

EMBASSY OF CAMBODIA  
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DEVELOPMENTS IN CAMBODIA  
FOLLOWING THE INVASION AND THE AGGRESSION  
BY THE NORTH-VIETNAMESE AND VIETCONG FORCES

## A NEUTRAL COUNTRY

Cambodia has been declared a neutral nation since the Geneva Agreement of 1954 which ended the first Indochina war - an agreement signed by North-Vietnam. Article 7 of the "Agreement on the cessation of Hostilities in Cambodia" states:

"In accordance with the declaration made by the Delegation of Cambodia at 24:00 hours on July 20, 1954 at the Geneva Conference of Foreign Ministers:

"The Royal Government of Cambodia will not join in any agreement with other States, if this agreement carries for Cambodia the obligation to enter into a military alliance not in conformity with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations or with the principles of the agreements on the cessation of hostilities, or, as long as its security is not threatened, the obligation to establish bases on Cambodian territory for the military forces of fireign powers.

"During the period which will elapse between the date of the cessation of hostilities in Vietnam and that of the final settlement of political problems in this country, the Royal Government of Cambodia will not solicit foreign aid in war material, personnel or instructors except for the purpose of the effective defense of the territory".

Moreover, a national law of November 4, 1957, voted by our Parliament, declares that: "Cambodia is a neutral country", that "it abstains from any alliance - military or ideological - with foreign countries", and that "in case it should be victim of a foreign aggression, it reserves the right to defend itself, to appeal to the United Nations, or to appeal to a friendly power".

It is this status of neutrality, first accepted under the guarantee of an international agreement and later proclaimed by a national law, that has helped us to keep out of the war in Vietnam for almost 16 years.

## VIOLATION OF NEUTRALITY

However, North-Vietnam and the Vietcong have not respected that neutrality in first installing their military sanctuaries in Cambodia since 5 years, and then, since April 1970, in launching an open aggression against it.

For the past 5 years, North-Vietnam and the Vietcong have secretly set up military sanctuaries along the 600-mile long border between Cambodia and South-Vietnam. These sanctuaries contain major base camps, training and regroupment centers, hospitals, logistic facilities, communications network, arms and ammunition depots, and headquarters of the Central Committee from where go out all the orders and instructions for military operations and **subversive** campaigns in Cambodia and South-Vietnam.

What started a few years ago as temporary sanctuaries to which the North-Vietnamese and Vietcong forces used to retreat to escape the battle in South-Vietnam, have become, little by little, under the cover of secrecy, a veritable military occupation of Cambodian territory by more than 40,000 North-Vietnamese and Vietcong troops.

On the date of the legal deposition of Prince Norodom Sihanouk, former Head of State, i. e. 18th March 1970, these 40,000 North-Vietnamese and Vietcong troops controlled the entire strip of the eastern border of Cambodia with South-Vietnam. This massive occupation by North-Vietnamese and Vietcong troops of Cambodian territory is a clear violation both of the sovereignty of Cambodia and of the Geneva Agreement of 1954.

Faced with this violation, the Cambodian Government has used all diplomatic and political means to secure the withdrawal of these foreign forces through a peaceful settlement - on the basis of non-interference and mutual respect of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of each others nation.

#### OPEN AGGRESSION

But the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South-Vietnam have not only refused to settle the problem peacefully with us but have decided - in the space of about two weeks - to unleash their forces to start an open and brutal aggression against Cambodia.

A short chronological summary of the events of the second half of March 1970 clearly shows that North-Vietnamese and the Vietcong, while occupying the frontier regions of Cambodia, and their plans ready to launch an aggression at the first opportunity.

On 12th March 1970, the Cambodian Government demanded North-Vietnam and the Vietcong to evacuate their troops from Cambodia. Two days later, on 14th March 1970, as a gesture of goodwill and to show our desire for a peaceful settlement, the Cambodian Government proposed the holding of round table tripartite talks between Cambodia, North-Vietnam and the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South-Vietnam.

North-Vietnam and the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South-Vietnam agreed to be present at the talks. Consequently, two meetings were held on 16th and 17th March 1970, in Phnom-Penh.

But it was clear from the start that the North-Vietnamese and Vietcong representatives did not want to enter into meaningful talks, and on 25th March 1970, in spite of a renewed appeal by the Cambodian Government to continue the negotiations, North-Vietnam and the Vietcong declared that they have decided to recall their Ambassadors and diplomatic staff and to "suspend"

their diplomatic relations with Cambodia. On March 27, 1970, the North-Vietnam and Vietcong Ambassadors and their diplomatic personnel left Phnom-Penh by plane for Hanoi and their Embassies were closed.

The same day, March 27, 1970, the Vietcong and North-Vietnamese forces started their first military operations: attack on a Cambodian unit at Prek Chrieu, district of Snuol, in Kratie province, occupation of Svay Andong in Prey Veng province, by 3000 Vietcong troops, movement of Vietcong troops at Tuk Meas in Kampot province.

Thus began the North-Vietnamese and Vietcong aggression against Cambodia. It was evident that as soon as they were asked to stop their violation of Cambodian territory, the North-Vietnamese and Vietcong simply came out of their sanctuaries along the border and started their open aggression. Since March 27, 1970, North-Vietnamese and Vietcong troops have been attacking almost daily our military posts and civilian centres in all of the eastern and south-eastern parts of the country.

From small centres, they are now trying to conquer big cities and entire provinces. They are even trying to encircle the capital, Phnom-Penh.

This naked aggression continues. We have lost, up to three weeks ago, more than four thousand dead, wounded or missing, thousands of houses destroyed, roads, buildings, schools, hospitals destroyed and the whole economy of the country is being disrupted. Our 35,000 man army which was not prepared for such a brutal and unexpected aggression, is resisting everywhere with determination. It is being reinforced to meet the emergency.

Today then the situation is this: Cambodia whose only desire is to live in peace, independence and strict neutrality, is victim of an open aggression by North-Vietnamese and Vietcong troops.

It would be difficult to imagine a clearer violation of the provisions inscribed in the Geneva Agreement of 1954, in the Charter of the United Nations as well as of other specific international obligations concerning the respect of the territory of other countries.

#### A MATTER OF INTERNATIONAL CONCERN

The violation of international agreements, to which Hanoi itself has subscribed, constitutes a problem which concerns not only the parties to these Accords, but also the world community. North-Vietnam has violated its commitments under the Geneva Agreement of 1954.

In Cambodia, Hanoi and the Vietcong make use of armed forces where they have no legitimate right and against a people with whom they have no ethnic or racial affinity. The North-Vietnamese and Vietcong aggression poses a danger to peace and security in Cambodia and in all South-East Asia,

While pressing North-Vietnam and the Vietcong to enter into peaceful negotiations, the Cambodian Government has simultaneously asked, since March 21, 1970, for the immediate reactivation of the International Control Commission - the international body - composed of India, Poland and Canada - which was created by the 1954 Geneva Conference and whose duties and functions are precisely to control that no foreign troops should be introduced in Cambodia in violation of the Agreement. An investigation on the presence of North-Vietnamese and Vietcong troops in their Cambodian sanctuaries would clearly be within the purview of the ICC. Cambodia has also suggested the sending of UN observers in conformity with the Charter of the UN.

The question of the reactivation of the ICC is not yet solved, neither is the question of the UN observers.

In the meantime, and because the North-Vietnamese and Vietcong continue their aggression, all that remains for us is to defend our territory. In this task of the defense of the country, and without violating in the least its neutrality, Cambodia can, in conformity with the 1954 Geneva Agreement and its own law of November 4, 1957, appeal to all friendly countries for arms and material.

To justify their aggression, the North-Vietnamese and the Vietcong are making the usual hackneyed and false accusation that Cambodia has become an ally of the United States, and are repeating the no less well worn out cliché that they are fighting a war of liberation on behalf of the Cambodian people.

#### THE DJAKARTA CONFERENCE

Contrary to all allegations by the communist propaganda, the foreign policy of the Government of Cambodia remains based on the principles of peace, independence, territorial integrity and strict neutrality.

The danger of communist aggression in Cambodia and the threat of Cambodia losing its neutrality are felt all over Asia. In this context, it is particularly significant that virtually all the countries of South-East Asia, even Australia and New-Zealand, are so concerned with the situation that, on the proposal of the Foreign Minister of Indonesia, Dr. Adam Malik, they met in Djakarta on May 16 and 17, 1970, to discuss the problem and make recommendations as to how it could be solved. After two days' deliberations, the Conference issued an appeal asking:

- that all acts of hostilities be stopped forthwith and all foreign forces be withdrawn from Cambodia;

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\* Eleven countries attended the Djakarta Conference: Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, Australia, New-Zealand, Laos, South-Vietnam, South-Korea, Thailand and Philippines.

- that all parties respect the sovereignty, independence, neutrality and territorial integrity of Cambodia and refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of that country;
- that the Co-Chairmen and the participants in the 1954 Geneva Conference and the members of the ICC (India, Poland & Canada) consult and cooperate in reactivating the ICC;
- that the participants of the Geneva Conference and all other interesting parties consult together to arrive at a consensus for the early convening of an international conference to find a just peace in Cambodia;

In addition to this appeal, the conference appointed three countries to work for a broader international meeting on the subject, and present a compromise view to the United Nations. The work was entrusted to Indonesia, Japan and Malaysia, and a three-nation committee will soon visit India, Poland, Canada (the three nation members of the ICC), USSR and Great-Britain (the Co-Chairmen of the 1954 Geneva Conference), the United Nations in New-York, and perhaps other countries as well.

The Conference did not - and could not - settle the Cambodia conflict, but as Dr. Adam Malik said, the results show the determination of the eleven participating countries to settle regional problems without foreign interference. And this is "a first step in an endeavour to arrest the worsening of the situation and contribute towards restoring a peaceful atmosphere in Cambodia".

#### A NEW GENEVA CONFERENCE

The Djakarta Conference will act as a catalyst for the emergence of Asian solidarity and as a stimulant for international concern and action on Cambodia's behalf. It will help to draw the attention of the international community to the grave world in an international action to uphold the right of a small nation to live in peace, free from all external interference. We, in Cambodia, do not believe in - and we cannot accept - the extraordinary concept put forward recently by some so-called liberal Westerners that the independence of smaller countries could be sacrificed for the benefit of a potentially paramount military power in any given region of the world.

## UNITED STATES INTERVENTION

Perhaps a word should be said about the United States and South-Vietnamese action in Cambodia, following President Nixon's speech of April 30, 1970. The American military move to attack the North-Vietnamese and Vietcong sanctuaries in Cambodia has provoked various reactions in the world. Many countries approve and understand the military decision, but a few are doubtful about the outcome. In contrast with the ambivalence of a few Western Governments, the socialist countries have lost no time in violently denouncing the decision as another "imperialist aggression".

The fact is that some governments have conveniently chosen to express their opposition now to the United States operation while cautiously keeping silent over the open aggression by North-Vietnam and the Vietcong against Cambodian territory which preceded the American intervention. Some countries seem to profess not to see the fundamental difference which exists between the American action and that of the North-Vietnamese and Vietcong. And yet the truth is there for everybody to see. While North-Vietnam and the Vietcong are openly attacking Cambodia, the American intervention is designed to clean out the North-Vietnamese and Vietcong sanctuaries which were set up in violation of Cambodia's neutrality.

Truth will ultimately triumph. Eventually no foreign troops should be in neutral Cambodia, be they North-Vietnamese, Vietcong, South-Vietnamese or American.

The action taken by the United States forces is moreover limited in scope and in time. The Prime Minister of Cambodia, General Lon Nol, has stated on May 4, 1970: "The Government of Cambodia notes with satisfaction that the President of the United States has taken into consideration, in his decision, the legitimate aspirations of the Cambodian people who desire nothing but to live in peace, territorial integrity, independence and strict neutrality".

### TRUE NEUTRALITY - OUR AIM

Thus, even while fighting a war which we do not want, a war which is forced on us, Cambodia still proclaims her desire for peace and strict neutrality. For we believe that our vital interests are best served by a policy of neutrality. When and if peace comes back to our country, our objective will still be the same - to remain neutral - this time true neutrals. Occupying as we do a very special geographical and strategic position in South-East Asia, remembering our historical experience, realizing the requirements of our position right at the dividing line between two opposing ideological worlds, we must remain truly neutral. We shall do what we can to preserve that neutrality. Because we are convinced that the neutrality of Cambodia - necessitated so to say by history and geography - will constitute a factor of peace not only in South-East Asia but in all Asia and perhaps the world. /.