peace—the economic marketplace in Indochina rather than the battlefield. And doing business with Hun Sen's government has real meaning to the Thai army, whose leaders are full partners in the Thai economy. Furthermore, the Thai army does not want the Khmer Rouge to win the war in Cambodia and, still more important, it has the ability to prevent that from happening if it acts soon.

And this is because, for ten years, the Thais have been giving all kinds of aid and support to the Khmer Rouge, while the world pointedly averted its eyes. If they gradually reduce that support, the Hun Sen government can prevail. And, in the meantime, Prince Sihanouk can join with that government, if he wishes, or avoid it if he does not. In either case, the 6,000,000 Cambodians will have a stable and non-Khmer Rouge government. This, as far as we are concerned, is all the world should be trying to achieve in this period—this is going to be hard enough.

The Khmer Rouge are strong militarily but only as a guerilla force. And the sea in which these guerilla's wish to swim is as hostile to them as any sea in which a guerilla has ever found himself. This is why the instructions to the Khmer Rouge are to "fight for the

Continued on page 2



Prime Minister Chatchai Choonhaven of Thailand

World Wide Photos

Continued from page 1

quadrupartite solution." In political terms, their interim goal has to be to achieve the political legitimacy which such a quadrupartite solution would provide. As Hun Sen put it recently, China wishes, with the quadrupartite solution, to separate the Khmer Rouge from their genocidal reputation.

If these guerrillas tried to move from the guerilla stage to holding towns or cities, they would find a population that had to be controlled with cruelty—a cruelty that would reignite the hostile feelings and fears of the Cambodian nation and the world.

Moreover, direct contacts between the guerrillas and the population would shatter years of patient indoctrination. The guerrillas are now being told, for example, that the Vietnamese killed the 2 million Cambodians who died during the Pol Pot period! The Cambodian public would straighten them out. The guerrillas are being told that every uniformed Hun Sen soldier is, really, a Vietnamese in disguise. This, also, would be readily seen not to be true.

Accordingly, strategists like Pol Pot, Son Sen, and Ta Mok, three killers who are in charge, respectively, of three of the four zones into which they have divided Cambodia, cannot permit fraternization of their forces.

But these guerrillas can and will raise hell. And so, to a lesser extent, can the KPNLF forces of the Son Sann. (The forces of Prince Sihanouk, according to his comments and those of one of his generals, do not plan to fight.) And all factions have more weapons than they know what to do with.

Under the Bush Administration, the State Department is determined to follow a low posture in regional affairs leaving local states to take the front lines. As a result, the department's statements on Cambodia are so low-voiced and so all-things-to-all persons that even expert observers cannot follow their thinking.

The Paris peace conference represented "too many cooks" and they were, predictably, spoiling the broth. The Thais, in conjunction with Hun Sen, can solve this problem if any can. And if they cannot, right thinking people everywhere will be forced to beg the Vietnamese to return to prevent a Khmer Rouge takeover. The time has come for the State Department to reach a conclusion and support the best instincts of the Thais.

— Jeremy J. Stone

FAS and Cambodia

FAS is working to resolve that East-West regional conflict, and civil war, that Cambodia has come to represent; this relevant report on Thailand by Stone follows his other related reports on Cambodia (April, 1989) and Vietnam (May, 1989).

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WHO ARE THE THAIS?

Thailand is not the United States. And if the fate of the Cambodian people rests, in the first instance, with Thailand, then nothing is more important than to determine how this people and their Government function.

Forced by the Chinese, a few thousand years ago, to flee their ancestral homeland, they have known periodic, if not constant, insecurity. This insecurity has been the father of vigilance and diplomatic pragmatism. Except for a few years under Japanese control, which their history books play down, they boast of never having been colonized. Historians commonly attribute this to their skill in accommodating foreign influence, although some observe that the British and French colonial empires, between which Thailand was fortuitously placed, needed a buffer state.

Ruled absolutely by kings from time immemorial until 1932, and with 75% of the population still living as peasants, their country has, at its base, a large majority prepared to leave its rule to their betters. And since 1932, with the exception of the period 1973-1976, these have been military men. During this period there has been constant instability—by 1986, there had been thirteen constitutions, thirteen general elections, fifteen coups d'état, sixteen premiers and forty-five governments in only half a century.

Thai Prime Ministers Almost Always Military

Only two of the sixteen premiers were civilians. Two brothers, M.R. Seni Pramoj and Kukrit Pramoj were the exception, and only for three years. Descended from Persians who arrived in Thailand in the 17th century, their family had long been powers behind the throne. But the democratic impulses that made them civilian prime ministers were not characteristically Thai. And Seni even talks of his adopted people as if he were not one of them, saying in his recent biography, "[Pridi] was charming, most Thais are, I don't know what goes on in their heart and mind."

His biographer, David Van Praagh, describes the failure

of this democratic period in this way:

"The Thai nation was known for its flexibility, the Buddhist religion for its tolerance, and, at least since October 1973, the monarchy for its encouragement of democracy. But something seemed to be missing in the education of many Thais. Or perhaps it is more accurate to say that they were so conditioned by centuries of authoritarian rule and hierarchial deference that they were afraid of personal freedom and unwilling to accept accompanying responsibility."

Today, in Thailand, there is a premier elected by a popularly elected parliament, and his policies are, for the Cambodians, hopeful indeed. But his recent completion of a first year of Western style democracy surprised observers, despite the military origins of the three key government officials. Prime Minister Chatchai Choonhaven was a major general. His foreign minister, Siddhi Savetsila was an air chief marshal. The third major power in the Thai Government is, also, military—the army commander, General Chavalit Yongchaiyudh.

While some believe, and many hope, that the period of military coups is over, the influence of the military is obvious in all things and overwhelming and uncontested in matters of national security.

Military Have Economic Goals

But the goals of the military are not only military goals. Their leaders share the general Thai interest in business, and in getting rich. Bangkok, to a naive observer, looks like a city on the make—bustling itself into pollution and traffic jams in the intoxicating desire to become the newest NIC—newly industrialized country. The military are tied into this prosperity. While the three million descendants of the ethnic Chinese dominate commerce, they have long since formed protective alliances with military partners whose profits substitute for whatever shakedowns the commercial entrepreneurs would, otherwise, have to pay.

This traditionally sanctioned approach to what we would deplore as the "payoff" means that Thai generals inevitably have financial interests even in their military activities. Thus all observers take it as given that, when they transfer arms from the Chinese to the Khmer Rouge, they are taking a "piece of the action." And, similarly, if either Thai businessmen or the Khmer Rouge themselves are making money from rubies in adjacent Cambodian provinces, or from timber, or whatever, the Thai military "would not be wise" in King Mongkut's estimation or their own, if they were not profiting as well.

Thus the Prime Minister's vision is not one of trying to beat something with nothing. His notion of turning Indochina from a battlefield to a market place has a great deal in it for the military factions and empires over which his government presides uneasily.

Starting with Hun Sen's dramatic first visit to Bangkok, the prime minister has been following a policy of dealing with realities as they exist. □

KING MONGUT'S VIEW ON BUREAUCRATIC PAYOFFS

When, in 1864, Anna Leonowens, of *Anna and the King of Siam* fame, approached King Mongkut for a raise, he said:

"Why you should be poor? You come into my presence every day with some petition, some case of hardship or injustice, and you demand 'your Majesty shall most kindly investigate and cause redress to be made;' and I have granted to you because you are important to me for translations, and so forth. And now you declare you must have increase of salary! Must you have everything in this world? Why you do not make them pay you? If I grant you all your petition for the poor, you ought to be rich, or you have no wisdom."

—*The English Governess at the Siamese Court* (Oxford University Press, 1870). ■

THE PRESENT STATE OF PLAY IN BANGKOK

As of mid-September, the Thai foreign minister was well to the right of the prime minister and his advisers. Indeed, Prime Minister Chatchai was calling in the four Cambodian factions for consultation with him and his army commander, Chavalit Yongchaiyudh, without asking Foreign Minister Siddhi to join them. Siddhi, a person whose integrity and decency was attested to by many, even in Moscow, is a deeply conservative person. He believed, for example, that the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the Vietnamese overthrow of Pol Pot were part of a coordinated Soviet attack on the Asia-Pacific region. As another example, on a human rights level, he implied to the Lawyer's Committee on Human Rights that involuntary residence at a Khmer Rouge site was not a serious problem since the Khmer Rouge "had changed," if only as a practical necessity so that they could continue to attract new recruits.

One of his assistants, Charan Kullavanijaya, a Thai lieutenant general seconded to the foreign ministry, held that Pol Pot and Ta Mok had changed their ideas lately and that the absence of recent genocide was evidence for this. This political-military coordinator for security-related issues believed that the West worried too much about genocide of the past. He had no reports of families being forced to walk across minefields, and so on. But asked why Thailand insisted on a seemingly unworkable quadripartite government in Cambodia, he admitted "We thought of the possibility of supporting just one faction but could not accept the possibility of having the border plundered. If the one power involved could control the border, it would be alright."

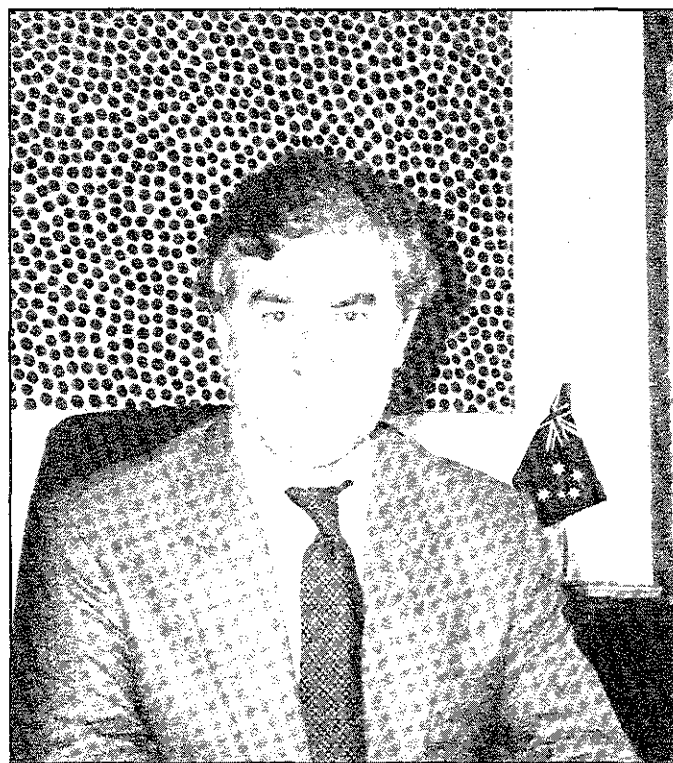
Control of the Border the Issue?

He went on to say that "We were glad when the Vietnamese came in but we had problems when it led to the Khmer Rouge plundering the border. So we 'aligned the factions,' pushed 'white into red' (i.e. forced Sihanouk to join with Khmer Rouge) because we saw that Hun Sen could not control the border."

The second Foreign Ministry hawk was Ambassador Sarasin Viraphol. He received FAS, in his personal capacity, just after telling ASEAN and western representatives, as they later told us, that the failure of the Paris peace talks provided "no basis for a radical change" in Thai policy. (The operative word for the prime minister's men was 'radical' because the Thais never make radical change, but for the foreign ministry the operative word was 'change'.)

Ambassador Sarasin had the Harvard man's self-assurance and some contempt for the opinions of interlopers. In his off-the-record interview, he had little interest in answering the question "How could the United States help put Thailand in a position where it could justify diminishing aid to the Khmer Rouge?" A week later, a Thai paper reported that Sarasin, "known for his hard-line stance on Cambodia," was being moved "to bridge the differences between the ministry and Government House on Indochina."

At the end of the visit, FAS was received by a third such



Australian Ambassador Richard Butler, former Minister for Disarmament, follows Thai national security issues closely.

Foreign Ministry hard-liner, Director-General for International Organizations Kasit Piromya. He was appalled to read, in the various intelligence reports on the FAS visit, that Stone had "expressed his opinion to everyone, absolutely everyone" and called Stone "inflexible." His annoyed and reproachful expression and tone were absolutely those of Yul Brynner playing King Mongkut when the King told Anna that she was "particularly difficult person."

A Journalist's View

Later, a senior journalist said that the two track policy in Bangkok envisaged scaling down of military aid to the Khmer Rouge and non-communist resistance but that this part of the strategy was not yet operable. Indeed, if the Khmer Rouge could be handled by Hun Sen without such scaling down, then the Thais might let the aid go through. Prime Minister Chatchai and General Chaovalit would probably be in office for another year, after which the trends (toward doing business with and accepting Hun Sen) might be irreversible. Chaovalit agreed with Chatchai on the policy of limiting the scale of the civil war and Siddhi was just too conservative to be in on the meetings.

Visit to the Sihanouk Headquarters

At the FUNCINPEC headquarters of Prince Sihanouk in Bangkok, General Nady Tan confirmed that the Prince's force saw its responsibility as one of "protecting Cambodian innocents" and not one of joining in the war—"We are not going to fight." Asked if this was consistent

with statements that Prince Sihanouk had made a few months ago that he wanted to be the "peacemaker" and, accordingly, would let Hun Sen fight with the Khmer Rouge, he said that it was.

A Vietnamese Source

Vietnamese representatives in Bangkok thought that the aim of the Khmer Rouge was to weaken Hun Sen rather than to "liberate the land." The Khmer Rouge wanted to test the strength of Hun Sen after ten years.

The short term interests of Thailand might be served if the Khmer Rouge were kept as a small irritant but, in the long run, Thailand has to worry about how to deal with the Khmer Rouge and also how to deal with the refugees.

In their view what Cambodia needed more than recognition was economic aid.

The Nation's Star Cambodia Reporter

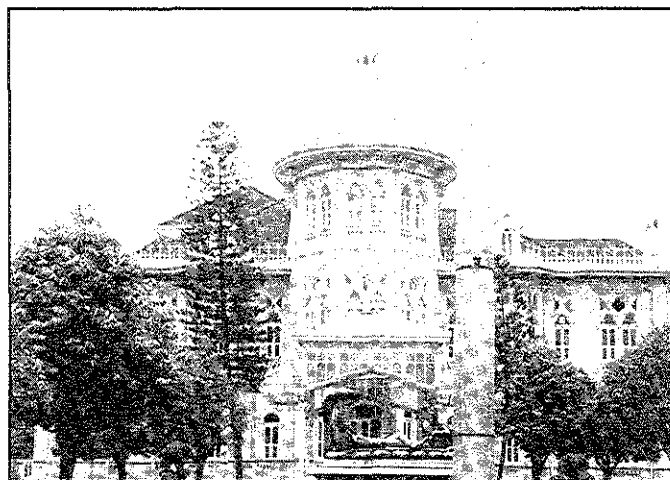
On Monday, September 11, Thailand's *The Nation* was written, basically, by one brilliant 34 year-old journalist, Kavi Chongkittavorn. His front page scoop "Chatchai-Hun Sen Talks This Week" revealed that Hun Sen was coming to Bangkok and described the strategy of the Prime Minister's advisers.

On page 8, his unsigned editorial "Give Peace A Chance" complained that the major powers "have not tried hard enough" to control their allies and urged Thailand to have the "courage" to deal with the military aspects of the Cambodian problem. Time would tell, he said, whether the Thai military was "being dictated to by major powers or not."

As if this were not enough, he contributed an op-ed piece on the same day describing the "Thai Factor In China's Khmer Policy." He noted that there was, for the first time, a "high sense of ambivalence" among Thai officials over the "appropriate means" of dealing with the Khmer Rouge. Outside the Thai Foreign Ministry, he said, some Thai policy makers think that the top priority should be "cessation of the flow of arms" to the Khmer Rouge, although not to the other two factions. At least one Thai official thought the Chinese might be interested in a "graceful exit."

The Prime Minister's Men

Pansak Vinyarat is the Chairman of the Council of Advisers to the Prime Minister. It contains four Harvard graduates, two graduates of London University, and a scientist. Among other things a former journalist, he shared ideas on a wide variety of subjects in an off-the-record interview. Joining him was the prime minister's son Kraisak Choonhavan. For the rest of the week they were both much in the news, as newspapers reported their efforts to complete the consultations with the four Cambodian factions by getting Hun Sen to Bangkok, after which they were going to travel to Beijing to see Prince Sihanouk along with a Thai major general. They were much engaged in the new Thai diplomacy aimed at slowing the civil war and keeping negotiations going. □



Part of the Government House containing reception rooms for the Council of Advisers to the Prime Minister.

THAILAND'S SECURITY ATTITUDES

On the Thai Army

"The modern Thai army, about one hundred years old, has never had to defend Thailand against external aggression. Its institution and development have been related more to internal political developments and, especially after the coup against the monarchy in 1932, it has been more involved in the jockeying for and exercise of political power than in the military defense of the state. And, in the post-war period, until the end of the Vietnamese war, the armed services had their security guaranteed by the US. Only recently have they had, therefore, to take external threats seriously."

On Thai Attitudes Toward Democracy

"If the government performs in the interest of the people, then it is democratic. In this conception, political freedom, voluntary participation in the political process, and the necessity of participatory institutions for interest aggregation and interest articulation are not given much attention. In fact, they are feared as sources of instability and as requiring guidance to make them 'constructive.' The army claims that the system of political parties cannot reach out to the true interests of the people, is likely to make for weak government, and cannot guarantee the security of Thailand. It argues that an appointed senate can be more truly representative of the people's interests than an elected house of representatives."

On Thai Neutrality

"Thailand maintains that it is neutral in the war between the various Khmer factions but this claim is 'riddled with holes' because of its diplomatic support to the Khmer coalition, acquiescence to the supply of arms by the PRC to the Khmer coalition using supply routes in Thai territory, and de facto permission to the Khmer resistance forces to use Thai territory as a sanctuary when they are subject to harassment from Vietnamese or Hun Sen forces."

—Muthiah Alagappa, *The National Security of Developing States* (Auburn House, Dover, MA, 1987) ■

THAILAND'S DEMOCRATS: THE PRAMOJ BROTHERS

Alone on the Sharp Edge: The Story of M.R. Seni Pramoj and Thailand's Struggle for Democracy by David Van Praagh (DK Bookhouse, 1989) provides a splendid view of Thai history.

Seni founded Thailand's oldest anti-authoritarian political force, the Prachatipat or Democrat Party. His brother, Kukrit Pramoj, also a civilian prime minister in the 1973-76 period, was a leader of the Social Action party. Seni considers the tradition of his ancestors, Persian merchants (called Bunnags) who came to Thailand in about 1600, as "non-conformist without being anti-establishment" and this certainly reflects the character of both brothers.

The History

In 1932, a coup ended the absolute monarchy of Thailand, while preserving the monarchy as a deeply beloved entity that exercises decisive influence in national emergencies through its power to appeal to the people. From 1932 to 1945 and from 1948 to 1957, the country was led by Pibul Songgram, a military strongman who was pro-Japanese and racist.

For part of the time between Pibul's two periods of prime ministership, a sinister and devious leader named Pridi Phanomyong served as prime minister. He was forced to resign because of suspicions that he was behind the death, by revolver, of King Ananda. Later suspected of being behind at least one other coup attempt, he fled to China where, some believe, he was behind the setting up of the Communist Party of Thailand. Considered a socialist for his interest in land-reform, for decades he and Pibul were the main contestors for power.

From 1957 to 1963, Marshal Sarit Thanarat was the strongman. And so it went, one military man after another, until the student revolt of 1973.

At that time, the US had reached a ceasefire agreement with the North Vietnamese and the Thais, deeply committed to the US's anti-communist stand in Asia

felt betrayed and out on a limb. Praagh says "What was immediately plain in the early 1970s, however, was that because of their reliance on the United States, the ruling generals were afraid of peace, not war, and not for their country but for themselves."

The students chose this time to demonstrate for freedom, much as in the recent demonstrations in China. The King, Bhumiphol Adjulyadej, or Rama IX, backed them. According to Seni, "The King's nature (is) to defuse a situation. The King believes in democracy but he's against anarchy. The King is consistent in his belief in constitutional monarchy and law and order." Three years later, when the Pramoj brothers could not cope with the nation's problems, the king supported the generals in their efforts to restore order by a military coup.

More recently, from 1979 to 1986, Thailand was run by General Prem Tinsulanonda who was widely regarded as honest, benign and even non-controversial. His withdrawal permitted Thailand to get back to where it had been in 1976 with the formation of a government by the elected leader of the party with the largest number of seats in the lower (elected) house of Parliament.

This elected leader was the present retired Major-General Chatchai Choonhaven. He promptly appointed a competitor for the prime ministership, Air Marshal Siddhi, leader of the Social Action Party, as foreign minister.

Comments on the Thais

Seni's and Praagh's perceptions of the Thai character are thought-provoking. Some comments:

"The virus in our system is the army—it is always there—why the hell should we care about reason." (Seni)

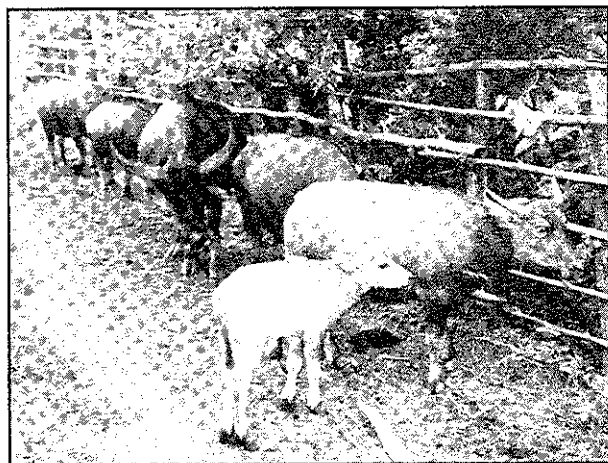
"... the persistent Thai inclination to roll over before superior force and seek salvation in an escape hatch." (Praagh)

"The typically Thai wish to avoid direct confrontation, and to have it both ways..." (Praagh)

"... historically adept at holding would-be foreign conquerors at bay notwithstanding their psychological tendency to shy away from direct conflict." (Praagh)

"There is a shortage of qualified civilian political leaders a generation younger than Kukrit Pramoj and Seni Pramoj. Moreover, except for Seni's Democrats and the Social Action Party led by Kukrit until the end of 1985, Thai political parties are mostly shifting opportunist groups representing narrow interests, including military elements." (Praagh)

"But how can any civilian leader be strong as long as the military is openly involved in politics?" (Seni)



Water buffalo returning home near Aranyaprathet

THE SON SANN (KPNLF) REFUGEE CAMP AT SITE 2

One hour outside Bangkok, the pollution disappears, and three hours later one arrives at the eastern border town of Aranyaprathet. This is the border headquarters of the various relief groups. Site 2, with 130,000 of the 300,000 refugees, is an hour away. It is the refugee camp for the Son Sann KPNLF forces. Five hours to the north is the Site B camp of Prince Sihanouk's forces. To the south is a "model" camp which the Khmer Rouge use to deceive foreigners about their other camps, to which visitors cannot go.

Site two is 75% women and children under 15. Households engage in minor commerce: sewing, selling small produce, etc. There is excellent health care by Southeast Asian standards and, of course, free rice, so in some ways much of the population is probably better off than they would be in Cambodia. But life is boring and, in the evenings when the foreign presence is gone, insecure. And the future is uncertain as they wait for the outside world to determine the fate of Cambodia.

Interviews with the inhabitants produce predictable answers. If the Khmer Rouge take over, no one wants to go back. If not, they say at first, they would want to go back. Asked specifically what they would want if Hun Sen remained in control, they say "Whatever Son Sann wants, we will do." (One woman said the answer depended upon her husband; another just said, "I want to go back.")

Birds at the Bottom of a Well

But the real truth was expressed by one inhabitant, who said "We are like a bird at the bottom of a well; we cannot see far enough to know in what direction we want to go."

They are, after all, heavily indoctrinated. And the Voice of America, in Khmer, fills them full of propaganda. With minor exceptions, VOA supports the views of the "non-communist resistance" viz, those of Prince Sihanouk. Among the many lies the refugees are told is that Hun Sen's wife is Vietnamese when, in fact, she is of Chinese extraction.

One sophisticated Khmer said that the bottom line is that the peasants want to return home and the intellectuals want to go abroad.

The young boys are pressed into the service of the KPNLF army; they can refuse to serve but to refuse repeatedly is unhealthy. In middle September when we arrived, the trucks were openly picking up young men to take them to prepare for the new front that would be opened up immediately after the Vietnamese left on September 26. The KPNLF is especially interested in seizing territory, perhaps to secure a special role for itself. And as part of this effort they may try to herd the civilians back into Cambodia. This would pose a problem for UNBRO (United Nations Border Relief Organization), which has no mandate to work inside Cambodia but only inside the Thai border.

The camps have become hostages of the various groups and each person in them is forced to support the resistance group running the particular camp. It is rare when anyone

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Children in the KPNLF's camp. 75% of the inhabitants are women and children.

IMPROVING THE CONDITIONS OF THE REFUGEES

●The Camps should be moved out of the war zone where they can be shelled at any time. Geographically, the civilians have been put on the front line and resistance camps in the rear. That order should be reversed.

●Refugees came to the border in search of a non-politicized, non-militarized atmosphere in which, as civilians, they could live as they chose. Instead, they found each camp devoted to one combatant force or another. They need neutral camps.

●Neutral camps are, also, the first key step toward a safe and voluntary repatriation movement. With the Vietnamese withdrawing, many people will want to return home and all those who do want to return home ought to be provided with the opportunity. The present situation is unique. A large civilian population in a country of 1st asylum is not being allowed to return home to their own country, which is ready and willing to accept them!

●In particular, persons should have the right to leave one camp and enter another. Most of the people in the Khmer Rouge camps got there as a matter of chance—evacuated with them in December '78/January '79. Why does the international community tolerate the holding of captives by a regime whose nefarious record is well known? At the very least, UNBRO should have access to all refugees it is supporting.

●Information is required for the refugees so that they can determine whether or not to go home. They need objective information and, perhaps, the right to send teams of refugee observers to travel and return with independent opinions.

●Something has to be done to improve security, especially at night, in these camps, through some kind of resident foreign presence. ■

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gets to return legally to Cambodia. When recently a family of seven got such permission, the Thai military was upset as were, of course, the heads of these camps, for whom such returns could be a bad precedent.

Instead, refugees who want to return pay guides to take them illegally across the heavily-mined border.

Anomalies abound. In these refugee camps, for example, are only 5% of the Cambodian population of 6,000,000. Yet UNBRO gets \$60,000,000 for them (\$200 per person) while the only UN funds that go to Cambodia at large are \$5 million through UNICEF (84 cents per person).

While the Hun Sen Government is condemned for being "former Khmer Rouge," the camps are full of former Khmer Rouge, often in high administrative positions. One such former Khmer Rouge administrator said that he was not sure whether people would want to return under Hun Sen but certainly not under the Khmer Rouge. He said that only about once a month did people come to him and ask to leave, and that he would counsel them not to do it. (In fact, Western representatives in the camp are approached all the time by people who want to know how to leave.)

The secretary-general of his KPNLF movement, Ieng Mouly, happened to be in the camp at the time. He was concerned about disguised Vietnamese soldiers being left in Cambodia and even about Vietnamese traders and farmers whose removal they wished to negotiate.

The KPNLF forces are a crazy quilt combination of groups that want a "free Cambodia," including royalists, extreme rightists and more moderate forces. Asked if the free Cambodia they desired had ever existed before, their secretary-general said, "no."

He understood the Khmer Rouge strategy of wanting a quadripartite solution perfectly:

"At present, if the Khmer Rouge win, they cannot govern, because they lack the confidence of the people. So they want to share power, and try to win public confidence. When accepted, they will then seek to take over."



Ieng Mouly, Secretary General of Son Sann's KPNLF which runs the Site 2 refugee camp.

Asked if the KPNLF needed arms, he said "I think we have enough now. We get them from the Chinese and can capture some and buy others." Did Sihanouk need weapons for his group? "Only as a political symbol."

Asked who would take over the KPNLF leadership if Son Sann should die—he is 78 years old, Mouly replied that there was an executive committee including the minister of defense, Im Chhoeubh, Son Sann's son, Son Soubert, Ieng Mouly himself, and General Chum Chheang.

Their defense of the quadripartite proposal that all four factions share power on an interim basis was, as they put it to Hun Sen in Jakarta, that such an arrangement would not result in 3 against 1 (i.e. the three resistance factions against Hun Sen) but 3 for 1 (i.e. the three non-Khmer Rouge factions against the Khmer Rouge). But this assumes, of course, that Prince Sihanouk would break his alliance with the Khmer Rouge. And asked about the prince's opinion, Mr. Mouly said "It depends, of course, on what capital he is speaking from."

Hun Sen's forces, one observer said, have been incredibly restrained in avoiding the various refugee camps which are placed near the borders and in between the hostile forces and the troops. Thus the refugee camps are both tactically and strategically hostage to the resistance.

The Thais Control Everything

The Thais control everything and know everything. Thais dressed as Khmer sometimes even go with the troops into Cambodia as intelligence officers. The weapons are said to come out of AID (Agency for International Development) warehouses and US advisers are said to disguise themselves as AID employees. Singapore has intelligence people there and seems to have supplied the M-16 rifles that the non-communist resistance uses—thus the use of Singapore as a conduit makes direct US lethal aid unnecessary.

Business is unbelievably far ahead of a political solution: everyone is trading with everyone else. At some border points, Hun Sen's soldiers are playing poker with Thai representatives and those of the non-communist resistance amid sporadic explosions of violence.

There are rumors of Khmer Rouge planning to wear KPNLF uniforms and of Khmer Rouge infiltrating the Sihanouk FUNCINPEC forces.

Son Sen, the defense minister for Pol Pot, evidently has five categories against whom he plans to act when the Khmer Rouge seize power. They are: a) regular army Vietnamese b) hidden regular army Vietnamese c) Vietnamese disguised as Hun Sen forces; d) civilian Vietnamese and e) Khmer "fellow-travelers" of the Vietnamese.

Some months ago, when he was campaigning for lethal aid to be given by the US, Congressman Stephen Solarz apparently advised General Sak Sukaron, a leading Son Sann commander that he, Solarz, would ensure that weapons were provided to Son Sann but that "you will have to guarantee that these won't be used against Hun Sen." General Sukaron readily agreed. But observers dismissed the possibility of such a commitment being meaningful. □

THAILAND'S FOREMOST SECURITY ANALYST: M.R. SUKHUMBHAND PARIBATRA

M.R. Sukhumbhand Paribatra, a graduate of Oxford University and Georgetown University, is especially expert on the Thai military and is the author of *In Search of Security: Thailand's Armed Forces and Defense Since 1975*. No doubt it is his special understanding, and his pungent and courageous comments, that provoked the uprising noted in an adjoining box.

What follows are some of his views taken from his writings to supplement an off-the-record interview.

In *Beyond Cambodia* (1989), he argued that ASEAN should reach a new consensus on Cambodia and proceed to implement it without waiting for a "constructive foreign policy from Beijing." The new consensus should find ways of avoiding civil war and ways of dealing with the Hun Sen regime "which, for better or for worse, is the only Cambodian faction with an effective administrative machinery at its disposal," but should press the Hun Sen regime to broaden its base.

He went on to say, "For its part, Thailand is unlikely to be willing to endorse unequivocally an arrangement in Cambodia which institutionalizes Vietnamese primacy or one which clearly embodies a denial of China's right to participate in the determination of the course of regional affairs. In the absence of a comprehensive settlement the Thais are likely to 'hedge their bets' and continue the policy of providing support to the armed resistance movements, particularly the Khmer Rouge, although almost certainly at a lower level than before, given the general improvement in Thai-Vietnamese relations. This continuing support in turn will make a comprehensive solution even more elusive.

"But at the same time, as long as most of the Vietnamese troops remain out of Cambodia and ways and means of keeping most of the Vietnamese out of Cambodia can be found, Bangkok will be more or less satisfied that there is no clear and present danger to itself. Accordingly it will not be reluctant to conduct 'business-as-usual' relations with Hanoi, especially if one considers the fact that the prospects for reap-

ing benefits from improved economic ties with Vietnam are generally thought to be good. Moreover, Thailand is likely to be further attracted by the prospect of improved ties with Laos and a Vietnamese-influenced regime in Phnom Penh, attracted not only by the raw materials and opportunities for investment available, but also by the hope that one day history may be 'reversed' and that closer ties with Thailand would 'wean' the two away from Vietnam.

"The trend towards peaceful coexistence and 'business-as-usual' relations between Vietnam and Thailand is one which will make it more difficult to achieve a comprehensive solution to the Cambodian problem, and thus the prospect of its taking place is looked upon as being undesirable by those who advocate a 'just and durable' settlement, whereby Cambodia becomes completely free of Vietnam

Continued on page 10

THAI MILITARY ALLERGIC TO CRITICISM

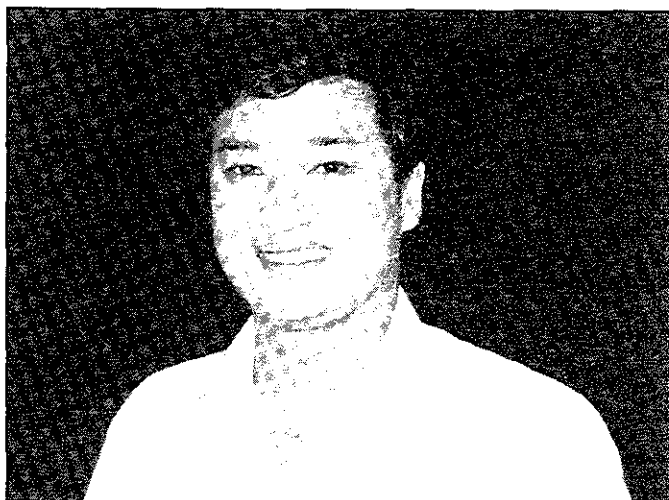
Thailand is a country in which newspapers apologize abjectly to the military for having "adversely affected the reputation of the Thai armed forces," as the Bangkok Post did on August 1, explaining that its reporters were unwittingly misled.

On August 4, a similarly revealing flap began when Army Commander General Chavalit Yongchaiyudh publicly urged the Prime Minister to cut down on corruption. (One parliamentarian was quoted, during this flap, saying that ordinary people "need to bring something along with them" whenever they contact officials or else they'll "face a lot of trouble.")

According to press reports M.R. Sukhumbhand Paribatra had observed, at a Social Science Association meeting, that "Anyone who says the government is 90 percent corrupt should clean up their own house first" and had suggested an overhaul of the curriculum of the Chulachomklao Academy program in which the armed forces are trained.

Whatever he said, the Army took offense. Its spokesman announced on television that "Army officers feel that the Army is an important institution which should not be blemished" and warned that Sukhumbhand's remarks would create "doubts about the Army." Thus encouraged, 600 to 1,000 army officers gathered at a hotel ballroom to call for his removal as an adviser to the prime minister, to request his apology, and to bar him from making any further comments on military affairs in future.

M.R. Sukhumbhand responded that his grandfather had been involved in the very academy as a founder of the Thai armed forces and that his "status and family background should suffice to guarantee the pure conviction that motivated him to speak." Nevertheless, to protect the prime minister, his resignation was accepted. ■



M.R. Sukhumbhand, Director of Policy Studies at the Institute of Security and International Studies of Chulalongkorn University.

Continued from page 9

ese influence and fully independent and democratic. Indeed, the possibility that those who reject such a *de facto* acceptance of Vietnam's position in Cambodia may create problems which would increase tension once more, cannot be ruled out. But there is little doubt that, at least in the short term, this trend has contributed and will continue to continue to contribute to the process of rapprochement and detente in international politics both at the global and regional level, and that, at this juncture, with China preoccupied by domestic problems, there is no party, with the exception of the Khmer Rouge, which has both the willingness and the capacity to reverse such a trend against the wishes of both Vietnam and Thailand." □

Took the King To Halt the Army

"Indeed, the power of the military is such that, according to well-informed sources, it took a personal intervention by the king to persuade General Arthit to withdraw the Thai forces sent to enforce a territorial claim against Laos, a measure which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs saw as being unjustified and potentially damaging in view of the Thai application to join the Security Council."

—M.R. Sukhumbhand in *ASEAN in Regional and Global Context* ■

A JOURNALIST ENGAGED IN TRACKING THE KHMER ROUGE: NATE THAYER

Nathaniel T. Thayer, a former U. of Mass. political science student turned journalist, lives in Aranyaprathet and follows the Khmer Rouge.

He thought that the real question for the Khmer Rouge was when and if they would shift from guerrilla war activities to large-scale actions. Khmer Rouge defectors said they had been told to increase their attacks and, over the last three months, there had been much more movement of porters carrying weapons into Cambodia. The Khmer Rouge controlled 30 to 40 kilometers along the border near Trat. They had recently overrun a Hun Sen division headquarters. Whenever they chose to attack, they always won. Whenever they had been defeated, it had been done with Vietnamese forces and not with Hun Sen forces.

Khmer Rouge Cannot Control Territory

Son Sen was very intelligent but, as late as 1989, he had indicated that there was no change from the "guerrilla" strategy except in the Pilsen area, which they wanted to hold because it contains gems. They did not take cities because "Why take them if you can't hold them?" Asked by a Danish general why they were not trying to take territory, Son Sen told the general "We want to win the hearts and minds of the people." (On the other hand, KPNLF were going to launch major attacks on Battambang to try to show that their movement was not an illusion.)

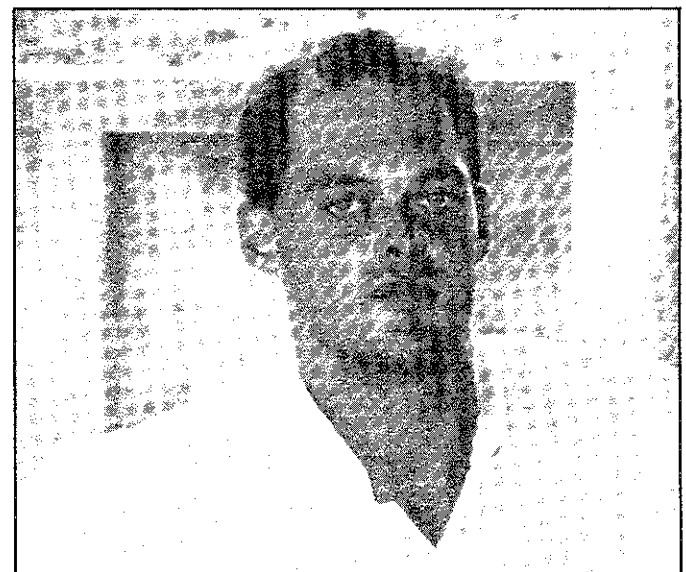
In the last six months, the Thais have ceased to provide covering fire for the Khmer Rouge, but Thayer has seen no open cooperation between Hun Sen's forces and the Thai military as yet.

All the Thai military and Cambodian defectors think that some Vietnamese will stay and switch to Hun Sen uniforms. Thayer was sure they would leave "at least units to provide intelligence." Even Hun Sen defectors don't think they could defend against the Khmer Rouge; one defector said "Hun Sen doesn't have a chance in hell."

The Cambodians were extraordinarily nationalistic and the Vietnamese had treated them the way whites treated blacks after the emancipation. The Cambodians also hated corruption and it meant a lot that the Khmer Rouge were not corrupt. (In crime terms, being in a Khmer Rouge

camp was like being in Moscow while being in a KPNLF camp was more like being in New York City.) But they needed legitimacy. Thayer thought they should be included in a quadripartite government if one came about. [Ed. note: This four-way government is now clearly a non-starter.] Excluding them meant they would have no choice but to fight. The quadripartite process was a way of diluting and defusing the Khmer Rouge but what was left would certainly launch an offensive anyway—too many in the Khmer Rouge believed in what they were doing. And there was no way to build up the non-communist resistance to deal with the Khmer Rouge.

But the Khmer Rouge sincerely wanted a political solution precisely because they could not get a military solution anymore than the US could get a military solution in Vietnam. Their situation was summed up in the Cambodian saying, "Eat like a king, sleep like a dog." It meant one could eat like a king—but only by coercing peasants, after which one had to sleep in the jungle like a dog because it was not safe to turn one's back on those who had provided the meal. □



Nathaniel T. Thayer, AP journalist.

INFORMED OPINIONS

A synthesis of informed opinion in Bangkok reads something like this: In the first place, it is not, observers say, in the Thai nature to think too far ahead. Instead, Thai policy rides all the horses at the same time to see how far they can go. Such inconsistency cannot be maintained for long. One tendency of the Thai army does not really want the war to be over because, in the absence of real national security problems, the power of the Thai army would be undermined.

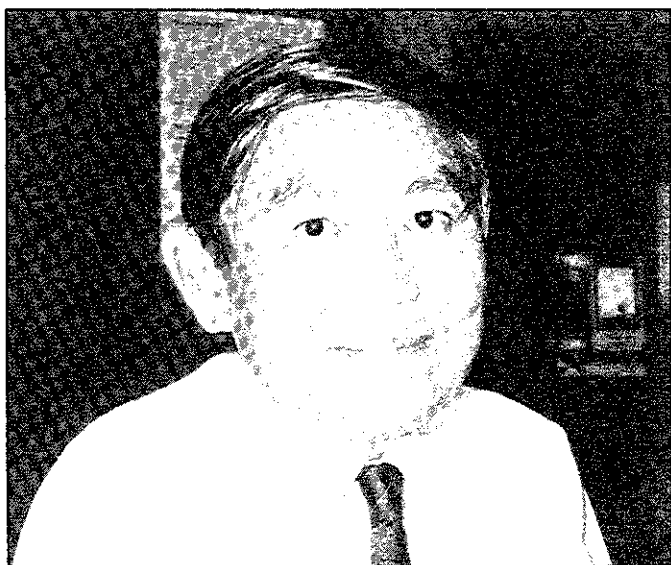
Of course, peace would be popular with many in Thailand but if the war is ended the prime minister and not the army commander will get most of the credit.

Thailand does not, ever, act in a radical way. Its approach is gradual change and a hedging of bets. If Hun Sen were to be winning, the Thais would back his winning horse. If he were losing, and the Khmer Rouge were winning, it would, in the short and medium run, work with the Khmer Rouge. The Khmer Rouge would have more to trade—in terms of wood and jewels, etc.

But in the longer run, the Thai Army does not want the Khmer Rouge to win, for several reasons. In the past, the Khmer Rouge attacked Thailand. And they ran a country that did not do business, preferring an autarky of isolated peasants rather than a free and prosperous economy that could be exploited through trade. Accordingly, if the Khmer Rouge started to win, the Thais would withdraw some support and try to preserve at least a stalemate.

The Thai military have no problem with Hun Sen but only with his Vietnamese connection. And a few Vietnamese in Cambodian uniform, if such exist, are not going to prevent the Thai military from dealing with Hun Sen.

The Thai Army is the critical element in Thailand for national security issues. The prime minister has no presence on the Thai border and must work through the army, which is a collection of empires. But the prime minister's marketplace strategy may substitute for his presence.—*Jeremy J. Stone* □



Dr. Kamchad Mongkolkul, biochemist and President of the Science Society

SCIENCE IN THAILAND

Thailand has a science society, somewhat more akin to the AAAS than to the National Academy of Sciences, with open membership and a desire to encourage science. Forty-two years old, it has as its president Dr. Kamchad Mongkolkul, a biochemist and administrator. The society contains 2,000 scientists of all kinds. Dr. Kamchad is also Chairman of the Advisory Committee to the Prime Minister on Science and Technology and an adviser to the House of Parliament Science Committee.

Thai Scientists Honor King Mongkut

In an interview, Dr. Kamchad explained that "not many in Thailand understood the importance of science" so, about seven years ago, at the 200th anniversary of the establishment of Bangkok as capital of Thailand, they honored King Mongkut, the father of Thai science, by establishing a "scientist of the year award." (King Mongkut died of malaria as a direct result of taking an expedition to southern Siam to observe an eclipse; his purpose was to persuade the superstitious Thais that an eclipse did not involve the sun being swallowed up by a demon. He was ecstatic over his observations but he, and many others in the team including his son, fell seriously ill shortly thereafter.)

With about \$3,000 from the Asia Foundation, and some matching funds, they were able to start a prize. And each October, they invite a Nobel Prize winner to their annual conference to present it. They have also arranged a Thai Youth Science Week and have held a seminar on the role of science and technology in Thailand in the year 2000.

FAS also spoke by phone with Dr. Pijit Rattakul, who is the chairman of the Science Committee of Parliament and the son of Thailand's deputy prime minister. We offered to assist him on his impending trip to the United States. And we offered Dr. Kamchad our good offices in his annual search to find a Nobel laureate to grace his conference.

Thais Welcome US Scientists

Among other things, the Thais would enjoy having American scientists give papers at their conference, albeit at the expense of the US side since their funds are limited. And they hope that Thai-Americans who are scientists will come to visit and to establish constructive ties. They much admire the gift of Lyndon Johnson to South Korea—establishing the Korean Institute of Science and Technology. And they feel that this gift helped South Korea start up its industrialization and that a similar institute might help them move in the same direction.

Dr. Pijit's agenda includes bills in Parliament to start a science foundation fund, to encourage R&D in industry with a tax break, and to produce more scientists and engineers.

FAS looks forward to helping Thailand in any ways we can that complement the already substantial program of the National Academy of Sciences.—*JJS* □

STATE DEPARTMENT REFUSES TO ACCUSE KHMER ROUGE OF GENOCIDE

In September 14 hearings before the House Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs, Assistant Secretary of State Richard Solomon repeatedly refused to say whether the department considered the Khmer Rouge to have been guilty of genocide.

Bobbing and weaving and calling the questions unfair, he asserted that no one wanted the actions of the Khmer Rouge repeated. The problem was threefold. In the first place, the department fears that international lawyers could justify the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia on the grounds that overthrowing a genocidal regime is a lawful, and indeed a desirable act. (But as Chairman Stephen Solarz pointed out, the Vietnamese do not take this line; they just assert that they were attacked and had the right of self-defense.)

The department's second problem is that if they agreed that the Khmer Rouge were guilty of genocide, they would have to take action under the genocide convention to bring them to justice. And, sadly, these Khmer Rouge have been seated in the UN, with our acquiescence.

The third problem is that we are supporting Prince Sihanouk in his desire to have the Khmer Rouge dealt with as part of a new Cambodian Government. If they were guilty of genocide, they could not very well be dealt with in this regard.

Still, it is painful to see a decent civil servant forced to avoid saying what all the world knows is true.

US Policy is Amoral

The rest of Solomon's testimony was no better. The dangers to the 6,000,000 Cambodians tended to disappear as he explained how our primary interests lie in the "security of Thailand" and the "continued integrity and vitality" of ASEAN. Where is the moral element in our strategy?

After having demanded that the Vietnamese leave Cambodia by a date certain, the Department now complains that the "Vietnam in effect presented the international community with a forced choice in a fairly compressed time frame"—to choose between Hun Sen and the resistance forces. Shame on them; they did what we wanted after ten



Richard Solomon, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs.

years of occupation and five years of promising to leave by 1989 or 1990. And we weren't ready!

While even Congressman Solarz, who has been very faithful indeed to Prince Sihanouk, is now saying that Sihanouk is capable of "monumental misjudgments," Solomon can only say that "Prince Sihanouk was our horse in the race" as his explanation for following Sihanouk's views slavishly. Ranking Republican James Leach saw the problem with this and said:

"We should stick persistently to principle rather than to place American foreign policy decision-making in the hands, in this case, of the Chinese—which are not very clean hands—or in the hands of Prince Sihanouk which are not all wrong but hardly pure."

Worse for the administration, Congressman Atkins pointed out that the "only two non-negotiable items" in Paris were Sihanouk's insistence on having the Khmer Rouge participate in the interim government and Sihanouk's insistence on expunging references to genocide. And in both cases, Atkins pointed out, the Hun Sen position and the US preferences were the same. He felt the Department was acting like a "moral Houdini." □

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