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**CHAPTER
VI**

CAMBODIA



CHAPTER VI: Cambodia

Civil war in Cambodia saw involved four different Khmer factions and each one had an outside sponsor state (Solomon 1999). Despite its reputation from the war in Vietnam and the bipolar constraints of the Cold War, the US was seen as the most 'neutral' member of the Security Council, "with the political influence and resources to help structure the settlement" (Solomon 2000, 4). At the moment the US-led peace talks took place in the last months of 1989, the government in Phnom Penh was headed by Hun Sen, whose faction assumed power thanks to a Vietnamese military incursion into Cambodia in December 1978 which overthrew the Khmer Rouge regime (Hampson and Zartman 2012, 4). The pro-Vietnamese government, named People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK), was backed only by the USSR and its allies and did not enjoy support of the West. Also, it was certainly not in good relations with the authorities in Beijing. China was concerned with Vietnamese expansionist policies interpreting them as Soviet efforts to contain Chinese influence in South-East Asia. Once dethroned, Khmer Rouge fled to the jungles along the border with Thailand and thanks to the Chinese support, started an insurgency campaign against Vietnam's client regime (Solomon 1999, 284).

Given its experience with Vietnam, and the positioning of the Soviet Union in the matter, the United States chose China for a partner. It was clear to the US that China was interested to improve its international reputation after the June 1989 events on Tiananmen Square, and thus be more willing to cooperate with the US even at a cost of distancing themselves from the Khmer Rouge (Hampson and Zartman 2012, 6). The two sides managed to reach initial convergence of interests in supporting a future coalition government led by Prince Sihanouk, who governed the Cambodia in its first decade as an independent state, only to be toppled by Khmer Rouge forces in 1963. Ironically, Chinese acceptance of Sihanouk was coupled with a request to allow for Khmer Rouge to be included in the future power-sharing arrangement. The US did not object to this, as it wanted to keep Khmer Rouge engaged in the peace process, fearing that otherwise they might act as spoilers. At the same time, the US was confident that if Khmer Rouge accepted to participate in the future political life of Cambodia, its unpopularity with local people would certainly not allow them to gain power through elections.

6.1 Nature of the conflict

6.1.1 Sources of Intractability

During the French colonial rule, Cambodia was a relatively peaceful area. The majority of its population was ethnic Khmers, with Buddhism as the most dominant religion. At the same time almost a fifth of the country's inhabitants were ethnic and religious minorities. Interestingly, these minorities also had a distinct work related role in the society. As Kiernan points out, "Vietnamese, Chinese, and Muslim Chams worked mostly in rubber plantations or as clerks, shopkeepers, and fisherfolk, while a score of small ethnolinguistic groups, such as the Jarai, Tampuan, and Kreung, populated the upland northeast" (Kiernan 2002, 483). After World War II, the colonial rule was gradually challenged and resisted by organized independence movements of Vietnamese (Viet Minh) and nationalist Khmer Issarak (independence) forces. Over time the lengthy anti-colonial struggle produced a Vietnamese-sponsored Cambodian communist movement, the Khmer People's Revolutionary Party (KPRP), which received an "increasing though not unchallenged" support from the Issarak nationalists (Kiernan 1985; Kiernan 2002). As the KPRP slowly gained leadership over the Issarak membership, several anti-communist movements started emerging. By 1952 these anti-KPRP movements started campaigns of massacres targeting ethnic Vietnamese and Cham populations (Kiernan 1985).

Cambodia became independent in 1953, as a result of the French defeat in the First Indochina War. King Norodom Sihanouk, who according to Hampson and Zartman (2012) was a mercurial figure, immediately assumed a foreign policy of neutrality. This was a carefully calculated decision in the midst of the Cold War dynamics. As Kiernan points out, on the one side he tried to accommodate the communist forces and acknowledge their role in Cambodia's struggle for independence, while at the same time fearful of their potential disruptive behavior if the country was to assume a more pro-western stand (Kiernan 2002, 484). The policy of neutrality was also aimed at keeping a peaceful relationship with the neighboring Vietnam.

In the first decade of independent Cambodia, Sihanouk's policies of neutrality managed to appease both the moderate nationalist and veteran communists, transforming the country into a one-party kingdom

(Kiernan 2002, 484). Dissatisfied forces - both from the left and from the right - either found exile in Vietnam or headed for the hills deep in the country-side waiting for an opportune moment to return. Veteran leaders of the demobilized KPRP - who generally came from a rural, Buddhist and pro-Vietnamese background - were gradually replaced by a group of younger, urban, Paris-trained, anti-Vietnamese militants headed by Saloth Sar, Ieng Sary and Son Sen. According to Kiernan's accounts, "from the jungles of remote northeast, the new party leadership planned an armed rebellion against Sihanouk's regime, ignoring his independent nationalism and labeling him a U.S. puppet" (Kiernan 2002, 484). Fearful for its survival, Sihanouk's regime started employing harsh policies against all leftist forces pushing the moderate communist veterans to join the new young leaders of KPRP.

6.1.2 Development of Deep Feelings of Distrust and Employment of Repressive Measures

However, the biggest threat for Cambodia's stability in the mid 1960s came with the intensification of the US campaign in Vietnam. The border between the two countries was over flooded by Khmer and Vietnamese-communist refugees escaping Saigon's and US' advancement. By 1967 the communist forces - now renamed Communist Party of Kampuchea (CPK) - under Saloth Sar's leadership started a small scale insurgency which provoked a disproportionate reaction of the government. The Cambodia countryside was dragged into a civil war. Unable to cope with the challenges provoked by the war in Vietnam and CPK's rebellion, on 18 March 1970 Sihanouk's government was toppled in a military coup led by General Lon Nol.

Finding refuge in Beijing, Sihanouk found allies in the CPK and its leader Saloth Sar who started using his name 'code name' Pol Pot - or Brother Number One (Kiernan 2002, 485). The country was immediately renamed into the Khmer Republic, and Lon Nol became its first President. Under his directive, the army started a campaign of massacres of ethnic Vietnamese, forcing around 300,000 to flee across border to Vietnam. According to Kiernan, this set a precedent for intensified "ethnic cleansing" by the Khmer Rouge - a colloquial term used for the CPK (Kiernan 2002, 485).

In fact, although assisted by the Vietnamese army as a reaction to

the US' support for the Republican forces in their anti-communist campaign when the Vietnamese conflict spilled over to Cambodia, "the Khmer Rouge central leadership attacked its Vietnamese allies as early as 1970, killed a thousand Khmer communist returnees from Hanoi, and in 1973-74, stepped up violence against ethnic Vietnamese civilians, purged and killed ethnic Thai and other minority members of CPK regional committees, banned an allied group of ethnic Cham Muslim revolutionaries, and instigated severe repression of Muslim communities" (Kiernan 2002, 485). In the meantime Lon Nol's government was losing credibility and support, as its policies were tainted with numerous cases of corruption and a repressive military regime. Continuous fighting with the communist culminated in 1975, when the Khmer Rouge forces seized the capital Phnom Penh - one of the bastions of Lon Nol's power - deported its two million residents to the country side and established a new state of Democratic Kampuchea (DK) (Kiernan 2002, 485).

The new regime immediately started applying severe policies of mass deportations of people from urban areas into agricultural labor camps in the northwestern part of the country, eventually doubling the population of that area. Unbearable living conditions caused the death of tens of thousands of people. At the same time the Khmer Rouge started purging the former Khmer Republic officials, army officers, civil servants, and even the peasants from the northwest who were related to the officials from the former regime. By 1979, more than a million people had died due to starvation, poor living conditions and extreme repression (Gordon 1986). Under attack were also numerous minorities. Between 1975 and 1979 more than a half of the ethnic Chinese population - around 250,000 people - had perished, more than 100,000 Cham Muslims were killed or starved to death, and more than 10,000 Vietnamese were killed and the remaining 100,000 Vietnamese expelled from the country (Kiernan 1985).

The Khmer Rouge also conducted sporadic incursions into the Vietnamese territory. The cross-border attacks motivated Vietnam to intervene, invading Cambodia on 25 December, 1978 and taking over Phnom Penh on 9 January, 1979 (Gordon 1986). Officials and forces loyal to the Khmer Rouge once again fled to the mountains, leaving the country in the hands of Heng Samrin and his rebels supported by 150,000 Vietnamese troops. The country was again renamed, this time

to the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK). Finding refuge in the sanctuaries mostly along the country's northern and western borders with Thailand, for more than a decade the Khmer Rouge continued to challenge the new government and the Vietnamese military (Gordon 1986, 66).

6.1.3 Internal Characteristics of the Conflicting Sides and Creation of Irreconcilable Positions

The new governing elite consisted primarily of former Khmer Rouge officials - such as Hun Sen and Chea Sim - that defected to Vietnam in 1978 (Berquist 1998, 93). Their policies largely avoided "to stress Cambodian grandeur at the expense of Vietnamese intentions and took a more realistic view of power relations between the two states" (Ashley 1998, 17). Due to its dependency on Vietnamese support, throughout the 1980s Cambodia remained quite isolated from the international community.

In fact, while ejected from power, Pol Pot and his Khmer Rouge managed to maintain a strong international backing from China and the US. By 1982 together with the royalist National United Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful, and Cooperative Cambodia (FUN-CINPEC) led by the exiled Prince Sihanouk, who had a strong backing of both China and the US, and a non-communist movement the Khmer People's National Liberation Front led by Son Sann, the Khmer Rouge successfully formed an exiled Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK) (Solomon 2000, 15; Ashley 17). They were joined by a shared hatred toward Vietnam and dependence on foreign support.

6.2 Involvement of International Actors and Their Interests in the Conflict

The irreconcilable positions of various Cambodian actors cannot be properly understood without a careful assessment of diverging interests and standpoints of major international and regional powers. In fact, the years that followed actually saw a conflict on three levels which not only included the overthrown Khmer Rouge and the new Heng Samrin re-

gime, but also Vietnam, China, the USSR, the US and their numerous allies. Solomon pointed out that already in 1970s “Indochina became a cockpit of the global rivalry between the Soviet Union and China that developed after the breakdown of their alliance in 1960” (Solomon 2000, 10). Thus the first two levels of conflict are what Gordon refers to as ‘East-East’ struggle, as they personalized a clash within the communist ideological camp. On the one side there was the obvious struggle between two communist groups in Cambodia - the Khmer Rouge and Heng Samrin’s PRK. This struggle had a second, more regional level, which saw the conflict between China and Vietnam - again two members of the communist block. According to Gordon, already in February 1979, as “punishment” for Hanoi’s invasion of Cambodia, China launched a brief attack on several northern provinces of Vietnam (Gordon 1986, 66). The tension between two regional powers increased over time, resulting in Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping’s public threat of a second invasion of Vietnam unless Hanoi withdraws its forces from Cambodia (Gordon 1986, 67; Solomon 2002, 11).

China and Vietnam have had a long lasting rivalry in the region. As Gordon points out, this has always been an uneasy relationship, as “the Vietnamese have never doubted that the long-term challenge to their independence emanates from Beijing, and the Chinese have always regarded Vietnam and Indochina as their nation’s ‘soft underbelly’” (Gordon 1986, 67). The name Vietnam comes from the Chinese term ‘An nam’ which means ‘Pacified South’ (Gordon 1986, 68). Vietnam’s regional expansionist ambition to unify all of Indochina was strongly opposed by China. Beijing perceived this scenario to be a direct threat to its national stability - in fact, almost all the French colonial advancements toward China throughout centuries have been conducted from the south. Therefore, in 1954 during the Geneva conference, which was convened as the French were defeated by Viet Minh, the Chinese ‘consistently opposed’ a unified Indochina and instead “strongly endorsed the concept of separate Indochinese states” (Gordon 1986, 67). During the conference China’s position was well in line with the positions of other major powers: for the French tried to preserve as much influence as possible, thus conceding to an independent Vietnam only the northern territories; the US followed its French allies; and so did the Soviet Union hoping to gain French support on banning a German rearmament in Europe. Facing pressure from all sides Vietnam accepted the creation of

Cambodia and Laos. As Gordon points out, “Prince Sihanouk knew at that time, the legitimacy given to Cambodia’s independence at Geneva (as well as that accorded Laos) owed much to China’s support” (Gordon 1986, 68).

Hoping to establish a strong and lasting influence in Cambodia, Vietnam trained and supported a vast number of high ranking members of the Khmer Rouge during their unrest against the republican regime. However, as soon as he got to power, Pol Pot, quite suspicious of Vietnam’s plans, commanded a series of purges to be executed with the aim of ousting the ‘Hanoi Khmers’, and on several occasions tried to alter the border with Vietnam. More importantly, “he had Chinese support from the outset” (Gordon 1986, 69). These provocations eventually resulted in a Vietnamese intervention which put an end to the Khmer Rouge regime.

In its regional power-struggle with China, as a result of the 1960 Sino-Soviet, Vietnam managed to find a strong ally in the Soviet Union. Moscow has been Hanoi’s strongest ally since the war with the US. Thanks to the Soviet financial assistance - which amounted to about 2 billion dollar per year - Vietnam was able to keep its economy afloat and sustain the Cambodian occupation. In return the Soviets could use the strategically highly important Vietnamese naval and air bases in Cam Ranh Bay and Da Nang (Gordon 1986, 67). The tensions between two communist super-powers lasted until the end of the 1980s. As recorded by Solomon, “as late as 1989, Deng Xiaoping told President Bush that Moscow’s relationship with Vietnam and Cambodia were a threat to China because they represented a continuation of Soviet efforts to ‘encircle’ his country going back to the Khrushchev and Brezhnev eras” (Solomon 2002, 11, fn 4).

In order to counter the Vietnamese presence in Cambodia, China openly supported the Khmer Rouge. In 1984, Xiaoping stated “I do not understand why some people want to remove Pol Pot... it is true that he made some mistakes in the past but now he is leading the fight against the Vietnamese aggressors” (cited in Kiernan 2002, 488). Throughout the 1980s, on a yearly base, China supplied the Khmer Rouge with 100 million dollars in weapons (Kiernan 2002, 488).

The US involvement in Indochina during the Sino-Soviet alliance in the 1950s was aimed at containing the spread of influence of communism. In the 1960s this policy resulted in a lengthy, costly and most

importantly unsuccessful attempt to hamper revolutionary nationalism under the communist banner in Vietnam and Cambodia. Between 1969 and 1973 the US extensively bombed Cambodia, hoping to cut off the North Vietnamese supply routes and contain the expansion of the Khmer communist forces (Bergquist 1998, 100). The US also provided 'active support' to Lon Nol in overthrowing Sihanouk, whose foreign policy of neutrality the US perceived as "insufficiently supportive of US interests" (Bergquist 1998, 100). However, after the Sino-Soviet split, in 1972 Washington found "a common cause with China in shared opposition to the expansionist Soviet Union and its allies" (Solomon 2002, 12). In 1975, during a visit to Indonesia, President Ford announced that "despite the severe setback of Vietnam... the United States intends to continue a strong interest in and influence in the Pacific, South East Asia and Asia. As a whole we hope to expand this influence" (cited in Kernan 2002, 487). This claim was not aimed at China, because during the same visit Kissinger added, "we believe that China does not have expansionist aims now... Their first concern is the Soviet Union and their second Vietnam... the Chinese want to use Cambodia to balance off Vietnam... we don't like Cambodia, for the government in many ways is worse than Vietnam, but we would like it to be independent. We don't discourage Thailand and China from drawing closer to Cambodia" (cited in Kiernan 2002, 487). The US 'winked semipublicly' (to use Brezinski's term) at the Chinese to aid the Khmer Rouge. In 1979 Kissinger revealed, "I encouraged the Chinese to support Pol Pot. Pol Pot was an abomination. We could never support him, but China could" (cited in Kiernan 2002, 487).

According to Kiernan, it was for "geopolitical reasons, while the Cambodian genocide progressed, [that] Washington, Beijing and Bangkok all supported the continued independent existence of the Khmer Rouge regime" (Kiernan 2002, 487). This common cause with China induced the US to promote the policies which internationally isolated the PRK after the overthrow of Pol Pot in 1979. They held on to Cambodia's seat in the UN, assigning it to the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea - thus absolving the Khmer Rouge for their genocidal regime (Ashley 1998, 17; Kiernan 2002, 488). Throughout the 1980s the US strongly opposed any effort to investigate the Khmer Rouge for their genocidal regime. The US Secretary of State Schultz even called "stupid" the Australian initiative for a dialogue over Cambodia,

and declined to support Australian Foreign Minister Hayden's proposal for an international tribunal (Kiernan 2002, 489). He even stressed his opposition of conducting peace talks which would include Vietnam, warning the neighboring states "to be extremely cautious in formulating peace proposals for Kampuchea because Vietnam might one day accept them" (cited in Kiernan 2002, 489). Even the new administration, under President Bush, had no problems with the Khmer Rouge, and actually proposed that they get included in the future government of Cambodia (Kiernan 2002, 489). Together with China, the US sponsored the two smaller anti-Vietnamese Khmer resistance movements led by Prince Sihanouk and Son Sann. At the same time, it did not object Beijing's support of the Khmer Rouge, as both countries were "determined to prevent Hanoi from consolidating its client government in Phnom Penh led by a former Khmer Rouge commander Hun Sen" (Solomon 2012, 12).

The combination of such different positions resulted in a clear stalemate. On the one side China, supported by the US, insisted that Vietnam immediately had to evacuate from Cambodia, on the other Vietnam, supported by the Soviet Union, asked for clear guarantees that Khmer Rouge play no role in the future governmental arrangements and that China abandons the policy of threats toward Hanoi. As noted by Gordon, "the involvement of the outside major powers, introduces to the Indochina conflict the classic formula for explosive international politics, in which external states often have a greater impact on developments than those directly involved" (Gordon 1986, 67). It was clear that the powerful outside power had both the leverage to guide the belligerents towards a mutually acceptable solution (as was hypothesized in H1) and a strong interest to achieve an outcome compatible with their strategic goals (as was hypothesized in H9).

6.3 Multiparty Mediation Process

6.3.1 Initial Lack of Cooperation Between Third Parties

Early contacts between Prince Sihanouk and Hun Sen took place already in December 1987. They met in Paris to discuss the possibility of formulating a power-sharing arrangement between the two non-communist movements and the Hun Sen regime. Although this had

a potential of ending the war, it was rejected by the US and China “on the ground that it excluded the Khmer Rouge and legitimized Vietnamese-backed regime already in power” (Chandler 1998, 19). It was obvious that any solution to the conflict would have to include all four Khmer factions. More importantly, any future negotiations had to tackle a number of questions that had to be compatible with major powers’ interests. These issues were: the withdrawal of the Vietnamese troops from Cambodia, demobilization of paramilitary forces, establishment of measures that would prevent potential retaliatory activities, and a formula for organizing the elections which would produce a legitimate and internationally recognized government (Chandler 1998, 19).

The importance of powerful outside actors was immediately evident during the first regional forum on Cambodia held in Jakarta in 1988. The meeting was attended by all Southeast Asian states, and only managed to produce the necessary guidelines for any future settlement (Ratner 1993, 5). The new talks were scheduled to take place in Paris, in a year, but this time with a direct involvement of major powers. As Meijer points out, from the beginning, the Paris agreements were worked out by foreign powers who exercised tight control over the factions and the form the final settlement would take (Chandler 1998, 19).

As previously explained, the US and China had a shared goal in opposing Vietnam’s occupation of Cambodia, while at the same time openly supporting different anti-Vietnamese factions in the country. The new Bush administration knew that an open support for the Khmer Rouge was a liability, so in an attempt to block the recognition of the Vietnamese installed government of Hun Sen, the US adopted a policy of supporting the Coalition Government (Sihanouk - Son Sann - Khmer Rouge) as the legitimate incumbent government in Cambodia (Solomon 2000, 20). As noted by Solomon, who was Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs and was to be appointed as an US envoy in the peace process, “the evolution of great power cooperation on a Cambodia settlement was complicated in early June 1989 by the violent events at Tiananmen Square... overnight our official contacts with China became a domestic political liability” (Solomon 2000, 20). These events sparked a vast amount of criticism of the Chinese government. In the days that followed, in an attempt to improve their international reputation, the Chinese became extremely sensitive about their continuing support for the Khmer Rouge. As Solomon points out,

“the criticism increased Beijing’s interest in a political settlement of the Cambodia conflict in a way that would distance China from Pol Pot and his movement. Nonetheless, China’s strategic objective remained consonant with that of the United States: to prevent Vietnam from establishing hegemony over all of Indochina” (Solomon 2000, 20-21). The looming convergence of interests between the US and China was pushing the mediation process to a direction which was unacceptable for Vietnam and its partners in Phnom Penh. Reflecting on the game theoretical model the peace process was at *point b*. Cooperative behavior - as illustrated in the model - was producing much higher payoffs to the Chinese, as all of their priorities and interests were promoted through the process.

The Paris Peace Conference was held in August 1989, and was attended by 18 countries and four Cambodian factions (Chandler 1998, 19). According to Solomon, the US “was not inclined to take the lead on Indochina issues”, it was rather inclined to support the French and Indonesians (that organized the conference) in their preparations (Solomon 2000, 21). For the Paris conference the US had a list of five goals that had to be included in the peace settlement: “an immediate ceasefire and the eventual termination of all foreign military assistance to the Khmer factions; the formation of an interim administration headed by Prince Sihanouk; the establishment of a process that would culminate in the internationally supervised election of a new constitutional government the voluntary return of the large Khmer refugee population in Thailand; and the creation of an international control mechanism to implement a settlement process monitored by the UN” (Solomon 2000, 24).

The Vietnamese were aiming at a much different solution. Solomon refers to this position as “a partial solution” to the Cambodian Conflict. The Vietnamese wanted “to limit the international involvement in a settlement to verification of the withdrawal of their troops, perhaps some oversight of an election, but no arrangement that would weaken the authority of their client regime” (Solomon 2000, 24).

The US and China proposed a ‘quadripartite’ government, which unequivocally meant a transfer of a quarter of Hun Sen’s power to the Khmer Rouge. Vietnam expressed its strong opposition to the inclusion of Khmer Rouge not only in the future governmental arrangement, but in the peace process itself. They were concerned that in case the Khmer

Rouge would get a role in the future power-sharing arrangement this could create a possibility for them to return to power and subsequently retaliate. Vietnamese Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach, stuck to the idea that “only Hun Sen government, intact had the power to prevent the dreaded Khmer Rouge from fighting their way back to power” (Solomon 2000, 25). In other words, Vietnam was quite opposed to the ‘quadripartite government’. Solomon points out that this position had “little resonance among the conference participants, who generally supported the view that the best way to constrain the Khmer Rouge was to give them some stake in a political process subject to international supervision” (Solomon 2000, 25). As Vietnam was not showing signs of cooperation, Hun Sen’s delegation continued requesting that the potential Vietnamese withdrawal be “linked to the guarantees of a non-return to power of the Khmer Rouge” (Chandler 1998, 19). As Chandler points out, “this was simply interpreted as political maneuvering on the part of the SoC [abbreviation for State of Cambodia] to stall the peace process” (Chandler 1998, 19).

According to Bert, China was not enthusiastic about the return to power of the Khmer Rouge however it used them as a bargaining chip, recognizing that “the Khmer Rouge was the only force in Cambodia capable of standing up to the government militarily, and it used the KR to achieve its objectives, either encouraging them with arms support or pressuring them to participate in negotiations” (Bert 1993, 329). Thus the main Chinese strategic interest was to have Cambodia free of Vietnamese influence, which was quite in line with US interests and those of the ASEAN countries (Bert 1993, 330). As noted by Kiernan, “China’s involvement brought Khmer Rouge protégés to center stage” (Kiernan 2002, 489). It was obvious that any agreement would require unanimity. With a veto power in their hands, the Khmer Rouge could both obstruct any compromise, and while stalling the negotiation, rearm and improve their military power. Kiernan shows Pol Pot’s briefings to his generals, where he indicated his intention to delay elections (which were one of the issues that were discussed in Paris) until his forces controlled the countryside: “the outside world keeps demanding a political end to the war in Kampuchea, I could end the war now if I wanted, because the outside world is waiting for me. But I am buying time to give you, comrades, the opportunity to carry out all the tasks. If it doesn’t end politically and ends militarily, that is good” (cited in Kiernan 2002,

489). Thus during the Paris talks, representatives of the Khmer Rouge insisted that their rule was not characterized by genocide, and indicated their support for a coalition government under Sihanouk as the only way for Cambodia to regain its sovereignty lost in a Vietnamese “colonial” rule through Hun Sen (Hampson and Zartman 2012, 6). Although, Vietnam was experiencing noticeable pressure, it still did not perceive any utility in accepting the terms proposed by the US and China. At the same time, the uncompromising position of China led the Khmer Rouge to assume also an uncompromising position. The unyielding positions between main sponsor states led the peace conference into failure as each of their client movements was unwilling to compromise. Such dynamics are in line with what was previously hypothesized in H4 - namely that in case mediators are unable to reach convergence of interests, the conflicting sides will be induced to defect from negotiations, making it more likely for the peace process to fail. In fact, in light of the imminent failure of the peace talks “on the ground in Cambodia, the Khmer Rouge, the Khmer People’s National Liberation Front (KPNLF), and Hun Sen’s State of Cambodia were launching new tests of military strength” (Solomon 2000, 31). Especially symptomatic was the lack of Vietnam’s convergence of interests with the rest of the mediating coalition - especially the US and China - which was driving the process into a deadlock (Solomon 2000, 84), as hypothesized in H2. At the same time, the Vietnamese unyielding position was creating lower payoffs for the Hun Sen government, as they were experiencing stronger pressure from the rest of the conference to accept the ‘quadripartite government’, which induced them to defect from the process, end soon after engage in belligerent activities against other Khmer factions, as hypothesized in H4.

However, a significant change took place when Moscow “delivered a secret warning to the Vietnamese that it would no longer subsidize Vietnam’s occupation of Cambodia and its tug-of-war with China” (Hampson and Zartman 2012, 5). Soon after that, Vietnam announced that it would withdraw its troops from Cambodia. This significant change in conflict dynamics was strongly related to an earlier larger geo-political shift in Moscow’s foreign policy that saw the advent of Gorbachev to power. Similar to the previously described case of Namibia, the new Gorbachev doctrine saw the developments in Southeast Asia as a chance in strengthening relations with China.

During a speech in Vladivostok in 1986, primarily aimed at the Chinese audience, Gorbachev pointed out that the Soviet Union should abandon the policy objective of being as strong as any possible coalition of states opposing it. It was an indication that the Soviet Union economically could not sustain the strategy of maintaining parity with the US, Europe, China and Japan combined (Nguyen 1993, 285). Thus he suggested a pact between two continental powers, united by their real or imagined grievances against the West, which Nguyen calls “Eastern Rapallo” (Nguyen 1993, 286). Gorbachev emphasized that both countries had similar priorities in improving their domestic economies and thus it would be of mutual benefit to mend their differences and engage in constructive economic relations (Shearman 1987, 1101). Knowing that the Soviet support of Vietnam had been perceived as a direct threat to Chinese interests, already in 1985 Gorbachev informed the General Secretary of the Vietnamese Communist Party, Le Duan that Moscow wished to see an improvement in Vietnam’s relations with China. Two years later, Duan’s replacement, Nguyen Van Linh, was informed that Moscow believed a solution to the Cambodian question rested in “national reconciliation and unification of all patriotic forces in Kampuchea” (Shearman 1987, 1101). Although important and novel, these early changes in Soviet positions did not generate sufficient pressure which in turn would provoke a change in Vietnam’s position. Nevertheless, Vietnam was slowly feeling isolated from the international community. The withdrawal of Vietnamese troops - promised to the Soviet Union - only aggravated the conflict between the government and insurgent forces. The resistance forces slowly gained ground from Hun Sen’s troops, putting significant pressure on the Vietnamese and Hun Sen to explore possibilities of a peaceful settlement. Vietnam announced its plans to withdraw troops from Cambodia already in April 1989. However the withdrawal was conducted in stages, as the last troops left the country only after the first Paris talks, in September 1989 (Ratner 1993, 5). However, in light of a waning Soviet willingness to support the Vietnamese policies in the region, and the high costs that the occupation was producing, the withdrawal paved the way for more substantial talks (Bert 1993). Such developments might provide important evidence in support of what was previously hypothesized in H6, as an increase in costs supporting the war might induce the defecting third-party to change its strategy and engage in a cooperative mediation effort to ma-

nage the conflict. This will be further analyzed in the rest of the case.

6.3.2 Convergence of Interests Between Third Parties

The United States became aware that a good way to detach various Khmer factions from their outside sources of dependence was by transferring the problem to an in-tune Security Council P-5 that could induce the warring parties to compromise. Solomon points out that “the Paris Conference had had an ambiguous outcome regarding a role for the United Nations in a peace process, some proposed it, a few opposed it” (Solomon 2000, 34). According to Hampson and Zartman (2012) the US had two reasons for transferring the problem to the UN. First of all, in case the peace process succeeded the US wanted to avoid being the sole responsible of Cambodia’s post-conflict reconstruction, so it wanted to see the financial burden shared with other countries. More importantly, “the only way to wean the various Cambodian factions from their regional and great power backers was through a concerted P5 team-based effort that would, in effect, force Cambodia’s factions to compromise and make concessions at the negotiating table” (Hampson and Zartman 2012, 6). The strongest opponents to this US position were Vietnam and the Hun Sen regime. In their eyes, a strong involvement of the UN would undermine Cambodian sovereignty. The only way to prevent the Khmer Rouge from retaliating, they argued, was to preserve the integrity and military capabilities of the current Hun Sen government.

The US initiated creating momentum among the five permanent members of the Security Council (P-5), and a framework for the future UN involvement in Cambodia was emerging. From January until August 1990, the P-5 held six rounds of talks. During the first session that took place in Paris, all participants unanimously accepted the US draft which indicated a need for an enhanced UN involvement, especially regarding the verification of the withdrawal of Vietnam’s forces, monitoring of the elections, assistance in the protection of human rights and a smooth repatriation of refugees (Solomon 2000, 40). However, this early convergence of interest also pointed out major obstacles for achieving a settlement. Among the most complex ones were the issues of security, in light of continuous fighting between various Khmer factions; transitional government until the elections could be organized; and

Cambodian sovereignty.

On the issue of security, the P-5 concurred “to stabilize a cease-fire, contending military factions should be put under the UN control in cantonments where they would be disarmed and eventually reorganized into a national army under the authority of the Cambodian government that would emerge from the elections” (Solomon 2000, 42). The problem of a provisional administration for the country was solved with the establishment of the Supreme National Council (SNC). On this matter the Chinese insisted that they would not support any settlement which would not prescribe an active role for the Khmer Rouge. The US was quite apprehensive of the future role of the Khmer Rouge - especially in light of an increasing public outrage of the US’s indirect support for the Khmer Rouge - as this would legitimize their past doings. The solution was in assigning “individuals representing the full range of Cambodian public opinion and deprived of any operational authority” to the SNC instead of organizations and movements (Solomon 2000, 42). Thus, while the Khmer Rouge would not be presented as a separate body, it would still have one of their officials as a full member of the Council. According to Solomon, “this gave the Chinese sufficient political leverage to “deliver” their client to the settlement” (Solomon 2000, 42). However, as the negotiations between the P-5 progressed, it became quite obvious that the Soviet Union and China were unable to find a mutually acceptable formula regarding the degree of UN involvement in implementing the peace agreement. On one side, the Soviets refused to accept any significant role for the UN, indicating respect for Cambodian sovereignty, which was an euphemism for the concern that a strong involvement could endanger government’s chances in the upcoming elections. On the other, the Chinese were asking for a complete disarmament of the government, claiming that such a move would serve the purpose of creating equal chances for everyone in the elections, while in reality Beijing was trying to weaken Hun Sen’s chances (Hampson and Zartman 2012, 7; Solomon 1999; Solomon 2000).

While the Soviet Union and China were struggling to find an agreement, the United States was experiencing a serious challenge on the domestic front. Solomon recounts that “during the fall of 1989, and into the spring of 1990, domestic political pressure in the United States had been building against any agreement that would seem to legitimize the Khmer Rouge by including their leadership in a settlement plan, much

less increase the party's chance of returning to power by some combination of military and political maneuvering" (Solomon 2000, 44). The strongest hit to the US position came in April 1990. Following a screening of a documentary on ABC news, which claimed that the US financial support intended for Prince Sihanouk was ending up in the hands of the Khmer Rouge, a bi-partisan group of US Congressmen wrote to the Secretary of State James Baker asking for a radical change in US foreign policy. They asked for an immediate termination of support for Prince Sihanouk and Khmer Rouge and a subsequent sift in preference towards Hun Sen and his pro-Vietnamese government. The letter stated that "China is the problem, not the solution in Cambodia" and that US policy "should be based, first and foremost, upon preventing the return to power of the Khmer Rouge" (Solomon 2000, 44-45). The Congressmen threatened that in case "the administration did not shift its approach to a Cambodian settlement away from Sihanouk's coalition, Congress would cut off all financial support for the noncommunist resistance - FUNCINPEC and the KPNLF" (Solomon 2000, 45).

This radical shift - also known as 'the Baker shift' - in the US' position was first announced to Soviets during the fifth P-5 session in Paris in July 1990. Baker stated that the US intended to withdraw its recognition of the representatives of Cambodia's coalition (that included Sihanouk and the Khmer Rouge) in the UN (Hampson and Zartman 2012, 8). He also indicated that the US was considering initiating consultations with the Vietnamese government and their partners in Cambodia (Solomon 2000, 46). The shift represented a 'political bombshell' for the negotiation process. It was clear that the US was about to switch sides and have policies much closer to the positions of Vietnam and the USSR.

China was very concerned that this change would cement Hun Sen's position and jeopardize the momentum that was already created in the peace process. Privately they even admitted that the 'Baker shift' caused grave confusion in Chinese leadership (Solomon 2000, 46). Thus the Chinese decided to push stronger for the achievement of an agreement within the P-5, as a way of keeping the Khmer Rouge involved in the political settlement (Solomon 2000, 46). Interestingly, reflecting on the game theoretical model, the Chinese choice to stay in the mediation process permitted the process to avoid a potential myopic equilibrium, and consequently move the mediation efforts into NME. Vietnam on

its part, apprehensive of the Soviet decision to improve its relations with China and stop supporting its cause in Cambodia, saw this as a chance to achieve a greater convergence of interests with the US. In light of the new policy priorities, the US officials openly indicated their readiness to improve bilateral relations with Hanoi, under the condition that they would accept an UN-managed settlement for Cambodia. Isolated Hanoi was also well aware that it had to “give up on Ho Chi Minh’s dream of an Indochina Federation... and to normalize relations with China on Beijing’s terms” (Solomon 2000, 78). As a result Hanoi became more inclined to compromise and to explore constructive ways to engage all of the Khmer factions in the future political processes. At the same time, China was careful not to make a move which would shift the blame of spoiling the process to them. For this reason authorities in Beijing decided to put pressure on the Khmer Rouge telling them to “stay on the course and reach a political settlement” (Hampson and Zartman 2012, 8).

On August 1990, at their sixth and last meeting in New York, all the members of the Security Council accepted a framework agreement that “formally recognized that there could not be a settlement without the participation of all factions and that the Khmer Rouge had to be included to avoid the continuation of the civil war” (Hampson and Zartman 2012, 8); that the UN would take over the role of a transitional government until the elections are organized; that Cambodia’s sovereignty would be ‘embodied’ in a Supreme National Council composed out of individuals, and that this body would not have any authority before the UN monitored elections would take place (Solomon 2000, 47). It was an unequivocal indication that all the major powers - the US, China and Russia (that represented Vietnam’s interests) - managed to achieve convergence of interests in solving the conflict. The process was now in *point c*, as each party evidently achieved less than what it initially aimed at, but more than what was gaining from non cooperative behavior. As Solomon pointed out, now the challenge was to “convince the conflicting parties to accept the settlement” (idem). These developments provide support for what was previously hypothesized in H3 and H4, as the mediators’ ability to achieve convergence of policy objectives among them, improved the chances of achieving success through mediation. Thus, as long as the mediators were unable to reach a convergence of interests, the peace process could not yield any results.

Once the P-5 plan became public, the Chinese Vice Foreign Minister visited Hanoi to convince Vietnamese colleagues to support the framework. According to Solomon, the initiative failed because the Vietnamese Foreign Minister Thach “gratuitously insulted the visiting Chinese envoy in an effort to keep the diplomacy deadlocked” (Solomon 2000, 74). After this incident, in September 1990, Chinese and Vietnamese officials started a series of secret bilateral negotiations in order to resolve their differences. As a result of these consultations, “extremely nationalistic” Thach was retired from his position in June 1991. Soon after that, Sino-Vietnamese relations “were fully normalized” (Solomon 2000, 75). Unfortunately, there are no public records of these meetings. However their frequency in a short period of time - according to Solomon (2000, 74, fn 53) there were four secret meetings from September 1990 until the spring of 1991 - was a clear indication of the two sides’ readiness to exit the lingering quagmire of their bilateral relations. Once reconciled, both sides exercised “irresistible pressure” on their Cambodian partners – Hun Sen for the Vietnamese and Khmer Rouge for the Chinese - to accept the compromises in the interest of the settlement (Solomon 2000, 78). In August 1991, it was clear that all parties accepted the proposed framework, moving the process to point (c) as indicated in the game theoretical model. As all major regional and global actors that were involved in the peace process showed intention of resolving their differences and exiting Indochina, the signing of a final settlement plan was a matter of days. In two months, specific details of the plan were discussed and the agreement was ratified in Paris on 23 October 1991.

As a direct participant in the peace process, Solomon points out that “it is clear that the parallel and mutually reinforcing reconciliations of 1991 between Beijing and Moscow, and Beijing and Hanoi, made possible the fundamental political deals that enabled the Perm Five’s peace plan for Cambodia to fall into place” (Solomon 2000, 78). Such developments provide support for H8, as the evident convergence of interests was a direct result of mediators’ ability to negotiate a solution amongst themselves. At the same time, as hypothesized in H1, the constructive role of China, Soviet Union and Vietnam in the multiparty mediation process was best observed in their ability to influence their client Khmer factions, and move them towards a mutually acceptable solution. However, this role was only fulfilled once the parties managed

to reach a convergence of interests, as hypothesized in H3. On the one side, the Sino-Soviet rapprochement that culminated with a P-5 agreement was a result of a major geo-political shift which was the advent of Gorbachev to power, indicating evidence to support hypothesis H5. On the other, the Soviet decision to stop financing the Vietnamese “tug of war” with China and change the strategies toward Beijing, offer evidence in support for H6. Similarly, the Sino-Vietnamese rapprochement was also a result of a geo-political change - Soviet waning influence induced Vietnam to seek partners in the US and China - and awareness that the costs of supporting the war through occupation were becoming too high, especially as the Soviets cut their financial support, which is evidence in support for H7.

The intra-P-5 negotiations that generated the convergence of interests, while conducted under the US leadership, benefited greatly from the legitimacy of the UN. In fact, the US used the legitimacy of the UN to guide the conflicting communist super-powers to an agreement. This was strongly in line with the effects hypothesized in H10. As hypothesized in H11c, the US was able to take the leadership role only once its goals were not jeopardizing those of the other P-5. In fact, the compromise solution that was achieved within the P-5 indicates that each side had to accept less than what they initially aimed, confirming the dynamics described in the model that a cooperative solution will still produce some costs.

