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"HONEST BROKERS"? CANADA AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION  
FOR SUPERVISION AND CONTROL, CAMBODIA: 1954 TO 1964

By Jeffrey L. Kerr, B.A.

A thesis submitted to  
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial  
fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Department of History

Carleton University

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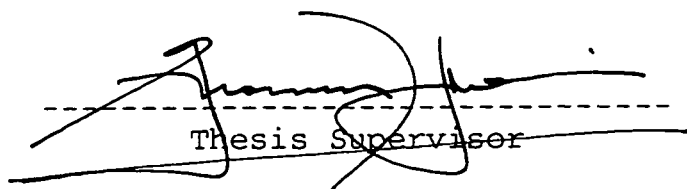
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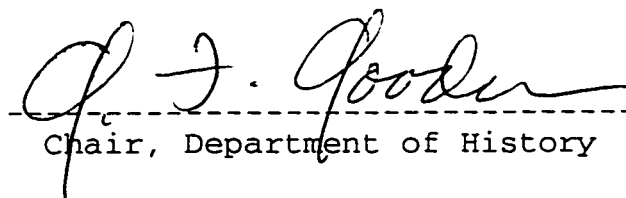
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Jeffrey L. Kerr, B.A.,

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### Abstract

This thesis will examine Canada's participation in the International Commission for the Supervision and Control of Cambodia, from 1954 to 1964. It will examine this subject within the context of two principal themes. The first is the relationship between the Canadian and Indian delegations that served on this Commission. Did a "special relationship" exist between India and Canada, and did it have an impact on the International Commission in Cambodia? The second theme which this thesis will attempt to illuminate is the relationship between Canada and the United States, and its importance to Canadian foreign policy. Did the Canadian delegation act as an impartial mediator and good international citizen, or was it biased towards the American side?

## Acknowledgements

Special thanks to the staff at the National Archives of Canada, Norman Hillmer, Arthur Blanchette, William Bauer, Madame Jules Leger and Jacques Monet.

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I dedicate this thesis to my parents.

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## Introduction

On July 19, 1954, Canada was asked to become a member of the International Commissions which were created to supervise the implementation of the Geneva Accords for Indochina. The invitation came as a complete surprise to the Department of External Affairs. Exactly why and how Anthony Eden and V.M. Molotov, the British and Soviet co-chairmen of the conference respectively, decided to choose Canada is still something of a mystery. Arthur Blanchette, who would serve as a Commissioner in Cambodia, suggested that Canadian diplomat Chester Ronning's friendship with Chinese Premier Chou En-lai may have been a contributing factor, and the Chinese Premier did, in fact, nominate Canada as the Commissions' western representative. Many years later, Blanchette quipped that, if Ronning was involved in the decision to nominate Canada, " . . . he has much to answer for!"<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Arthur Blanchette, "Indochina: From Desk Officer to Acting Commissioner", in Special Trust and Confidence, ed. by D.C. Reece (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1996), p.35. See also James Eayrs, In Defence of Canada - Indochina: Roots of Complicity, Volume 5 (Toronto:

For the next twenty years, the Indochina Commissions demanded a great deal of the Department's time and resources, far out of proportion to any benefits that Canada could possibly have received.

This thesis will examine Canada's participation in the International Commission for the Supervision and Control of Cambodia, from 1954 to 1964. It is, first and foremost, an attempt to write the narrative history, based on primary sources, of a subject that has received little attention from Canadian scholars. The thesis is also an examination of two significant themes of Canadian diplomatic history. The first is the relationship between the Canadian and Indian delegates who served on the Commission. Canadian scholars have suggested that a special tie developed between India and Canada. To what extent, therefore, did this atmosphere of goodwill carry over to the International Commission in Cambodia?

The second theme which this thesis will attempt to develop is the relationship between Canada and the United States. The United States was an important player in Indochina, since it was the leading western participant at

the 1954 Geneva Conference. The U.S.' subsequent withdrawal from the negotiations, and its refusal to associate itself with the Final Declarations, set an ominous tone during the Conference's final days. The driving force behind U.S. policy in Indochina was the containment of Communist expansion there. From the American point of view, the Geneva Agreements for Indochina made too many concessions to the Communists, and the loss of North Vietnam was far more unacceptable to the U.S. than to either the French or the British. As U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles told a congressional committee:

Whether [Communism] can be stopped at this point, and whether Laos and Cambodia and the southern part of Vietnam, Thailand, Malaya, and Indonesia can be kept out of Communist control depends very much on whether we can build a dike around this present loss. . . . It will be a domino business, unless we can bolster this thing alone.<sup>2</sup>

Canada could not ignore the views of its powerful neighbour to the south. Canada was undeniably linked to the United States, not only by geography, but also through economic and cultural ties. How far did Canada go, in its capacity as a participant in the Indochina Commissions, in

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<sup>2</sup> in Gary R. Hess, Vietnam and the United States (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1990), p.52.

order to satisfy American interests in Indochina? The issue of Canadian-American relations with respect to Indochina has been debated extensively in numerous historical works; however, this issue has been dealt with almost exclusively within the context of Canada's involvement in Vietnam. It remains to be seen whether or not the arguments for and against Canadian "complicity"<sup>3</sup> can apply to Cambodia as well. Was Canada merely carrying out American policy in Cambodia, or were the Canadians acting as "honest brokers", doing their utmost to arrive at satisfactory and conciliatory solutions?

Canada carried out its foreign policy and diplomacy in the 1950's in a manner that was consistent with its status as a middle power. Canada found solutions to policy problems not in the proposing of grand designs, rather in the response to them. Canadian policy sought "constructive amendments and imaginative formulas", finding a way in which it could fit in, rather than lead, and playing a productive

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<sup>3</sup> see Victor Levant's Quiet Complicity: Canadian Involvement in the Vietnam War (Toronto: Between the Lines), 1986.

role that frequently contributed to the problem's solution.<sup>4</sup>

Internationalism was the trademark of Canada's foreign policy. Internationalism, loosely defined, referred to Canada's preference for taking action within a multilateral framework, especially when the alternative was what James Eayrs has called "the stifling bilateral embrace" of the United States.<sup>5</sup> Canada's first priority was to create a "workable framework for peace", and it was devoted to this end through an earnest participation in international organizations.<sup>6</sup> The United Nations and the British Commonwealth were all important institutions to Canada. As a student of Canadian diplomacy at the time observed, "[in] using the United Nations and the multiracial Commonwealth to build bridges to the world, the diplomats sought to bestow benefits on Canada."<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> John W. Holmes, The Shaping of Peace: Canada and the Search for World Order, 1943-1957, Volume 1 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979), p.ix.

<sup>5</sup> quoted in Hillmer and English, "Canada's American Alliance", in Partners Nevertheless (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman Ltd., 1989), p.36.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., pp.x-xi.

<sup>7</sup> Iris Heidrun Lonergan, "The Negotiations between Canada and India for the supply of the N.R.X. Nuclear Research Reactor, 1955-56" (Unpublished Master's Thesis, Carleton University, Ottawa, 1989), p.14.

One of the bridges was to Canada's Commonwealth partner, India. Canadian officials undoubtedly assumed that the "special relationship" that existed between Canada and India would serve them well on the Indochina Commissions. As former members of the British Empire, certain cultural and historical ties existed between the two nations. Both nations were exercising a degree of international influence and control over their own affairs which had not existed before the Second World War. India, having recently gained its national independence, emerged as a model for other developing, post-colonial nations in Africa and Asia. Canada had gained a reputation as an influential middle power in the post-war world order. It seemed only natural for Canadian officials to assume that Canada and India would share many common views in their Indochina policy.

Canada and India collaborated extensively during the negotiations for an armistice in Korea and Indochina. Lester B. Pearson and India's representative, Krishna Menon, served on that committee from December, 1950 through January, 1951. In 1952-1953, Pearson and Menon were important participants in the negotiations which secured a cease-fire in Korea. When Nehru advocated an immediate cease-fire in Indochina,

shortly before the Geneva Conference had been announced, Canadian Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent was the only Western leader to support him. Canada went even further in its support for India, by recommending India as a member of the Geneva Conference of 1954 on Indochina and Korea.<sup>8</sup>

Escott Reid, the Canadian High Commissioner in India from 1952 to 1957, believed fervently in this special relationship. In December, 1949, while he was preparing for the upcoming Colombo Conference, Reid emphasized that such conferences provided an invaluable forum for keeping in touch with the Asian members of the Commonwealth. India was "the leading Asian state"; the Canadian representatives should use this opportunity to learn the Asian nations' views on Communism in Asia, and on the recent formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).<sup>9</sup> At the conference itself, Reid took special note of some apparently inflammatory remarks that were made by Prime Minister Nehru, who was at the peak of his power and influence at the time. Reid suggested that Nehru's objections to Western policy in

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<sup>8</sup> in Escott Reid's Radical Mandarin (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), p.274.

<sup>9</sup> Reid to External, December 30, 1949. Escott Reid Papers, MG 31, E 46, Vol. 7, file 15.

Asia originated not from an active dislike of the West, but rather from a sometimes neo-colonialist Western attitude in Asia. Nehru " . . . had not been advocating that Western European powers get out of Southeast Asia. He himself believed that it would be a great tragedy if there was a break between Western and Eastern cultures."<sup>10</sup> Nehru could not have asked for a more sympathetic or understanding Canadian High Commissioner.

India's involvement in Indochina was governed by other factors. The conflict in Indochina was seen not only as a struggle between the communists and the anti-communists, but also as a struggle against colonialism. India, whose own struggle for independence had just ended in 1947, was naturally sympathetic with the Indochina states in their anti-colonial struggle. Furthermore, India's geographic position as an Asian state obviously affected its policy. India shared a long common frontier with powerful China, and parts of India's northwestern regions bordered on the Soviet Union. This prevented the Indians from taking a militant stance against Communism. A policy of non-alignment in the

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<sup>10</sup> Escott Reid, "Colombo Conference Notes", January 9, 1950. Escott Reid Papers, MG 31, E 46, Vol.7, File 15.



Cold War, and peaceful co-existence with the Communists, thus emerged out of necessity. India's policy in Indochina was driven by three main principles: "Anticolonialism, antiracialism, and an extension of the area of peace by undercutting and eliminating the bloc system."<sup>11</sup>

India consistently worked towards preserving Cambodia's independent and non-aligned status. In March, 1955, Nehru secured a formal commitment to non-alignment from Cambodia's thirty-year old king, Norodom Sihanouk, during the latter's visit to New Delhi. Their joint communique spoke of "[the] historical connections and close cultural affinity between India and Cambodia", and indicated a common approach to foreign policy:

The leader of the Cambodian Delegation expressed his appreciation of India's general approach to world problems and desire for the maintenance of peace. The Delegation of the Royal Government of Cambodia and the Prime Minister of India agreed that the best guarantee for peace in the world and for friendship between countries is to adhere to the principles of the recognition of each other's sovereignty, independence and integrity, of non-aggression, of equality and mutual respect and of non-interference in the domestic affairs of each

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<sup>11</sup> Ramesh Thakur, Peacekeeping in Vietnam: Canada, India, Poland, and the International Commission (Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press, 1984), p. 16.

other or of other countries and on the promotion of conditions for peaceful coexistence.<sup>12</sup>

The meeting between Sihanouk and Nehru yielded two important results; at this time, Sihanouk decided to abandon his controversial proposals for constitutional reform in Cambodia. Furthermore, the king subscribed officially to Nehru's neutralist principles of foreign policy, instead of wavering between a Western alliance and neutrality.<sup>13</sup>

Cambodia's foreign policy adds an interesting dimension to the overall picture. Cambodia chose a position of non-alignment in the Cold War, but for different reasons than India. Cambodia had achieved its independence from the French in 1953. Sihanouk had successfully used Cambodia's position as a French ally in the struggle against the Vietminh as a bargaining chip for Cambodian independence.<sup>14</sup> Once the French colonial regime withdrew, Cambodia became

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<sup>12</sup> "Nehru-Norodom communique, 18 March 1955", in Select Documents on India's Foreign Policy and Relations 1947-1972, Volume 2, ed. A. Appadorai (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1985), pp.307-308.

<sup>13</sup> D.R. SarDesai, Indian Foreign Policy in Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam, 1947-1964 (Berkely: University of California Press, 1968), p.69.

<sup>14</sup> Gareth Porter, "Cambodia: Sihanouk's Initiative", in Foreign Affairs Vol. 66, No.4 (Spring, 1988), p.814.

dependent on foreign aid. Despite, or perhaps because of, his "mercurial" personality and his tendency to resort to dramatic outbursts, Sihanouk was very proficient in his efforts to procure aid from both the West and the Communist bloc.<sup>15</sup> In any case, Cambodia's non-aligned status pleased India, and Canada could find some solace in the fact that a strong, relatively stable, and non-communist government was in place in Phnomh Penh.

A considerable literature has been devoted to Canada's participation on the Indochina Commissions, but the historiography concentrates mainly on the Vietnam Commission. The debate in these sources centres on the extent of Canadian involvement in Vietnam; that is, to what degree were the Canadian delegates carrying out American policy in Indochina? The "complicity" school<sup>16</sup> is highly critical of the activities of the Canadian delegates on the commission for Vietnam. Victor Levant, for example, suggests that Canada played an active role in Vietnam, and that

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<sup>15</sup> Interview with Arthur Blanchette, November 21, 1996.

<sup>16</sup> Another book that belongs in this category is Charles Taylor's Snow Job: Canada, the United States and Vietnam 1954 to 1973 (Toronto: The Hunter Rose Company, 1974)

Canadian activities there damaged Canada's reputation as an impartial peacekeeper by gearing its policies towards the interests of the west.<sup>17</sup> Levant theorizes that there were three principles behind Canadian foreign policy in Vietnam: a fear of communism, the defence of the "free world" under U.S. leadership, and the acceptance of a junior partnership position.<sup>18</sup> The Canadian delegation, acting on instructions from Ottawa, played a co-ordinated part in Washington's strategy of bolstering South Vietnam in defiance of the Geneva Accords. In addition, states Levant, Canada was not acting under pressure from the United States; rather, that Canada acted of its own free will.<sup>19</sup>

The noted political scientist James Eayrs also interprets Canada's actions in Indochina as complicitous. In the fifth volume of his In Defence of Canada series, Eayrs' argument revolves around the following questions:

Were the Commissioners to be regarded and expected to perform, as disinterested seekers after fact and truth, letting the chips fall where they may

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<sup>17</sup> Victor Levant, Quiet Complicity: Canadian Involvement in the Vietnam War (Toronto: Between the Lines, 1986), p.2.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p.3.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., pp. 4-5.

and the record speak for itself? Or were they rather to be viewed as agents of their governments and spokesmen for their respective trends of world opinion, shaping the record rather than revealing it?<sup>20</sup>

And he concludes:

Canada's acceptance of membership on the Indochina truce commissions was riddled by illusions. Of all its expectations, none was to prove more ill-founded than the belief that Canada could serve in the spirit bidden by its mandate without in the course of that service complicating, eventually fraying, Canadian relations with the United States.<sup>21</sup>

The complicity school has been confronted by B.C. political scientist Douglas Ross in his study, In the Interests of Peace. The "Indochina wars involved a sufficiently ambiguous and complex set of events that no single interpretive perspective is likely to command widespread support for the foreseeable future."<sup>22</sup> Ross explained Canada's role against the background of complex international factors: " . . . the American intervention was

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<sup>20</sup> James Eayrs, In Defence of Canada: Indochina: Roots of Complicity, Vol.5 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983), p.59.

<sup>21</sup> Eayrs, In Defence of Canada, vol.5, p.57.

<sup>22</sup> Douglas A. Ross, In the Interests of Peace: Canada and Vietnam 1954-1973 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), p.4.

unlikely to succeed from the outset";<sup>23</sup> in addition, American policy-makers "decided to pursue their interventionary project despite their knowledge at each stage along the way that their probabilities for success were poor."<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, " . . . throughout the protracted evolution of the Vietnam struggle and throughout the period of direct Canadian involvement in the work of the Indochina truce supervisory commissions there was an ever-present risk of escalation of the conflict to tactical nuclear warfare"; in Indochina, indeed, Secretary of State John F. Dulles had been authorised to offer French Prime Minister Georges Bideault the use of nuclear weapons to relieve besieged French troops at Diembienphu in the spring of 1954.<sup>25</sup>

In Ross' opinion, the Canadian and Indian delegates on the Indochina Commissions believed that " . . . 'saving' South Vietnam was never strategically vital or even beneficial to American security." Rather, the domino theory was simply a rationalization constructed by the extreme anti-communist element in America. The "hidden agenda of

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<sup>23</sup> Ross, In the Interests of Peace, p.4.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., pp.4-5.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., pp.5-6.

intervention in Vietnam included an early decisive confrontation with communist China. . . . It was precisely this policy current which most terrified officials in Ottawa and New Delhi."<sup>26</sup>

John W. Holmes' two-volume analysis, The Shaping of Peace, also provides some useful commentary regarding the Indochina commissions. Holmes was the Assistant Secretary of State for External Affairs from 1953 to 1960, responsible for the Commonwealth, the United Nations, and Far Eastern Divisions. His summary of the objectives of Canadian policy in Indochina recognises that Canadian policy was, at times, quite compatible with American policy. For example, Canada sought to encourage the development of the U.S.-sponsored Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO). However, Canada did this " . . . in a way that would cause the least possible offence to the neutralist countries, particularly India, Burma, and Indonesia."<sup>27</sup> Since it became clear to Canadian officials that the United States intended to go

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<sup>26</sup> Ross, In the Interests of Peace, pp.7-8.

<sup>27</sup> Holmes, The Shaping of Peace, Vol.2, p.209.

ahead with the development of SEATO, Canadian policy sought to guide it "in the least offensive directions."<sup>28</sup>

There is also a small literature that discusses the Canadian interpretation of the Indo-Canadian relationship. Escott Reid's memoirs, Radical Mandarin and Envoy to Nehru, are perhaps the most outstanding contributions to this field. From Reid's perspective, a genuine community of interest existed between India and Canada. As a colleague observed, upon learning of his appointment to New Delhi, "Reid's appointment is not surprising. Mr. Nehru will find him a most congenial spirit in the field of anti-imperialism."<sup>29</sup> The roots of this community of interest lay, to a certain extent, in India and Canada's perceptions of the Korean War. Reid points out that Canada initially welcomed U.S. President Truman's decision to intervene in Korea, but as the war went on, " . . . we became more and more worried." The U.S. appeared to many foreign observers to be taking an increasingly dangerous approach to American policy in the Far East. The risk of escalation into a full-

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p.209.

<sup>29</sup> in Escott Reid's Radical Mandarin (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), p.270.



scale nuclear confrontation with Russia and China seemed to be a distinct possibility. The "convulsion" that Truman's dismissal of General Douglas MacArthur touched off in the United States, which " . . . demonstrated how deep, widespread, irrational and dangerous was the public and congressional support for MacArthur and his views on United States policy in the Far East."<sup>30</sup> This element in America reaffirmed " . . . the necessity of Canada maintaining a special relationship with India in which India would try to moderate Chinese policy and we would try to moderate United States policy."<sup>31</sup>

Political scientist Dale C. Thompson suggested that an entente had developed between India and Canada. Thompson argues that India joined the Commonwealth because it agreed with the "Canadian View", which sought to create a British Commonwealth that recognised all member-nations as equals. The relationship served as an East-West "bridge" for both India and Canada during the Korean war, and kept the Commonwealth alive when the Suez crisis threatened to

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<sup>30</sup> Escott Reid, Envoy to Nehru (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1981), p.24.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p.24.

shatter it. Thompson concludes that the Indo-Canadian entente did not disappear after 1957, but it did lose much of its vitality. This was attributable, in part, to the new Conservative government in Ottawa, which "felt that Canada should have stuck with the United Kingdom during the Suez crisis, right or wrong."<sup>32</sup> The Commonwealth was also expanding after 1957, with the admission of more former British colonies in Africa, thus diminishing the relative importance of India and Canada.<sup>33</sup>

This thesis relies mainly on the Department of External Affairs documents that are available at the National Archives of Canada. The Archives' series on the Cambodia Commission, which contains the Canadian delegation's correspondence with the Department of External Affairs, has been largely declassified up until 1963. In addition to those files, I have also consulted the private collections of Escott Reid, Jules Leger, and Arnold Smith, and interviewed two former members of the Department of External Affairs, Arthur Blanchette and William Bauer. During their

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<sup>32</sup> Dale C. Thompson, "India and Canada: A Decade of Co-Operation 1947-1957" International Studies, Vol.9, No.4 (April, 1968), pp.404-430.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p.430.

respective assignments to the Department's Far Eastern Division, Blanchette and Bauer held the position of Desk Officer for Indochina. Blanchette was also the Canadian Commissioner in Cambodia from 1958-1959, while Bauer was employed as a junior official on the Vietnam Commission in Hanoi from 1955 to 1957, and was the political advisor to the Canadian delegation at the Geneva Conference for Laos from 1961 to 1962. Bauer also dealt with the Indochina question while he was stationed in Ottawa from 1964 to 1967, and during his posting to Washington from 1967 to 1970.

Chapter One will discuss the Commission's reactions to the Cambodian General Elections of 1955, and the Military Aid Agreement between Cambodia and the United States. Chapter Two will cover the Commission's activities during the years 1956 to 1958, with a special emphasis on the border incidents that generated so much controversy during those years. Chapter Three will analyze the Commission's activities from 1959 to 1964, as it disintegrated into inactivity.

Chapter One: 1954-1955; "co-ordination .  
 . . is now mainly an Indian-Polish  
Preserve."

The International Commission in Cambodia (I.C.S.C.) was in its busiest and most productive period during the years 1954 to 1955. The more important provisions of the Geneva Agreements were completed to the Commission's satisfaction during this period. The demobilization of the military units in Cambodia was finished by the end of 1954; the political phase of the cease-fire Agreements was settled by the Cambodian general elections of 1955. The Commission also debated the controversial issue of the U.S.-Cambodian Military Aid Agreement that year.

The Geneva Indochina Conference lasted from 8 May to 21 July, 1954. Delegates from France, Cambodia, Laos, the State of Vietnam, the United Kingdom and the United States met with the three communist delegations, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the People's Republic of China, and the Soviet Union. Canada was not a participant at the Indochina deliberations. However, Canada was well represented at the concurrent Geneva talks on Korea. Lester B. Pearson, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, led a Canadian

delegation composed of Chester Ronning and Assistant Under-Secretary John W. Holmes. According to James Eayrs, the Canadian delegates had a great deal of informal contact with the representatives serving at the Indochina deliberations.<sup>1</sup>

The cease-fire agreements which resulted from the Geneva Indochina Conference were obtained on July 21, 1954. On that same day, the conference participants adopted a final declaration that formally took note of these agreements and created a separate International Supervisory Commission for each of the associated states of Indochina; namely, Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam. Representatives from India, Poland, and Canada constituted the membership of the International Commissions. Their responsibility was for the supervision, but not the enforcement, of the provisions of the agreement. The parties to the treaty (in Cambodia, these were the Royal Government of Cambodia and the Khmer Resistance Forces and Vietnamese Military Units) were made responsible for its execution. A separate Joint Commission was also created to carry out the actual disengagement and

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<sup>1</sup> see James Eayrs, In Defence of Canada. Indochina: Roots of Complicity, Vol. 5 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983), pp.39-48.

withdrawal of forces. Unlike Vietnam and Laos, there were no significant pockets of Communist resistance forces remaining after the Geneva settlement. Furthermore, a relatively strong central government remained in place in Cambodia.

In addition to setting forth the procedure for the withdrawal of foreign armed forces from the territory of Cambodia, the Geneva Agreements contained provisions for the demobilization of the Khmer Resistance Forces, and for their reintegration into the national community. Furthermore, the introduction of fresh troops, military personnel, armaments and munitions was strictly regulated. The main responsibilities given to the International Commission were outlined as follows:

. . . to control the withdrawal of foreign forces, to see that the frontiers were respected, to control the release of prisoners of war and civilian internees, and to supervise the application of a declaration by the Cambodian government which stated that foreign aid in war materiel, personnel, or instructors would not be solicited "except for the purpose of the effective defence of the territory."<sup>2</sup>

A general cease-fire in Cambodia had been achieved by August 7, 1954. The inaugural meeting of the I.C.S.C. for

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<sup>2</sup> Report of the Department of External Affairs 1954 (Ottawa, 1955), p.24.

Cambodia took place on August 11, where the rules of procedure were established, along with the deployment of the fixed and mobile teams. A Joint Commission, made up of a delegation from the Royal Cambodian Government and the Vietnamese military, began operations on August 20th. Its task was to oversee the withdrawal and demobilization of the combatants in Cambodia. By October 20th, the parties had successfully implemented the military clauses of the agreement. The Joint Commission was dissolved on that date. After that, the only authority which the I.C.S.C. in Cambodia dealt with for the remaining clauses of the agreement was the Royal Government of Cambodia.

The most contentious issue which the International Commission dealt with in 1954 was the release of former Khmer Resistance Forces Members and their reintegration into Cambodian society. A report made by the Commission declared, "The International Commission is not fully satisfied that the amnesty is as comprehensive as it ought to be and has therefore made representations to the Royal Government."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> International Commission for Supervision and Control in Cambodia : Progress Report on the Implementation of the Geneva Agreement for the period ending December 31, 1954 (Phnomh Penh, 1954), p.3.

This action by the Commission was brought on by a communique that the Cambodian government had issued on September 15th decreeing that it could not recognize the existence of a "so-called Khmer Resistance Movement", and that the Geneva Agreements had recognized this group as a mere organ of the Vietnamese units. A subsequent announcement stated that communist rebels and anti-monarchists who refused to rejoin the national community would not be allowed to vote in the upcoming general elections.<sup>4</sup> This was an unsatisfactory solution according to the intent of Article 6 of the Geneva Agreement. The Commission members voiced their concerns to the Royal Government, and succeeded in correcting the government's position. The government launched an extensive information campaign, which was designed to reassure the former Resistance Force members of the sincerity of the government's offer of amnesty. The Cambodian government also issued identification cards which confirmed the card

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<sup>4</sup> Canadian Commissioner, Hanoi, to Secretary of State for External Affairs, Ottawa, "Weekly Progress Report on the International Commission in Cambodia", p.1. September 27, 1954. RG 25, Vol. 4700, file 50052-C-40, pt.1.



holder's status as a Cambodian citizen, and enabled them to participate in the upcoming election.<sup>5</sup>

However, the issue of the Khmer dissidents remained a controversial one. The Khmer Resistance Forces (K.R.F.) claimed to have demobilized on August 22, 1954; since the I.C.S.C. for Cambodia did not commence operations until August 11, and the Joint Commission began on August 20th, there were no supervisory bodies present to observe the demobilization. The Royal Cambodian Government remained unconvinced that the K.R.F. had completely demobilized. Despite the fact that the K.R.F. insisted that all weapons had been destroyed, the Cambodian government complained to the Commission that large stashes of armaments still remained hidden in the countryside. The Commission's investigation was inconclusive, and the issue was never resolved in a completely satisfactory way. However, before the Joint Commission came to an end in October, the delegation representing the resistance forces declared that the Royal Government was " . . . free to deal according to

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<sup>5</sup> see Progress Report . . . for the period Ending December 31, 1954.

the normal laws of the country with any bands masquerading as Khmer Resistance Forces."<sup>6</sup>

The military phase of the cease-fire agreements was, by then, mostly complete. The Commission had functioned as a model of efficiency. The Indian, Canadian, and Polish delegations had worked well together, sharing a near unanimity of views and objectives. The Canadian Commissioner, Rudolphe "Paddy" Duder, referred to the Cambodia Commission as the "success story" of the three Indochina commissions.<sup>7</sup>

As University of California scholar D.R. SarDesai points out, there were several reasons favouring the success of the Commission's work. The situation in Cambodia was not nearly as complex as that of Laos and Vietnam. The Vietminh aggression in Cambodia had been sporadic and short-lived, and was easily countered by Cambodia's forces. The Cambodian agreement was the only one in which the French authorities did not figure; in Laos and Vietnam, the French were heavily involved in the fighting, and were actual signatories to the

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p.3.

<sup>7</sup> see D.R. SarDesai's Indian Foreign Policy in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, p.124.

cease-fire agreements. In addition, the Commissions there were dependent on the cooperation of the French military authorities, and the use of their logistics facilities. This was not the case in Cambodia. Furthermore, the Cambodian government was eager to establish a good relationship with the International Commission, since it wanted to bring peace to the country.<sup>8</sup> All of these factors combined to make the task of the Cambodia Commission seem easy by comparison; there was no cause for strife amongst the three delegations. However, that was all about to change.

The U.S.-Cambodia Military Aid Agreement (MAA) was not well received by the Indian government. This agreement would provide Cambodia with American money, military equipment, and a military advisory group (MAAG) to supervise the use of the equipment.<sup>9</sup> Nehru criticized the Agreement in a letter to his chief ministers on May 20, 1955. The overall situation in Indochina, he said, continued "to be a precarious one":

In Cambodia a certain development has taken place recently which may lead to trouble. The Government there has come to an agreement with the U.S. for

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<sup>8</sup> SarDesai, pp.124-125.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p.121.

the supply of military equipment and some personnel to deal with this equipment. It is doubtful how far this is in keeping with the Geneva Agreement. According to the Cambodian government, this is not a breach. We have not seen the terms of the Cambodian agreement with the U.S. yet. But we have heard that China takes a very strong view about this matter.<sup>10</sup>

The Canadian delegation in Cambodia first learned of the MAA informally. The British Charge-D'affaires in Cambodia, G.S. Littlejohn-Cook, was invited to the U.S. Embassy in Phnomh Penh to read the text of the agreement. Littlejohn-Cook then gave Acting Canadian Commissioner Maj.-Gen. Eric Snow a summary of the text, impressing upon him that the MAA was " . . . completely innocuous, . . . and does not contravene the Geneva Agreement in any respect."<sup>11</sup> Throughout the Commission's debate on the MAA, the Canadian delegation consistently maintained this argument.

On May 24, 1955, Snow reported to External Affairs in Ottawa that the Indian chairman had received a copy of the Agreement, forwarded it to his government, and was already

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<sup>10</sup> J. Nehru, in Jawaharlal Nehru: Letters to Chief Ministers 1947-1964 Volume 4 (New Delhi: Government of India, 1987), p.175.

<sup>11</sup> Eric Snow, Acting Canadian Commissioner, Cambodia to the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Ottawa, May 18, 1955. RG 25, Vol 4702, file 50052-C-40, pt.6.

receiving advice from New Delhi.<sup>12</sup> There were numerous sections of the MAA that were objectionable to the Indians.

Paragraph nine was one such stumbling block:

In conformity with the principles of the United Nations, the Government of Cambodia will by mutual agreement furnish to the government of the United States or to any other governments, such equipment, materials, services and other assistance as may be mutually agreed upon in order to increase their capacity for individual or collective defence or to facilitate their effective participation in the collective security system contemplated by the United Nations Charter.  
<sup>13</sup>

From the point of view of India's officials, this section could be suggesting an obligation on Cambodia's part towards other U.S. allies, effectively imposing membership in SEATO upon Cambodia.

Other sections of the MAA were also unacceptable to the Indians, since the language of the agreement implied that Cambodia had abandoned neutrality in favour of a western alliance. One clause, contained in the agreement's introduction, stated:

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<sup>12</sup> Snow to External, May 24, 1955. RG 25, Vol. 4702, file 50052-C-40, pt. 6.

<sup>13</sup> Cited by E. Snow, Acting Canadian Commissioner, Cambodia, in a memo to External Affairs, May 24, 1955. RG 25, Vol. 4702, file 50052-C-40, pt. 6.

The Government of the Kingdom of Cambodia hereby confirms that it has agreed to . . . make, consistent with its political and economic stability, the full contribution permitted by its manpower, resources, facilities, and general economic condition to the development and maintenance of its own defensive strength and the defensive strength of the free world.<sup>14</sup>

The phrase "free world" seemed to indicate, yet again, that Cambodia had joined the western camp through this military aid agreement with the United States. Furthermore, Indian officials objected to another clause of the agreement which granted tax and duty-free status for " . . . equipment and materials in transit through Cambodian territory and destined for other countries receiving military aid from the United States or for American military assistance missions in such countries."<sup>15</sup>

General Snow<sup>16</sup> received advice on how to proceed during the International Commission's deliberations on the MAA. In response to Indian claims that the MAA contravened Article 7

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., May 25, 1955.

<sup>15</sup> Snow to External, May 24, 1955, in Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> At this time, Snow was acting as the alternate delegate for R. Duder, who was on sick leave. Duder does reappear from time to time during the MAA debate. His tour of duty in Cambodia was, in any case, near its end at this time.

of the Geneva Agreements, External Affairs officials told Snow:

This undertaking on the part of Cambodia does not, in our opinion, constitute a military alliance not in conformity with the principles of the Charter nor does it embody any obligation to establish bases on Cambodian territory for the military forces of foreign powers . . . . We take it that the objection is to Cambodia permitting the passage through Cambodian territory of United States military aid materiel destined for other countries. This does not conflict with the provisions of Article 7 because, in cases such as this, the Government of Cambodia would not itself be soliciting foreign aid. There is no provision in the Cambodian Agreement . . . which could be interpreted as prohibiting the passage through Cambodia of war materiel.<sup>17</sup>

A.D.P. Heeney, the Canadian Ambassador in Washington, discussed the MAA at length with State Department officials. He was told that the agreement " . . . should not be a matter of great concern to the International Commission"; in addition, Heeney was told, ". . . the Cambodian Government would hold the view strongly that it did not have to account to the International Commission in this instance." Heeney also reported that the U.S. was somewhat mystified by the Indian delegation's objections to the MAA:

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<sup>17</sup> Secretary of State for External Affairs, Ottawa, to Canadian Commissioner, Cambodia, May 28, 1955. RG 25, Vol.4702, file 50052-C-40, pt.6.

It was difficult [for State Department officials] to understand what the Indian desires were with respect to Cambodia or, indeed, Laos and South Vietnam. The Indians seemed always suspicious of United States motives but had never made any concrete offer to "share the burden" in that area. The rumoured agreement reached at Bandung between India and China as to Laos and Cambodia being protectorates of India remained in the status of rumour so far as the State Department was concerned.<sup>18</sup>

Indian officials related their concerns regarding the MAA to the Canadians in New Delhi. According to B.M. Williams at the Office of the High Commissioner for Canada, the Indians were speculating that China might use the MAA as an excuse to begin arming North Vietnam.<sup>19</sup>

The Commission's discussions of the MAA began to wind down in mid-June. At an informal meeting held on June 11, both the Polish and Indian delegates continued to insist that the Military Assistance Agreement contravened the Geneva Accords. G. Parthasarathi, the Indian Chairman, said that the discussion of the MAA had gone far enough, and suggested three courses for the Commission. The first option was to forward a majority report to the co-chairmen stating

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<sup>18</sup> A.D.P. Heeney to External Affairs, Ottawa, June 5, 1955. RG 25, Vol 4702, file 50052-C-40, pt.6.

<sup>19</sup> B.M. Williams to External Affairs, Ottawa, June 6, 1955. RG 25, Vol 4702, file 50052-C-40, pt.6.



that the MAA contravened Geneva. The second option consisted of asking Cambodia and the United States to amend the objectionable clauses. The third option required a statement from Cambodia and the United States which explained the objectionable clauses, thereby reassuring the interested parties that the MAA in no way contravened the Geneva Agreements.<sup>20</sup>

Rudolphe Duder reported to External Affairs that the Indian chairman might accept the third option. However, the U.S. would not issue such a statement. Although the Indian chairman might be willing to accept a statement from Cambodia alone, it would have to be extremely comprehensive. Duder also told External Affairs that, "[American Ambassador to Cambodia] McClintock told me if Commission attacks agreement he will himself brief Cambodians on effective rebuttal. Our view is that Washington will react strongly to criticism."<sup>21</sup> The Polish delegates, of course, continued to insist that the Agreement contravened Geneva. Nevertheless, the Canadian delegates continued to endure the criticism of

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<sup>20</sup> R. Duder to External Affairs, June 13, 1955. RG 25, Vol 4702, file 50052-C-40, pt.6.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., June 13, 1955.

their Polish and Indian colleagues, and proceeded to work with various compromise solutions.

General Snow commented on India's interests in a letter to R.M. MacDonnell, a senior official in Ottawa:

I am afraid that the Poles are being most difficult over the MAA but of course that was to be expected. What was not expected is the dogmatic stand of Parthasarathi. Many of his arguments just do not stand up to reasonable discussion and I am inclined to believe that he knows this but is steadfastly hewing to the party line - the Indian line - and not even sweet reasonableness seems to make any impression on him. He is obviously following instructions from India and it is beginning to look as though India is determined to do all she can to embarrass the U.S. over this Military Assistance Agreement.<sup>22</sup>

Jacques Cousineau, a junior official at External Affairs, wrote to Arthur Menzies, an official in the Department's Far Eastern Division, regarding the U.S.-Cambodia Military Aid Agreement. This "quaint succession of moves" on the part of Cambodia, which re-iterated a commitment to neutralism and led to the signing of a military agreement with the U.S. one month later, emerged from " . . . a very human desire to take the most out of everything." Cousineau added, "It

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<sup>22</sup> Snow to MacDonnell, June 14, 1955. RG 25, Vol. 4702, file 50052-C-40, pt.6.

remains to be seen whether Cambodia will succeed in 'having its cake and eating it too':

Having just escaped from the French yoke and being quite anxious to avoid any foreign domination whether communist or not, Cambodia would like to receive help from every quarter and reach a state of balance between foreign influences . . . . Its personal sympathy is wholly slanted to India which is closely related and apparently presents much less danger of interference in Cambodian internal affairs. Cambodia had to sign a military agreement with the U.S. because the latter country is more in a position to give effective help.<sup>23</sup>

In a memorandum sent to Lester B. Pearson, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Under-Secretary of State Jules Leger recommended that, in order to "avoid having a propaganda defeat" which would result from a negative interpretation of the MAA, " . . . I think we should do what we can informally and confidentially to try to persuade the Cambodians to make a conciliatory statement before the Commission aimed at winning over the Indian chairman." Leger added, "We think that the State Department should also know of the difficulties we are encountering. While we do not wish them to give up their strong view, which we share, that the MAA does not contravene the Geneva settlement, we hope they will see the advantages of

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<sup>23</sup> J.C.Cousineau to A. Menzies, June 14, 1955, p.1, 11.

presenting this view in a diplomatic way in order to try to win over the Indians."<sup>24</sup>

Canadian diplomatic officials made further efforts towards winning over their Indian colleagues. During Assistant Under-Secretary of State John Holmes' visit to New Delhi, he had occasion to discuss the U.S.-Cambodia Military Aid Agreement with Indian Commonwealth Secretary Dutt and Joint Secretary Jha. Holmes adopted a conciliatory position, and avoided entering into a legal discussion with the Indian officials. He pointed out that what mattered were the intentions of the American and Cambodian governments. His previous discussions with the Cambodian Prime Minister and the American Ambassador revealed " . . . that the agreement had in no way interfered with [Cambodia's] complete independence and that the United States had no desire whatsoever to bring Cambodia into SEATO or commit it in any way."<sup>25</sup> He also assured the Indian officials that he had done his utmost to reassure American officials in Phnomh

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<sup>24</sup> Jules Leger to Lester B. Pearson, "Memorandum for the Minister", June 15, 1955. RG 25, Vol. 4702, file 50052-C-40, pt.6.

<sup>25</sup> Holmes, from the Office of the Canadian High Commissioner, New Delhi, to External, June 15, 1955, p.1. RG 25, Vol. 4702, file 50052-C-40, pt.6.

Penh that the Indian delegates were concerned about China's reaction to the agreement. However, Holmes warned them of " . . . the danger of exarcebating the feelings of the Cambodian government if the Commission persisted in questioning its good faith and its independence."<sup>26</sup>

This style of diplomacy was consistently used by Canadian officials throughout their involvement on the Indochina Commissions. In any situation, the Canadians attempted to achieve a compromise solution. In the case of the MAA debate, their goal was to obtain some sort of conciliatory statement from the Cambodian government in order to appease the Indian delegation. The Canadian delegates had been advised by Pearson to avoid involving the U.S. in any such statement. Since the U.S. was not a signatory at Geneva, it would have been improper to include them. In the meantime, Snow was to keep the U.S. Ambassador informed confidentially, and continue to advise the Cambodians informally.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p.2.

<sup>27</sup> Pearson to Snow, June 16, 1955. RG 25, Vol. 4702, file 50052-C-40, pt.7.

The Canadian delegation was evidently becoming frustrated with the Indian delegation. General Snow commented that the Indian Chairman was very hard to assess:

He changes his attitude from day to day and hour to hour. He agrees one moment and disagrees the next. He is definitely in a quandary and seems to be torn between his own intellectual honesty and his direction from India. At [the] moment he has three main thoughts on his mind: Nehru dislikes intensely any free military aid from [the] United States to any other country; China and North Vietnam are very hostile to the MAA; India does not interpret Article 51 of [the] UN Charter as do Western powers . . . [T]he chairman is not really open to argument since these thoughts convince him that [the] MAA should be found incompatible with [the] Geneva Agreement.<sup>28</sup>

There is evidence to suggest that Canadian and American officials were both working to obtain some sort of statement of clarification from the Cambodian government. Snow met with Sam Sary and Khim Tit of the Cambodian government, and pointed out that he was " . . . sure they would be most sympathetic to Commission request for clarification". Sary and Tit were drafting an acceptable statement, with the help of the US Ambassador.<sup>29</sup> By June 23, Canadian officials agreed that General Snow had " . . . carried our views in

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<sup>28</sup> Snow to External, June 21, 1955. RG 25, Vol. 4702, file 50052-C-40, pt.7.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, pp.1-2.

the Commission and to the Cambodians about as far as is possible at the present time." Menzies noted that the response from the State Department on Canada's efforts was ". . . very satisfactory". He added that Holmes had explained, " . . . about as fully as possible", the Canadian position to Indian officials during his visit to New Delhi:

I am inclined to think that the principle obstacle to a satisfactory resolution of this matter lies in the political attitudes of Mr. Nehru and Mr. Krishna Menon. Until they can be satisfied in some way, or talked out of their intransigent attitude, I doubt if we will see any amendment of the instructions to the Indian Commissioner in Phnomh Penh.<sup>30</sup>

American officials in Cambodia took an initiative of sorts to resolve the stalemate within the International Commission. Menzies reported to the Canadian delegation that McClintock resorted to ". . . a mild form of shock treatment" with Parthasarathi, reading extracts of a conversation between a U.S. official and Krishna Menon. Menon had criticized the American use of military aid to "buttress undemocratic regimes in Asia." McClintock then told Parthasarathi that "if he was not disposed toward

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<sup>30</sup> A.R. Menzies, "Cambodian Military Assistance Agreement with the United States", June 23, 1955, p.1. RG 25, Vol. 4702, file 50052-C-40, pt.7.

cordial and strengthening relations between India and Cambodia he could show Menon's comments regarding the so-called undemocratic regime in Cambodia to the Queen and Prince Sihanouk thereby permanently impairing relations between Indian and Cambodia." Moreover, McClintock seemed certain that Parthasarathi would recommend that his government accept a statement in good faith from the Cambodian government.<sup>31</sup>

During the week of June 16-23, the International Commission in Cambodia had resolved to send a letter to the Cambodian Government which pointed out the questionable clauses in the MAA, and offered an acceptable interpretation. After the inevitable delays, during which the delegations were reportedly consulting with their governments, the letter was sent on July 5, 1955. It asked the Cambodian government to confirm the Commission's interpretation of the MAA, which narrowed the inherent difficulties in the agreement to five main trouble spots. The Commission wanted the Royal Government to emphasize that

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<sup>31</sup> A.R. Menzies to I.S.C. Commissioner, Cambodia, High Commissioner for Canada, New Delhi, and Canadian Ambassador, Washington, June 23, 1955. RG 25, Vol. 4702, file 50052-C-40, pt.7.



it was not bound by the provisions of any U.S. legislation, specifically the 1954 Mutual Security Act, under which military assistance was to be given "in order to promote the foreign policy, security, and general welfare of the United States." The Commission also requested clarification of the term "free world", as used in the Agreement, which ought to refer to all freedom-loving nations, and not just the western bloc. In addition, the Royal Government must not consider the equipment granted to it to be at the disposal of the U.S. or any of its allies. Another provision which granted freedom of transit of war materiel through Cambodia should only apply during peacetime; in the event of a war, the laws of neutrality would take effect. The final clarification reminded the Cambodian government that they were required to keep the Commission fully appraised of Cambodia's requirements for effective defence, in order to avoid any surpluses of war materiel.<sup>32</sup> On July 13, the Cambodian foreign minister sent a brief reply, which

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<sup>32</sup> Third Interim Report of the International Commission for Supervision and Control in Cambodia for the period April 1 to July 28, 1955 (London, 1955), pp.8-11.

confirmed "the exactitude" of the Commission and Royal Government's interpretation of the MAA.<sup>33</sup>

A series of diplomatic exchanges took place to ensure that this latest interpretation of the MAA was acceptable to everyone concerned. India made extensive representations to China, and the U.S. Ambassador in Cambodia meanwhile was liaising with the Cambodian government.<sup>34</sup> General Snow concluded, "I think that an examination of the result of more than two months of wrangling, fence-sitting and procrastination brings us to the conclusion that the inch by inch fight has not been without success as far as the Canadian delegation is concerned." Snow suggested that the Polish and Indian positions were "more or less similar", because both of these delegations believed that the MAA was incompatible with the Geneva Agreement. As to "[w]hether or not the Indian government was at any time happy to see American aid given to Cambodia", Snow speculated, " . . . from certain remarks and acid comments made by members of the Indian delegation, I am inclined to think that they do

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p.11.

<sup>34</sup> See Canadian diplomatic correspondence from July 21-July 23, contained in RG 25, Vol 4702, file 50052-C-40, pt.7.

resent, to a degree, what they consider to be an unwarranted trespassing on their Cambodian preserve."<sup>35</sup>

The next issue the International Commission in Cambodia had to contend with was the upcoming general elections there. It may be useful at this point to review the political situation in Cambodia which preceded the election in 1955.<sup>36</sup> From 1947 to 1952, Cambodia was a democratic, constitutional monarchy. Its constitution provided for an elected National Assembly, a second chamber known as the "Council of the Kingdom" similar to a senate, and a Council of Ministers, equivalent to the cabinet in the British parliamentary tradition. The sovereign had similar powers as the British monarch.<sup>37</sup>

In June, 1952, Cambodia's constitution was suspended by the King, on the grounds that no stable government could be formed by the existing National Assembly. For the previous five years, the National Assembly had been dominated by the

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<sup>35</sup> Snow to External, July 26, 1955. RG 25, Vol. 4702, file 50052-C-40, pt.7.

<sup>36</sup> This review is based on Cambodian General Elections of 1955, a summary written by the Department of External Affairs, and contained in RG 25, Vol. 4705, file 50052-C-2-40, pt.1.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p.1.

Democratic Party, but King Sihanouk became alienated from the Democratic Party and its leader, Son Ngoc Thanh.<sup>38</sup>

On January 24, 1955, the Cambodian government resigned. An "elections government", composed of representatives who had proven their loyalty to the King, was formed to rule in the interim. In an address to the Cambodian people, Sihanouk professed that, under his leadership between 1953 to 1955, Cambodia had gained its independence, received a satisfactory settlement at Geneva, and was being extended full diplomatic recognition by numerous nations. His "mission" complete, Sihanouk asked the Cambodian people to evaluate his performance in a referendum, scheduled to precede the general election. This referendum, according to a Canadian observer, was nothing more than a calculated political manoeuvre, designed to bolster the King's popularity:

No attempt was made to provide for secrecy of ballot and the whole process was an example of the referendum as used by European dictators from Napoleon to Hitler to erect a facade of retroactive popular ratification for policies already implemented.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>Cambodian General Elections of 1955, pp.1-2.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p.4.

On February 22, 1955, Sihanouk issued his "Study to Amend the Constitution Granted by the King in 1947", whose aim was to abolish the party system in Cambodian government; the document's subtitle proposed, "to enable the mass of the people to exercise the powers vested in it directly and to eliminate the chaos of democratic life in Cambodia". Sihanouk claimed that the power of the people had been " . . . usurped by a group of self-seeking party politicians", and asked:

Why not allow this people to exercise directly and unequivocally the powers demanded in its name, instead of removing these powers from the people only to give them in the last resort to a class of persons who possess none of the fundamental qualities of our people, and who, therefore, cannot validly represent it and can only cause the mass of the people to lose its faith in its representatives and its government, with the resultant anarchy and chaos we have known and still know today.

Sihanouk further stated that those who had drafted the Constitution " . . . presented the Khmer people with the French constitutional provisions which [caused] so much harm to the French people. . . ."<sup>40</sup>

However, Sihanouk's constitutional reforms were not well received by most foreign observers. In a sudden,

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<sup>40</sup> in Cambodian General Elections of 1955, pp.4-5.

dramatic gesture, he abdicated the throne to his parents on March 2, 1955. He claimed that, because of the opposition of his enemies, he could no longer serve the interests of his people. The Department of External Affairs speculated on Sihanouk's motives:

It may be guessed that he was deeply hurt by what was probably unexpected opposition to his reform proposals by representatives of friendly countries and by the suggestion that some of the terms of these proposals were contrary to those of the Geneva settlement.<sup>41</sup>

As a result, the general elections in Cambodia were postponed until September 11, 1955. Sihanouk abandoned his controversial reform proposals, stating that the upcoming elections would be held under the existing electoral law. Within a few days of the abdication, some party leaders renounced their party allegiances, and rallied to support the ex-King. The major opposition parties lost many members, including Sim Var, one of the founders of the Democrats. In April, 1955, Sihanouk announced the formation of the *Sangkum*, or Popular Socialist Community. The Sangkum was hailed by Sihanouk as a movement for the "little people"; nevertheless, it embodied Sihanouk's reform proposals, and

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<sup>41</sup>Cambodian General Elections of 1955, p.8.

disguised them as a political party. As a Canadian document which summarized the election revealed, the Sangkum reform proposals were " . . . directed specifically against the party system and if they are implemented the Sangkum will function . . . more characteristic of parties in totalitarian than in democratic states."<sup>42</sup>

The election campaign itself was hardly a shining example of democracy in action. Members of Cambodia's Pracheachon (Communist) and Democratic parties suffered severe repressions at the hands of Sangkum supporters. Numerous Pracheachon and Democratic candidates were arrested and imprisoned for the duration of the campaign. These prisoners were the fortunate ones. In one incident in the district of Kampot, government troops arrested four Pracheachon members and shot two others dead. As a result, the Pracheachon was able to field candidates for only 35 of the 91 seats.<sup>43</sup> In addition, the voters themselves were often intimidated by the authorities, and there is some

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p.10.

<sup>43</sup> Ben Kiernan, How Pol Pot Came to Power: A History of Communism in Kampuchea, 1930-1975 (London: Verso, 1985), p.159.

evidence to suggest that the ballot boxes were tampered with after the vote.<sup>44</sup>

In light of the political developments in Cambodia, the Commission's supervision of the 1955 elections became controversial. As early as October, 1954, the Canadian Commissioner had indicated that he was not convinced that the International Commission had the duty of supervising the elections.<sup>45</sup> The State Department informed the Canadian ambassador in Washington that the U.S. shared the view of the Cambodian government that the I.C.S.C in Cambodia had no supervisory obligations regarding the elections.<sup>46</sup> However, the Indian and Polish delegates thought that the Commission had an obligation to supervise the elections. R. Murray, an assistant to the Canadian delegate in Cambodia, wrote:

It would therefore be an expensive and dangerous policy for the Delegation to oppose supervision of elections in any form. Its wisest policy might be to aim ultimately at a compromise solution. The International Commission would let the Cambodian government know that it did not consider itself to

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p.160.

<sup>45</sup> R.Duder, "The Cambodian Elections and the International Supervisory Commission", p.2. October 8, 1954. RG 25, Vol. 4700, file 50052-C-40, pt.1.

<sup>46</sup> G.P. de T. Glazebrook to External Affairs. RG 25, Vol. 4700, file 50052-C-40, pt.1. Oct.25, 1954.



be competent to supervise the elections of a state whose sovereignty was recognized by the Geneva agreement; that its only role would be to report to the Geneva Powers on the conduct of the elections. Because the sovereignty of Cambodia would thus be unquestioned, the Cambodian government, recognizing the value of a good report, would co-operate with the Commission which would thus be able in fact to . . . [act] as conscience and conciliator."<sup>47</sup>

The Department of External Affairs' legal division reached a similar conclusion. One of their memoranda stated, " . . . it would appear that legally the Commission has the right and responsibility to observe the general elections only in so far as they concern ex-members of the Khmer Resistance Forces and their families."<sup>48</sup> Article 6 of the Geneva Agreement for Cambodia contained an implicit guarantee by the Cambodian government to conduct free and open elections:

[The Cambodian Government] Declares itself resolved to take the necessary measures to integrate all citizens, without discrimination, into the national community and to guarantee them the enjoyment of the rights and freedoms for which the constitution of the Kingdom provides.

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<sup>47</sup> Memorandum to Acting Commissioner from R. Murray, "Supervision of the Cambodian Elections", p.2. Oct. 8, 1954. RG 25, Vol. 4700, file 50052-C-40, pt.1.

<sup>48</sup> "Elections in Cambodia", p.2. Dec. 16, 1954. RG 25, Vol 4701, file 50052-C-40, pt.2.

Furthermore, under the same article, the Cambodian government pledged " . . . that all citizens may freely participate as electors or candidates in general elections by secret ballot." Article 3 of the Final Declaration states:

The Conference takes note of the declarations made by the Governments of Cambodia and of Laos of their intention to adopt measures permitting all citizens to take their place in the national community, in particular by participating in the next general elections, which, in conformity with the constitution of each of these countries, shall take place in the course of the year 1955, by secret ballot and in conditions of respect for fundamental freedoms.

The Canadian interpretation of these agreements limited the application of Article 6 to the re-integration of ex-members of the Khmer Resistance Forces. The Final Declaration created moral, rather than legal, responsibilities.

Therefore, the Commission had no legal obligation to enforce the provisions of the Final Declaration.<sup>49</sup> The Indian and Polish delegations maintained that the Commission had a general supervisory role to ensure that the elections were

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<sup>49</sup> Excerpts from the Geneva Agreement and the Final Declaration, in addition to the statement of the Canadian position, are contained in Cambodian General Elections of 1955, Chapter 5, "The International Supervisory Commission and the Elections", pp.1-2. RG 25, Vol.4705, file 50052-C-2-40, pt.1.

genuinely free and secret. They also interpreted the Final Declaration as binding and legal.<sup>50</sup>

This difference of interpretation surfaced during the discussions of the Commission's supervision of the elections. There was a great deal of debate surrounding the extent of the Commission's supervision of the conduct of the Cambodian elections. General Snow informed External that the Indian Chairman "sprung" a letter of instruction on him during an informal meeting. It ordered the inspection teams to circulate much more thoroughly throughout their respective areas, question local Cambodian officials "tactfully and unobtrusively", and report fully and frequently to the Commissioners. These instructions appeared, from the Canadian point of view, to take the Commission's participation in the elections much further than anticipated. General Snow observed that the Indian Chairman "bridled when I, unlike the Pole, tried to obtain clarification and make comments." Snow added that he would "instruct the Canadian Team members to oppose any tendency

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p.2.

on the part of the Indian and Polish Team Members to enlarge the scope of the instructions."<sup>51</sup>

The new Canadian Commissioner, Arnold Smith, commented on the divergent opinions of the Canadian and Indian delegations:

I told Parthasarathi of my concern lest we exceed our mandate. His view . . . is that the Commission is responsible to the Geneva signatories . . . . [T]ruly free elections in Cambodia were an integral part of the considerations for which the Vietminh stopped fighting. He suggested that there might well be a complaint after the elections from China or the Vietminh that the elections had not in fact been free and in accordance with "all the fundamental freedoms".<sup>52</sup>

The External Affairs Department in Ottawa instructed Smith to oppose any action by the Commission which would pass judgement on the conduct of the Cambodian elections:

. . . [T]he project of a general report to the co-chairmen giving or not giving a clean bill of health should be opposed for the same reason that we opposed the publication of the MAA documents. The elections, like the MAA, are an issue which should not be kept alive in such a way as to give

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<sup>51</sup> Snow to External, "Instructions to teams in connection with the Elections", August 2, 1955. RG 25, Vol. 4702, file 50052-C-40, pt.8.

<sup>52</sup> Arnold Smith to External, "Indian Views on Indo-China", August 9, 1955. RG 25, Vol. 4702, file 50052-C-40, pt.8.

grounds for continuing communist criticism and propaganda.<sup>53</sup>

The Indian delegation's continuing criticism of the elections was beginning to erode much of the good faith that existed between the Cambodian and Indian governments. In Smith's words:

I do not believe it is Indian policy to intervene directly or indirectly in hope of a democratic victory in the elections . . . . Nevertheless [the] Indians have long had sympathy with [the] Democrats and a number of ill-advised actions and statements over [the] past twelve months have probably given Sihanouk the impression that India is against him and have reduced India's popularity in Cambodian government to low level . . . . Parthasarathi is, however, apt to assume with perhaps subconscious arrogance school masterism Indian mission to coax and scold Cambodians into proper democratic behaviour.<sup>54</sup>

Smith's suspicions were confirmed during his meeting with Sihanouk:

Sihanouk . . . went on to speak very highly of our Delegation. However, he made an impassioned and almost violent attack at [the] top of his voice on the other two members of the Commission. He said the Polish delegation were helping the Communists, but admitted this was not surprising. He accused

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<sup>53</sup> External to Smith, "The Commission and the Elections", August 12, 1955. RG 25, Vol. 4702, file 50052-C-40, pt.8.

<sup>54</sup> Smith to External, "Indian attitude in Cambodian elections", August 18, 1955. RG 25, Vol.4702, file 50052-C-40, pt.8.

the Indian delegation, however, of giving substantial an consistent support to "some clans which were enemies of the regime." . . . The Prince left no doubt, however, that he is at present in a decidedly anti-Indian frame of mind.<sup>55</sup>

The debate on the elections issue created an entirely different situation within the International Commission. The Canadian Commission perceived a change in the attitude of the Indian Commissioner. Smith speculated that this was a result of India's loss of faith in Sihanouk as a result of the U.S.-Cambodia Military Aid Agreement, and factored in Nehru's recent visit behind the Iron Curtain. Above all else, the Indian position assumed that the underlying "spirit of Geneva" was designed to keep China happy. The rumoured agreement between the Communists and India, which apparently recognised India's jurisdiction over Cambodia, would have been shaken by Sihanouk's ostensible shift from neutralism towards the West. Smith noted that India held natural sympathies with Cambodia's Democratic Party. As a victory by Sihanouk's Sangkum party became apparent, India ceased to be as sensitive towards Cambodia's views. All this

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<sup>55</sup> Smith to External, "Interview with Prince Sihanouk", August 30, 1955. RG 25, Vol. 4702, file 50052-C-40, pt.8.

created an interesting and new dynamic within the International Commission:

Unquestionably the change in Polish and Indian attitudes has made for a radical change in the Commission. Whereas the Canadian Delegation and the Indian Delegation used to have a fundamental sympathy in long and short-run objectives, a sympathy which expressed itself in either tacit or private co-ordination of approach, the co-ordination of approach is now mainly an Indian-Polish preserve.<sup>56</sup>

The Sangkum party of the former King Sihanouk won all 91 seats, obtaining 83 per cent of the popular vote.<sup>57</sup> After this overwhelming victory, the debate within the International Commission turned to the Commission's Fourth Interim report. Several drafts of this report were written, and were bitterly contested within the International Commission. The Indian and Polish delegates co-ordinated their activities, and advocated the inclusion of all the alleged electoral abuses on the part of the Cambodian government. The Canadian delegate fought hard to remove the sections which he deemed to be overly critical of the

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<sup>56</sup> Smith to External, "Attitudes and Position within Commission", September 9, 1955. RG 25, Vol. 4702, file 50052-C-40, pt.8.

<sup>57</sup> Report of the Department of External Affairs 1955 (Ottawa, 1956), p.26.

Cambodian government, and objected to the publication of the numerous petitions submitted to the Commission, on the grounds that the Commission had not investigated these complaints. Eventually, the Indian Chairman, unwilling to break the Commission's record of unanimity, conceded, resulting in a final report which was more along Canadian lines.<sup>58</sup>

A final matter of controversy was the Commission's final evaluation of the elections. The Indian Chairman was against any clear-cut statement that the Cambodian government had satisfied the conditions of Article 6. The Polish Delegate was willing to say that the Cambodian government had fulfilled its obligations, but with the important qualifying denial that the Commission approved of the Government's conduct. The Canadian delegate advocated a simple, clear-cut statement which recognised that the Cambodian government had satisfied the conditions of Article 6. After much debate, the Commission's final version was also nearer to the Canadian viewpoint.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Cambodian General Elections of 1955, Chapter 5, "The International Supervisory Commission and the Elections", pp.9-12. RG 25, Vol. 4705, File 50052-C-2-40, pt.1.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p.13



India was acting primarily out of concern for the reaction of Communist China to the developments in Cambodia. Indian policy conformed to its well-established advocacy of neutralism. Since Nehru had secured Sihanouk's commitment to neutralism, the Military Aid Agreement between Cambodia and the U.S. was unacceptable to India. India's reaction to the Cambodian government's conduct in the 1955 general elections was negative for similar reasons. Cambodia's Democratic Party was one of the political refuges of that country's Communists. It soon became obvious to foreign observers that the political machinery of the Cambodian government had been mobilized in such a way as virtually to guarantee a victory for Sihanouk's Sangkum party. This was unacceptable to India's policy-makers, who feared a negative reaction from Communist China.

Canada acted as a western nation, seeking to eliminate the threat of a communist propaganda victory over the developments in Cambodia in 1955, and also acted as an honest broker between India, Cambodia, and the U.S. Believing that the primary threat to Cambodia's security at that time was Communist expansion, Canada naturally favoured the U.S.-Cambodia Military Aid Agreement. Similarly, the

Canadian delegates stepped lightly over the apparent electoral abuses by the Cambodian government, since they had no desire to see a Communist victory in Cambodia. As far as the Canadian delegation was concerned, the MAA and the elections were sources of possible embarrassment and opportunities for Communist propaganda; the Canadian delegation therefore attempted to sweep these issues away as quickly as possible. In the Commission's debates concerning both of these issues, the Canadian delegation achieved no small amount of success in putting its point of view into action.

Chapter Two: 1956-1958; "Rarely . . . has so much money been spent. . . to so little avail."

The years of 1956 through 1958 mark the beginning of a long, frustrating period in the International Commission for Cambodia's history. With the conclusion of the Cambodian General Elections in the autumn of 1955, the work of the Commission, as envisaged under the Geneva Accords, seemed complete.

Unfortunately, the Commission was forced to carry on, entangled in a complex web of political paradoxes. The Geneva Accords did not take into account that, once the Communist threat in Cambodia had been removed, traditional rivalries between that country and her non-communist neighbours would re-emerge. Moreover, a rift was beginning to develop between India and the West, attitudes towards the Suez Crisis and the Hungarian Revolution in late 1956 illustrating just how far views were diverging. The deteriorating relations between Cambodia and her neighbours, and between India and the West, inevitably complicated matters for the Canadian officials working in Cambodia. They were mystified by India's motives, and the Indians for their

part viewed Canadian policy as a mere reflection of the interests of the United States.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the events of 1956 through 1958, and to set them within a context that illustrates their impact on the International Commission for Cambodia. The chapter also makes use of a border incident that took place between Cambodia and South Vietnam in the summer of 1958, providing a useful case study to demonstrate the strained political atmosphere of the time and raising questions about Canada's policy in Indochina. To what extent, if any, did Canadian actions on the International Commission bolster America's designs for Indochina?

A good way to begin this examination of the events of 1956-1958 is to look at the tour of duty of a Canadian Commissioner. Arnold Smith's tenure in Cambodia reveals a great deal about the activities and frustrations that came along with the job. Having successfully met the challenges imposed by the MAA and the general elections of 1955, Smith now faced a period of comparative inactivity. In his personal correspondence, Smith expressed a moderate degree of dissatisfaction with the ebb and flow of Canadian personnel to Cambodia. In 1955, for example, the Canadian

Department of External Affairs executed a complete rotation of its personnel in Cambodia; this coincided, unfortunately, with the rather hectic series of events of that year. In a letter which he wrote to the DEA's Personnel Division, Smith said, " . . . I hope nobody ever again allows a complete turn-over in any International Commission's personnel to be timed to coincide with the general election which climaxes its work."<sup>1</sup> Further drains on the Canadian delegation in Cambodia took the form of the oppressive humidity and heat, combined with various afflictions common to the tropics.

Smith's tour as Canadian Commissioner provides a contrast between the active and inactive phases of the Cambodia Commission. In April, 1956, Smith introduced a resolution to his Indian and Polish colleagues, which the Canadians hoped would bring about the dissolution of the Cambodia Commission. Smith proclaimed that the settlement in Cambodia had evolved along the lines foreseen under Geneva. The situation there, Smith said, could already be called "an unmitigated success". Since the three delegations had already recognized that the political settlement was

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<sup>1</sup> Smith to External, Oct. 10, 1955. Arnold Smith Papers, MG 31, E 47, Vol. 82, file 23.

complete in Cambodia, " the withdrawal of the International Commission . . . would provide international recognition that Cambodia is the outstanding success story of the Indo-China settlement."<sup>2</sup> No decision on the matter was taken at the time, since the Indian and Polish delegations did not wish it. The issue was instead set aside, to be considered at a later date.

Smith barely contained his frustration in his personal correspondence. Met by the obstinacy of the Indian and Polish delegations within the Commission itself, Canadian officials were placing their hopes with a higher power, namely, the British co-chairman. The Canadian delegates were under strict instructions not to approach the Cambodian government about the dissolution of the Commission. This task was to be carried out exclusively by the British. Smith took exception to this policy; to him, it only served to cause further delays. In a letter to A.R. Menzies, the Canadian Assistant Under-Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, Smith criticized this "virginity-complex doctrine", which prevented a direct approach to the Cambodian

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<sup>2</sup> Fifth Interim Report of the International Commission for Supervision and Control in Cambodia for the period October 1, 1955 to December 31, 1956 (London, 1956), p.6.

government by a Canadian official. He advocated more, rather than less, diplomatic dialogue between the non-communist representatives involved in Indochina. Smith blamed this absence of dialogue for the apparent "lack of concerted view" amongst the non-communist representatives; it was "perhaps the biggest problem" that they faced in Indochina.<sup>3</sup>

Menzies' reply to Smith was non-committal. He assured the Canadian Commissioner that officials in Ottawa were conducting "a vigorous and straightforward effort to eliminate the Commission in Cambodia". However, no change was made from the policy of allowing only British representatives to take the matter up with Sihanouk.<sup>4</sup> Menzies suggested to Smith that he should no longer make any suggestions for facilitating dissolution, even to his colleagues back in Ottawa. He appeared to do nothing more than encourage Smith to carry on as best he could:

It would seem to me to be more timely to make these suggestions when you have had a good crack at dissolution of the Commission and know more

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<sup>3</sup> Smith to External, March 21, 1956. Arnold Smith Papers, MG 31, Vol. 82, file 23.

<sup>4</sup> Menzies to Smith, in Ibid., Apr. 11, 1956.

clearly what the future requirements, if any, will be.<sup>5</sup>

This reply, needless to say, was unsatisfactory to Smith. He wrote back that he was "appalled" at the seeming indifference on the part of the more senior officials at the DEA. He pointed out that he had done everything that was humanly possible to bring about the dissolution within the Commission itself. Smith's anger and sarcasm were hardly contained:

As to the wind-up of the Commission, on which I am happy to see you place such emphasis, I hope that you realize by now that we are doing our best also at this end. Indeed, we have been doing our best to get this Commission reduced and wound up ever since I arrived here last August. My motives in this have not been personal, and I neither need nor want personal carrots or sticks to induce us to continue doing what we can in this regard.<sup>6</sup>

He also reminded Menzies about the physical demands that service in Indochina placed on Canada's personnel there, using his own poor health as an example. By early June, 1956, Smith's health had deteriorated to the point where continuing as the Canadian representative in Cambodia became

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<sup>5</sup> Menzies to Smith, in Arnold Smith Papers, April 11, 1956.

<sup>6</sup> Smith to Menzies, in Ibid., April 26, 1956.



an impossibility. Afflicted with a severe case of amoebic dysentery, Smith finally returned home on July 3rd, 1956.

The process of the dissolution of the Cambodia Commission was further complicated for the Canadian delegation by the growing rift between India and the West. This divergence of views became apparent to Canadian officials at least as early as May, 1955. Escott Reid observed that, during Sir Anthony Eden's visit with Prime Minister Nehru in May, 1955, the Indians made it clear that they suspected the United States' influence behind the increasingly anti-communist overtures from the governments of Cambodia, Laos, and South Vietnam.<sup>7</sup> In an effort to repair the damage done to U.S.-Indian relations, Reid paid a visit to the U.S. State Department in September, 1955. He met with the director of Southeast Asian Affairs, and engaged him in a frank discussion about Indochina. Reid was clearly fishing for information that he could use to pacify Indian feelings about American intentions in Indochina. Director Young told Reid that the State Department welcomed an extension of Indian influence in Southeast Asia; he

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<sup>7</sup> Escott Reid to External, March 5, 1955. In Escott Reid Papers, MG 31, E 46, Vol.8, file 22.

recognised that a certain "cultural affinity" existed between India, Laos and Cambodia. The possibility of India extending some sort of security guarantee to the area was also discussed. Young told Reid that the U.S. had no interest in a long-term commitment to the security of Southeast Asia. The recent trend of U.S. military aid was, according to Young, nothing more than an effort to meet the immediate defence needs of the three non-communist governments in Laos, Cambodia, and South Vietnam.<sup>8</sup>

Canada's role as a mediator between India and the United States proved to be at least as frustrating as membership on the Indochina commissions. Ultimately, this led to irreparable damage to Indo-Canadian relations.<sup>9</sup> In October, 1956, Reid wrote to John W. Holmes, complaining at length about the difficulties that U.S. and Canadian policy inconsistencies caused him:

I suggested that our influence here [in New Delhi] would be greatly weakened if we gave the Indians firm assurances about U.S. policy in Indo-China and it later turned out that our assurances were

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<sup>8</sup> "Memorandum on Mr. Reid's visit to Washington", Sept.13-14, 1955. In Escott Reid Papers, MG 31, E 46, Vol.8, file 24.

<sup>9</sup> see Escott Reid, Envoy to Nehru (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1981), pp.82-84.

not justified. . . [If] you were justified in giving the Indians assurances about American policy in Cambodia, then we had an obligation, . . . to instruct [the Canadian Commissioner] to use his influence to persuade the U.S. authorities in Cambodia not to depart from the policy which you had assured the Indians the U.S. was following, and . . . to send a similar instruction to our Ambassador in Washington.<sup>10</sup>

However, Canadian sympathies were by no means on India's side at that time. Events occurring in Hungary and in the Suez Canal region placed the foreign policies of India and the West in sharp contrast. British Prime Minister Sir Anthony Eden illustrated this contrast in his memoirs. What Eden referred to as the "Indian view" saw Egypt's actions as "the expression of a nationalist mood in a country recently emancipated, for which, therefore, benevolent allowances must be made."<sup>11</sup> On the other hand, Eden saw the Suez crisis as a "denial of an international engagement, recently affirmed by the Egyptian government, and the seizure by force of international property."<sup>12</sup> On October 31, 1956, Nehru issued a statement which was

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<sup>10</sup> Escott Reid to John Holmes, Oct. 10, 1956. Escott Reid Papers, MG 31, E 46, Vol. 8, file 24.

<sup>11</sup> Sir Anthony Eden, Full Circle (Boston: The Times Publishing Co. Ltd., 1960), p.560.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p.560.

critical of France, Britain, and Israel's attack on Egypt. Lester B. Pearson immediately sent a message to Escott Reid in New Delhi:

I have no quarrel with the Indian government's decision in this matter but the contrast between its quick and strong denunciation of Israeli action with its complete silence over events in Hungary, and Russian intervention in these events, will have a very bad effect in this country.<sup>13</sup>

This was the beginning of the end of the special relationship between India and Canada. As Escott Reid pointed out, a "process of erosion" that began two years earlier was becoming irreparable:

It was caused by the resentment aroused in India by the U.S. military aid agreement with Pakistan concluded early in 1954; the differences of opinion between the West and India over Indo-China and Kashmir; the resentment aroused in the West by the treatment accorded by India to Krushchev and Bulganin on their visit to India in the autumn of 1955; and the attitude of the Indian government to the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 and the Soviet-imposed counter-revolution.<sup>14</sup>

Relations between Cambodia and her neighbours, South Vietnam and Thailand, were declining rapidly as well. The reasons for this animosity originated many centuries before

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<sup>13</sup> Lester B. Pearson to Escott Reid, October 31, 1956. Escott Reid papers, MG 31, E 46, Vol.8, file 24.

<sup>14</sup> Escott Reid, Radical Mandarin (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), p.277.

the Cold War. Both Thailand and Vietnam, in the 13th and 17th centuries respectively, had encroached upon the Khmer kingdom. Until the late 17th century, the southern portion of Vietnam known as Cochinchina, was Khmer territory. The French prevented the absorption of Cambodia by Thailand and Vietnam, with the establishment of their protectorate in 1864.<sup>15</sup> In 1941, during the period of Japanese occupation, Thailand annexed substantial amounts of Cambodian territory, including the ancient ruins of the Preah Vihear Temple. Under the 1946 Treaty of Washington, it was returned to Cambodia. However, when the French withdrew in 1953, Thai police seized the site once again. In February, 1956, Thai and Cambodian patrols clashed at the temple, and a potentially grave situation was narrowly averted through U.S. diplomatic intervention.

Cambodia's policy of neutrality aroused a considerable degree of suspicion in Thailand and South Vietnam. Both countries regarded this neutral posture as an open invitation for communist subversion. Sihanouk's efforts to establish good relations with Communist China was also

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<sup>15</sup> see Roger M. Smith, Cambodia's Foreign Policy (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1965), p.140.

treated unfavourably by his pro-western neighbours. Diplomatic relations with Cambodia were completely severed by Thailand and South Vietnam after Sihanouk returned from Peking in 1956, and again after Cambodia's diplomatic recognition of China in August, 1958.<sup>16</sup>

Incidents along Cambodia's frontiers were all too common at this time. When Arnold Smith introduced the resolution which called for the Commission's dissolution, he encountered opposition not only from within the Commission, but also from French and Cambodian officials. Sihanouk, for example, was opposed to the Commission's adjournment because he hoped it could provide a measure of protection against Thai and Vietnamese incursions:

The Indian and French stand was supported by Prince Sihanouk who had declared publicly that he would like the Commission to remain to bear witness that Cambodia was acting correctly in its relation with its neighbours, especially South Vietnam with whom it was having border disputes.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> see Smith, Cambodia's Foreign Policy, pp.140-141, and Michael Leifer, Cambodia: The Search For Security (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1967), pp.74-85.

<sup>17</sup> "Memorandum for the Minister: Dissolution of the Cambodian Commission", pp. 1-2. RG 25, Vol. 4704, file 50052-C-40, pt.13. September 27, 1956.

These border incidents were constantly being brought to the attention of the International Commission, much to the consternation of the Canadian representatives. Between January and May of 1957 alone, seventeen letters from the Royal Cambodian government were received concerning some 30 border incidents involving South Vietnamese forces. Canadian officials were adamantly opposed to any sort of involvement:

. . . if the other party to the Geneva Cease-Fire Agreement for Cambodia, that is the Vietminh, were the party involved in the border incident with Cambodia, then the case would fall under International Commission jurisdiction. If on the other hand the other party is South Vietnam or Thailand, then the International Commission is not competent to involve itself in the incident. . . . [It] is the Canadian view that to have the International Commission for supervision and Control in Cambodia deal with those incidents would be to infringe upon Cambodia's sovereignty and to claim jurisdiction for matters which are outside the purview of its terms of reference.<sup>18</sup>

A brief from External Affairs' legal division interpreted the Canadian position in similar terms:

. . . it is the Canadian view that the Cease-Fire Agreement for Cambodia should be interpreted in such a way as to encroach, as little as possible, on the free exercise by Cambodia of its sovereignty which was recognized in paragraph 2 of

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<sup>18</sup> A. Couvrette to Mr. Collins, "Border incidents in Cambodia. International Commission's competence to supervise these incidents", pp.1-3. RG 25, Vol. 4704, file 50052-C-40, pt.13. February 5, 1958.

the final declaration at Geneva. For the Commission to claim competence to judge a border dispute between Cambodia and South Vietnam would, in the Canadian view, be a derogation of Cambodia's sovereignty, which was not envisaged at Geneva.<sup>19</sup>

J.H. Taylor, the Second Secretary of the Office of the High Commissioner for Canada in New Delhi, informed External Affairs that he had discussed "your favourite subject and mine" with the U.K.'s First Secretary, Joe Dobbs. Dobbs had been trying for some time to persuade the Indians of the soundness of the Anglo-Canadian legal view regarding border disputes. Indian officials disagreed with him, saying that the Commission was useful on broad political, rather than legal, grounds. The primary aim of the Commission, according to the Indians, should be to maintain the peace in Indochina. Since the Geneva Agreements were drafted in a hurry, there were bound to be a number of legal flaws. The lack of provisions concerning border incidents thus constituted a grey area. Taylor observed,

I was struck by the resemblance between the sort of practical argument [the Indians were] putting

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<sup>19</sup> "Canadian Position in Respect to the alleged competence of the International Commission in Cambodia to deal with border incidents between South Vietnam and Cambodia", p.2, May, 1957. RG 25, Vol 4704, file 50052-C-40, pt.13.



forward about Cambodia and the sort of argument we used on the Indians during the loaded pause in Vietnam after April 28, 1956. In Cambodia, the shoe is on the other foot; the Indians want the Cambodian Commission to continue, and are therefore prepared to slide lightly over legal difficulties, just as we were prepared to do in Vietnam two years ago to keep the Commission there from breaking down.<sup>20</sup>

During their conversation, Dobbs also told Taylor that the Foreign Office was unsure about approaching the Russian co-chairman about this, although he implied that the Russians sometimes surprised him about what they were prepared to agree to:

We knew that they took very little interest in Indochina. (The Russians here almost never call on the Ministry about Indochina, by the way) In May, 1956, they had startled the Vietnam Commission by agreeing with the U.K. co-chairman to send a message telling the commission to stop worrying about legalities and get on with the job.<sup>21</sup>

Taylor conceded, "It would be a pity . . . if we queered the pitch in Laos and Vietnam by forcing a relatively unimportant issue in Cambodia." He then concluded his letter to Ottawa by signing it, "with the hope that all three

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<sup>20</sup> Letter from J.H. Taylor to W.E. Bauer, p.1, January 3, 1958. RG 25, Vol. 4704, file 50052-C-40, pt.13.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p.3.

Commissions may choke to death on their own paper during 1958."<sup>22</sup>

The difference of opinion on border incidents between Indian and Canadian delegates seemed to be impossible to resolve. From the Canadian perspective, India seemed to be using the issue of border incidents as an excuse for maintaining an international presence in Cambodia. Escott Reid observed the Indian unwillingness to terminate the activities of the Cambodia Commission, and sounded out the Indian Commonwealth Secretary on the matter. He reported, "Desai told me on Dec. 7 that the Indian view continues to be that the commissions in Cambodia and Laos must continue in existence as long as the commission in Vietnam is in existence."<sup>23</sup> Another Canadian official later suggested,

. . . I think it likely that when the dissolution of the Cambodian Commission became a live issue in 1956, the Indians were apprehensive about the possible adverse effect of withdrawal of the Commission upon the maintenance of a policy of neutrality by the Cambodian government and upon

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid, p.2.

<sup>23</sup> E. Reid to External, December 8, 1956. RG 25, Vol 4704, file 50052-C-40, pt.13.

the continued growth of Indian influence and prestige here.<sup>24</sup>

Canadian officials believed that the Indian government had its own motives for encouraging Cambodia's neutralism. Arnold Smith communicated his views to Arthur Menzies at External Affairs:

. . . India has tried to use neutralism not as a means of establishing buffer zones between herself and the Communist world, but rather for more positive purposes; . . . India has sought to bring Cambodia under Indian leadership as a junior partner in India's neutralist camp. . . . [N]eutralism seems to me to be essentially a sort of ideological weapon used by somewhat dissatisfied and somewhat expansionist would-be Great Powers in attempts to develop their own spheres of influence. . . .<sup>25</sup>

Smith also pointed out that India had been actively discouraging any rapprochement between Cambodia and the U.S.:

[The Indians] had . . . been very active in trying to weaken United States influence in Cambodia. [They were], as you know, successful in this effort to such a remarkable extent that the United States Government seriously considered making an example of Cambodia by cutting off, or seriously cutting down, the relatively huge amount of United

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<sup>24</sup> E. Gilmour to External, January 10, 1958. "Prospects of Dissolution of the Cambodian Commission". RG 25 , Vol. 4704, file 50052-C-40, pt.13.

<sup>25</sup> Arnold Smith to External, July 25, 1957. RG 25, Vol. 4713, file 50052-L-40, pt.1.

States aid to that country (about \$45 to \$50 million a year).<sup>26</sup>

The incidents along Cambodia's frontiers continued to escalate in frequency and intensity. In June of 1958, a group of South Vietnamese soldiers pursued some 80 - 90 guerrillas, who claimed to be former Vietminh soldiers, across the Cambodian border, and penetrated some five miles inside the Cambodian province of Stung Treng. An External Affairs memorandum stated that the Cambodian government had taken the matter very seriously, " . . . but there are indications that the incident is little more than a minor skirmish of the type which occurs continually in this vaguely defined border area." The South Vietnamese government maintained that the incident had been grossly exaggerated, and disclaimed any knowledge aside from the fact that Cambodian troops attacked a South Vietnamese post. U.K., French, and U.S. missions in Phnomh Penh all told the acting Canadian Commissioner that the incident was " . . . a relatively minor frontier incident involving pursuit of fugitives by Vietnamese forces through an ill-defined border

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<sup>26</sup> Arnold Smith to External, July 25, 1957. RG 25, Vol. 4713, file 50052-L-40, pt.1.

area, [and] has been exaggerated by the Cambodians out of all recognition."<sup>27</sup>

The South Vietnamese soldiers' attempts to retrieve the guerrillas were unsuccessful, and they were forced to withdraw. The Cambodian government, exasperated by the increasing number of border violations by South Vietnamese troops, brought the incident to the attention of the International Supervisory Commission on June 20th. On June 23rd, the Cambodian government formally asked the Commission for its attitude in this matter. By June 24-25, it became apparent that the Indian and Polish delegates on the Commission were in favour of conducting an investigation, and began to pressure the Canadian delegate to support it.

The Canadian delegates, as well as their superiors at External Affairs, were extremely reluctant to press ahead with the investigation. They suggested that the investigation of border violations was outside the jurisdiction of the Commission as defined by the 1954 Geneva Indochina Accords:

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<sup>27</sup> "Memorandum for the Acting Minister: Frontier incident in Cambodia", June 30, 1958. . RG 25, Vol. 4704, file 50052-C-40, pt.14.

This was in keeping with the long-standing Canadian legal position that border disputes between South Vietnam and Cambodia were not covered by the Cease-Fire agreement for Cambodia and therefore were outside the jurisdiction of the International Commission.<sup>28</sup>

Moreover, the Canadian delegates were receiving diplomatic correspondence from Ottawa that suggested that the Americans and British were more than a little nervous about how the Canadians would handle the incident. The U.S. and British officials believed that the Cambodian government was on the verge of extending official recognition to communist China. Eric Gilmour, the Acting Canadian Commissioner in Cambodia, relayed the following dispatch to External Affairs:

[The] British charge . . . expressed to me gravest apprehensions that Cambodia on point of turning to Communist China in reaction against failure of Western powers to make any gesture of political assistance in time of emergency. . . . USA Ambassador supports these views. . . . They are communicating with FO and State Department envisaging immediate approach to Canadian government urging our formal or informal subscription to formula finding South Vietnam responsible for violation.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> "Memorandum for the Acting Minister: Frontier Incident in Cambodia", p.2, June 30, 1958. RG 25, Vol. 4704, file 50052-C-40, pt.14.

<sup>29</sup> E.H. Gilmour to External, July 10, 1958. RG 25, Vol. 4704, file 50052-C-40, pt.14.

The Canadians feared the development of a propaganda opportunity for the Communists. This possibility was communicated to External Affairs by T. Le M. Carter, the Canadian Commissioner on the Vietnam Commission:

. . . the violence of the Cambodian charges and the strong South Vietnamese counter-charges give good political and propaganda openings to the Communists. The Communists may well portray South Vietnam as bringing pressure on its smaller neighbour at USA instigation, because [Cambodia] maintains a neutralist stand and refuses to join USA bloc.<sup>30</sup>

The situation was extremely awkward. It was conceivable that the Canadians could find themselves participating in an investigation which would ultimately prove to be unfavourable to South Vietnam, an important U.S. ally in Indochina.

The initial American response to the Stung Treng incident was to distance themselves from it as much as possible. The U.S. Assistant Secretary of State, Walter S. Robertson, discussed the incident with a Canadian official. Robertson's appreciation of the situation paralleled that of

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<sup>30</sup> T. Le M. Carter to External, June 30, 1958. RG 25, Vol. 4704, file 50052-C-40, pt.14.

the Canadians in Phnomh Penh. An External Affairs memorandum stated:

[Robertson] commented that the Cambodians were ' shooting off in all directions ' and were somewhat psychopathic over this incident. While he did not refer specifically to the . . . royal proclamation of June 25 [which asked] . . . 'The great nation of the USA to exert all efforts to ask Vietnam to stop permanently her unjust annexationist manoeuvre', he undoubtedly had it in mind when he said 'We are not . . . going to get into the middle of this one.'<sup>31</sup>

Chester Ronning, who replaced Escott Reid as the High Commissioner for Canada in New Delhi, informed External Affairs in Ottawa of the Indian government's reaction to the Stung Treng incident:

Desai told me [that] . . . Prime Minister [Nehru] was extremely worried about reports from the Indian commissioner in Phnomh Penh. While Desai gave me the impression that he personally was somewhat less disturbed about the seriousness of the border incident, nevertheless the Prime Minister's fear that a relatively minor incident might lead to more serious trouble could not . . . be ignored.<sup>32</sup>

Ronning outlined the Canadian viewpoint, insisting that the Commission was not competent to deal with border incidents.

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<sup>31</sup> Memorandum to External Affairs, June 30, 1958.RG 25, vol. 4711, file 50052-E-40, pt.6.

<sup>32</sup> Chester Ronning to External Affairs, June 28, 1958. RG 25, Vol. 4713, file 50052-I-40, pt.1.



Nevertheless, Desai maintained that this did not absolve the commission from initiating an investigation. Such an investigation, Desai pointed out, would not pass judgement of guilt or innocence; it would merely ascertain the facts. Desai argued that the commission had an obligation to act unless a final political settlement had been reached. Moreover, the Commission was responsible for supervising the flow of men and munitions across the frontiers.<sup>33</sup>

The Canadian delegates were conscious of Indian opinion in this matter, but only so far as it related to Canadian interests. At the time, the Canadian delegates on the Laos commission were involved in some delicate negotiations concerning the possible wind-up of that commission; it was hoped that a similar agreement would soon follow for Cambodia. W.E. Bauer instructed Eric Gilmour not to risk antagonizing the Indians until the Laotian negotiations were completed. Gilmour was further instructed to provide a team member on a "personal basis pending instructions making it clear that this is without prejudice to question of commissions' competence." Despite these instructions,

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<sup>33</sup> Ronning to External, June 28, 1958. RG 25, Vol. 4713, file 50052.I.40, pt.1.

Gilmour was made aware of the possible limitations of the Canadian viewpoint:

You will realize there is possibility we may have to ask you to withdraw team member. We regret this but are sure you realize the requirements of situation. Team member should do all he reasonably can to delay investigation and report.<sup>34</sup>

Subsequent letters of instruction emphasized the Canadian position. After the Canadian member had joined the investigation team, Gilmour was informed,

. . . we would have no objection if you permitted [Colonel] Stocks to remain with the team until it returns to Phnomh Penh. He would then withdraw and refuse to participate in the preparation of a report.<sup>35</sup>

Gilmour displayed some concern that this incident might provide some justification, in the minds of his Indian and Polish colleagues, for a continued international presence in Cambodia:

Without bargaining leverage provided by Laos negotiations can see no . . . prospect of overcoming heavily compromising effects of our participation in frontier investigation from which team returned today. If we are not . . . prepared to press our views to point of unilaterally withdrawing [from Laos] when [its government]

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<sup>34</sup> W.E. Bauer, "Border Incident", June 27, 1958. RG 25, vol. 4704, file 50052-C-40, pt. 14.

<sup>35</sup> W.E. Bauer, July 4, 1958. RG 25, Vol. 4704, file 50052-C-40, pt.14.

insists commission leave we are most unlikely to obtain any serviceable grounds for relieving ourselves of our commitment here during months ahead.<sup>36</sup>

Further documentary evidence indicates that Canadian officials viewed South Vietnam as the aggressor. A letter from R.E. Collins, the head of Far Eastern Division, to John Holmes, the Assistant Under-Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, stated:

All three members of the team are apparently satisfied that there was deliberate Vietnamese incursion lasting at least one day, as well as a shifting of a frontier marker approximately 3000 metres to the west. In the circumstances, although we appear to have been placed in the position of having to pull British and American chestnuts out of the fire, I think we shall have to go along.<sup>37</sup>

Collins added that this action might have the desirable effect of impressing upon the British and Americans of finding some other method of dealing with border disputes than by misuse of the International Commission.<sup>38</sup>

After a conversation with U.S. Ambassador Strom in Phnomh Penh, Gilmour was apparently satisfied that he

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<sup>36</sup> E.H. Gilmour to External, July 9, 1958. RG 25, Vol. 4704, file 50052-C-40 pt.14.

<sup>37</sup> R.E. Collins to J.W. Holmes, July 11, 1958. RG 25, Vol. 4704, file 50052-C-40, pt.14.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., July 11, 1958.

considered the crisis past. Gilmour explained, however, that Strom was possibly frustrated by Washington's rejection of his idea that Cambodia was the key to resisting Communist advance in Indochina, and was pressing the State Department to extend an invitation to the new Cambodian foreign minister, Son Sann. Strom also suggested that the American Secretary of State, John F. Dulles, should send a congratulatory message to Prince Sihanouk on his recent re-election as Premier. Gilmour no longer saw any reason to delay in informing the Indians and the Poles that the Canadian delegation would not be participating in the Stung Treng report. To do otherwise, according to Gilmour, would " . . . most seriously prejudice [the] prospect of [the] commission's demise." Gilmour suggested that the "least damaging alternative might be to have Stocks participate informally in preparation of report."<sup>39</sup>

Agreement on the Stung Treng report was reached on July 19, 1958. The Indian and Polish members of the investigation team signed the report. Colonel Stocks signed in a personal capacity, verifying the accuracy of the findings, but

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<sup>39</sup> E.H. Gilmour to External, July 12, 1958. RG 25, Vol. 4704, file 50052-C-40, pt.14.

asserting that the investigation was beyond the competence of the commission. Therefore, the Canadian delegates were able to maintain that they had not formally participated, and hoped to be able to abstain from voting on the grounds that the investigation was not valid.<sup>40</sup>

Gilmour also met with Prince Sihanouk to discuss the Stung Treng incident. Gilmour took the opportunity to impress upon Sihanouk the Canadian position towards the continued international presence in Cambodia; namely, that the essential functions of the Supervisory Commission under the Geneva Accords had been fulfilled, and that the Canadians were eager to disband the commission. Sihanouk replied that the Cambodian government would not object to the Commission leaving, but would not call upon it to leave. Sihanouk also told Gilmour of his view that, since no political settlement had been reached in Vietnam, incidents along the border might be considered as a concern to the commission, and, in light of this, the whole of Vietnam, instead of merely North Vietnam, should be regarded as a party to the Cambodia agreement. Gilmour made it clear to

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<sup>40</sup> E.H. Gilmour to External, July 21, 1958. RG 25, Vol. 4704, file 50052-C-40, pt.14.

Sihanouk that only North Vietnam could be regarded as a party to the Cambodia agreement; the recent Canadian participation in the Stung Treng incident was exceptional, and such participation would not happen in the future.<sup>41</sup>

The Commission completed action on the Stung Treng incident on July 28 and 29. Both the majority and minority reports were presented to the British and Soviet co-chairmen. Gilmour, much to the annoyance of his Indian and Polish colleagues, re-iterated his position that, if any such incident should occur in the future, Canada would vigorously oppose any investigation by the commission members, and refuse to participate in any capacity.<sup>42</sup>

Gilmour's term in Cambodia lapsed soon after the reports were submitted to the co-chairmen. He was replaced by Arthur Blanchette. The controversy surrounding the incident seemed to be over; however, the matter of the refugees themselves still remained, wrote Blanchette:

[The]. . . Cambodian government states that it proposes to hand Stung Treng Escapees over to [the] commission for 'any action [the] commission

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<sup>41</sup> E.H. Gilmour to External, July 24, 1958. RG 25, Vol. 4704, file 50052-C-40, pt.14.

<sup>42</sup> E.H. Gilmour to External, July 30, 1958. RG 25, Vol. 4704, file 50052-C-40, pt.14.

will deem useful' since all of them have now expressed [a] wish to be sent to North Vietnam.<sup>43</sup>

This new development created additional difficulties for the Canadian representative. Since the escapees had requested to be sent to North Vietnam, Blanchette could not have simply argued that the Stung Treng incident was beyond the competence of the commission. Their request "[injected a] new element into [the] problem." Blanchette told External Affairs that, in this case, he was in agreement with the Indian chairman, who considered the question of escapees to "fall primarily within [the purview] of the Vietnam Commission. . . ." Blanchette added, "if escapees were to return to South Vietnam with or without compulsion they would likely be thrown into jail again. . . . [The] resulting adverse Communist propaganda about such action would . . . no doubt be considerable."<sup>44</sup>

In a subsequent dispatch to External Affairs, Blanchette noted that "the Cambodian government is apparently trying to avoid the responsibility for making a

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<sup>43</sup> A. Blanchette to External, August 12, 1958. RG 25, Vol. 4704, file 50052-C-40, pt.14.

<sup>44</sup> A. Blanchette to External, August 12, 1958. RG 25, Vol. 4704, file 50052-C-40, pt. 14.

difficult decision." In his opinion, the refugee question was one to be decided between the governments of Cambodia and South Vietnam.<sup>45</sup> At External Affairs Headquarters, Bauer apparently agreed with Blanchette:

It is obvious that no provision of [the] Cambodia CFA gives [the] Cambodia Commission the obligation or the right to deal with the escapees. It must be remembered that the persons have, by their own admission, escaped from the custody of the authorities of the Republic of Vietnam. Any action by the Cambodia Commission which would abet their escape would be not only ultra vires but also most improper.<sup>46</sup>

In his book, Indian Foreign Policy in Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam, D.R. SarDesai argues that Canada's position on border incidents after 1956 was not consistent with the delegation's attitude in previous years. He suggests that, in January 1956, before Sihanouk's visit to China and before these border incidents with South Vietnam were occurring at such an alarming rate, Canada joined the other Commission members in the investigation of these incidents without any

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<sup>45</sup> A. Blanchette to External, August 14, 1958. RG 25, Vol. 4704, file 50052-C-40, pt.14.

<sup>46</sup> W.E. Bauer, August 19, 1958. RG 25, Vol. 4704, file 50052-C-40, pt.14.



reservations.<sup>47</sup> While this is a valid observation, SarDesai fails to recognize the extent to which Canadian priorities in Cambodia had changed. At the time of the Stung Treng incident, the primary aim of the Canadian delegates in Cambodia was to find a way of gracefully bowing out of their supervisory obligations. The Stung Treng incident suggested to T. Le M. Carter that, while more thought needed to be given to improving South Vietnam-Cambodia relations, Canada's primary aim remained unchanged:

Apart from our general interest in peace in this area . . . we have a very practical concern in this topic because of our desire to reduce, and as soon as possible to end, our participation in the International Commissions.<sup>48</sup>

It would be difficult to interpret Canadian actions in the Stung Treng incident as an example of Canadian complicity in American designs. There were far more practical considerations which shaped Canadian behaviour in this case. An ongoing involvement in border incident investigations would have set a bad precedent, as far as the

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<sup>47</sup> D.R. SarDesai, Indian Foreign Policy in Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), p.142.

<sup>48</sup> T. Le M. Carter, August 19, 1958. RG 25, Vol. 4704, file 50052-C-40, pt.14.

Canadians were concerned, which would have jeopardized the possibility of terminating the international presence in Cambodia. The Stung Treng incident reveals more about Canada's relations with India than with the U.S. It was one of the more outstanding examples of the Canadian delegation's refusal to give any ground in order to make the end result more acceptable to their Indian colleagues.

Once the deliberations of the Stung Treng incident were complete, the Canadian delegates found that they had very little else to do, in terms of supervising the provisions of the Geneva Accords. On November 26, Blanchette complained to External Affairs about the Commission's inactivity: he stated that, since October 10, when the case of the Stung Treng escapees was passed to the Vietnam Commission, the Cambodia Commission had held three meetings. The first of these, on October 29, authorized a " . . . new 'masticating apparatus' (that, I gather, is what the Indians call dentures) for General Singh's Indian Army cook." The second meeting, held on November 12, " . . . passed to the Vietnam Commission a letter from the Cambodian government reminding the Cambodia commission about the Stung Treng escapees and complaining about current

delays in dealing with them." The third meeting saw the membership agree unanimously " . . . that it could take no action regarding the disposal of an armed bandit who gave himself up to the Cambodian police some time ago while claiming that he was Vietnamese and a former Viet Minh." Blanchette concluded, "Rarely in the course of human events has so much money been spent by so many countries to so little avail."<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> A. Blanchette to External, November 26, 1958.RG 25, Vol. 4704, file 50052-C-40, pt. 14.

### Chapter Three: 1959-1964; "Un Jeu Diplomatique"

The International Commission in Cambodia continued to function on a limited basis during the years 1959-1964. The principal concern of the Canadian delegation was to find a way to adjourn the Commission, because, apart from receiving complaints of border violations from South Vietnam and Thailand, the Commission had little to do. The Commission did not take any significant steps to address these complaints; they were usually referred to the International Commission in Saigon.

This period was further characterised by worsening relations between Cambodia and the United States, and an increasing rapprochement between Cambodia and China. American involvement in Indochina was beginning to escalate at this time, and the instability that resulted in South Vietnam and Laos had an extremely unsettling effect in Cambodia.

Furthermore, Indian-Chinese relations also took a severe turn for the worse, largely because of the latter's occupation of Tibet. The International Commission in Cambodia was forced to watch these unfortunate developments from the sidelines, as the foundation for peace that was

established in Geneva less than a decade ago crumbled into dust.

It soon became evident to Prince Sihanouk that the Commission was unable to meet the new threats that Cambodia faced from Thailand and South Vietnam. The International Commission, bound by the terms of the 1954 Geneva Accords, was unable to lend any assistance. Sihanouk was thus compelled to take a series of initiatives, designed to achieve international recognition for Cambodia's neutrality, and respect for her frontiers. This chapter will discuss the impact that this chaos had on the International Commission in Cambodia.

On July 25, 1958, Canada's Minister for External Affairs spoke in the House of Commons, stating that the Canadian government would like to adjourn the Commission in Cambodia, using the same adjournment formula used in Laos. The Canadian delegation pressed for adjournment within the Commission, and argued that the task of the Commission was complete. However, the Cambodian government wanted the Commission to remain, and the Indian delegation would not consider adjournment so long as the Cambodians would not agree. In order to convince the Cambodian government that

the Commission no longer performed any useful function in Cambodia, the Canadian delegation continued to resist participating in the investigations of the numerous border incidents between Cambodia and its neighbours. As an alternative to Commission involvement, the Canadian delegation suggested the formation of a mixed commission to deal with border disputes; however, this idea was not greeted with much enthusiasm by their Indian colleagues:

. . . the Indians' interest would rather lead them to maintain the framework of the Geneva Agreements for as long as possible because in their view it tends to allay - so far as Indochina is concerned - India's two principal fears; the fear of Communist expansion and the fear of another major war.<sup>1</sup>

The Indian delegation opposed the Canadian proposal, because the removal of the Geneva framework could compromise India's policy of non-alignment. The adjournment of the Commission would eliminate Communist representation in Cambodia and, according to the Indian view, Communist representation was one of the major benefits of the Geneva Accords. Any Indian support for an adjournment formula would have involved

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<sup>1</sup> "The Future of the I.C. in Cambodia and the problem of Cambodian-Vietnamese relations", p.4. January 16, 1959. RG 25, Vol. 4713, file 50052-M-40, pt.1.

" . . . Indian identification with the anti-Communist bloc."<sup>2</sup>

The Canadian External Affairs Department received some encouraging news about the prospects for terminating the Cambodia Commission in January, 1959. The Canadians learned of a conversation between French Ambassador Gorce and Prince Sihanouk. Sihanouk told Gorce that, if France, Britain and Canada could convince Indian officials to support dissolution, he would not oppose adjournment *sine die* of the Cambodia Commission. Sihanouk's only concern seemed to be that Indian Prime Minister Nehru might get the impression that Sihanouk was favouring the communists, or trying to sabotage the efforts of the Indian government to keep communism at bay in Indochina.<sup>3</sup> Sihanouk wished to preserve his good relations with Nehru, and would agree to adjournment only if the Indian representatives raised the issue directly with Nehru.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p.4.

<sup>3</sup> Canadian delegation, Phnomh Penh, to External, January 30, 1959. RG 25, Vol. 4713, file 50052-M-40, pt.1.

<sup>4</sup> Canadian High Commissioner, London, to External, Feb. 2, 1959. RG 25, Vol. 4713, file 50052-M-40, pt.1.

The British shared their Canadian counterparts' enthusiasm for the Commission's adjournment. The Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations communicated this view to the High Commissioner for the United Kingdom in Ottawa:

. . . it is desirable, from our point of view, that the Commission should adjourn. But we are further much influenced by the fact that the French government have made it clear that they are not prepared to continue to contribute to the Cambodian Commission once their credit is exhausted . . . . We are naturally most anxious to avoid arriving at a point where the French refuse to contribute to the upkeep of the Commissions.<sup>5</sup>

British officials continued their initiatives aimed at the Commission's adjournment. Deputy High Commissioner James spoke to Indian Commonwealth Secretary Desai in New Delhi, who said the Indian government "saw every reason for reducing [the] Commission to zero plus but not to zero"; the Indian government would agree to further reductions in personnel, but not to adjournment or abolition of the Commission. Desai cited the difficulties the Indian government had encountered in reactivating the Laos

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<sup>5</sup> Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, London, to High Commissioner for the U.K., Ottawa, Feb. 6, 1959. In RG 25, Vol. 4713, file 50052-M-40, pt.1.



Commission, as a reason for opposing adjournment.<sup>6</sup> The Indian government proposed the creation of an "embryo" Cambodian Commission. Initially, the Indians suggested that this commission would operate exclusively from Saigon; a subsequent version envisaged an Indian chairman, operating from the Indian legation, as the only permanent representative in Phnomh Penh. The chairman would only call on the Polish and Canadian personnel stationed in Saigon as needed, and if a crisis developed in Cambodia. This information did not impress Canadian officials, who felt that the Commission's staff in Cambodia had already been reduced as far as possible. Furthermore, Canadian officials doubted that Sihanouk would be enthusiastic about a Cambodian Commission operating largely out of Saigon.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> United Kingdom High Commissioner, New Delhi, to High Commissioner, Canada, February 18, 1959. RG 25, Vol. 4713, file 50052-M-40, pt.1.

<sup>7</sup> Arthur Blanchette said that the second Indian proposal was " . . . not of course as desirable from our point of view as full dissolution . . . [or] even adjournment *sine die*. However it is certainly better than the present state of life in death here. It is also preferable to idea of embryo Cambodia Commission in Saigon since it is likely to prove acceptable to Prince Sihanouk who will I think be willing to follow Indian lead in this matter" Jul. 16, 1959. RG 25, Vol. 4713, file 50052-M-40, pt.1.

The deliberations over the adjournment of the Cambodia Commission were put on a temporary hold when Prince Sihanouk left for recuperative leave in France on March 30, 1959. Canadian Commissioner Arthur Blanchette observed, "[as] he appears to be accompanied by two of his favourites including Monique his Franco-Vietnamese concubine he may well feel [the] need for some recuperation"; while Sihanouk's absence would mean that the political situation in Cambodia would be quiet, it also meant " . . . that at least one month has been added to [the] life expectancy of [the] Cambodia Commission."<sup>8</sup>

The relative quiet in Cambodia seemed to do nothing to soften the Indian attitude towards adjourning the Cambodian Commission. The British High Commissioner spoke, once again, with M.J. Desai in New Delhi. Desai emphasised that the Indian government would not consider adjournment until an agreement between the Geneva participants had been reached to discuss mediation between the Royal Laotian Government and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. Desai made it clear to the British Commissioner that the Indian government

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<sup>8</sup> A. Blanchette to External, Mar. 31, 1959. RG 25, Vol. 4713, file 50052-M-40, pt.1.

regarded the Laotian question as a test case of the Canadian and other western governments' good faith. He added that the Indian government had gone a long way to accommodate western wishes when they agreed to adjourn the Laos commission *sine die*, and that this had been done on the assumption that the Commission would be reconvened if the circumstances warranted it. The resistance that the Indian government faced against reconvening the Laos commission suggested to Desai " that some of the western governments had never intended the Commission to be reconvened in any circumstances."<sup>9</sup>

British officials in New Delhi achieved a breakthrough of sorts in July, 1959. Their persistence in discussing adjournment with Desai appeared to have yielded some positive results. The Canadian High Commissioner in London relayed a message to Ottawa, which indicated that the Indians were prepared to consider adjourning the Cambodia Commission *sine die*, on the condition that the three delegations agreed to appoint a member of the Vietnam Commission as its representative in Cambodia. If the Polish

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<sup>9</sup> High Commissioner for the U.K., New Delhi, to the High Commissioner for the U.K., Ottawa, Apr. 21, 1959, in RG 25, Vol. 4713, file 50052-M-40, pt.1.

delegation did not agree, Desai said the Indians would be prepared to carry the resolution with a majority vote. He also wanted assurances that the South Vietnamese government would not object to the Cambodia Commission meeting in Saigon if necessary.<sup>10</sup>

The patient efforts of the British officials did not get a chance to develop. On October 3, 1959, the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs presented a note to the British Embassy in Moscow, which criticized the British Government for its proposal to dissolve the Commission in Cambodia. The British Ambassador in Moscow, Sir Patrick Reilly, " was at a loss to know what this was about." Although the British had spoken to the Cambodians<sup>11</sup>, Reilly knew of no British

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<sup>10</sup> Canadian High Commissioner, London, to External Affairs, Aug. 12, 1959. RG 25, Vol. 4713, file 50052-M-40, pt.1.

<sup>11</sup> A British document, which was sent to the Canadian Department of External Affairs, would seem to confirm this. On July 17, 1959, the Foreign Office instructed the British Ambassador in Phnomh Penh to approach the Cambodian government. The document states: "You should now inform the Cambodian government that the time has come for the International Commission in Cambodia to be adjourned . . . . It is still costing 9,000 [pounds] a month to each of the Four Powers and is not producing any useful results." located in RG 25, Vol. 4713, file 50052-M-40, pt.1.

proposal to that effect. Reilly "did not know whether the Cambodians had committed an indiscretion

. . . or whether the Russians were using Cambodian discussions as a stick with which to beat the British over Laos." The Soviet note linked the proposal for Cambodia with the British government's opposition to the renewal of the Laos Commission, as part of a " . . . unified plan directed towards the dissolution of all International Commissions in Indo-China."<sup>12</sup>

From the Soviet point of view, the British failure to consult them about adjourning the Cambodia Commission seemed suspicious. British efforts were mainly directed at convincing India to accept adjournment. Since the British also approached the Cambodian government before taking the matter up with the Russians. Reilly's suggestion of a Cambodian indiscretion in this matter are probably quite correct; Sihanouk was notorious in western circles for his unfortunate tendency of leaking information given to him in confidence. Further credibility is given to Reilly's hypothesis by a change in Cambodian thinking about the

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<sup>12</sup> J. Blair Seaborn, Canadian Ambassador, Moscow, to External Affairs, October 5, 1959. RG 25, Vol. 4713, file 50052-M-40, pt.1.

International Commission. In November, 1959, the Cambodians stated that they wanted the International Commission to remain as long as relations with Thailand were poor.<sup>13</sup>

The sense of urgency over the adjournment of the Cambodia Commission was removed by the end of 1959. The French Government agreed to defer the implementation of their decision to make no further contributions to the International Commissions after January 1, 1960, deciding to wait for progress in the talks between the British and Soviet co-chairmen.<sup>14</sup> In the meantime, the Canadian representatives could only take solace in the fact that substantial reductions of 50% overall in the personnel of the Cambodia Commission had been achieved.

Sihanouk's political rivals in Cambodia were becoming more and more active in their efforts to overthrow him, culminated in the Dap Chhuon Plot of early 1959. Prince Sihanouk accused General Dap, the governor of Cambodia's Siem Reap province, of collaboration in an attempted coup with Ngo Trong Hieu, the South Vietnamese representative in

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<sup>13</sup> Canadian High Commissioner, London, To External, November 20, 1959. RG 25, Vol. 4713, file 50052-M-40, pt.1.

<sup>14</sup> Canadian High Commissioner, London, to External, December 29, 1959. RG 25, Vol. 4713, file 50052-M-40, pt.1.

Phnomh Penh. Dap also convinced Son Ngoc Thanh, then living in exile in Thailand, to lead Thai-supplied troops into Cambodia. Sihanouk furthermore alleged that the communications link between Dap and Hieu was provided by Victor Matsui, a Central Intelligence Agency operative attached to the American embassy in Phnomh Penh. The plot was exposed because of the suspicious activities of Sam Sary, whom the conspirators had designated as Sihanouk's political successor. General Dap was killed as he tried to escape, and Sary reportedly escaped to South Vietnam. South Vietnam, Thailand, and the United States denied any involvement in the plot.<sup>15</sup>

Sihanouk asked the International Commission to conduct an investigation of what he has labelled the "Bangkok Plot",<sup>16</sup> no doubt hoping to obtain evidence that would confirm his allegations of South Vietnamese or Thai involvement. From Arthur Blanchette's perspective, the entire incident was nothing more than "internal politics" at

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<sup>15</sup> Roger M. Smith, Cambodia's Foreign Policy (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 1965), pp.163-165.

<sup>16</sup> see Sihanouk's account of this incident, as told to Wilfred Burchett, in My War With the CIA (London, 1973), pp. 102-111.

work within Cambodia. His superiors in Ottawa did not agree with Sihanouk's view that the alleged plots were a matter which required the Commission's attention. They instructed Blanchette not to participate in an investigation.<sup>17</sup> As a result, Blanchette became *persona non grata* with Sihanouk. A few weeks later, at a dinner held in the Royal Palace, Blanchette found himself on the receiving end of one of Sihanouk's royal tirades. Fortunately, Blanchette's hearing aid gave out before Sihanouk launched into his diatribe; he did not hear a word that Sihanouk said. When Blanchette's posting was coming to an end, he sought an appointment with Sihanouk, in order to pay him the customary farewell call. Blanchette received no reply.<sup>18</sup>

In October, 1959, Sihanouk addressed Cambodia's National Assembly, proposing a referendum to assess public support for his policy of neutrality. During the speech, Sihanouk was critical of his principal political rivals, Sam Sary and Son Ngoc Thanh. He accused them of carrying out

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<sup>17</sup> Interview with Arthur Blanchette. Ottawa: November 21, 1996.

<sup>18</sup> Arthur Blanchette, "Indochina: From Desk Officer to Acting Commissioner", in Special Trust and Confidence, ed. by D.C. Reese (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1996), p.44.



subversive activities, and enjoying the support of "powerful and wealthy foreigners"; that is, South Vietnam, Thailand, and the United States. The Cambodian Foreign Ministry asked the International Commission to supervise this referendum. D'Iberville Fortier, the Canadian Commissioner, stated that the " . . . matters discussed in [the] declaration . . . in no manner fall within the competence of [the] Commission. The [Indian] Chairman's personal reaction is identical."<sup>19</sup> At an extraordinary meeting held on October 30, the three delegations agreed that the Commission "did not . . . find itself in a position to meet the [Cambodian] government request."<sup>20</sup>

Territorial disputes in Asia were not confined to the countries of Indochina alone. Relations between India and China deteriorated severely in 1959, caused by China's occupation of Tibet. Nehru had reflected positively on the Sino-Indian relationship shortly before it soured. He dismissed the "consistent propaganda . . . in the foreign press" about the rivalry between India and China:

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<sup>19</sup> Fortier to External, October 7, 1959. RG 25, Vol. 4704, file 50052-C-40, pt. 14.

<sup>20</sup> Fortier to External, October 31, 1959. RG 25, Vol. 4704, file 50052-C-40, pt.14.

"Apparently people used to the Cold War cannot think except in terms of rivalry. There is no rivalry between India and China." He concluded, "Even if something is said or done in China or the U.S.S.R., which is not to our liking, we shall continue to pursue our own policy of friendship and co-operation wherever this is possible."<sup>21</sup> Unfortunately, Nehru's optimism soon proved to be unfounded. The initial incursions by China into Tibet in 1959 led to a brief border war with India in October, 1962. India's forces were quickly overwhelmed; by November, China had clearly emerged as the victor. The events of 1962 forced Nehru to re-evaluate his approach to Communist China completely:

We do not desire to dominate any country, and we are content to live peacefully with other countries, provided they do not interfere with us or commit aggression. China, on the other hand, clearly does not like the idea of such peaceful existence and wants to have a dominating position in Asia. . . . Communism too is gradually developing two facets, one represented by the Soviet Union and the other by China. It is possible to live peacefully with the Soviet Union. But it does not appear to be possible to do that with China.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> J. Nehru, Dec. 31, 1958, in Jawaharlal Nehru: Letters to Chief Ministers 1947-1964, Vol. 5, ed. G. Parthasarathi (Government of India, 1989), pp. 191-192.

<sup>22</sup> J. Nehru, Feb. 2, 1963, in Jawaharlal Nehru: Letters to Chief Ministers 1947-1964, Vol. 5, ed. G. Parthasarathi

The early 1960's were a period of continuing strain and frustration for the International Commission. The Canadian Delegation was preoccupied with the termination or reduction of the Commission, while the Cambodian government insisted that the Commission still had a vital role to play. Commissioner Fortier wrote to Collins at External Affairs' Far Eastern Division:

Unless we are prepared to press the matter to the point of taking unilateral action and withdrawing, which might have serious repercussions in this country and elsewhere, it seems to me that we will have to wait for a propitious moment . . . . Prince Sihanouk - who is now for all intents and purposes "The State", has shown repeatedly that he attaches importance to the Commission remaining physically here for the time being.<sup>23</sup>

Western relations with Cambodia continued to worsen on account of Sihanouk's belief that the border troubles between Cambodia and South Vietnam and Thailand had been encouraged by the United States. Sihanouk gave press interviews on June 25 and July 9, and suggested that Cambodia might seek some sort of military assistance from the Communist countries. This possibility alarmed some

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(Government of India, 1989), p. 567.

<sup>23</sup> Fortier to Collins, June 16, 1960, p.2. RG 25, Vol. 4704, file 50052-C-40, pt.15

Western observers. Canadian officials observed that the Commission could block such an alliance only through Article 7 of the Geneva Agreements. David C. Reese, an official at the Office of the Canadian High Commissioner in London, met with Michael Butler from the Foreign Office's Southeast Asia Department. Butler told Reese that Article 7 "would appear to permit almost any form of military agreement between Cambodia and Communist China." Foreign aid in the form of equipment, personnel, instructors, or even the establishment of military bases on Cambodian territory, could be held to conform to the principles of Article 7. Butler added that he had discussed these views with an official at the U.S. Embassy, who " . . . expressed his personal view that the United States Government was unlikely to agree that any form of military agreement between Communist China and Cambodia was in conformity with the U.N. Charter . . . ." <sup>24</sup>

Sihanouk was actively pursuing a rapprochement with Communist China. However, the situation for the communists within Cambodia was as uneasy as ever. Fortier informed External Affairs on August 25 that a showdown between

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<sup>24</sup> D.C. Reese to External, July 29, 1960, pp.1-2. RG 25, Vol. 4704, file 50052-C-40, pt.15.

Sihanouk and the left-wing elements in Cambodia was in progress. About 15 members of the Pracheachon (Communist) Party and staff members of its newspaper were arrested, among them a Polish interpreter who worked on the Commission's Secretariat staff. Fortier speculated that these recent actions " . . . should reassure Saigon [and] Bangkok and improve chances for negotiations."<sup>25</sup> Sihanouk's reactions would seem to illustrate that his desire to abandon U.S. military aid in favour of China's may not have been completely genuine. Sihanouk's threats may also have been designed to draw western attention to Cambodia's difficulties with her neighbours. In any case, he certainly appreciated that a Communist government in Cambodia would have no interest in preserving the monarchy.

Sihanouk's faith in the International Commission's abilities was definitely at its lowest ebb. During his 1960 visit to the United Nations' Fifteenth General Assembly, he spoke with the U.N.'s Secretary-General, Dag Hammarskjold. The Acting Canadian Commissioner in Cambodia, Gilles Grondin, speculated that Sihanouk " . . . does not anymore

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<sup>25</sup> Fortier to External, August 17, 1960. RG 25, Vol. 4704, file 50052-C-40, pt. 15. See also Fortier's tel. of Aug. 20, 1960.

hold the opinion that the presence of the International Commission is absolutely necessary for the maintenance of peace in the area."<sup>26</sup>

During this session of the U.N.'s General Assembly, the Cambodian delegation proposed the neutralization of Laos and Cambodia. Initially, some Canadian and Indian officials were enthusiastic about the plan. Chester Ronning met with Desai on November 24, 1960. Desai told Ronning that India would support such a resolution. The absence of China and North Vietnam from the U.N. should not be a great obstacle, since both would probably welcome U.N. endorsement of neutrality as a deterrent to U.S. influence. Desai blamed the current situation in Laos on the United States, emphasizing that U.S. policy had driven the Royal Laotian Government leader Souvanna Phouma into a coalition with the Pathet Lao. Ronning agreed that the plan for U.N. endorsement of neutrality had merit, and recommended to his superiors at External Affairs that " we should consider supporting [the] resolution provided the sponsors agree to [an] acceptable wording":

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<sup>26</sup> Grondin to External, November 5, 1960, p.2. RG 25, Vol. 4704, file 50052-C-40, pt.15.

Keeping India, the largest and best organized country in South and Southeast Asia in a position of responsibility in [the] area may be the most effective counterpoise against China. . . . If this is sufficiently important for us we may have to continue our own participation and responsibility in a reactivated Commission [in Laos] in spite of our desire to remain withdrawn from [the] area.<sup>27</sup>

There was a general lack of enthusiasm for Cambodia's inclusion in the agreement. Sihanouk's subsequent proposals dealt exclusively with Laos. He proposed that an immediate cease-fire be implemented in Laos, and that formal guarantees of Laos' neutrality should be implemented. Furthermore, a Geneva-style conference should be convened as soon as possible, consisting not only of the original membership, but Thailand and Burma as well. Canadian Commissioner Fortier cabled his impressions to Ottawa:

The reasons for the changes in the initial proposal are clear enough. The present government in Laos is one for which Sihanouk has no sympathy. The Cambodians have not recognized it nor have they followed the Communist policy of pretending that Prince Souvanna Phouma still heads the legal government of Laos.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Ronning to External, "Neutrality zone in Cambodia and Laos", November 25, 1960. RG 25, Vol. 4704, file 50052-C-40, pt.15.

<sup>28</sup> Fortier to External, December 30, 1960, p.1. RG 25, Vol. 4704, file 50052-C-40, pt.15.

Fortier estimated that, if support for a neutral Laos could be maintained, Sihanouk would renew his request for a two-country neutral zone. He stated that Sihanouk had been somewhat critical of the International Commission in recent press statements, alleging that it had been neutralized by the Cold War politics of the Canadian and Polish delegations.<sup>29</sup>

A.D.P. Heeney, the Canadian Ambassador in Washington, recognized that a new, neutral commission in Laos had many benefits:

While USA has been sceptical of the effectiveness of the Commission's procedures in the past, the increased emphasis of the new [administration] on regional factgrs (sic) and on a neutral status for Laos and Cambodia, may make it easier to enlist their support for more clearly defined tasks for the Commissions to permit them to work more effectively and more realistically.<sup>30</sup>

New difficulties arose for Cambodia as a result of the renewed fighting in South Vietnam in 1962. This resulted in regular incursions by the Viet Cong into Cambodia. T.M. Pope, the Canadian Commissioner, met with the Indian

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p.4.

<sup>30</sup> Heeney to External, "Laos and the Indochina Commissions", March 30, 1961. RG 25, Vol. 4704, file 50052-C-40, pt.15.



chairman, and discussed India's approach to this new situation:

(Indian Commissioner) Trivedi very guardedly told me today, without giving any details, that Nehru had recently written to Sihanouk about the situation in Vietnam . . . . Nehru had apparently advised Sihanouk that it would be in Cambodia's best interests to take the strongest action against any Viet Cong who might temporarily take refuge in Cambodia, in order to scotch any remaining suspicion that Cambodia was taking a complaisant attitude towards the Viet Cong.<sup>31</sup>

The Viet Cong prisoners who were unfortunate enough to be captured in Cambodia were quickly imprisoned. On May 24, 1962, the Secretary General of the Cambodian Foreign Ministry, Sarin Chhak, brought up the issue of Viet Cong prisoners with Pope, trying to convince him that Commission action was necessary. He said that Cambodia could not afford to keep prisoners of this sort, since turning the prisoners over to either North or South Vietnam would affect relations with the other.<sup>32</sup>

The Canadian delegation was not sure how to proceed in the case of border incidents involving the Viet Cong. It had

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<sup>31</sup> T.M. Pope to External, "Cambodia and the Viet Cong", April 7, 1962. RG 25, Vol. 4704, file 50052-C-40, pt.16.

<sup>32</sup> T.M. Pope to External, May 25, 1962. RG 25, Vol. 4704, file 50052-C-40, pt.16.

long been the practice of the Canadian delegation to decline involvement in cases when persons crossed into Cambodia from South Vietnam. However, the International Commission for Vietnam had recently released a report which affirmed a link between the Viet Cong and North Vietnam. According to the Canadian interpretation of the Geneva Accords, the Commission could be obliged to investigate. The Canadian delegation asked External Affairs for advice, but no reply was sent.

A draft report on various border incidents involving the Viet Cong was prepared by the Commission. However, the Indian chairman rejected it. Apparently, officials in New Delhi called the results of the reports on border incidents prior to June 16th "lukewarm"; officials in New Delhi wanted the Commission to produce a more detailed account of the incidents.<sup>33</sup> The Indian Chairman later revealed that Delhi found the report on the 1962 border incidents unacceptable because the evidence was too circumstantial. Pope informed External Affairs of the Indian Chairman's views:

Chairman believes that Delhi's attitude is [the] result of [a] conversation in Geneva between

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<sup>33</sup> Canadian Delegation, Phnomh Penh, to External, August 6, 1962. RG 25, Vol. 4704, file 50052-C-40, pt.16.

[Indian Minister without portfolio] Krishna Menon and [the]Cambodian Foreign Minister. [The Chairman's] attitude is that he got into trouble in the first place by adopting a position which took too great [an] account of our own. Since he is now acting on instructions from Delhi, it is quite unlikely that we will bring him back to his original position unless Delhi itself gives him the authority. Pressure exercised here will therefore . . . no longer be effective.<sup>34</sup>

A Canadian External Affairs document dated September 25, 1962, reveals that Canada's position on the investigation of border incidents was modified somewhat, because of the possibility of a rapprochement between Cambodia and the Communist world. The future of the International Commission in Cambodia was directly related to the struggle in South Vietnam, and to the results of Prince Sihanouk's recent initiatives. Therefore, in the event of any future border violations (except those cases involving South Vietnam or Thailand), the Canadian delegation agreed to participate " . . . on the ground that they might reveal involvement of forces or elements under the direct or indirect control of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam."<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Pope to External, August 7, 1962. RG 25, Vol. 4704, file 50052-C-40, pt.16.

<sup>35</sup> "International Commission for Cambodia", September 25, 1962. RG 25, Vol. 4704, file 50052-C-40, pt.16.

Indian officials were equally concerned about the situation in Cambodia. Ronning informed External Affairs that the "Indians tended to equate their own interests at present junctured with those of Cambodia", and that Indian policy would endeavour " . . . to take all possible measures to improve Cambodia's relations with Thailand and Vietnam or at least remove causes of friction."<sup>36</sup>

In response to the continuing problem of border incidents, Prince Sihanouk again attempted to obtain wider international recognition of Cambodia's difficulties. In August, 1962, he sent a personal letter to the leaders of the thirteen Western and Communist countries directly concerned with the recent Geneva Indochina Conference for Laos, including the Canadian Prime Minister, John Diefenbaker. Sihanouk pointed to the increasing number of border incidents between Cambodia and South Vietnam and Thailand, and re-iterated his request to convene a new Geneva-style conference for Cambodia. Appropriately soothing replies were sent by U.S. President John F. Kennedy, British Prime Minister Harold MacMillan, French President de Gaulle,

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<sup>36</sup> Ronning to External, October 10, 1962. RG 25, Vol. 4704, file 50052-C-40, pt.16.

and Diefenbaker; however, no Western representative was willing to give any far reaching guarantees to Sihanouk. Howard Green, Canada's Secretary of State for External Affairs, pointed out to Diefenbaker the difficulties inherent in Sihanouk's proposal:

An international conference, as a means of solving the problem (of border incidents) would clearly be undesirable, in view of the difficulty of keeping to the purely Cambodian aspect of the question. Moreover, extension of discussions to South Vietnam when the situation there is still in a state of flux would be premature. This opinion is shared by the Americans, the British and the French.<sup>37</sup>

At a press conference held on September 3, 1962, Sihanouk said he was disappointed by the unwillingness of the West to convene a new conference. He said that his objective was to guarantee Cambodia's neutrality and territorial integrity, and he would be satisfied with a simple recopying of the Laos neutrality declaration. Yet the simple recognitions of support, such as those given by the U.S. and Britain, were not satisfactory. Sihanouk added that, if Cambodia's neutrality could not be guaranteed, he

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<sup>37</sup> Green to Diefenbaker, "Memorandum for the Prime Minister: Proposal for an International Conference on Cambodia", August 31, 1962. RG 25, Vol. 4705, file 50052-C-1-40, pt.2.

would be forced to call on Soviet and Chinese troops.<sup>38</sup> This threat was taken very seriously by the Canadian Commissioner:

I do not . . . agree with the optimistic appreciation of the State Dept . . . and the FO that the threat to bring in Soviet troops is . . . not to be taken seriously (sic). Sihanouk may make ill-considered threats but he has the bad habit of keeping his word, and Cambodian patience (never their most notable virtue when dealing with the Vietnamese) has clearly run out. [Canadian] opposition to a mild [message] expressing the Commissions concern to the cochairmen would do UK a real disservice in increasing the leftward pressures on Sihanouk.<sup>39</sup>

Sihanouk sent out another series of letters in November, 1962. This version contained a Declaration of Neutrality by Cambodia, and a Protocol to this Declaration, envisioning international assurances of assistance in the event of a violation of Cambodian neutrality, the withdrawal of foreign military personnel, and an expanded International Commission with fixed teams on Cambodia's frontiers. The Canadian view of this latest proposal seems unusually

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<sup>38</sup> Canadian Delegation, Phnomh Penh, to External, September 3, 1962. RG 25, Vol. 4704, file 50052-C-40, pt. 16.

<sup>39</sup> Canadian Delegation, Phnomh Penh, to External, September 20, 1962. RG 25, Vol. 4704, file 50052-C-40, pt. 16.

conciliatory. Under-Secretary of State for Eastern Affairs Norman Robertson gave the following advice to the Minister:

. . . if Sihanouk is determined to have an agreement of the Laos type it will probably be thought best to give it to him. This seems to be the conclusion to which the French (with alacrity) and the British (reluctantly) have come; the Australians, too, appear to see some merit in the proposals; and the Americans, though clearly more doubtful, have so far been unable to suggest any feasible alternative . . . India's attitude, so far as it is known, appears similar to that of the West.<sup>40</sup>

Green agreed:

I am inclined to the view that it would be wiser and more prudent to accept Sihanouk's determination to have an international agreement of the Laos type and to seek to amend those parts of his draft which are clearly impossible of acceptance than to reject draft and propose something entirely different, thereby incurring what would seem to be a grave risk that he might turn exclusively to Communist powers and particularly to Communist China for support and assistance.<sup>41</sup>

No official reply was sent to Sihanouk. Ronning showed the preliminary Canadian views on Sihanouk's proposals to Miss Muthamma of India's External Affairs department's

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<sup>40</sup> N.A. Robertson, "Memorandum for the Minister", December 10, 1962. RG 25, Vol. 4705, file 50052-C-1-40, pt.3.

<sup>41</sup> Green to Canadian High Commissioner, New Delhi, December 10, 1962. RG 25, Vol. 4705, file 50052-C-1-40, pt.3.

Indochina desk on December 14. He observed that " her . . . remarks about [the] Commission becoming an instrument of Cambodian national policy are a pretty clear indication that Indians appreciate problem." Ronning also reported that India's response to Sihanouk's proposal would consist of nothing more than " . . . a polite interim reply containing nothing of substance."<sup>42</sup>

In February, 1963, a tripartite working group consisting of representatives from Britain, France, and the United States completed a tentative draft of a neutrality agreement for Cambodia. It was based largely on the counter-proposals that the U.S. State Department developed in response to Sihanouk's letter. A final agreement between the three powers remained elusive, however, largely as a result of French opposition. The Foreign Office considered it essential that the U.S., the U.K., France, Canada and India, should be " . . . absolutely agreed on the principles before any of us sends a definitive reply to Sihanouk."<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Ronning to External, December 15, 1962. RG 25, Vol. 4705, file 50052-C-1-40, pt.3.

<sup>43</sup> Foreign Office telegram of November 22, 1962, reproduced in Canadian Embassy, London, telegram to External, November 27, 1962. RG 25, Vol. 4704, file 50052-C-40, pt.16.



This agreement was not forthcoming. As a result, no formal action was taken.

The latest setback to Sihanouk's initiatives led Canadian observers to upgrade Cambodia to an "immediate danger spot". A memorandum from Far Eastern Division warned that "Cambodia's domestic relative tranquility is in sharp contrast with the excitement it has displayed in its relations with Thailand and South Vietnam." The West's apparent indifference to Sihanouk's proposals was leading Cambodia towards an alliance with Communist China:

[Sihanouk] has intimated that if the West is not prepared to give him a satisfying degree of reassurance he will turn to Communist China for help in order to strengthen his relatively weak position with regard to his two pro-Western neighbours. Prince Sihanouk has seemed less determined, in the last two months, to obtain international guarantees for his frontiers and this new attitude may be connected with the trip he made to Peking last winter. When he returned to Cambodia he gave the impression to have drawn somewhat closer to Communist China.<sup>44</sup>

In early July, 1963, Sihanouk announced to the Cambodian National Assembly that he was abandoning his neutrality proposals, a decision based on his assessment

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<sup>44</sup> J.G. Maranda, Far Eastern Division, to C.J. Small (NATO Working Group), "Contribution to the Expert Working Group on the Far East", March 27, 1963. RG 25, Vol. 4705, file 50052-C-1-40, pt.4.

that there was no possibility of agreement by all powers.<sup>45</sup>

Green asked Robertson why Canada had sent no reply to Sihanouk. Robertson answered:

We did not particularly wish to make a reply which would be at cross-purposes with anything the three [U.S., U.K., France] might propose nor did we wish either to accept Prince Sihanouk's proposals or to offend him by criticizing or objecting to his proposals in detail.<sup>46</sup>

The Canadian High Commissioner in London advised caution in replying to Sihanouk's proposal: the State Department

" . . . still [believes] that Sihanouk has finally abandoned hope of his proposals for a multilateral guarantee and [fears] that we might revive it."<sup>47</sup>

Sihanouk's disillusionment with the West was nearly complete. On August 27, 1963, he broke off relations with South Vietnam. On November 1, a U.S.-supported coup in South Vietnam resulted in the assassination of President Diem and

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<sup>45</sup> Canadian Delegation, Phnomh Penh, to External, July 2, 1963. RG 25, Vol. 4705, file 50052-C-1-40, pt.4.

<sup>46</sup> Robertson to Green, "Memorandum for the Minister: Reply to Prince Sihanouk's proposals of November, 1962", August 6, 1963. RG 25, Vol. 4704, file 50052-C-40, pt.16.

<sup>47</sup> Canadian High Commissioner, London, to External, August 20, 1963. RG 25, Vol. 4704, file 50052-C-40, pt. 16.

his brother, Ngo Dinh Nhu.<sup>48</sup> This had a very unsettling effect on Sihanouk, suggesting how far the U.S. might be prepared to go to enforce its will in his own country. Sihanouk renounced the Military Aid Agreement with the United States that same month, and President Kennedy's efforts to improve relations between Cambodia and the U.S. were cut short by his assassination.<sup>49</sup> All diplomatic relations between the two countries ended in May, 1965.

The United States had taken very little interest in Cambodia before 1963. Once the fighting in Vietnam began, however, the U.S. learned exactly how important Cambodia was to the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong. The Vietnamese Communists depended on their secret supply routes and sanctuaries hidden along the border, inside Cambodian territory. The frequent border incidents began to take on a whole new meaning to the Americans.

On May 21, 1964, Adlai Stevenson, the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, spoke to the U.N.'s Security Council

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<sup>48</sup> see Ellen J. Hammer's A Death in November (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1987), pp. 169-311.

<sup>49</sup> see Milton Osborne's Sihanouk: Prince of Light, Prince of Darkness (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994), pp.161-162.

on the question of aggression in Vietnam. He made particular reference to accusations made against the United States by the Soviet delegation, who alleged that U.S. military advisors were present during an illegal South Vietnamese incursion into Cambodia. Stevenson denied that the U.S. was involved in the border incident in any capacity. He managed to turn the question around completely, and placed the blame for the repeated violations of Cambodia's frontiers on the Vietnamese Communists. Yet his reply would seem to indicate that the U.S. was also becoming dissatisfied with the performance of the International Commission in Cambodia:

One cannot blame the Viet-Nameese for concluding that the International Control Commission cannot do an effective job of maintaining frontier security. The "troika" composition of the International Control Commission, which under the Geneva Agreements on Viet-Nam and Cambodia requires that decisions dealing with violations which might lead to a resumption of hostilities can be taken only by unanimous agreement, has contributed to the frustration of the International Control Commission. . . . The fact that the situation in South Vietnam has reached the crisis stage is itself dramatic testimony of the frustration to which the International Control Commission has been reduced.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> in Walter Johnson et al., (eds.), The Papers of Adlai E. Stevenson, Volume VIII, 1961-1965 (Boston, 1979), p.561.

A subsequent memorandum that Stevenson sent to President Lyndon Johnson does not even consider the Commission as a means to guarantee the integrity of Cambodia's frontiers. He was not encouraged about the prospect of any future U.N. involvement either. "As of today", he wrote,

there is no possibility of a large and effective UN force to protect the border. A commission to inquire into the situation and make recommendations seems likely. This would be meagre but it would at least get a UN foot into the door.<sup>51</sup>

This prompted an exasperated Paul Martin, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, to come to the defence of Canada's role in Indochina. Martin addressed the Standing Committee on External Affairs and Defence on July 9, 1964:

The other day Mr Adlai Stevenson in the Security Council, when the question of the Vietnamese and Cambodian border was under discussion, observed that the Commissions had outlived their usefulness and that some other vehicle should be provided to deal with that particular situation. If it is thought that the Commissions still can serve a useful purpose, Canada will accept its responsibilities; but . . . we are not anxious to carry on an undertaking if it is thought that the operation is not a useful one.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> in Ibid., p.564.

<sup>52</sup> in Arthur Blanchette (ed.), Canadian Foreign Policy 1955-1965 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1977), pp.313-314.

Martin's response to Stevenson's suggestion may lend some support to John Holmes' view that Canada's relations with its friends and allies may have suffered more than its relations with antagonists as a result of our participation on the Indochina Commissions.<sup>53</sup> This was certainly true of the Indo-Canadian entente, especially from the point of view of the Canadian delegates who actually served on the Indochina Commissions. Arthur Blanchette summed up his impressions in a 1996 interview:

From government to government, Ottawa to New Delhi, there was a good relationship that went on for quite a while. But, in Indochina, there was no special relationship. Relations were cordial - they were friendly enough. But just about every officer I've ever spoken to about this, all of us, had difficulty relating to the Indians on the ground. . . . I found myself more at ease with the Poles. I was not the only one. Not ideologically, but in the way they thought . . . the way they approached problems - far more like us than the Indians. We weren't on the same wavelength [as the Indians].<sup>54</sup>

Blanchette's view that the Indo-Canadian entente was largely limited to the officials and politicians in Ottawa and New Delhi is given additional credibility by the views

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<sup>53</sup> John Holmes, "Canada and the Vietnam War", in J.L. Granatstein and R.D. Cuff (eds.), War and Society in North America (Toronto, Nelson, 1971), p.191.

<sup>54</sup> Interview with Arthur Blanchette, November 21, 1996.

of Jules Leger. His impressions of the Commissions from Ottawa was of a "jeu diplomatique" between the Indians, Canadians, and the Poles. While India's diplomacy may have varied throughout the course of the Commissions, there was an understanding between India and Canada: "On se comprenait."<sup>55</sup>

However, the impressions of the Canadians on the ground were quite different. William Bauer's recollections of the Indo-Canadian relationship were similar to Blanchette's, if not more extreme:

It was special, but it wasn't a particularly warm one. Most of us were frustrated, badly frustrated, by the relationship. I remember Marcel Cadieux saying to me . . . that he [could not] think of anything . . . that would have done more damage to the Canadian-Indian relationship than our service together on the Commissions.<sup>56</sup>

The mystique that surrounded the Indo-Canadian entente did not stand up to the harsh light that service on the Indochina Commissions projected. As Bauer concluded, "two

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<sup>55</sup> Transcript of an interview between H.H. Carter and Jules Leger, Ottawa: Sept. 24, 1980. Jules Leger Papers, MG 32, A 3, Vol.1, Part 1.

<sup>56</sup> Interview with William E. Bauer, November 26, 1996.

years in Indochina certainly removed any illusions I had about the Indians."<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Interview with William Bauer, November 26, 1996.



## Conclusion

By early 1969, the Royal Khmer Government had ceased asking the Commission to make any kind of investigations despite considerable evidence of Vietnamese Communist interventions in Cambodia. In October of 1969, the Cambodian government formally informed the Commission of its decision "to terminate the mission of the Commission in Cambodia before the end of the year"; the RKG specifically requested the Commission to adjourn *sine die* as of December 31. The Commission in Cambodia agreed to carry out the request of the Cambodian government, and adjourned on the specified date.<sup>58</sup>

Between 1965 and 1969, the Kampuchean Communist movement was beginning to gain momentum in Cambodia. Both Hanoi and Beijing had to use their influence to restrain the Communists in Cambodia, and prevent them from launching a full-scale offensive against Sihanouk's government. Nevertheless, the Communists in Cambodia, under the leadership of Saloth Sar (Pol Pot), did carry out a small-scale armed struggle against Sihanouk's regime from early

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<sup>58</sup> Report of the Department of External Affairs 1969. (Ottawa, 1970), pp.27-29.

1968.<sup>59</sup> Less than a decade later, Pol Pot and his genocidal minions, the Khmer Rouge, were in power. The campaign of murder and destruction that the Khmer Rouge initiated is undeniably among the most appalling crimes in human history.

Cambodia had taken a tragic course, whose roots lie in the American military intervention there. The U.S. intervention began clandestinely with secret bombing raids in the spring of 1969, and culminated with the *coup d'etat* of 18 March, 1970. The coup left Lon Nol's American-backed regime in power in Phnomh Penh. A week later, North Vietnam issued a statement which supported Sihanouk and the "patriotic struggle of the Cambodian people."<sup>60</sup> The stage was set for a conflict between the Communists and their foes in Cambodia; there was no longer any hope for the peace that was envisioned at Geneva in 1954.

A civil war then raged in Cambodia, between Lon Nol's pro-American military dictatorship and China's proxy, the Khmer Rouge. In 1975, the Khmer Rouge emerged as the

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<sup>59</sup> R.B. Smith, "The International Setting of the Cambodia Crisis, 1969-1970", in The International History Review, XVIII, 2 (May, 1996), pp. 312-313.

<sup>60</sup> R.B. Smith, "The International Setting of the Cambodia Crisis", p.330.

victors, and that regime's disastrous socioeconomic policies, largely inspired by their racial hatred of the Vietnamese, resulted in the deaths of over two million Cambodians. In 1977, Pol Pot began a provocative offensive along the border with Cambodia's "hereditary enemy", Vietnam. His aggressive actions prompted Vietnam to respond with force. The Vietnamese Army succeeded in driving the Khmer Rouge out of power in Phnomh Penh, and into hiding in the Cambodian countryside, where they remain to this day. In January, 1979, Vietnam installed a client regime in Phnomh Penh. Its leadership consisted of some former members of the Khmer Rouge, who had been driven into an alliance with Vietnam by Pol Pot's successive purges of party and army personnel.<sup>61</sup> Later that same month, while in New York to address the U.N.'s General Assembly, Sihanouk and his wife Monique escaped the custody of their Khmer Rouge bodyguards. He would not return to Cambodia for more than a decade.

The Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia was not well received in Beijing. In February, the Chinese Premier, Deng Xiaoping, ordered a three-week military campaign in

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<sup>61</sup> Gareth Porter, "Cambodia: Sihanouk's Initiative", in Foreign Affairs, Vol. 66, No.4 (Spring, 1988), pp.810-811.

Vietnam's northern provinces to "teach Vietnam a lesson". Although this campaign proved to be "a costly failure", and was not successful in dislodging the Vietnamese from Cambodia, Deng did succeed in mobilizing an informal coalition of nations, including the United States, to support sanctions against Vietnam. By 1982, the diplomatic and economic pressure on Vietnam resulted in the establishment of a coalition government in Cambodia, the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK). The CGDK, with Norodom Sihanouk as its President-in-exile, united the three opposition elements: former Prime Minister Son Sann's Khmer People's Liberation Front (KPNLF), Sihanouk's political front, and the Khmer Rouge, now under the political leadership of Khieu Samphan, a moderate and more acceptable Communist leader. It is debatable whether or not this coalition exercised any real power in Cambodia, although it was recognised by the United Nations as the legitimate government. Meanwhile, the Khmer Rouge's guerilla forces, under the direction of Pol Pot, remained in place in the countryside.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., pp. 811-812.

A permanent political settlement in Cambodia remained elusive throughout the 1980's. Vietnam was still maintaining a military presence there, and its end was nowhere in sight. Vietnam refused to negotiate with the Khmer Rouge, while China continued to support them. This was the inherent paradox of the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia. On the one hand, the Vietnamese liberated Cambodia from Pol Pot's tyrannical rule. On the other, any nations who condemned the Vietnamese strengthened the position of the Khmer Rouge.

In 1984, the Vietnamese Army began an offensive against the network of Khmer Rouge bases along the Thai border. The campaign was largely successful, since it disrupted the Khmer Rouge's main supply routes. Pol Pot's troops were forced to regroup, and retreated into Thailand.

Throughout the latter half of the 1980's, as the Cold War was winding down, the international community was beginning to re-evaluate their Cambodian policy. From 1987 to 1989, several conferences took place, in order to bring about a lasting settlement amongst the factions in Cambodia. Sihanouk figured very prominently in these discussions. He was recognised by the international community as a credible leader, who stood the greatest chance of successfully

uniting Cambodia. By September, 1989, the Vietnamese Army had completed the process of withdrawing its troops from Cambodia. In November, 1991, after nearly twelve years in exile, Sihanouk returned to a hero's welcome in Phnomh Penh. He was reinstated as the King of Cambodia in September, 1993.<sup>63</sup>

This thesis has tried to place Canada's involvement in Cambodia from 1954 to 1964 into perspective. The analysis has concentrated on two central themes. The first is the extent of Canada's co-operation with the interests of the United States. Based on the research that is contained in this thesis, it would be difficult to say that Canada acted solely or even primarily as a satellite of the United States. Admittedly, the U.S. showed very little interest in Cambodia until the tempo of the war in Vietnam had escalated.

Yet the decisions that the Canadian delegation made in Cambodia between 1954 to 1964 do not reflect a pro-American bias. The Canadians' support of the U.S.-Cambodia Military Aid Agreement of 1955 may seem, on the surface, to be

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<sup>63</sup> see Milton Osborne's Sihanouk: Prince of Light, Prince of Darkness (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994), pp. 248-262.

suspicious. However, it must be pointed out that the Cambodian government was free to accept or refuse this aid, and chose to accept it. The Canadian delegation's efforts to modify the agreement into a form that would be more acceptable to the Indian delegation illustrate a certain amount of judicious impartiality, since the changes to the agreement removed much of the U.S.'s power to dictate the terms of the agreement. Nor can the Canadian delegation's hands-off approach to the 1955 General Elections in Cambodia be seen as an example of pro-Americanism. The Canadian delegation was no doubt encouraged by the fact that a non-communist government won by such an overwhelming majority, but this hardly constitutes proof of complicity with American interests. Furthermore, the Canadian delegation's position of non-competence in the investigation of border incidents did not indicate systematic Canadian support in favour of the U.S.'s allies in Indochina, South Vietnam and Thailand. It indicated nothing more than the very practical and legitimate Canadian desire to wind up the Commission in Cambodia.

The second theme that this thesis has attempted to address is Indian-Canadian relations. Based on the analysis

of the debates between the Canadian and Indian delegation over many issues, it can be concluded that no special understanding existed between the Indians and Canadians in Cambodia. From the Commission's debates on the U.S.-Cambodia Military Aid Agreement, to the Indians' obstruction of the dissolution of the Commission, the Canadians and Indians were constantly in opposition. India's policy remained fairly consistent throughout its tenure on the Cambodia Commission. The Indians adhered to their principles of non-alignment and non-interference, but their actions on the Commission were frequently determined by their estimates of China's interests. It is difficult to say if the Sino-Indian conflict of 1962 created a marked departure in India's behaviour in Cambodia. There was very little Commission activity at the time that could serve as an estimation of Indian intentions. However, there was a noticeable rapprochement between India and the Soviet Union after 1962. In many ways, this was a marriage of convenience, since both the U.S.S.R. and India were having difficulties relating to the Chinese.

The relationship between India and Canada deteriorated after 1955. The Indians did not seem to the Canadians to be



genuinely neutral at all. Generally, the Indians were protecting themselves from trouble with the Chinese or the Russians. The Canadians, indeed, were all the more disillusioned by the Indians, because there was an aura of optimism that surrounded the Commonwealth, and the good relations that Canada and India shared.

Canada's role on the International Commission for Cambodia was a long and frustrating one. The Canadian delegates were working towards flexible solutions, improvising and adapting as the situation dictated. Their attempts to be "honest brokers" were largely successful during the Commission's early years. As the Commission in Cambodia began to stagnate, the Canadians were unable to bring about the adjournment of the Commission. However, they were partially successful in achieving the subsequent reductions in the size and scope of the Commission's activities. Unfortunately, the 1954 Geneva Conference's ultimate goal of bringing a lasting peace to Indochina went unrealized. No amount of mediation or compromise on the part of the Canadian delegations could achieve this.

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