

Australia's Security Concerns and the Cambodian Problem (1979-1989)

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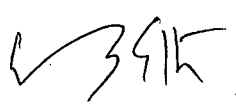
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P R E F A C E

It appears that since the Second World War, Australia has been trying hard to identify a precise threat to its security in the Southeast Asian and Pacific region. Much of its insecurity stemmed from its geographical dislocation in the southern Asian neighbourhood with a population consisting of mainly the Whites. This dissertation seeks to analyse the sources of Australia's security concerns since the Second World War in the Southeast Asian (and Pacific) region. There are six chapters in all.

The first chapter seeks to identify Australia's threat perceptions as it emerged as a young nation, and how it sought to deal with these threats through a series of alliances and defence arrangements with the Western powers. It traces the shifting perception of threat from a re-armed Japan in the 1940s to local and the Chinese form of communism in the 1950s and 60s, and from the Soviet and Vietnamese brand of communism to finally, a change in the approach to Southeast Asia marked by a policy of 'Comprehensive Engagement'. In short, it explains how by actively participating in the Cambodian peace process Australia has tried to be the 'odd one in' from the previous position of the 'odd one out' in the Southeast Asian and Pacific region.

The second chapter analyses the reasons and anxieties behind Australia's eagerness to form the ANZUS and the SEATO, built around the strong deterrent effect provided by the United States.

The Vietnam war was a controversial issue in Australia and chapter three seeks to analyse the motivations behind Australia's marginal participation in the war, the responses of the Australian opposition political party, institutions and people to the government's action.

The Cambodian conflict is presently regarded as a great source of insecurity to the stability of the Southeast Asian region. Chapter four traces the Cambodian problem from the overthrow of the Lon Nol regime by Pol Pot to the present ongoing Paris conferences and informal talks at Jakarta to bring some semblance of peace in the strife-torn area.

Chapter five examines the proposals presented by Australia for peace in Cambodia which promotes the idea of a "comprehensive settlement" and envisages a major UN role.

The concluding chapter examines the viability of the Australian proposals, the main obstacles, and challenges to be met. It also concludes, that inspite

of a strategically favourable global change, its improved relations with the Asian neighbours and identification of interests, Australia still regards the presence of the United States necessary for the stability and security of not only itself, but the Southeast Asian and the Pacific region.

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

The basic aim of most States, which are not embarked upon programmes of territorial expansion, are the maintenance of security and territorial integrity, and the raising of living standards throughout the State.¹ The maintenance of security generally imply security of the nation from the danger of subjugation by external power. Nations have adopted different policies in search of security, such as, security by

- (i) a nation's own power in the form of single-handed defence;
- (ii) balance of power in the form of alliances directed at securing a counter-balance of forces as against any other nation or group whose preponderance might become menacing;
- (iii) preponderance of power, conquest or domination, rendering hostile action by others impossible;
- (iv) collective security by which a group of States take a common action in defense of any of its members which is the victim of aggression.²

1 "Australia - Geographical Basis of Foreign Policy", The Round Table, 1965, p. 177.

2 Encyclopaedia Britannica, SARS to SORC., No. 20, p. 263.

A single-handed defense inevitably involves a realistic understanding of military power of the countries capable of playing a significant role in the area concerned necessitating a formulation of national defence programme. This would include the procurement and development of military technology either from within the nation's own resources or without. On the other hand, alliances can also imbibe a sense of security to the nation with a weak defense system. Normally alliances are indicators of strength in international politics identifying issues over which States coalign strategies and pool resources. In this sense, alliances serve the function of facilitating the calculation of the probable reactions of States in specific situations.³

In short, the primary interest of every nation is the maintenance of its physical integrity and sovereignty. This being so, the post-Second World War period saw Australia entering a number of alliances, chiefly with the United States, as a form of an appropriate and necessary measure of self-defence from the threats it perceived. To understand the nature of these threats, firstly, one has to take account of the geographical imperatives and historical situations which has remained a constant reality

3 Buszynski, Leszek, S.E.A.T.O. : The Failure of an Alliance Strategy, Singapore, 1983, p. ix.

in Australia's strategic environment. With an area of 7,686,884 sq. km., Australia is the sixth largest State in the world after the USSR, Canada, China, the USA, and Brazil; but it has a relatively small population with a density of 1.7 persons per sq. km.⁴ Its insular character gives it immunity from invasions, and the absence of direct land contact with its neighbours also eliminates the possibility of border conflicts or easy infiltration by inimical forces. But the largeness of the country, the great length of its coastline which is 19,635 km. long, the concentration of its population mainly on its southern and eastern periphery, and the sparseness of population makes the defence of the mainland difficult.⁵ Secondly, international relation is an endless flux and reflux: an issue of little importance today could be of great importance tomorrow.⁶ In such an unpredictable international environment, the possession of an adequate military capability or an alliance with a strong military power will always be important to imbibe a sense of security.

4 Chakravorty B., Australia's Military Alliances: A Study in Foreign and Defence Policies, New Delhi, 1977, p. 1.

5 Ibid., p. 33.

6 Crocker, W.R., "Australia and the Region".
Beddie, B.D. (ed.), Advance Australia - Where?
Oxford, 1975, p. 76.

The international environment in which the Australian security policies are pursued has been changing rapidly both at the global and regional levels. The politico-military changes that have taken place in the Asian context have witnessed a rapprochement between the USA and China, the total victory of the communist forces in South Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, and the phasing out of the S.E.A.T.O.⁷ More recently, the world has witnessed the fading out of the ideological conflict between capitalism and communism over the last forty years. This ideological dispute had been the fault-line for international relations, the organizing principle around which countries defined their positions and interests. The failure of communism has been attributed to "its inability to cope with economic globalisation and technological developments which underlie it".⁸ Economic interest of States are increasingly ranked alongside, if not ahead of, traditional political concerns. Japan, India and the European Community are perceived to be the main economic actors in the Asia-Pacific region following a relative reduction of U.S. interests in the area. But a generally positive international environment cannot provide a good enough reason to assume that States

7 n. 4, p. 33.

8 Australia's Regional Security, Ministerial Statement by Senator the Hon. Gareth Evans QC, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, December, 1989, Australia, p. 3.

will renounce the use of military power in pursuit of their objectives. While circumstances can change relatively rapidly, there is no country at present or in the foreseeable future, that projects a threatening posture with a range of naval, air and logistic capabilities to sustain a major military action against Australia.⁹ Even in its global assessment, no major power poses a threat to its security. In regard to Vietnam and China, Gordon Scholes (Defence Minister in the first Hawke Government formed in 1983) opines that "neither country can move its forces outside its own territory very far (and) neither has an across-water capability".¹⁰ He emphasized that the "Chinese are, in fact, effective only as far as they can walk".¹¹ Besides, the most immediate strategic threat for the Chinese comes from the Soviet Union. With regard to India, Australia views with some concern the growing educated (middle class) population, its developing and manufacturing industrial sector, and its substantial land-mass. India, with its significant military capabilities has the capacity for increasing strategic reach including into Southeast Asia. But it appears to Australia that India's military development is only motivated by

9 Ibid., p. 12.

10 Seth, S.P., "ANZUS in Crisis", Asian-Pacific Community, No. 29, Summer 1985, p. 116.

11 Ibid.

"preoccupations in its immediate region and considerations of prestige, rather than by a desire to intervene out-of-area".¹² Regarding the Soviet Union, Gordon Scholes had opined that "they could attack us (in a global war) when they might nuke the U.S. facilities but this would not be part of a plan to occupy, or take out, Australia as such".¹³ In the case of Japan, Australia's concern is a shared one with the Southeast Asian countries. Foreign Minister Hayden articulated it during his official visit to Japan in mid-1983. In a private meeting, he reportedly warned Mr. Yasuhiro Nakasone : "Australia would be concerned if - either as a result of external pressure or internal decision - there were a shift in Japan's basic defence posture or a dramatic acceleration of defense spending".¹⁴ He added : "Australia would also be concerned if Japan were to attempt to develop a regional security role as this would have a destabilising effect on the Asia-Pacific region". Japan even as a remote threat is unlikely as long as it continues to be part of the U.S. security system.¹⁵ Finally, in the case of the ASEAN countries, although most of them have acquired sophisticated

12 n. 8, p. 13.

13 n. 10, p. 116.

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid.

military capabilities, none of them have the capability, let alone the intention to project and sustain major military action against Australia.

The four main priorities that underlie Australia's security perception are:

- (i) the protection of Australia's security through the maintenance of a positive and strategic environment;
- (ii) pursuing trade, economic and investment co-operation;
- (iii) contributing to global security through an alliance system;
- (iv) contributing to the cause of good international citizenship by promoting causes relating to Human Rights, refugee problem and environment.

The 1987 Defence White Paper marks Southeast Asia, Southwest Pacific and the East Indian Ocean as areas of Australia's primary strategic interest.¹⁶ The Southeast Asian region encompasses the six ASEAN countries as well as Myanmar (formerly called Burma) and the three countries of Indo-China. The South Pacific region includes Papua New Guinea, the other South Pacific Forum States, the

16 The Defense of Australia, 1987. Presented to Parliament by the Minister for Defense, the Hon. Kim C. Beazley, M.P., March 1987, Canberra, 1987, p. 12.

remaining colonial possessions and New Zealand. Australia's approach to the formulation, implementation, and presentation of policies relevant to its regional security interests are governed by two general principles : "comprehensive engagement" for Southeast Asia and "constructive commitment" for the South Pacific.¹⁷ Although Australia has wider global interests, its security concerns in practice focus on its region to enable it to relate its commitments and priorities to its capabilities. Australia, it is said, and often reiterated, is unable to identify or define a precise threat to itself. No regional power except for Indonesia could pose a serious concern but not amounting to a threat. As Gordon Scholes, the former Defense Minister in the first Hawke's Government, put it, "No regional power could mount a significant threat to Australia but one (Indonesia) could cause us serious inconvenience for a while ... but neither Indonesia nor any other regional power could offer a threat that Australia could not cope".¹⁸ Australia possibly faces a fear of uncertainty in the region, for, tensions between nations in Southeast Asia could provide opportunities for increased involvement in the region by unfriendly or contending powers. Australia's feeling of insecurity emerged only

17 n. 8, p. 40.

18 n. 10, p. 115.

after Japan overran Southeast Asia in World War II when it actually experienced direct enemy attack on its soil. There is also a racial connotation attached to it. It feared the "yellow hordes" from the far north would descend down on Australia again posing a threat to its existence. The early part of this century was a period of nationalist resurgence in Southeast Asia. Australia, as a young nation, did not have the experience in dealing with sovereign nations in its neighbouring region and this maximised its fear of insecurity further.

Australia was initially under the British dominion when it participated in the First World War. It was content to let the British Government handle its defence and diplomatic policies for some more years inspite of the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act, 1900. In 1942, it created a separate Australian Foreign Service¹⁹ for the first time. Britain was still a powerful country after the Second World War, but by then the traditional balance of power had changed visibly. "There was no disposition to question the primacy of the British Commonwealth relationship in the conduct of defence and foreign policies but there was an awareness that in a major war in the area much would depend upon the attitude of the United States".²⁰

19 n. 4, p. 3.

20 Reese, Trevor, R., Australia, New Zealand and the United States: A Survey of International Relations, 1941-1968, Oxford, 1969, p. 7.

Australia turned its attention from Britain to the USA but its problem became one of reconciling its traditional ties with the former power, with the emergence of the hard geo-political reality of the U.S. power in the Pacific.²¹ Australia's initiative for a regional defence arrangement resulted in the ANZAC Pact of 1944 with New Zealand. They had promoted the concept of a South-west Pacific defence zone which they later put to the Commonwealth Prime Minister's Conference in London in April and May 1946.²² Following the ANZAC, the South Pacific Commission was established in 1947 comprising of the six Pacific Trust territory administering powers, i.e. Australia, New Zealand, the USA, the UK, France and Holland. It aimed at encouraging and strengthening international cooperation in promoting the economic and social welfare of the peoples of the non-self-governing territories in the South Pacific region, and to the creation of an effective machinery for coordinating Australian and New Zealand policies on many issues. To meet various potential threats from Asia, Australia adopted a policy of "forward defence" aimed at checking the Chinese communist influence in Southeast Asia.²³ To secure an assurance of assistance from powerful allies in the event of an attack, Australia contributed to their

21 n. 4, p. 5.

22 n. 20, p. 61.

23 n. 21.

security arrangements and military efforts. In 1949, it reached an agreement with Britain and New Zealand for coordinating defence planning in the area covering Australia, New Zealand and the British territories in Malaya and Borneo. Australia, however, wanted a deeper involvement of the USA in a pact which would ensure the security of the former. This culminated in the ANZUS Pact of 8 September, 1951 which was signed in San Francisco.²⁴ The treaty was created out of Australian perceptions of need, and the skill, persistence and determination of Mr. P.C. Spender, the then Minister for External Affairs from December 1949 to March 1951 during the Prime Ministership of Mr. R.G. Menzies (Liberal - Country Party).²⁵ It helped to keep the USA involved in the South-Pacific affairs and brought to the Australian people generally, a feeling of confidence in their national security.²⁶ It had also sought to institutionalize the world war II links against a similar threat eventuating from a re-armed Japan, following the peace treaty with Tokyo. To quote the Australian Foreign Minister Bill Hayden : " ... the fact of the matter ... was that the ANZUS Treaty was part of the Japanese

24 Watt, Alan, The Evolution of Australian Foreign Policy, 1938-1965, Cambridge, London, 1967, p. 117.

25 Ibid., pp. 112-13

26 O'Neill Robert, "ANZUS and the Future Australian-American Relations", The Round Table, No. 310, April, 1989, p. 177.

peace settlement arrangements and machinery".²⁷ However, as it transpired the threat from Japan was replaced by the perceived communist threat, first, during the Korean war and subsequently, in the Vietnam war. In both cases, the U.S. led military operations were supported by Australia and New Zealand.

With the conclusion of the Korean armistice in July 1953, the United States became increasingly concerned with communist advance in South-East Asia. The fall of Dien Bien Phu (7 May 1954) and the deepening crisis in Indo-China led the U.S. to think of a strategy that would justify its armed intervention in Indo-China. Thus, the South-East Asia Collective Defence Treaty, better known as SEATO, or the Manila Pact was signed at Manila on 8 September, 1954.²⁸ But SEATO could not react effectively against the subversive Viet Minh - Pathet Lao threat during the Laotian crisis of 1960-61.²⁹ President Johnson's efforts to involve the SEATO in Vietnam only intensified existing conflicts within the alliance failing in its stated intention of defending Indo-China against communist infiltration. The SEATO demonstrated the irrelevance of military power to problems that were essentially political

27 n. 10, p. 109.

28 n. 4, p. 8.

29 n. 3, p. x.

and social.³⁰ Recognition of failure in Vietnam was the basis of U.S. disengagement from Indo-China which entailed the eventual dismantling of SEATO. It was finally discarded two years after the fall of Saigon in 1975 once Thailand and the Philippines readjusted their foreign policies to the reality of China.

Australia's need for alliances with major powers for the security of the Asia-Pacific region and especially with the United States, can be cited from Prime Minister Bob Hawke's (Labor Party) address to the Washington Press Club on 15 June, 1983. He said, "Australia is not and cannot be a non-aligned nation ... we are linked with the U.S. ... by a whole range of common interests, attitudes, aspirations, perceptions, institutions, traditions, and associations in war and peace".³¹ During the Vietnam war, there was criticism that the ANZUS alliance had dragged Australia into the conflict unnecessarily. But whether ANZUS had existed or not Australia would have wanted the USA to be involved in the stemming of Communist insurgency in Southeast Asia and would have been willing to contribute token forces as a political stimulant to greater American commitment.³² Similarly with the SEATO, the then Australian Minister of External Affairs had said on 30 May, 1966,

30 Ibid., p. xi.

31 Derek Mc Dougall, "The Hawke Governments' Policies towards the USA", The Round Table, 1989, April, No. 310, p. 166.

32 n. 25, p. 178.

that Australian "actions in Vietnam are in pursuance of our obligations through SEATO but not because of SEATO alone".³³ But the main motives behind Australia's participation in the Vietnam conflict were the Australian policy of "forward defence which fitted in the US policy of forward defence against communism, and the Australian desire to placate the USA by actively supporting the Vietnam action so that the USA remained actively committed to containing communism in Southeast Asia and in times of need would also reciprocate by coming to the aid of Australia against any aggression".³⁴ Economic difficulties in the late 1960s had compelled Britain to halt its military commitments east of Suez. But Australia did not appreciate British proposal to withdraw half of its forces deployed in Malaysia - Singapore region. Prolonged discussions later, resulted in the Five-Power Defence Arrangements³⁵ involving Australia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore and Britain with effect from 1 November 1971. Under these arrangements, the five powers would contribute to the security of Malaysia and Singapore in the event of any armed aggression or threat.

33 n. 4, p. 14.

34 Ibid., p. 15.

35 n. 4, p. 22.

The United States' Asia-Pacific policy had undergone some changes by the end of the 1960s. President Nixon had clearly indicated in the Guam Doctrine of 1969, that henceforth regional allies would have to rely on their own collective or individual efforts to defend themselves in local conflicts. The emergent Sino-U.S. strategic parallelism against the Soviet Union (highlighted by Pr. Nixon's visit to China early in 1972) also effectively demolished the myth of an international communist monolith operating against the "free" world.³⁶ The entire edifice of Australia's strategic thinking was badly shaken as it became more apparent that Soviet Union rather than China was now regarded as a destabilising factor in the region. The Labour Party under E.G. Whitlam which came to power in December 1972, attempted to normalise relations with China and also formulated a new policy with a marked accent on regional identification. It was recognised that the danger to security may emerge from the region and had to be largely met by Australia itself. To this new situation, Australia reacted with a response of self-reliance in its defence planning and also, identified its strategic interests with the strategic interests and developments of the Southeast Asian and Southwest Pacific regions. Since the end of the Vietnam commitment Australia had used self-reliance

36 n. 10, p. 110.

as the main tenet of its defence posture. The identification of self-reliance as a primary requirement, and of the regional factor in its security interests has been included in the policy information paper on defence, the 1976 White Paper, where it has been stated that:

In our contemporary circumstances we no longer base our policy on the expectation that Australia's Navy or Army or Air Force will be sent abroad to fight as part of some other nation's force, supported by it. We do not rule out an Australian contribution to operations elsewhere if the requirement arose and we felt that our presence would be effective, and if our forces could be spared from their national tasks. But we believe that any operations are much more likely to be in our own neighbourhood than in some distant or forward theatre, and that our Armed Services would be conducting joint operations together as the Australian Defence Force. (37)

In an era of relaxation of tensions and the improvement in East-West relations, it may not be possible for Australia to use the same old global security arguments to keep the USA as actively committed to the region as before. Herein lies the need to develop greater self-reliance for security against threats other than the Soviet and to devise other ways of remaining politically relevant in international relations.³⁸ In general, Australia's strategic environment is favourable. Without affecting favourable nature of the region's strategic environment,

37 n. 16, p. 2.

38 n. 25, p. 178.

there have been a number of political and economic developments with the potential to affect regional stability and security. It is Australia's concern that these developments might lead to interference by external powers in regional affairs.³⁹

Since the second World War, Australia's strategic perspectives in relation to the region have undergone a marked change. In the 1950s and 1960s, its defence policy was influenced by strong anxiety about the ability of the newly independent countries of Southeast Asia to withstand domestic insurgencies and external pressures.⁴⁰ Eversince then, its policy approach has been one of "comprehensive engagement"⁴¹ in Southeast Asia. The concept of comprehensive engagement seeks to withhold military engagements where it can be avoided. It also seeks to develop a substantial and mutually beneficial range of linkages with the South East Asian region so that any motivation and intention to threaten Australia will be minimised. It seeks to convey a common message : Australia's desire to be a full-fledged partner, and the value of interaction with it.⁴²

39 n. 36, p. 13.

40 Ibid., p. 14.

41 n. 8, p. 44.

42 Ibid.

Internal instability in individual countries in South-East Asia and tensions between the nations could introduce or expand uncertainties in Australia's strategic prospects, even though developments may not be directly threatening. Uncertainties in South East Asia relate principally to :

- economic and political problems in the Philippines;
- the unresolved question of the political future of Cambodia; and
- the establishment of the Soviet military presence at Cam Ranh Bay.⁴³

In the case of the Philippines, Australia is concerned with the insurgency of the New People's Army which not only threatens the long-term prospects for moderate reforming governments, but also raises the possibility that contending external powers could become involved. With regard to the Soviet military presence in the region, while its military assets in Vietnam would be vulnerable in the event of a global conflict, its continuous naval and air presence in Vietnam is an adverse element in Australia's regional security perspective.

The unresolved situation in Cambodia provides an element of uncertainty in the security outlook of Australia.

43 n. 36, p. 14.

The presence of the Vietnamese forces in Cambodia had made Australia quite apprehensive about potential military clashes between Thailand and Vietnam arising out of the internal military and political situation. The close interest of China and the Soviet Union also provided a significant element to the conflict. A major extension of the conflict is most unlikely, but its continuation is of concern to the Australian government, "not least because of the potential for more extensive involvement by external powers as the conflict persists".⁴⁴

Negotiations for a peaceful settlement between the four warring factions consisting of those led by the exiled Prince Norodom Sihanouk, former Prime Minister Son Sann, the Khmer Rouge, and the PRK Government have met with very limited success. They were all brought together for the first time between 25-28 July, 1988 to seek a political solution at an informal meeting in Jakarta, commonly known as JIM-I. Mr. Hun Sen had proposed the creation of a new "national reconciliation council" to be headed by Prince Norodom Sihanouk to organise new general elections in Cambodia.⁴⁵ He had, however, rejected the other side's demand that the PRK Government should be dismantled agreeing to form a coalition with the tripartite resistance group. Though nothing concrete came out of it, JIM-I opened the

44 Ibid.

45 International Herald Tribune, 26 July, 1988.

door for negotiations and on 19 February 1989, the leaders of the four Khmer factions, Foreign Ministers of the ASEAN, Vietnam, and Laos attended an upgraded version of JIM I. The meeting took place in the wake of diplomatic efforts and the issues of interest concerned the transitional period after the withdrawal of the Vietnamese troops which Vietnam promised by September, 1989. Differences arose over arrangements between the withdrawal and general elections.⁴⁶ Mr. Hun Sen had expressed the view after the JIM II that these talks should lead to an international conference on Cambodia rather than to a JIM III.⁴⁷ While the first Paris meeting had taken place on 5-7 November, 1988, the second Paris meeting began on 1 August, 1989 for a month long duration with representatives from the ASEAN, Indo-China, and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council.⁴⁸ The meeting failed again as the Hun Sen government refused to disband itself while the three other factions found the formation of a body consisting of all four factions unacceptable as that would mean legitimising an imposed regime. As a way out of the conflict situation, Australia had come forward with a proposal to set up a U.N. interim government prior to elections to be held under the U.N. supervision. It had

46 Bangkok Post (Bangkok), 16 February, 1989.


47 The Hindu (Madras), 21 February, 1989.

48 n. 45, 2 November, 1989.

included a proposal that required the UN seat vacant during the interim period. In fact, the Australian proposal had been the basis of JIM III in February, 1990 which was attended by the participants from nineteen countries. It was an attempt to overcome the problem of power-sharing between the Phnom Penh regime and the CGDK by directly involving the UN.

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Chapter II

AUSTRALIA, THE ANZUS AND THE SEATO

Security in the contemporary world is not only global but it is also concerned with questions of political stability, economic satisfaction, ideological poses and value attitudes.¹

Under the British Commonwealth Australia literally "grew up under the physical and psychological wing of Great Britain".² There were a number of factors responsible for this British orientation. The population then had consisted of White majority and so the thought either of foreign conquest, especially by an Asian power, or of large scale Asian immigration caused some anxiety. Their numbers being less, they also feared that the movement of numerous people from the populous and impoverished Asian States would cause a depression in their living standards and also submerge their English culture into their own. Australia had responded to this fear by promoting British and European immigration, excluding orientals, and maintaining close ties with the British Empire.

1 Greenwood, Gordon, Approaches to Asia: Australian Post-War Policies and Attitudes, Sydney, 1974, p. 480.

2 Cairns, J.F., Living with Asia, Melbourne, 1965, p. 1.

The Second World War brought about changes in the balance of power in the Pacific region. The fall of Singapore in February 1942, and the sinking of the British battleships the Prince of Wales and the Repulse also marked a sharp turning point in Australia's history.³ As a result of these events Australia decided to appeal to the United States to redress the balance of power in the Pacific area. In an article in The Melbourne Herald on 27 December 1941, Prime Minister John C. Curtin had exclaimed that Australia now looked to America "free of any pangs as to our traditional links or kinship with the United Kingdom".⁴ He had also added, that "Australia can go and Britain can still hold on ... we are therefore determined that Australia shall not go, and we shall exert all our energies towards the shaping of a plan, with the United States as its keystone, which will give to our country some confidence of being able to hold out until the tide of battle swings against the enemy".⁵ There was a new assumption in Australia after the Second World War

3 Vandenbosch, Amry and Mary Belle, Australia Faces Southeast Asia: The Emergence of a Foreign Policy, Lexington, 1967, p. 4.

4 Day, David, "Loosening the Bonds: Britain, Australia and the Second World War, History Today, February, 1988, p. 16.

5 Ibid.

that as far as the interests of the British Commonwealth in the Pacific and Southeast Asia were concerned, Australia must take over the responsibilities once borne by the U.K. In a B.B.C. broadcast delivered on 10 May 1946, Dr. H.V. Evatt, Minister for External Affairs in the Labour Government had summed up the subsequent develops in this manner:

... We are reaching a stage in British Commonwealth relations at which there is a division of functions on a regional basis for certain purposes. It has become possible for a Dominion to act not only for itself but also for the United Kingdom and other Dominions as well. (6)

The United States by then had become a factor in the Pacific. Following the San Francisco Conference it was understood that the U.S. intended to play an active role in the post World War, assuming responsibilities and unprecedented commitments in support of international peace.⁷ The Australian thinking in the immediate post-war years was dominated by the fear of the possibility of a resurgent and expansionist Japan. It had then directed its policy to restrict Japan's economic and military strength, preventing it from menacing the peace of the

6 Watt, Alan, The Evolution of Australian Foreign Policy: 1938-1965, London, 1967, p. 103.

7 Reese, Trevor R., Australia, New Zealand and the United States - 1941-1968, Oxford, London, 1969, p. 48.

Pacific.⁸ Its strategic thinking had been based on the principle that defence against aggression from the "yellow hordes" from the North should be conducted in co-operation with the United States. At first the Labour Government placed a lot of hope on the U.N. to play a positive role in the maintenance of international peace. But as the U.N.'s weakness became more evident, Australia began to look for a Pacific regional arrangement on which it could lean for security.⁹ The U.S. was initially reluctant to assume regional commitments in the Pacific. There was also a change of attitude stemming from Japan's impressive economic growth, limited defence expenditure, its West-oriented policies, and the emergence of what seemed more formidable dangers with the communist victory in China, and the possibilities of the communist insurgency in Southeast Asia¹⁰ - exemplified by the Vietminh successes in Vietnam and by the communist subversive campaigns in Malaya. The links between the eastern and the western communisms symbolized in the Sino-Soviet Pact of 1950 further aggravated the fear of communist expansion both in terms of ideology and territory. The Sino-Soviet rift did not necessarily eliminate China as a source of danger.¹¹

8 n. 1, p. 481.

9 n. 7, p. 49.

10 n. 1, p. 482.

11 Ibid.

The Korean war in 1950 also abruptly changed American assessments of the priority of communist goals around the world. Therefore, in the American view, it became imperative to conclude a peace treaty with Japan in order that it might become a part of the anti-communist front in the region. In these circumstances, the Australian Government found its own advocacy of the prohibition of the Japanese re-armament at a loss. Mr. R.G. Menzies, the new Australian Prime Minister succinctly stated Australia's helplessness in that " ... if these Great Powers (the US and the UK) were not willing to prohibit and to enforce that prohibition by supervision and occupation if necessary, how could Australia by herself make a prohibition effective ...?"¹² At the same time, the United States found it desirable, though not strictly, to obtain Australian assent to a peace settlement with Japan, which Australians believed likely to increase their own security problems.¹³ The Australian Government did not believe that the new democratic Japan would not threaten the Australian security again. In fact, Mr. Percy Spender, who had succeeded Mr. H.V. Evatt as Minister for External Affairs said in January 1951 that a Pacific Pact was more than ever necessary because most of the powers negotiating the

12 Menzies, R.G., "The Pacific Settlement Seen from Australia", Foreign Affairs, vol. XXX, no. 2, January 1952, pp. 189, 194.

13 n. 6, p. 124.

Japanese Peace Treaty did not share the Australian view on the need to prevent a revival of Japanese militarism.¹⁴ Negotiations over the draft of a Japanese Peace Treaty gave opportunity for consideration of regional security plans, and detailed discussions took place when Mr. J.F. Dulles visited Canberra on 14 February 1951 as part of his Pacific tour to sound out opinion on peace terms with Japan. Australia had argued that Japan was its most obvious potential aggressor who alone in Asia possessed "both the industrial capacity for naval construction and a strong motive for expansion southward".¹⁵ Besides when the Korean war broke out on 25 June 1950, Australia had sent an air contingent in support of the United Nations' forces. On the following month, 26 July, it was also announced that it would commit units from all three services to the Korean struggle.¹⁶ This decisive action on the part of Australia enabled Australian - American relations to attain once again that degree of cordiality which had existed in 1945. On 18 April 1951, President Harry S. Truman of the USA announced his government's willingness to negotiate a Pacific Security arrangement with Australia and New Zealand pursuant to Article 51 and

14 Webb, L.C., "Australia and S.E.A.T.O", in Modalski, George, ed., S.E.A.T.O. : Six Studies, Melbourne, 1962, p. 52.

15 Sissons, D., "The Pacific Pact", Australian Outlook, vol. VI, no. 1, March 1952, p. 24.

16 n. 6, p. 123.

52 of the UN Charter - a statement welcomed by Mr. P.C. Spender as 'a green light on the road to Pacific Security'.¹⁷ The ANZUS Treaty was therefore signed by Australia, New Zealand and the US on 1 September 1951 prior to and in virtual conjunction with the signature, seven days later, of the Peace Treaty with Japan.¹⁸ On 29 April 1952, after instruments of ratification had been deposited by each of the signatories, the Treaty came into force in accordance with the Article IX thereof,¹⁹ which reads:

This Treaty shall be ratified by the Parties in accordance with their respective Constitutional processes. The instruments of ratification shall be deposited as soon as possible with the Government of Australia, which will notify each of the other signatories of such deposit. The Treaty shall enter into force as soon as the ratifications of the signatories have been deposited. (20)

The ANZUS Treaty was conceived broadly as an interim, but presumably, long term arrangement for the preservation of Pacific security, and the ANZUS Council was empowered to "maintain a consultative relationship with States, regional organisations, associations or other authorities

17 n. 14, p. 52.

18 Starke, J.G., The ANZUS Treaty Alliance, Melbourne 1965, p. 1.

19 Ibid.

20 'Security Treaty between Australia, New Zealand and the United States', Current Notes on International Affairs, vol. 22, no. 9, September, 1951, p. 500.

in the Pacific area in a position to further the purpose of this treaty and to contribute to the security of that area" (Article VIII).²¹ The major article was set out in Article IV:

Each party recognises that an armed attack in the Pacific Area on any of the Parties would be dangerous to its own peace and safety and declares that it would act to meet the common danger in accordance with its Constitutional processes. (22)

Thus the Treaty did not guarantee any specific response to an armed attack on any of the parties.²³ Though the language of the treaty was much milder than that of the North Atlantic Treaty (NATO), there were two favourable aspects in the wider interest of Australia. Firstly, there was no definition of the quarter from which a threat might come: it could therefore openly apply to the Japanese or communist aggression. Secondly, Article VIII held out the prospect of "a more comprehensive system of regional security in the Pacific Area".²⁴ The tendency to contrast the ANZUS Treaty with the North Atlantic Treaty strongly influenced the Australian policy and was an important

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid., p. 499.

23 Mediansky, F.A., "United States Interests in Australia", Australian Outlook, vol. 30, no. 1, April 1976, p. 143.

24 n. 20.

part of the background of the Manila Treaty.²⁵ It was assumed that a treaty on the lines of NATO covering South-east Asia and the Pacific, or some part of it, would contribute substantially to a solution of Australia's problem of security.

By 1954, the anti-communist objectives of the ANZUS seemed to have become paramount to its anti-Japanese purpose. With the conclusion of the Korean armistice in 1953, the U.S. had become concerned at the redirection of the communist Chinese pressure from Korea to Indochina.²⁶ The Republican administration of President Dwight D. Eisenhower re-oriented America's Far Eastern policy from the earlier policy of military containment and economic aid to the concept of "massive retaliation"²⁷ which involved placing "more reliance on deterrent power and less dependence on local defensive power".²⁸ But this new strategy was not favourably received among the allies of the U.S. In Indochina, the military position of the French which had been supporting the Associated States of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia against the Vietminh since

25 n. 14, p. 57.

26 Greenwood, Gordon and Harper, Norman, ed., Australia in World Affairs - 1950-55, Sydney, 1957, pp. 168-9.

27 n. 7, p. 163.

28 n. 26, p. 163.

1946 had also sharply deteriorated arousing fears of communism triumphing throughout Southeast Asia.²⁹ It also illustrated the limitation of the ANZUS in relation to stemming the southward expansion of communist activity.

It became increasingly evident that only intervention by other Western powers could avert a French collapse in Indochina.³⁰ Following the decision of the Berlin Conference of January 1954 to call a conference in Geneva for late April to consider, among other things, the problem of restoring peace in Indochina, and an intensified Vietminh offensive, General Paul Ely, the French Chief of Staff visited Washington on 20-26 March, 1954. He told the President and his advisors that American intervention alone could avert a final French defeat. On the basis of General Ely's appraisal of the situation, the U.S. decided that an intervention in Indochina was feasible with the support of its allies. Accordingly, in a speech to the Overseas Press Club on 29 March, 1954, Mr. John Foster Dulles issued a warning, that "communist control of Southeast Asia would carry a grave threat to the Philippines, Australia, and New Zealand with whom we have treaties of mutual assistance".³¹ Dulles called for a 'united action'

29 n. 26, p. 168.

30 Ibid.

31 Ibid., p. 170.

which was interpreted to mean that the Western nations should seek to halt the communist advance in Indochina by a threat of intervention. The British Government though welcoming the idea of a larger Pacific Pact was opposed to a formation of a defence organisation before the Geneva conference on the Indochina settlement. On 27 April 1954, Prime Minister Churchill formally announced in the House of Commons that 'Her Majesty's Government are not prepared to give any undertakings about UK military action in Indochina in advance of the results of Geneva'.³² The results of the American hydrogen bomb tests in early 1954 had made the British Government to pursue a policy of extreme caution and readiness to avoid possible escalation of local war into atomic war. Any military undertaking prior to the Geneva conference would have made difficult the task of securing the assent of the Soviet Union and China and the approval of India. It was not until the last week of June 1954, that the U.S. obtained Mr. Churchill's approval to British participation in the first discussions which eventually led to the creation of the S.E.A.T.O. A joint communique issued in Washington stated, that the two governments had agreed to 'hasten the planning of Asian defence against communism and to set up an Anglo-American working party to consider the problem of security

in the area'.³³ Thus, the initial American proposal for intervention in Indochina became transformed into a collective defence treaty to assure peace and security in Southeast Asia.

Since the Korean war, Australia regarded China as a principal source of danger to peace and stability of Southeast Asia. Falling in line with the American attitude, Australia did not recognise the Chinese communist government and had opposed its entry into the United Nations. Contradictorily, while appreciating China's value as a market, Australia felt, that the containment of China had become more important. Around this time, there had also been a greater realisation of the significance of the Asian States for Australia. Following the then External Affairs Minister, Mr. R.G. Casey's 'goodwill' visit to the Southeast Asian countries, Australian diplomatic representation in Southeast Asia substantially increased and expanded. As a result of first-hand sources, the Australian anxiety about the seriousness of the Indochina situation increased and made it all the more anxious to press on for the creation of a Mutual Defence Pact with a scope wider than in the ANZUS.³⁴

33 Ibid., p. 150.

34 Ibid., p. 145.

Mr. R.G. Casey had welcomed the "Dulles' proposal" at the same time he held that 'the line of thought put forward by Mr. Dulles needs further elaboration and exploration before any new statement of Australian policy can be made on this point'.³⁵ Australia's dilemma was quite evident in his remark. On 10 August 1954, he told the Parliament, that an armed intervention would be wrong as it would not have the backing of the United Nations. It would only embroil Australia with the communist China and wreck the Geneva Conference too. He had felt that Australia should look for a negotiated political settlement of the problem in Indochina while recognising the realities of the situation. The Australian dilemma now arose over the question of avoiding precipitate American action in Indochina without stifling the new American interest in the security of the mainland Southeast Asia. On the one hand, the need for a collective defence arrangement covering Southeast Asia and the West Pacific, backed by the American military power had been a fixed point in the Australian security calculation for nearly a decade, and it was feared that America would lose interest in Southeast Asia through the indecisiveness of its allies. On the other hand, there was also the fear that the goodwill built up labouriously by Australia in post-war Asia would be dissipated overnight if the Australian troops went into

35 n. 14, p. 59.

action against the Vietminh.³⁶ For an effective security pact, the Australian Government also regarded the participation of the Asian members, particularly of India, highly essential. It felt, that no country could be saved from communism unless the people wanted to be saved.³⁷ But the Asian States could not be convinced that a security system against communism would be desirable for them too.³⁸ A significant comment came from the Sydney Morning Herald which demanded that the US allies needed to say where they stood.

For America and Britain, the defence of Southeast Asia may be seen as strategically desirable, for France it is a matter of national prestige: but for Australia it is life and death. If the cork is forced out of the bottle, in Mr. Eisenhower's graphic phrase, and aggressive communism flood over the peninsula into Indochina, Australia will be placed in immediate and deadly peril. The security of Southeast Asia is Australia's security. (39)

On 4 June 1954 shortly before Mr. Casey's second departure for the Geneva conference, he had full discussions with the Australian Cabinet, which decided that the Australian policy should be directed towards securing the

36 Ibid., p. 60.

37 n. 26, p. 177.

38 Levi Warner, Australia's Outlook on Asia, Sydney, 1958, p. 95.

39 Sydney Morning Herald, (ed.), 29 April, 1954 see n. 14, p. 61.

following results:

- (1) consideration of the situation in Laos and Cambodia separately from that in Vietnam;
- (2) the withdrawal of the Vietminh forces from Laos and Cambodia;
- (3) a division of the State of Vietnam on the best possible terms that could be achieved by negotiation;
- (4) an international 'guarantee' of the settlement with provision for its enforcement;
- (5) the association of the free Asian countries, especially India, with the settlement of the guarantee;
- (6) a regional defensive arrangement within the framework of the UN Charter in support of this settlement in Indochina, but of course, with a more extensive purpose.⁴⁰

The negotiations for a Southeast Asian Defence Treaty gained momentum after the Geneva settlement on the Indochina problem which partitioned the former French colonial territory and protectorates at the 17th parallel latitude. There was a general lack of confidence that the settlement would prove to be a long lasting one. It was feared, that the 17th parallel might be found to be a very temporary boundary, that within a period of a year or two, the communist pressure from North Vietnam might be successful

40. Ibid., pp. 61-2.

in undermining the Government of the Republic of Vietnam, and that with the whole of Vietnam lost, the non-communist governments of Laos and Cambodia would also fall prey easily.⁴¹ Australia also feared that should international communism reach its shores, the defence burden to repel alone would be beyond the country's capacity.⁴² The critical situation in Southeast Asia was regarded as so serious that the Australian Prime Minister took the unprecedented step of announcing Australia's willingness, in times of peace, to accept military commitments in advance for the defence of Southeast Asia:

... before long we may be forced to regard the communist frontier as lying on the southern shores of Indochina (43)

Therefore it was felt, that Australia had to give not only economic and spiritual encouragement to the non-communist elements in Indochina, but also rally the weighty opinion and influence of the new democracies of South and Southeast Asia.

Seven weeks after the Geneva conference ended on 21 July, 1954, the Southeast Asia Collective Defence Treaty, commonly known as the S.E.A.T.O. (Southeast Asia

41 n. 6, p. 151.

42 Millar, T.B., Australia's Foreign Policy, Sydney, 1968, p. 96.

43 n. 6, p. 152.

Treaty Organisation), was signed in Manila on 8 September, 1954. Its members were Australia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Thailand, the Philippines, France, Great Britain and the United States.⁴⁴ In the closing session of the SEATO conference on 8 September 1954, the Minister for External Affairs Rt. Hon. R.G. Casey stated that the real purpose of the treaty was:

... to present a concerted front of defence against aggressive communism which presents the free world with immediate problems of security. We in Australia are very conscious of this; we realize that our fate is linked with the South-East Asian countries actually on the Asian mainland and all the countries not far away. And all our Australian defence policy is directed towards the dominant purpose of coping in the future with any eventuality that may unfortunately result. (45)

Unlike the NATO pact which explicitly stated that an attack on one member is considered an attack on all, the treaty contained only implicit provisions.⁴⁶ Thus the SEATO pact required action by each member country in the event of aggression, only in accordance with their

44 n. 38, p. 106.

45 Current Notes on International Affairs, Australian Foreign Affairs Department, Canberra, vol. 25, no. 9, September 1954, p. 646.

46 Girshing, J.L.S., "Australia and Southeast Asia in the Global Balance", Australian Outlook, vol. 31, no. 1, April 1977, p. 4.

constitutional processes".⁴⁷ R.G. Casey defended the treaty on the question of its effectiveness by stating that it did not matter ... "whether the Treaty language reads like NATO or reads like ANZUS. What matters is the purpose and attitude of mind of the signatories. This treaty is in fact our Constitution"⁴⁸ He quoted the U.S. Secretary of State Mr. Dulles who had said before a Congressional Committee in 1954 that "the test of a Constitution is not how it is written but how it works".⁴⁹ When an argument was raised that in the SEATO, the obligation of the parties under the terms of Article IV(i) was weaker than the corresponding obligation under NATO, R.G. Casey flatly contested the validity of the argument:

... at Manila we were careful to make certain that the wording adopted was just as effective as that used in the North Atlantic Treaty Mr. Dulles made it clear to us that, as far as the American Constitutional position was concerned, the formula adopted at Manila, deriving from the Monroe Doctrine ... gives all the freedom of action and power to act that is contained in NATO.⁵⁰

The Pacific Charter which accompanied the SEATO Treaty also emphasized the need for economic and technical

47 n. 45, p. 671.

48 Ibid., p. 645.

49 Ibid.

50 n. 6, p. 155.

assistance to Asia to deal with the problems of economic and social discontent which gave rise to communism. The SEATO did not include Laos, Cambodia and South Vietnam as treaty members but included them in the "treaty area" and eligible for assistance on request.

From Australia's point of view there were three aspects to the SEATO. First, it committed the United States to the physical defence of the mainland of Southeast Asia, and thus, interposed the American arms between China and Australia's neighbours. Secondly, it ensured joint efforts by three Asian States for their common defence, thus making them more ready and more able to defend themselves. And finally, it extended Australia's front line of defence, as it were, from the Kra Isthmus to the Thai, Laotian and South Vietnamese borders.⁵¹ Australia had wanted a deeper U.S. commitment against aggression, but the U.S. was adamantly against it, as it foresaw the possibility of involving the US through the SEATO in Indo-Pak conflict.⁵² Besides in the U.S.'s relations with China, the centre of gravity had shifted to Formosa and its concern was to provide in the SEATO a warning that further Chinese aggression would be resisted but beyond this to avoid undertakings that would limit its freedom

51 n. 41.

52 n. 14, p. 66.

to dispose its military forces according to the needs of the situation. In the outcome, the treaty had referred to aggression generally and the U.S. was allowed to append a declaration that its obligations related only to the communist aggression. For Australia there was always the ANZUS and even before the Manila Conference, Casey had been at pains to secure from Dulles an understanding that the ANZUS would not be superceded or reduced in importance by the SEATO. In fact, in the 1958 edition of his book, Friends and Neighbours, R.G. Casey had stated that "SEATO will no doubt do some of the work that ANZUS was designed to do. But it will not supercede ANZUS; Australia, New Zealand and the US are all agreed in wanting ANZUS to remain in existence and functioning".⁵³ The Australian government had confidence in the SEATO's ability to meet aggression and to contribute to the stability of Southeast Asia. If the SEATO was to play a military role primarily, it had to be effective and impressive enough to compensate for the loss of goodwill which its creation had caused with the Asian neutralist powers.⁵⁴ Another point worthy of note is that the UK had been excluded from the ANZUS largely by the American insistence, but it was a participant in the SEATO. For Australia, this was a favourable

53 n. 18, p. 221.

54 n. 38, p. 110.

turn of events as it established a connection between both its major Western partners in an area that was vital to Australian defence.

Throughout the fifties and sixties, Australia relied upon its associations with the UK and the US. It also rested upon the development of goodwill in a number of the Asian States, and upon their belief in the value of an Australian contact. But in purely strategic terms, the Asian factor was subsidiary to the Western association, simply because the West possessed military and economic power and most non-communist Asian States did not. In a sense, the basic Australian attitude was to preserve a continuing British interest in Southeast Asia, fundamentally in the Malayan area, and to ensure as far as possible that the U.S. would remain concerned with the containment of China and more generally of communism.⁵⁵

55 n. 1, p. 484.

CHAPTER III

AUSTRALIA AND VIETNAM

Vietnam is a long, thin-waisted, mountaneous country which stretches for some 1,200 miles from south-east China to the southern-most point of Cambodia. Its coastline shaped like the letter 'S' winds down from the Gulf of Tonkin, along the western border of the South China Sea, to the Gulf of Thailand.¹ There are two main significant areas of food supply, viz. the Red River Delta area in the north and the Mekong Delta area in the south, for which Vietnam has earned the description of being "like two rice baskets at the opposite ends of their carrying pole", the pole consisting of the intervening mountains.²

In the 50s and 60s, Vietnam was the focus of Australia's interest, activity, dissent and confusion over South-east Asia. What started as a Vietnamese war of independence against the French had been transformed by the Cold War into a western containment of communism. Australia's contribution consisting less than two percent of all foreign servicemen in Vietnam had been its largest involvement in overseas combat operation so far. The participation was more in the nature of a political

1 Watt, Alan, Vietnam: An Australian Analysis, Melbourne, 1968, p. 1.

2 Fall, Bernard, The Two Vietnams (rev. ed.), New York, 1964, p. 3.

gesture to South Vietnam, to the United States, and to the SEATO, than a significant military contribution towards ending the conflict.³

The Geneva Agreements of 21 July 1954 which saw the dispersal of the French from Vietnamese soil and partitioned the land at the 17th parallel was welcomed by Australia with a willingness to play a part in the consideration of peace in the area. The Prime Minister Sir Robert Menzies, on 22 July, 1954, had said that the government would apply, in regard to the settlement, the principles of the UN Charter, including Article 2(4). Australia would view aggression in violation of the settlement as a threat to international peace and security.

By 1961, the U.S. had become highly concerned about the Vietnamese communist activities in South Vietnam, moving President Kennedy to write to President Ngo Dinh Diem on 14 December 1961, stating that the U.S. was prepared to help the Republic of Vietnam "to protect its people and to preserve its independence".⁴ Furthermore, the U.S. would be willing to promptly increase its assistance to South Vietnam's defence efforts. Following

3 Millar, T.B., Australia's Foreign Policy, Sydney, 1968, p. 98.

4 n. 1, p. 98.

upon this letter, American troops in Vietnam, in 1963 had increased to some 12,000 men. The Gulf of Tonkin incident on 2 August 1964 led to an unexpected escalation of the war.⁵ On 4 August, following President L.B. Johnson's authorisation for a defensive counter-attack, U.S. aircrafts for the first time carried out bombing raids on North Vietnamese torpedo-boat bases and some oil - installations.

The military situation in South Vietnam during 1964-65 had deteriorated greatly. The period witnessed the overthrow of Diem's regime followed by political chaos that enabled the Viet-Cong to step up their activities in the hope of staging a final victory. Responding to South Vietnam's request on 7 February 1965, the U.S. conducted an air-attack and a series of follow-up raids against the Viet-Cong (in South Vietnam). This marked an important departure from the so-called "advise and assist" policy. By 1964, the U.S. was spending a million dollars a day on the defence of South Vietnam and over 15,000 American military personnel were advising the local armed forces.⁶

5 Ibid., p. 110. (On 2nd August, the American destroyer 'Maddox' patrolling in international waters about 30 miles off the coast of North Vietnam, and 80 miles southeast of Hanoi, was attacked by three North Vietnamese motor patrol boats which were driven off after sustaining some damage).

6 Reese, Trevor, R., Australia, New Zealand and the United States, A Survey of International Relations, 1941-66, London, 1969, p. 304.

The American troops gradually assumed major responsibility for offensive fighting after marines were introduced in March, 1965. By mid-1966 US units were frequently suffering a higher weekly casualty rate than the South-Vietnamese.⁷ By then, the United States had become so involved in the war that it made withdrawal for any U.S. government difficult to contemplate without at least an appearance of success in securing a peaceful settlement that kept South Vietnam free of communist control. The motivating central theme in official statements in the U.S. had been the need to halt the expansion of communism and prevent aggression succeeding. The so-called 'domino theory' was a dominant influence behind this theme, though later its validity was increasingly questioned.⁸

Australia recognised the Government of the Republic of Vietnam on 8 February, 1950 and its involvement in the South Vietnamese resistance of the communist North Vietnamese pressure had started from the early sixties. The ANZUS Council meeting held in Canberra on 8-9 May, 1962 had issued a communique which appreciatively noted the determination of the Republic of Vietnam to defend itself against the communist insurgency directed from

7 n. 1, p. 105.

8 n. 6, p. 307.

North Vietnam.⁹ The United States, represented by the Secretary of State Dean Rusk, requested more assistance in Vietnam emphasizing that Australia, New Zealand and other SEATO countries, as well as, the U.S. had obligations in South-East Asia. Australia responded ten days later on 24 May, 1962 by deciding to send at the request of South Vietnam, a group of some thirty Australian Army personnel to provide instruction in jungle warfare, village defence, and other related activities such as engineering and signals. The Minister of Defence Mr. Townley, however, emphasized that 'Australia would not be providing combat forces', and claimed that the decision was in accordance with Australia's obligations under the SEATO Treaty.¹⁰ The SEATO Council meeting held in Manila from 13-15 April also stated that the defeat of the communist campaign in South Vietnam was 'essential not only to the security of the Republic of Vietnam but to that of South-East Asia'. The members of the SEATO agreed to remain prepared, if necessary, to take further concrete steps within their respective capabilities in fulfilment of their obligations under the Treaty.¹¹ The increasing Australian involvement

9 Current Notes on International Affairs (Dept. of External Affairs), vol. 33, no. 5, May 1962, p. 6.

10 n. 1, p. 109.

11 Ibid., p. 112.

in Vietnam followed the American pattern, only on a much smaller scale. On 8 June 1964, the Australian government increased the number of its army instructors sent to Vietnam from thirty to sixty along with £ A 3,500,000 aid for defence support and economic development. Early in 1965, the number of Australian advisors were increased to one hundred.¹² As the situation continued to deteriorate, the Prime Minister Sir Robert Menzies, on 29 April 1965, announced the Government's decision to provide an infantry battalion for service in Vietnam following a visit by the U.S. President's special envoy Mr. Henry Cabot Lodge.¹³ This was a decisive Australian commitment in the Vietnam war which according to the Prime Minister represented the most useful additional contribution Australia could make to the defence of the region at that time.¹⁴ There was a further announcement on 18 August 1965 for three hundred and fifty additional supporting troops to be sent to South Vietnam.¹⁵

12 Watt, Alan, The Evolution of Australian Foreign Policy, 1938-1965, London, 1967, p. 183.

13 n. 6, p. 305.

14 n. 12, p. 183.

15 Vanderbosch, Amry and Mary Belle, Australia Faces Southeast Asia: The Emergence of a Foreign Policy, Lexington, 1967, pp. 111-12.

The Australian government's Southeast Asian outlook had long been based on the domino theory and was largely encouraged by a sympathetic press which expressed Australia's apprehensions about communism. The Sydney Morning Herald, for example, was concerned over the possible implications for Australian security of a successful communist aggression : If South Vietnam falls to communism (followed quite certainly by Laos) Thailand would be isolated and a vulnerable target for further communist expansion if it does not, like Cambodia, seek its own accomodation with Peking. This collapse would bring the communist presence to the borders of Malaysia. The Brisbane Courier Mail also commented , that "were Vietnam to fall, with it would go Laos, Cambodia and probably Thailand".¹⁷ But the qualitative change in the nature of the Australian military assistance to South Vietnam also stirred up some concerns about the effects upon Australia's capacity to carry out commitments elsewhere, like in Malaysia which was confronted by Sukarno's Indonesian military forces. Besides, no British troops had been sent to South Vietnam and many Australians felt it was unusual, uncomfortable and perhaps embarrassing

16 Sydney Morning Herald (SMH), 30 December 1964.
See also, SMH, 20 January, 10 and 16 February 1965.

17 Courier Mail (Brisbane), 10 February 1965.

to become involved in serious fighting except alongside Britain.¹⁸

In view of its traditional opposition to conscription for overseas service, the Labor Party also strongly criticized the government's decision to send combat troops to Vietnam. The opposition leader Mr. Arthur Calwell argued, that it would promote the interests of China in Asia and the Pacific. It meant the substitution of military for economic aid and the support of a reactionary regime. It further represented a threat to Australia's standing in Asia and above all to the security of the nation.¹⁹

The Australian commitment in Vietnam grew substantially from defensive duties to offensive operations against the Viet-Cong. In the 1966 elections, the polls showed majority support for the Vietnam war. Mr. Harold Holt and Mr. John Gorton who became Prime Ministers in 1966 and 1968 respectively, continued to carry out their party's Australian commitment in Vietnam. But as the war went badly, this support for the war began to fall away. It did not appear that China would be taken over, and, that the dominoes would begin to fall throughout South East Asia. Real uncertainty as to what might follow the

18 n. 1, p. 114.

19 n. 15, p. 112.

failure in Vietnam showed in the public debate which preceded the decision in February, 1969 to commit Australian forces to Malaysia and Singapore after the British had left.²⁰

No previous military cooperation overseas by Australia had given rise to such confusion and doubt as the involvement in Vietnam. Had the intervention been wise? Were the ends sought politically justified? Could they be achieved by the means adopted? These were the major questions that arose at the time.

In defense of the Australian government's action Sir Garfield Barwick, External Affairs Minister in May 1962, had said that if the communists achieved their aims in Vietnam, it would have gravely affected the security of the whole of South East Asian area and ultimately Australia itself. He also added, that the Australian government's response to the invitation to assist Vietnam which was a protocol state under the SEATO Treaty had been in accordance with Australia's obligations under that Treaty.²¹ Mr. Paul Hasluck, then Minister for External Affairs in 1966 also reiterated, again and again, that 'what is happening in South Vietnam is not a local

20 Grant, Bruce, The Crisis of Loyalty, A Study of Australian Foreign Policy, Sydney, 1972, p. 16.

21 n. 15, p. 110.

rebellion caused by internal discontent but the application of the methods and doctrines of communist guerrilla warfare first evolved in China and then successfully in North Vietnam'.²² Apart from the fear of communism, the government then had little faith in the UN's peace keeping ability and as a small nation in a time of power contest, it felt Australia could not afford to be neutral. The government's assessment was that if the spread of communism was not checked in South Vietnam, the communist pressure against the neighbouring States would intensify and their independence be at risk.²³ Australia's principle concern was with the intentions of China and the government identified communism in South East Asia with the Chinese expansionism. According to Prime Minister Holt, the Chinese government saw "the eventual domination of the world by communism as its ultimate goal. So far as Australia is concerned, what is happening in Vietnam is one of the steps in this process of expansion of communist influence and infiltration throughout the areas of South East Asia, penetrating further and further in the course of time until this continent is itself threatened ..."²⁴ The fear of communism reaching the shores of Australia

22 n. 1, p. 130.

23 n. 6, p. 311.

24 Ibid., p. 312.

was clear. The government had hoped that military intervention there combined with military and economic support for conservative governments elsewhere in South East Asia would bring forward anti-communist governments, thereby creating stability in the region. In justifying sending troops to Vietnam, Mr. Menzies at times emphasized the necessity to defend Australia "in depth" and to meet the enemy as far as possible from Australia's shores. It did not appear to him as it did to Mr. A.G. Whitlam, Deputy Leader of the Labor Party, that for a country which was anxious to establish close relations with Asian countries, this could have an adverse affect. What was good sense and good strategy for the Australians might be regarded by the Asians as a determination by the Australians to fight their wars on Asian soil.²⁵

As for the implication of the Australian membership of the SEATO, Mr. Hasluck often implied, that Australia did not act in Vietnam solely because it was obliged to do so under the SEATO. Whether the SEATO had existed or not, to see the communist advancement deterred and resisted in the region of South and Southeast Asia would have been uppermost in Australia's strategic thinking. The SEATO was an agreement and a working practical arrangement in

in which Australia adhered to and observed in pursuit of its own interests and policies. Its actions were in pursuance of its obligations through the SEATO but were not because of the SEATO alone.²⁶

As late as March 1970, Mr. Mc Mahon, Minister for External Affairs, reiterated in a Ministerial statement that Australia still regarded 'communist China and other communist regimes as a central obstacle to peace, stability and ordered progress throughout Asia'.²⁷ But once it became clear, that the US was pulling out of Vietnam, the Australian response was a reluctant but an unavoidable one. On 16 December 1969, the Prime Minister John Gorton acknowledged the implications of Nixon's decisions and stated that if there were subsequent withdrawals then some Australian troops would also be withdrawn.²⁸ The last withdrawal of the Australian combat troops was announced in November 1971 and only some one hundred and fifty army instructors remained in a training capacity.

With the phased withdrawal of troops the Australian public's interest in Indo-China also waned. All that

26 Ibid., p. 121.

27 Ingleson, John, "South East Asia", in Hudson, W.J., ed., Australia in World Affairs, 1971-75, Sydney, 1980, p. 291.

28 Sydney Morning Herald, 17 December 1969.

was left for the victorious Labor Party in the December 1972 elections was immediately on forming a government, to abolish conscription, bring home the remaining army instructors and end all military aid to the South Vietnamese and Cambodian governments.

The Liberal Country government had been cautious not to damage the Australia - U.S. alliance as it felt Australia's future security depended much on it.²⁹ But the Labor Party was less encumbered with the cold war ideology. While in opposition, the Labor Party had repeatedly argued that neither North Vietnam nor China provided noteworthy military aid to the Viet Cong, that the South Vietnam conflict was in the main an internal civil war, with the guerrillas receiving much support from the people.³⁰ The party called for a radical alteration in the ruling party's Vietnam policy - that if American defeat occurred, South East Asia would be swept by communism - as it was on the opinion that military action could not suppress a revolutionary movement. But the government had dismissed the Labour argument by reiterating that only America's firm commitment to the defence of South Vietnam could save South East Asia and therefore Australia would be

29 Canberra Times, 14 February 1968.

30 "Australia's Policy towards South East Asia", The Round Table, September 1965, no. 220, London, p. 385.

foolish and disloyal to adopt policies contrary to those of its protector.³¹ But once the Labour Party came into power it opened diplomatic ties with China and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, ended Australia's military commitment to South Vietnam and withdrew troops from Singapore, welcomed the reduction in U.S. military forces in the region and generally encouraged regional cooperation free from Western military involvement. For the first time an Australian government viewed South East Asia in its own right. In a low keyed approach it tried to identify Australia more closely with what it saw as the aspirations of the people's of the region.³² This new attitude was also reflected on Mr. Whitlam's attack on the government's policies in Indo-China on March 1970 as part of "our continuing failure to recognise and identify with the national aspirations and expectations of the people of the area".³³ The Labor government also stated its support for the full implementation of the Paris Agreement of January 1973 meant to prepare the way for a political solution, and supported any initiatives which might bring an end to the war.

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid., n. 27, p. 284.

33 Ibid., p. 291.

The fall of the Cambodian and South Vietnamese governments in April 1975 once more opened deep fissures in the Australian society on the Indo-China war raising old fears and prejudices about South East Asia and the domino theory again. The Whitlam government's response was, however, calm as it had expected such an outcome for years. As Mr. Whitlam put forward in his argument in a ministerial statement to the House of Representatives on 8 April 1975: "who rules in Saigon is not, and never has been, an ingredient in Australia's security. Our strength, our security, rest on factors and relationships ultimately unchanged by these events for some time the government's policy was to recognise as the legitimate government whoever controlled a country's capital".³⁴ In accordance with its stated policy, a few days after the Khmer Rouge captured Phnom Penh, the government recognised the government of President Norodom Sihanouk as the legitimate government of Cambodia. In Vietnam, the PRG was likewise recognised as the government of

34 "Indo-China" - A ministerial statement to the House of Representatives by the Australian Prime Minister Mr. E.G. Whitlam on 8 April, 1975. Australian Foreign Affairs Record, April 1975, vol. 46, no. 4, Netley (South Australia), p. 177.

South Vietnam after it gained control of Saigon.³⁵

35 Thereafter, Australia committed itself to substantial support for the reconstruction in Indo-China contributing, in fact, \$ 3.4 m to UN Commissioner for Refugees, UNICEF and the International Red Cross. Sydney Morning Herald, 7 May 1975.

CHAPTER IV

THE CAMBODIAN PROBLEM

The Cambodian problem has so far eluded a peaceful settlement between the four warring political groups that include:

- the Sihanoukists led by Prince Norodom Sihanouk;
- the Kampuchean People's National Liberation Front (KPNLF) led by former Prime Minister Son Sann;
- the Khmer Rouge led by Mr. Khieu Samphan; and
- the People's Republic of Cambodia (PRC) regime led by Mr. Heng Samrin.

A proper perspective of the situation requires one to fully understand the genesis of the problem, the background of the factional groups, the interest of Vietnam leading to occupation, and nonetheless, the interests of other external powers in the conflict.

The primary background of the Indo-China conflict can be found in the historical prejudices and traditional contrasts between different nations.¹ The first manifestation of the ethnic antagonism in the Cambodian conflict erupted on 9 April 1970 when Khmer troops killed some eighty-nine ethnic Vietnamese in the Prasaut area of

1 Kiljunen, Kimmo, ed., Kampuchea: Decade of the Genocide, Report of a Finnish Inquiry Commission, London, 1984, p. 60.

Svay Rieng.² Historically, Vietnam has been the predominant power in Indo-China and has always been sensitive towards developments in Laos and Cambodia.³ The close relations between Democratic Kampuchea and China in the mid-70's, therefore, gave Vietnam much cause to worry about China's covert intentions in Indo-China, especially, at a time when its own relations with China was deteriorating. The gradual weakening of relations between China and Vietnam was affected, in turn, by the strategic changes that took place in great power relations like the rapprochement between China and the United States, and the growing tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union. China, in fact, was the only country in the outside world with which the Democratic Kampuchean government under Pol Pot had any relation. It was estimated that in 1978, there were about 20,000 Chinese advisors residing in Cambodia.⁴

Vietnam also considered its western borders extremely vulnerable and this made relations with the neighbouring states strategically significant. Vietnam and Cambodia fell into an armed conflict over disputes concerning

2 Simon, Sheldon W., War and Politics in Cambodia, N. Carolina, 1974, p. 39.

3 Naidu, G.V., "Kampuchea Moving towards a Settlement", Patriot, Delhi, 19 January 1988.

4 n. 1, p. 23.

certain islands (The Chu, Phu Quoc, and Koh) and disagreements over the inland border as early as in May, 1975.⁵ In April and September of 1977, there were major attacks carried out by Democratic Kampuchea in the Vietnamese areas of Ha Tien and Tay Ninh. In a counter-attack, Vietnam penetrated for over a month as far as forty kms into the provinces of Takeo, Prey Veng and Svay Rieng. In the spring and summer of 1978, border clashes continued to be aggravated by the internal power struggle in Kampuchea, as it was called then and by the rebel movement in the eastern provinces along the border with Vietnam.

The Government of Democratic Kampuchea under the leadership of an ill-defined revolutionary organisation called Angkar (organisation) came into existence in 1976.⁶ The U.S. military bombings during the Vietnam war enabled the growth of a powerful national liberation struggle closely allied with North Vietnam and Laos. The liberation struggle of the Khmer Rouge was formed under the central leadership of Pol Pot, formerly Saloth Sar, Nuon Chea, Ieng Sary, and Son Sen. They drew ideological support from the interests of the poorest of the peasantry. Lon Nol fled and left the country in the hands of the

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid., p. 14.

militant Khmer Rouge Army on 17 April 1975. Thereafter, under the direction of Pol Pot, a series of genocidal activities were perpetrated in the pursuit of primitive communism with agriculture as the base. The reign of terror unleashed by the Khmer Rouge once again led to the formation of a rebel movement called the United Front or the Kampuchean National United Front of National Salvation (KNUFNS) on 2 December 1978. Its goals were:

- the overthrow of the Pol Pot regime;
- the establishment of a people's democratic regime; and
- the creation of friendly relations between Vietnam and Kampuchea.⁷

The internal measures of Pol Pot and the continuing border skirmishes finally led Vietnam to send its troops into Cambodia on 25 December 1978. By 10 January 1979, Vietnamese troops had the whole of Cambodia under control and they set up a new regime, the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) with Heng Samrin as President.⁸ By 1983, there were 150,000 to 180,000 Vietnamese soldiers in Cambodia.

Vietnam's intervention in Cambodia was strongly protested by the West and its allies in the UN. The

7 Ibid., p. 22.

8 Amrita Bazar Patrika, Calcutta, 9 January 1979.

Foreign Ministers of the five member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) called for Vietnam's immediate withdrawal of troops from Kampuchea as their joint statement issued at Bangkok on 12-13 January 1979 declared, that they "affirmed the right of the Kampuchean people to determine their future by themselves, free from interference or influence from outside powers in the exercise of their right to self-determination"⁹

In Australia, the Prime Minister Mr. Malcolm Fraser deplored the Vietnamese occupation and said, that the "Vietnamese invasion had created risk of serious intensification of the war into a regional conflict which had serious consequences for all those who lived in the region". He added, that "The very fact that Vietnam has signed an agreement that contains security elements with the Soviet Union tends to introduce the eastern bloc approach to politics in Southeast Asia".¹⁰ Australia also suspended its aid programme to Vietnam and all cultural exchanges with it. The Australian press also betrayed a fear of Soviet Union's suspected hegemonistic tendencies. The Vanguard on 25 January 1979 stated that

9 "World Nations and Leaders Condemn Vietnam", Third World Unity (Monthly), No. 14, Special number on Kampuchea, February 1979, New Delhi.

10 Ibid.

" ... The Soviet Union spread lies and slander against Democratic Kampuchea in an attempt to isolate the Kampuchean revolution and prepare the way ideologically for its invasion through the Vietnamese puppet army. The Soviet Union plans to use Vietnam to Asia in the same way as it used the Cubans in Africa - turning ... Asian against Asian, thereby increasing Soviet hegemony".¹¹

Vietnam and Laos gave recognition to the new government of PRK on 8 January, 1979¹² while the Soviet Union and Afghanistan followed soon after.

For the first several years of its occupation, Vietnam linked the withdrawal of its forces to the acceptance of the PRK by the ASEAN and China, and the termination of their assistance for the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK). The communique issued after a summit meeting of the heads of government of Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea on February 20-21, 1983 provided a formulation of the Vietnamese position. It provided for the Vietnamese withdrawal only "after the threat by reactionaries among the Beijing ruling circles and other reactionary forces, as well as, the use of the Thai territory against the People's Republic of Kampuchea and all support for the Pol Pot clique and

11 Ibid.

12 The Statesman (New Delhi), 10 January 1979.

other reactionaries have ceased completely and peace and security of Kampuchea, particularly along the Kampuchean - Thai border are assured".¹³

The Kampuchean crisis made a significant impact on international relations. The Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia heightened the fear of a new threat in the region from the Indo-Chinese communists.¹⁴ It affected the ASEAN's calculations of regional balance and order because it established Vietnam's superior status in Indo-China. This led the ASEAN to feel great concern about their security although none of the member states except perhaps for Thailand's national security was involved. It offered China the opportunity to draw closer to the ASEAN countries and also intensified the strategic rapprochement between China and the U.S.¹⁵ Under the leadership of the U.S., trade sanctions were immediately declared and all developmental programmes and Western aid stopped. But the Western policy of isolating Vietnam, ironically drew it closer to the Soviet Union who in turn, increased its military presence

13 Haley, P. Edward, "Kampuchea: The Riddles of Peace" Preliminary Draft. A Supplement to a paper by the same author "Which Way Out? Reflections on the Ways Wars End", prepared for a conference on Cambodia, Griffith University, Australia, June 30 - July 2, 1986.

14 Pillai, M.G.G., "Kampuchea's Proxy War: Will Diplomacy follow Trade?" The Statesman, 6 October, 1987.

15 n. 1, p. 64.

in the area.¹⁶

The ASEAN's diplomatic offensive against the Heng Samrin regime produced results in the form of the latter's continued absence from the UN.¹⁷ At the ASEAN's initiative, the United Nations' General Assembly in its thirty-fourth session, took up the Cambodian issue on 14 November 1979, and adopted the ASEAN-sponsored Resolution (No. 34/22) with a considerable majority. Accordingly, the General Assembly called for the immediate withdrawal of all foreign forces from Kampuchea and appealed to the antagonists that they should settle their disputes by peaceful means as per the UN Charter. Mr. Heng Samrin, however, ignored the UN resolution and in a strong-worded letter before the UN session started told the President of the Security Council that any meeting of the Security Council to hear the representatives of a "non-existing government" of Phom Penh would: 'constitute a flagrant intervention in the internal affairs of Kampuchea.'¹⁸

At this juncture, India came out with the proposal of keeping the UN seat vacant until the Kampuchean

16 Ibid.

17 n. 14.

18 Hindustan Times, New Delhi, 10 January 1979.

issue was solved. The question of seating rival Cambodian delegations in the NAM summit meeting had aroused a fierce debate in the ministerial meeting of the Non-aligned Co-ordinating Bureau before the Havana Summit in 1979.¹⁹ Since India recognised the Heng Samrin regime, the only non-socialist country to do so, it supported the Summit's decision, to keep the seat vacant in the future NAM summit meetings.²⁰ In fact, in the NAM Foreign Ministers' conference held in New Delhi in 1981, India had made a declaration in favour of:

- (i) foreign troops withdrawal from Kampuchea;
- (ii) an end to all types of interference in the country's affairs;
- (iii) a political settlement; and
- (iv) a zone of peace in the region.²¹

India's proposal was, however, categorically rejected by the US and its allies, including the ASEAN States. In 1980, the UN General Assembly voted 74 to 35 with 32 abstentions in favour of continued seating of the ousted Khmer Rouge.²² At the initiative of the ASEAN countries

19 Bangkok Post, 7 June 1979.

20 Indian Express, New Delhi, 8 February 1983. See also, China Daily, 8 February 1983.

21 Ibid.

22 The Statesman, 22 October 1980.

the U.N. General Assembly conference was held again from 15-21 July 1981.²³ It called again for the Vietnamese withdrawal and, also, cooperation in finding a just solution that would lead to a "neutral, independent and non-aligned Kampuchea".²⁴ Vietnam and the Soviet Union found the conference biased and did not participate in it.

Australia also continued to reiterate its support for the continued seating of Democratic Kampuchea in the UN along the Western lines. The Australian Foreign Minister Mr. Andrew Peacock had made this fact known to his counterparts at the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' meeting in June 1980.²⁵ Meanwhile, the unpopularity of the Khmer Rouge's past genocidal activities was gaining ground. The United Kingdom de-recognised the ousted Pol Pot regime in the beginning of 1980, but continued to support Democratic Kampuchea's seat at the UN General Assembly. The United States also neither recognized Pol Pot nor Heng Samrin. Australia was not far behind the Western powers in derecognising the ousted Pol Pot government. It did so on 14 February 1981 succumbing to mounting pressures from the domestic opinion and

23 Tribune, Chandigarh, 16 July 1981.

24 National Herald, New Delhi, 15 July 1981.

25 New Strait Times, Kuala Lumpur, 17 July 1980.

condemnation. It did not recognise the Heng Samrin regime and abstained on the UN vote on Kampuchea in 1981 and 1982.

The ASEAN countries were compelled to step up efforts for a coalition government to improve Democratic Kampuchea's credibility with the world organisation. In 1981, at the ASEAN Foreign Minister's meeting, the sponsoring States found it difficult to take a common position on the best way to resolve the Kampuchean tangle. Vietnam, Indonesia and Malaysia had a similar outlook on China's influence as a security threat to Southeast Asia. Indonesia was opposed to the ASEAN being associated with the supply of arms and instead stressed the need for efforts of a negotiated settlement.²⁶ Thailand and China, on the other hand, shared a common vision of Vietnam as "an arrogant and expansionist power which, if allowed to consolidate control in Laos, Cambodia and at home, would seek to export its revolution to neighbouring Thailand". China actually exploited Thailand's chronic oil shortages by refusing to deliver promised oil supplies unless it agreed to resupply arms and aid to Khmer Rouge via the former US air base of Takli in

26 Times of India (New Delhi), 28 December 1981.

Central Thailand.²⁷

The ASEAN's standpoint in the Kampuchean affair was clearly expressed in the declaration of the International Conference on Kampuchea (ICK) in the same year. It stated that :

- free elections should be held under the U.N. auspices;
- to assure the success of the elections, measures should be taken to prevent 'armed Kampuchean factions' from disrupting the voting; and
- a neutral interim administration should maintain order pending the establishment of the elected government.²⁸

The Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK) was formed in Singapore in 1981²⁹ and Prince Norodom Sihanouk represented the newly formed government in the UN General Assembly on 26 October 1982. The General Assembly rejected a move initiated by nearly a dozen countries, including India, to unseat the CGDK. The voting was 29 in favour, 90 against, and 26 abstentions.

27 Eads, Brian, "Why Thais Support Peking", Observer (London), 6 May 1979.

28 n. 26.

29 Far Eastern Economic Review, Hongkong, 20 January 1983, p. 22.

In the following years, the Kampuchean problem seemed to involve two main issues -

- (i) the withdrawal of Vietnamese forces and prevention of the recurrence of genocidal policies and practices of the Pol Pot regime.
- (ii) to ensure the cessation of all foreign interference and external arms supplies to the opposing Kampuchean forces.³⁰

Negotiations for a Kampuchean settlement had reached a stalemate and it seemed that the Kampuchean were caught in a vicious circle without having the ability to break out of and other parties not having sufficient political will. The Vietnamese were not willing to withdraw unless military assistance to the rebel factions were stopped. Similarly, the stoppage of aid was put on conditions of Vietnamese withdrawal. Thailand by this time had well projected an image of a frontline state and was least desiring of a compromise. To Thailand, maintaining a crisis situation in the neighbouring Kampuchea was advantageous for two reasons:

- (i) It increased the political and military weight of Thailand in the strategic calculation of the West and it gave an opportunity to pressurise for U.S. military aid.

30 Bhagwan Jai, "Khmer Rouge: The Bone of Contention in Kampuchea", Strategic Analysis, vol. XII, no. 8, November 1988, New Delhi, p. 893.

- (ii) The guerrilla activities by the communist party in the northern parts of the country had significantly died down because of reduced support from China.³¹

Thailand, therefore, covertly provided support areas, and created buffer zones in the border areas occupied by refugees and controlled by the opposition movements.

The Kampuchean peace negotiations once again found its momentum around the year 1987. The background for it was laid by what has now come to be accepted as a historic watershed in world affairs - Mr. Mikhail Gorbachev's Vladivostok speech in 1986 outlining an imaginative Asia initiative.³² The Soviet Union who had stayed out of the Kampuchean problem revised its views when the Soviet leader emphasized its geo-political and strategic interest in the Asia - Pacific region. In mid-1987, Moscow set up a Special Department of Socialist countries of Asia and in November the same year, restored diplomatic relations with China.³³

31 n. 1, p. 66.

32 George, T.J.S., "Kampuchea's Elusive Peace", Indian Express, Delhi, 12 May 1988.

33 Ibid.

There were also other significant developments preceding 1987 that favoured diplomatic initiatives.

Firstly, China's financial aid to the Khmer Rouge resistance decreased somewhat which weakened their counter-offensive moves especially after the Vietnamese dry season offensive in 1984-85.

Secondly, factional fights within the CGDK came to the open in 1985 prompting Prince Sihanouk to absent himself from his post for a year starting from May 1987.

Thirdly, Vietnam which had started yearly troops withdrawal in 1982 withdrew a large number (20,000 approx.) in 1987 promising to withdraw completely by 1990.

Fourthly, Heng Samrin's government had decided in February 1986 to postpone the national elections due in 1987 till 1991, to keep the door open for a settlement before elections were held.

Fifthly, in 1986, the CGDK for the first time in an eight-point proposal agreed to accommodate the Heng Samrin faction in a four-party interim government, and did not insist on a Khmer personality, to whose presence Vietnam takes serious obligation, at the head of the interim government. Vietnam, for its part, withdrew its objection to the presence of the Khmer Rouge except for Pol Pot and his close associates.

Sixthly, China also relented from its earlier hard-line posture and re-established diplomatic relations with Laos suspended since 1979.³⁴

At the twentieth conference of the ASEAN Foreign Ministers held in Singapore in June 1987, Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew declared in a positive refrain that "... an eventual Cambodian settlement ... is more likely than continued Vietnamese defiance".³⁵ In the attempt of finding a political solution, Vietnam approached Prince Sihanouk twice - first through an Austrian intermediary in 1986 and Rumania in 1987, with a proposal for a four-party meeting of Kampuchean factions in Vienna. Neither worked.³⁶

In the meantime, on the anniversary of his Vladivostok speech, Gorbachev in a press interview gave an assessment of peace prospects in Cambodia. He went on to say, that the ASEAN countries could make contributions to the incipient process and that Soviet Union was "already aware of the initiatives put forward by Indonesia and some other countries and we welcome them." It was soon followed by a major breakthrough in the discussions

34 n. 3.

35 Thayer, C.A., "Reconciliation in Kampuchea: A Perspective - II", Patriot, 11 January 1989.

36 n. 32.

in Ho Chi Minh City between Indonesia foreign minister Professor Mochtar Kusumaatmadja and his Vietnamese counterpart Mr. Nguyen Co Thach. In the joint communique issued, an informal meeting of the two sides of Kampuchea, which Mr. Mochtar called a "cocktail" party, was agreed on the basis of "equal footing, without pre-conditions and with no political labels".³⁷ At a later stage, Indonesia would invite other concerned countries including Vietnam to participate. Jakarta was offered as the site for this meeting. Vietnam, however, changed its mind within days of the proposal and said it would not talk to the CGDK until it got rid of the "Pol Pot clique".³⁸ The ASEAN also called a snap meeting in Bangkok on 16 August, 1987 and nullified the Mochtar-Thach agreement out of the possible fear that ASEAN's position at the UNGA would be undercut. The new ASEAN proposal declared, that

"the proposed informal meeting is envisaged as one meeting, initially among the Cambodian parties, followed immediately by the participation of Vietnam."

ASEAN's rejection evoked an immediate protest from the Indo-Chinese States. The Soviet Union, Indonesia and other concerned parties pursued an intense round of

37 n. 14.

38 Ibid.

diplomacy once again in an effort to get all parties to show some flexibility. The Thai foreign minister's visit to China on 18-20 August resulted in China's endorsement of the ASEAN's 16 August proposal. Prince Sihanouk, under pressure from China, also accepted on 2 September to put his name to a joint statement with his coalition partners. At one stage, after the announcement of quitting his post, he had criticized the United States, France, and other countries for their unwillingness to officially recognise the coalition government though it received their support. He bluntly refused to take the Australian offer of help in promoting negotiations about his return to Kampuchea.³⁹ Ignoring all advices, recommendations and proposals to end the Kampuchean people's sufferings, Prince Norodom Sihanouk sharply criticised those who co-operated in any form with Vietnam, giving it economic or technical aid and assistance. Thus he also criticized Australia's trade agreement with Vietnam to participate in the construction of a telecommunication centre in Vietnam.

The peace process stalled since the ASEAN's 16 August statement began to move forward again. On the eve of the UN General Assembly session dealing with Kampuchea on 8 October, 1987, the PRK issued a major

39 Patriot, 31 January 1987.

five-point policy statement in which it reiterated its willingness to meet the leaders of the opposition groups except Pol Pot and his aides. Besides, the PRK was ready to offer Prince Norodom Sihanouk a high place in the leading state organ in conformity with his contribution to the cause of peace, national reconciliation and the independence of the country.⁴⁰ Three days later, Vietnam announced its sixth annual partial withdrawal of the Vietnamese troops in November in the presence of invited foreign observers.

The Laotian leader Kaysone Phomvihane had also made a few diplomatic moves when he went from Vientianne to Moscow via New Delhi in June, 1987. Apparently, he wanted India to get involved as a mediator.⁴¹

It was on 2 December 1987, at Fere-en-Tardenois, 60 miles to the east of Paris, that Prince Sihanouk and Premier Hun Sen finally met for the first ever dialogue after the Vietnamese intrusion in 1978.⁴² The four-point agreement signed between the two leaders indicated that a political solution must be achieved via negotiations

40 Thayer, Carlyle A., "Reconciliation in Kampuchea: A Perspective - III", Patriot, 12 January 1989.

41 n. 32.

42 The Times (London), 3 December, 1987.

involving all parties to the conflict to be guaranteed by an international conference.⁴³ Sihanouk's failure to mention the Vietnamese forces in Kampuchea led to criticism by his coalition partners. This and also the failure of Vietnam to meet him led to call off further talks on 9 December. But on the 14th of December, he reversed his stand and agreed to meet Mr. Hun Sen for the second time.

The second round of talks took place at St. Germain-en-Laye from 20-22 January, 1988 where both sides exchanged views about the shape of a future political settlement. Mr. Hun Sen set up a draft time-table for the Vietnamese withdrawal of forces over three phases lasting twenty-four months which would commence as soon as a political agreement was reached.

Indonesia's and the USSR's hectic diplomatic efforts paid off when Vietnam agreed to participate in the Jakarta Informal Meeting (JIM) on 25-28 July 1988. It was the first occasion that Vietnam officially met with the four Kampuchean parties, including the Khmer Rouge.⁴⁴ JIM set up a working group of all participants which, with the exception of the Khmer Rouge, convened in 17-20 October to discuss the separation of the external or

43 n. 39.

44 Patriot, 13 January 1989.

international from the international aspects of the Kampuchean question.⁴⁵ It meant that the process of withdrawing Vietnamese forces from Kampuchea would not be a matter between Hanoi and the CGDK but remain, in effect, a bilateral issue between Vietnam and the PRK to be carried out, not unilaterally as in the past, but as part of an overall political settlement.⁴⁶ The question of a Vietnamese withdrawal was also linked with the cessation of external aid for the Khmer Rouge and other resistance factions. The proposals put forward by Prince Sihanouk had included:

- the disbandment of the Heng Samrin government before national election;
- installation of a "quadripartite government" of the resistance groups and the Phnom Penh establishment in which there would be four co-ministers representing the four parties in every ministry;
- an international conference under UN aegis to be held in a neutral country; and
- an international control commission comprising two each from neutral or non-aligned countries,

45 Ibid.

46 Thayer, Carlyle A., "Obtaining and Securing Peace within Kampuchea: The Next Phase (Withdrawal/Neutralization)". Paper presented to the Third International Conference on Cambodia, Queensland, January 23-28, 1989, Australia, p. 4.

socialist or communist countries, and the 'free world'.⁴⁷

These were not acceptable to the Heng Samrin government which counter-proposed:

- the forming of an international control commission to supervise a political settlement;
- withdrawal of Vietnamese forces by March 1990 at the latest;
- the dismantling of the Khmer Rouge army of Pol Pot; and
- an international conference to endorse and guarantee the arrangements mutually agreed upon by the four contending groups.

As against the other side's proposal for the disbandment of the Phnom Penh government the Cambodian proposal called for the formation of a "national reconciliation Council" headed by the Prince himself. It was to be given responsibility to oversee the implementation of the agreements and to hold the national election.⁴⁸ The KPNLF and the Khmer Rouge, however, rejected the Kampuchean proposal outright. Prince Sihanouk presented

47 Saral Patra, "Kampuchean Settlement Soon?", Hindustan Times (New Delhi), 15 February 1989.

48 Ibid.

his own plans with some modification in the Hun Sen's proposal. He called for a national administration built on existing structures to be gradually transferred into a quadripartite body in a new "State of Kampuchea" with a new national flag and anthem.⁴⁹

The points on which the Jakarta Informal Meeting reached a consensus are contained in the statement of the Meeting's Chairman, Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas:

All participants share the view that the two key issues of the Kampuchean problem which are interlinked are the withdrawal of Vietnamese forces from Kampuchea, to be carried out within the context of an overall political solution, and the prevention of the recurrence of genocidal policies and practices of the Pol Pot regime and to ensure the cessation of all foreign interference and external arms supplies to the opposing Kampuchean forces. They also saw the need to set definite timetables and to provide an effective international presence to supervise these processes. (50)

On 19 February 1989, the leaders of the four Khmer factions, Foreign Ministers of the ASEAN, Vietnam, and Laos attended an upgraded version of JIM-I⁵¹ where the issues of interest were concerned with the transitional

49 n. 30, p. 896.

50 n. 46, pp. 4-5.

51 Hindustan Times, 19 February 1989.

period after the withdrawal of the Vietnamese troops which Vietnam promised by September, 1989. Once again, differences arose over arrangements between the withdrawal and general elections.⁵² More specifically, the two crucial issues were - UN role in the Kampuchean peace process, and the dismantling of the Vietnam - backed Heng Samrin regime soon after Hanoi withdrew its forces.⁵³ The Vietnam foreign minister Mr. Nguyen Co Thach reiterated that Vietnam would withdraw all its forces by December, 1990 irrespective of a political situation. Mr. Hun Sen had also expressed the view, that the Jakarta talks should lead to an international conference on Cambodia rather than to a JIM-III.⁵⁴ The conference would be convened with the participation of India, USSR, the U.S., U.K., France, and China, all of whom had participated at the international conference on Indo-China in the 1950s. Hun Sen had made this statement in reference to suggestions that there could be an informal meeting in Bangkok (BIM) among the Khmer factions.⁵⁵ Furthermore, Prince Sihanouk was conspi-

52 Bangkok Post, 16 February 1989.

53 Times of India, 20 February 1989.

54 The Hindu (Madras), 21 February 1989.

55 Ibid.

cous by his absence and he was represented by his son Prince Ranaridh. He saw no point in attending the talks after the PRK had rejected his five-point proposal. Against the five points of Prince Sihanouk, there had been the seven-point proposal of the PRK. Mr. Hun Sen had also proposed a civilian International Control Commission (ICC) but this could not come under the UN's auspices as Cambodia's UN seat was held by anti-Phnom Penh resistance coalition.

Other than the Jakarta Informal meetings, France and Indonesia also co-sponsored a series of Paris Peace Conferences on Cambodia. The first Paris meeting had taken place in 5-7 November, 1988 before the start of the JIM-II. This was followed by two rounds of inconclusive talks between Hun Sen and Sihanouk in December, 1988 and January, 1989.⁵⁶ The second Paris meeting was convened in 1 August, 1989 for a month long duration with representatives from ASEAN, Indo-China, five permanent members of the UN Security Council and those regarded as being capable of contributing peace.⁵⁷ The UN General Secretary proposed to send a fact-finding mission to Cambodia to gather technical information on the spot, including all areas of the country. This

56 International Herald Tribune, 2 November, 1989.

57 Ibid.

decision was taken at the three day foreign ministers level plenary session in Paris before the second international peace conference started. The purpose of the mission was to gather any information of a purely technical nature, relevant to the work of the Committee, co-chaired by India and Canada, to define modalities of a ceasefire and the mandate, as well as, the principles which would guide the creation and operation of an effective international control mechanism in order to supervise and control the comprehensive implementation of the settlement.⁵⁸ Mr. Hun Sen welcomed the U.N. mission only after a reassurance from the UN Secretary General and the foreign ministers of Canada and Australia that the presence of the mission did not imply future UN involvement in the internal affairs of Cambodia.

The timing of the peace conference had been influenced by Vietnam's declaration of troop withdrawal irrespective of political settlement. Vietnam's decision to withdraw did not reflect any change in its long-standing conviction that its security depended on exercising close political influence over the whole of Indo-China. In fact, this conviction had been responsible

58 The Hindu (Gurgaon), 4 August, 1989.

for the initial invasion of Cambodia to oust the Khmer Rouge which was seen as an aggressive proxy for China.

Vietnam's total troop withdrawal by 26 September 1989⁵⁹ had aimed at securing an end to external military support for the Khmer Rouge, and to exclude the Khmers effectively from a political settlement by playing on their gruesome record.⁶⁰ In this regard, Prince Norodom Sihanouk criticized a French compromise proposal for a two-tier interim administration in Cambodia in which the Khmer Rouge would effectively be involved only in helping to organise elections.⁶¹ According to him, "it would be impossible to achieve peace without the Khmer Rouge who form the military back-bone of the three-party resistance coalition headed by the Prince".⁶² The Paris peace talks, therefore, failed again as the Hun Sen government refused to disband itself while the other factions also found the formation of a body consisting of all four factions unacceptable as that would mean legitimising an imposed regime. It was then

59 Times of India, 27 September, 1989.

60 Leiffer, Michael, "Cat and Mouse with the Khmers", The Times (London), 11 August, 1989.

61 Times of India, 29 August 1989.

62 Ibid.

that Australia joined other diplomatic initiatives and came forward with a proposal to prevent another deadlock. The Australian proposals that envisaged a major role for the UN in a comprehensive political settlement of the Cambodian problem were discussed in the resumed second Paris talks on November, 1989 but divisions remained over how to prevent the Khmer Rouge from reasserting control in Cambodia.⁶³ The proposals also formed the basis of the Informal Talks in Jakarta on 26 February 1990 attended by participants from nineteen countries - the JIM group (comprising the four Cambodian parties, the six ASEAN countries, and Vietnam and Laos) together with the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, four other "interested countries (Australia, Canada, India and Japan) and Zimbabwe, as the then Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement.⁶⁴

63 n. 51.

64 Australian Foreign Affairs and Trade. The Monthly Record, vol. 61, no. 3, Canberra, March 1990, p. 144.

CHAPTER V

AUSTRALIAN PROPOSALS FOR PEACE IN CAMBODIA

Australia's peace efforts to achieve a Cambodian settlement has to be understood against a background of its earlier peace initiatives and attitude towards Indochina.

In the period before the Vietnam war, Cambodia did not engage Australia's interest at all. It's lack of interest and understanding of the region was equally matched by an absence of policy towards it.¹ On account of its proximity to Vietnam, Cambodia came under the purview of the domino theory which had been coined by President Eisenhower in 1954. It was a "domino" threatened by communist China and Vietnam. With its intense preoccupation with military security and the downward thrust of communism, Australia had found it essential to support neutral governments in the Indochina States. Accordingly, it supported the Lon Nol regime and also continued to support the Pol Pot regime following the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia. Australia followed the Western line both at the United

1 "Australia, Indo-China and the Cambodian Peace Plan", Address on 13 March, 1990 to the Sydney Institute, by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Senator Gareth Evans, Australian Foreign Affairs and Trade Record, vol. 61, no. 3, Canberra, March 1990, p. 142.

Nations and in its attempts to isolate Vietnam. It condemned the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia and suspended all bilateral aid and cultural exchanges to Vietnam on 24 January 1979.² An attitude to the events was exemplified in a speech to the House of Representatives by the then Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser on 22 February, 1979. He said: "Pol Pot's regime horrified the world but Vietnam's invasion of Kampuchea cannot be condoned because of that. The Australian government cannot accept the use of force for the settlement of disputes, whatever their cause".³ Australia continued to support the United Nations Security Council resolution of 25 January 1979 calling for the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Kampuchea but very soon, the pressure of domestic public opinion and condemnation forced it to withdraw its recognition of the Khmer Rouge government on 14 February 1981. It also abstained in the annual vote in the UN General Assembly on 18 September of the same year to uphold the credentials of the Democratic Kampuchean delegation. In so doing, it broke ranks with the ASEAN which had been sponsoring the Khmer

2 Howarth P., "Vietnam and Australia: The Cambodian Situation and Bilateral Relations", Australian Foreign Affairs Record, 55(3), March, 1984, p. 174.

3 Ibid.

Rouge's cause in the United Nations.⁴ On the occasion of the UN General Assembly voting, the Australian Ambassador to the UN, Mr. David Anderson explained his country's decision to abstain. He said the reasons included " ... our derecognition of the Democratic Kampuchean regime, the contested situation within Kampuchea itself, and the efforts to establish an internationally and domestically acceptable alternative for that country"⁵ At the same time Australia held back from giving recognition to the Heng Samrin government and made its support clear for the efforts of the ASEAN to bring about a peaceful settlement in Kampuchea.

The Whitlam period introduced a new evolutionary outlook in Australia's support to Indochina. The change involved a sharper appreciation of national interests, the projection of a very much more independent Australian image, a deepened commitment to international cooperation and multilateral process, and a determination to intensify Australia's regional foreign policy focus.⁶ In this regard, Australia gradually realized that its national interests were very much involved in

4 n. 1, p. 143.

5 n. 2, p. 174.

6 n. 1, p. 142.

Cambodia⁷, the strife-torn area in the Southeast Asian region. In its evolving relationship with Southeast Asia, Australia has come to regard Indochina, and the Cambodian problem in particular, as an issue central to the stability of the region, an important factor in its relations with the ASEAN, and an important criterion by which it is perceived by the region.

Australia's concern about the Cambodian problem and peace efforts resulted from the fear of a prolonged war that could hold the possibility of becoming the single greatest source of instability in the region. It is the sole serious disruptive cynosure in the region and being an issue that touches the interests of many outside the region, including the super powers, China, and France, it could feed tensions and hostilities between regional countries. It could also draw in the great powers on opposite sides much against the interests of the region.⁸ There are also economic

7 Introductory address on 26 February 1990 by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Senator Gareth Evans, to the Informal Meeting on Cambodia in Jakarta. Australian Foreign Affairs and Trade, February, 1990, no. 2, vol. 61, p. 70.

8 "The Australian Government's foreign policy philosophy". Edited transcript of a speech to the Australian Joint Service Staff College by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Bill Hayden, MP, on 10 April 1984. Australian Foreign Affairs Record, April, 1984, vol. 55, no. 4, pp. 308-9.

considerations but new levels of economic development and cooperation cannot be wholly pursued if the war continues. Apart from these, Australia conveys a humanitarian interest in its attempts to resolve the Cambodian conflict through a comprehensive settlement. It has, in fact, provided humanitarian basic assistance within Cambodia through various international agencies and non-government organisations (NGOs).⁹ For instance, on 23 February 1990, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Senator Gareth Evans had made a statement that Australia would contribute \$ 3.2 million in 1990 for programmes assisting displaced persons on the Thai - Cambodian border and for relief programmes inside Cambodia which would be channelled through the United Nations Border Relief Operation (UNBRO) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)¹⁰

Australia's refusal to co-sponsor the ASEAN's resolution on Kampuchea at the United Nations' General Assembly had caused a lot of tension between the two sides. In spite of this, the then Australia's Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, Bill

9 (Parliament, Question Without Notice", Cambodian Aid", from Hansard of 23 August 1990), Australian Foreign Affairs and Trade, August, 1990, vol. 61, No. 8, p. 561.

10 n. 7, p. 103.

Hayden (Labour Party) persisted in his efforts to play a mediatory role with the objective of finding a comprehensive Cambodian solution. On his visit to Vietnam in June-July 1983, he presented a peace proposal which was based on the following principles:

- (i) acceptance by Vietnam of an appropriate accommodation with its neighbours;
- (ii) phased withdrawal of the Vietnamese forces from Cambodia matched by an effective arrangement to prevent Pol Pot and his Khmer Rouge forces returning to power in Cambodia;
- (iii) a form of self-determination for Cambodia;
- (iv) the creation of conditions for the peaceful return of the displaced Cambodians to Cambodia;
- (v) the acceptance by all parties that Cambodia is neutral, independent and non-aligned; and
- (vi) the restoration of normal relations between Vietnam, on the one hand, and China, the ASEAN, and the West, on the other.¹¹

Australia put these proposals in its concern for continued stability in the Southeast Asian region. By the early eighties, the perceived threat from the

11 n. 2, p. 176.

Soviet Union's direction and its expansionist tendencies were strongly entrenched in Australia's strategic thinking owing to its invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. Australia grew apprehensive about Vietnam's growing dependence on the Soviet Union and feared that if the war continued, Vietnam's dependence would increase which in turn would contribute to an obtrusive increase of the Soviet military presence in the Asia - Pacific region. In a speech to the Sydney Journalists' Club on 8 November 1984, Mr. Bill Hayden, who had by then become the Minister for Foreign Affairs, said: "The Soviet Union is investing a great deal in the way of economic and other kinds of support for the Vietnamese government. It has obviously calculated that the cost is worth the profit that it returns: in other words, the cost is worth the portion that its support buys in the larger Soviet concern with China and the United States. In the meantime, of course, the objective of the ASEAN and the Asian region to keep out super power rivalry is rendered that much more difficult".¹² Prime Minister Bob Hawke also expressed his anxious concern over the disturbing implications that the Cambodian situation carried for peaceful relations among all countries of the Asia - Pacific

12 Australian Foreign Affairs Record (henceforth it will be written as AFAR), November, 1984, p. 1168.

region. Regarding Australia's future plan of action, he said, in an address at a return dinner for the Japanese Prime Minister Mr. Nakasone in Tokyo on 2 February 1984 that " ... because Australia has the ability to speak to all the main protagonists in the Indochina problem - the ASEAN countries, China, the United States and Vietnam itself - we will continue within the limits of our capacity, to do what we can to promote progress towards a settlement.¹³

In response, to the Australian proposal, Vietnam showed its willingness to engage in regional discussions on problems relating to the first stage towards peace and security in Southeast Asia and in the list included:

- Vietnamese troop withdrawals;
- removal of Pol Pot and his associates (Ieng Sary and Khieu Samphan) as a political and a military force;
- a safety zone on both sides of the Thai-Cambodian border;
- security of borders, including the Chinese borders with Vietnam and Laos and the Thai-Lao border;

13 AFAR, February 1984, p. 63.

- a process of self-determination by free elections, excluding Pol Pot and his associates; and
- international supervision of all aspects of the foregoing.¹⁴

Since Vietnam had been maintaining a rigid stance all along, the fact that it was now prepared to regard the Cambodian and related problems as a priority issue in regional security talks, and the reference to self-determination, were considered to be a new element in Vietnam's attitude.

Although Australia expressed different views on certain issues like the co-sponsorship of the annual ASEAN resolution at the UN, or a possible war crimes tribunal to try Pol Pot and his associates, Mr. Bill Hayden's active efforts helped to keep the Cambodian issue alive and brought the international community to appreciate the Australian contribution to the peace process. The need to reform the Soviet economy in the mid-eighties along with other factors compelled Mr. Gorbachev to call the Soviet troops out of Afghanistan.¹⁵ Vietnam also felt the pressure to

14 n. 2, p. 176.

15 Thayer Carlyle A., "Reconciliation in Kampuchea: A Perspective - III", Patriot, 12 January 1989.

accelerate its troop withdrawal from Cambodia as the Soviet Union was no longer in a position to supply financial and military assistance. But neither Vietnam's announcement of a complete troop withdrawal nor the JIM II talks and the Paris Conference in November 1989 showed any sign of positive progress towards a comprehensive settlement of the Cambodian problem.

Against this background, Australian foreign minister and Senator Gareth Evans came forward with a proposal, that he thought would find a way through the impasse "by retaining the goal of a comprehensive settlement, but focussing squarely on the issue which had most divided the Paris Conference - the nature of the transitional administration".¹⁶ He unfolded his peace plan in the Australian Senate on 24 November 1989 which envisaged - a transitional administration built around the authority of the United Nations pending free and fair elections organised by the United Nations and held under international supervision; and the declaration of the Cambodian seat at the UN as vacant.¹⁷ On this aspect, he told the Senate:

16 n. 1, p. 144.

17 "Cambodia: A Possible Alternative Approach". Statement to the Senate on 24 November 1989 by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Senator Gareth Evans, Australian Foreign Affairs and Trade. The Monthly Record, Canberra, November 1989, no. 11, Vol. 60, p. 646.

"Such an agreement would mean that no Cambodian party would be in a position to decide the country's destiny pending free and fair elections organised by the UN and held under international supervision. It would involve a compromise by the present Hun Sen administration - being prepared to step back from its present role as the de facto government of the country - and by the three resistance parties, which would not have a role in the transitional administration". (18)

The central idea of the proposal was to overcome the proposal of power-sharing between the four Cambodian factions by directly involving the United Nations in the administration of Cambodia during the interim period subject to an appropriate change in the status of the Cambodian seat in the UN. As the Australian Permanent Representative to the UN, Dr. Wilenski, stated in the UNGA on 15 November 1989 that Australia assumes "that as part of a comprehensive settlement a change in seating will take place - either the seat will be declared vacant or will be occupied by the interim authority, until elections install a legitimate government which can take its rightful place in this body".¹⁹

While keeping the objectives of a comprehensive settlement in view, the proposal provided for neither

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid.

the Hun Sen government nor the Khmer Rouge to be in a position of authority during the transitional period. The proposal had considerable appeal in the court of public opinion in Australia and was given varying degrees of public endorsement, by just about all the parties to the Paris talks.²⁰ It was all agreed that the Australian proposals required further appraisal on its viability and political endurance. There were certain obstacles before the UN could effectively carry out the proposals. The cost of financing a UN interim administration in Cambodia would be large and such an operation would require elaborate peace-keeping machinery, as well as, extensive administrative resources and man-power. The risk of heavy casualties, last of all, could not be ruled out especially if the warring parties were not effectively disarmed. In the following period from December 1989 to January 1990, hectic rounds of diplomatic meetings and consultations were carried to refine and develop the detailed elements of the Australian proposal. The Australian Deputy Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Mike Costello also made a detour to Hanoi on his way out for talks on other matters in Hawaii and Tokyo.²¹ His preliminary read-out

20 n. 1, p. 145.

21 n. 20.

received an encouraging response as it did in other countries. By late January, the Indonesian co-chairman of the Paris Conference, Foreign Minister Ali Alatas, was sufficiently encouraged to set about convening, as a prelude to a fully resumed Paris Conference, meeting, a regional "Informal Meeting on Cambodia" (IMC) to be attended basically by the JIM cast, but under Paris auspices and with Australia to be also invited as a 'resource delegation'.²²

At the request of the Indonesian Foreign Minister, Australia produced a compilation of a 154 - page set of working papers referred to as the 'Red Book' to distribute in the Conference which convened in Jakarta on 26 February 1990.²³ The working papers were designed as a comprehensive package intended to assist participants in the Paris Conference to meet the objectives of a comprehensive settlement.²⁴ It carried a major input from a technical mission sent to Cambodia for ten days in mid-February. Senator Gareth Evans had made this announcement on 29 January 1990 stating that the information gathered "would assist with the further elaboration of Australia's

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid., p. 169.

24 Cambodia: An Australian Peace Proposal, Canberra, 1990, p. 1.

proposals for an enhanced UN role in comprehensive political settlement of the Cambodian problem".²⁵

The purpose of the mission had been to consult extensively with the representatives of the National United Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful and Co-operative Cambodia (FUNCINPEC), the KPNLF, and the Khmer Rouge, as well as, with the Hun Sen administration, and to visit from Bangkok the Thai - Cambodian border area.²⁶ The mission had an exclusively fact-finding role - as did the UN's own technical mission addressing specific monitoring issues which was despatched by the Paris Conference to Cambodia in August, 1989.²⁷

The Government of Australia's publication of Cambodia: An Australian Peace Proposal or the "Big Red Book", as it is called, laid down two essential objectives to which all the work of a comprehensive settlement should be directed. They are:

- (i) to achieve conditions in which the Cambodian people can freely, secure from intimidation or coercion, choose their own leaders and determine their own future, by means of

25 Australian Foreign Affairs and Trade, January 1990, p. 35.

26 Ibid., p. 36.

27 Ibid.

- free and fair elections; and
- (ii) to achieve a reconstructed Cambodia with internationally guaranteed sovereignty, independence and neutrality.²⁸

Such an environment in which all political parties have an equal opportunity, in which no political party is given any advantage or disadvantage, and in which the Cambodian people can determine their own future and political leaders required an active UN involvement in civil administration in the transitional period leading to free and fair elections.

In brief, Working Papers I and II deals with the structure of government in the transitional period and the UN role in civil administration. Working Paper I suggests the creation of a Supreme National Council (SNC) in which Cambodian sovereignty may be located during the transitional period. The Paper states that the SNC could function as "the repository of Cambodian sovereignty during the transitional period"²⁹, and all government authority would be invested on it subject to an agreement by all the Cambodian parties. It would also occupy the seat of

28 n. 24.

29. Ibid., p. 3.

Cambodia at the United Nations and be a source of consultative advice to the UN Secretary General and his special representative.

Working Paper II develops further the discussion in Working Paper I of the options for the exercise of government authority and emphasises that normal government services must continue to be provided to the Cambodian people during the transitional period. It also deals with the question of administrative responsibility for the repatriation and rehabilitation of refugees and displaced persons during the transitional period.³⁰

To ensure a free and fair election where all the parties will accept any outcome as genuinely representing the wishes of the Cambodian people, the UN has not only to monitor elections but to organise and conduct them. Working Paper III outlines in detail how such an electoral process can be conducted.³¹

Measures have to be taken to create an environment in which the Cambodian people can vote freely without fear of intimidation from external force or internal threat.³² Working Paper IV, therefore,

30 Ibid., p. 5.

31 n. 7, p. 72.

32 n. 1, p. 72.

discusses how the UN can provide an element of military security in its operation. The paper calls for the withdrawal of foreign forces, a ceasefire between the contending parties and an end to all foreign arms supply and military assistance which can be monitored and verified by the UN.

Working Paper V identifies means of achieving a sovereign, independent, and neutral Cambodia, with appropriate international guarantees.³³ It also suggests certain measures that can be taken as guarantees against the recurrence of human rights abuses in Cambodia. For instance, the international community could charge the UN Commission on Human Rights to keep the situation in Cambodia under review for at least five years from the time that the new Cambodian government is inaugurated.³⁴

Lastly, Working Paper VI is drawn from the points unanimously agreed at the Paris Conference in 1989. It identifies the kind of commitments the international community may be prepared to make to assist in the economic and social reconstruction of Cambodia after free and fair elections. It also suggest the establish- of a body such as the International Committee on the

33 n. 24, p. 7.

34 Ibid., p. 8.

Reconstruction of Cambodia (ICORC) as Japan has proposed.³⁵ The 'Red Book' Working Papers also consists of four supplementary papers that sets out firstly, a draft UN mandate eventually agreed by all the parties to the settlement in supplementary Paper A.³⁶ Supplementary Paper B provides a framework for a final comprehensive settlement for Cambodia while Supplementary Paper C provides an indicative time-table for the implementation of the comprehensive settlement, particularly for the role of the UN.³⁷ Supplementary D contains a summary of resource estimates required for the UN to carry out the tasks proposed for it during the transitional period. The overall costs estimate and numbers of personnel needed was drawn up on the basis of information gathered during the Australian Technical Mission's visit to Cambodia, and following consultation with the UN Secretariat.³⁸ The Supplementary paper also contains three broad scenarios of total cost estimates - highest cost, lowest cost, and mid-range. The paper suggests that the mid-range scenario would meet the objectives of UN involvement at a cost of US \$ 987 million for

35 Ibid., p. 9.

36 Ibid., p. 129.

37 Ibid., p. 9.

38 Ibid., p. 147.

twelve months or US \$ 1.3 billion for eighteen months.³⁹ There would also be an estimated 5,500 military personnel and 2,000 polling officials involved. The intended UN role in Cambodia is apparently more complex and extensive than that in Namibia which had lasted just under twelve months. The United Nations' Namibian operation called the U.N. Transitional Assistance Group (UNTAG) had involved fewer civilian and electoral staff (800), police monitors (1,500), election observers (600) and military personnel (4,600) at an estimated cost of only \$ 416 million.⁴⁰ The difficult terrain, climate, infrastructure and population has also to be taken into account while estimating the UN's role in the transitional government.

Encouraged by the Australian peace initiative, the five Permanent Members of the UN Security Council met in Paris on 12-13 March 1990 for a third session of discussions on the modalities of a comprehensive political settlement of the Cambodian conflict.⁴¹ Though the Jakarta talks had not adopted a formal text, the Permanent Five noted that in the course of the meeting, common understanding had been reached between

39 n. 7, p. 74.

40 n. 24, p. 153.

41 n. 1, p. 169.

all the parties concerned on the need for the UN to have an enhanced role. Both the Jakarta and Paris meets while endorsing the Australian ideas, specifically noted the establishment of a Supreme National Council (SNC) for Cambodia. It was to be a unique legitimate body and source of authority in which national sovereignty and unity would be enshrined in the transitional period.⁴² The rival Khmer groups did not have objection to the establishment of the SNC, which, in fact, was ratified when they all met in Tokyo in June 1990. But, again, in both meetings, there were differences on the issue of 'genocide'. Mr. Hun Sen was of the view that considering the atrocities committed by the Khmer Rouge in the past, a reference to the term 'genocide' was only right in any peace plan for Cambodia.⁴³

Australia understood the reason behind the argument of Vietnam and the State of Cambodia (earlier the PRK) about the genocidal practices of the Khmer Rouge. But it was unable to provide a solution to the Khmer Rouge problem except for settling down to a compromise. This was evident in Foreign Minister,

42 Ibid.

43 Ibid., p. 146.

Senator Gareth Evans address on 13 March 1990 to the Sydney Institute. He said, "... if peace was to come to Cambodia, there comes a point when everyone has to look forward rather than to the past. Room has to be created by each warring party for the others to move to the table. The alternative is a continuation of misery and tragedy".⁴⁴

The two central themes of the Australian plan - an enhanced UN role, and the UN vacated seat for Cambodia - were actually suggested earlier by the United States Congressman Stephen Solarz and, nearly a decade ago, by Prince Norodom Sihanouk.⁴⁵ In July 1981, the International Conference on Kampuchea held under the UN auspices had clearly identified two areas of the UN involvement, namely, supervision and verification of cease-fire and withdrawal of foreign forces from Cambodia. But the Australian plan took a further step by proposing Cambodia to come under a form of "UN trusteeship". This increased the role and authority of the UN as both the rival governments were denied any role in the transitional government.⁴⁶ In fact, the transitional administration under the United Nations'

44 Ibid., p. 147.

45 n. 24. See Foreword by Senator Gareth Evans.

46 Chetty, A. Lakshman, The United Nations Peace Initiative on Cambodia: A Critical Appraisal, Madras, 1991, p. 10.

authority was intended to offset any possibility of the Khmer Rouge returning to power. However, the proposal also required the existing government in Phnom Penh to be dismantled at a time when elections are to take place. The Heng Samrin regime rejected the proposal to dismantle its government but was not altogether opposed to the UN involvement - it only took objection to giving sweeping powers, which in a political sense the Heng Samrin regime feared, would undermine its chances in the elections.⁴⁷ It was not free from the fear that the UN which had recognised the coalition government all these years might act in a prejudicial manner.⁴⁸ The Australian proposals like an enhanced role for the UN, and the tackling of the UN seat issue had already been suggested earlier: the former by U.S. Congressman Stephen J. Solarz Prince Sihanouk while a number of lobby groups had long been suggesting that the UN seat issue was the key to unlocking the whole conflict.⁴⁹ Much of its success in achieving a diplomatic breakthrough lay essentially in three factors: its packaging, its timing

47 Ibid., p. 11.

48 Ibid., p. 18.

49 n. 1, p. 148.

and the energy with which it was pursued.⁵⁰ The proposal linked the two central themes within the framework of the ASEAN - sponsored concept of a comprehensive settlement and presented it when the diplomatic deadlock in Paris had become well established. The period also witnessed "growing public concerns about the role of the Khmer Rouge in an interim arrangement, and a well-founded fear about the imminent unleashing of a new round of bloodshed on the ground in Cambodia".⁵¹

The Cambodian problem remains unresolved despite the Australian efforts but the whole exercise has definitely demonstrated the fact, that there are other ways of reaching a comprehensive settlement. It brought the warring factions and their external backers to the negotiating table on the possibility of internal action in Cambodia under the UN auspices. It laid down the precedent that, if there was to be a way forward, the UN would always be actively involved. Australia recognises the leading role of the ASEAN in bringing about a settlement, and also, recognises the crucial role of Indonesia and France as co-Chairman of the Paris Conference. It regards the part it plays as only

50 Ibid.

51 Ibid.

a 'modest one', as it is not a party principal to the Cambodian dispute.⁵² If peace is to come to Cambodia, it could be brought by the decisions of the Cambodian parties themselves and by the decisions of the external powers who support them.⁵³ Australia, at the most, could provide only guidelines by which the negotiating parties could search for a peaceful settlement. The role that Australia wants to play in the Cambodian peace process can best be summed up by quoting from Senator Gareth Evans' speech at the Informal Meeting on Cambodia in Jakarta on 26 February 1990. He said:

"What we have sought to do is play the role, as it were, mapmaker - to identify the places we would all like to get to, and to find way of getting there that have not previously been fully explored". (54)

52 n. 7, p. 71.

53 Ibid.

54 Ibid.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Although Australia is a middle ranking power having common interests with the advanced and under-developed countries, its European background and geographical propinquity to Asia, has lent a certain degree of ambivalence to its security outlook and external policies. As an emerging nation, Australia lacked a good comprehension of its Asian neighbours and perceived itself to be surrounded by a hostile environment. Ideological differences, competing values and divisions of interest and outlook among the Asian States further led Australia to adopt attitudes that were essentially at odds with those pursued by its neighbours. Assessments differed on the dangers of communist expansion, national independence and regional security, which automatically meant "opposed positions on non-involvement, non-alignment and regional pacts".¹ Alliances therefore became an important determinant of Australia's policies. It identified stability in Asia with the stability imposed by the proximity of a Western power whereupon it tried to secure an active American commitment in the Asia-Pacific region for the security of Australia. By the sixties, the United

1 Greenwood, Gordon, ed., Approaches to Asia: Australian Post-War Policies and Attitudes, Sydney, 1974, p. 481.

States had virtually replaced the United Kingdom as Australia's protector. Moreover a shared apprehension of China intensified by uncertainty about its real intentions or capabilities worked in Australia's favour to draw the US deeper into its obligations in the Asia-Pacific region. Australia was convinced that it was in the interest of its security that Chinese or Communist influence should be prevented from further expansion in the region. The ANZUS alliance was a resulting product of its efforts to commit the US as a protector of the Asia-Pacific region. Australia has labouriously tried to put across the impression that the ANZUS Treaty was only a defensive treaty which obliged the US to assist in its defence only. More aggressive in its form and intention was the SEATO that also gave the Australian government a pretext for intervention in Southeast Asia, particularly in Vietnam. It fulfilled Australia's objective to keep both Britain and America in the region but its unrepresentative character remained its weakness. France, Britain, America, Australia and New Zealand heavily outweighed the Asian member states that even the then Indonesia's Prime Minister, Ali Sastroamidjojo regarded it as an anti-Asian alliance.² On the eve

2 Jha, M.N., The Origins of the SEATO, Ph.D. Thesis, ISIS, New Delhi, 1963, p. 223.

of the Manila Conference, Sastroamidjojo proposed that an all-Asian pact, with communist China too as its member should be concluded to resist the implementation of the SEATO's anti-Asian designs.³ There were mutually contradictory views expressed about its conclusion and future operation. John Foster Dulles, in the report of the Manila Treaty which he submitted to President Eisenhower, referred to it as "the bulwark of peace and security in the Pacific area". As against it, the Burmese Chamber of Deputies passed unanimously a resolution condemning it as being "directed against peace in Southeast Asia".

The emergence of the SEATO actually aroused a fresh wave of anti-colonialist feelings in the countries of South and Southeast Asia. It further accentuated the existing tension between the two blocs since the beginning of the Cold War. In fact, it helped the extension of Cold War in this part of the world. Although the desire for co-operation between the nations of Southeast Asia and the West was genuine, it was not possible to form an anti-Communist East-West alliance as the ruling nationalist regimes in the newly independent countries of South and

3 Ibid., p. 224.

Southeast Asia were neither in a position nor willing to give up their non-alignment.⁴

The seeds of disintegration of the SEATO was laid in the beginning itself. The views of the Asian members on its conception were far removed from the Western view of it. When it appeared, that the Western powers were not going to comply with their expectations, the SEATO seemed to have lost its practical value. The Laotian crisis of 1961-2 further exposed its futility as a political and military alliance.

The SEATO treaty also became controversial as the Vietnam war gradually went against the American forces. Within Australia, public opinion began to question the morality and justification behind sending Australian troops to Vietnam. What had taken the uppermost place in Australia's strategic thinking at that time, was the defence of Southeast Asia, and Australia in particular, built around a security system with a major Western power playing a pivotal role. In this regard the Vietnam war was the climax of the Australian policy of dependent alliance with the United States. Although it has discounted criticisms, Australia had virtually no influence on the conduct

4 Ibid., pp. 224-5.

of the war. By participating in the war, Australia tried to ensure that the US under a sense of obligation would reciprocate should Australia itself needed protection.⁵ Australia's Vietnam debate echoed American arguments but eventually paid close attention to the regional politics of the war which were likely to affect Australia's interests far more than America's especially in the long run.⁶ The decision to withdraw "East of Suez" announced by the British government on 18 July 1967, alarmed Australia, and it considered the step to be a threat to the future of the SEATO. The British were adamant to complete the withdrawal by the end of 1971. Subsequently, the Australians decided to re-assess their strategy with regard to Southeast Asia. Unlike its predecessor, the new Labor government's view in the 1970's was not influenced by the Cold War ideologies and for a while Australia's fears of communism took a back seat. The next few years witnessed an opening of diplomatic ties with China and the DRV, withdrawal of Australia's military troops from South Vietnam and Singapore, and

5 Millar, T.B., Australian Foreign Policy, Sydney, 1968, p. 126.

6 King, Peter, ed., Australia's Vietnam, Sydney, 1983, p. 10.

a general encouragement towards regional cooperation, free from Western military involvement. Even before the victory of the Australian Labour Party in the 1972 elections, the necessary strategic re-appraisal had actually been carried out. The Liberal Country Party government in its 1972 Australian Defence Review first, cut back its potential external involvement to 'assistance' (rather than intervention) and second, severely restricted the area of immediate concern.⁷ Australia was appreciative of the rapprochement between China and the United States in 1972. This to some measure reduced the Australian anxiety over the potential threat that China posed. Vietnam's intervention in Cambodia in 1979 did not help to allay Australia's fears of a renewed threat from local communism or the Soviet Union in Southeast Asia, a region it had come to consider as strategic in its security calculations. While attributing its attitude to a principled stand in cases of intervention, Australia's call for the Vietnamese troop withdrawal and initial support for the CGDK were basically the outcome of the communist fear. The Fraser government in Australia suspended

7 Girling, J.L.S., "Australia and Southeast Asia in the Global Balance: A Critique of the 'Fraser Doctrine'", Australian Outlook, vol. 31, no. 1, April 1977, p. 6.

all aid and cultural exchanges to Hanoi on January 1979 and likened its position on the Cambodian issue with that of the West and the ASEAN. The Soviet presence and its support to Vietnam was seen as a threat to the peace and security of the Southeast Asian region. How could the Pol Pot regime ousted by its own dissidents, in collaboration with Vietnam, still find international support and a kind of respectability in its last strongholds along the Thai border, while the Khmer population must accept the Vietnamese protection against a revival of the genocidal nightmare of 1975-79? These were the questions that the public in Australia wanted to know and the government finally succumbed to their pressure when, in 1981, it withdrew its anomalous recognition of the Pol Pot regime, China and ASEAN notwithstanding. Australia did retain a small measure of independence in policy as also, indicated by the diplomatic relations which continued with the socialist Vietnam since December 1972.⁸ It did not co-sponsor the ASEAN's resolutions on Cambodia again till 1988 when the resolution dealt with two essential elements - that Vietnam must leave and that Pol Pot must not return.

8 n. 6, p. 190.

The parties to the conflict and their external patrons had also softened their original positions offering for the first time the chance of a possible long-term solution to the Cambodian problem. The favourable developments could be observed in the series of Jakarta Informal Meetings beginning from 1988, Vietnamese troop withdrawing by 1989, the super power detente and a favourable response by the ASEAN.

The Vietnamese troop withdrawal generated a lot of hope that a solution to the conflict would be forthcoming in the foreseeable future but the application of the second element in the ASEAN resolution - that of finding ways to prevent Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge returning to power - was and has remained a difficult task. The Australian peace proposal in 1989 indirectly aimed at preventing the Khmer Rouge from returning to the centre of power in Phnom Penh by envisaging a role for the UN not only to oversee elections but to form an interim administration before the new government took over. The Cambodian problem has continued for over a decade throwing up different problems everytime the concerned parties seem to draw near to an acceptable solution.

In terms of achievement, the Australian peace proposal did not provide an immediate solution to the

Cambodian conflict. However, the proposal did offer new grounds on which the United Nations' Security Council could chart out its own proposals to prevent the ongoing dialogue between the warring factions from ending in another protracted stalemate. The offer of a major role for the United Nations was not a new idea, but the key element in the plan - that of the formation of a Supreme National Council (SNC) gave both the negotiating parties an equal prospect of representing Cambodia's sovereignty during the period of the UN administration ahead of internationally supervised elections. The question of sovereignty raised separate issues - How much power should be held by a UN interim government in Cambodia and what must the Phnom Penh government give up? What should also be the relationship between the four factions and the UN within the SNC?

The twelve member SNC was to consist of six members each from the combined coalition forces and the Phnom Penh government. But Prince Sihanouk as the supreme body's Chairman would definitely put the odds in favour of the coalition group. Fearing that the Khmer Rouge would manipulate the peace process, Mr. Hun Sen had demanded for the post of Vice-Chairman and also refused to dismantle his administration and

disarm his forces. His concerns over the Khmer Rouge's push for power is not totally unfounded. The UN's plans to disarm all the factional forces contain enormous risks. It would definitely be easier to disarm the standing government troops than to disarm the guerrilla forces. Besides, there is no assurance that the Khmer Rouge will not leave any weapon behind and fight its way back to power, after all the other forces are demolished. The Phnom Penh government has also demanded that any peace agreement must refer to the need to prevent a return to the genocidal policies of the past. At the start of the latest phase in the Jakarta talks in June 1991, the Phnom Penh government had, in fact, called for the UN plan to include a tribunal to try the Khmer Rouge leaders for genocide. The ASEAN and the European Community have also condemned the Khmer Rouge regime for the deaths of more than a million Cambodians, before it was ousted from power by the Vietnamese forces in January 1979. Despite the withdrawal of military and other assistance to the Khmer Rouge by the USA, the Chinese continue to provide arms to the Khmer Rouge, thereby creating hurdles to a peaceful settlement of the Cambodian problem. Meanwhile, the Khmer Rouge has tried to change its tactics, and

project a conciliatory image of itself. Yet the Khmer Rouge remains a major obstacle to the return of peace in Cambodia.

Australia's active participation in the search for a Cambodian solution should be seen in the light of its stated programme of 'Comprehensive Engagement' in Southeast Asia. The argument behind the programme is that development of a substantial and mutually beneficial range of linkages with the Southeast Asian region would minimise the motivation and intention of threats to Australia. This present security outlook is perceived to lead gradually to a greater cohesion and a sense of regional commonality of interests. There is a definite change in its strategic plans for tackling perceived threats in the region. Its earlier strategies based on 'forward defence' has shifted to 'self-reliance', the ability to defend itself from within its own resources - a priority clearly established, in the 1987 White Paper The Defence of Australia. This self-reliance is pursued within the framework of alliances, the most important of which is the ANZUS. The review of the ANZUS treaty in 1983 highlighted the practical benefits that Australia and the US could gain during peace time. In a regional context, the benefits for Australia include an access



to the U.S. intelligence resources and advanced military systems, joint training and exercises, preferred customer treatment in defence purchasing, and industrial and scientific co-operation.⁹ The ANZUS treaty sustains a favourable regional strategic environment for Australia. Its deterrent value is unmistakable, but it also betrays the fact, that Australia has not freed itself from its exaggerated fear of threat from the region.

9 Australia's Regional Security, December 1989, Canberra, p. 15.

APPENDIX - I

APPEAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ON THE
GENOCIDE PHENOMENA AND PREVENTION OF THEIR
RETURN (PHNOM PENH, CAMBODIA, JULY 21-22, 1989)

We, the participants to this International Seminar on the genocide phenomena held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, July 21-22, 1989, believe that, after the appeal made by the 12 Nobel Laureates and by other famous international personalities, it is never too late to launch here again this appeal to the conscience of the world to contemplate and, if agreeable to adopt one or several of the measures below so as to do a minimum of justice to the Cambodian people:

1. We call upon international lawyers and democratic governments to assist in bringing the Khmer Rouge leadership and organisation to the International Court set up in conformity with the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the crime of the genocide.
2. The Cambodian UN seat should be vacant until a fairly and democratically elected government can claim it.
3. There is a duty to all the governments to stop weaponry delivering and military assistance to the Khmer Rouge. Any government have no right to give any asylum to the criminals.

4. We appeal to all parties which are seeking for peace settlement in Cambodia to oppose the presences of the people responsible for the crime against humanity in any future government in Cambodia.
5. We appeal to the international community consider objectively the needs and aspirations of the Cambodian people - their rights to live in peace and freedom, free from fear and hunger.
6. We appeal to all peace loving countries to join us in welcoming the recent Proclamation on the Permanent Neutrality of Cambodia adopted by the Cambodian National Assembly as a contribution to peace and stability to the region and to the world.

Press Release, Embassy of the State of Cambodia,
New Delhi, July 22, 1989.

APPENDIX - II

EXCERPTS FROM CAMBODIA'S PRIME MINISTER HUN
SEN'S TELEGRAM TO THE UN SECRETARY GENERAL

"Your Excellency, following my telegram dated September 22, 1989, I am very pleased to inform you that, although the Paris International Conference on Cambodia failed to reach an overall solution, the withdrawal of the last units of the Vietnamese volunteer troops from Cambodia has been effected. The last 26,000 Vietnamese soldiers with their war materials had totally withdrawn from Cambodia by September 26, 1989 in the presence of 422 journalists and 106 observers from 20 countries and 6 international organizations.

"As from today, September 27, 1989, not a single Vietnamese soldier or military advisor remains in Cambodia. So, the question of Vietnamese troops' presence in Cambodia is no longer an obstacle to the settlement of the Cambodian conflict, and the only problem that remains is how to prevent the return of Pol Pot junta to power and the outbreak of a civil war and to cease all foreign military aid and outside intervention in Cambodia's internal affairs. Many countries have expressed their approval for the prevention of an outbreak of civil war in Cambodia after the total Vietnamese troop withdrawal and some countries concerned have committed themselves to cease

..... their military supplies to the warring Khmer factions
after the pullout. Now, it is time for them to honour
their commitments")

~~NEWS~~ from Cambodia, Embassy of the State of
Cambodia, New Delhi, October 15, 1989.

JOINT - COMMUNIQUE ISSUED BY PRINCE NORODOM
SIHANOUK AND HUN SEN IN TOKYO ON JUNE 5, 1990.

The delegation of H.R.H. Samdech Norodom Sihanouk and the delegation of H.E. Mr. Hun Sen met in Tokyo on June 4-5, 1990 to discuss various issues, with a view to achieving the earliest solution to the Cambodian problem. After intensive deliberations, both sides agreed on the following points.

1. An urgency of implementing a voluntarily self-restraint use of force by all factions.
2. Actual ceasefire must be implemented as a step toward the pending acceptable solution. Furthermore, such undertaking can be realized through a cessation of hostilities and the agreement on the creation of a Supreme National Council (SNC).
3. It is essential for all factions to refrain from all offensive actions including all military operation during the transitional period. This will include a clarification of measures to ensure military standstill and military in place. Such measures would at least ensure that the troops under control remain in their respective positions and refrain from any actions which lead to an extension of territory.

4. The Paris International Conference on Cambodia shall be called upon, with a proper participation of the UN, to take necessary measures to monitor, supervise and verify the withdrawal of all foreign forces and the cessation of all foreign military assistance, including an implementation of a ceasefire agreement. These measures should be functioned through the ICM.
5. The establishment of a SNC is essential in order to symbolize Cambodia's neutrality, national sovereignty and national unity following the agreement in the Joint Communiqué signed by H.R.H. Samdech Norodom Sihanouk and H.E. Hun Sen on February 21, 1990 in Bangkok. The SNC shall be composed of equal numbers of prominent personalities from both parties to represent all shades of opinions among the people of Cambodia. The SNC shall be convened and chaired in its first meeting by a member chosen by the SNC.
6. Both sides represented at the Tokyo meeting hereby declare that the historic monument of Angkor is a non hostility area. Both sides welcome international community to enlarge its scope of cooperation for the preservation and restoration of this common heritage of mankind.

Done and signed by both sides on the Fifth Day of
June Nineteen Ninety.

ANNEX I

Pursuant to the Joint Communiqué agreed on the Fifth Day of June, 1990; it is hereby declared that voluntarily self-restraint use of force shall be implemented by all Cambodian parties on the day when the first meeting of a Supreme National Council is convened.

ANNEX II

Pursuant to the Joint Communiqué agreed on the Fifth Day of June, 1990; it is hereby announced that a Supreme National Council shall be convened not later than the end of July 1990.

ANNEX III

Pursuant to the Joint Communiqué agreed on the Fifth Day of June 1990; both parties took note of the result of the latest meeting of the five UN Security Council permanent members meeting which had been released on May 26, 1990. Both parties express their willingness to brief the members in the meeting of the permanent members of the UN Security Council at appropriate time in the future.

ANNEX IV

Pursuant to the Joint Communiqué agreed on the Fifth Day of June, 1990; both parties called upon co-Chairman

of the International Conference on Cambodia to reconvene
as soon as possible.

News for Cambodia, Embassy of the State of Cambodia,
New Delhi, June 19, 1990.

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