

6992

**Dear Senator Mansfield:**

**The President has asked me to call to your attention an article which Prince Sihanouk wrote for the December issue of Sangkum.**

**I enclose a translation of the article prepared by our Embassy in Phnom Penh.**

**Best regards,**

**Henry A. Kissinger**

**The Honorable Mike Mansfield  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, D. C. 20510**

**Rewrtn: AMH:lrs:2/21/70**

THIS DOCUMENT MAY CONTAIN  
CONGRESSIONAL MATERIAL

PHNOM PENH A-10

Encl. 1

Page 1

## CAMBODIA AFTER THE VIETNAM WAR

### The U.S. and Us

The US is fully aware that on the day, when they will have completely disengaged from SEA, that day will be the "beginning of the end" for Cambodia, independent, neutral and Buddhist. That is why American newspapermen who, as we know, do not have the slightest sympathy for us, predict with satisfaction, even with cynicism, a sad end for my country under the claws of neighbors who will cut up Cambodia after having liquidated the criminal which I am and who has dared to combat US imperialism.

These journalists recall my notorious and unforgiveable ingratitude toward their country which for years has been sacrificing the lives of its sons, its money, its materiel in the face of the tentacular expansionism of Asian Communism, in order to defend the liberty of the peoples of our region - including the Khmer people.

Now, it so happens that my country and I, myself, have absolutely no reason to be grateful to the US, and for the following reasons:

1. The efforts put forth by the US to fight Communism have never been directed in the right direction, despite my many warnings. The latter, which were severe, made me appear in the eyes of Uncle Sam as a spoilsport, since these were the opposite of the flattery which they were used to hearing from their Asiatic "clients".

Furthermore, these sacrifices were agreed to by the US in SEA only to serve their interests as a great power and not to "defend the liberty" of the peoples of our region. If it were otherwise, how could it be that we should see dictatorial, anti-popular governments in Taipei, Seoul and, especially, in Saigon and Bangkok.

2. The armed, badly inspired, badly conceived interventions, and even the sacrifices - of the US have finally avored the advance of Communism in the minds and on the ground - which brings Communism to the frontiers and even to the interior of Cambodia much more rapidly than would have occurred normally.

3. The so-called war "against communism" carried on by the Americans has resulted in damaging or destroying a sizable part of the economic potential of Cambodia (plantations, cattle, buildings, fields and rice paddies). It has ruined numbers of our peasants and placed more than 400 of their families in mourning.

4. The American press, not content with inciting the US Government and Army to the murder of Cambodia, still carries on an unjust campaign to discredit and humiliate our country in all fields: political, diplomatic, ideological, economic - and even on that of the building up of tourism.

PHNOM PENH A-10

Encl. 1

Page 2

5. The CIA and "other agencies" have organized, as the American press has itself admitted, plots against our unity, our independence and our neutrality, our territorial integrity - without speaking of the task of corruption of a part of our civilian elite and military, of the support for the "Khmer Serei" and of their multiple attempts during these last years to have me assassinated, while I am the national leader freely chosen by the Khmer people.

Not only do the Americans have no right whatsoever to our gratitude, but we know that certain US circles (CIA, press) detest us and despise us even more than they despise the Communists, whom they combat but respect.

\* \* \*

This clarification done, I must admit in all honesty and objectivity that American imperialism in installing itself in our region after the defeat of French colonialism by the Viet Minh -- and in using enormous means of all kinds in order to maintain itself since 1955, renders us an involuntary and indirect service.

Certainly, we are too attached to our political and territorial unity to wish for others, even though they be our actual or potential enemies, any weakening or division.

It is very sincerely, for instance, that we wish for Vietnam the liberation of the South of the country from foreign occupation and a final reunification.

We always begin with the principle that one must never wish for others what one would not wish for oneself.

But it is an undeniable fact that the difficulties caused to Vietnam by the Americans (and those undergone by Laos and especially Thailand as a result of the confrontation there of American imperialism and Asiatic Communist imperialism) - and the momentary impossibility of the reunification of our redoubtable Vietnamese neighbors - permit the survival of Cambodia in total political independence and in territorial integrity . . . which has become relative for some time, delaying the end which will see our country absorbed by Asiatic Communism, except for a miracle.

On the diplomatic and political plane, the fact that the US remains in our region and does not yet leave it allows us maneuverings "brilliant" according to some, "enervating" according to others - but in any case efficacious - to assure on the one hand our more than honorable presence in the concert of nations (one gladly recognizes that our diplomatic and political statures far surpass our geographic and demographic size) and on the other hand, to remain, until new orders, on the path of freedom, peace and progress. . . and of the joy of living, with frontiers recognized by all countries which count (except by our Thai neighbors).

The American presence in our vicinity permits us to be respected, if not courted, by the European and even Asiatic socialist camps.

This presence (and this is an irony of fate for the anti-imperialists that we are) is an essential condition for the "respect", for the "friendship", and even for the aid of our socialist "friends". When the US has left these regions, it is certain that the Cambodia of the Sangkum will be the objective of the shelling of the heavy communist guns: unfriendliness, subversion, aggressions, infiltrations, and even occupation.

Until now we have been "anti-imperialist and democratic progressives". We shall then become for our socialist "friends" (who will at that moment become ex-friends) the rulers of a reactionary regime, valets of the American imperialists, dictators and oppressors of the people "—no less". . .

This new label is not imaginary. It is already attached to the Sangkum by our compatriots who are partners of Asiatic Communism and who work against their own nation: the "Khmer Rouge".

Asiatic Communism even if it does not attack us directly at that moment, will so well relaunch clandestinely the "rebellion" of its Khmer valets (who already call themselves "the people"), that they will not have very much difficulty, thanks to this "Trojan horse", in bringing the fortress of independent, neutral and territorially whole Cambodia tumbling down.

This integrity will easily be placed in doubt. "Corrections of frontiers" will inevitably be brought about with a Cambodia which will no longer have any liberty for maneuver and with, especially, the presence in Phnom Penh of a government which will be Khmer only in name and which will have been placed in power by the "red" foreigner. This government will quickly accept a "more equitable" demarcation of frontiers (in favor of the foreigner, naturally) which would be asked of it by its big "brothers" in ideology.

What I write there is not the fruit of my imagination.

Son Ngoc Thanh, for example, continues to criticize, from his bases in Bangkok and Saigon, my policy aimed at recognition by all the countries of the world of the intangibility of our present frontiers. The so-called "hero of the Khmer people" even has the impudence of speaking against the fact that I made respect for the Khmer sovereignty of Preah Vihear the condition sine qua non of our reconciliation with Thailand. He claims that such a policy "does a disservice to the high interests of Cambodia."

As for the "Khmer Rouge", they formally accuse the Sangkumians of being "friends of the imperialists" and "accomplices of the Americans", knowing well that we only have ordinary diplomatic relations which do not bind us any more closely to these than do our relations with Burma or Laos.

Why do the "Khmer Rouge" try so desperately to denounce "connivance" between the Americans and the Sangkum which after all has nothing to do with these "white" imperialists. The reason jumps before one's eyes: these valets of Communism know that they cannot destroy our national regime and take over our independence as long as the US remains in the neighborhood, and I believe, for the same reason, their masters will be forced to hold out the hand of friendship towards us, to turn on their smiles (and they laugh "yellow", if I dare use the expression, in their conscience) in order not to throw us into the arms of the adversary, of the mortal enemy, of the only opponent they have, since the disappearance of the French and British imperialists in the conquest and conditioning of humanity. As H.E. Chou En-lai said to me at Bandung (14 years ago), "We don't see any harm in your having relations with France, that you should even accept its teachers and its aid and its military assistance, for France has ceased to be a danger for us, while the Americans are extremely dangerous". . .

\* \* \*

The problem is to know finally, if the Americans will really be able or will really wish to disengage and leave Southeast Asia.

In my opinion, the US, if I may express myself thus, are condemned to remain a world power and therefore present everywhere.

For them it is a question of life or death.

This is the primary explanation of the immense sacrifices in men and material which they devote to the war in Vietnam - and it is the principle reason for the impasse at the negotiations in Paris.

The US (and especially their government) know well that the famous "domino" theory applies to them just as much as to other non-communist countries under whose eyes they wave the bugaboo of Maoist danger.

Their press tries to change the tone in predicting that not only Vietnam but Southeast Asia as a whole offers no strategic interest for the future of their country.

Believing - wrongly - that Cambodia, disappointed by the actually disrespectful friendship of certain of its socialist neighbors who pretend to respect its frontiers, tries to place itself under the military and financial protection of Uncle Sam. This press floods us with ringing warnings. In substance she tells us: "It is too late, friends. Until very recently you had largely insulted us in order to be agreeable to the Chinese and Vietnamese Communist whom you court. We Americans tried in vain to warn you that the enemy for Cambodia was Communism and not the US. You, and especially Sihanouk, turned a deaf ear. Now your eyes are opened. You plead 'mea culpa' and, trembling, you try to shelter yourself under our protecting umbrella which you rejected yesteryear.

"If the peoples of Southeast Asia are not capable of defending themselves, we are not going to continue impoverishing ourselves and having

our soldiers killed to save you.

"From now on look after yourselves. We Americans wash our hands of what may happen. After long reflection, we estimate that we have no essential interest to defend in Southeast Asia. We will lose nothing in leaving you to your sad fate which is to be swallowed by Communism."

This language may sound impressive to American ears.

But, if the US truly is losing interest in Southeast Asia, why does Mr. Nixon show himself so worried about what is happening there and why, as concerns Indochina particularly, does the US effect such reluctance in getting out of the Vietnamese hornets' nest.

Cambodia, for its part, has never had any illusion as concerns its communist "friends". But, even if tomorrow relations between us worsen, there will be absolutely no question of our breaking diplomatic relations with them and even less question of drawing nearer to the Taipei or Saigon regimes. For we would have everything to lose in treating the communists as enemies and in trying to resolve our common problems without diplomatic relations with them.

After all, it is within this same order of ideas that we had to renew diplomatic relations with the US, for the difficulties between us were getting worse from the fact that we could not examine them together.

Therefore, the fact that we treat the communist countries as friends does not in any way signify that we nurture the slightest illusion towards them.

On the other hand, the normalization of our relations with the US does not in any way mean to say that we are looking for their aid and protection: we see too clearly what has happened to South Vietnam, Thailand and Laos.

When the American press writes: "Look after yourselves", we are for once in full accord: since 1953, the throne, and since 1955, the Sangkum, have taught the nation to count only on itself, no matter what the circumstances.

But does America really think that she will be able to give up, without seriously mortgaging her future and without compromising her creation: the "free world" and her planetary position.

The South Vietnamese problem is more complex than it appears. After the innumerable difficulties and disappointments caused them by the Viet Minh and Viet Cong - and taking into account their tremendous deception (not admitted, of course) of having had to defend in Saigon only dictatorial, corrupt and extremely unpopular regimes - The Americans are probably sincere, when they state that they would like to disengage as quickly as possible from the Vietnamese conflict.

But such a disengagement, should it take place, would be interpreted by their opportunistic "clientele" (allies, friends, the non-aligned of the

entire world) as a defeat - and the propaganda of the communist states never ceases to insist on this theme.

A defeat which would be the first in the history of this country which considers itself the richest, the most developed, the best armed in the world, which has even succeeded in conquering the moon - a defeat caused by a little underdeveloped yellow country! This would create great anxiety on the part of all clients of the US and a veritable panic in some.

Already, partially "occupied" Japan is moving, and the tenors of the pro-American policy of the Philippines between 1945 and 1966 are now playing towards the US "super Sihanouk". Thailand, itself, through the voice of its Minister of Foreign Affairs, announces that it is preparing a change in its foreign policy.

In the Middle East, the Soviets are supplanting the USA - and this process will become general and irreversible, if there is an American defeat in Vietnam.

Latin America is stirring more and more. Several governments have taken their distance from the American government and are checking the economic and financial monopoly of the US. The former chief of state of the Dominican Republic, Mr. Juan Bosch, confirmed this to me last month in Phnom Penh. He told me that Khmer resistance to "Yankee imperialism" and the military victory of the Vietnamese constitute "that much more encouragement to the South American peoples in their struggle to free themselves from the clutches of the USA."

The "domino" theory is in full swing. The US, itself, who invented it runs the risk of being the principal victim. Parenthetically, we must note furthermore that Washington has never been convinced (and for reason) by the argument of our delegate to the UNGAs that the US would gain great prestige by quitting South Vietnam.

To return to our region, Singapore and Malaysia are already very worried by the retreat of the British from their lands. What are they thinking, what will they do when the American retreat follows in the region.

Australia sees very clearly the lot which awaits it in the same eventuality. She has had the frankness to openly express her very real worry in the case of the departure of the Americans from South Vietnam.

The US should learn much in studying with great care the more and more "neutralist speeches" pronounced in the UN and elsewhere by the ex-champions of SEATO and of anti-communism, such as the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Thailand and the Philippines.

The prospective of an early retreat of the Americans from South Vietnam plunges all the friends of the US into fear - except Cambodia, of course,

PHINOM PENH A-10  
Encl. 1 - Page 7

who will know how to fall before communism with its customary poise and dignity.

The clients and friends of the US are now thinking of "dropping" the latter in an effort to "whitewash" themselves toward Mao's side. They are like the bird terrorized by the serpent, which tries to be very gentle in the hopes that the latter will let him alone. But the bird, gentle or not, always ends up by being swallowed up.

Yes, Cambodia is aware that it stands a good possibility of falling after the retreat of the US from South Vietnam. But after it, neither Thailand, nor Burma, nor Malaysia, nor Singapore will escape the same destiny.

It is not only Cambodia who will know the "twilight of the gods." All the false "gods" who criticize us or who despise us will also be swept aside (perhaps even more easily than us) by Asiatic communism.

The US has announced that their military disengagement in South Vietnam will be followed by that from other countries of the region, beginning with Thailand.

Already, the Japanese government no longer respects the peace treaty signed with the US, which forced it to keep only a police force. It is in the process (and it has the means, Japan having become a third economic power in the world) of endowing itself with a real national defense force with very modern armed forces (sea, land, air).

It is evident that Asia no longer counts on the Americans. India, hence rather than remaining face to face with China, will resign itself to fall under Soviet influence.

The true theory of the "domino" is this: in losing South Vietnam they will lose all of Southeast Asia, and as a result, Asia.

Supporting Israel, they will lose the Near East and then Africa.

Losing Africa and Asia, they will lose the Near East and then Africa. Africa and Asia, they will entirely have lost face in Latin America from which they will be chased.

They will then be reduced to defending their ideals and very life as a inside their own frontiers. This prospective is not in the long run unimaginable.

Yes, the American "hawks" are right when they treat the pacifists, the parading or fasting in front of the White House to obtain the withdrawal of the US forces from South Vietnam, as "fools" and as "oblivious", but the fault does not come from the pacifists. It is the fault of the American Government which has never had the courage to tell its people the basic problem.



The latter is as follows: Will the US still have a future when they shall have retreated into their shell and are obliged to defend their very existence within the interior of their frontiers - just as if they were a greater Cambodia.

South Vietnam is not a Viet Cong or Viet Minh problem, but a problem of life or death for the American people -- "To be or not to be", said Hamlet.

Understanding that, I do not believe that America, even if it wants to can disinterest itself from Southeast Asia or even from non-communist Indochina.

If is possible and even probable that the new Nixon doctrine which foresees not having American troops intervene and not even having American troops in the region, may enter into effect in the years to come.

But I don't believe that the Americans will be able to offer themselves the luxury of disengaging from this region by other means.

They will be obliged in their own interest to support the popular nationalists in their resistance against the new imperialism, that of Asiatic communism. This resistance will have two aspects, one military and the other socio-economic.

On the military plane, if the US brings an aid without conditions and without physical intervention in the equipment and the arming of the nationalist armies, they will certainly have more hope of seeing the flood of communism contained than if they assume this task with their own soldiers. In effect, they would thus contribute to cutting the wings from the subversive propaganda of communism, which calls the people to rebellion - and to the "liberation of the Nation" when this region is "occupied" by foreign forces (the cases of South Vietnam, Thailand and especially Laos: note the embarrassment of Prince Souvanna Phouma when he tries to prove that there is no American military presence in his country).

Independence is the dearest thing to the hearts of Asians. It is under the banner of liberation that the Viet Minh triumphed over France in 1954. It is under the banner of liberation and not under that of communism that the Viet Cong have been able to regroup the greater part of the South Vietnamese people and to check the most formidable expeditionary corps in the world.

The physical assistance of the US to the non-communist peoples only hastens their communization. On the contrary, an unconditional material aid without the physical presence of the USA would multiply the efficacy of the resistance of these peoples.

The indispensable complement of material aid will necessarily be economic and social assistance which constantly raises the standard of living of the masses, but must in no case allow their leaders and those who would handle it the possibility of turning it to their profit.

This last risk is not difficult to avoid. It suffices for the donor to offer his aid in the form of finished goods (to be discussed between the parties) which he will himself build and which he will turn over to the beneficiaries when completed.

One does not conquer communism with bayonets. But one can conquer it with those weapons which are the well-being of the people and with social justice.

As a result of not understanding this, ever since the end of the second World War, the US, which possessed a superabundance of the means of making itself loved and preferred by the peoples of the third world, have succeeded in getting themselves detested by many of them. And in the long run, they have only served the interest of communism, their mortal enemy. In the same way, as a matter of fact, the infiltrations of foreign communists in Cambodia and the excesses of their "red" Cambodian valets have but succeeded in spoiling communism for our people and in making the latter, for instance, move somewhat closer to the US (before the bloody US aerial attack against Dak Dam).

Sangkum, December 1969.

6992

ACTION

CONFIDENTIAL

February 19, 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. KISSINGER

FROM: John H. Holdridge

SUBJECT: Letter to Mansfield Enclosing Sihanouk Article

The President suggested that you forward to Senator Mansfield a copy of Sihanouk's recent article in Sangkum concerning U. S. / Cambodian relations. He indicated that he particularly wished to draw to Mansfield's attention the part of the article in which Sihanouk argued strongly against a U. S. withdrawal from Vietnam.

RECOMMENDATION:

That you sign the letter to Senator Mansfield at Tab A.

Att.

CONFIDENTIAL

JHH:LG:mlr:2/19/70