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# Cambodia's Foreign Policy

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then turn to China for increased economic and technical assistance and also for military aid. A few days later, upon the confession of a Khmer Serei member, who was captured while trying to enter Cambodia, Prince Sihanouk demanded the immediate termination of American aid and the departure from Cambodia of all nonembassy personnel of the United States government. While China applauded this Cambodian action and offered Sihanouk her support, the Prince's subsequent actions indicated that he was not prepared to deliver his country into the Communist bloc.<sup>55</sup> Still convinced of the need to maintain a Western presence in Cambodia, he invited France to fill the vacuum created by the departure of the United States. At his request the existing French military mission has remained in Cambodia. In addition, the Prince renewed his request for an international conference to decide upon a guarantee of Cambodia's neutrality and independence. In contrast to her position on Sihanouk's first request in 1962, the United States in late 1963 adopted a favorable view of his proposal.<sup>56</sup>

The American interest in restoring good relations with Cambodia was indicated by the relative swiftness with which the United States reached agreement in January,

<sup>55</sup> For a further statement concerning Cambodia's adherence to any bloc, see Norodom Sihanouk, "Une politique de neutralité dans l'Asie troublée," *Le Monde Diplomatique* (Paris), Oct., 1963, p. 13.

<sup>56</sup> According to official American sources, however, Ambassador Sprouse was unable to gain an audience with Sihanouk and thus could not communicate this view to him. For reports of the new American view, see *New York Times*, Dec. 3, and the editorial of Dec. 8, 1963. On Dec. 15, 1963, the *New York Times* reported from Paris that in a meeting with the British and French foreign ministers, Secretary of State Dean Rusk emphasized that "the United States would not participate [in the conference on Cambodia] unless ground rules and objectives of the meeting were clearly defined."

1964, with Great Britain and France on a draft declaration of Cambodia's neutrality<sup>57</sup> and, at the same time, accepted a Philippine compromise formula for the settlement of her differences with Cambodia.<sup>58</sup> Complete *rapprochement*, however, was prevented by the intransigence of Thailand and South Vietnam<sup>59</sup> and the reported fear of the United States that a conference on Cambodia would become a forum for a debate on American policy in all of Southeast Asia as well as seriously affect American relations with Thailand and South Vietnam.<sup>60</sup> In mid-February, Prince Sihanouk announced his willingness to limit participation in the conference to the United States, Thailand, South Vietnam, and Cambodia.<sup>61</sup> This concession was made when tension between Cambodia and South Vietnam reached a new height as a result of a South Vietnamese air attack on a village in Kompong Cham province<sup>62</sup> and of charges by American military officials in Saigon that the

<sup>57</sup> See *ibid.*, Jan. 16, 1964. The *Washington Post*, Jan. 22, 1964, reported that the draft declaration included (1) a declaration of neutrality by Cambodia, (2) a declaration of respect for Cambodia's neutrality by the powers, and (3) an agreement strengthening the powers of the International Control Commission.

<sup>58</sup> *Washington Post*, Jan. 22, 1964. The *New York Times*, Jan. 22, 1964, reported that the Philippine compromise was based on the recognition by the United States of the need for an international confirmation of Cambodia's neutrality. It did not, however, specify American agreement on an international conference.

<sup>59</sup> Negotiations in December between Cambodia and South Vietnam on their border difficulties collapsed on the refusal of the latter to participate in the proposed guarantee of Cambodia's neutrality (see *New York Times*, Dec. 19, 26, 27, 28, and 30, 1963). In early Jan., 1964, the Thai government refused to negotiate with Cambodia, under the auspices of United Nations Secretary-General U Thant, a treaty of nonaggression (see *AKP*, Feb. 1, 1964).

<sup>60</sup> See *New York Times*, Dec. 25, 1963; Jan. 15 and 16, 1964.

<sup>61</sup> See *Washington Post*, Feb. 20, 1964.

<sup>62</sup> See *AKP*, Feb. 6, 1964; *New York Times*, Feb. 12, 1964.

Viet Cong were receiving arms and military equipment through Cambodia.<sup>63</sup> His new proposal was viewed by the American State Department as being "most welcome,"<sup>64</sup> and an effort was then made by the United States to persuade the Saigon and Bangkok governments to agree to such a conference. Premier Nguyen Khanh of South Vietnam soon declared his government's willingness to attend a limited conference, but Thailand was reported to be balking at American pressure.<sup>65</sup> The official response of the United States to Sihanouk's proposal was favorable but she was reported by the Cambodian and the American press as having set as a precondition for the meeting a redefinition of Cambodia's borders by a commission composed of Cambodia and her neighbors. Prince Sihanouk, anticipating that the American counterproposal would serve only to forestall discussion of Cambodia's neutrality, withdrew his proposal for a restricted conference.<sup>66</sup>

American officials in the State Department whom the

<sup>63</sup> See *AKP*, Feb. 2, 1964; *Washington Post*, Jan. 5, 1964. This charge was based on Cambodian customs statistics (which are readily available), on reports of Cambodian seizure of illegal matériel, and on an analysis of equipment captured from the Viet Cong in South Vietnam.

<sup>64</sup> *Washington Post*, Feb. 22, 1964.

<sup>65</sup> See *ibid.*, Mar. 3, 1964; *New York Times*, Mar. 7 and 8, 1964. Thai Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman was reported to have said his government would consider any proposal to enhance the chances for peace in Southeast Asia, but at minimum Cambodia would first have to cease its anti-Thai propaganda (*New York Times*, Mar. 7, 1964). Thailand was probably also concerned over reports that Cambodia was about to receive arms aid from China and that the Chinese government would soon build two jet airbases in Cambodia (see *Washington Post*, Feb. 18, and *New York Times*, Mar. 15 and 16, 1964).

<sup>66</sup> See *Réalités Cambodgiennes*, Mar. 14, 1964; *New York Times*, Mar. 10 and 11, 1964.

author interviewed denied that the United States had set preconditions for the conference. They stated that the suggestion of the United States for delimiting the borders was submitted as a draft, one to be discussed along with other drafts. They indicated that the United States was agreeable to a conference that would review drafts submitted by all four participating countries. Failure of the conference to materialize was attributed, first, to the fact that the invitation to attend the conference had not been extended to Thailand and South Vietnam until the last moment, with the result that neither country submitted a draft; and, second, to the unacceptability of the Cambodian proposal on which Sihanouk desired action. The United States rejected the Cambodian draft for the following reasons: (a) it was submitted with the stipulation that the conference be held by the end of March or Cambodia would call it off; (b) it contained references to Franco-Thai treaties which the Thai viewed as humiliating; (c) Cambodia demanded that the United States bear all of the expenses incurred by the International Control Commission; and (d) Cambodia appended to the draft a "Gentleman's Agreement" according to which South Vietnam would accept full responsibility for border incursions and the United States would accept a major share of the responsibility for previous and future attacks, and pay reparations in a form to be determined by Cambodia.

Yet another setback in progress toward a *rapprochement* occurred on March 19, when an American-supported South Vietnamese air and ground attack on the Cambodian village of Chantrea in Svayrieng province resulted in the death of seventeen villagers. Both the United States and South Vietnam accepted responsibility and offered their apologies for the attack, which was alleged to have

resulted from the pursuit by Vietnamese army units of Viet Cong guerrillas across the poorly defined Cambodian frontier.<sup>67</sup> Nevertheless, Prince Sihanouk announced his intention to place the matter before the United Nations Security Council. He also reiterated his insistence on the need for an international conference on Cambodia that would include all the Geneva powers. At Sihanouk's request, President de Gaulle and Chairman Khrushchev undertook to persuade the United States and Great Britain of the need for immediate talks on Cambodia.<sup>68</sup> Before results were obtained from their efforts, South Vietnamese military forces again crossed into Cambodian territory. An immediate apology was offered by South Vietnam; it placed the ultimate responsibility for the attack, however, on Cambodia, which, Saigon charged, was providing sanctuary for the Viet Cong.<sup>69</sup>

The issue of incursions of Cambodia's borders by South Vietnam, which Prince Sihanouk had hoped would be resolved by the Geneva powers, was now brought before the United Nations Security Council, where the Cambodian delegate asked for consideration of the "repeated acts of aggression by United States-South Vietnam forces against the territory and civilian population of Cambodia." Am-

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, Mar. 22 and 23, 1964. See *AKP*, Apr. 30, 1964, for the text of the South Vietnamese letter of apology, dated Mar. 21, 1964.

<sup>68</sup> In his letters to de Gaulle and Khrushchev, as well as one to R. A. Butler, Foreign Secretary of Great Britain, Sihanouk also urged that the Geneva powers be convened to "determine the most favorable political solution for all the countries of ex-Indochina." For the texts of his letters, see *AKP*, Apr. 23, 1964. See also *Neak Cheat Niyum*, Apr. 26, 1964; *AKP*, May 10, 11, and 23, 1964; and *New York Times*, May 9, 1964.

<sup>69</sup> See *AKP*, May 12 and *New York Times*, May 10, 1964. See also *La Dépêche du Cambodge*, May 9, and *Phnom Penh Presse*, May 11, 1964.

bassador Sonn Voeunsai asked, also, for the establishment of a United Nations investigation commission to look into South Vietnamese-American countercharges that Cambodia was sheltering the Viet Cong.<sup>70</sup> The matter, however, was exploited by the Soviet Union, whose delegate, Nikolai T. Fedorenko, demanded that the Council "roundly condemn the criminal military aggression" of the United States and take immediate measures not only to protect Cambodia but also to end United States interference in any part of Southeast Asia.

In a reply to the Soviet allegation, the chief American delegate to the United Nations, Adlai E. Stevenson, on May 20 asserted that the United States was involved in Southeast Asia for one reason: "to aid . . . peoples prepared to fight for their freedom and their independence against armed aggression sponsored from outside their borders."<sup>71</sup> When "all states in [Southeast Asia] make and abide by the simple decision to leave their neighbors alone," he said, then there will be no need for an American presence. "Until such assurances are forthcoming, we shall stand for the independence of free peoples in Southeast Asia as we have elsewhere."

<sup>70</sup> The text of the Cambodian complaint is to be found in United Nations, Security Council, Doc. S/5697, May 13, 1964, and *AKP*, May 12, 1964. A "dossier of American-South Vietnamese aggression" against Cambodia was sent to the Security Council by the Cambodian government on Apr. 16. See *AKP*, May 5, 1964. For the official text of the Cambodian complaint see United Nations, Security Council, Doc. S/5666, April 22, 1964. See also, *New York Times*, May 14 and 20, 1964. The South Vietnamese reply is to be found in République du Vietnam, *Memorandum en réponse aux accusations formulés par le Gouvernement Royal du Cambodge contre le République du Vietnam devant le Conseil de Sécurité de l'O.N.U.* (Saigon: Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, 1964).

<sup>71</sup> For the full text of Stevenson's address to the Security Council, see *New York Times*, May 21, 1964.

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With respect to the Cambodian question before the Council, Stevenson tried to assure Cambodia that the United States was in complete sympathy with her concern for the sanctity of her borders and the security of her people. While admitting American involvement in the attack on Chantrea, he denied that the United States had any aggressive intent against Cambodia. He went on:

The difficulty . . . has been that Cambodia has not been in a position to carry out with its own unaided strength its own desire to live in peace and tranquility.

Others in the area have not been prepared to leave the people of Cambodia free to pursue their own ends independently and peacefully.

The recent difficulties along the frontier which we have been discussing here in the Council are only superficially and accidentally related to the Republic of Vietnam. They are deeply and directly related to the fact that the leaders and armed forces of North Vietnam, supported by Communist China, have abused the right of Cambodia to live in peace by using Cambodian territory as a passageway, a source of supply, and a sanctuary from counterattack by the forces of South Vietnam, which is also trying to maintain its right to live in peace and go its way.

Obviously Cambodia cannot be secure. Her territorial integrity cannot be assured. Her independence cannot be certain as long as outsiders direct massive violence within the frontiers of her neighboring states.

This is the real reason for troubles on the Cambodian border and this is the real reason that we are here today.

Ambassador Stevenson, however, rejected the contention that a Geneva-type conference could produce an effective agreement to restore security along the Cambodia-South Vietnam border. What was needed, he said, was im-

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plementation of the Geneva agreements of 1954 by all the participant states, including those who were not members of the United Nations. (The Cambodian delegate had also made this point, but while Stevenson made specific reference to China and North Vietnam, Sonn Voeunsai had referred to South Vietnam.) Stevenson concluded by taking note of the several suggestions which had been made for restoring stability along the frontier: (a) establishment of a commission of inquiry to investigate whether the Viet Cong were actually using Cambodian territory; (b) establishment by Cambodia and South Vietnam of a joint military force to observe and patrol the border and to report to the United Nations Secretary-General; (c) establishment of a bilateral border police force supplemented by United Nations observers and possibly placed under United Nations command; and (d) use of an all-United Nations force to patrol and control the frontier. But, Stevenson said:

We would suggest . . . that whether one of these or some other practical solution is agreed, that it would be useful to ask the Secretary-General of the United Nations to offer assistance to Cambodia and to the Republic of Vietnam in clearly marking the frontiers between the two countries. One of the difficulties is that there are places where one does not know whether he stands on one side of the frontier or the other. Certainly it would help to reduce the possibility of further incidents if this uncertainty could be removed.

There followed several days of discussion of the merits of organizing a United Nations patrol force, as suggested by the United States and supported by South Vietnam, or of reopening the conference among the Geneva powers and entrusting the task of preventing frontier violations to

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the International Control Commission for Cambodia, as favored by Cambodia, France, and the Soviet Union. Cambodia, the United States, and South Vietnam agreed to a compromise proposal drafted by Morocco and the Ivory Coast in accordance with which the Security Council would establish a three-nation committee to investigate friction along the border. The final Security Council resolution stated:

The Security Council, considering the complaint by the Royal Government of Cambodia in document S-5697,

Noting the statements made in the Council in regard to the complaint,

Noting with regret the incidents which have occurred on Cambodian territory and the existing situation on the Cambodian-Vietnamese frontier,

Taking note of the apologies and regrets tendered to the Royal Government of Cambodia in regard to these incidents and the loss of life they have entailed,

Noting also the desire of the Governments of the Kingdom of Cambodia and the Republic of Vietnam to succeed in restoring their relations to a peaceful and normal state,

1. Deplores the incidents caused by the penetration of units of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam into Cambodian territory;
2. Requests that just and fair compensation should be offered to the Royal Government of Cambodia;
3. Invites those responsible to take all appropriate measures to prevent any further violations of the Cambodian frontier;
4. Requests all states and authorities and in particular the members of the Geneva conference to recognize and respect Cambodia's neutrality and territorial integrity;
5. Decides to send three of its members to the two countries and to places where the most recent incidents have occurred in order to consider such measures as may prevent any recur-

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rence of such incidents. They will report to the Security Council within 45 days.<sup>72</sup>

The United States and South Vietnam expressed regret that the Council had not complied with their suggestion that it station a United Nations force on the frontier to prevent further incidents. For his part, Prince Sihanouk rejected an American suggestion that the United Nations commission should become involved in helping to demarcate the border, but he hinted that Cambodia would be amenable to United Nations assistance in this respect when South Vietnam dropped her demands on Cambodia's coastal islands and recognized them as belonging to Cambodia.<sup>73</sup>

On June 11, the village of Tralok Bek in Svayrieng province was bombed and strafed by South Vietnamese aircraft. The International Control Commission, which investigated immediately, reportedly asserted that the border was well marked at this point.<sup>74</sup> According to Prince Sihanouk, in letters to R. A. Butler and Andrei Gromyko, the Geneva co-chairmen, and to United Nations Secretary-General U Thant, "The Security Council resolution has been deliberately violated." He again demanded that the Geneva powers be convened to consider Cambodia's case. "I should like to reiterate," he wrote, "that this latest aggression proves the impossibility of finding a solution to the Khmer-South Vietnam problem outside of the international conference for which we have asked in vain for so long."<sup>75</sup>

<sup>72</sup> United Nations, Security Council, Doc. S/5741, June 4, 1964; *New York Times*, June 5, 1964. Brazil, Morocco, and the Ivory Coast were chosen as members of the investigation commission.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, June 8, 1964.

<sup>74</sup> See *Réalités Cambodgiennes*, June 19, 1964.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

Meanwhile, the Security Council's special mission had returned from Cambodia with the report that Cambodia and South Vietnam, despite fundamental differences in their foreign policies, were prepared to resume normal peaceful relations and that, moreover, South Vietnam indicated its respect for Cambodia's neutrality. Both countries had suggested to the mission ways in which the border problem could be alleviated. South Vietnam proposed establishment of an international police force, or an observer group with sufficient personnel and resources to keep the frontier area under surveillance. Cambodia, in her turn, suggested that teams of unarmed United Nations civilian observers be stationed on Cambodian territory to observe possible incursions but stipulated that they were not to be allowed to cross the frontier. The mission recommended that the Cambodian proposal be carried out.<sup>76</sup>

Subsequent to the mission's report, however, further attacks by South Vietnamese forces (including American military advisory personnel) on Cambodian border villages led to a renewal of tension between the two countries. Vietnamese and American spokesmen conceded the Cambodian charges but insisted that the attacks had been necessitated by increased Viet Cong activity originating from bases in Cambodia.<sup>77</sup> In the wake of these attacks, Prince Sihanouk threatened to sever diplomatic relations with the United States, to strike back militarily across the border, and to negotiate a border settlement with North Vietnam and the National Liberation Front (the political arm of the Viet Cong). He also invited all governments

<sup>76</sup> See Appendix B for an extract of the mission's report to the Security Council.

<sup>77</sup> See *New York Times*, Oct. 27, 1964. Cf. *Réalités Cambodgiennes*, Oct. 23, 1964.

and parties with interests in Indochina to convene to discuss their common problems.<sup>78</sup>

By mid-November Cambodian-American relations were deteriorating rapidly, and the United States proposed a meeting between the two countries to resolve their differences, to forestall a diplomatic break, and possibly, also, to block a border agreement between Cambodia and North Vietnam.<sup>79</sup> The United States did not intend, however, to discuss Cambodia's relations with South Vietnam. "We would not consider it appropriate," the American embassy in Phnom Penh informed the Cambodian government, "to negotiate on matters involving the interests of third countries without their participation."<sup>80</sup> But each side would be free to introduce any subject relevant to the resolution of Cambodian-American differences.

At the opening of the negotiations in New Delhi on December 8, the chief Cambodian delegate, Son Sann, reviewed the events that had led up to the present crisis in United States-Cambodia relations. He emphasized in particular the plight of Cambodians who had borne the brunt of the South Vietnamese attacks, which, he said, involved American aircraft and personnel. He went on to note that since 1956, when Cambodia established relations with the Communist powers, she had become "progressively the target of the western powers, and particularly of the United States and its Asian allies, who were so ob-

<sup>78</sup> See *Réalités Cambodgiennes*, Oct. 23 and 30, and Nov. 27, 1964. Talks with North Vietnam were entered into in Peking in late November. See also *New York Times*, Oct. and Nov., 1964, *passim*.

<sup>79</sup> See *New York Times*, Nov. 17, 1964.

<sup>80</sup> Note no. 32 of American Embassy to the Cambodian Foreign Ministry, Nov. 25, 1964, reprinted in U.S. Department of State *Bulletin*, LI, no. 1329 (Dec. 14, 1964), p. 857.

essed by the fear of communism that they discovered and continue to discover it everywhere, even in neutral Cambodia." <sup>81</sup> He denied earlier charges by the United States and South Vietnam that the Viet Cong operated from bases in Cambodia and reminded them that both countries had so far refused to support Prince Sihanouk's proposal to increase the mobility of the International Control Commission and extend its investigatory powers.<sup>82</sup> He concluded by enumerating the terms that Cambodia demanded as part of any agreement between herself and the United States. As a minimum condition, he stipulated that "the U.S.-South Vietnamese forces must no longer attack the frontier villages of Cambodia and must not come and make arbitrary arrests in Cambodian territory." <sup>83</sup> He described the second point as a logical compromise, one that should be acceptable to all parties concerned:

The United States and its allies, particularly South Vietnam and Thailand, must no longer unjustly and slanderously accuse Cambodia of being a transit place for Vietcong troops and for transit of arms for the Vietcong so long as these countries do not agree to provide necessary means and to entrust the International Control Commission with the task of establishing an appropriate control which the Royal Government has always accepted over its territory, including its ports, in conformity with the 1954 Geneva Agreements.<sup>84</sup>

<sup>81</sup> "Text of the speech of H.E. Mr. Son Sann, Head of the Cambodian delegation on opening of U.S.-Cambodia talks in New Delhi on 8 December 1964," Cambodian Embassy, New Delhi, 1964, pp. 4-5.

<sup>82</sup> The substance of Prince Sihanouk's proposal may be found in the *Draft Protocol to the Declaration on the Neutrality of the Kingdom of Cambodia*. See below, Appendix A, pp. 231-236.

<sup>83</sup> "Text of the speech of H.E. Mr. Son Sann . . .," p. 7.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.* In addition to these basic issues, the Cambodian govern-

The chief American delegate, Ambassador Philip W. Bonsal, explained in his reply that American interest in Southeast Asia was based on "the very simple principle that each country has the right to choose the form of government and kind of social organization desired by its people, without foreign interference." <sup>85</sup> He urged Cambodia to try to understand South Vietnam's difficulties in her confrontation with the Viet Cong and to undertake with the Saigon government direct negotiations concerning common border problems.

In offering the apologies of the United States for the loss of life and property suffered by Cambodians in the frontier region, Ambassador Bonsal said:

Neither my government nor the South Vietnamese government has anything to gain by violating Cambodian territory. . . . We are convinced that the South Vietnamese government, under difficult conditions, has increased its efforts to avoid further frontier incidents, and it has in this endeavor the complete cooperation of the American military advisors. The American government will continue and will intensify its measures to minimize the possibility that American personnel are involved in future incidents.<sup>86</sup>

Then, in an apparent allusion to Viet Cong activity in Cambodia, Ambassador Bonsal asserted: "We are convinced that the violations of Cambodian territory have

ment was anxious to settle with the United States matters pertaining to compensation for the loss of life and property suffered in the attacks on Cambodian villages, to Khmer Serei propaganda broadcasts from South Vietnam, and to the fate of Cambodian prisoners in South Vietnam.

<sup>85</sup> Quoted in "Réponse de la délégation cambodgienne à la déclaration de M. Bonsal du 8 décembre 1964," Cambodian Embassy, New Delhi, Dec. 9, 1964, p. 2.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

been committed contrary to the desires and in spite of the energetic measures taken by the Cambodian government to prevent them."<sup>87</sup>

While he welcomed the renewed expression of United States interests in the freedom and independence of South-east Asian states, Son Sann reminded the American delegates that Cambodia had in fact practiced the principle involved and that as recently as November Prince Siha-nouk had suggested that all the people of Indochina meet to express their desires on the subject. He went on:

A policy is judged by the results obtained from it. Those obtained in Cambodia prove that the policy extolled by our Prince and followed by all of the Cambodian people is the best. . . . If the United States were able to reconsider its position in time and revise its policy as a result, such a revision will profit everyone and the United States in particular. But, out of scrupulous respect for the principle of non-interference, Cambodia has until now not asked the United States to revise its policy. In return we have the right to ask you to allow us to follow our policy without suggesting a "cooperation" which is contrary even to the principle of neutrality and which would have as an inevitable consequence our involvement in the disastrous situation in which Laos and South Vietnam now find themselves.<sup>88</sup>

To Son Sann, the Americans by suggesting that Cambodia and South Vietnam negotiate their differences seemed to be ignoring the numerous attempts made by Prince Siha-nouk to persuade South Vietnam formally to drop its claims to Cambodia's offshore islands and to recognize the present border—steps that would enable the resumption of friendly relations. Furthermore, Son Sann declared, the Cambodian government would like to have more than

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

formal assurances that South Vietnam would never again invade her territory; specifically, Cambodia desired "a formal engagement that [would] guarantee once and for all [her] frontiers and territory from aggression and [her] people from all land, air, sea, and river attacks."<sup>89</sup>

During the course of the next week, according to communiqués issued by the Cambodian embassy, "the two delegations arrived at a better understanding of their respective positions." It was hoped by Cambodia that a partial, if not total, agreement might be reached. On December 16, however, the American delegation announced that the Cambodian proposals required considerable study and that it would have to return to Washington for consultations. In acceding to the suspension of talks, the Cambodian delegation noted that the Americans were returning to Washington "to consult with their Government on subjects which had been officially communicated well in advance of the opening of the talks in New Delhi. [We] wish to note that it is the Government of the United States which had taken the initiative to propose the talks and which now takes the initiative to interrupt them."<sup>90</sup>

In perspective, it is evident that the incidents of 1963 and 1964, though they received much publicity, played a small role in the evolution of Cambodian foreign policy to its present state. More important was the American

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>90</sup> "Communiqué of the Cambodian Delegation," Cambodian Embassy, New Delhi, Dec. 17, 1964, p. 2. What actually motivated the United States to interrupt the talks at this point is not known. It may be of some interest to note, however, that at about this time negotiations which Cambodia was conducting with North Vietnam in Peking failed to reach a satisfactory conclusion. See *Réalités Cambodgiennes*, Dec. 18, 1964.

persistence in disregarding Cambodia's appeal for a guarantee of her neutrality against *all* threats,<sup>91</sup> which confirmed Cambodian fears that she could neither rely upon the United States to curb Vietnamese and Thai harassment and aggression in the present nor count on her assistance against Vietnam and Thailand in a future period when they might no longer belong to the Western camp.

In contrast to the United States, France in 1963-1964 unequivocally supported Cambodia's desire to pursue a policy of neutrality. Moreover, as the United States position in South Vietnam and Laos appeared to Cambodians to be deteriorating and the probability of an American withdrawal from Indochina appeared to be great, France was expressing an interest in re-establishing her influence in that area. These two developments, together with the fact that France is unencumbered by ties with South Vietnam and Thailand, make her very attractive to Cambodia. With China jealously guarding her position on the opposite side of the balance, Cambodia is assured that the danger would be small that France would once more strive to deprive Cambodia of her independence.

<sup>91</sup> The United States assertion that she was in full sympathy with Cambodia's desire for security and would do all she could to defend Cambodia (and other states) from outside aggression notwithstanding, it was clear to Prince Sihanouk that the United States was referring only to Communist aggression.

## *Problems of Cambodian Foreign Policy*

IN the preceding chapters we have discussed the principal considerations which have guided the evolution of Cambodia's foreign policy in the postindependence period. The most pressing and persistent of these, we have seen, has been the felt need to minimize threats of aggression against her by Thailand and the two Vietnams. Cambodia's uneasiness concerning their intentions is traceable in part to the history of her relations with them, a history marked by the gradual but steady shrinking of her borders as a result of Thai and Vietnamese encroachments. Partly, too, Cambodia's wariness of her neighbors stems directly from incidents in the present which, though minor in themselves, signify to Cambodian leaders that neither the Thai nor the Vietnamese have abandoned their centuries-old tradition of expansion at her expense. How real are Cambodia's fears in this regard is evident in her relations with states whose power predominates in Indochina, in particular the United States and China. Since independence Cambodia's relations with them have oscillated between warm cordiality and aloofness, according to whether their positions were perceived as abetting or restraining aggression against her by the Thai and the Vietnamese.