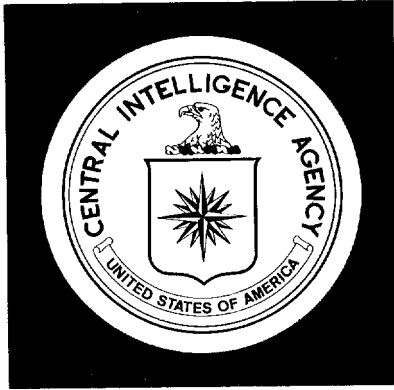


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Research Study

"Democratic Cambodia": An Experiment in Radicalism

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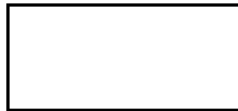


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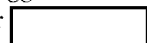
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"DEMOCRATIC CAMBODIA":
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Note: In the preparation of this study, the Office of Political Research consulted other offices of the Central Intelligence Agency. Their comments and suggestions were appreciated and used. Comments would be welcomed by the author



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PRINCIPAL FINDINGS

Since the fall of Phnom Penh in April 1975, the Khmer Communists have shown themselves to be the most extreme of the world's totalitarian regimes. The regime's politico-economic policies have been characterized by the total mobilization of the Cambodian people. The forced resettlement of the entire urban population in the rural areas has been justified as a means to create a huge permanent labor force in the countryside. The unprecedented cruelty with which the experiment was carried out resulted in the death of hundreds of thousands of people including almost the entire educated stratum.

Unorthodox economic practices, such as the complete abolition of private ownership and the departure from a money economy, reflect the Khmer Communists' determination to implement a social system that is alien to other Communist countries. The regime has departed from Marxist-Leninist practice by refusing to identify "Democratic Cambodia" as a member of the Communist camp. The Khmer Communists' vagueness about the country's political system and their avoidance until recently of standard Communist terminology are actions amounting to a unique "Cambodian model."

The most striking departure has been the regime's decision to keep the Khmer Communist Party (KCP) underground. The denial of the Communist Party's leading role in the post-revolutionary period, and the use of the vague term "revolutionary organization" in lieu of the Party are innovations without precedent in Communist practice.

Indications are that the continued underground status of the KCP did not diminish its decision-making role in the political life of the regime. Recent evidence that Prime Minister Pol Pot and KCP General Secretary Saloth Sar are the same person tends to strengthen that conclusion.

In the area of foreign policies, the Khmer Communist regime is concerned above all with maintaining Cambodia's independence. Especially fearful of Vietnamese ambitions, the regime pursues a policy of neutrality, nonalignment and nonparticipation in any military bloc or regional alliance.

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Having no *overt* Communist Party of its own, Cambodia restricts its relations with other Communist countries to state-level contacts. Despite its overwhelming reliance on China for economic and military assistance, the regime has avoided forming an ideological alliance with Peking. Cambodia does not even have diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, but by refraining from public polemics with Moscow, the Khmer Communists are keeping the door open to future ties with the Kremlin.

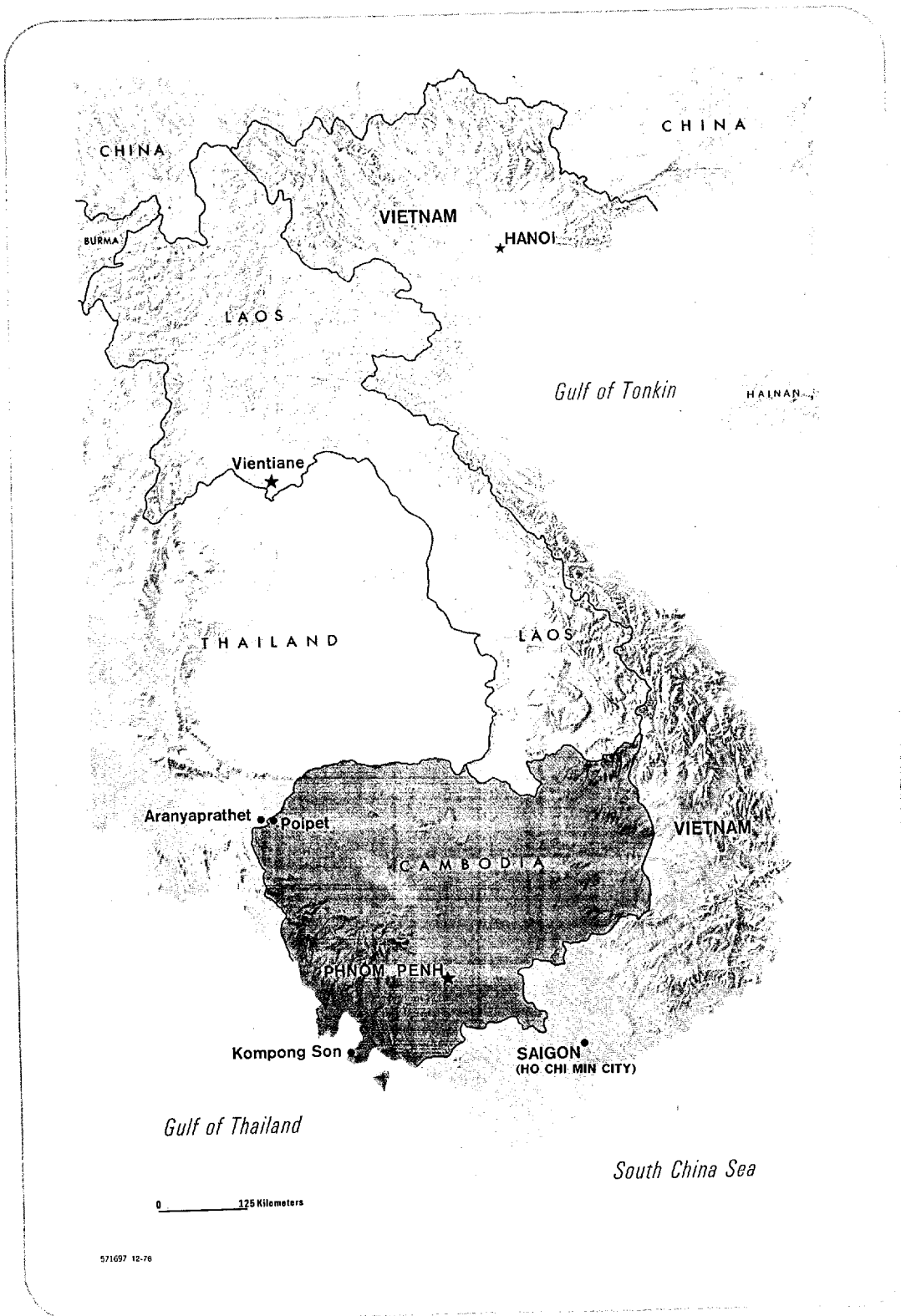
Recent efforts to ease Cambodia's initial diplomatic isolation are expected to continue. For the time being, however, the regime is not likely to change its hostile attitude toward the US or to make any overtures to the US.

The Khmer Communists have lately been showing an increasing interest in forming economic and trade contacts with the rest of the world. However, the continued scarcity of export commodities and the virtual lack of hard currency earnings is likely to prevent the regime from substantially reducing its reliance on Chinese economic and military aid for some years to come.

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DISCUSSION

I. THE DOMESTIC SITUATION: A MAVERICK REGIME

A. Politico-Economic Radicalism

With its takeover of Phnom Penh in April 1975, the new Cambodian regime, controlled by hard-line elements of the Khmer Communist movement, embarked on a unique totalitarian experiment. The most appalling features of this experiment have been the uprooting of the population of the urban areas and the use of forced labor on a national scale. Both of these features are unprecedented in the history of the Communist movement.

In trying to justify their actions, the Khmer Communist leaders have put forward a variety of considerations. They argued that the lack of foodstuffs in the cities swollen by the influx of refugees left no alternative but to return the city-dwellers into the rural areas. The same move was supposed to remedy the problem of the depleted population in the countryside which would have otherwise precluded the completion of basic agricultural tasks.

In stark terms, the strategy worked. Having forced the total city population to settle in agricultural cooperatives, the regime eliminated the need for transporting large quantities of food into the urban centers. Through the introduction of mass forced labor, the Khmer Communists were able to claim a satisfactory harvest of rice by the end of the year. The utilization of millions of people for the construction of a giant country-wide system of dikes and embankments has been aimed at reducing the country's dependence on weather conditions in the future.

The political considerations have been closely related to the economic ones. The Khmer Communists calculated that a swollen urban population, experiencing a severe shortage of food and other consumer goods, could become a source of resistance to their administration. By driving the entire city population

to the countryside and moving them around at will, the regime managed to cower potentially hostile elements and to prevent the emergence of organized opposition in the civilian population. Psychological as well as material factors, such as the feeling of rootlessness, separation from other family members, newly-found poverty and the fear of cruel punishments have effectively prevented former city-dwellers from resisting the totalitarian rule of the new regime.* Indications are that despite the relatively small number of guards assigned to individual agricultural collectives—equivalent to the former villages—resistance to the Khmer Communist administration has manifested itself mainly in the form of attempted escape rather than in outbreaks of physical hostility against the regime.

Ideological considerations also played a part in the Khmer Communists' decision to strip the cities of their population. The extreme cruelty with which the experiment was carried out reflects a mixture of naive utopianism and intense Khmer nationalism which may be a reaction to 90 years of French colonial rule. The difficult conditions experienced by the Khmer Communists during years of guerrilla existence intensified their resentment toward the "embourgeoisement" of the urban population, their alleged abandonment of Cambodia's cultural and national heritage and indulgence in Western-type conveniences. Besides serving an economic function, therefore, the driving of the city-dwellers into the countryside and exposing them to extremely harsh living and working conditions may have been motivated by a naive attempt to punish them for the acceptance of what the new regime considered a corrupt, reactionary way of life.

* The regime's systematic attempt to eliminate all those connected with previous administrations, particularly members of the educated stratum, combined with the spread of various diseases such as malaria, is believed to have led to the death of hundreds of thousands of people, possibly over 10 percent of the entire population.

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B. Departure From the "Conventional" Communist Model

The economic system introduced by the Khmer Communists following the takeover contradicts the economic theories of Marxism-Leninism. The most extreme features of the Cambodian economic experiment have been the banning of all private property except the most essential personal belongings of the individual, the abolition of the wage system, and the nationwide return to a barter economy in the place of money as the means of exchange.* These features reflect an attempt to adopt a social system based on economic utopianism, one which had been envisaged in some early Marxist theoretical works but was discarded by Communist regimes once in power.**

There are still other areas in which the Khmer Communists remain out of step with the political patterns of established Communist regimes. The new state Constitution, adopted in December 1975, had been drawn up with apparent disregard for the experience of other Communist countries. Judging by its organizational structure as outlined in the Constitution, Cambodia is basically a Communist-type republic. Up to now, however, the regime has failed to specify the exact political system of the new state. As a result of this, the text of the Constitution includes no reference either to the abolition of the former monarchy or to the transition to a republican system. The lack of definitions amounting to the concealment of established facts have been due to the Khmer leadership's efforts to avoid identification with the

* In an extraordinary move, following the takeover the regime abolished the monetary system. People are being compensated for their labor in the form of meager rice rations. The basic industrial items produced by local workshops and the few factories now in operation are "sold" to the rural co-operatives in exchange for the agricultural products grown by the latter.

** Soviet theoretical literature routinely condemns "egalitarianism" as a petty-bourgeois utopian theory which seeks to prove the possibility of eliminating capitalistic contradictions by means of the evenhanded redistribution of private property. In China, too, manifestations of egalitarianism have in recent years been condemned by the Party as being utopian and not in conformity with the existing conditions of socialism. The Chinese state Constitution includes specific provisions sanctioning the continued existence of private plots and so-called side-line production in the countryside. In early 1975, left-radical elements, while conceding that commodity production, an unequal wage system and the money economy were still necessary at the current stage of economic development in China, described the elimination of those "bourgeois" practices as a long-term goal.

"conventional" Communist pattern and to establish a uniquely Cambodian model.

In contrast to the usual Communist practice, the regime chose the ambiguous term "Democratic Cambodia" as the official name of the country. The name implies no direct organizational ties with the Communist world and allows the Khmer Communists to claim membership in the less-structured conglomeration of bloc-free nations known as the nonaligned movement.

C. Ideological Departure: Communism Without a Party?

The potentially most significant departure from the "conventional" pattern lies in the regime's refusal to publicly identify the KCP as the leading force in Democratic Cambodia's political life. Neither the Constitution nor any other document issued by the Cambodian leadership since the takeover has made any reference to the KCP's position vis-a-vis the state or confirmed the very existence of the Party.

Indications are, however, that the ideological departure of the regime may be a tactical measure and as such a temporary one. The KCP is known to exist, although its organizational form and membership remain secret.* Some of the top leaders of the Cambodian insurgency have been identified as leading functionaries of the underground KCP. The same men are in charge of the highest offices of the Cambodian Communist state.

There are a number of possible explanations for the regime's continued refusal to bring the KCP into the open. For one thing, the long years of guerrilla existence instilled a strong sense of secretiveness and elitism into the Party leadership which might be difficult to overcome under the new conditions of overt political existence. The same leaders may believe that the KCP's reemergence from its underground status would necessitate the incorporation of new members, a move that might result in diluting its strong revolutionary discipline and turning the Party into a looser, less cohesive organization. Further, the Khmer Communists may have wanted to avoid

* The Cambodian Communist organization was founded in September 1951, following the dissolution of the Indochinese Communist Party which cleared the way for the formation of national Communist parties in Indochina. Initially known as the Cambodian People's Revolutionary Party, the organization assumed its present name only in 1966.

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identifying the Party as the leading force during the initial period of repression which has led to the displacement of millions and the violent death of hundreds of thousands of Cambodians.

Even more important, the decision to keep the Party out of sight enables the Khmer Communists to remain silent on their earlier ideological and organizational association with the Lao Dong Party, ties that the Vietnamese may try to utilize in an attempt to interfere with Cambodian developments. The underground existence of the KCP allows the regime to avoid direct party relations with the Vietnamese Communists.

Rather than acknowledging the leading role of the KCP, the Khmer Communists invented a unique new entity, the so-called "revolutionary organization." First used in the early 1970s, the term is but a facade for the Communist Party. As such, the revolutionary organization has been attributed the same powers and qualities other Communist regimes assign to their respective parties. Accordingly, the victory of the Khmer Communist insurgency has been due to the "clearsighted leadership" of the revolutionary organization. The same organization is held responsible for charting the present and future course of the Cambodian revolution.

As a result of the regime's secretiveness about the nature of the revolutionary organization, the term has assumed an almost mythical quality. Being a substitute for the actual KCP, the revolutionary organization is not likely to have such formal components as a Central Committee or Politburo. In contrast, the real KCP which remains underground, is believed to have an organizational structure of its own—including a Central Committee—whose members occupy important positions in the state apparatus. Recent information identifying Prime Minister Pol Pot as being identical with KCP Secretary General Saloth Sar suggests that the Party has retained firm control over the state administration and is in charge of the political course of the regime.

D. Middle-Class Leadership

Following nationwide "elections" in March 1976, the Khmer Communists formally established the new executive and legislative structure of the Cambodian state. The most important offices that emerged in the wake of the election farce have been a State

Presidency, the Government of Democratic Cambodia and the Standing Committee of the regime's quasi-legislative organ, the People's Representative Assembly. A survey of nine top functionaries holding responsible posts in these offices, as listed in the attached chart, reveals some of the essential characteristics of the leaders of Democratic Cambodia.

There are important similarities in age, family and educational backgrounds as well as in professional experience. The nine men and women included in the survey all appear to be in their mid or late 40s; most are of middle-class origin and highly educated. Almost without exception they received some kind of schooling in France, an experience that tends to encourage a sense of comradeship within such groups.

Almost all of those surveyed qualify as members of the Cambodian "intelligentsia." Having occupied administrative or educational posts upon their return from France, they disappeared from Phnom Penh in the 1960s to join the anti-Sihanouk forces gathering in the hills and jungles of Cambodia. Having established themselves as leading functionaries of the Khmer insurgency, some were included in Prince Sihanouk's Peking-based exile government in the early 1970s. Finally, they came to form the top leadership of the new executive and legislative organs of Democratic Cambodia in April 1976.

This leadership is also characterized by a significant degree of nepotism. Two government ministers, Ieng Thirith and Yun Yat, are the wives of two Deputy Prime Ministers, Ieng Sary and Son Sen respectively. Moreover, Ieng Thirith happens to be the sister of Khieu Ponnary, who is married to Prime Minister and KCP General Secretary Pol Pot/Saloth Sar.

The latter, appointed Prime Minister of Democratic Cambodia in April 1976, appears to be the single most influential member of the Khmer Communist leadership. Born about 1928, Pol Pot/Saloth Sar studied technical subjects in Phnom Penh before taking a course in electronics in France. Having returned to Cambodia in the mid-1950s, he became active in leftist journalistic circles and participated in the organization of the People's Party, a Communist front organization. Married to Khieu Ponnary, a former schoolteacher, Pol Pot/Saloth Sar was probably accepted by members of the Cambodian French-educated professional-administrative elite as a member of the same group. Pol Pot/Saloth Sar disappeared

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from Phnom Penh in 1963 and joined the underground Khmer Communist organization in which he became General Secretary in 1972.

25X1 The positive identification of Pol Pot and Saloth Sar as the same person [redacted] helped clarify the power relationships between the two main executive organs of the Cambodian state, the State Presidency and the government. Up to then, the State Presidency under the chairmanship of Khieu Samphan, a nationally recognized personality of solid revolutionary credentials, appeared to wield equal powers with the government under the little-known Prime Minister Pol Pot. The new information on Pol Pot's real identity, however, effectively changes that judgment.

A decision issued by the Khmer Communist leadership in late September authorizing the Prime Minister to take temporary leave from his post "in order to take care of his health which has been bad for several months," shed some doubt about his future in the Cambodian hierarchy. However, subsequent developments suggest that Pol Pot/Saloth Sar may be

genuinely ill, and remains in favor politically.* His temporary absence from political activity may serve as another reminder of the secrecy that continues to surround all personalities in Communist Cambodia.

II. FOREIGN RELATIONS: STRIVING FOR INDEPENDENCE

A. In Search of Security

Since coming to power in April 1975, the Khmer Communists have shown as deep a concern about maintaining Cambodia's independence from Vietnam as the administrations before them. They have paid lip service to the country's historical tradition in the same fashion as the governments they succeeded and adopted fundamentally the same foreign policy

* Despite the September announcement concerning his temporary leave on medical grounds, Pol Pot's name continues to appear in Cambodian broadcasts suggesting that he retains the post of Prime Minister. The official Cambodian media has thus far failed to confirm Pol Pot as being identical with Saloth Sar. As long as the KCP is to remain "underground," Saloth Sar is not likely to be mentioned in any official capacity in the regime.



Left: Prime Minister "Pol Pot" of Democratic Cambodia. Photo was distributed by the Vietnamese News Agency following the visit of a Vietnamese journalist delegation in Cambodia last July. Right: Man tentatively identified as Saloth Sar, secretary general of the underground Khmer Communist Party in 1973. Recent evidence indicates that the two men are the same person.

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principles formulated by Norodom Sihanouk some two decades earlier. The most important components of those principles are: independence, neutrality, nonalignment and opposition to all forms of foreign interference in Cambodia's internal affairs.

One of the regime's basic preoccupations is to prevent foreign military encroachments on Cambodian territory. The new state Constitution of Democratic Cambodia includes a special provision "absolutely rejecting" the establishment of foreign military bases on Cambodian soil, a pledge that the regime has been repeating both in the context of bilateral relations and that of the security of the entire Southeast Asia region.

Like Sihanouk in the 1950s and 1960s, the Cambodian Communist leaders are hoping to find some sort of a guarantee for the country's security in Cambodia's association with the nonaligned movement. There is a direct relationship between the regime's pledges of nonalignment and nonparticipation in military blocs and regional alliances, and its refusal to acknowledge Cambodia's status as a full-fledged Communist state. The regime is trying to use Cambodia's membership in the Third World as an excuse for basing its relations with other Communist countries on the basically apolitical idea of peaceful coexistence rather than on the principles of "proletarian internationalism."

Up to now, in their contacts with the Cambodian regime, most Communist governments have accepted this formulation, although for different reasons. The more independent-minded members of the Communist camp—Cuba, North Korea, Romania and Yugoslavia—view the Cambodian experiment as useful in reinforcing their arguments against any binding common pattern that would tend to subordinate them to the USSR.

The Chinese Communists, who see Cambodia as a bulwark against creeping Soviet expansionism in Southeast Asia, not only accept the Cambodian stand but have become the primary supporters of the Khmer Communist regime.

The Soviet Union and its closest allies, with whom Cambodia has thus far refused to establish diplomatic relations, refrain from criticizing the Khmer Communist experiment in the fear of driving Phnom Penh even closer to Peking.

The Khmer Communists' close political and economic relations with China serves to accentuate the differences in political orientation between them and the Vietnamese who appear to be forming increasingly close ties with the Soviet Union. In its relations with Cambodia, Hanoi's primary aim is to overcome the regime's opposition to the spread of Vietnamese influence in Southeast Asia. Out of tactical considerations, therefore, the Vietnamese have been trying to avoid any further deterioration of their relations with Phnom Penh and appear eager to broaden their present limited economic and political contacts with the Cambodian Communists.

B. Ideological Neutralism

The lack of an *overt* party organization has enabled the Khmer Communists to avoid forming direct party-to-party relations with other Communist regimes. In communications with friendly Communist governments, the Cambodians routinely praise the "clear-sighted leadership" of the party involved, without referring to direct party-level ties as such. In discussions of Cambodia's relations with other Communist regimes, the party reference is invariably omitted and the existence of friendly contacts between "governments" and "peoples" is stressed.

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The regime's unwillingness to identify Democratic Cambodia as a Communist country has allowed the Khmer Communists on the whole to refrain from using standard Marxist-Leninist terminology. This omission is particularly significant when it comes to terms some Communist regimes consider offensive, such as "revisionist," "dogmatist," etc. By omitting the use of such terminology, the Khmer Communists have managed to retain a semblance of neutralism in the ideological conflict between Moscow and Peking.

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Despite their close economic and political ties with the Chinese, the regime has resisted full ideological identification with Chinese Communism. In its contacts with Peking, the Cambodian leadership retains a certain formality: [redacted]

[redacted] broadcasts devoted to various aspects of Cambodian-Chinese relations speak of the friendship between the two "countries" and two "peoples" without implying direct relations between the two parties. At the same time, despite their refusal to establish diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, the Khmer Communists have refrained from engaging in public polemics with the Soviet leadership on political or ideological issues. Instead, the regime has retained occasional contacts with Moscow in the form of anniversary messages and greetings, in conformity with the minimum standards of protocol between independent Communist states.

Possibly as a sign of disagreement within the Khmer Communist leadership on Cambodia's indebtedness to Mao Tse-tung, in statements devoted to Mao's memory last September the regime came near to abandoning its neutralist line on ideological issues. A eulogy delivered by Prime Minister Pol Pot/Saloth Sar on the occasion of Mao's funeral used an unusual formulation equating the role of the revolutionary organization—the term used by the Khmer Communists in lieu of the Party—with that of the Communist Party of China. The same eulogy also maintained that the revolutionary organization, like the Chinese Communist Party, adhered to the principles of Marxism-Leninism, a statement never before made by any Cambodian Communist leader in public. Moreover, Pol Pot/Saloth Sar departed from earlier Cambodian practice by praising Mao as the "most prominent teacher in the international revolutionary movement since Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin."

A subsequent Cambodian broadcast, made on the occasion of the Chinese national day celebrations in early October, paraphrased the above statements in a manner implying even closer identity with Chinese ideological formulations. The broadcast in effect misquoted Pol Pot in alleging that

... The Comrade Prime Minister of our country remarked that the Chinese revolution under the wise and correct leadership of Chairman Mao produced experiences which have set the best and most valuable examples for the contemporary world revolutionary movement since Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin.

Despite the references to a "revolutionary" rather than a "Communist" movement, the above statements tended considerably to weaken the Khmer Communists' earlier effort to retain a neutral stand between China and the Soviet Union.

However, indications are that this bias toward the Chinese ideological line was only temporary: by mid-October a new formulation appeared, considerably watering down the role attributed to Mao in shaping Marxist theory and avoiding any references to Stalin as one of the "prominent teachers" of the international revolutionary movement. The new formulation described Mao as a mere "inheritor" of the theories of Marx and Lenin and made no mention whatsoever of Stalin.*

C. The Shedding of Isolationism

The isolationism that characterized the first year of Khmer Communist rule has since given way to increasing receptiveness to foreign contacts. Throughout 1975 the Cambodian regime maintained diplomatic ties only with Communist regimes it considered free from Moscow's domination.** However, the standards laid down by the Cambodians were flexible enough to include, in addition to China and Albania, regimes of such diverse political and ideological orientations as Cuba, North Korea, Romania, Yugoslavia and Laos.

Following the takeover, the Cambodian regime's relations with Vietnam showed increasing strains due to continued Vietnamese incursions into Cambodian territory and conflicting territorial claims—particularly concerning some offshore islands—that remain outstanding. These differences, compounded by Cambodia's concern over the growing friendship between Hanoi and Moscow, have kept political relations between the two neighboring regimes at an unusually low level. Despite diplomatic contacts and the inauguration of a Hanoi-Phnom Penh flight last September, economic relations between Vietnam and Cambodia are virtually nonexistent. In defining their relations with the Socialist Republic of Vietnam,

* Statement by the head of the Cambodian economic delegation in Peking. Peking NCNA in English 13 October 1976.

** The single exception was Thailand; the regime negotiated diplomatic relations with Bangkok in October 1975 without, however, exchanging embassies. As of the end of 1976, contacts are still being maintained at the liaison office level.

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Cambodian leaders have referred to unspecified "hardships and obstacles" which, according to them, must be overcome if contacts are to develop on a friendly basis.*

In contrast, the Cambodian regime's relations with its closest non-Communist neighbor, Thailand, have been progressing relatively smoothly. Despite potentially serious problems between the two countries, such as the presence of over 10,000 Cambodian refugees on Thai territory, Phnom Penh's handling of its relations with Thailand has been characterized by a large degree of flexibility. At the time of establishing diplomatic relations with the Thai Government in late 1975, the Khmer Communists defied a concerted Lao-Vietnamese campaign against Bangkok, aimed at pressuring the Thais to rid the country of American presence. One year later, the Khmer refusal to echo Vietnamese propaganda attacks on Thailand following the Thai military coup, suggested the regime's eagerness to retain a balance between its Communist and non-Communist neighbors.

In 1976, Cambodia recognized more non-Communist governments, particularly members of the Third World. Moreover, the Khmer Communists also negotiated recognition—although without exchanging ambassadors—with selected industrialized nations such as Sweden, Denmark, Italy, Norway, and Japan.

The regime's main criterion in establishing relations with any given country is that country's willingness to abide by the general principles of Cambodia's foreign policies without pressing for an embassy in Phnom Penh. The Khmer Communists' reluctance to accommodate more than a handful of diplomatic representatives in the capital appear to be based on both economic and security considerations. Experiences of Communist diplomats stationed in Cambodia may help dissuade other governments from exposing their personnel to the hardships and restrictions of Phnom Penh living.

The one area in which the Khmer Communists continue to show a complete lack of flexibility is their attitude toward the US. Anti-Americanism remains an integral part of the regime's political philosophy. The

* References to these obstacles were included in an interview by Cambodian Prime Minister Pol Pot to a Vietnamese journalist delegation last July and in a speech by Deputy Prime Minister Ieng Sary at a Vietnamese embassy reception last September.

Siem Reap "bombing" incident may have been specifically designed to make the US a scapegoat for Cambodia's internal and external difficulties. The extreme anti-American propaganda is also being used by the regime to justify its continued repression of the population. Cambodia's rigid anti-US stance is out of line with that of most other Communist regimes; it is comparable only with the policies of North Korea and Albania, countries subject to political and economic isolation similar to that of the Cambodian regime. Any change in Cambodia's anti-US stand is likely to reflect a calculation that a less hostile position may facilitate the acquisition of economic aid from the West.

D. The Shackles of Foreign Assistance

The regime's radical economic practices, its reliance on the permanent resettlement and total mobilization of the population reflect an obsession with the development of agricultural production. Specifically, the Khmer Communists want to produce a sufficient amount of rice for export even if it means to keep the population on starvation rations.* The use of forced labor on a nationwide scale for the construction of an elaborate system of dikes and field embankments is aimed at eventually reducing Cambodia's dependence on the annual rainfall. In the long run, however, the extreme means by which the Khmer Communists hope to accelerate the fulfillment of the agricultural tasks—the complete abolition of private property and material incentives—must slow down progress.

The emptying of the urban areas of their inhabitants and the permanent settlement of the city population in the countryside are bound to have a detrimental effect on the rehabilitation of the industry which was severely damaged during the war. There are no plans to expand the country's industrial capacity,** and the systematic elimination of the educated professional strata should for a long time necessitate dependence on less sophisticated technologies. As a result of this, Cambodia will remain reliant on its traditional commodities for export, such as lumber, crepe rubber and rice.

indicate that the average daily ration of those engaged in agricultural production ranges from one-half to one full condensed milk can of rice.

** As stated by Prime Minister Pol Pot in his interview with a Vietnamese journalist delegation, 20 July 1976.

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Since the takeover, the Khmer Communist regime has been overwhelmingly dependent on Chinese economic and military assistance.* It was with Chinese help that the regime rehabilitated some of its transport facilities, opened up its only seaport for shipping and put some of its industrial plants back into operation. Although the financial terms of Chinese assistance are not known, the long-term reliance on China is bound to pose some economic and political problems. Economically, the steady flow of material and technological assistance provided by the Chinese is likely to increase the Cambodian regime's indebtedness to Peking. Politically, the combination of that indebtedness and the growing Chinese presence in Cambodia would tend further to restrict the regime's limited freedom of action in the area of foreign relations.

In a possible effort to reduce its dependence on the Chinese, in the second part of 1976 the Cambodian regime made some attempts toward the establishment of economic contacts with foreign countries, mainly friendly Communist regimes and members of the Third World. In September, a Cambodian economic delegation held extensive talks with Yugoslav, Albanian and Romanian economic experts; the same delegation visited North Korea in early October. About the same time, the regime established contacts

* During 1975 and 1976, Cambodia did receive some assistance also from the North Korean regime. Indications are that a small number of North Korean technicians may be working in the country.

with nonaligned groups by participating in international conferences on economic and industrial cooperation among Third World nations. The Cambodians also began to drop hints of their willingness to initiate trade relations with a limited number of industrial countries.*

None of these exploratory moves is known to have produced any concrete results. However, by making such contacts, the regime signalled its interest in entering into bilateral or multilateral agreements on trade and economic cooperation with a broader group of nations. The fundamental, long-term problem the Khmer Communists are facing in this respect is the continued scarcity of exportable commodities and the resultant lack of foreign currency earnings. Economic relations with foreign countries, Communist or otherwise, must therefore be conducted mainly on the basis of new grants and credit arrangements which would further increase Cambodia's financial obligations to the outside world. Consequently, even if it were to broaden its economic contacts to a growing number of foreign countries, the regime is not likely for some time to come to free itself from its present one-sided dependence on China for economic and military assistance.

* As something of an exploratory venture, in August 1976 the Cambodian Government set up a quasi-official trading company in Hong Kong. With the exception of some minor initial purchases, the office, called the Ren Fung Company Ltd., appears to be inactive.

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