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United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

Case No.: 200701753

MAR 25 2010

I refer to your letter dated March 11, 2007 regarding the release of certain Department of State material under the Freedom of Information Act (Title 5 USC Section 552).

We searched for and reviewed the self study guides that you requested and have determined that all except one of them may be released. They are on the enclosed disc. One of the guides is being released with excisions.

An enclosure provides information on Freedom of Information Act exemptions and other grounds for withholding material. Where we have made excisions, the applicable exemptions are marked on each document. With respect to material withheld by the Department of State, you have the right to appeal our determination within 60 days. A copy of the appeals procedures is enclosed.

We have now completed the processing of your case. If you have any questions, you may write to the Office of Information Programs and Services, SA-2, Department of State, Washington, DC 20522-8100, or telephone us at (202) 261-8484. Please be sure to refer to the case number shown above in all correspondence about this case.

We hope that the Department has been of service to you in this matter.

Sincerely,



for Margaret P. Grafeld, Director
Office of Information Programs and Services

Enclosures:
As stated.

63934 Federal Register/Vol. 69, No. 212
Rules and Regulations

Subpart F – Appeal Procedures

§171.52 Appeal of denial of access to, declassification of, amendment of, accounting of disclosures of, or challenge to classification of records.

- (a) *Right of administrative appeal.* Except for records that have been reviewed and withheld within the past two years or are the subject of litigation, any requester whose request for access to records, declassification of records, amendment of records, accounting of disclosure of records, or any authorized holder of classified information whose classification challenge has been denied, has a right to appeal the denial to the Department's Appeals Review Panel. This appeal right includes the right to appeal the determination by the Department that no records responsive to an access request exist in Department files. Privacy Act appeals may be made only by the individual to whom the records pertain.
- (b) *Form of appeal.* There is no required form for an appeal. However, it is essential that the appeal contain a clear statement of the decision or determination by the Department being appealed. When possible, the appeal should include argumentation and documentation to support the appeal and to contest the bases for denial cited by the Department. The appeal should be sent to: Chairman, Appeals Review Panel, c/o Appeals Officer, A/GIS/IPS/PP/LC, U.S. Department of State, SA-2, Room 8100, Washington, DC 20522-8100.
- (c) *Time limits.* The appeal should be received within 60 days of the date of receipt by the requester of the Department's denial. The time limit for response to an appeal begins to run on the day that the appeal is received. The time limit (excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and legal public holidays) for agency decision on an administrative appeal is 20 days under the FOIA (which may be extended for up to an additional 10 days in unusual circumstances) and 30 days under the Privacy Act (which the Panel may extend an additional 30 days for good cause shown). The Panel shall decide mandatory declassification review appeals as promptly as possible.
- (d) *Notification to appellant.* The Chairman of the Appeals Review Panel shall notify the appellant in writing of the Panel's decision on the appeal. When the decision is to uphold the denial, the Chairman shall include in his notification the reasons therefore. The appellant shall be advised that the decision of the Panel represents the final decision of the Department and of the right to seek judicial review of the Panel's decision, when applicable. In mandatory declassification review appeals, the Panel shall advise the requester of the right to appeal the decision to the Interagency Security Classification Appeals Panel under §3.5(d) of E.O. 12958.

The Freedom of Information Act (5 USC 552)

FOIA Exemptions

- (b)(1) Withholding specifically authorized under an Executive Order in the interest of national defense or foreign policy, and properly classified. E.O. 12958, as amended, includes the following classification categories:
 - 1.4(a) Military plans, systems, or operations
 - 1.4(b) Foreign government information
 - 1.4(c) Intelligence activities, sources or methods, or cryptology
 - 1.4(d) Foreign relations or foreign activities of the US, including confidential sources
 - 1.4(e) Scientific, technological, or economic matters relating to national security, including defense against transnational terrorism
 - 1.4(f) U.S. Government programs for safeguarding nuclear materials or facilities
 - 1.4(g) Vulnerabilities or capabilities of systems, installations, infrastructures, projects, plans, or protection services relating to US national security, including defense against transnational terrorism
 - 1.4(h) Information on weapons of mass destruction
- (b)(2) Related solely to the internal personnel rules and practices of an agency
- (b)(3) Specifically exempted from disclosure by statute (other than 5 USC 552), for example:
 - ARMEX Arms Export Control Act, 22 USC 2778(e)
 - CIA Central Intelligence Agency Act of 1949, 50 USC 403(g)
 - EXPORT Export Administration Act of 1979, 50 App. USC 2411(c)(1)
 - FSA Foreign Service Act of 1980, 22 USC 4003 & 4004
 - INA Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 USC 1202(f)
 - IRAN Iran Claims Settlement Act, Sec 505, 50 USC 1701, note
- (b)(4) Privileged/confidential trade secrets, commercial or financial information from a person
- (b)(5) Interagency or intra-agency communications forming part of the deliberative process, attorney-client privilege, or attorney work product
- (b)(6) Information that would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy
- (b)(7) Information compiled for law enforcement purposes that would:
 - (A) interfere with enforcement proceedings
 - (B) deprive a person of a fair trial
 - (C) constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy
 - (D) disclose confidential sources
 - (E) disclose investigation techniques
 - (F) endanger life or physical safety of an individual
- (b)(8) Prepared by or for a government agency regulating or supervising financial institutions
- (b)(9) Geological and geophysical information and data, including maps, concerning wells

Other Grounds for Withholding

- NR Material not responsive to a FOIA request, excised with the agreement of the requester

Cambodia

A Self-Study Guide

NATIONAL FOREIGN AFFAIRS TRAINING CENTER
School of Professional and Area Studies
Foreign Service Institute
U.S. Department of State

The *Self-Study Guide: Cambodia* is intended to provide U.S. Government personnel in the foreign affairs community with an overview of important Cambodian issues related to history, geography, culture, economics, government and politics, international relations and defense. This guide should serve as an introduction and a self-study resource. Cambodian history and its relations with the United States are far too complex to be covered in any depth using only the text in this guide. The reader is encouraged to explore the questions and issues raised in the guide by referring to the books, articles, periodicals and web sites listed in the bibliography. All of the bibliographic material can be found on the Internet or in the National Foreign Affairs Training Center Library, the Main State Library, or the Library of Congress.

The first edition of the *Self-Study Guide: Cambodia* was prepared by Dr. Craig Etcheson, a Visiting Scholar at the Foreign Policy Institute of the Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies in Washington, D.C. He was formerly an Associate Research Scientist with the Center for International and Area Studies at Yale University. He has been carrying out research on and in Cambodia since 1979. The views expressed in this guide are those of the author or of attributed sources and do not necessarily reflect official policy or the position of the Department of State or the National Foreign Affairs Training Center.

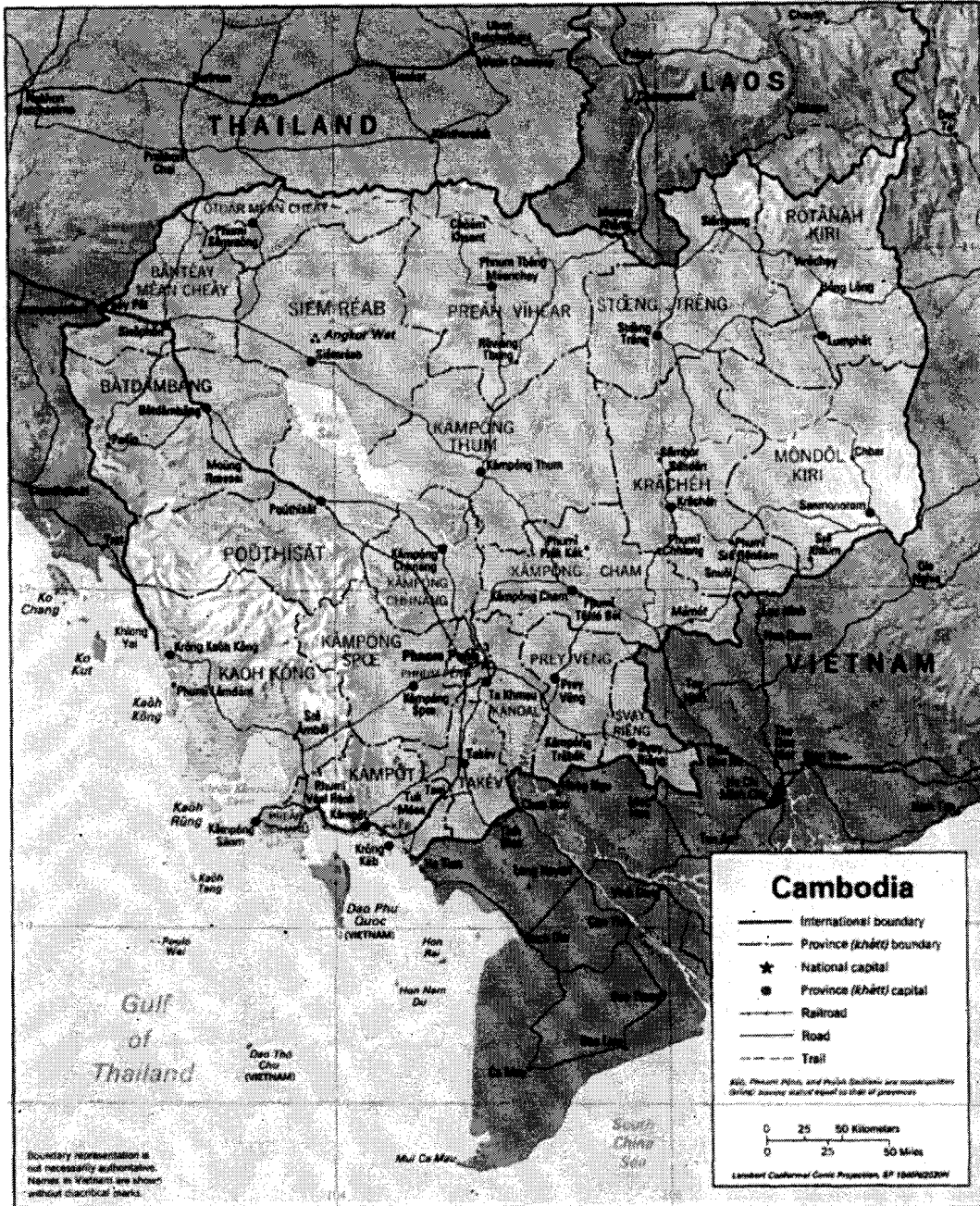
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First Edition, July 2004

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Map of Cambodia



Internet Resources on Maps

Historical Maps of Cambodia from Border Camps:

<http://www.websitesreg.com/border/maps.html>

Maps of Cambodia from Yale University's Cambodian Genocide Program:

<http://www.yale.edu/cgp/maps.html>

Maps of Angkor from NASA's Spaceborne Imaging Radar:

<http://www.jpl.nasa.gov/radar/sircxsar/angkor.html>

Provincial, City, Road and Other Maps from Canby Publications:

<http://www.canbypublications.com/maps/maphome.htm>

Maps of Environmentally Protected Areas from the World Parks Congress:

<http://www.mekong-protected-areas.org/cambodia/pa-map.htm>

Cambodia Map Directory from Embassy World:

http://www.embassyworld.com/maps/Maps_Of_Cambodia.html

THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE

This chapter of the study guide provides an introduction to the land and the people of Cambodia. We will review the physical and political geography of the country, and briefly introduce the various ethnic and national groupings that can be found there.

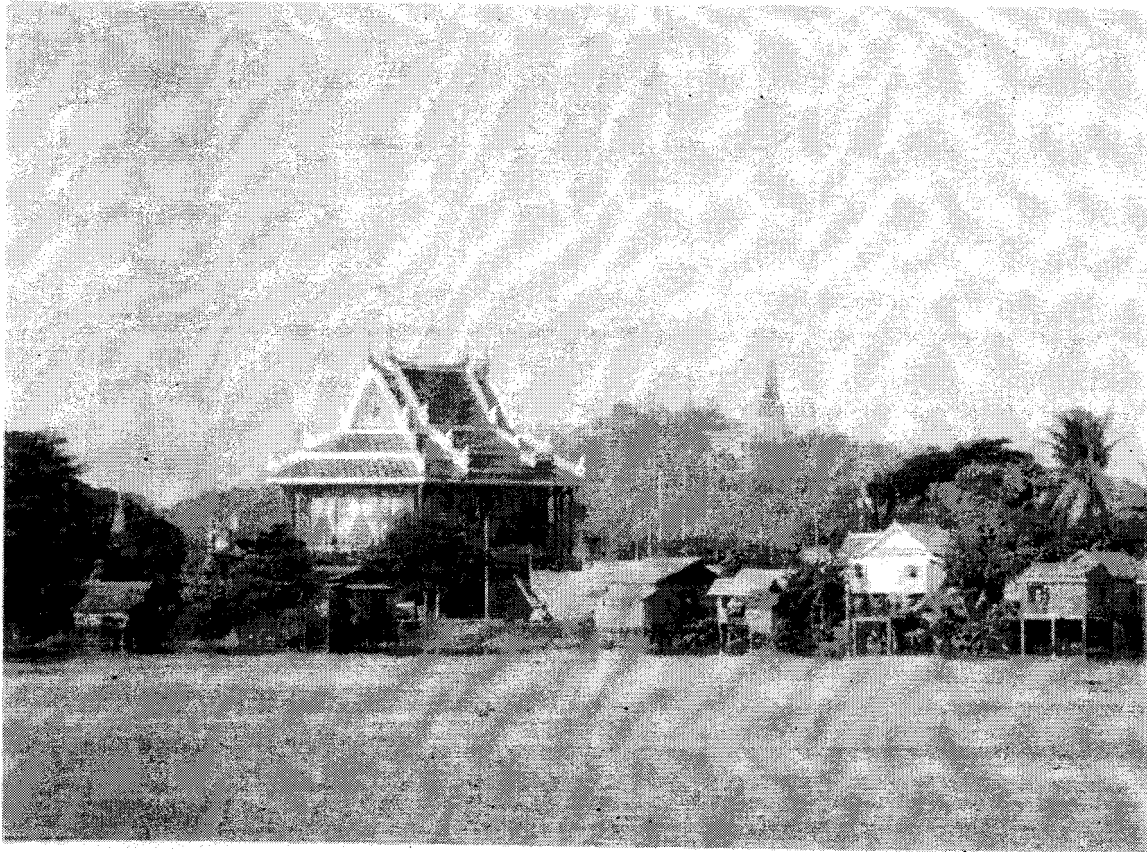
Physical Geography

Cambodia is situated in mainland Southeast Asia, 13 degrees latitude north of the equator, at 105 degrees east longitude. The country has a total area of 181,040 km², of which some 4,500 km² consists of bodies of water, with the remaining area comprising land surface. It is approximately the same size as the U.S. state of Missouri. Cambodia has a deep-water port on the Gulf of Thailand at Kampong Som, providing the country with direct access to the Pacific Ocean.

The terrain of the country is shaped roughly like a shallow saucer, with a depressed lip in the south. The rim of the saucer is formed by modest mountains in the west, north and northeast, none of which exceeds about 1,800 meters (5,900 feet) in altitude. The basin of the saucer covers most of the country, and is essentially a large watershed draining into the Mekong River. The basin is dotted here and there with small prominences, known as *phnoms*, or "mountains."

The Mekong is Cambodia's principal river. It enters Cambodia from Laos in the north, flows in a generally southerly direction for approximately 200 kilometers (125 miles), and then jogs southwest for another 150 kilometers (95 miles) to the capital, Phnom Penh, before resuming a generally southerly flow on into Vietnam. The intricate branching of rivers and streams found in Vietnam's Mekong Delta actually begins at Phnom Penh, where the Mekong River splits off into another major waterway, the Bassac River.

In the middle of Cambodia, just slightly off-center to the west, lays a large, hourglass-shaped body of water called the *Tonle Sap*, or Great Lake. This lake is remarkable for a number of reasons. The Great Lake provides the majority of animal protein consumed in the Cambodian diet, by virtue of the bountiful fish harvests gathered from the lake and its tributaries. But how these harvests have been sustained over the centuries is even more fascinating. The Great Lake drains southward into the Mekong River through a tributary that is also called the *Tonle Sap*. During each rainy season, as the Mekong swells from run-off, it rises above the dry-season surface level of the Great Lake, and then the Tonle Sap River reverses direction and begins to flow north into the lake. In the process, the surface area of the Great Lake expands by a factor of ten, and enormous loads of silt are deposited in its bed and upon the surrounding inundated land. This unusual phenomenon provides a fertile spawning ground for fish, and annually renews the soil over large areas of central Cambodia. Thus the Tonle Sap functions as an enormous natural flood control bladder for the lower Mekong River Basin.



Viewed from the Tonle Sap River, the old imperial capital, Oudong, rises on hills in the distance; the tallest spire is King Sihanouk's funeral stupa, under construction in 2000.
(Photo by Craig Etcheson)

The Tonle Sap River reverses its southerly course towards the sea and begins to flow north early in the wet monsoon, which typically commences in May and lasts through November. In the rainy season, it is common for there to be a brief, intense shower late in the afternoon, particularly around Phnom Penh. The dry monsoon is from December through April, during which there is rarely any precipitation. Temperatures vary little through the year, with the hottest time being in April, when the mercury often exceeds 100° Fahrenheit. The coolest period comes in December, when nighttime temperatures can fall into the 70s or below. The average total annual precipitation in Cambodia is approximately 100 to 150 centimeters (40 to 60 inches), though this varies considerably depending upon the terrain. For example, the coastal mountains in the southwest often receive up to 500 centimeters (200 inches) of rain, squeezed from the clouds as the moisture-laden monsoon air coming off the Gulf of Thailand rises over the mountains.

Political Geography

The previous section began by asserting a size for the land area of Cambodia; among many Cambodians, this assertion would be considered highly controversial, to say

the least. Part of the reason for this is that many of Cambodia's boundaries are not clearly demarcated. Moreover, some areas of Cambodia's land and maritime border regions are still the subject of on-going territorial disputes with neighboring countries. The issue of alleged land and maritime encroachment on Cambodian territory by Thailand and Vietnam remains a potent issue in contemporary political debate.

Over the previous several centuries, Cambodia has lost a great deal of its land and maritime area to these neighbors, including significant losses when France withdrew from the region in the 1950s. Successive Cambodian governments have never fully accepted the administrative demarcation lines drawn by French colonial authorities, but those lines became permanent international borders in the wake of the French retreat from Southeast Asia. Similarly, some Thais do not really accept their current borders with Cambodia, believing that some lands presently under Cambodian sovereignty rightfully belong to Thailand. The current government of the Second Kingdom of Cambodia remains vulnerable to criticism from domestic opponents over its relatively accommodating policy toward Vietnam on the border question. Territorial issues with Thailand also lurk just under the surface of Cambodian public opinion, and played a key role in a serious anti-Thai riot in Phnom Penh during January 2003. Those riots resulted in some \$50 million in property damage, and caused a temporary break in diplomatic relations between Cambodia and Thailand.

Cambodia's border with Thailand stretches from the western coast to the northern escarpment for a distance of some 800 kilometers (500 miles). In the northeastern mountainous region, Cambodia shares a 540 kilometer (335 miles) border with Laos. Cambodia's longest shared border is with Vietnam, in the east and the south, running some 1,220 kilometers (760 miles). To the Southwest, Cambodia borders the Gulf of Thailand. Cambodia claims a 200 nautical mile exclusive economic zone in the gulf, but much of this area is disputed with Vietnam and Thailand.

The name of the country derives from the archaic term, *Kambuja*, which may have originated with early Indian settlers to the region who came from the northwestern area of India called *Kamboja*, much as many place names in North America can be traced to European origins. The French transliterated *Kambuja* as *Cambodge*, and it entered the English language as Cambodia. Contemporary Cambodians sometimes refer to their country as *Kampuchea*, though this usage has fallen out of favor in recent years due to its association with the communist governments of the 1970s and 80s. The people of Cambodia are usually called Cambodians, although some also use the term *Khmers*, a practice that can be disconcerting to Cambodian citizens who do not happen to be of Khmer ethnicity.

Ethnology

Cambodia's majority ethnic group is the Mon-Khmer, or Khmer, who comprised some 90% of the country's approximately thirteen million people as of 2004. In pre-historical times, the region encompassing today's Cambodia was inhabited by peoples about whom little is known. The Mon-Khmer people are believed to have migrated to the

area in the few centuries prior to the beginning of the Christian era, perhaps from southern China. Recent archaeological studies have begun to reveal more about the culture and social organization of these early inhabitants, but a reliable historical record does not begin until around the sixth century AD. According to Cambodian mythology, an Indian prince named Kundinya founded the nation, and this mythology may be rooted in the early migration of peoples from India.

Cambodia's history of repeated catastrophic wars over the centuries has caused numerous episodes of dramatic depopulation. The long slow recovery from the demographic disaster of the 1970s means that the population today is young, with a median age of about 19, and a relatively robust growth rate of 1.8%. Another lingering result from thirty years of war is the fact that according to the 1998 census, there are 93 males for every 100 females, though this effect is more pronounced in the older age cohorts of the population.

The remaining 10% of Cambodia's population is composed of ethnic Vietnamese, ethnic Chinese, Muslim Cham, and a mix of other groups (primarily Lao, Thai, and a number of traditional hill-dwelling tribes such as the Montagnard, Brao, Por, Taupou, Stieng and Jarais). The precise size of these various groups is the subject of some ongoing uncertainty because the 1998 census did not record ethnic identities. Nonetheless, the Vietnamese, Chinese and Cham groups make up the largest of the ethnic minorities. Inter-marriage between the Khmer majority and many of the minority groups has reduced ethnic distinctions, but significant cultural differences continue to exist between the various minorities and the Khmer.

The primary language spoken in Cambodia is called Khmer, and is one branch of the Mon-Khmer family of Austroasiatic languages. Unlike the Vietnamese and Thai languages, Khmer is non-tonal. Numerous dialects of Khmer are found in different regions, and native speakers can identify a person's place of origin based on the dialect. The Khmer script is derived from south Asian languages, and the language has borrowed many words from Pali and Sanskrit. In addition to Khmer, Cambodian minorities also speak various dialects of Chinese, along with Cham, Thai, Vietnamese and Lao. Many of the hill tribes of the northeast have their own languages, and do not speak Khmer.

Cambodia has a relatively poor and uneducated population. The adult illiteracy rate is around 30%, rising to 40% for females. According to the World Bank, per capita income in Cambodia hovers well below one dollar per day. As one might expect, there is a striking difference in the standards of living of Cambodia's urban and rural residents. Most rural residents engage primarily in subsistence agriculture, while many of the country's city-dwellers are interconnected with the global economy and have a correspondingly much higher level of income and standard of living.

The **general health status of Cambodia's population is also poor.** There are **numerous endemic diseases**, including **several strains of malaria, tuberculosis, Japanese encephalitis, and Dengue Fever.** Cambodia also has a high **prevalence rate** for HIV/AIDS, estimated at 2.8% in 2002. The child **mortality rate** is high and rising, with

138 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2003; the material mortality rate is also one of the highest in Asia, estimated to be 473 per 100,000 live births. The health care system remains rudimentary and insufficient to address these health care challenges, especially in rural areas. Per capita health care expenditure is estimated at only \$19. As a result, according to the World Health Organization, life expectancy in Cambodia is low, at 56 years, with a healthy life expectancy of only 46 years.

In geographic terms, Cambodia's population is unevenly distributed. The central lowland provinces such as Kampong Cham, Kandal, Takeo, Kampong Speu, Kampong Thom, Kampong Chhnang and Battambang are densely populated, with villages situated primarily along rivers and lakes. The more remote highland provinces like Monduliri, Ratanakiri, Stung Treng, Preah Vihear and Koh Kong are very sparsely populated. The following table illustrates this distribution, as well as the imbalance in the sex ratio.

HOUSEHOLDS AND POPULATION OF CAMBODIA (1998 CENSUS)

Province	Total Household	Total Population	Males	Females
Banteay Meanchey	111,856	577,772	283,358	294,414
Battambang	148,356	793,129	388,599	404,530
Kampong Cham	312,841	1,608,914	775,796	833,118
Kampong Chhnang	82,638	417,693	197,691	220,002
Kampong Speu	115,728	598,882	287,392	311,490
Kampong Thom	106,908	569,060	272,844	296,216
Kampot	104,993	528,405	253,085	275,320
Kandal	206,189	1,075,125	515,996	559,129
Koh Kong	24,964	132,106	67,700	64,406
Kratie	49,326	263,175	130,254	132,921
Monduliri	5,657	32,407	16,380	16,027
Phnom Penh	173,678	999,804	481,911	517,893
Preah Vihear	21,491	119,261	59,333	59,928
Prey Veng	194,185	946,042	445,140	500,902
Pursat	68,235	360,445	172,890	187,555
Ratanakiri	16,758	94,243	46,396	47,847
Siem Reap	127,215	696,164	336,685	359,479
Krong Preah Sihanouk	28,015	155,690	76,940	78,750
Stung Trang	14,323	81,074	40,124	40,950
Svay Rieng	98,244	478,252	225,105	253,147
Takeo	155,030	790,168	376,911	413,257
Oddar Meanchey	12,531	68,279	34,472	33,807
Krong Kep	5,369	28,660	14,014	14,646
Krong Pailin	4,133	22,906	12,392	10,514
Cambodia	2,188,663	11,437,656	5,511,408	5,926,248

Issues and Questions

1. Geopolitical strategists suggest that Cambodia is of minimal significance because it does not sit astride any important lines of global communication or transportation. But China recently launched a project to make the upper reaches of the Mekong River navigable by clearing a series of rapids in southern Laos, which would allow some ocean-going traffic to reach China via the Mekong, through Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. What impact is this development likely to have on geo-strategic assessments?
2. Cambodia's population is relatively homogenous from an ethnic perspective, but lax regulation of immigration from Vietnam over the last twenty years has fueled fears among many Cambodians that the Khmer will gradually be overwhelmed by Vietnamese. These fears are reinforced by historical memory; a case in point is the formerly Khmer town of Prey Nokor, which today is known as Ho Chi Minh City. In the 1970s, such fears led to anti-Vietnamese pogroms during the Lon Nol regime, and genocide against ethnic Vietnamese Cambodians during the Pol Pot regime. What are the prospects for a repeat of such atrocities in the future?

Internet Resources on the Land and the People

An excellent, albeit dated, Library of Congress Country Study of Cambodia:

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/khtoc.html>

CIA World Fact Book on Cambodia:

<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/cb.html>

Data from the World Bank on Cambodia:

<http://www.worldbank.org/data/countrydata/countrydata.html>

Cambodian health care data from the World Health Organization:

<http://www.who.int/country/khm/en/>

Some results from the 1998 census of Cambodia:

<http://www.nis.gov.kh/CENSUSES/Census1998/statistics.htm>

Statistics on Cambodia from Nationmaster:

<http://www.nationmaster.com/country/cb>

A detailed 1996 study of maternal mortality in Cambodia:

<http://rc.racha.org.kh/docDetails.asp?resourceID=69&categoryID=28>

HISTORY

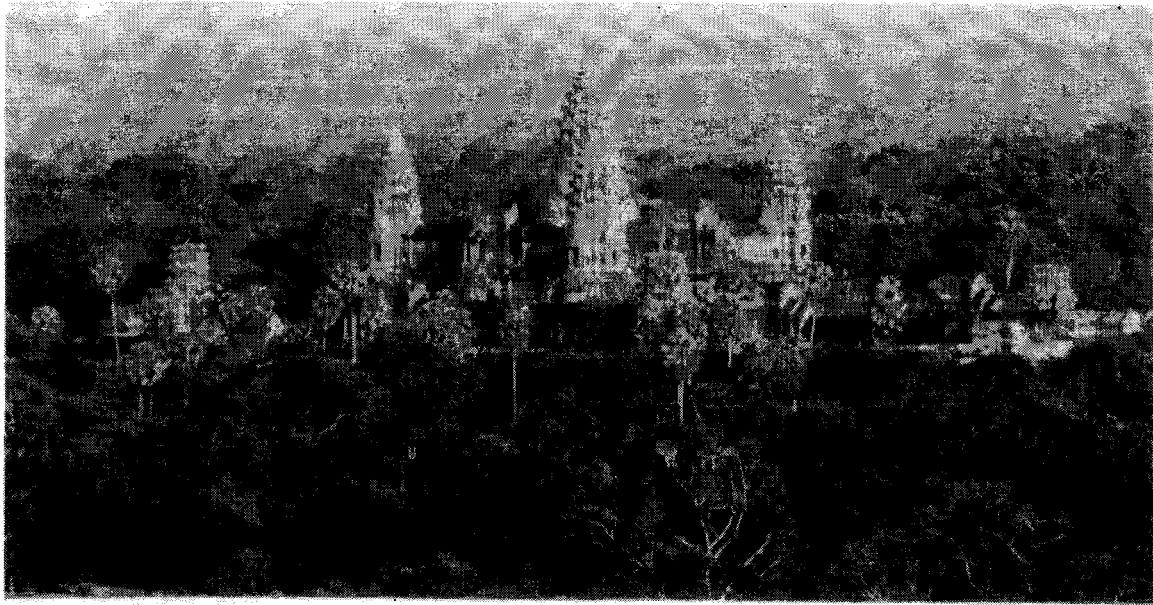
This section of the study guide provides a brief history of Cambodia. We will begin with an overview of the historical development of the country from early times through the colonial period to independence. We will then focus in somewhat more detail on the major periods since independence, which can be divided according to the regime in power.

The Rise of the Angkor Empire

As noted above, Cambodia's pre-history is shrouded in obscurity. It is only in the last decade that new archeological research has begun to reveal a few tantalizing tidbits about what came before the rise of the Angkor Empire. The oldest surviving inscriptions date to the beginning of the 7th century, but other evidence suggests that the Mekong Basin had well-developed social and economic structures many centuries prior to that time. It appears likely that the region was dotted with small principalities or kingdoms, and that these smaller socio-political units gradually coalesced into larger political entities. For many years, historians described the emergence of the Angkor Empire as a result of the union of two kingdoms, Funan and Chen-la, the first centered on the lower Mekong Delta in present-day Vietnam, and the second to the north of the Great Lake. Recent research has raised some questions about the validity of this historical scenario, but some similar sequence of events probably did occur.

The origin of the Angkor Empire is usually dated to 802 AD, when Jayavarman II declared himself to be a *devaraja*, or "God-King," in the Kulen Mountains north of the present-day Angkor area. He thus founded a reign which would become a great empire, dominating much of mainland Southeast Asia for more than half a millennium. Through conquest and alliances, Jayavarman II quickly grew his kingdom until its borders were said to be contiguous with "China, Champa, the ocean and the land of cardamoms and mangoes," quite an expansive claim of sovereignty, indeed. He later moved his capital to Ruluos, just east of present-day Angkor. A string of successors followed, and toward the end of the 9th century, the God-King Indravarman embarked on a program of temple-building that was to pre-figure the greatest accomplishments of the Angkor Empire. Sometime around the beginning of the 10th century, Indravarman's son, Yasovarman, moved the capital to the area that is today known as the Angkor complex. Here the empire was to grow great and rich, rivaling all other civilizations before and since in the scope of its artistic and spiritual achievements.

The rise of Suryavarman I to the throne of the God-King in the early years of the 11th century marked the beginning of a distinct centralization and intensification of the power of the Angkor Empire. After a period of dynastic turmoil at the end of the 11th century, a God-King taking the name Suryavarman II accomplished the single most enduring feat of the six centuries of the Angkor Empire by constructing the temple mountain of Angkor Wat. This monument is probably the largest religious structure ever built, and it stands in testimony of the greatness of the God-King's vision.



Inner Sanctuary of Angkor Wat, the "Temple City," Towers Above Surrounding Jungle
(Photo by Craig Etcheson)

Angkor Wat was completed in 1150 AD, shortly after the death of Suryavarman II, about a decade before the construction of the Notre Dame Cathedral began in Paris. The astounding scope of this temple still takes the breath away from visitors today. Covering an area of five hundred acres and rising to a height of 699 feet, it was designed to mimic the five peaks of Mount Meru, the sacred mountains of Hindu cosmology. The entire temple is laid out in precise dimensions reflecting Hindu understandings of cosmic time and space, from the beginning of time-until the end of time. This temple complex is adorned with thousands of stone carvings. For example, the outer gallery surrounding the central temple is adorned with more than a mile of bas relief carvings depicting scenes from Hindu mythology, and the exploits of the Angkor God-Kings.

Jayavarman VII was undoubtedly the greatest of all the Cambodian God-Kings. The details of his early history are somewhat mysterious, but he arose in a time of crisis for the Angkor Empire. In 1177, the Kingdom of Champa invaded Angkor by land, and the next year they returned by water and overwhelmed the empire, sacking the capital and putting the king to death. Jayavarman rallied an army, and in an epic naval battle on the Tonle Sap in 1178, defeated the Chams. If we are to believe his own accolades, he was ferocious in war, but magnanimous in victory. According to an inscription in the Preah Khan temple written in 1191, "to prisoners of war" Jayavarman VII "gave his own forests, thus manifesting generosity and justice." Considering that he captured the Cham capital in 1191, this "generosity" may account for the substantial population of ethnic Cham people that has lived in Cambodia for centuries.

Jayavarman VII was crowned God-King in 1181, and spent the next three decades transforming the empire. He built a system of roads throughout the land, along with rest houses, hospitals, reservoirs and other public works. Most of all, however, he built temples. Though art historians judge that the quality of some of his temples is marred by haste and haphazard design, today his many remaining monuments suggest a grandeur bordering on the megalomaniacal. Ta Prohm ("Ancestor Brahma") and Preah Kahn (the "Sacred Sword") were built to honor his mother and father, respectively. Both housed thousands of people, and perhaps one hundred thousand additional people were dedicated to the maintenance of each of these two temples. He built other new temples and embellished many older temples, but there is little doubt that his greatest artistic achievement was the Bayon. At the center of Angkor Thom, the immense "Big City," he constructed a monument with 54 gigantic towers, each of which is crowned with four faces oriented in the cardinal directions. Each of these more than two hundred faces is believed to be a representation of Jayavarman VII as the Buddha, deep in meditation, with closed eyes and an enigmatic smile on his lips. The inner and outer galleries of the central temple are decorated with bas relief carvings depicting many contemporary scenes, ranging from a pictorial account of Jayavarman VII's victory over the Kingdom of Champa, to scenes of everyday domestic life.

The only independent contemporary account of the Angkor Empire comes down to us from a Chinese envoy to Angkor, Chou Ta-Kuan, who spent a year at the court of the God-King Indravarman III from 1296-1297. His subsequent report about the Angkor Empire was translated into French in 1902, and since then successive English editions have appeared under the title, *The Customs of Cambodia*. Chou Ta-Kuan's text is wide-ranging, covering architecture, language, religion, customs, holidays, health and hygiene, commerce, food, and many other topics. He also reported on the comportment of the God-King, and it is worth quoting at length from his observations:

When the King leaves his palace, the procession is headed by the soldiery; then come the flags, the banners, the music. Girls of the palace, three or five hundred in number, gaily dressed, with flowers in their hair and tapers in their hands, are massed together in a separate column. The tapers are lighted even in broad daylight. Then came other girls carrying gold and silver vessels from the palace and a whole galaxy of ornaments, of very special design, the uses of which were strange to me. Then came still more girls, the bodyguard of the palace, holding shields and lances. These, too, were separately aligned. Following them came chariots drawn by goats and horses, all adorned with gold, ministers and princes, mounted on elephants, were preceded by bearers of scarlet parasols, without number. Close behind came the royal wives and concubines, in palanquins and chariots, or mounted on horses and elephants, to whom were assigned at least a hundred parasols mottled with gold. Finally the Sovereign appeared, standing erect on an elephant and holding in his hand the sacred sword. This elephant, his tusks sheathed in gold, was accompanied by bearers of twenty white parasols with golden shafts. All around was a bodyguard of elephants, drawn close together, and still more soldiers for complete protection, marching in close order.

[*The Customs of Cambodia*, p. 72]

The pageantry and splendor reflected in this description convey some sense of the wealth and power at the command of the Angkor Empire at its zenith.

The Decline of Angkor

There is not a firm consensus among historians on causes of the decline of the Angkor Empire. There are several schools of thought, none of which has yet unambiguously won the day. One theory suggests that disease – the rise of malaria and the infiltration of the bubonic plague that had swept across Europe – combined with a series of Mongol invasions to sap the vitality of the empire, and open the way for its destruction. Another theory suggests that the Angkor Empire was simply outpaced by the rapid expansion of two more vital neighboring empires, the Siamese (or Thai) to the west and the Vietnamese to the east. It is perhaps more likely that both of these factors played at least some role in the eclipse of the Angkor Empire.

However, the most popular explanation for the decline of the empire is known as the Hydraulic Theory. Angkor's glory was based on the ability to control water through a vast system of dykes, canals, and reservoirs. This control enabled the empire to extract multiple rice crops from the land each year, and in turn, this surplus production allowed the Angkor to support a vast population of non-agricultural workers, including priests, soldiers, and other public servants. But as investment in imperial projects like temples and wars increased in proportion to productive work such as growing food and maintaining the hydraulic network, floods and silt gradually depleted the ability of the system to sustain the empire. In fact, historians believe that this decline had actually begun during the reign of Suryavarman II, with his extraordinary expenditure of resources to build Angkor Wat, and that the decline accelerated thereafter. These conditions could have weakened the empire, making it vulnerable to other threats, such as disease and invasion by growing neighbors.

A series of invasions from Thailand in the first third of the 15th century culminated with a catastrophic attack in 1431, during which the Thai sacked Angkor. Shortly thereafter, Angkor was abandoned, and the capital was moved south, further from the marauding Thai armies, eventually settling on the present-day site of Phnom Penh. But this move, as Cambodians say, only brought them closer to being caught between the "Tiger" and the "Crocodile," because the Vietnamese people were steadily expanding down the coast of the South China Sea towards the Mekong Delta. In the 16th through 18th centuries, Cambodia was gradually squeezed between the Thai and the Vietnamese, losing territory and autonomy. The fractious nature of Cambodia's royals, with frequent usurpations and repeated dynastic succession struggles, made it only that much easier for Cambodia's neighbors to manipulate the country. By the middle of the 19th century, Cambodia was on the verge of extinction, with large sections of the empire having been annexed by their neighbors. There were long periods when the entire country was occupied by either Thai or Vietnamese troops, or more often, both. But the world was beginning to shrink, and new imperial players were starting the territories of the Angkor Empire.

Cambodia Becomes a French Colony

In 1863, the Cambodian royal court was under the patronage of Thailand, and some Cambodian officials of the court were chafing at Thai influence. France offered King Norodom a treaty of protection, promising to balance Thai influence in exchange for rights to extract natural resources from Cambodia. The King accepted, and although the Thai resisted, the next twenty years saw a gradual extension of French influence at the court, wresting control over economic life in the capital, and eventually, installing French *résidents* in provincial towns. A rebellion against the increasing foreign influence flared in 1884, and after putting this down, the French briefly slowed the expansion of their control, but the growth of their power over Cambodian affairs was inexorable. With the installation of King Sisowath in 1906, French domination of the affairs of state in Cambodia became complete, and thenceforth, Cambodia was a colony of France.

While the French were principally interested in extracting natural resources from their colony, French officials justified their control of Cambodia at home, to international audiences, and perhaps even to themselves, by proclaiming a *mission civilisatrice*. And indeed, France did do much to modernize traditional ways of life in Cambodia's towns. They abolished slavery, rationalized tax collection, and instituted a system of land titles, in the process utterly overturning the way that Cambodia had been governed for centuries. They brought modern technology to Cambodia, providing electrification and running water first in Phnom Penh, and then elsewhere in the provinces. The French created a network of paved roads through-out the territory, and developed a plantation economy. And they also brought additional foreign influences in the form of Chinese traders and merchants, and Vietnamese workers and supervisors. The growing population of Chinese and Vietnamese was a key impetus in the gradual emergence of nationalist sentiments among the Cambodian elite.

By 1940, Europe was at war. In June of that year, the Vichy government took power in France, which had been overwhelmed by Germany. In Southeast Asia, French colonial officials attempted to maintain their authority, but the weakness of a conquered France made this a difficult challenge. Japan was expanding its influence and control across Southeast Asia. The Thai, for their part, took advantage of the opportunity to seize large swaths of Cambodian territory. Amidst this turmoil, Cambodia's King Monivong died, and a succession crisis ensued. In a bid to increase French control over spiraling events in Cambodia, French Governor-General Jean Decoux chose a teenage prince named Norodom Sihanouk to be installed on the throne. Decoux judged that this young man would be a more pliable puppet than the heir apparent, King Monivong's son, Prince Monireth. This would prove to be a miscalculation.

The Twilight of French Colonial Power

In asserting control over Cambodia, the Japanese had faced two problems: how to undermine the French colonial administrative apparatus, and how to circumvent the considerable symbolic power held by the Cambodian God-King, Norodom Sihanouk. Their solution to these problems was devilishly modern; they encouraged the small

liberal Cambodian elite to form a republic. This plan was enthusiastically grasped by Cambodian urban elites who saw it as a solution to their own problems of colonial oppression and feudal backwardness.

This short-lived republican scheme was summarily crushed by the French when they swept back into Indochina after the war, with the help of King Norodom Sihanouk, who understood very well how pressure for democratization was a threat to his own power. But the republican interlude during World War II had unleashed forces – and similar forces were also brewing in Laos and Vietnam – which would bring down the curtain on the French Empire in Southeast Asia in less than a decade.

Recall that in the wake of World War II, the United States was leading a drive for decolonization of European imperial possessions around the world – though this drive was not pursued in French Indochina. Thus, to appease the nationalist sentiments that had been awakened in the Cambodian body politic, King Sihanouk was forced to become more nationalist than the nationalists, so to speak. He launched a “Royal Crusade for Independence” from France, and alternately allied himself with forces on the left who sought a socialist republic, and forces on the right who sought a liberal republic, squarely retaining command of the center.

By the early 1950s, the French were beleaguered by guerilla attacks all across Indochina – in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia – as well as peaceful political resistance. By 1954, they realized that the game was up, and sued for peace. Cambodia became an independent nation.

The Sangkum Period: Kingdom of Cambodia

After all that has come since, Cambodians old enough to remember the period look back on Norodom Sihanouk’s post-independence government as a Golden Age. Though no doubt it is all relative, in truth, there were many things about this period which were not so golden. The Geneva Conference of 1954 mandated elections in Cambodia and Vietnam. The United States worked with the emerging military dictatorship of Ngo Dinh Diem in southern Vietnam to thwart the holding of democratic elections there, but in Cambodia, elections went forward, though exactly how democratic they really were is another matter.

King Norodom Sihanouk abdicated the throne in favor of his father, and in the pose of “ordinary prince” – a pose no one really believed – he moved to rapidly assemble a political party to contest the elections. He named his political vehicle the “Sangkum Reastr Niyum,” or Popular Socialist Community. Cambodia’s heretofore dominant political party of the right, known as the Democratic Party, and a hastily organized party of the left, known as the Pracheachon, or People’s Party, never stood a chance against Sihanouk’s charisma – or against his aggressive security apparatus.

Claiming to have single-handedly brought Cambodia to independence from France, Sihanouk was able to reinforce the respect he already commanded among the

population from fifteen years as the nation's monarch. Among some in the peasantry, Cambodian kings were still revered as something like gods, custodians of a mystical link between heaven and earth, bringers of life-giving water, and of course, terrible in their wrath, with the power of life and death over mere mortals. The last part, at least, was all too true.

Using his control over the country's security forces, Sihanouk ruthlessly eliminated all rivals for power. Those among the Democratic Party who could not be co-opted into joining Sihanouk's party would suddenly find themselves in all manner of difficulties. Those among the Pracheachon Party who attempted to resist the charms of the Prince more often found themselves dead. So effective were Sihanouk's secret police in rooting out potential opposition that many Cambodian leftists fled for Hanoi. Those who stayed were decimated. The urban communist organization was virtually annihilated, and the rural communist infrastructure was reduced to isolated pockets.

It was in this period, in fact, that Sihanouk coined the phrase, "Khmer Vietminh," simultaneously impugning the integrity of Cambodia's left wing by associating them with the reviled Vietnamese communists, while also casting suspicion on their patriotism. Soon he shortened this epithet to "Khmer Rouge," or Red Khmer. Twenty years later, that label would come back to haunt Sihanouk and the entire world.

In 1954, the US organized the Manila Conference, out of which came the Southeast Asian Treaty Organization, or SEATO. SEATO was intended as a bulwark against the expansion of communist influence in Southeast Asia. Sihanouk refused to join, and henceforth Cambodia's relationship with the US was fraught with difficulty. Sihanouk's neutral line in the Cold War did not please the US. Nonetheless, through the 1950s and early 1960s, the US assiduously courted Cambodia with aid totaling some \$300 million, winning support among Sihanouk's military and police forces. They were unhappy when Sihanouk renounced US assistance in 1963, and two years later cut diplomatic relations with the US, on suspicion that the Americans were fomenting insurrection against him.

Sihanouk gave his security forces free reign to suppress domestic dissent from the left. But faced with growing infiltration of Vietnamese communist forces along the eastern border, he decided to turn a blind eye to these violations of Cambodian sovereignty. That would be his undoing. By 1970, a growing economic crisis and a rising nationalist resentment of Vietnamese encroachment led to a decision among the Cambodian elite to oust Sihanouk and declare a republic. The flames of the war in Vietnam were about to engulf Cambodia.

The Lon Nol Regime: Khmer Republic

It is an article of conventional wisdom among many in the United States – not to mention worldwide – that the coup d'état executed against Sihanouk by Lon Nol and Sirik Matak in 1970 was a CIA operation. There is no evidence to support that conclusion, though it is true that US intelligence was aware of the plot and did nothing to

discourage it. The tensions within Cambodia's political elite were sufficient to explain the origins of the coup. Sihanouk's Kingdom of Cambodia was declared defunct, and Lon Nol's Khmer Republic was born.

In the immediate aftermath of the coup, however, the United States moved quickly to support the new regime. Battalions of ethnic Khmer commandoes who had been recruited and trained by US Special Forces in Vietnam were quickly airlifted from their bases there to provide support to the new military junta in Phnom Penh. The Nixon administration was soon providing arms and other forms of support to the Lon Nol regime, and before long, the US Ambassador in Cambodia began to function as something like a proconsul. Before the end of the Khmer Republic five years later, US assistance would account for more than 95% of the Khmer Republic's total annual revenue. Cambodia became a US client regime in every sense of the term.

The coup against Sihanouk was a watershed for Cambodia's communists. Though the Cambodian communists had been waging an ineffective low-level insurgency for several years, the Soviets, the Chinese and the North Vietnamese had been content with Sihanouk's policy of neutralism, and offered no support to Cambodia's would-be revolutionaries. But when Sihanouk was overthrown and Lon Nol's regime turned against Vietnamese forces that had been using Cambodian territory to infiltrate southern Vietnam, everything changed. Suddenly Cambodia's heretofore inept communists had big-time allies.

Seeking to avenge his overthrow, Sihanouk took the fateful step of allying himself with the "Khmer Rouge," who until then had been his foremost domestic enemies. With military, economic and diplomatic support from the communist world, there began a vicious five-year civil war which would ultimately lead to the utter destruction of the entire country.

The North Vietnamese Army overran much of the Cambodia countryside in a matter of weeks, turning "liberated" areas over to the rapidly growing Cambodian revolutionary forces. Despite massive US assistance, Lon Nol's army fared poorly against the communists. Soon the Khmer Republic existed as little more than garrisons of a few major cities, with the rural areas in the hands of the revolution. Widespread strategic area bombing of the countryside by the US Air Force between 1969 and 1973 generated a terrible legacy, and a high civilian death toll.

US intelligence believed that the Cambodian communists were a wholly-owned subsidiary of the North Vietnamese. Little was known about them. Few were prepared for the degree of enmity which would develop between the Cambodian and Vietnamese communists, and fewer yet foresaw the unprecedented radicalism that the Cambodian communists would display upon victory. On April 17, 1975, the Khmer Rouge took Phnom Penh and began what has been called "Year Zero," an effort to totally remake Cambodia from the ground up.

The Pol Pot Regime: Democratic Kampuchea

It is difficult to imagine, and more difficult to describe, how horrible life was in Cambodia during the Khmer Rouge regime. As with all utopian projects, the objective of the Khmer Rouge leadership was to transform not merely society, but to transform human nature itself. And if the nature of any particular human should prove resistant to change, there was an easy solution: death. As a result, approximately one third of the Cambodian population died in the three years, eight months and twenty days that the Khmer Rouge ruled Cambodia.

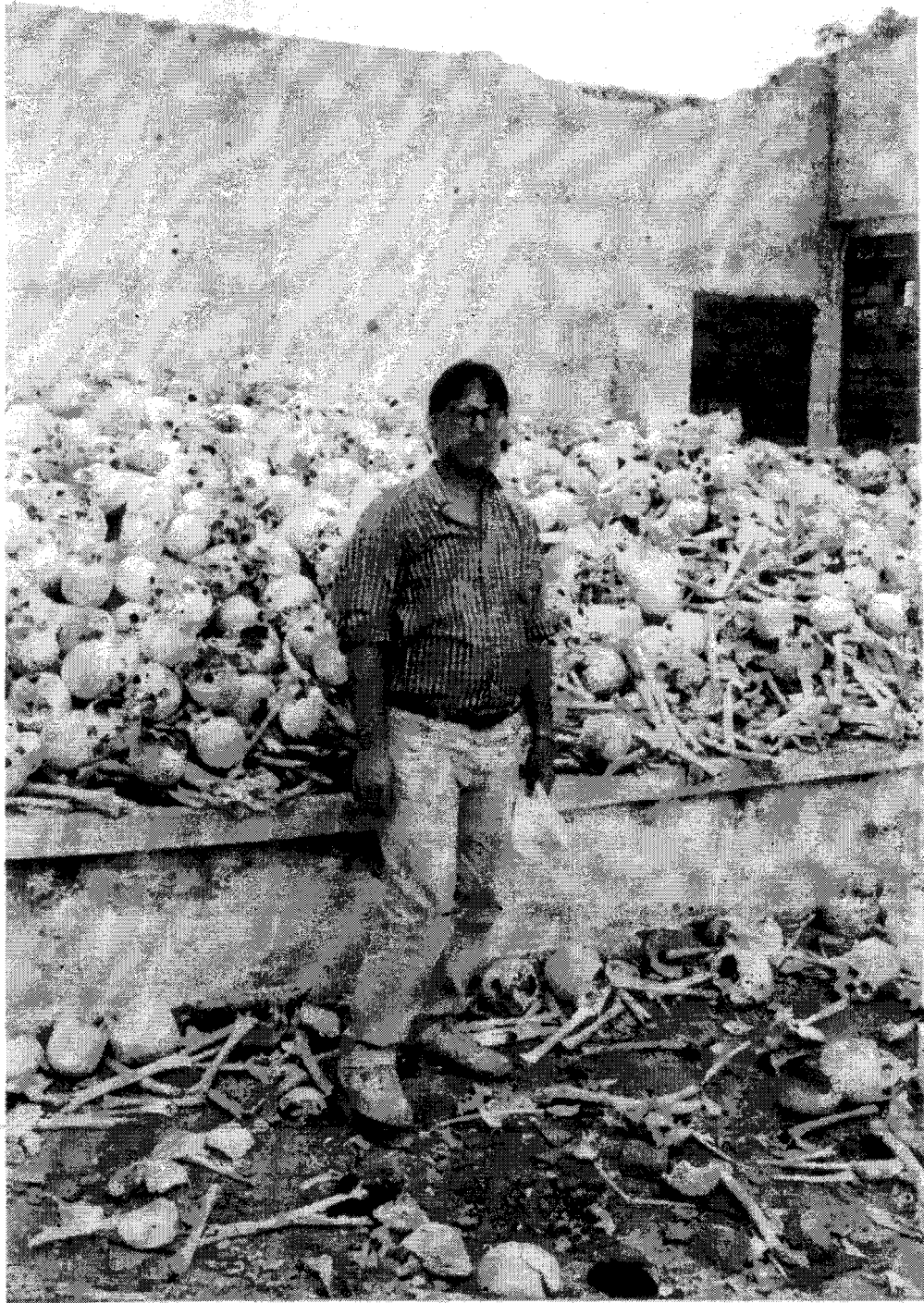
The Khmer Rouge state of Democratic Kampuchea may well have been the most totalitarian regime in the history of mankind. The Khmer Rouge envisioned something that would make Marx spin in his grave: they were going to accomplish a super-great leap forward from a feudally organized, peasant-based subsistence economy directly into full-fledged communism, skipping the intermediate stages of petty bourgeois dominance, national revolution, industrial development, capital accumulation, and socialist revolution. Robust theorists they were not.

In order to accomplish this dream, their design penetrated far beyond the transformation of economic relations and social institutions into the very seat of human consciousness itself. They aimed to forge a new type of person who could realize their communist ideals. They aimed to change the very way people think.

It began with abolishing cities, emptying all urban centers of all inhabitants and relocating everyone to the wilderness where they were to hack new settlements from the jungle. The Khmer Rouge abolished money, and along with it, both the modern and traditional economies. Markets and all forms of trade or accumulation were forbidden, even barter and foraging, except by state organizations. They abolished religion, focusing primarily on the dominant Buddhists, but also utterly obliterating the minority Muslim sect and the small Christian community. They abolished modern medicine. They abolished families, dispersing spouses to different work camps, taking children from their mothers at age five for training in party military schools. Any expressions of love or affection which were not directed to the party organization were prohibited, and the selection of marriage partners became a function of the state. Every aspect of life was totally collectivized, and all private property – right down to personal eating utensils and even such things as female sanitary supplies – was forbidden. The only permitted activity was grueling manual labor. Failure to work hard and enthusiastically twelve to fourteen hours a day, seven days a week, was punishable by summary execution.

One measure of the brutality of the Khmer Rouge regime comes out of a project being conducted by the Documentation Center of Cambodia, a non-governmental organization that has been collecting information about atrocities during the reign of the Khmer Rouge. For the last decade, this organization has been conducting a systematic survey of mass graves all across Cambodia. With approximately 80% of the countryside

carefully examined, the Documentation Center has located more than 20,000 mass graves dating to the Khmer Rouge regime, containing the remains of an estimated 1.1 million



Dr. Etcheson at Sang Prison in Kandal Province
(Photo from Craig Etcheson Archives)

victims of execution. This was from a population of approximately seven million at the time. Perhaps an equal number died from starvation, disease, and exhaustion. Two to three of every seven people in the entire country died in less than four years. The following table illustrates the distribution of the executions.

Mass Grave Surveys in Cambodia, 1995-1999*

Province	Total # of Sites	Estimated # of Pits	Wells/Other Used as Graves	Prison Sites	Memorial Sites	Estimated # of Victims
Banteay Meanchey	17	567	0	4	3	40,782
Battambang	22	1,070	0	8	6	37,195
Kampong Cham	61	3,035	11	13	9	176,423
Kampong Chhnang	30	3,143	1	6	3	253,154
Kampong Speu	20	1,549	1	4	2	24,332
Kampong Thom	18	1,427	5	6	5	123,808
Kampot	22	2,761	0	7	3	55,625
Kandal	43	504	4	13	9	102,804
Koh Kong	1	0	0	1	0	17,349
Kratie	9	7	1	1	4	13,339
Mondulkiri	2	1	0	1	0	0
Phnom Penh	7	0	0	3	2	0
Preah Vihear	Not Yet Surveyed					
Prey Veng	43	1,804	12	8	3	89,406
Pursat	21	2,167	10	13	3	53,050
Ratanakiri	4	33	0	1	0	2,300
Siem Reap	29	715	5	9	2	77,873
Krong Preah Sihanouk	15	570	0	6	0	2,600
Stung Treng	8	61	0	4	1	4,000
Svay Rieng	35	166	0	9	11	5,107
Takeo	25	862	0	8	5	33,682
Totals	432	20,442	50	125	71	1,112,829

* Data from the Documentation Center of Cambodia Mass Grave Mapping Project; adapted from Craig Etcheson, *Quantifying Crimes Against Humanity in Cambodia*, Phnom Penh: Documentation Center of Cambodia, 2000.

The Khmer Rouge were also bad neighbors. They launched military attacks against all three neighboring countries, Thailand, Laos and Vietnam. After several years of punishing attacks in their border provinces, and failed attempts to negotiate a diplomatic solution, the Vietnamese finally decided they could no longer tolerate their former allies. They assembled a liberation force from among Khmer Rouge elements that had fled Pol Pot's purges, and on Christmas Day, 1978, launched a full-scale invasion of

Cambodia. Two weeks later, they had secured the capital, and the Pol Pot regime was ended. Pol Pot fled to the Thai border in the west with the rump of his army, and proceeded to rebuild a military machine to oppose the Vietnamese occupation, and the regime the Vietnamese had put into place.

The Heng Samrin Regime: People's Republic of Kampuchea/State of Cambodia

The new regime in Cambodia was dubbed the People's Republic of Kampuchea, and it consisted primarily of Cambodian communists who had fled the terrible purges of the Khmer Rouge regime. Though many among the newly appointed leadership had intensely nationalistic feelings, they labored under the reality of a Vietnamese military occupation of the country. Considering the level of destruction left in the wake of the Khmer Rouge regime, including the annihilation of the intelligentsia, the new regime had little choice but to rely on Vietnam for material support, technical advice and most of all, protection from the defeated but still dangerous forces of Pol Pot.

The Vietnamese invasion also stoked nationalist feelings in other segments of the Cambodian Diaspora. Soon the Khmer Rouge had rivals for the honor of expelling the Vietnamese from Cambodian soil. Remnants of Lon Nol's Khmer Republic regime, who for years had lived in exile along the Thai border, in France, the US and elsewhere, organized the Khmer People's National Liberation Front to contest the new Cambodian regime. Prince Sihanouk, now freed from the house arrest he had endured under Pol Pot, also organized a royalist revolutionary force, and began to build military camps along the Thai border.

Thailand, suddenly finding its historic regional Vietnamese rival bumping up against its border, actively encouraged and supported all three resistance forces. Within a couple of years, international pressure led to the founding of the so-called Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea, dominated by the Khmer Rouge, but including the republican and royalist resistance forces. That provided the political cover under which China, the US, the Association of Southeast Asian nations and many European countries would provide assistance to the combined resistance. Geopolitical calculations thus dictated a moral choice which haunts the US to this day: a great deal of US assistance made its way to the Khmer Rouge, who by now were widely suspected of having committed genocide.

In the event, however, neither the new Cambodian government nor the resistance was strong enough to prevail in battle, and so Cambodia sunk into what would become a twenty year long war of attrition. It was brutal, grinding, and bloody. Vietnamese forces, in particular, took an enormous number of casualties, and some came to call the war, "Vietnam's Vietnam." Vietnam still had plenty of its own domestic problems to deal with flowing from their revolutionary victory in 1975, and thus they put in place a program to achieve self-sufficiency on the part of their client regime in Cambodia so that they could eventually withdraw and focus on their own development.

But that program required years of effort, and enormous cost. A great deal of this cost was borne by Vietnam's Soviet ally. Thus when the Soviet Union lurched towards collapse in 1989 and began to reduce support for its own Third World clients, it was fortunate for Vietnam that its program to stabilize the People's Republic of Kampuchea had progressed far enough to allow the withdrawal of Vietnamese combat units from Cambodia.

The collapse of the Soviet Union also transformed the international geopolitical environment in such a way that the principal supporters of the war in Cambodia – the Russians, the Chinese and the Americans – began to seek a way to end the conflict. The resulting negotiations culminated in a framework document in 1990, and the Paris Peace Conference in 1991. The settlement called for a quadripartite solution, with the Phnom Penh regime, the Khmer Rouge, the royalists and the republicans all agreeing to cease hostilities and commit to elections under the guidance of a United Nations peacekeeping operation. The UN force would be known as:

UNTAC: The United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia

The Paris treaty on Cambodia in October 1991 committed the United Nations to the largest, most expensive and most interventionist peacekeeping operation in history, with the possible exception of the Congo. Idealists argued that the goal of the accords was to bring peace to a land that had known a quarter century of war and genocide. Realists argue the purpose was merely to remove the "Cambodian Problem" from the international agenda. In either case, the "Agreements on a Comprehensive Political Settlement of the Cambodian Conflict" were touted as a model for collective security in the post-Cold War world order. Consequently, it is important to have a clear understanding of exactly what these agreements did – and did not – accomplish.

The Comprehensive Settlement achieved numerous significant objectives. The Cambodian conflict was decoupled from Great Power geopolitical conflict. Chinese military aid to the Khmer Rouge was terminated. Cambodia's two decades of international isolation was ended. About 362,000 refugees left the camps in Thailand and returned to Cambodia. The three-faction, rebel coalition challenging the Cambodian government was reduced to a single recalcitrant faction. The fragile beginnings of political pluralism were put in place. A free press began flowering in Cambodia as never before. Indigenous human rights groups and other civil society organizations were founded and began rapid growth. Approximately 90% of eligible Cambodians registered to vote, and 89% of those voted in 1993's free and fair elections, despite Khmer Rouge threats to kill anyone who participated. A liberal constitutional monarchy was promulgated, and a coalition government began functioning, more or less. These were huge accomplishments, a tribute to the skill and dedication of the international civil servants who risked (and in some cases sacrificed) their lives in Cambodia. It was \$3 billion well spent.

At the same time, one must be clear-headed in assessing the impact of the UN in Cambodia. The Comprehensive Settlement had laid out numerous central objectives

above and beyond the elections, all of which considered to be essential preconditions for a successful mission. First, the ceasefire was to be implemented and maintained. Second, all outside assistance to the warring factions was to be terminated. Third, the warring armies were to be cantoned, disarmed and demobilized. Fourth, the utterly destroyed Cambodian economy was to be rehabilitated. Fifth, the demobilized soldiers, internally displaced persons, and repatriated refugees were to be reintegrated into civil society. And sixth, a neutral political environment was to be established; which is to say, state institutions had to be decoupled from party organs. Not a single one of these central objectives of the UN peace plan in Cambodia was achieved.

US Secretary of State Warren Christopher called the Cambodia's UN-administered elections "the triumph of democracy." Rhetorical flourishes aside, he probably realized that one UN-administered election does not make a democracy. In fact, if one examines the transition to stable, liberal democratic systems in western, northern and southern Europe, in central and southern Latin America, and in the emerging democracies of East Asia, it is clear that this process has depended in part on the existence of strong labor movements and a powerful middle class, capable of bargaining with military, landed and financial elites. These conditions did not remotely exist in Cambodia at the time of the UN withdrawal, and they still do not. Thus one can confidently conclude that it is premature to predict the consolidation of democratic rule in Cambodia. To be completely fair, critics of the UN operation in Cambodia should not ascribe such a goal to the operation. Partisans of the UN operation should avoid dreaming that the mission could have achieved that goal in just eighteen months.

The Khmer Rouge reneged on the peace agreements, and their defiance of the UN forces in Cambodia quickly showed the Phnom Penh regime that there was no penalty for refusing to play by the rules of the peace treaty – not that they ever intended to do so. Combat continued, and the UN's peacekeeping mission was by turns transmuted into an election-holding mission. Even so, the UN carried out this rump goal very effectively. The May 1993 election produced a constituent assembly, which wrote a new constitution for the country, and in September, a new government was promulgated.

The "Royal" Government: Second Kingdom of Cambodia

Thus, one goal that the UN intervention in Cambodia indisputably did achieve was to leave in place a new, legitimate government. Events would soon prove, however, that this government was far from a marvel of efficiency or stability. The new Royal Government of Cambodia was menaced from birth by a continuing Khmer Rouge insurgency, and by an unwieldy political arrangement.

Though the royalist political party had won the election, it faced an unenviable challenge in attempting to govern. For one thing, the second-place Cambodian People's Party controlled the entire administrative apparatus of the state, including the police, the secret police, and the military. For another thing, as is the nature of one-party states, the People's Party and the administrative organs of the state were totally intertwined, two sides of the same coin. Wresting control of such an apparatus is virtually impossible.

Moreover, active cadres of the People's Party numbered in the tens of thousands, and those cadres were spread across every village in the country, where they had been close to the people for the previous fifteen years.

In contrast, the royalist party was very much an elite organization, with little more than a hundred or so experienced political operatives. Moreover, virtually all of their senior operatives had spent the previous quarter century in exile abroad, and thus had little sense of what was really happening on the streets of Phnom Penh, much less in the villages of the countryside. Even after they returned with the UN intervention, royalist officials had little contact with ordinary Cambodians. This was particularly true in the case of their top political officers, many of whom were members of the royal family, and had no desire to mingle with mere commoners.

All of this was a recipe for disaster. The People's Party had refused to accept the election outcome, alleging a variety of irregularities in the UN's conduct of the polling. One faction of the People's Party went so far as to threaten armed succession, terrorizing royalist operatives in several eastern provinces. Realizing their weak position, the royalists agreed to form a coalition government with the People's Party, with power theoretically shared on the basis of co-ministers from each party at the top levels in the organizational hierarchy of the government.

The system of co-ministers was bound to yield nothing but frustration for the royalists. It was clear to all that real power continued to lay in the hands of the People's Party, despite the title of "First Prime Minister" bestowed upon the royalist leader, Prince Norodom Ranariddh. Still, at first, the arrangement appeared to many to be a miracle of national reconciliation, and the country set about rebuilding following many years of war. As tensions between the main coalition partners in the government grew over the first years of the new Royal Government, however, the business of governing gradually ground to a halt, and bickering set in. Many royalists grew increasingly bitter over their lack of access to the levers of power, and the continuing dominance of the People's Party.

In late 1996, royalist military and intelligence officials conceived a plan they hoped would reverse their fortunes. They began to negotiate with the Khmer Rouge, aiming to recreate the alliance of the 1980s and alter the internal balance of power in the government. Intelligence services controlled by the People's Party quickly detected these maneuverings, and Second Prime Minister Hun Sen bitterly denounced the moves, threatening that it would mean war. The international diplomatic community in Phnom Penh urgently called on the royalists to cease and desist from this provocative plan, but hubris carried the day. On July 4, 1997, as the royalists moved to formalize their alliance with the Khmer Rouge, the coalition government exploded into combat on the streets of Phnom Penh. The royalist military was quickly routed, and a number of their key senior intelligence officials were rounded up by People's Party loyalists and summarily executed. First Prime Minister Prince Norodom Ranariddh fled the country just ahead of the fighting.

Though it was quite brutal, one significant result of the coup d'état was that the three competing military factions within the Cambodian government – those loyal to the People's Party, the republicans and the royalists – were reduced to one. After much posturing and international pressure, the People's Party agreed to new elections and the royalists returned from exile. In 1998, the elections were held, eventually yielding a new government dominated by the People's Party. Norodom Ranariddh, Sihanouk's son and the former First Prime Minister, settled for a largely ceremonial role as President of the National Assembly.

At the same time, using a combination of military pressure and negotiations offering various forms of amnesty, the Khmer Rouge military and political organizations were gradually divided and conquered by the People's Party's Hun Sen. At the end of 1998, the last remaining Khmer Rouge political leaders surrendered to the government, and early in 1999, the last remaining Khmer Rouge military chieftain was captured. The Khmer Rouge had finally been defeated.

Since then, Cambodia has struggled to adjust to an unaccustomed life as a peaceful society, to rebuild an economy shattered by decades of war, and to find some way to achieve national reconciliation in a nation where the majority of the population alive today has known nothing but conflict for their entire lives. It will take generations to achieve these goals.

Issues and Questions

1. For the last six hundred years, Thailand and Vietnam have fought each other in repeated wars on Cambodian territory. Cambodia can thus be seen as a buffer zone between two rival regional powers. But in the course of these wars, Thailand and Vietnam have annexed much of what was the Angkor Empire. The most recent of these wars ended in 1991 with the Paris Peace Accords. Many Cambodian intellectuals say they fear that the Mekong River one day soon will become the border between Thailand and Vietnam. Does Vietnam's admission to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations mark a breakpoint in this long history of rivalry between the two nations, or is it more likely a strategic pause before the next round of conflict?

2. Many a Cambodian ruler has seen power slip from his grasp under the pressure of peasant rebellions. The Khmer Rouge attempted to exploit the power of the peasantry by ruling in the name of the peasants, but their oppression was so extreme that the people welcomed the overthrow of the Pol Pot regime by foreign forces. We can conclude from this that Cambodia cannot be ruled without at least the acquiescence, if not the active support, of Cambodia's peasantry. Given that many observers say the conditions of life for rural Cambodians have been growing steadily worse over the last fifteen years, what are the prospects for internal stability in Cambodia should this trend continue?

Internet Resources on History

The Agreements on a Comprehensive Political Settlement of the Cambodia Conflict:

http://www.usip.org/library/pa/cambodia/agree_comppol_10231991_toc.html

Links to many sources of historical information about Cambodia:

<http://www.asiasource.org/cambodia/links.htm>

Current issue and searchable database of past articles from the *Phnom Penh Post*:

<http://www.phnompenhpost.com/>

CULTURE AND SOCIETY

This section of the study guide provides the sparsest of introductions to Cambodian culture and society. In particular, we will examine the growing divergence between urban and rural lifestyles, social structure, religion, and national holidays. Each of these topics reveals some important things about what it means to be a Cambodian.

It is sometimes said that Cambodia is not one, but rather two countries – Phnom Penh and “not-Phnom Penh.” Remarkable progress has been made over the last decade in restoring the charm and luster that Phnom Penh lost during the war years. In the capital today, one finds five-star hotels, pizza parlors, fine French restaurants, Internet cafes, satellite dishes, and many other appurtenances of contemporary cosmopolitan life. Streets, sidewalks, storm sewers, parks and other public amenities are being gradually rehabilitated throughout the city. These factors make Phnom Penh a comfortable posting for expatriates, diplomats and other foreigners – notwithstanding the occasional outbreaks of armed violence. A surprising proportion of Cambodians in Phnom Penh speak at least some English, ranging from civil servants to service sector employees to taxi drivers. But for foreigners who never venture outside of Phnom Penh, the glitz of the capital masks what many consider to be the “real Cambodia.”

Outside this urban center, the 80% of the Cambodian people who live in the countryside still exist in a largely traditional peasant environment, with few modern conveniences. In some remote rural villages, it appears as if life has changed very little over the centuries. The vast majority of Cambodians continue to eke out a meager existence through subsistence agriculture, never more than one crop failure away from catastrophe. Their social lives revolve around extended family ties, the village, and Buddhism. Many of them have never traveled more than a few miles beyond their home village. At the same time, and in contrast to some of their city cousins, Cambodia’s rural population hews to a set of core values that are in some ways strikingly similar to those of farmers in the US heartland: they tend to be honest, hard-working, conservative, and generously hospitable. These values are anchored by a traditional social structure in which every person knows his or her place in the scheme of things.

Social Structure

The Cambodian language contains an intricate vocabulary that is designed to indicate differences in the status of individuals, and this reflects the country’s highly hierarchical social structure. Beginning with the King, there is a complex set of linguistic constructs (“the royal language”) that is used at court when addressing the sovereign, depending upon whom is speaking to whom (the King, the Queen, consorts, concubines, siblings and children of the King and the Queen, court officials, younger and older princes of another royal line, younger and older princesses, religious officials, secular officials, commoners, and so on). Though somewhat less elaborate, there are similar forms of speech that are used in everyday verbal intercourse to indicate relative social status, encompassing senior government officials, individuals of royal title, rankings by age, wealth, military office, and other indicators of social standing. Within a family, for

example, different forms of speech are used to address older and younger siblings of each gender, parents, grandparents, children, grandchildren, in-laws, cousins and other relations. The Khmer Rouge attempted, but failed, to eradicate these linguistic signs of social status, although their assault on these traditional forms of speech does appear to have slightly attenuated the historically sacrosanct nature of this practice.

Casual observation of these forms of speech in everyday life can lead one to conclude that women are valued less than men in Cambodian society. While this is true in some respects, anthropologists have concluded that traditions of gender relations in Cambodia are rather more complex than that. For example, women are expected to be virtuous, particularly with respect to sexual matters, while men are not. It is common for young males to be initiated into sexual activity by prostitutes, but females are expected to remain chaste until marriage, and to remain faithful thereafter. Men, on the other hand, commonly employ the services of prostitutes. This duality is reflected in the fact that many Cambodian men insist on the truth of the myth that there is no such thing as a Khmer prostitute, only Vietnamese prostitutes. Nonetheless, the role of women in family life is in many ways dominant. The wife traditionally manages the household finances, and often assists her husband in functioning effectively as the family breadwinner.

The ambiguous duality of gender roles in Cambodia becomes slightly clearer when we observe educational attainment. As of 2000, for example, 80% of adult males were literate, but only 57% of adult females were literate. While 66% and 65% of males and females respectively were enrolled in primary school, by secondary school those figures fall to 24% and 14% respectively. A large part of the reason for the dramatic decline in secondary attendance is economic, insofar as many families are unable to afford the costs of education. But if a family must choose, often they choose to educate their male children, while the females stay home to help with chores and farming.



A woman plants the rainy season rice crop in Kandal Province, July 1995.
(Photo by Craig Etcheson)

Religion

The dominant religion in Cambodia is Buddhism, and there is a minority but still substantial following of Islam. Despite the years of communist control, religion remains a crucial influence in the lives of most Cambodians. When asked what it means to be a "Cambodian," many people will answer, 'a Cambodian is a Buddhist.' Cambodia's version of Buddhism is syncretic, which is to say, it combines mainstream Buddhist doctrine with elements of Hinduism, animism, and other indigenous traditional spiritual beliefs. As a result, the spirit world suffuses Cambodian Buddhism. Ancestor spirits are held to be particularly potent, and spirits are also associated with many other aspects of the world, such as particular places and things. For example, there are "spirit forests" in many places in Cambodia, where large, old trees, are believed to be inhabited by guardian spirits; this has led to serious conflict with loggers in some cases. Mainline Buddhist practice has been slow to regenerate after the religious devastation of the Khmer Rouge period, when the Sangha was utterly annihilated. During the People's Republic of Kampuchea period in the 1980s, the government permitted a limited practice of Buddhism, but did not actively encourage it, preferring that it be restricted primarily to the few surviving monks and the elderly. But after the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops in 1989, Buddhism was again declared the state religion. The once-respected Buddhist Institute in Phnom Penh began to be regenerated only during the period of UN intervention, and has grown, albeit slowly, since then. Well-trained monks are still few and far between today, and this has resulted in many scandalous incidents of devotees who fail to uphold the precepts of the religion by drinking alcohol, consorting with women, and engaging in other prohibited activities.

The form of Islam practiced by Cambodia's Cham population is, like Cambodian Buddhism, also syncretic. Many Cambodian Muslims profess to believe not only in the teachings of the Prophet Mohammed, but also in the teachings of the Buddha. Like Buddhism, Islam in Cambodia was nearly destroyed under the Khmer Rouge, with virtually all of the religious leaders exterminated, and much of the physical apparatus of the religion laid waste. In the years since, Islam has been revived in the Cham community in large part thanks to the efforts of foreign missionaries, at first primarily from Malaysia, but in recent years increasingly from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and other Gulf States. Some of these missionaries have attempted to introduce fundamentalist forms of Islam into the Cham community, particularly from the Sufi, Wahhabi and Salafist sects. These proselytizers have not, however, found particularly fertile ground among the Cham, who regard these more austere and militant versions of Islam as inimical to their traditional beliefs and lifestyles. Even so, these forms have had some influence; for example, it is now more common than it has been to see Cham veiled from head to toe, with only their faces visible.

Holidays

Cambodia is notable for its many national holidays. The Cambodian people love a good party, and this shows in the profusion of events that are officially celebrated. Perhaps nothing exemplifies this more clearly than the fact that Cambodia celebrates not

one, but three different New Year holidays, including the international new year, Chinese New Year (late January/early February, varying according to the lunar calendar), and the Cambodian New Year (March 17). Another key national holiday is Pchum Ben, or Ancestor Day (September), which is actually observed for nearly a week, a time when many people travel to their ancestral villages to honor the spirits of their ancestors. Vesak Buchea Day (late May) marks the birth, enlightenment and death of the Buddha.

There are also several important royal holidays. One of the most notable of these is the "Plowing of the Furrow" ceremony (late May), during which oxen are brought to the Royal Palace and presented with several different bowls containing grains, water, legumes, and other items; by observing which items are of most interest to the oxen, astrologers are believed to be able to predict the course of the coming agricultural season. The Water Festival (usually early November, but set by the royal astrologer) is another important national holiday, nominally marking the victory of Jayavarman VII in an epic naval battle against the Kingdom of Champa in 1178; the parades, floats, boat races, and other amusements of the Water Festival today bring millions of people from the provinces to Phnom Penh for several days of celebrations. The King's Birthday (October 31) has been observed solemnly each year since the restoration of the monarchy in 1993, with the exception of 1997, when all concerned were distracted by combat between the royalist party and the ruling party. Finally, Independence Day (November 9) marks the end of French colonialism, and is celebrated with a ceremony at Independence Monument which is located, not coincidentally, at the intersection of Norodom Boulevard and Sihanouk Boulevard.

Since the fall of the Khmer Rouge regime, multiple international holidays have been observed, and these seem to have proliferated over the years. They include International Women's Day (March 8), International Labor Day (May 1), International Human Rights Day (December 10), and Paris Peace Accords Day (October 23). There are also several controversial holidays that are freighted with political baggage, including "Liberation Day" (January 7), and the "Day of Hate" (May 20). "Liberation Day" nominally marks the day that the Khmer Rouge were expelled from Phnom Penh in 1979; however, for many who are not partisans of the ruling party, this observance is acidly referred to as "Vietnamese Invasion Day." Similarly, the "Day of Hate" was instituted in 1983 as a means of promoting solidarity in the struggle against Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge; this particular holiday has been in the process of transition in recent years. It was suppressed at the demand of the royalists in the early years of the first post-UNTAC government, then revived after 1997 by the ruling party, and in the last few years has begun to be referred to as a "Day of Commemoration" or a "Day of Remembrance," out of consideration for national reconciliation.

Art

Those who are unfamiliar with Cambodia might be forgiven for thinking that the Cambodian arts consist primarily of the multitude of ancient Hindu and Buddhist carvings that decorate the monuments at Angkor. But in fact, Cambodia boasts a wide variety of artistic forms, traversing the performing arts, plastic and design arts, literature,

and architecture. Within each of these categories, there is a rich diversity of styles ranging from the traditional to the modern. Contemporary artistic forms in Cambodia include classical dance by the royal ballet, folk dances from the provinces, shadow puppet theater, modern theater, story-telling, music such as pin peat orchestra, rock and roll, rap, design arts like weaving and jewelry design, a profusion of painting styles in watercolor, oil and other media drawing on traditional and modern influences, with a vibrant school of impressionism, sculpture, and a wide range of literature styles in poetry and prose – all of these artistic endeavor and more are flowering in Cambodia.

In a very real sense, this flowering of artistic creativity also amounts to a resurrection, both in the traditional and modern arts, because virtually all art forms were driven to the edge of extinction by the Khmer Rouge drive to eliminate perceived foreign, bourgeois and monarchical influences from Cambodia. By some estimates, nine out of ten of Cambodia's artists perished under the Khmer Rouge. But perhaps no art form more uniquely identifies Cambodia than the royal ballet. The restoration of classical dance has helped to restore a sense of national unity and pride, distancing the Cambodian people from their recent years of turmoil, appealing to enduring values embedded in Cambodian culture. As Julie Mehta has written, "Cambodian classical dance is the single most lively connection the modern Khmer have with their glorious ancestors." [Mehta 2001]

Cambodian classical dance was once the exclusive preserve of the Cambodian king, an entertainment of the court which served to symbolize the mystical connection between the king and the divinities. During the colonial period, the French were taken with the royal dance company and made it available to French and colonial audiences. At independence, King Sihanouk took measures to re-appropriate the court dance troupe and eliminate what he regarded as foreign influences that had seeped in during the years of French dominance. With these changes and the climate of nationalistic ferment in the 1950s, Cambodia's classical dance evolved into a popular medium. As a symbol of the monarchy, however, it was virtually destroyed during the Khmer Rouge era, when nearly all of Cambodia's classical dancers were killed. In recent years, this art form has been undergoing a revival, and has now been harnessed as a means to bind the nation together again. With its spare style and elegant forms, classical dance transports the audience to another time and space, far from the turmoil of recent years.

The evocation of the glory of the Angkor Empire present in every performance of the royal ballet is the key to the way Cambodian classical dance contributes to regenerating a sense of cultural unity and nationhood. A standard in the classical dance repertoire is the *Reamker*, Cambodia's adaptation of the Indian classic, *Ramayana*. This tale is the story of Ream (named "Rama" in the Indian version), an incarnation of the Hindu god Vishnu, tracing his exploits and woe across his lifetime. At the center of the story is an epic battle involving legions of monkey-warriors and demons in a struggle to rescue Ream's kidnapped wife, Seda (or "Sita" in the Indian version). An indication of how intimately this legend is tied to Cambodia's identity as a nation can be found in the fact that many of the bas reliefs in Angkor Wat and other Angkor Empire-era temples depict scenes based on the *Ramayana*. In this respect, this story and its enactment in

classical dance provides a potentially potent symbolic rallying point for the shattered nation.

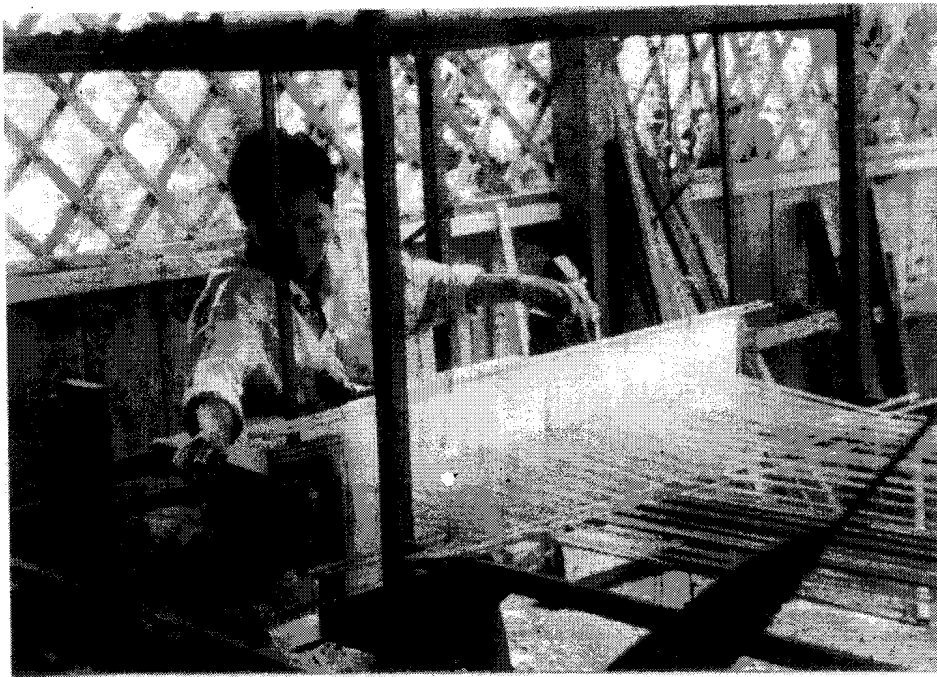


Classical dancers are cultivated from a tender age at the Dance School in Phnom Penh
(Photo from Craig Etcheson Archives, courtesy of Janet Gardner, The Gardner Group, Inc.)

Issues and Questions

1. A prime tenet of Buddhism is compassion, which promotes the corollary value of tolerance. Consequently, Cambodians tend to be remarkably tolerant of other religions, including not only Islam, but also Christianity, Hinduism, and many other faith traditions. In Cambodia one therefore finds a vast range of missionaries attempting to convert Buddhists – who seen by some as adherents to a “godless” religion – to another faith, including Mormons, Catholics, various Protestant sects, various Muslim sects, and many others. Interestingly, the growth of Christian churches in former Khmer Rouge zones has been particularly strong in recent years. What impact might the progressive proliferation

Association of Cambodia, only 16 are entirely Cambodian-owned; the majority of the textile factories that produce products for export are Chinese-owned, with the remainder owned by Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Europe and US. The largest market for Cambodian textile exports is the US, which buys approximately two-thirds of Cambodia's exports. Europe accounts for most of the other third. However, Cambodian textile the exports to the US have been made possible by virtue of the Multi-Fiber Agreement quota system, and under World Trade Organization rules, that quota system is scheduled to end on December 31, 2004. (Cambodia was admitted to the WTO in September 2003, along with Nepal becoming the first 'least developed countries' to join the organization.) There is a widespread expectation that with the elimination of the advantages conferred by the quota system, foreign factory owners are likely to move these textile and garment enterprises to other countries that offer comparable labor costs, and stronger infrastructures and legal regimes. Should this occur to any great extent, it will have a dramatic impact on Cambodia's economic performance.



In contrast to the modern factories that serve the export market, many textiles produced for Cambodia's domestic market are still made the old fashioned way.
(Photo by Craig Etcheson)

This would be an unfortunate development, indeed, because at present Cambodia is already the poorest country in Southeast Asia. As of 2003, 78% of its population lived on less than \$2 per day, and 45% were below the poverty line at less than \$1 per day. The bulk of these impoverished people are rural agricultural small-holders. Moreover, recent studies have shown that the practice of "land-grabbing" by rapacious units of the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces is increasing in many provinces, and as a result, more and more displaced rural residents are becoming landless and utterly destitute. This is a significant part of the reason why poverty rates in Cambodia continue to rise, despite the steady growth of GDP. In addition, the fact that some 60% of Cambodia's population is

under twenty years of age means that a huge demographic bulge is preparing to enter the workforce, and at present it is difficult to foresee how the economy can possibly create enough jobs to absorb this supply of labor. That is a formula for serious social unrest, and it looms in the immediate future.

The government's budget for 2003 was projected at slightly more than \$700 million. Approximately half of Cambodia's national budget is financed by foreign aid, with much of that aid focused on capital investment. Over the last decade, the international community has pumped billions of dollars into Cambodia's economy, fulfilling a commitment made in the Paris Peace Accords of 1991. How long this level of donor generosity can be sustained is a critical question for Cambodia's leaders. Given the limited appeal of the Cambodian economy to foreign direct investors, without this high level of charity, that economy would face dramatic problems. It is for these reasons that King Sihanouk has frequently lamented that his country has become a "beggar nation."

In standard analyses of Cambodia's national accounts, and in the data produced by international financial institutions on the performance of Cambodia's economy, a central aspect of the economic realities of Cambodia is typically neglected: there is reason to believe that a very significant proportion – perhaps a majority – of economic activity in Cambodia occurs "off the books." For example, most of Cambodia's civil servants earn a salary averaging \$20 per month, which is only a fraction of the amount required for a single person to survive in urban Cambodia. And yet, most of these civil servants own a home, an automobile or motorcycle, a cell phone and so on. How is this possible? The answer is that additional resources flow to each employee through a system of clan support. It works like this: even though primary and secondary education is nominally free, each teacher demands a small payment of 100-200 Riel (2.5-5 cents) from each student, each day. The teacher retains a small amount of this income, but most of it is handed over to the principal, who in turn retains a small amount and gives the balance to the superintendent, and so on, as the cash flows up the clan hierarchy to the top, ending up in the hands of, say, Hun Sun. This process occurs in each and every aspect of life in Cambodia, and the result is a very large cash flow. The substantial resources thus garnered are allocated by the clan leader to support his "extended family," thereby earning and retaining their loyalty.

The cash flow that is generated through this hierarchical system of payments is significantly augmented through the black market economy. Gambling, drug-smuggling, money laundering, human trafficking, illegal logging, the gem trade and other illicit activities produce huge revenue streams that are similarly allocated through the clan system. For example, one recent analysis of the human trafficking industry in Cambodia calculated that the cash flow from the sale of human beings and the associated prostitution industry generates upwards of \$250 million dollars annually. That revenue alone would amount to one-sixteenth of the nominal GDP, and none of it appears on national accounts. If we extrapolate the revenue streams from this single area of the black economy across the entire range of illicit economic activities in the country, the

conclusion is inescapable that standard economic analyses of the country do not describe totally the true nature of Cambodia's economy.

Issues and Questions

1. Demographers project that given current trends in fertility and mortality, Cambodia's population will nearly double in size by 2025, to some 22 million. Taking into account the declining availability of arable land in Cambodia, as well as the limited growth prospects for Cambodian industry, what impact is this development likely to have on the overall standard of living in the country in coming years?

2. Off-shore exploration of potential hydrocarbon deposits in the Gulf of Thailand by international oil companies has indicated that there may be very large, albeit as-yet unproven, deposits of natural gas and petroleum within the exclusive economic zone claimed by Cambodia. However, the most promising areas for hydrocarbon exploitation are the subject of territorial disputes with Thailand. Explore the implications of this situation for a) the development of Cambodia's domestic economy; b) Cambodia's relations with Thailand; and c) Cambodia's integration into the international economic system.

Internet Resources on the Economy

CIA statistics on the Cambodian economy:

<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/cb.html#Econ>

World Bank statistics on the Cambodian economy:

<http://devdata.worldbank.org/external/CPProfile.asp?SelectedCountry=KHM&CCODE=KHM&CNAME=Cambodia&PTYPE=CP>

International Monetary Fund information on Cambodia:

<http://www.imf.org/external/country/khm/index.htm>

A variety of economic data from the Cambodian Development Resources Institute:

<http://www.cdri.org.kh/>

A regional investment bank's view of the Cambodian economy:

<http://www.mekongcapital.com/html/cambodia.htm>

The German government's view of the Cambodian economy:

http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/www/en/laenderinfos/laender/laender_ausgabe_html?type_id=12&land_id=73

Global Witness reports on resources, conflict and corruption in the forest industry:

<http://www.globalwitness.org/projects/cambodia/>

GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

This section of the study guide provides an overview of Cambodia's system of government and politics. It will review the branches of the government – the executive, legislative and judiciary – and provide snapshots of the major political parties, as well as a brief insight into the functioning of the country's political processes.

Cambodia's government, as defined by the Constitution of 1993, is a multi-party liberal constitutional monarchy, with a monarch who "reigns but does not rule." The three branches of government – the executive, legislative and judicial – are co-equal and independent only in theory, as practice has not yet come fully into conformity with the constitutional design. The reality in Cambodia today is that the executive drives the process of governance, with the other two branches playing subsidiary roles.

Hun Sen and the Cambodian People's Party

For all intents and purposes, Cambodia's Executive branch is now, and for twenty years has been, a man named Hun Sen. Prime Minister Hun Sen has displayed a remarkable ability to out-manuever his opponents for more than two decades. Born in 1952, he has achieved extraordinary accomplishments for a peasant boy with a limited formal education. But he did attend a Phnom Penh high school, and learned to read and write. These skills served him well when he joined the Khmer Rouge guerillas in 1970. Respected by his largely illiterate peers as a relatively intellectual figure, he quickly assumed leadership positions. Hun Sen was soon selected by the Khmer Rouge for advanced leadership training. His bravery in combat further impressed his communist superiors. He was one to be watched, and groomed.

Over the course of the 1970-75 civil war, however, Hun Sen came to see the wanton brutality of the organization he had joined. As the Khmer Rouge regime took shape after 1975, he was ordered to lead his troops against domestic "enemies" of the regime. Hun Sen says that he evaded a command to attack an ethnic Cham village in Kroch Chhmar District of Kampong Cham Province around the end of September 1975 by claiming that he and 70% of his men were sick with malaria. He also began to see increasing numbers of his revolutionary comrades being called away by the Khmer Rouge for "meetings," never to be seen again. Before long it was his turn to be called away for a meeting, and it was then, in June 1977, that he made the fateful decision to flee the Khmer Rouge purges for Vietnam. Like the Khmer Rouge before, the Vietnamese also soon recognized his leadership potential, and began grooming him to lead forces back into Cambodia to fight and topple the Khmer Rouge regime.

After the Khmer Rouge regime was overthrown, the Vietnamese selected Hun Sen as Foreign Minister of the new regime. He performed well in that role, gaining stature among his colleagues, trust from the Vietnamese whose troops occupied the country, and experience with the international community, in general, and the United Nations, in particular. Within a few years he was appointed as Prime Minister, a post to which he has clung through the following tumultuous two decades. His survival in such a

lethal environment demonstrated Hun Sen's ferocious competitive drive. He is a natural, an instinctive political animal.

Despite his self-declared image as "Strongman," and the perception many of his opponents have of him as a dictatorial tyrant, Hun Sen does not rule entirely at his own whim. Most important policy decisions are first hashed out in the Standing Committee of the Cambodian People's Party, and then submitted to the Council of Ministers for consideration. In the ruling party's politburo, Hun Sen is not even first among equals, ranking second after Chairman Chea Sim. Reflecting its roots as a communist organization, the ruling party still operates according to a slightly fractured version of democratic centralism. Policy issues are debated, and a consensus is forged among the representatives of the various clans that carry weight in the upper reaches of the party. Hun Sen's occasional tendency to present his colleagues with *faites accompli* has given rise to many tensions over the years, and has earned him a significant degree of enmity among his rivals within the party. Thus it is not for nothing that he maintains a large, private security contingent.



Hun Sen with US Ambassador Charles Twining, May 1994
(Photo by Craig Etcheson)

And indeed, Hun Sen does have rivals within the Cambodian People's Party (CPP), despite the fact that the CPP endeavors to project an image of unity and solidarity. Analysts have long identified People's Party Chairman Chea Sim as the head of a clan that is considered a rival center of power to Hun Sen. Chea Sim has a long background in senior leadership positions, first as a Khmer Rouge district chief in Kampong Cham during the Democratic Kampuchea regime, then as Interior Minister and a key member of the Council of State during the crucial formative phases of the People's Republic of

Kampuchea, longtime President of the National Assembly, and more recently, President of the Senate during the Second Kingdom of Cambodia, and Chairman of the ruling party since 1991. Over the course of these thirty years in leadership posts, he has assembled a large following in the party and government who owe their positions to his patronage. In the last few years, one of Sim's protégées, Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sar Kheng, has himself developed a clan structure that appears to be breaking off from Chea Sim's and forming a center of power in his own right.

Norodom Ranariddh and FUNCINPEC

Prince Norodom Ranariddh leads the "National United Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful and Cooperative Cambodia," more commonly known as FUNCINPEC (for the French acronym of the official name), or simply the "royalist" party. The first mandate of the then-new Royal Government was given in the UN-sponsored election in 1993, and the royalist party took the largest number of seats in parliament in that election. The second mandate came out of the 1998 election, when the Cambodian People's Party claimed the largest block of seats in parliament, and joined in a coalition with the second-place royalists to form a governing majority. A minority of seats in 1998 went to the third-place opposition group, the Sam Rainsy Party.

In the July 2003 national election, the royalist party took a big hit. The CPP increased its seats in the Assembly from 64 in the outgoing parliament to 73 in the third mandate. The opposition party made strong gains, increasing its seat holdings by 60%, from 15 in the outgoing Assembly to 24 in the coming Assembly. All these gains were at the expense of the royalists, whose share of seats in the Assembly will decline from 43 to 26, a loss of nearly half their Members of Parliament. Moreover, in terms of the popular vote, the opposition party edged out the royalists with 22% of the votes compared to 21% for the royalists.

Why are the royalists losing seats? They have seen a steady decline in their popularity, from 58 seats in 1993's election, to 43 in the 1998, to 26 in the 2003. Part of the reason for this slide in public support is due to perceptions of corruption on the part of some senior royalist leaders. Partly it is due to perceptions that the royalist party is poorly led, and politically inept. And without question, partly it is due to the perception among some of their erstwhile supporters that the royalists sold out to the ruling People's Party during the 1998 mandate, functioning as a weak junior coalition partner in government, unable to articulate significant policy differences between itself and the ruling party. Another significant element may be regular statements from King Norodom Sihanouk, expressing contempt for his son, Norodom Ranariddh.

As has usually been the case over the centuries, Cambodia's royal families today engage in internecine competition for power, patronage, influence and money. Though Ranariddh has been the undisputed leader of the royalist organization since his father turned the reins over to him in the early 1980s, he is not without rivals. Chief among these are his uncle, Prince Norodom Sirivuth, whose intelligence and political acumen are widely regarded to be far superior to Ranariddh. Since the turn of the century, Sirivuth

has served as the Secretary-General of the royalist party. Members of the other principal royal family, the Sisowath royal line, also compete for position.

The Sam Rainsy Party

Sam Rainsy was born in 1949 to an old Cambodian political family; his father, Sam Sary, was a Deputy Prime Minister in the 1950s. There has long been speculation that Sihanouk's secret police did in Sary. Rainsy was raised and trained in France, and waited out much of the war years working as a financier in Paris, but maintained close connections with the royalist party. He returned to Cambodia to stand for a seat in the National Assembly during the 1993 election, and was subsequently appointed as Minister of Finance in the first coalition government. Rainsy received high marks from his international interlocutors for his honesty, integrity and effectiveness in that position. But his vocal denunciations of government corruption soon bought him trouble with his colleagues in the royalist party and the government at large. After publicly criticizing Ranariddh for corruption, Rainsy was expelled from the party, dismissed as Finance Minister and stripped of his seat in the National Assembly.

Rainsy promptly formed a new political vehicle, the Khmer Nation Party, and began to attract a following that responded to his appeals for good government, his bitter criticism of the People's Party, and his very harsh rhetorical line against Vietnam and Vietnamese. The CPP soon engineered the emergence of a rival political party that took the same name – the Khmer Nation Party – and in the subsequent lawsuit, Rainsy lost the right to use that name. At that point, he renamed his party after himself, as the Sam Rainsy Party, or SRP. Sharing leadership in the SRP is Rainsy's wife, Tioulong Samura, who, like Rainsy, also comes from an old Cambodian political family. It is often speculated that Samura is the real brains behind the SRP operation, and no one doubts her abilities. As a team, they transformed the face of Cambodian politics in a very brief period of time. The SRP appears to be on the verge of eclipsing the royalists as the second largest political party in Cambodia, but then, that assessment depends in part on what one thinks of Cambodian elections as a barometer of public opinion.

Elections in Cambodia since 1993

The idea of genuinely representative elections in Cambodia is a very new thing – so new, in fact, it may not have happened yet. The election staged by the United Nations in 1993 was widely regarded as having been free and fair, by everyone except the incumbent Cambodian People's Party, which denounced its loss to the royalists as fraudulent, and mounted a short-lived succession threat in eastern Cambodia. The pressure of CPP opposition to the vote led to a power-sharing arrangement with the royalists, an arrangement that contained the seeds of its own destruction. That coalition government eventually erupted into factional fighting in 1997.

The 1998 election took place amidst an environment of serious political turmoil, and as the first election to be managed by the Cambodians themselves, it exhibited more than a few flaws, and left many questions in its wake. Both the royalists and the

opposition party rejected the results of that election, taking to the streets in protests that eventually turned violent, provoking an even more violent government response. But the losers may have had a point about the fairness of that election. For example, a random survey of 100 likely voters was taken just days prior to the election among recently-defected former Khmer Rouge rebels in the foothills of Kampong Speu Province's Kamchay Mountains. Of the 100 persons questioned, not a single individual voiced any support for the CPP; most bitterly denounced the ruling party. And yet, when the votes were tallied, this particular constituency – Taing Syar Commune in Phnom Srouch District – came in with 55% of the vote for the CPP. Was it a silent majority speaking? Or was it manipulation of the vote? Perhaps we will never know, but that result was far from the only suspicion raised in the 1998 election.

Were the July 2003 elections “free and fair”? Most international and domestic observers have declared that July's election may have been the cleanest in the history of Cambodia, but others – such as the International Republican Institute – note that this still left room for a lot of shenanigans. One of the most significant manipulations of the process occurred prior to the actual vote, during voter registration, when there were repeated difficulties of various kinds in certain constituencies that are strongholds of the opposition and royalist parties. According to one estimate, up to half a million voters were unable to register in those constituencies. Even so, election day itself played out fairly cleanly. Moreover, the year-long political stand-off in the wake of the election proceeded without any outbreaks of mass violence. Although the absurdly long negotiation to form the Third Mandate of the Royal Government caused untold damage to the public interest, at the same time, it marks a new level of maturity in Cambodia's political dialogue. In that sense, the 2003 elections turned out to be a victory for the Cambodian people.

The Legislative Branch

Cambodia has a 122-member National Assembly that functions as little more than a rubber stamp for legislation that is introduced by the executive. As part of the political deal to resolve the political stand-off after the 1998 election, Cambodia also created a 61-member “upper chamber” called the Senate. The function of the Senate appears to be largely to give incomes and official titles to senior political functionaries who could not be accommodated within the confines of the National Assembly or Royal Government. Legislation must be approved by both houses of parliament, and it almost invariably is, typically with no amendments – although there is often sharp debate.

A great deal of time, manpower and money has been injected into the National Assembly by the international donor community over the last decade in an effort to increase the capacity and professionalism of that legislative body. Among other things, a large new National Assembly building is being constructed adjacent to the Buddhist Institute. But the fact that the contract for building this new palace of law went to a close relative of the chairman of the Assembly's construction committee says a lot about how things continue to be done at the Assembly.

The Judiciary

Like so much of the country, the Cambodian judiciary was annihilated during the Khmer Rouge regime. In the decade following the Khmer Rouge, little was done to rehabilitate a professional judiciary, with only a handful of lawyers having been trained at Kiev and in other Soviet law schools. Most judicial posts were staffed by political hacks who in many cases had not even graduated from high school, much less law school. The criminal code adopted by the People's Republic of Kampuchea was called "Decree Law Number 2," and was drafted by Sin Song, a communist functionary with no legal training. As Evan Gottesman has observed, Decree Law Number 2 "served to reveal the fundamental tautology that underlay the PRK's criminal justice system: anyone guilty of 'betraying the revolution' was 'Pol Pot,' and 'Pol Pot' was anyone 'betraying the revolution.'" [Gottesman 2003: 241]

The situation today is only marginally better, despite a decade of efforts to reform the judiciary. Cambodian jurists now draw randomly on multiple contradictory legal codes, including the 1956 French-derived penal code, People's Republic of Kampuchea-era decree law, hastily drafted State of Cambodia legal codes enacted in 1992, legal codes that were promulgated under the authority of UNTAC, and fragmentary legal instruments that have been promulgated since 1993. The result is legal anarchy. For example, in 1994, a newspaper published a headline that read, "Ranariddh is More Stupid than Hun Sen Three Times a Day." Second Prime Minister Hun Sen took offense, and filed a civil suit against the publisher for monetary damages under the State of Cambodia-era defamation law. When the case came to court, the judge promptly threw out Hun Sen's civil suit, and slapped the publisher with criminal charges using UNTAC's criminal defamation statute. The publisher was convicted, and sentenced to a hefty fine and a lengthy prison term, whereupon King Sihanouk exercised His royal prerogative to pardon the convict, a power granted to His Majesty under the 1993 Constitution. So here we had one case, using three separate legal codes.

The professionalism of the judiciary has been gradually improving, but has a long way to go. The ruling party has been reluctant to promote to the bench the several hundred young lawyers who have been graduated since 1993, but has been active in encouraging sitting judges to undertake remedial professional training. According to sources at the Council of Ministers, Cambodia currently has approximately 200 practicing judges. However, according to Ministry of Justice records, there are only 120 sitting judges in Cambodia. In addition, the country has about 55 prosecutors, of whom fewer than ten have attended law school; more than half of the prosecutors did not graduate from high school. Of the judges, the Council of Ministers asserts that approximately forty have either bachelors or masters degrees at law; Ministry of Justice records suggest that only fifteen Cambodian judges have law degrees. Whether the real number is closer to 15 or to 40, most of these law degrees are of Soviet vintage. Of the remaining roster of sitting judges, the overwhelming majority have no formal legal training whatsoever, beyond perhaps a few seminars and workshops over the last decade or so. More than half of Cambodia's judges did not even graduate from high school.

His Majesty the King

As noted earlier, King Norodom Sihanouk was restored to the throne of Cambodia in 1993. Under the constitution, Sihanouk is Head of State, but is a monarch who “reigns but does not rule.” Having survived six tumultuous decades at the center of Southeast Asian politics, Sihanouk is one of the most senior and experienced statesmen in the world today. It is worth recalling that when He came to power, the world’s dominant political leaders included Franklin Roosevelt, Joseph Stalin, Winston Churchill, Charles de Gaulle, and Mao Tse-tung. Those men are all long dead, and Sihanouk is Head of State. But the incredible trauma that Cambodia and her people have suffered during His years on the political scene will certainly color the epitaph that marks His grave. And in fact, that grave has already been dug, as it were. At the ancient imperial capital of Oudong, the construction of Sihanouk’s burial stupa was completed in 2002, along with a royal crematorium at the base of the Phnom from which the stupa rises. It is a magnificent monument – derided by wags as costing one billion bowls of rice – but it is a resting place befitting a God-King who stood astride Cambodia as no other has since the glory days of the Angkor Empire. The King’s wife, Queen Monique – who has a mixture of Khmer, Vietnamese, French, and Italian blood – is said to favor her only son, Prince Sihamoni, to succeed her husband on the throne. There has also been speculation that the Throne Council could select her either as Queen or as Regent to reign following King Sihanouk’s demise.



Their Royal Majesties, King Norodom Sihanouk and Queen Monique of Cambodia
(Photo courtesy of the Royal Palace, Phnom Penh)

Issues and Questions

1. October 2004 marks the 82nd birthday of King Norodom Sihanouk. As His health has deteriorated in recent years, the King has expressed increasing worries about the future of Cambodia's monarchy. Royal succession is controlled by the Throne Council, and that body is dominated by the ruling Cambodian People's Party. Some in the ruling party believe that the death of Sihanouk would provide a golden opportunity to destroy the troublesome royalist party, by abolishing the monarchy and declaring a republic. Others in the ruling party believe that it would be wise to maintain the monarchy, in order to split the votes of those who oppose continued ruling party control between the royalists and the Sam Rainsy Party. Which course would you choose upon Sihanouk's death?

2. The Cambodian People's Party has dominated Cambodia's political scene since 1979. This extended tenure has the advantages of providing stability and cadre with long experience, but also has all the disadvantages that flow from Lord Acton's dictum. CPP power is deeply entrenched. After all, despite 20,000 peacekeeping troops and an international mandate for a UN-controlled poll, the CPP lost the 1993 election but still managed to retain power. Given the CPP's pervasive political control, even if it were possible for the royalists or the opposition to seize the organs of the state, would it be desirable? Could either of these parties – or perhaps more to the point – would either of these parties be willing and able to rule without having to resort to extreme repression in order to overcome the ubiquitous tendrils of the CPP's political control?

Internet Resources on Government and Politics

Website of the ruling Cambodian People's Party:

<http://www.camnet.com.kh/cpp/>

Website of the royalist FUNCINPEC party:

<http://www.funcinpec.org/>

Website of the opposition Sam Rainsy Party:

<http://www.samrainsyparty.org/>

The Cambodian government's primary website (English version):

<http://www.cambodia.gov.kh/unisql1/egov/english/home.view.html>

Links to a range of political information about Cambodia:

<http://www.politicalresources.net/cambodia.htm>

Reports on Cambodia from the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs:

<http://www.ndi.org/worldwide/asia/cambodia/cambodia.asp>

Reports on Cambodia from the International Republican Institute:
www.iri.org/countries.asp?id=8392062734

FOREIGN POLICY AND DEFENSE

This section of the study guide will highlight some issues of concern to Cambodia's foreign affairs and defense. Most of Cambodia's principal foreign affairs issues were touched upon under the heading of History, but here we will consider some of those matters in a bit more depth, and introduce a few additional current foreign affairs issues. This final narrative section of the study guide also provides a brief overview of Cambodia's military posture and defense situation.

Foreign Policy Issues

There are several foreign policy issues that warrant additional attention in this study guide, including terrorism, the Khmer Rouge Tribunal, and Cambodia's role in the regional balance of power. There is also one issue in US-Cambodia bilateral relations that warrants a brief discussion – the deportation of alien residents from the United States to Cambodia – because it is likely to be a source of mutual grief for years to come.

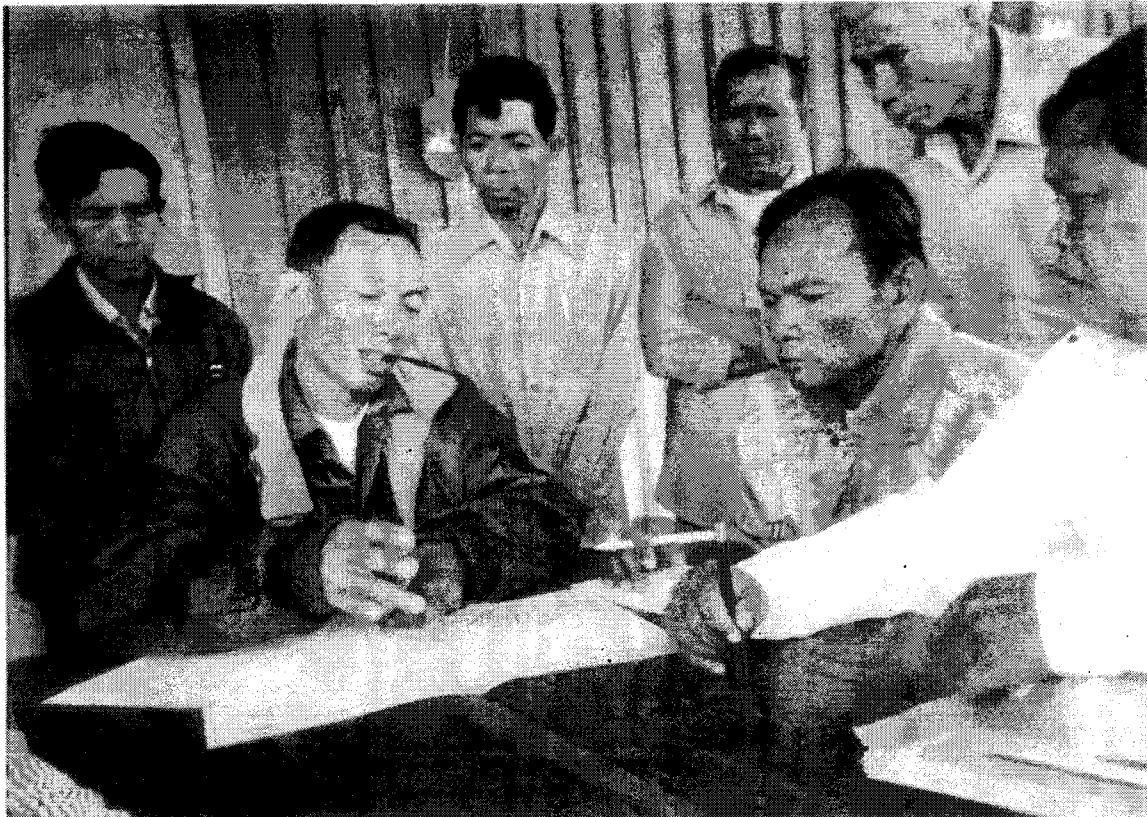
Terrorism

Within days after the September 11 attack on the World Trade Center, Prime Minister Hun Sen wrote to President Bush offering his unqualified assistance in the fight against terrorism. He has followed up on that commitment in several concrete ways, including using his tenure as chair of ASEAN in 2003 to urge his fellow Southeast Asian leaders to cooperate with the US in the war on terrorism. At home, Hun Sen initiated an intense investigation of Cambodia's Islamic religious schools, resulting in the arrest of three alleged operatives of the al-Qaeda affiliated organization Jemaah Islamiya, two Thai nationals and an Egyptian, at two Cham schools. During the same crackdown, fifty other Islamic teachers from Sudan, Yemen, Nigeria, Egypt, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia were expelled from Cambodia, and the schools where they had been teaching were shuttered. More recently, after reports that shoulder-fired anti-aircraft weapons had been smuggled from Cambodia to Thailand by militants, the government agreed to cooperate with the United States in destroying Cambodia's entire stock of anti-aircraft missiles. Additional cooperative activities such as intelligence sharing are also taking place. The close cooperation with Cambodia in the war on terrorism has irked some in the US Congress such as Senator Mitch McConnell, who has been known to suggest that Prime Minister Hun Sen is himself a terrorist.

The Khmer Rouge Tribunal

No single Cambodian issue has engaged more sustained and intense attention from the international community since 1997 than question of a Khmer Rouge Tribunal. At the opening session of the Paris Peace talks in 1989, Prime Minister Hun Sen called on the international community to prosecute the leadership of the Khmer Rouge for genocide and other crimes against humanity, and he regularly repeated this rhetoric in subsequent years. In June 1997, the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Human Rights in Cambodia, Ambassador Thomas Hammarberg, persuaded Hun Sen

and his Co-Prime Minister Norodom Ranariddh to write to Secretary-General Kofi Annan, formally requesting UN assistance to establish such a tribunal. Annan responded by appointing a three-member Group of Experts to study the issue, and in January 1999, they produced a report recommending that the UN clone the International Criminal Tribunals for Yugoslavia and Rwanda, adding a new chamber for Cambodia. However, by this time, Khmer Rouge supreme leader Pol Pot had died, and the remaining senior Khmer Rouge political leadership had surrendered to the Cambodian government. Consequently, Hun Sen rejected the recommendations of the UN Group of Experts.



Former Khmer Rouge officials study a plan for development of an eco-tourism nature preserve in a remote region of Banteay Meanchey Province during December 1999.

(Photo by Craig Etcheson)

But the momentum of the tribunal idea inside the UN bureaucracy had gained a head of steam, and the Secretariat was not prepared to take no for an answer. Moreover, spurred by the 1994 Cambodian Genocide Justice Act, US Ambassador at Large for War Crimes David Scheffer explored numerous potential avenues for bringing the surviving Khmer Rouge leadership to justice. With these elements as the principal motive force, there ensued a torturous and twisting five year long process of negotiations which ultimately yielded two key documents, Cambodia's 2001 "Law on the Establishment of Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia for the Prosecution of Crimes Committed During the Period of Democratic Kampuchea," and the 2003 "Agreement

Between the United Nations and the Royal Government of Cambodia Concerning the Prosecution under Cambodian Law of Crimes Committed During the Period of Democratic Kampuchea.” These documents specify the modalities for international cooperation with Cambodia in a mixed national-international criminal tribunal that will judge a handful of Khmer Rouge leaders on charges of war crimes, genocide, other crimes against humanity, and violations of other Cambodian and international laws.

The UN-Cambodia agreement was adopted by the UN General Assembly in May 2003. However, the prolonged political stalemate following the July 2003 Cambodian elections prevented consideration of the agreement by Cambodia’s National Assembly, at least through mid-July 2004. The political stalemate did not, however, prevent the UN and the Cambodian government from proceeding with technical preparations, and the UN projects that the Khmer Rouge Tribunal could be established within six months of parliamentary ratification by the National Assembly.

If and when it is established, the tribunal will be composed of two chambers, a trial chamber with three Cambodian judges and two international judges, and an appeals chamber with four Cambodian judges and three international judges. Decisions will be taken by a “supermajority” principle, in which a majority plus at least one international judge will be required to agree in order for the court to hand down a judgment. Cambodian and international co-investigating magistrates and co-prosecutors are to work together to prepare indictments and prosecute those “senior leaders of Democratic Kampuchea and those who were most responsible” for the crimes of the Khmer Rouge regime. The court will be seated in Phnom Penh, and is to be financed primarily by voluntary contributions to a UN Trust Fund.

Polling Data on Cambodian Public Attitudes toward Khmer Rouge Tribunal (KRT)

Source	Date	N	Sample	Question	Yes
KJA	Feb 95	794	5 provinces	Pol Pot trial?	79%
DC-Cam	May 97	22	political elite	KRT?	85%
IFFASSORC	Jan 99	1503	Urban/rural	KRT/leaders?	81%
McGrew	Dec 99	48	urban elite	KRT?	87%
Cam Daily	Jan 00	24	rural	KRT/leaders?	100%
CSD	Jan 00	632	urban	KRT good?	82%
DC-Cam	Jun 02	873	Urban/rural	KRT?	78%
IRI	Feb 04	1200	Urban/rural	KRT good?	84%

Public opinion data indicates that the Cambodian people are strongly in favor of a Khmer Rouge Tribunal, with more than four-fifths of respondents showing support for

the convening of a tribunal. The data suggest that this support has been consistent over time for the last decade, and consistent across varying cohorts of the population. Urban, rural, elite, and mass respondents in all sections of the country, all appear to want a Khmer Rouge trial to be established, and they have wanted it for quite some time. This is the case despite the fact that the Cambodian public is all too familiar with the shortcomings of the Cambodian justice system. Cambodian politicians seem to be keenly aware of this sentiment, because they regularly and loudly insist that this must be done, and will be done soon. Yet, a variety of factors have thus far prevented the establishment of the tribunal.

The plan for the Khmer Rouge tribunal has been highly controversial both among the Cambodian intelligentsia and internationally because, as noted in the section on Government and Politics, the Cambodian judiciary has a reputation for corruption, weak technical capacity, and a habit of answering to the executive, particularly in sensitive cases with political implications. Critics thus argue that the plan for the tribunal gives too much control to the Cambodian government, and that the deliberations of the court are liable to lack an adequate degree of judicial independence and be contaminated by political interference from Cambodia's executive. Human rights groups such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have been harshly critical of the plan, but a 27-member "Group of Interested States" has continued to promote the process and assist the UN and the Cambodian government in coming to terms on the issue. During the Clinton Administration, the United States was the primary driving force behind the Khmer Rouge Tribunal, while since the advent of the Bush Administration, the process has been driven primarily by France and Japan, with the US playing a subsidiary role.

The proposed Khmer Rouge Tribunal would constitute a significant precedent in international jurisprudence. Unlike any internationalized criminal tribunal devised to date, the Khmer Rouge Tribunal will give an unprecedented degree of influence to nationals of the country where the violations were committed. Some justice advocates worry that this precedent will create future opportunities for countries who might otherwise be subject to the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court (ICC) – which is a purely international body, and presumably less vulnerable to the intense political pressures that are always involved with war crimes prosecutions – to reject the jurisdiction of the ICC and demand the "Cambodia model," thus retaining significant domestic control over any judicial proceedings.

Proponents of the Khmer Rouge Tribunal argue that this precedent might not be such a bad thing. The Bush Administration's Ambassador for War Crimes, Pierre Prosper, has stated that it is US policy to seek the prosecution of war criminals in a domestic, national context whenever that appears to be feasible. For victims of war crimes, genocide, and other crimes against humanity, it is likely to be much more satisfying to see those who persecuted them being prosecuted locally, rather than in far away places like The Hague, where judicial proceedings are conducted in unfamiliar foreign languages, and where – not incidentally from the perspective of the donor community – the cost of justice is exceptionally high.

This practice conforms to the principle of "complementarity," which is embodied in Article 17 of the Rome Statute of the ICC. This principle holds that war crimes prosecutions should in the first instance be undertaken in the country where the violations occurred, unless the government in question is either unable or unwilling to do so. It remains to be seen if the Cambodian government is in fact willing and able to hold these trials. But should the Khmer Rouge Tribunal eventually be convened as it has been envisioned, this new precedent will become firmly established in international jurisprudence. More importantly, perhaps, twenty-five years after they were subjected to crimes against humanity on an unimaginable scale, the people of Cambodia may finally see a measure of justice meted out against the architects of the Cambodian genocide.

The Regional Balance of Power

As a tiny country with a pitifully weak state apparatus, Cambodia faces enormous challenges in its foreign relations with its two much stronger neighbors, Vietnam and Thailand, as well as with the two global powers that have the most abiding interest in the region, China and the United States. All four of these countries share long and complicated histories with Cambodia, including having been directly involved in armed conflict in Cambodia as recently as the early 1990s. Moreover, all four were guarantors of the Paris Accords of 1991, and thus have a shared and continuing responsibility to ensure the peace in Cambodia.

It was noted at some length in previous sections of the study guide that Cambodia has been whip-sawed between Thailand and Vietnam for centuries. Vietnam essentially created the current ruling dynasty in Cambodia, and that ruling party continues to nurture close relations with the Vietnamese. Thus there are many channels, both formal and informal, through which the Cambodian and Vietnamese governments can discuss issues of mutual concern. Vietnam's interests in Cambodia today are far more complex than the primarily security-related concerns that predominated two decades ago. Vietnam is the second largest investor in Cambodia's economy, and cross-border trade is substantial, including a great deal of exchange that takes place beyond regular trade channels. It can thus be said that the complex web of ties with Vietnam probably constitute Cambodia's single most important bilateral relationship. But it could not be Cambodia's only important regional relationship.

Historically, it has been unhealthy for Cambodian rulers to hew too closely to one or the other side of the Thai-Vietnam rivalry. The Cambodian government has been responding to this historical imperative for more than a decade, a transition in many ways made easier by the integration of first the royalist and republican factions into the national community, and more recently the Khmer Rouge. All three of those former adversaries with the central government had close relations with Thailand, and those connections are now being exploited to the benefit of the country as a whole. For its part, too, Thailand has dramatically accelerated its courting of the Cambodian government in the years since the final collapse of the Khmer Rouge, particularly under the leadership of Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra. This has yielded new cooperation across a broad

spectrum of issues, including trade, border crossings, security and terrorism, cultural exchange and other areas.

Yet, the process of balancing a stronger neighbor sometimes requires that clear signals be sent. Since 1993, Thailand had come to dominate several key sectors of the Cambodian economy, including pharmaceuticals, tourism, hotels, construction materials, telecommunications, and airlines. Cambodia's ruling party evidently decided by late 2002 that the imperatives of economic sovereignty dictated that this imbalance must be redressed. On January 29, 2003, the government orchestrated an anti-Thai riot in Phnom Penh, striking a decisive blow against precisely these Thai economic interests. Since then, negotiations have been in train that will eventuate in new business arrangements. Henceforth, most Thai investments in Cambodia will include partnerships with key members of the Cambodia's ruling party.

As the principal patron of the Khmer Rouge, the People's Republic of China (PRC) was an avowed enemy of the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK), and was bitterly denounced by PRK state propaganda organs. In the years immediately following the overthrow of the Khmer Rouge regime, the PRK engaged in periodic bouts of repression against Cambodia's Sino-Khmer community, spurred by fears of a fifth column controlled from Beijing. But the ruling party soon realized that it was not capable of suppressing the energy and discipline of the Cambodia's Chinese business community, and moreover, that it was unwise to do so, in view of the extent to which that community was driving the economic recovery. So, beginning in the mid-to-late 1980's, the CPP instead sought to harness Sino-Khmer entrepreneurial instincts, a policy that has matured in subsequent years. Along with that change of domestic policy, Cambodia also began to court the PRC, a policy initiative that has been vigorously reciprocated. This policy has advanced rapidly since the UN peace process.

The growth of Chinese influence in Cambodia has been substantial at the cultural, political and economic levels. The development of party-to-party and state-to-state relations between Cambodia and the PRC since the early 1990's has dovetailed with the growing influence of the "overseas Chinese" in Cambodia to create a new dynamic. According to figures from the Cambodian Development Council, in 2002 China became Cambodia's third largest investor (\$23 million), trailing South Korea (\$72.6 million) and Vietnam (\$24.2 million) out total FY02 foreign direct investment of \$139 million. The attention lavished on Cambodia by Chinese leaders has been extraordinary, with repeated visits in recent years by the PRC President, Prime Minister, and a seemingly endless parade of senior ministers bearing gifts. A particularly notable recent high-level expression of this interest came in November 2002, when Premier Zhu Rongji visited Phnom Penh and forgave the state debts accrued by the Khmer Rouge, reportedly amounting to as much as \$2 billion.

The reasons for China's intense interest in Cambodia span the spectrum of economic, political and security interests. Particularly important motivations for Chinese foreign policy behavior in Cambodia include driving a strategic wedge into ASEAN, and challenging US, Indian, Japanese and other great power influence in the region at large.

Establishing beachheads from which to exploit the region's natural resources and enhance trade and investment opportunities is another factor. And another consideration is to ensure that any Khmer Rouge Tribunal inflicts minimum damage on the PRC's interests.

In contrast, US attention to Cambodia has been relatively muted. US foreign assistance to Cambodia is been limited by Congressional restrictions, and has been hovering around \$30-40 million annually for the last decade or so. Most of this assistance is distributed to non-governmental organizations in Cambodia, with direct assistance to the government restricted to a few humanitarian areas such as mine clearance, AIDS, and maternal health care. The sole high-profile visit by a senior US official in many years was the brief appearance of Secretary of State Colin Powell in Phnom Penh during the June 2003 ASEAN Regional Forum. Nonetheless, the Cambodian government has assiduously courted the attentions of the US government, mindful of the potency of the "sole superpower" in regional and global affairs. Rather than allow China's influence to become too dominant, Hun Sen has worked hard to maintain and improve his relations with the US as well.

Hun Sen's management of both his regional and global foreign policy challenges illustrates an important technique of weak power diplomacy. Hun Sen has a tendency to tell everyone what they want to hear, and then he wobbles a bit to keep everyone off-balance and continuing to beat a path to his door with additional inducements. It is a technique he learned from his greatest teacher, Norodom Sihanouk. To Chinese audiences, Hun Sen repeats the same mantra: Cambodia is following the "Two Victories" policy, which is to forget the past and concentrate only on the future – forgetting the past being the key phrase the Chinese want to hear, and that Cambodia adheres resolutely to the "One China Policy." To American audiences, Hun Sen demands that a Khmer Rouge tribunal be convened before the end of this year – no matter what year one might be talking about – arguing that the Cambodian people deserve justice for the crimes of the Khmer Rouge regime, and that regional leaders should cooperate with the US in the war on terrorism, just as Cambodia has. Hun Sen is a superb tactician, and is reputed to be a master-level chess player. It shows in the way he manages his foreign policy challenges.

Deportation of Alien Residents

In March 2002 under the authority of the 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act, the US concluded a Memorandum of Understanding with the Cambodian government for the deportation of US alien residents of Cambodian extraction who have been convicted of an "aggravated felony." As of June 2004, 67 such individuals had been deported to Cambodia in nine transfers (one of whom subsequently died of natural causes). The pool of alien residents who have been deemed eligible for deportation to Cambodia is slightly more than 1,400. Virtually all of the affected individuals came to the US as legal refugees, and most of them arrived in the US as very young children. However, they subsequently failed to obtain US citizenship, rendering them eligible for deportation. Hence, most of these individuals have been raised as Americans. Many of them have no memories of Cambodia, and do not speak or write the

Khmer language. Some of them, born in Thai refugee camps during the 1970s and 1980s, have never set foot on Cambodian soil.

In practice, an "aggravated felony" can include such offenses as shoplifting, driving while intoxicated, and possession of personal-use quantities of marijuana. One deportee became an aggravated felon when, after having been convicted of relieving himself against a wall in public, that offense was subsequently reclassified as a "sex crime." He had been gainfully employed in a steady job for nearly a decade, owned a home, and was married with four children. Perhaps understandably, his wife refused to relocate to Cambodia with the children, and sued for divorce. Thus it is the case that some of the deportees do not conform to one's typical image of "hardened criminals."

Nonetheless, a significant proportion of those scheduled for deportation, and some of those already deported, have been convicted of serious crimes such as multiple homicide, many of which were committed in connection with membership in violent Southern California street gangs. In a similar situation under the 1996 legislation, hundreds of members of Los Angeles' "El Mara" street gang have been deported to Central America, where the deportees have reconstituted the gang as a transnational criminal enterprise. In Honduras, authorities have reacted harshly to criminal activity by El Mara members; nearly two hundred of them have been killed in various prison incidents. There are concerns that a similar dynamic might develop in Cambodia, and there are signs that this could occur. While some of the deportees have adapted well and are integrating themselves into Cambodian society as productive citizens, others have already had multiple encounters with Cambodian law enforcement authorities, and may eventually be tempted to band together for self-protection against existing Cambodian street gangs, or simply because that is all they know how to do.

In an attempt to ease the entry of the deportees into Cambodian society, an NGO called the Returnee Assistance Project ("RAP") was founded in 2002 by an American minister, Bill Herod. RAP provides orientation, language literacy classes, employment counseling, housing assistance, substance abuse treatment and other services to the deportees. As of June 2004, RAP was operating two half-way houses for the deportees, and was preparing to open a third in anticipation of an increase in the rate of deportations. A few of the returnees require full-time care due to physical or mental health problems, or advanced age. Since mid-2003, the US Department of State has been the largest single source of funding for RAP. US Foreign Service Officers who are posted to Phnom Penh are likely to encounter various aspects of the deportee situation for years to come.

Defense

The Royal Cambodian Armed Forces (RCAF) is organized into the Army, Navy, and Air Force. Annual budgeted military expenditures are currently running slightly below US\$100 million, which is about 3% of gross domestic product. Beyond that, it is difficult to be very precise about Cambodia's military posture and order of battle.

Estimates of the size of Cambodia's Army, for example, range from 20,000 to 140,000. It is likely that total military manpower is much closer to the lower end of this range, but it is difficult to know. We do know, however, that more than 400 officers hold the rank of general. The reason for the wide variance in manpower estimates is corruption; "ghost soldiers" permit commanders to pocket pay, and to sign up non-existent conscripts for the World Bank's well-intended but chronically troubled demobilization program. Human rights campaigner Brad Adams has argued,

Collecting the salaries of ghosts is only part of the incentive for inflating the numbers. Soldiers are issued with a wide variety of supplies each year, from rice and shoes to shirts and underwear - and guns. But ghost soldiers don't eat and don't wear clothes. Senior military and government officials profit gloriously from this con. Companies close to senior military and political figures sell these goods to the army at inflated prices. As one of Cambodia's most powerful businessmen says, "For instance, a shirt costs \$8 but the army pays \$21. Shoes cost \$2-\$3 but they pay \$8-\$10. By law they are supposed to bid but they rarely do it." [*Phnom Penh Post*, November 23, 2001]

The level of readiness of the army, whatever size it may actually be, is generally abysmal. Training resources are highly limited. As a result, many officers employ those under their command in private extracurricular revenue-generating activities, such as illegal logging and other aspects of the illicit economy. These income-generating activities are in fact necessary for the military, as the average pay for those soldiers who do actually exist is \$20 per month plus an allowance of 20 kilograms (44 pounds) of rice, which is not nearly enough to support the soldier alone, much less his family.

Consulting standard open-source military references such as SIPRI, IISS, and CSIS will indicate that the RCAF has a modest stock of hardware. One source suggests that Cambodia has 24 combat aircraft, but it is best to take such numbers with a grain of salt. For example, twenty of these erstwhile combat aircraft are MIG-21 fighter-bombers, none of which have been airworthy during the last decade. Four of the MIGs were sent to Israel some years ago for retrofitting, but the Royal Government has not been able to pay the bill, and so the aircraft remain in Israel. Even if one of the MIGs were to suddenly become airworthy, there would be no pilot to fly it, as the Russian- and Vietnamese-trained pilots have long since abandoned the military for more lucrative commercial work. As for the Army's heavy weaponry, a similar discounting should be made. The RCAF claims a force of 150 main battle tanks and 400 pieces of towed artillery, but that is most likely a gross exaggeration. However, it is true that a higher proportion of the Army's assets are likely to be functional at any given time than is the case with the Air Force.

An anecdote regarding Cambodia's Air Force will serve to illuminate RCAF air doctrine, and provides an indication of the overall capability of the RCAF. In April 1994, RCAF Air Force Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Norodom Vatvani was ordered to launch air attacks against civilian gem miners in the Khmer Rouge zone near Pailin. At that time, his entire functional fixed-wing fleet consisted of two old AN-24 cargo aircraft, and so he

pressed these platforms into service for the combat mission. Fearful of flying low enough to come under anti-aircraft fire in the Khmer Rouge zone, the pilots first attempted the attack by hurling satchel charges out of the aircraft from altitude, but this proved ineffective. Finally, they resorted to dropping mortar bombs from the rear of the aircraft, though it is not clear if they were able to actually inflict any casualties on the hapless gem miners laboring in pits far below.

The RCAF Navy does not fare much better than the Army and the Air Force. Cambodia has no major surface combatants, no submarines, and no naval aircraft. They have fewer than half-a-dozen coastal and river patrol craft, and some 1,500 marines. The Navy recently acquired a pair of twin Evinrude outboard-powered launches, which are proudly deployed each year at Phnom Penh's Water Festival. Along banks of the Tonle Sap and Mekong Rivers near Phnom Penh, one can observe several derelict US vessels rotting at anchor, and these serve to house much of Cambodia's marine force.

In view of the general lack of capability of the RCAF, Cambodia is fortunate in that at present it faces no strategic threats. It used to be said of Thailand that 'the business of the Thai military is business.' The Cambodian military seems to be copying that page from the Thai playbook. But Cambodia's military also seems to follow the ancient Hindu warrant for provincial political potentates, which is to "consume" the land and the people under their control. In view of the military's alleged involvement in such activities as human trafficking, illegal logging, and "land-grabbing," they evidently take that injunction quite literally. In this respect, the Cambodian military does not so much defend the Cambodian people from threats, but rather the corrupt, bloated, top-heavy and ineffective Cambodian military is in fact itself one of the principal threats facing the Cambodian people today.

Issues and Questions

1. The proposed Khmer Rouge Tribunal is structured in such a way as to ensure that the Cambodian government can exercise effective control over the proceedings, despite the participation of international jurists in the court. For example, Dith Munty, who is a member of the CPP Politburo, is slated to preside over the tribunal's appeals chamber. Judicial independence is the *sine qua non* of "international standards of justice," but who is to say what constitutes "independence" in the context of a given country's judicial system? The UN General Assembly, for one, overwhelmingly affirmed its confidence in Cambodia's ability to conduct this legal procedure. In this light, evaluate the consequences of the principle of "complementarity" for the future of international justice in the wake of a Khmer Rouge Tribunal.

2. The People's Republic of China has provided generous levels of aid to the Royal Government of Cambodia over the last decade. Much of this aid has been in the form of security assistance, including such things as land mine removal, military procurement, military training, military re-organization, and so on. In contrast, the US security-related presence in Cambodia has been largely limited to a military attaché at the embassy, and

periodic missions by the Joint Task Force/Full Accounting, working on the repatriation of the remains of US service members lost during the war. Is it wise for the United States to take such a casual approach toward Chinese cultivation of favor among Cambodia's armed forces, or is it irrelevant due to Cambodia's debatable strategic significance?

Internet Resources on Foreign Policy and Defense

The Report of the UN Experts on a Khmer Rouge Tribunal:

<http://www.khmerinstitute.org/docs/UNKRreport.htm>

Law on the Establishment of Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia:

<http://www.cambodia.gov.kh/krt/english/index.htm>

Data from SIPRI on Cambodian military expenditures (registration required):

http://web.sipri.org/contents/milap/milex/mex_database1.html

CHRONOLOGICAL TIMELINE

700-800 AD	Java dominates the region.
806 AD	Jayavarman II casts off Javanese domination and founds Angkor Empire
895	Yasovarman I founds the new capital at Angkor.
10 th c.	Buddhism is introduced; Angkor Thom is built.
11 th c.	Angkor Thom ("Great City") is embellished.
12th c.	Angkor Wat ("Temple City") is built by Suryavarman II; Kingdom of Champa (present day Cochinchina or Central Highlands of former South Vietnam) taken by Angkor in series of wars.
1178 AD	Vengeful Chams sack Angkor.
1181	Jayavarman VII expells Chams; embellishes Angkor Thom.
1220	Khmers evacuate Champa on death of Jayavarman VII.
1282	Jayavarman VIII defeats Mongol invasion.
1394	Siamese capture Angkor; 100-year war follows.
1431	Capital is moved to Longvek, then to Oudong; Thai annex northern regions.
1626	Vietnamese annex Cochinchina.
1834	On death of Ang Chan, Vietnamese seize control of Kingdom of Angkor.
1840-1846	Territory of Angkor Empire is battlefield for Vietnamese-Thai war.
1848	Ang Duong crowned King of Angkor by joint Vietnamese-Siamese agreement; he agrees to pay tribute to both.
1863	New monarch, King Norodom, accepts a French protectorate; "Cambodge" (Cambodia) emerges.
1884-1886	French governor provokes peasant uprisings.
1907	King Sisowath of Cambodia recovers with French help the provinces of Battambang, Siem Riep, and Sisophon, previously annexed by Thai.
3 Feb 1930	In Hong Kong, Ho Chi Minh founds the Indochinese Communist Party (ICP).
27 July 1931	Khieu Samphan is born in Cambodia.
25 Apr 1941	Norodom Sihanouk, age eighteen, crowned king by French.
12 Mar 1945	Under Japanese occupation, Sihanouk proclaims independence from France.
May 1945	Son Ngoc Thanh returns from refuge in Japan.
Aug 1945	Son Ngoc Thanh becomes prime minister.
Oct 1945	British, Indian, and Free French forces occupy Cambodia; Son Ngoc Thanh arrested, later deported; "Cambodian Liberation Front" formed.
11 Nov 1945	ICP dissolves itself.
8 Nov 1949	French grant limited independence to Cambodia with Franco-Cambodian Treaty; Cambodia becomes an Associate State in the French Union.
Feb 1951	Vietnamese communists reorganize into Lao Dong or Worker's Party.
3 Mar 1951	Lao Dong and CLF ally against French colonialism.
30 Sep 1951	Vietnamese reorganize remnants of ICP into three national parties, forming and dominating the Khmer People's Revolutionary Party (KPRP).
Mid-1953	King Norodom Sihanouk launches "royal crusade for independence" from France.

- 9 Nov 1953 French grant complete independence to Cambodia.
- 7 May 1954 French garrison at Dien Bien Phu, Vietnam, falls to Viet Minh; next day Geneva Conference convenes.
- 21 Jul 1954 Geneva ends, orders free elections for Cambodia and Vietnam, plus a pullout of Viet Minh forces in Cambodia; much KPRP retreats to Hanoi; a few KPRP cadres stay to fight, some to form Pracheachon or "People's Party" to contest elections.
- 8 Sept 1954 SEATO Treaty promulgated in Manila, Philippines.
- Dec 1954 Sihanouk declares neutralism after meeting India's Nehru.
- 31 Dec 1954 United States announces aid to Cambodia, South Vietnam, and Laos, effective January 1, 1955, to combat communism.
- 2 Mar 1955 Sihanouk abdicates to father (Norodom Suramarit) and forms Sangkum Reastr Niyum; he will control this central political institution until 1970.
- Apr 1955 Sihanouk meets with Vietnamese, Laotian, and Chinese communists at Bandung Conference of Nonaligned Nations.
- May 1955 Sihanouk signs agreement to admit US Military Assistance Advisory Group to assess Cambodian military hardware needs.
- 11 Sep 1955 National election returns 83% for Sihanouk's Sangkum, 13% for Democratic Party, and 3% for Pracheachon Party.
- 13 Feb 1956 Sihanouk to Peking, signs Sino-Cambodian Friendship Treaty.
- Feb 1956 Sihanouk refuses over-flight privileges to SEATO for joint military exercises.
- 22 June 1956 People's Republic of China (PRC) gives \$22.3 million to Cambodia, first PRC aid ever to a noncommunist state.
- Spring 1956 Sihanouk rejects SEATO membership, Thailand and South Vietnam impose economic blockade; CIA begins funding anti-Sihanouk rightist group, Khmer Serei, led by Son Ngoc Thanh; Thailand occupies northern frontier of Cambodia.
- June 1958 South Vietnamese army occupies parts of Stung Treng province.
- 13 July 1958 Sihanouk extends diplomatic recognition to PRC.
- Jan 1959 Sihanouk alleges "Bangkok Plot" against him.
- 21 Feb 1959 Cambodian General Dap Chhuon secessionist attempt with Thai, South Vietnamese, Laotian, and U.S. involvement is discovered and crushed by Sihanouk.
- 31 Aug 1959 Assassination attempt on King, Queen, and Prince.
- 3 Apr 1960 King Suramarit dies, succession crisis follows.
- 14 June 1960 National Assembly revises Constitution, elects Norodom Sihanouk head of state.
- 20 June 1960 Prince Norodom Sihanouk becomes head of state.
- 30 Sep 1960 Second KPRP National Congress convenes, later to be referred to as First Congress of the Communist Party of Kampuchea; twenty-one delegates opt for continued political struggle, "preparation" for armed struggle; Touch Samouth elected chairman, Nuon Chea is number two, and Saloth Sar is number three in party organization; KPRP changes party name to Khmer Worker's Party (KWP).

- Jan 1962 Pracheachon General Secretary Non Suon plus thirteen associates arrested, imprisoned for life.
- 20 Jul 1962 KWP Party Secretary Touch Samouth disappears, presumed victim of Sihanouk, opening way for rise of Saloth Sar to party leadership.
- Jan 1963 Sihanouk nationalizes banking and foreign trade.
- 1 May 1963 Liu-Chi state visit to Cambodia; Sihanouk alleges CIA-Kuomintang attempt on Liu's life and his own.
- May 1963 KWP sends 90 percent of leadership personnel underground; Saloth Sar confirmed as general secretary; he and Ieng Sary go to northeast, and later visit China.
- Aug 1963 Sihanouk severs relations with South Vietnam, renounces U.S. military assistance.
- Dec 1963 PRC begins delivery of military aid to Sihanouk's government.
- Sep 1964 Sihanouk meets with representatives of South Vietnamese National Liberation Front (NLF) and North Vietnamese Premier Pham Van Dong in Peking.
- 27 Oct 1964 Cambodian National Assembly threatens to break relations with United States if there are any further U.S. violations of Cambodia by U.S. Air Force.
- Nov. 1964 Sihanouk appeals to Vietnamese and Laotians for anti-U.S. summit conference.
- 7 Feb 1965 With Operation ROLLING THUNDER, United States begins bombing North Vietnam.
- 28 Feb 1965 U.S. announces "continuous limited air strikes" on North Vietnam.
- 1 Mar 1965 Sihanouk sponsors Indochinese People's Conference in Phnom Penh; Pathet Lao and NLF attend.
- 8 Mar 1965 U.S. Marines land at Da Nang, Vietnam.
- 1 May 1965 U.S. air strikes in Cambodia's Parrot's Beak.
- 3 May 1965 Sihanouk breaks diplomatic relations with United States.
- June 1965 PRC agrees in principle to provide technicians and more arms to Cambodia.
- Sep 1965 Khieu Thirith and Khieu Ponnary (sisters who are wives of Ieng Sary and Saloth Sar) go underground.
- Nov 1965 Sihanouk sends General Lon Nol on aid-seeking mission to Peking; he returns with arms for 20,000.
- Mid-1965 North Vietnamese begin using port of Sihanoukville as a supply route to South Vietnam.
- 11 Sept 1966 First election is held in Cambodia without pre-selection of candidates by Sihanouk.
- 22 Oct 1966 Rightist-dominated government emerges; Lon Nol is elected premier.
- Mar 1967 CPK cadres organize student demonstrations.
- Apr 1967 Massive peasant revolt in Samlaut district of Battambang Province over land expropriation and forced rice collection policy; Lon Nol sends in paratroopers, cracks down on dissent in capital.
- 22 Apr 1967 Sihanouk charges Khieu Samphan, Hou Yuon, and Hu Nim with responsibility for Samlaut rebellion.

- 24 Apr 1967 Samphan and Yuon go underground; Hu Nim stays in Phnom Penh.
- 30 Apr 1967 Sihanouk removes Lon Nol for failure of Samlaut pacification; Son Sann appointed as new prime minister.
- 2 May 1967 15,000 students demonstrate in Phnom Penh over assumed liquidation of Khieu Samphan and Hou Yuon by Sihanouk security forces.
- 9 May 1967 Sihanouk demands international recognition for the borders of Cambodia.
- 13 May 1967 NLF and Democratic Republic of Vietnam issue statement recognizing Cambodian border claims.
- May 1967 United States begins Operation SALEM HOUSE, cross-border armed reconnaissance inside Cambodia.
- 6 June 1967 Sihanouk extends de jure diplomatic recognition to NLF and Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV).
- Aug 1967 Samlaut rebellion stamped out by mass executions.
- 4 Sep 1967 Lon Nol accuses leftist Sihanouk aide, Chau Seng, of coup d'etat plan, latter is exiled; Hu Nim goes underground.
- 4 Jan 1968 PRC sends new military equipment to Lon Nol, including MIG jets and artillery.
- 12 Jan 1968 U.S. Ambassador to India Chester Bowles visits Cambodia to explore resumption of relations with United States and limitation of Vietnamese border use.
- 17 Jan 1968 CPK's newly founded Revolutionary Army of Kampuchea (RAK) begins guerrilla operations in seventeen of nineteen provinces.
- 27 Jan 1968 Sihanouk declares "war" on Khmer Rouge (KCP); United States announces policy of "hot pursuit" into Cambodia.
- 30 Jan 1968 Sihanouk names "Government of the Last Chance"; Penn Nouth is prime minister, Son Sann his deputy; Tet Offensive begins in Vietnam.
- 20 Jan 1969 Richard Nixon is sworn in as thirty-seventh U.S. President.
- 9 Feb 1969 General Abrams, commander of U.S. forces in Vietnam, requests air strikes against Vietnamese bases in Cambodia.
- 17 Mar 1969 Nixon approves request for air strikes in Cambodia.
- 18 Mar 1969 "Breakfast" air strike in Fishhook area of Cambodia, commencing U.S. bomb attacks designated "MENU" series.
- Apr 1969 United States agrees to respect Cambodian "sovereignty and neutrality."
- 21 Apr 1969 The CPK claims to have captured three provinces and partly captured three more.
- 24 Apr 1969 Summit Conference in Peking; DRV, newly founded Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam (PRG), CLF, and Laotian Front explore possibilities for unity against United States.
- 26 Apr 1969 Sihanouk announces "offensive" against Vietnamese Army in Ratanakiri Province, but his army actually attacks CPK positions.
- 2 May 1969 South Vietnamese communists open embassy in Phnom Penh.
- 9 May 1969 New York Times reporter William Beecher writes story on U.S. air strikes in Cambodia; nobody notices but Nixon.
- 10 May 1969 Al Haig transmits Nixon orders for wiretaps to find who leaked bombing story to Beecher.

- 25 May 1969 Royal Cambodian Air Force uses MIG fighters for first time against Communist positions.
- 11 Jun 1969 U.S.-Cambodian relations reestablished with exchange of embassies.
- 25 Jun 1969 Nixon proclaims "Nixon Doctrine."
- 1 Aug 1969 Penn Nouth resigns as prime minister.
- 12 Aug 1969 Lon Nol regains post as prime minister.
- 1 Sep 1969 Ho Chi Minh dies, Sihanouk attends funeral.
- Sep 1969 Lon Nol returns banking and foreign trade to private sector, then goes to Paris for "medical treatments"; Sirik Matak becomes acting prime minister.
- 29 Dec 1969 National Assembly sustains Sihanouk's rejection of banking and foreign trade denationalization.
- 27 Feb 1970 Sihanouk in Paris announces intent to travel to "great and friendly nations" of PRC and USSR to complain of Vietnamese occupation.
- 8 Mar 1970 Villagers in Svay Rieng Province demonstrate against Vietnamese occupation under direction of Lon Nol at order of Sihanouk in France.
- 11 Mar 1970 20,000, led by government-orchestrated troops, sack the NLF and DRV embassies in Phnom Penh.
- 12 Mar 1970 Sihanouk, in eyes-only cable, threatens heads will roll for overreaction to his anti-Vietnamese demonstration orders.
- 13 Mar 1970 Sihanouk leaves Paris for Moscow; more anti-Vietnamese riots in Cambodia; Acting Prime Minister Sirik Matak suspends government trade with PRG, announces army increase of 10,000 men; Cambodian Foreign Ministry notifies the PRG and DRV that all Vietnamese military forces must be withdrawn from Cambodian territory by March 15.
- 15 Mar 1970 Deadline for NVA pullout passes; Cambodia requests emergency meeting with DRV and PRG.
- 16 Mar 1970 At last official meeting between Cambodia and DRV / PRG, communists refuse to accede to troop removal; Chief of National Police Dum Manorine (Sihanouk's brother-in-law) attempts to arrest Lon Nol, but is blocked by troops loyal to Lon Nol.
- 17 Mar 1970 Dum's resignation is forced in the National Assembly.
- 18 Mar 1970 Cambodian National Assembly, voting with color-coded ballots under the watchful eye of General In Tam, deposes Sihanouk; Sihanouk leaves Moscow for Peking, informed of deposition at airport by USSR Prime Minister Kosygin.
- 19 Mar 1970 U.S. government states that Sihanouk was legally deposed, no need for new recognition of regime.
- 20 Mar 1970 Sihanouk in Peking announces intent to resist his deposition; Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) troops cross into Cambodia to harass NVA and PRG.
- 22 Mar 1970 Hanoi Party newspaper Nhan Dan supports Sihanouk.
- 23 Mar 1970 Sihanouk announces formation of Khmer National United Front (FUNK); Khmer People's National Liberation Armed Forces (PFLANK) formed; Sihanouk also announces intent to form united front with Laos and

- Vietnam; Kratie FANK (newly renamed Force Armee Nationale Khmer) garrison dissolves along with numerous others.
- 25 Mar 1970 PRC's Chou En-lai endorses the "United Front of Three Indochinese Peoples"; Polish embassy in Phnom Penh offers to evacuate DRV and PRG embassy staffs.
- 26 Mar 1970 Khieu Samphan, Hu Nim, and Hou Yuon join FUNK, Khieu as vice-chairman; nonviolent pro-Sihanouk demonstrations break out in Kampong Cham.
- 27 Mar 1970 DRV and PRG evacuate embassies, break relations; FANK fires on peasant demonstrators in Kampong Cham and Takeo.
- 28 Mar 1970 Mass insurrection: 40,000 pro-Sihanouk peasants march on Phnom Penh.
- 29 Mar 1970 North Vietnamese Army (NVA) initiates attacks on FANK in four of six military regions; FANK falls on column of peasants approaching Phnom Penh.
- 2 Apr 1970 In Peking, Sihanouk denounces United States as "sole culprit" in Indochina.
- 3 Apr 1970 North Vietnamese forces overrun Cambodian positions in Svay Rieng.
- 4 Apr 1970 PRC's Chou En-lai endorses Sihanouk's new front organization.
- 13 Apr 1970 Lon Nol troops launch widespread pogrom against ethnic Vietnamese Cambodians.
- 14 Apr 1970 Lon Nol appeals for international aid, US decides to send 3,000 weapons.
- 15 Apr 1970 US adds \$5 million in cash to Cambodia aid package.
- 19 Apr 1970 Nixon ups aid to \$10 million, and adds a CIA weapons cache to the mix
- 24 Apr 1970 Summit Conference of the Three Indochinese People's convenes in Peking, with Sihanouk and Chou En-lai presiding, DRV Premier Pham Van Dong attends.
- 26 Apr 1970 Nixon says he "reached my decision ... to go for broke" in Cambodia.
- 28 Apr 1970 US-South Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia begins, over objectives of the US Secretaries of State and Defense.
- 1 May 1970 Mao Tse-tung personally endorses Sihanouk's front organization.
- 4 May 1970 Sihanouk forms the exile Royal Government of National Unification of Kampuchea; the PRC breaks diplomatic relations with the Lon Nol regime.
- 11 May 1970 Cooper-Church Amendment, prohibiting US military action in Cambodia, is introduced in the Senate.
- 13 May 1970 Lon Nol re-establishes relations with Thailand, broken since 1961.
- 19 May 1970 Cambodia restores relations with South Vietnam, broken since 1963.
- 29 Jun 1970. US withdraws from Cambodia incursion, but South Vietnamese troops stay.
- 5 Jul 1970 Cambodia military tribunal sentences Sihanouk to death, in absentia.
- 10 Aug 1970 Rebels claim that half of Cambodia has been "liberated."
- 12 Sep 1970 Emory Swank arrives in Phnom Penh, first US Ambassador since 1965.
- 9 Oct 1970 Lon Nol proclaims a republic, and the Khmer Republic is born.
- 22 Dec 1970 Cooper-Church Amendment becomes law, prohibiting US funds for military use in Cambodia.

- 31 Dec 1970 Rebels claim 70% of Cambodia has been "liberated."
- 10 Jan 1971 US Military Equipment Delivery Team is formed for Cambodia.
- Mar 1971 Rebels claim 80% of Cambodia has been "liberated."
- 20 Aug 1971 Lon Nol troops launch Chenla-II offensive to open road to Battambang province.
- 18 Oct 1971 Lon Nol dissolves National Assembly.
- 20 Oct 1971 Lon Nol declares state of emergency, says he will no longer "play the game of democracy and freedom."
- 26 Oct 1971 Vietnamese launch counter-attack on Chenla-II offensive.
- 1 Dec 1971 Majority of Lon Nol army destroyed in Chenla-II counter-attack.
- 17 Dec 1971 Lon Nol revokes civil liberties and political rights in Khmer Republic.
- 11 Mar 1972 Lon Nol declares himself president and commander-in-chief.
- 4 June 1972 Lon Nol elected President of the Republic in questionable balloting.
- 11 Nov 1972 Sihanouk rejects Lon Nol cease fire offer.
- 27 Jan 1973 Paris Peace Accords signed; Article 20 states that all foreign troops will withdraw from Cambodia, but none do so; temporary US bombing halt in Cambodia.
- 6 Feb 1973 North Vietnam demands US end interference in Cambodia.
- 8 Feb 1973 US resumes bombing of Cambodia.
- 31 Mar 1973 Cambodian communist forces deploy armored units for the first time.
- Apr 1973 Cambodian communists begin a systematic program of "de-Sihanoukization."
- 22 Apr 1973 Communist forces advance on Phnom Penh.
- 27 Apr 1973 Communists penetrate to within 3 km of Phnom Penh, amid intense US air strikes.
- 10 May 1973 US House attempts to block funds for US air strikes in Cambodia.
- 21 May 1973 Intense US tactical air strikes begin to blunt communist offensive on Phnom Penh.
- 31 May 1973 US Senate votes 63-17 for an end to air strikes in Cambodia.
- 18 Jun 1973 Communists cut all six major roads linking Phnom Penh with provinces.
- 30 Jun 1973 Congress compromises with Nixon, allows bombing to continue until August 15.
- 9 Aug 1973 Communist forces overrun Phnom Penh international airport, cut communications links with outside world.
- 15 Aug 1973 US air strikes on Cambodia are ended.
- 29 Aug 1973 Lon Nol declares that negotiations are impossible, and that the war will be decided by arms.
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- 13 Nov 1973 US grants Lon Nol \$700 million in aid.
- 21 Nov 1973 Nixon pledges "all-out support" for Lon Nol.
- 5 Dec 1973 By a 2-vote margin, UN upholds Khmer Republic credentials in challenge by Sihanouk's government-in-exile.
- 2 Apr 1974 Mao Tse-tung is photographed with Khieu Samphan at his right hand, and Sihanouk at his left.
- 3 Apr 1974 John Gunther Dean arrives in Phnom Penh as first US Ambassador since Emory Swank departed seven months ago.

- 30 Jul 1974 Senate Judiciary Committee rejects Article IV (illegal war in Cambodia) of Articles of Impeachment against Nixon.
- 9 Aug 1974 Nixon resigns presidency in face of certain conviction by Senate.
- 16 Dec 1974 President Ford, with French president, issue communique expressing hope for peaceful negotiations among parties to Cambodia conflict.
- 1 Jan 1975 Communists launch final offensive against Phnom Penh.
- 5 Feb 1975 Communists cut Mekong River traffic, Phnom Penh is isolated except by air.
- 27 Mar 1975 USSR breaks diplomatic relations with Lon Nol regime.
- 1 Apr 1975 Lon Nol flees Cambodia for Hawaii.
- 12 Apr 1975 US Embassy in Phnom Penh is evacuated by air.
- 13 Apr 1975 Khmer New Year, ends Year of the Tiger, begins Year of the Hare.
- 14 Apr 1975 Khmer Republic military HQ bombed by air; 24-hour curfew in Phnom Penh.
- 15 Apr 1975 Khmer Republic main air base falls, Phnom Penh's defense perimeter collapses.
- 16 Apr 1975 Government imposes 48 hour curfew, Khmer Republic troops abandon outer defense line around capital.
- 17 Apr 1975 Phnom Penh falls with only sporadic resistance; evacuation of civilian population begins.
- 19 Apr 1975 Systematic murder of Khmer Republic military and civilian personnel begins.
- 20 Apr 1975 All Khmer nationals, including Vietnamese and Chinese, are forced out of French Embassy.
- 24 Apr 1975 Evacuation of Battambang, Poipet, and other cities begins.
- 30 Apr 1975 All foreigners deported from Cambodia; Saigon falls, "Vietnam War" ends.
- 3 May 1975 Cambodian-Vietnamese fighting begins on contested coastal islands.
- 12 May 1975 U.S. container ship Mayaguez seized in Cambodian territorial waters; Ford orders air strikes on Cambodia's only oil refinery, sends Marines to rescue crew.
- 21 June 1975 Le Monde reports fighting over Poulo Wai islands and in Ratanakiri mountains between Vietnamese and Cambodian communists.
- June 1975 Saloth Sar to Hanoi for border talks; border liaison group established.
- 18 July 1975 Khmer Rouge envoys ask Sihanouk to return to Cambodia, he refuses.
- Aug 1975 Khmer Rouge incursions into Vietnam increase; Vietnam's Le Duan to Phnom Penh for talks; Hou Yuon resigns in protest and then disappears.
- 19 Aug 1975 Penn Nouth and Khieu Samphan go to North Korea, offer Sihanouk position as head of state for life, he agrees.
- 9 Sep 1975 Sihanouk returns to Phnom Penh.
- Sep 1975 Second round of population relocation begins.
- 5 Jan 1976 Constitution of Democratic Kampuchea is promulgated.
- 20 Mar 1976 People's Representative Assembly chooses 250 delegates, including a previously unknown "rubber plantation worker" named Pol Pot.
- 4 Apr 1976 Sihanouk resigns as Head of State, replaced by Khieu Samphan.
- 14 Apr 1976 Pol Pot becomes Prime Minister.

- 25 Dec 1976 Trade agreements signed with China.
- 10 Apr 1977 Hu Nim is arrested.
- 30 Apr 1977 Vietnam says division-sized Cambodian force attacks Ha Tien and Chau Doc.
- May 1977 Fierce Vietnam-Cambodia border battles.
- Sep 1977 Vietnam launches a major incursion into Cambodia, penetrating up to 10 miles.
- 28 Sep 1977 Pol Pot, Ieng Sary, Son Sen and Vorn Veth visit PRC.
- 25 Dec 1977 Cambodia decides that it is "all-out war" with Vietnam.
- 6 Jan 1978 Vietnam begins withdrawal from Cambodia.
- 5 Feb 1978 Vietnam offer cease fire, Cambodia rejects the offer.
- 15 May 1978 Cambodian Foreign Minister Ieng Sary proposes 7 month "cooling-off" period before begin border talks with Vietnam.
- 4 Jun 1978 In Tokyo, Ieng Sary alleges Vietnam-CIA plot to destroy Democratic Kampuchea.
- 27 Jun 1978 Radio Hanoi responds to Ieng Sary charge of CIA plot: "Have the Kampuchea authorities gone crazy?"
- 21 Aug 1978 Before the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee, George McGovern calls for an international peacekeeping force to destroy the Khmer Rouge regime.
- 3 Nov 1978 Vietnam and the USSR sign a 25-year friendship treaty.
- 2 Dec 1978 Khmer Rouge defectors in Vietnam declare the "Khmer National United Front for National Salvation" to overthrow the Khmer Rouge regime.
- 28 Dec 1978 Vietnam launches a large-scale invasion of Cambodia.
- 5 Jan 1979 Pol Pot predicts "certain victory" over the Vietnamese invaders.
- 7 Jan 1979 Phnom Penh falls to the Vietnamese, Pol Pot retreats to the Thai border.
- Feb 1979 PRC launches an incursion in northern Vietnam to "teach a lesson."
- 19 Aug 1979 The "People's Revolutionary Tribunal" in Phnom Penh finds Pol Pot and Ieng Sary guilty of genocide, sentences them to death in absentia.
- 9 Oct 1979 Son Sann founds the "Khmer People's National Liberation Front."
- 7 Mar 1980 PRC withdraws from northern Vietnam after sustaining at least 20,000 casualties.
- 11 Mar 1980 Khieu Samphan calls on "all peace-loving, justice-loving countries" to oppose Soviet and Vietnamese "expansionism."
- 19 May 1980 Vietnam tells Thailand that the situation in Cambodia is "irreversible."
- 9 Feb 1981 Sihanouk rebuffs Khieu Samphan offer to form a united front.
- 23 Apr 1981 PRC openly gives weapons to non-communist resistance in Thailand.
- 8 Jul 1981 At UN in New York, Ieng Sary denies that the Khmer Rouge are communists.
- 18 Sep 1981 US representative votes for Khmer Rouge to retain Cambodia's seat at UN.
- 7 Dec 1981 Communist Party of Kampuchea asserts that it has dissolved itself, but that the same individuals will continue to constitute the Government of Democratic Kampuchea.
- 22 Jun 1982 Sihanouk, Khieu Samphan and Son Sann sign an agreement to form the exile "Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea."

- 4 Feb 1983 US Secretary of State George Shultz meets Sihanouk in Beijing.
- 24 Apr 1983 Sihanouk meets with French President Mitterrand.
- 25 Jul 1983 The Phnom Penh government's "Research Committee on Pol Pot's Genocidal Regime" publishes the results of a multi-year study concluding that 3,314,768 persons died during the Khmer Rouge regime.
- 2 Jul 1985 UN Special Rapporteur on Genocide declares that the Khmer Rouge government of Democratic Kampuchea was guilty of genocide "even under the most restricted definition."
- 28 Jun 1988 US Congressional Joint Resolution 602 calls for the "non-return to power by genocidal Khmer Rouge."
- 18 Oct 1988 President Reagan signs Joint Resolution 602 into law.
- 24 Jul 1989 Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen dines with Sihanouk in Paris on the eve of an international peace conference.
- 30 Jul 1989 A month-long international peace conference on Cambodia convenes in Paris.
- 17 Nov 1989 Representative Steven Solarz asks the Department of State what the US is doing to "bring Pol Pot to trial." The State Department submits a document to the House Foreign Affairs Committee, stating that the department believes "evidence exists that the Khmer Rouge committed genocide..."
- 28 Aug 1990 In New York, the Perm 5 on the UN Security Council forge a framework document for a "comprehensive political settlement of the Cambodia conflict" that outlines a quadripartite solution, in which the four principal factions will disarm under UN auspices and peacefully compete for power in a UN-organized election.
- 23 Oct 1991 The Paris Conference on Cambodia adopts the "Agreements on a Comprehensive Political Settlement of the Cambodian Conflict," giving the Khmer Rouge equal legitimacy alongside the Phnom Penh government, and the royalist and republican factions, to compete in UN-sponsored elections. US Secretary of State James Baker tells the conference that the US "will support efforts to bring to justice those responsible for the mass murders of the 1970s if the new Cambodian Government chooses this path."
- 15 Mar 1992 Japanese diplomat Yasushi Akashi, head of the UN Transitional Authority for Cambodia, establishes himself in Phnom Penh.
- 10 Apr 1992 US Senator Charles Robb introduces S.2622, the "Khmer Rouge Prosecution and Exclusion Act." It dies in committee, opposed by the Bush Administration.
- 22 Jun 1992 Thirty-three nations meeting in Tokyo pledge \$880 million to the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Cambodia.
- 5 Apr 1993 Khmer Rouge radio denounces the UN elections as "a theatrical farce to hand over Cambodia to Vietnam." They have not cooperated with the UN mission.
- 28 May 1993 UN-organized elections result in victory for Prince Norodom Ranariddh's royalist party, which takes 58 of 120 seats in the National Assembly. The incumbent Cambodian People's Party challenges the results, and a crisis

- ensues, which is eventually resolved by an agreement to form a coalition government.
- 24 Sep 1993 Constituent Assembly declares a constitutional monarchy, and restores Norodom Sihanouk to the throne; the Second Kingdom of Cambodia is born.
- 30 Jun 1993 Senator Robb reintroduces the "Khmer Rouge Prosecution and Exclusion Act" as Title VI of S.1281, and the bill becomes subject of an extended struggle, with fierce opposition from the Clinton Administration.
- 13 Apr 1994 At his Senate confirmation hearing, Charles Twining, US Ambassador-designate to Cambodia, proposes a compromise on the Khmer Rouge Prosecution and Exclusion Act whereby the investigations would be carried out by a private organization rather than by the US government.
- 29 Apr 1994 US Congress adopts the Cambodian Genocide Justice Act.
- 30 Apr 1994 President Clinton signs the Cambodian Genocide Justice Act, and it comes into force as part of Public Law 103-236.
- July 1994 The Office of Cambodian Genocide Investigations is established in the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, US Department of State.
- 17 Jan 1995 State Department announces a cooperative agreement between Office of Cambodian Genocide Investigations and Yale University's Cambodian Genocide Program.
- Aug 1996 Ieng Sary defects to government with a large proportion of Khmer Rouge forces.
- 15 Sep 1996 King Sihanouk grants a royal amnesty to Ieng Sary, overturning his 1979 conviction on charges of genocide by the People's Revolutionary Tribunal.
- 4 Jun 1997 General Nhiek Bun Chhay, an aide to First Prime Minister Norodom Ranariddh, tells reporters that negotiators are near to sealing a deal for Pol Pot, Ta Mok and Son Sen to go into exile, while Khieu Samphan would be permitted to take up a political role in Cambodia.
- 9 Jun 1997 Khmer Rouge leaders Son Sen and Yun Yat are assassinated on orders from Pol Pot, and the remaining Khmer Rouge leadership falls into armed turmoil.
- 19 Jun 1997 Pol Pot surrenders to Khmer Rouge forces loyal to General Ta Mok.
- 4 Jul 1997 Fighting erupts in Phnom Penh between military forces loyal to the CPP and the royalists, and the coalition government collapses into civil war; Second Prime Minister Hun Sen ousts First Prime Minister Ranariddh.
- 25 Jul 1997 Pol Pot is judged by a summary Khmer Rouge court and sentenced to house arrest for the murders of Khmer Rouge leaders Son Sen and Yun Yat.
- 18 Mar 1998 A Phnom Penh military court tries deposed First Prime Minister Ranariddh in absentia, finds him guilty of collusion with the Khmer Rouge and other offenses, sentences him to 30 years imprisonment.
- 30 Mar 1998 Ranariddh returns to Phnom Penh after being pardoned by his father, King Sihanouk; US Ambassador Kenneth Quinn comments, "Cambodia is a better country today than it was yesterday because it has taken one step in the direction of reconciliation."

- 6 Apr 1998 US President Clinton reportedly issues an order for Pol Pot to be taken into custody by US officials in Thailand.
- 15 Apr 1998 Pol Pot learns through a Voice of America broadcast that the Khmer Rouge are considering surrendering him to the US; he dies later that night in Anlong Veng.
- 30 Apr 1998 US tables draft statute at the UN Security Council for an ad hoc international Khmer Rouge tribunal, but the other four members of the P5 are not enthusiastic.
- 26 Jul 1998 Cambodian elections yield 64 National Assembly seats for the People's Party, 43 for the royalist party, and 15 for the opposition Sam Rainsy Party. The royalists and the opposition contest the result and take to the streets in violent protests.
- 11 Sep 1998 Congressman Dana Rohrabacher introduces HR533 in the US House of Representatives, calling for Prime Minister Hun Sen to be prosecuted for genocide.
- 10 Oct 1998 HR533 is adopted, expressing the sense of the US House of Representatives that the United States should work to bring about the indictment of Hun Sen for violations of international humanitarian law after 1978.
- 30 Nov 1998 After months of violent street protests over the election results, the People's Party and the royalist party form a coalition government, with Hun Sen as Prime Minister and Norodom Ranariddh as President of the National Assembly.
- 25 Dec 1998 The last Khmer Rouge political leaders in active resistance, Nuon Chea and Khieu Samphan, surrender to the Cambodian Government.
- 22 Feb 1999 A UN Group of Experts recommends the establishment of an international tribunal to prosecute the Khmer Rouge for genocide and other serious crimes.
- 12 Mar 1999 The Cambodian government delivers an aide-memoire to the UN Secretary-General, formally rejecting the proposal for an international tribunal.
- 30 Apr 1999 Cambodia becomes a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.
- 17 Jun 1999 Cambodia requests UN assistance in drafting legislation to allow foreign judges and prosecutors to participate in a domestic Khmer Rouge tribunal.
- 30 Jun 1999 Russia and China tell the US that they formally reject the concept of a Chapter VII Security Council mandate for a Khmer Rouge tribunal, and the US then turns its attention to other potential approaches.
- 4 Aug 1999 With HR 2606, the US Congress conditions foreign assistance to Cambodia on a formal finding that "the Government of Cambodia has established a tribunal consistent with the requirements of international law and justice and including the participation of international jurists and prosecutors for the trial of those who committed genocide or crimes against humanity."

- 23 Oct 1999 US Ambassador at Large for War Crimes David Scheffer meets with Cambodian officials in Phnom Penh, seeks agreement on a compromise for the tribunal.
- 6 Jan 2000 Cambodia's Council of Ministers approves the draft Khmer Rouge tribunal law.
- 29 Dec 2000 The Khmer Rouge tribunal law goes before the National Assembly for debate.
- 2 Jan 2001 The National Assembly adopts the tribunal law.
- 30 May 2001 US Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Jesse Helms and Senate Appropriations Committee Foreign Operations Subcommittee Chairman Mitch McConnell write to Secretary of State Colin Powell, saying they have "little faith" in the proposed Khmer Rouge genocide tribunal.
- 7 Aug 2001 Cambodia's Constitutional Council approves the tribunal law.
- 10 Aug 2001 King Sihanouk promulgates the tribunal law.
- 3 Feb 2002 Cambodia holds commune council elections, and the ruling party sweeps the vote, with the CPP dominating in 1,597 communes, compared to 13 for the opposition Sam Rainsy Party, and 10 for the royalist FUNCINPEC party.
- 8 Feb 2002 The UN rejects Cambodia's tribunal law, and withdraws from negotiations.
- 9 Feb 2002 US Ambassador to Cambodia, Kent Wiedemann, urges Cambodian government to remain open to negotiations with UN on the tribunal.
- 26 Mar 2002 US offers asylum to 1,000 Montagnard refugees who had fled Vietnam into Cambodian territory.
- 11 Apr 2002 Cambodia is one of ten countries depositing notice of ratification of the Treaty on the International Criminal Court (ICC) at the United Nations, bringing the total number of ratifications of the ICC to more than sixty and thus triggering the formal establishment of the court.
- 1 Oct 2002 Senate confirmation hearing is held for Charles A. Ray, US Ambassador-Designate to Cambodia.
- 18 Dec 2002 The UN General Assembly adopts a resolution instructing the Secretary-General to resume tribunal negotiations with the Cambodian government.
- 18 Mar 2003 Secretary-General Annan reports to the General Assembly that his team has reached agreement with the Cambodian government on a Khmer Rouge tribunal.
- 6 Jun 2003 Cambodia and the UN sign the Khmer Rouge tribunal agreement.
- 27 Jul 2003 National election returns a majority of 73 National Assembly seats for the ruling party, with 26 seats for the royalists and 24 for the opposition, but the CPP falls short of the two-thirds majority required to form a government. The resulting political stand-off delays formation of the next government for nearly a year, but unlike 1998, the minority parties do not call their partisans into the streets.
- 12 Sep 2003 The World Trade Organization agrees to admit Cambodia as a member.
- 30 Jun 2004 Leaders of the ruling party and royalist party sign an agreement on power sharing, clearing the way for the formation of a new government.

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