

DS  
557  
C28  
S65

# Cambodia's Foreign Policy

By ROGER M. SMITH  
*University of Washington*

PREPARED UNDER THE AUSPICES  
OF THE SOUTHEAST ASIA PROGRAM  
CORNELL UNIVERSITY

Cornell University Press  
ITHACA, NEW YORK

URIS LIBRARY

### *Cambodia's Foreign Policy*

agreement to the first demand but failed to win the concession of the South Vietnamese to the second. The result was that South Vietnam retained a position from which she could control traffic to and from Cambodia and attempt to exert indirect political pressure on her. Cambodian apprehensions in this regard proved justified in 1956, when South Vietnam suddenly imposed an economic blockade upon her in reprisal for Sihanouk's visit to Peking. While the blockade has since been lifted, Saigon continues to prohibit entry to ships of Communist nations, with whom Cambodia has been conducting an increasing volume of trade. Fortunately for Cambodia the completion of the port of Sihanoukville in 1959, with the assistance of the French, has averted a potential crisis between the two countries arising from conflict over the port of Saigon. For a certain amount of her trade Cambodia continues to rely on Saigon, but she is currently expanding facilities in Sihanoukville in the hope that her economy will soon become completely independent of South Vietnam.

As Cambodia has striven to make herself less and less reliant upon Saigon, tension between the two governments has arisen on a new front. In 1956, while construction of the port of Sihanoukville was proceeding, South Vietnam attempted to occupy Cambodian islands strategically situ-

funds, however, has never been implemented, and the money remains tied up in Paris banks. Cambodia has tried several times to open discussion of this problem, but the major difficulty in resolving the issue appears to be Vietnam's refusal to include the other two members of the former Federation (Laos and France) in the negotiations and her insistence on making the issue an exclusively Cambodia-South Vietnam affair. For a report of Sihanouk's efforts to negotiate the matter with the Diem regime in 1959, see *Cambodia News* (Washington, D.C., Royal Embassy of Cambodia), no. 13, Dec. 7, 1959, pp. 2-4.

### *Cambodia's Relations with Thailand and Vietnam*

ated in the vicinity of the new port, affirmed ownership of them, and harassed Cambodian fishermen fishing in the area.<sup>48</sup> The largest of these islands, Kôh Tral (Phu Quoc), was administered as part of Cochinchina by the French and is at present in South Vietnam's possession. In March and April, 1960, South Vietnam demanded that Cambodia renounce claims to other islands in the group over which Cambodia has always exercised control. These acts of the South Vietnamese government confirmed the suspicions of Cambodian leaders that the Vietnamese were still intent upon keeping Cambodia in a subordinate position and that they hoped to accomplish this by keeping her economically dependent upon Saigon. In the spring of 1960, Sihanouk publicly expressed his fears in his assertion that "the loss of the islands and the territorial waters surrounding them would lead to the stifling of the port of [Sihanoukville] . . . and very soon to the end of our independence."<sup>49</sup>

Relations between South Vietnam and Cambodia have also been marked by Cambodian complaints of numerous border violations by the Vietnamese. In June, 1958, for example, the Cambodian government reported that South Vietnamese troops had crossed the border, occupied a Cambodian village and moved boundary markers.<sup>50</sup> An

<sup>48</sup> See Great Britain, *Fifth Interim Report of the International Commission for Supervision and Control in Cambodia for the Period October 1, 1955 to December 31, 1956. Cambodia No. 1 (1957)*, Cmd. 253 (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1957), pp. 35-38.

<sup>49</sup> See "Le Cambodge face à l'impérialisme sud-vietnamien," *Cambodge d'Aujourd'hui*, Special number (Mar.-Apr., 1960), nos. 3-4, pp. 31-35, 44.

<sup>50</sup> See the letters from the Royal government to the International Commission in Great Britain, *Seventh Interim Report of the International Commission for Supervision and Control in Cambodia for*