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The imperative of success: United Nations Peacekeeping in Cambodia (1991-1993)

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UNAMIC: The limits of good offices

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After the Paris Peace Agreements were signed on 23 October 1991, UNTAC was nowhere near ready to deploy to Cambodia. Whether the United Nations would play a role in Cambodia had remained undecided until June 1991, which explains in part why the UN had hardly done any advance planning for what turned out to be the most ambitious UN peacekeeping operation in the history of the organisation. As there were concerns about the fragility of the cease-fire and about the gap between the signing of the peace agreement and the arrival of UNTAC, the idea took shape to send a small interim mission to Cambodia, allowing the United Nations to mobilise the necessary funds and forces for UNTAC. Plans for such a mission were hastily approved, and only a week before the signing of the Paris Accords, the UN Secretary-General authorised the establishment of the United Nations Advance Mission in Cambodia (UNAMIC), which deployed to Cambodia in the second week of November.¹ UNAMIC consisted essentially of fifty Military Liaison Officers (MLOs) from twenty-three different countries, who like UN military observers (UNMOs) were unarmed and operated in small groups. But instead of merely observing the cease-fire and reporting violations, their mission in Cambodia was to actively assist the Cambodian factions in maintaining the cease-fire through facilitating liaison between them and resolving problems, a diplomatic activity commonly referred to as “good offices.”² Without the presence of any armed peacekeeping units, the fifty unarmed MLOs relied purely on diplomatic means to keep the peace in Cambodia. This chapter explores to what extent these diplomats in uniform succeeded in maintaining the cease-fire between the Cambodian factions.

Existing studies about the UN operation in Cambodia have mostly neglected UNAMIC and exclusively focussed on UNTAC. But the five-month period separating the signing of the Paris Peace Agreement and the arrival of UNTAC deserves more profound analysis because it constituted the first phase of the United Nations’ presence in Cambodia. Instead of rigidly separating UNAMIC and UNTAC as two missions, as is often done, the two acronyms should be considered as two parts of the same operation. Political scientist Lise Morjé Howard described UNAMIC as a “survey mission.”³ Although this was not the case, in practice Howard’s characterisation was correct because UNAMIC constituted an essential first UN presence that enabled the UN to measure the temperature, collect information and do reconnaissance work, which was all essential to make sure that UNTAC could make an efficient start. This chapter will show that the UN Secretariat, distracted by the crises in the former Yugoslavia and Somalia, failed to give serious attention to the situation in Cambodia, support the small UN presence adequately,

1 S/23097 Report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on Cambodia, 30 September 1991; United Nations Security Council Resolution 717 (1991), 16 October 1991, UNA, S-0994-0002-0002.

2 UNAMIC was not mandated to investigate alleged violations of the cease-fire. “UNAMIC, Notes for the guidance of military liaison officers on assignment, Office for Special Political Affairs/Field Operations Division, United Nations, New York, October 1991,” UNA, S-0994-0002-0002.

3 Lise Morjé Howard, *UN Peacekeeping in Civil Wars* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 145.

or take advantage of UNAMIC's survey capacities.

Already a year before the signing of the Paris Agreements, officer-scholar John Mackinlay argued in a piece for the *RUSI* journal that supervising a Cambodian peace settlement would be "an unusually hazardous task" for the United Nations, and made some sharp predictions about the challenges a UN force in Cambodia would be facing. First, he warned that there would never be enough time between the conclusion of the negotiations and the start of the peace process to organise and prepare an effective international force with an agreed *modus operandi*. Second, he foresaw that keeping the cease-fire would be particularly complex and failing to do so would have disastrous consequences for almost every other aspect of the settlement. Third, Mackinlay insisted that the effectiveness of the infantry battalions, particularly in the initial stages of the cease-fire and the dispersal of opposing forces, would be crucial.⁴ The United Nations fell short on all three points, and scholars have put much of the blame for the loss of Khmer Rouge cooperation on UNAMIC, arguing that it lacked the mandate, the means and the strength to maintain the cease-fire and uphold the Cambodian factions' confidence in the peace process.⁵ The dominant view is that the legitimacy and authority of the UN had begun to wane even before UNTAC deployed to Cambodia in March 1992 because the UN's performance was insufficient to satisfy the Khmer Rouge, prompting them to change their position and withdraw their consent and support.⁶ According to Lise Howard, it was UNAMIC's "organisational dysfunction" that strongly contributed to the loss of consent and cooperation from the Khmer Rouge, even before the main operation had begun.⁷ Historian John Connor has questioned the quality of UNAMIC's personnel and argued that they neglected to give the planning for UNTAC the priority it required, whereas Cambodia specialist Raoul Jennar has lauded their professionalism and achievements.⁸

This chapter demonstrates that the mentality and skill of UNAMIC's personnel was certainly not the problem, though the lack of staff and materiel certainly hindered the effectiveness of their work. Rather, the main reason for UNAMIC's inability to effectively keep the peace and prepare for the arrival of UNTAC was that it missed the two main requirements that had been defined by Secretary-General Pérez de Cuéllar for the mission to successfully perform its tasks: "the cooperation, at all times, of all the Cambodian parties" and "freedom of movement."⁹ The argument here is that, from the beginning, UNAMIC encountered serious problems with the Khmer Rouge who followed a deliberate strategy of using the peace agreement as a "weapon" to stonewall the UN's efforts. This means that Pol Pot's faction became a spoiler much earlier in the peace process than has been assumed by scholars, who generally situate the "withdrawal"

4 John Mackinlay, "A Role for the Peacekeeper in Cambodia," *RUSI Journal* (Autumn 1990): 26–30.

5 Doyle, *UNTAC's Civil Mandate*, 60; Schear, "Riding the Tiger," 154; Peou: *Conflict Neutralization*, 184, 201, 272; Ratner, *The New UN peacekeeping*, 167; Jarat Chopra, John Mackinlay and Lary Minear, *Report on the Cambodian Peace Process, Research Report no. 165* (Oslo: Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, February 1993), 18; Berry, *Cambodia – From Red to Blue*, 211; Findlay, *Cambodia*, 119; Horner and Connor, *The Good International Citizen*, 136–37; Wang, *Managing Arms in Peace Processes*, 15.

6 Michael Mersiaides, "Peacekeeping and legitimacy: lessons from Cambodia and Somalia," *International Peacekeeping* 12, no. 2 (2005): 210.

7 Morjé Howard, *UN Peacekeeping in Civil Wars*, 145–46.

8 Jennar, *Chroniques Cambodgiennes*, 299, 348, 349; Horner and Connor, *The Good International Citizen*, 137. Also see: Berry, *Cambodia – From Red to Blue*, 212.

9 S/23097 Report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on Cambodia, 30 September 1991, UNA, S-0994-0002-0002.

of the Khmer Rouge's cooperation and consent in June 1992.¹⁰ As will be argued, at the time, the disintegrating situation in Cambodia was insufficiently understood at UN headquarters in New York where minimum attention was given to this small interim mission. While the UN Security Council was holding its summit meeting on 31 January to discuss its more active role in maintaining world peace, and the UN Secretariat went through a thorough reorganisation to prepare itself to realise these ambitions, the UN's prestige project in Cambodia was already unravelling at a quick pace.

An improvised operation carried by Franco-Australian strategic competition

UNAMIC was a last-minute improvised operation. A diplomat involved in the development of the Paris Agreements told the *Far Eastern Economic Review* that UNAMIC "was only an afterthought when the peace accord was drawn up."¹¹ Since the United Nations was in a dire financial situation and already desperately looking for funds to finance UNTAC, it had reserved no budget to run UNAMIC. Two member states, France and Australia, jumped in and made the advance mission possible by making each a voluntary financial contribution of \$8 million to pay for the start-up costs.¹² Both Paris and Canberra also fully funded their own contingents, which formed the backbone of UNAMIC, receiving no reimbursement from the United Nations.¹³ Australia contributed thirty-seven army signallers who assured independent communications throughout Cambodia, which was essential to allow for the effective liaison among the Cambodian factions as well as with UNAMIC. France provided an air unit of four SA 330 Puma helicopters and one C-160 Transall transport plane with 111 personnel, which was indispensable to travel in a country where the roads were in a terrible shape.¹⁴ These early investments by Paris and Canberra reflected the commitment of both governments to the Cambodian peace process, but also demonstrated their ambition to take a leading role in UNTAC. Their donations to the UN were in that sense not for free. Aiming to gain the key position of UNTAC force commander as well as control over communications of the peacekeeping mission, the Australian Department of Defence aptly codenamed its generous contribution to UNAMIC "Operation Goodwill."¹⁵

Larger interests were at stake for Canberra and Paris where an important policy aim was to gain a strategic foothold in this isolated country that started to open up to the wider world. These French and Australian ambitions led to competition and caused tensions. Australia had a long-held and well-known ambition to lead the military component of UNTAC. In early 1989, when a peace agreement was still uncertain and far away, Australia already started planning for a contribution to a future UN peacekeeping operation in Cambodia, and lobbied in New York for the top military

10 Notable exceptions are Cambodia experts Ben Kiernan, Michael Vickery and Raoul Jennar who, at the time, accurately warned for the Khmer Rouge's intentions to subvert the Paris peace agreement. This chapter reinforces their argument.

11 Nate Thayer, "Unsettled land, UN's delayed arrival starts to undermine peace settlement," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 27 February 1992, 23.

12 Peou, *Conflict Neutralization*, 243.

13 Horner and Connor, *The Good International Citizen*, 107.

14 New-Zealand contributed 20 demining experts and Germany 6 military doctors. Berry, *Cambodia – From Red to Blue*, 207; Horner and Connor, *The Good International Citizen*, 113; Compte-rendu de la réunion du 22 octobre 1991 relative à la mission préparatoire des Nations Unies au Cambodge (MIPRENUC), Paris, 29 October, ADN, 521PO/2/27.

15 Horner and Connor, *The Good International Citizen*, 113.

position.¹⁶ In January 1991, ten months before the peace agreements were signed, Canberra officially earmarked the then major general John Sanderson as its candidate for the position of UNTAC's force commander.¹⁷ But as the signing of the Paris Accords drew closer, Canberra's ambitions were suddenly impeded by Paris that lobbied to make the Cambodian peacekeeping operation as francophone as possible, arguing that most of the Cambodian interlocutors spoke better French than English – which was true – and nominated Brigadier General Michel Loridon for the position of UNAMIC force commander (not yet for UNTAC).¹⁸ When Marrack Goulding unexpectedly – and contrary to UN usage – announced that the working language of UNAMIC would be French, he encountered much resistance from Australian officials who accused him of “colluding with the French.”¹⁹ Washington, carrying veto-power over the decision, supported Sanderson's candidacy and objected to the appointment of Loridon for two reasons. First, Australia had supported the American candidate for the directorship of the World Food Programme, and the US support for Sanderson was a favour in return.²⁰ Second, and much more fundamental, was the fact that John Bolton, the then US Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs, said he disapproved of permanent members of the Security Council commanding UN peacekeeping operations as this was contrary to the traditions of the United Nations.²¹ The issue was eventually resolved when Washington and Paris agreed to make Loridon force commander of UNAMIC and Sanderson of UNTAC, with Loridon becoming Sanderson's deputy when UNAMIC would transition into UNTAC.²² Awaiting his official appointment as UNTAC force commander, Sanderson was temporarily named “Military Advisor to the Secretary-General on Cambodia,” allowing him to become involved in the planning process for UNTAC.²³

On the diplomatic level, Paris and Canberra also competed for the largely symbolic first accreditation of their ambassadors to the Supreme National Council in Phnom Penh. Prince

16 Ibid., 81, 86, 102.

17 Frank Frost, *Engaging the neighbours: Australia and ASEAN since 1974* (Acton: ANU Press, 2016) 77; Berry, *Cambodia – From Red to Blue*, 224; Horner and Connor, *The Good International Citizen*, 101.

18 Cable French Ambassador Canberra to Paris, 7 November 1991, “Cambodge,” ADN, 10 POI/1 1308; Cable French Ambassador Washington to Paris, 30 October 1991, “Cambodge MIPRENUC et ARPONUC,” ADN, 10 POI/1 1308.

19 Goulding, *Peacemonger*, 252; Berry, *Cambodia – From Red to Blue*, 208.

20 Horner and Connor, *The Good International Citizen*, 116; Berry, *Cambodia – From Red to Blue*, 224.

21 Bolton was also against P5 members contributing infantry battalions to UN peacekeeping operations. He took the position that if there were to be a consensus about the participation of P5 member states in UN peacekeeping operations, they should all contribute evenly, but only with logistical support units, not infantry battalions. In theory, this would mean that if France would contribute an infantry battalion to UNTAC – as they were planning –, the United States would be compelled to do the same. But the prospect of deploying a battalion of American troops in Indochina was an unimaginable scenario. See: Defence attaché of the French embassy in Washington, DC to First Political Counsellor of the French permanent mission to the United Nations in New York, 21 November 1991, ADN, 10 POI/1 1308; Cable French Ambassador Canberra to Paris, 7 November 1991, “Cambodge,” ADN, 10 POI/1 1308.

22 Paris agreed to this as soon as it was given assurances that Sanderson mastered the French language at an acceptable level and was working to improve it even further. Canberra also pointed out to the French that Sanderson's deputy, Lieutenant Colonel Damien Healy had been specifically chosen because he had followed courses at the French *École de Guerre* in Paris. Cable French Ambassador Canberra to Paris, “relations entre la France et l'Australie à propos du Cambodge,” 20 December 1991, ADN, 10 POI/1 1308; Cable French Ambassador Washington, DC to Paris, 30 October 1991, “Cambodge MIPRENUC et ARPONUC,” ADN, 10 POI/1 1308; Cable French Ambassador Canberra to Paris, 7 November 1991, “Cambodge,” ADN, 10 POI/1 1308. Horner and Connor, *The Good International Citizen*, 117; “Rivalités entre Français et Anglo-Saxons: La petite guerre pour la paix au Cambodge,” *Le Monde*, 8 November 1991.

23 The quarrel between Washington, Canberra and Paris did not lead to a more fundamental debate about the question whether permanent members of the UN Security Council should be allowed to hold key positions in UN peacekeeping operations.

Sihanouk decided that French ambassador Philippe Coste would be the first to present his letters of credence, thus becoming the doyen of the diplomatic corps.²⁴ The designated Australian ambassador, Richard Butler, an activist against French nuclear tests in the South Pacific, was furious and refused to come to Phnom Penh. Another ambassador, John Holloway, was eventually sent to Cambodia to take his place.²⁵ The diplomatic honours may have been given to the French, but the position of UNTAC force commander was far more important in directing the peace operation in Cambodia, as would become clear a few months later.

The carefully planned Australian preparation for obtaining military command in Cambodia contrasted sharply with the improvisation of the French government that rather randomly and at the last-minute selected Loridon as its candidate. Loridon hardly had any time to prepare for his mission in Cambodia. He attended the Paris Peace Conference as an observer and received a short briefing in New York from the Ghanaese Major General Timothy Dibuama, who had been the Secretary-General's military advisor since 1977.²⁶ But the two generals would have a difficult working relationship, mostly because of the French-English language barrier, which remained an issue.²⁷ When Loridon disembarked at Phnom Penh Airport on 11 November he told a large crowd of journalists that he saw his mission as "a difficult gamble."²⁸

Ataul Karim, a seasoned diplomat from Bangladesh, was appointed as the civilian head of UNAMIC and in that capacity given the responsibility to maintain contact with the Cambodian factions' leaders, who seated in the Supreme National Council under the presidency of Prince Sihanouk. General Loridon was given the command over 170 military personnel. Of the fifty Military Liaison Officers, seventeen were stationed at UNAMIC headquarters in Phnom Penh and thirty-three deployed to six different locations around the country. Every team was generally composed of approximately six officers, and three Australian radio operators. Besides monitoring the cease-fire and assisting the factions to maintain it, the MLOs were also tasked to collect exact figures of the factions' troops, weapons and munitions, and chart their mine fields. In order to do this effectively, the liaison officers needed to build confidence with the factions and required full freedom of movement around the country. However, it quickly became clear that not all factions were committed to the peace process and that full freedom of movement and cooperation remained a delusion.

The delusion of Khmer Rouge cooperation

Immediately after UNAMIC's arrival, it became clear that the mutual distrust among the Cambodian factions remained immense. Although there was no more war in Cambodia, the

24 Cable French Ambassador Phnom Penh to Paris, 15 November 1991, "présentation de mes lettres de creance," ADN, 10 POI/1 1308; Author's interview with Philippe Coste, 1 February 2019, Paris, France.

25 Author's interview with Philippe Coste; Cable French Ambassador Canberra to Paris, 20 December 1991, "relations entre la France et l'Australie à propos du Cambodge," ADN, 10 POI/1 1308; Cable French Ambassador Canberra to Paris, 20 November 1991, "attitude de la presse de langue anglaise," ADN, 10 POI/1 1308; Cable French Ambassador Canberra, to Paris, 14 November 1991, "le commandant de la force des Nations Unies au Cambodge vu de Canberra," ADN, 10 POI/1 1308; Horner and Connor, *The Good International Citizen*, 119.

26 Coulon, *Soldiers of Diplomacy*, 13.

27 Author's interview with Michel Loridon 22–23 July 2018, France.

28 Michel Loridon, "Une bataille pour la paix," *Armées d'Aujourd'hui* 167 (November 1991): 18.

factions continued to jockey for position. Sihanouk and Hun Sen soon started to move towards each other again, as they had done in the preceding year. On 23 November, Sihanouk announced the formation of an alliance between the political party of the State of Cambodia (the Cambodian People's Party) and FUNCINPEC (the political party under the leadership of his son Prince Ranariddh). The two parties vowed to share power after the elections even if one of them would win an absolute majority. It was a shrewd political move that politically isolated the Khmer Rouge and Son Sann's KPNLF.²⁹

As one could expect, the return of the Khmer Rouge to Phnom Penh, for the first time since 1979, did not occur without emotion and upheaval. The Khmer Rouge delegation to the SNC resided in a highly secured compound next to the royal palace. Son Sen, commander-in-chief of the Khmer Rouge's armed forces, the National Army of Democratic Kampuchea (NADK), arrived on 17 November without incident. On 27 November, however, Khieu Samphan's return provoked a demonstration that got out of control when the crowd attacked and ransacked the Khmer Rouge's residence and assaulted Khieu Samphan, who only narrowly escaped from being lynched by the mob if it wasn't for his bodyguards and the SOC police who only intervened at the very last moment. Khieu Samphan declared with icy dignity that Hun Sen had not kept his word to guarantee his safety, and immediately escaped to the airport to catch a flight back to Bangkok. During the ransacking of the Khmer Rouge office, evidence was discovered of regular reports by Son Sen to Pol Pot, proving that the secretive figure was still in control behind the scenes.³⁰ The riot was clearly orchestrated by the Phnom Penh government but probably got out of hand as a result of genuine popular fury. Recovering from his unpleasant return to the Cambodian capital, Khieu Samphan released a statement from Bangkok in which he called for the immediate deployment of a battalion of 1,000 UN peacekeepers to provide security in Phnom Penh.³¹ Political scientist Sorpong Peou has argued that this moment was the beginning of the creation of the Khmer Rouge's feeling of "vulnerability and insecurity," which is considered by Peou as the main cause for their non-cooperation.³² But the argument that the Khmer Rouge felt threatened becomes much less convincing when taking into account that the other Cambodian factions were willing to reassure the Khmer Rouge, and repaired the escalated situation themselves by quickly taking confidence building measures. Hun Sen apologised, spoke reconciliatory words and took responsibility for the incident.³³ On 3 December, the four factions met together with the representatives of the P5 and the UN in the Thai city of Pattaya, where agreement was found on a series of extra security measures for the Khmer Rouge in Phnom Penh. Two days later, still in Pattaya, Prince Sihanouk further eased tensions by calling off the alliance between FUNCINPEC and his political party, and guaranteed that they would not form a government before the UNTAC-organised elections.³⁴

For a brief moment, the situation remained hopeful as the Khmer Rouge made a statement

29 Lizée, *Peace Power and Resistance in Cambodia*, 99–100; Jennar, *Croniques Cambodgiennes*, 257–58.

30 Jennar, *Croniques Cambodgiennes*, 214.

31 Cable Karim to Akashi, Goulding and Ahmed, 14 January 1992, UNA, S-0795-0040-0002; Cable French Ambassador Phnom Penh to Paris, 27 November 1991, "les Khmers Rouges obligés de quitter Phnom-Penh," ADN, 10 POI/1 1308; Statement by Khieu Samphan, President of the Democratic Kampuchea party on who have tried to sabotage the SNC and the Paris Agreement, 25 December 1991, UNA, S-0993-0005-0001.

32 Peou, *Conflict Neutralization*, 183.

33 Brown, "Cambodia in 1991: An Uncertain Peace," 95; Klintworth, "Cambodia 1992: Hopes Fading," 115.

34 Jennar, *Croniques Cambodgiennes*, 214; Lizée, *Peace Power and Resistance*, 99–100.

of goodwill and expressed their willingness to cooperate with UNAMIC. By 22 December, all factions had received a team of UNAMIC liaison officers at their headquarters, including the fake headquarters of the Khmer Rouge in Pailin, a small Khmer Rouge-controlled town in a gem-mining area situated near the Thai border.³⁵ The real headquarters, a compound called “Office 87,” was located a few kilometres inside Thailand near the city of Trat, to which access was controlled by Thai army units.³⁶ After Karim and Loridon had travelled to Pailin to inspect the installation of the UNAMIC MLO team in a building opposite the Khmer Rouge “headquarters,” Karim cabled to New York that the local Khmer Rouge commander was “very cooperative” and that the discussions over lunch were held “in a very cordial atmosphere.” Given the fact that agreement was reached on all points of discussion, Karim optimistically reported his belief that the Khmer Rouge was “trying to demonstrate their sincerity with regard to the implementation of the agreement.”³⁷ But Karim’s optimism was purely based on the Khmer Rouge’s promises, which soon proved to have been premature.

There was a strong discrepancy between what the Khmer Rouge were promising and what they were actually delivering. Khmer Rouge officers might declare their commitment to the peace agreements, but it soon became clear that they failed to provide UNAMIC with a central precondition: full freedom of movement. Loridon planned to visit Pailin again on 24 December, to discuss with his liaison team there and urge the Khmer Rouge to send a military representative to Phnom Penh to participate in the meeting of the Mixed Military Working Group (MMWG). The Khmer Rouge were the only faction that had failed to send an officer with the rank of brigadier general to this consultative body in which military representatives of all factions were meant to discuss the observance of a cease-fire and exchange information about their troops’ numbers and locations.³⁸ While Loridon made an official request four days in advance to land with a helicopter in Pailin and meet with a Khmer Rouge representative, the Khmer Rouge disrespected UNAMIC’s right to freedom of movement by refusing the permission. A week later, Loridon avoided another refusal of his travel clearance by informing the Khmer Rouge about his arrival only one hour in advance. After landing in Pailin, a Khmer Rouge general made it clear that the UNAMIC commander was not welcome. It was also established that the MLOs in Pailin were severely restricted in their freedom of movement, notwithstanding the Khmer Rouge’s earlier declarations of cooperation.³⁹ “We have no freedom. The desire for cooperation is not there at the moment,” the liaison officer in charge, Lieutenant Colonel Rakesh Malik from India, told a journalist.⁴⁰ His Irish colleague, Commandant Sean O’Meara, recalled that they were not allowed

35 The six MLOs in Pailin were led by Lieutenant Colonel Malik from India. In the KPNLF headquarters in Banteay Meanrith were five MLOs commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Esteves from Argentina. The ANKI headquarters in Phum Ku had six MLOs commanded by Major Filler from the United Kingdom. The MLO team in Battambang was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Khamran from Pakistan, and the one in Siem Reap by Major Delius from the United Kingdom, the one in Phnom Penh by Lieutenant Colonel Bczyk from Poland.

36 David P. Chandler, *Brother Number One: A political Biography of Pol Pot* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), 181–82; William Shawcross, *Deliver Us from Evil: Warlords & Peacekeepers in a World of Endless Conflict* (London: Bloomsbury, 2002), 39.

37 Cable Karim to Ahmed and Goulding, 19 December 1991, “UNAMIC,” UNA, S-0995-0001-0004.

38 “UNAMIC, Notes for the guidance of military liaison officers on assignment,” Office for Special Political Affairs/Field Operations Division, United Nations, New York, October 1991.” UNNAY, S-0994-0002-0002.

39 Memorandum by Loridon, “bilan des actions de rétention de la part du NADK,” UNA, S-0994-0001-0001; Author’s interview with Michel Loridon.

40 Lindsay Murdoch, “A Khmer Rouge Renegade Puts Cambodia Peace Plan At Risk,” *The Age*, 6 March 1992.

any more than 300 metres from their building, and any ideas about ventures around the area were quickly dispelled.⁴¹ They were to be escorted in all areas they wished to visit, and talking to the local population was forbidden. Although the UN officers protested against this situation, they were told that these rules were for their own “security” since there were “strange men in the forest.” But the UN officers’ subsequent observations for any strange men proved fruitless.⁴² Loridon, who had spent the night in the building with his MLO team, wanted to experience the Khmer Rouge obstruction for himself and invited Major Eric Debontridder, a Belgian MLO in Pailin, to go for a morning run together. This time, the Khmer Rouge soldiers did not stop the two officers, but only followed them. This was an important experience for Loridon because it convinced him that the Khmer Rouge were bluffing and that the UN should be determined in exercising its right to freedom of movement.⁴³ Despite several attempts to communicate with the Khmer Rouge, no dialogue could be established throughout Loridon’s two-day stay in Pailin.⁴⁴ The consequence was that the first meeting of the Mixed Military Working Group on 28 December 1991 was held without a Khmer Rouge military representative. They did send a diplomat, Ambassador Mak Ben, who confirmed his commitment to respect the cease-fire and promised UNAMIC absolute freedom of movement.⁴⁵ On the ground however, nothing changed, whereupon Loridon informed New York that “the civil authorities of the Khmer Rouge try to make us believe that their faction plays the game, whereas the military doesn’t want to.”⁴⁶

The complete lack of Khmer Rouge cooperation was confirmed when Loridon met with Son Sen on 10 January. The Khmer Rouge commander-in-chief refused to give any guarantees for freedom of movement for the reason that he could not vouch for the UN officers’ safety in the Khmer Rouge-controlled territories. Moreover, he argued, the MLOs did not require full freedom of movement as their mission consisted only of being in touch with the Khmer Rouge headquarters in Pailin and nothing more.⁴⁷ The problem was that UNAMIC was not mentioned in the Paris Peace Agreement, and the Khmer Rouge used this to their advantage. Son Sen told Loridon that the cease-fire was purely symbolic until UNTAC arrived to supervise it.⁴⁸ While the NADK commander had made his position clear to Loridon, to the outside world he kept up the appearance of cooperation. After the meeting, he declared to journalists that he had “pledged full cooperation with UNAMIC.”⁴⁹ This was simply not true, and Loridon reported to New York that it was clear to him that the Khmer Rouge were dragging their feet.⁵⁰ Karim also informed Goulding about the “changing posture” of the Khmer Rouge and that a “somewhat gloomy scenario” was emerging.⁵¹

41 Sean O’Meara, “Keeping the peace a Cambodian diary Dec. 1991–June 1993,” *An Cosantóir – The Defence Forces Magazine* 52, no. 10 (October 1992): 34.

42 O’Meara, “Keeping the peace a Cambodian diary,” 34.

43 Author’s interview with Michel Loridon; Author’s interview with F. Motmans and E. Debontridder.

44 Memorandum by Loridon, “bilan des actions de rétention de la part du NADK,” UNA, S-0994-0001-0001; Author’s interview with Michel Loridon.

45 Press release UNAMIC “First Meeting of the Mixed Military Working group,” 28 December 1991, UNA, S-0993-0004-0001.

46 Cable Loridon to Goulding, 8 January 1992, “Violations du cessez le feu,” UNA, S-0995-0001-0004.

47 Cable Karim to Akashi and Ahmed, 14 January 1992, UNA, S-0795-0040-0002.

48 Berry, *Cambodia – From Red to Blue*, 210. No further indication of used source is given by the author.

49 “U.N. military chief meets Khmer Rouge leader,” *Reuters*, 12 January 1992.

50 Memorandum by Loridon, “bilan des actions de rétention de la part du NADK,” UNA, S-0994-0001-0001.

51 Cable Karim to Akashi, Ahmed and Goulding, 14 January 1992, UNA, S-0795-0040-0002.

Support from New York does not match the needs on the ground

UNAMIC was clearly not on the priority list at UN headquarters in New York, which meant that it was unable to provide the mission with crucial support and exploit momentum. Although the other three Cambodian factions started to lose their patience with the evasive Khmer Rouge attitude, they were nonetheless prepared to continue to build confidence by giving unanimous support to a Khmer Rouge proposal to send military representatives of the four factions to all the UNAMIC positions in the country, and to deploy, in addition to the already existing UNAMIC outposts in the country, eight additional UNAMIC liaison teams to a selection of new locations in the country.⁵² The Khmer Rouge wanted UNAMIC to concentrate on the eastern border with Vietnam, in order to improve the control and verification of foreign forces in Cambodia.⁵³ Despite the fact that it was clear that this proposal served the Khmer Rouge's interests, because all the proposed additional locations were in SOC-controlled areas and none was in their own zones, all the other factions agreed. Although UN officials at the time didn't know, this was the only moment throughout the entire peace operation that the factions unanimously agreed about an issue. This demonstrates that even the Phnom Penh government was willing to adopt a constructive attitude vis-à-vis the Khmer Rouge and build confidence. Loridon cabled Marrack Goulding that the deployment of these additional liaison teams was indeed "very desirable," and added a detailed estimation of what extra resources were needed in case New York approved of such an expansion.⁵⁴

Australian officials and scholars have viewed Loridon's immediate approval of the Khmer Rouge proposals as part of a French plot to retain the military command in Cambodia by expanding UNAMIC to such an extent that the deployment of UNTAC would become unnecessary.⁵⁵ It seems more convincing though that Loridon wanted to exploit an early consensus among the Cambodian factions and demonstrate the UN's neutrality and goodwill to the Khmer Rouge. The expansion of the small advance mission with additional MLO teams would allow UNAMIC to rapidly expand the UN presence in the Cambodian provinces, extend its mobility and increase its ability to effectively maintain the cease-fire. The positive impact of the military liaison teams had

52 Cable Loridon to Goulding, "Compte rendu de la 2eme réunion du GTMM," 2 January 1992, UNA, S-0993-0004-0001; Letter Son Sen to Karim, 28 December 1991, UNA, S-0993-0005-0001. These locations were Kompong Som, Kampot, Takeo, Kompong Thom, Preah Vihear, Kompong Cham, Kratie and Stung Treng.

53 Statement by Khieu Samphan, President of the Democratic Kampuchea party on who have tried to sabotage the SNC and the Paris Agreement, 25 December 1991, UNA, S-0993-0005-0001; Letter Son Sen to Karim, 28 December 1991, UNA, S-0993-0005-00001.

54 Loridon asked for three extra staff officers, forty additional liaison officers, twenty-four communication personnel, twenty vehicles, two extra helicopters and one additional transport plane. Cable Loridon to Goulding, "Compte rendu de la 2eme réunion du GTMM," 2 January 1992, UNA, S-0993-0004-0001.

55 Horner and Connor, *The Good International Citizen*, 129–30, 149. This Australian suspicion towards the French general's intentions was reinforced by the belief that, according to their information, Loridon had very recently been promoted to "major general," which was also interpreted as a strategic promotion in order to improve France's position to obtain the UNTAC military command. In reality, Loridon was never promoted to "major general" before or while serving in Cambodia, which would have been difficult since this rank does not exist in the French army. As UNAMIC-commander and throughout UNTAC, Loridon was *général de brigade*, a rank he held since 1988, and which in France does not have one but two stars. There is not a one-star general rank in the French army. The rank of *général de brigade* is preceded by *colonel* and succeeded by *général de division*, which bears three stars and is the French equivalent to the NATO-rank of major general. Loridon would receive his third star, as planned, after he left Cambodia and started his new function in Germany as deputy of the French forces in Germany. In the French military, *major général* is not a rank but an appointment, carried out by a four-star general *général de corps d'armée*, the equivalent of a NATO lieutenant general, who is at the head of an army corps and thus assisting the Chief of the armed forces. John Connor makes the same mistake by indicating that Loridon's successor also held the rank of "major general." See: "Biographie du Général Loridon," ADN, 10 POI/1 1310; Author's interview with Michel Loridon.

been demonstrated by the fact that in the provinces of Siem Reap and Battambang the number of cease-fire violations had declined rapidly after MLO teams had been deployed to these areas, whereas the majority of the cease-fire violation took place in the regions where MLO teams were not yet stationed.⁵⁶

New York, however, was slow to respond to this development and unable to deliver. It took two weeks for the UN Secretariat to reply that it had decided against the expansion of UNAMIC out of fear that too much would be expected from the small advance mission.⁵⁷ The problem was that the Security Council had decided on 8 January to enlarge UNAMIC with a unit of 1,000 engineers and demining specialists. Goulding feared that the Security Council would not accept another expansion of UNAMIC's mandate so soon after.⁵⁸ Loridon strongly regretted New York's decision, which led to incomprehension among the Cambodian factions. Khieu Samphan said he did not understand why the Security Council had no difficulty in sending engineers to Cambodia but appeared unable to send extra liaison officers or gradually expand the presence of UN infantry units in Cambodia. He warned Karim that the situation was getting "more complicated" and that it might become worse if UNTAC forces would not be deployed soon.⁵⁹ But the UN Secretariat was not on top of the situation in Cambodia. The twelve-hour time difference between New York and Phnom Penh and the communication problems between Dibuma and Loridon made the decision-making processes even more difficult.⁶⁰ UNAMIC suffered from a lack of autonomy as practically all important decisions had to be submitted by fax to New York for approval. While the reports from Cambodia were increasingly disconcerting, they were not alarming enough for Goulding to feel any urgency to take any radical decisions.

The feeling that New York did not fully appreciate the fragility of the situation in Cambodia was shared by US Congressman Stephen Solarz – one of the conceptual architects of the UN peace operation in Cambodia – who after a visit to Cambodia in the first week of January shared his concerns about the degrading situation in a letter to the newly appointed UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. Solarz described the situation he had witnessed in Cambodia as "extremely delicate."⁶¹ He applauded "the valiant efforts" of UNAMIC that helped to restore calm in Cambodia, but also expressed his strong concern that the next explosion might destroy all hope for implementing the peace agreement.⁶² The question is to what extent Solarz' alarming message got through at the UN Secretariat in New York, which was simply overwhelmed. "[W]e are drowning," Goulding wrote in his diary in mid-1991, "The member states are piling on the

56 Cable Loridon to Goulding, 8 January 1992, "Violations du cessez le feu," UNA, S-0995-0001-0004.

57 Cable Goulding to Karim/Loridon, 15 January 1992, "Notes on the second meeting of MMWG," UNA, S-0993-0004-0001.

58 Ibid.

59 Cable Karim to Akashi and Ahmed, 14 January 1992, UNA, S-0795-0040-0002; Minutes of the 4th meeting of the Mixed Military Working Group, 24 January 1992, UNA, S-1854-0080-0006.

60 Cable Paris to New York, 13 May 1992, "L'adaptation des structures onusiennes actuelles face à une opération de maintien de la paix de grande envergure rend problématique la tenue des échéances prévues pour l'application du processus de paix," ADN, 10 POI/1 1308.

61 Letter Congressman (NY) Stephen Solarz to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, 3 January 1992, UNA, S-1085-0022-0001.

62 Ibid.; Sue Downie, "Solarz calls for UN action in Cambodia, future UNs role as peacemaker at stake," *The Nation*, 2 January 1992.

Secretariat tasks which we do not have the capability to carry out; and there is no leadership.”⁶³ Moreover, immediately after taking office, the new Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali ordered a thorough reorganisation of the UN Secretariat, and especially of the desks that were responsible for peacekeeping. Between 1984 and 1992, UN peacekeeping had fallen directly under the executive office of Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar. In late 1991, a special report on peacekeeping operations observed an alarming lack of clarity about who at the Secretariat was responsible for what with regard to peacekeeping. Having received an unprecedented mandate during the presidential level Security Council meeting in January 1992 to make the UN ready to manage the post-Cold War challenges, Boutros-Ghali decided to undertake a drastic reorganisation. He was influenced by the recommendations made by former Under-Secretary General for Special Political Affairs Sir Brian Urquhart, who had urged that the UN bureaucracy needed to be adapted to the new circumstances. In March 1992, Boutros-Ghali began a sweeping reform that eliminated entire departments and senior posts. He abolished Goulding’s Office for Special Political Affairs (OSPA) and created two new departments, one dedicated to the military aspects of peacekeeping, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), and the other to the political aspects, the Department of Political Affairs (DPA), a separation which Goulding believed to be a mistake because of the inherent political nature of UN peacekeeping. The reorganisation further increased the bureaucratic confusion and lack of coordination.⁶⁴ International relations scholar Herman Salton has argued, on the basis of exclusive access to Marrack Goulding’s private papers, that the creation of DPA and DPKO further increased the already existing bureaucratic confusion and lack of coordination in the UN Secretariat with regard to UN peacekeeping operations.⁶⁵

UNAMIC also struggled with a complete lack of administrative and logistic support. There was a shortage of vehicles, helicopters and maps.⁶⁶ Cambodia was competing for attention as the crisis in Yugoslavia dominated the world’s headlines in early 1992 and demanded much of the UN’s resources.⁶⁷ To this was added the problem that the United Nations was on the brink of insolvency because member states were lagging behind with their contributions. A consequence was that a budget for UNTAC had not yet been approved.⁶⁸ Many within the UN Secretariat felt that with Cambodia’s rainy season starting in May, the deployment of UNTAC should probably be postponed until November 1992, or even 1993.⁶⁹ The UN desperately needed money for the operation in Cambodia, and Boutros-Ghali believed that the best place to get it was Tokyo. On 9 January, he appointed the Japanese UN career diplomat, Yasushi Akashi, as his special representative for Cambodia. Akashi had been a UN civil servant since 1957. Before being asked for the job in Cambodia, Akashi had been Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs

63 Herman T. Salton, *Dangerous Diplomacy: Bureaucracy, Power Politics, and the Role of the UN Secretariat in Rwanda* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 185.

64 Salton, *Dangerous Diplomacy*, 133; Boutros-Ghali, *Unvanquished*, 15–16; Goulding, *Peacemonger*, 31, 247.

65 Salton, *Dangerous Diplomacy*, 130–34.

66 Cable French Ambassador Phnom Penh to Paris, 27 January 1992, “Activités militaires des Nations-Unies au Cambodge,” ADN, 10 POI/1 1310.

67 At the press conference on 20 February 1992, Akashi admitted that UNTAC was in competition with UNPROFOR because many of the same states were being asked to provide forces to both missions. Press Conference Akashi, 20 February 1992. Also see: Chopra et al., *Report on the Cambodian Peace Process*, 19. Also cited in: Findlay, *Cambodia*, 26.

68 “Khmers clamour for early arrival of UN peace units,” *Bangkok Post*, 4 January 1992.

69 Interview by James S. Sutterlin with Yasushi Akashi, Session II, 28 November 1997, New York, United States, Yale-UN Oral History Project, Dag Hammarskjöld Library, United Nations, New York.

since 1987. Despite his familiarity with disarmament, he had not been involved in the Cambodian peace process, nor did he have any specific experience with UN peacekeeping. The choice was clearly also motivated by the expectation that the appointment of a Japanese national might help to persuade Tokyo to make a considerable financial contribution to the UN operation. As Akashi was essentially picked for the cash he could bring with him, he was not immediately sent to Cambodia, but spent his first months as special representative looking for the funds needed to get UNTAC running as quickly as possible.⁷⁰

Glimmers of hope

Two months after its arrival, UNAMIC was already running behind schedule for the collection of the necessary data to make preparations for the deployment of UNTAC. This was mainly caused by the fact that the Mixed Military Working Group continued to be ineffective because of the absence of a Khmer Rouge military representative.⁷¹ On 16 January, the Khmer Rouge finally sent Major General Mao Savy to Phnom Penh to attend the meeting, who took a cooperative stance by pledging to respect the cease-fire.⁷² But a few days after the meeting, on 21 January, armed clashes erupted between Khmer Rouge forces (NADK) and Hun Sen's army (CPAF) in Kompong Thom province, some 125 kilometres north of Phnom Penh. The town, situated at an intersection of the main roads between Phnom Penh and Siem Reap, was of great strategic importance for communications and provisioning because it connected the northern and southern parts of the country. For the Khmer Rouge, the province was also of symbolic value because it was the birthplace of Pol Pot. The fighting in Kompong Thom resulted in the worst cease-fire violations since the signing of the peace agreements. At least twenty people were killed in the fighting and an estimated 10,000 people were forced to flee their homes.⁷³ Prince Sihanouk requested to deploy a UNAMIC liaison team to Kompong Thom in an effort to promote a local cease-fire. Without consulting New York, the decision was quickly made by UNAMIC's leadership to form a new team which was deployed to Kompong Thom within a few days.⁷⁴ This action immediately prompted Khmer Rouge-leader Son Sen to renew his proposal to send additional MLO teams to more locations in the eastern part of the country.⁷⁵ But New York again replied that it was inopportune for the Secretariat to request the Security Council to authorise additional personnel

70 Ratner, *The new UN peacekeeping*, 163; Interview by James S. Sutterlin with Rafeeuddin Ahmed; Cable French Ambassador Phnom Penh to Paris, 27 January 1992, "Entretien avec le représentant spécial du secrétaire général des Nations-Unies," ADN, 10 POI/1 1310.

71 Cable Loridon to Goulding, 8 January 1992, "Violations du cessez le feu," UNA, S-0995-0001-0004; "Military working group cancelled due to Khmer Rouge absence," *Agence France Presse (AFP)*, 8 January 1992.

72 Cable Loridon to Goulding, 17 January 1992, UNA, S-1854-0080-0006.

73 Nate Thayer, "Unsettled land, UN's delayed arrival starts to undermine peace settlement," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 27 February 1992, 26; Jennar, *Chroniques Cambodgiennes*, 215.

74 Initially there were only two liaison officers. A third MLO, however, needed to be deployed. Thus, due to urgency it was decided that Major Malcom McGouch from the Australian contingent be appointed as the third MLO and deployed to Kompong Thom. See: Interoffice message CCLO to CMLO, 9 March 1992, "Deployment of Maj Malcom McGouch to Kompong Thom," UNA, S-0994-0001-0001; Cable French Ambassador Phnom Penh to Paris, 3 February 1992, "Situation militaire au Cambodge," ADN, 10 POI/1 1310; Minutes of the 4th meeting of the Mixed Military Working Group, 24 January 1992, UNA, S-1854-0080-0006.

75 The eight newly proposed positions were Phnom Den (in Takeo province); Prek Chrey (in Kandal province); Ka-am Samnar (in Kandal province); Bavet (in Svay Rieng province); Krek (in Kompong Cham province); Snoul (in Kratie province); Dak Dam (in Mondol Kiri province); Bar Keo (in Rattanakiri province). Son Sen to Karim, 28 January 1992, UNA, S-0993-0004-0001.

and equipment for UNAMIC.⁷⁶

Despite these serious cease-fire violations, Mao Savy adopted a surprisingly constructive posture in the Mixed Military Working Group where the atmosphere remained cordial, with the Khmer Rouge general stating that he regretted the fighting and that he would instruct his forces to respect the cease-fire.⁷⁷ He also agreed to put the positions of the Khmer Rouge units on a map on the wall, as the generals from the other factions had already done. As this was the first concrete positive gesture by the Khmer Rouge for which everybody had been waiting, all the Cambodian and UN officers in the meeting room immediately stood up and spontaneously applauded.⁷⁸ Mao Savy further made the promise to go to Pailin and give orders to undo all the restrictions that had blocked UN officers so far and allow UNAMIC to conduct a reconnaissance in the Khmer Rouge-controlled zone to make preparations for UNTAC's arrival.⁷⁹ Another major development was that he agreed to welcome liaison officers from the other factions to Pailin.⁸⁰ Mao Savy's cooperative stance created a quasi-convivial atmosphere in the meetings which seemed to establish a certain measure of trust between the parties.⁸¹ Loridon, who grew carefully optimistic about the situation, shared with Goulding his expectation that UNAMIC should receive full freedom of movement soon.⁸² When Goulding suggested that a report could be sent to the Security Council in order to put some extra pressure on the Khmer Rouge, Loridon replied that he felt that patience was now required because he sensed that the Khmer Rouge were finally becoming more flexible.⁸³

In order to keep the constructive spirit among the Cambodian factions alive, UNAMIC officers took the initiative to organise a "Mixed Military Working Group Dinner" at the luxurious *Cambodiana* hotel in Phnom Penh. It was hoped that such an informal occasion, gathering the senior officers from all Cambodian factions and UN personnel, would help to facilitate dialogue and maintain the goodwill between the parties and the UN.⁸⁴ Some bureaucratic obstacles nonetheless needed to be surmounted because UN regulations did not allow for the reimbursement

76 Cable Goulding to Karim/Loridon: "Deployment of MLO teams to Kompong Thom," 28 January 1992

77 When Akashi shortly joined the meeting during his visit to Phnom Penh between 21 and 27 January, Loridon upliftingly said to the special representative that there was "great support and cooperation" and even "friendship" among the generals. Minutes of the 4th meeting of the Mixed Military Working Group, 24 January 1992, UNA, S-1854-0080-0006.

78 Minutes of the 4th meeting of the Mixed Military Working Group, 24 January 1992, UNA, S-1854-0080-0006; Author's interview with Michel Loridon.

79 Lt. Col. Russel Stuart, "MMWG update on preparation for UNTAC," 3 February 1992, "Deployment of military component UNTAC," UNA, S-0994-0002-0006; Cable Loridon to Goulding, 17 February 1992, "Situation au Cambodge," UNA, S-0995-0001-0004.

80 Lt. Col. Russel Stuart, "MMWG update on preparation for UNTAC," 3 February 1992, "Deployment of military component UNTAC," UNA, S-0994-0002-0006.

81 Minutes of the 5th meeting of the Mixed Military Working Group, 31 January 1992, UNA, S-1854-0080-0006; Mao Savy also stated to the press that the meeting had brought "big progress." Mark Dodd, "Rival factions agree to deploy in all zones," *Reuters*, 31 January 1992; Cable French Ambassador Phnom Penh to Paris, 3 February 1992, "Situation militaire au Cambodge," ADN, 10 POI/1 1 1310.

82 Cable Loridon to Goulding, 6 February 1992, "Deployment of military component UNTAC," UNA, S-0994-0002-0006.

83 "Telephone conversation between Marrack Goulding and General Michel Loridon," 7 February 1992 10:30, UNA, S-0994-0002-0001.

84 Internal message Loridon to Samuel Chao (Senior Administrative Officer), 14 February 1992, "Mixed Military Working Group Dinner," 14 February 1992, UNA, S-0995-0001-0008; Author's correspondence with Michel Loridon 1 July 2019; Lieutenant Colonel Z. Biernat, "Team Leaders' coordinating conference Friday 14 Feb 1992," UNA, S-0995-0001-0007; Interoffice message Loridon to Samuel Chao Senior (Administrative Officer), 14 February 1992, "Mixed Military Working Group Dinner," 14 February 1992, UNA, S-0995-0001-0008.

of such “hospitality expenses.”⁸⁵ But eventually, UNAMIC’s tight budget was spared the costs of the dinner, as a deterioration of the situation led to its cancellation.

Pol Pot’s strategy: using the Paris Peace Agreements as a weapon

The glimmers of hope that seemed to glow in the second half of January 1992 extinguished completely by the start of February. Mao Savy’s cooperative declarations might have led to a certain optimism within the ranks of UNAMIC, but ultimately, Pol Pot was not planning to cooperate in good faith with the United Nations, but rather use the peace agreements as a weapon. It quickly became clear that the Khmer Rouge were not delivering on their promises. Travel permissions for UNAMIC through Khmer Rouge-controlled parts of the country were suddenly withdrawn and reconnaissance teams were denied access.⁸⁶ To this was added that the Khmer Rouge were slow to deliver the liaison officers they had promised to the UNAMIC locations, nor had they arranged facilities for the reception of the other factions’ liaison officers in Pailin, as they had also promised. The night before the scheduled deployment of all the factions’ officers to the UNAMIC liaison teams, the Khmer Rouge suddenly announced that they were not yet ready to receive them, without indicating when they would be. Most worrying of all, however, was that General Mao Savy suddenly disappeared and would never be seen again.⁸⁷ As a consequence, there was no Khmer Rouge permanent military representation anymore in Phnom Penh, which resulted in a complete interruption of UNAMIC’s reconnaissance missions.

There is no doubt that the sudden change in the Khmer Rouge’s behaviour was the direct consequence of a decision made at the highest levels of the Khmer Rouge hierarchy. On 6 February 1992, the Khmer Rouge leadership held a meeting during which Pol Pot gave a long speech in which he laid out in detail the Khmer Rouge’s strategy for the transitional period.⁸⁸ From the minutes of this speech, which were only discovered and translated by UNTAC almost a year later, it becomes clear that Pol Pot was not interested in peace or national reconciliation. He rather made it clear that their struggle with the “Yuan” – a pejorative word for “Vietnamese” – and their puppet regime in Phnom Penh continued, though the fight was moving into a new dynamic

85 Interoffice message Samuel Chao to Loridon, 14 February 1992, “Mixed Military Working Group Dinner,” UNA, S-0995-0001-0008. Also see: “Rapport de fin de séminaire” UNA, S-0995-0001-0008.

86 On 12 February, a UNAMIC team was denied access to the Khmer Rouge cantonment site of Phum Ta Ngan, despite the fact that this had been agreed to in advance. Another MLO team did succeed to visit another cantonment site just south of Phum Beng, but the local Khmer Rouge commander who was supposed to be there did not show up with the necessary information.

87 Letter Loridon to Mao Savy, 14 February 1992, “Co-operation in Progression of the Peace Process,” UNA, S-0993-0005-0001; Cable Loridon to Goulding, 17 February 1992, “Situation au Cambodge,” UNA, S-0995-0001-0002.

88 The minutes were captured by UNTAC’s Information division via SOC-related sources. UNTAC’s Khmer speaking experts under the leadership of the American diplomat Timothy M. Carney were of the view that the speech represented the “authentic thinking of Pol Pot.” Journalist and historian Nayan Chanda, historian Michael Vickery, and Cambodian scholar Raoul Jennar presumed it was Pol Pot, whereas historian Ben Kiernan has referred to the documents as drafted by Ieng Sary, the former deputy prime minister of Democratic Kampuchea. It could, indeed, have been either one of them since the speaker stated: “according to my own experience negotiating with Le Duan in 1975.” In June 1975, Pol Pot and Ieng Sary visited Hanoi, and in August of the same year, Le Duan visited Phnom Penh. For the sake of clarity, it is here assumed that the speaker was indeed Pol Pot. See: Nayan Chanda, “Strained ties, Poor UN relations with Bangkok mar peace process,” *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 17 December 1992, 26; Vickery, *Cambodia: A Political Survey*, 11; Jennar, *Chroniques Cambodgiennes*, 216; Kiernan, “The Inclusion of the Khmer Rouge,” 233; Chanda, *Brother Enemy*, 14.

with more players involved and becoming less “military” and more “political and diplomatic.”⁸⁹ In these new circumstances, Pol Pot proposed to adopt the tried-and-tested strategy which the North Vietnamese had applied during their negotiations with the Americans in the early 1970s: “talking while fighting.” Pol Pot even referred to former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger’s memoirs to illustrate how successful Hanoi had been by following this strategy. Now they needed to demonstrate the same toughness with both Hun Sen, UNAMIC and UNTAC.⁹⁰

The Khmer Rouge leader emphasised that the Paris Peace Agreements were “the fruit of a struggle waged for 13 years” which they should now use as their “weapon” to defeat the enemy and liberate Cambodia.⁹¹ When accused by the United Nations of non-cooperation, they should just refer to the Paris Agreements. Very clear instructions were given in this regard by Pol Pot: “We must use the Agreements as a weapon which we cite. [. . .] If these guys say something that differs from the Agreements, then we say, sir, you are saying something that is outside of the Agreements, are we implementing the Agreements or not? [. . .] like when our comrades [meet] Lorida, and all we do is bring up the documents, he’s at a disadvantage vis-à-vis us.”⁹² Pol Pot clearly considered Lorida as a serious threat to his objectives, but one that would soon disappear given the apparent lack of support he enjoyed within the United Nations: “even their own people see that Lorida’s a scoundrel. So this guy’s not got us beat,” Pol Pot said.⁹³ The Khmer Rouge thus finetuned the Vietnamese strategy of “talking while fighting” by promising cooperation while not delivering on it.

Drawing on Pol Pot’s speech and interviews with Khmer Rouge leadership figures, such as Ieng Sary – known as “Brother Number Three” – after their defection in 1997, political scientist David Roberts has argued that the Khmer Rouge leadership had every intention of cooperating with UNTAC and to comply with the terms of the Paris Agreements, but that the delay of UNTAC’s arrival gave them reason to change their minds.⁹⁴ Roberts’ analysis is in line with Sorpong Peou’s thesis that the Khmer Rouge’s insecurity perception constituted the main reason to withdraw their cooperation.⁹⁵ Pol Pot indeed complained that it took too long for UNTAC to arrive in Cambodia and even suggested that delaying UNTAC might be a deliberate strategy by the United States and Vietnam to give their armies the time to prepare for a joint attack on the Khmer Rouge.⁹⁶ This paranoid and highly unrealistic theory seems to support Peou’s thesis that Pol Pot was very concerned about his security and perceived UNAMIC as unreliable. But this argument becomes less convincing when taking into account that Pol Pot clearly explained that his strategy was predicated on using the Paris Agreements to strengthen the Khmer Rouge’s own position and evade their obligations that were disadvantageous to them.

Pol Pot made it clear that he wanted UNTAC to come to Cambodia because UNAMIC

89 “Clarification of Certain Principles Views to Act as de Basis of Our Views and Stance, 6 February 1992,” see: cable Akashi to Goulding, 16 December 1992, “Minutes of DK meeting held in February 1992,” UNA, S-0794-0049-0001. (Pol Pot speech, 6 February 1992).

90 Pol Pot speech, 6 February 1992.

91 Ibid.

92 Ibid.

93 This analysis is also made by Vickery, *Cambodia: A Political Survey*, 10.

94 Roberts, *Political Transition*, 93–96.

95 Peou, *Conflict Neutralization*, 183, 196, 201.

96 Pol Pot speech, 6 February 1992.

did not immediately give him the advantages he expected to get from the Paris Agreements, which was the weakening of the State of Cambodia. Resuming attacks and denying UNAMIC freedom of movement were presented as deliberate measures to put extra pressure on the UN to speed up UNTAC's deployment: "if for example we take measures to prevent these guys from coming to Pailin whenever they like, even though Loridon is not pleased, this makes Akashi hasten to come."⁹⁷ But the Khmer Rouge's cease-fire violations should not merely be interpreted as simply a ploy to force UNTAC's arrival. Pol Pot also clearly pointed out that their objective was to reconquer and control two-thirds of the Cambodian villages before UNTAC deployed. The "military solution" was considered as the right one, especially because it was clear that UNAMIC didn't have "any muscle power" to counter it.⁹⁸ In sum, the Khmer Rouge's strategy was to use the Paris Agreements as a tool to weaken their opponent and reconquer, or "liberate," Cambodia. UNTAC's presence was required to set this strategy in motion, and because UNAMIC did not serve this goal, Pol Pot decided to stop all cooperation. The effects of this decision were immediately noticeable, particularly by the sudden disappearance of the relatively cooperative general Mao Savy, who in Pol Pot's view, was clearly getting too "cosy" with UNAMIC.⁹⁹

Red flags

UNAMIC officers immediately witnessed the sudden change in behaviour of the Khmer Rouge, but their alarm signals sent to New York were not given serious attention. On the morning of 14 February, Loridon received a message from the Khmer Rouge headquarters that Mao Savy was sick and could therefore not attend the Mixed Military Working Group which was scheduled on the same day. This was a very disturbing signal, especially because the day before, the Khmer Rouge had also failed to send a representative to what was to be the first meeting of the Local Mixed Military Working Group in the volatile province of Kompong Thom. Loridon summoned the Cambodian generals to meet in Phnom Penh within six hours, hoping this would force the Khmer Rouge to send a replacement. But no reply came, and the meeting took place without a Khmer Rouge general, leaving the urgent topic of the continuing cease-fire violations undiscussed.¹⁰⁰ Loridon sent a cable to Goulding summarising in detail all the demonstrations of uncooperative behaviour by Khmer Rouge. He concluded that UNAMIC had entered "a difficult phase," but nonetheless expressed the hope that the meetings of the Mixed Military Working Group and of the Supreme National Council could brighten things up in case the Khmer Rouge would attend. Loridon considered these meetings as a last chance to keep the peace process on track and indicated to Goulding that the time might have come to threaten the Khmer Rouge with more forceful measures if they maintained their uncooperative attitude:

"If [Khmer Rouge cooperation] will not come around, I wish that the Security Council and the Secretary-General take measures, one of these could be to threaten the Khmer Rouge with an armed intervention by

97 Ibid.

98 Pol Pot speech, 6 February 1992.

99 Ibid.

100 Cable Loridon to Goulding, 17 February 1992, "Situation au Cambodge," UNA, S-0995-0001-0004; Record of the 6th meeting of the MMWG, 14 February 1992, UNA, S-1854-0080-0006.

the international community for the non-respect and violation of the Paris Accords signed by this faction. The current situation cannot continue.”¹⁰¹

On the same day that Loridon sent his alarming red-flag message to Goulding, the UN Secretary-General received a personal letter from Khieu Samphan that aimed to legitimise the Khmer Rouge’s non-cooperation by creating the impression that they were the victims of UNTAC’s absence. Written in sophisticated and exquisitely polite French – to which Boutros-Ghali was susceptible – the Khmer Rouge president expressed his concern that the Paris Agreements were being transformed into an instrument to legalise the “Vietnamese occupation” of Cambodia. The fact that UNTAC had still not arrived in Cambodia, three months after the signing of the Paris Agreements had given Hun Sen the opportunity to launch military operations against the Khmer Rouge, Samphan argued, and urged the Secretary-General to accelerate the arrival of UNTAC so it could take care of what he stated as the Khmer Rouge’s two main concerns: the control and verification of the withdrawal of all categories of foreign forces and the disarmament of the factions’ armies. As long as these two points were not settled by the UN, “other problems could not be resolved.” To what extent the Secretary-General was informed about the fact that the Khmer Rouge were the ones who were responsible for the violation of the cease-fire and were actively thwarting UNAMIC’s efforts to make the necessary preparations for UNTAC’s arrival is not certain, but he might have been reassured by Samphan’s concluding statement reaffirming his “determination to firmly respect the Paris Accords of 23 October 1991.”¹⁰²

While the Khieu Samphan tried to give Boutros-Ghali the impression of being a reasonable party with reasonable concerns while maintaining a firm commitment to the peace process, in Cambodia, the Khmer Rouge continued to block every effort of the UN. Contrary to the best hopes of the UNAMIC leadership, the meeting of the Mixed Military Working Group on 20 February only confirmed that the Khmer Rouge had decided to adopt an obstructive stance. General Mao Savy was replaced as the new military representative by General Nuon Bunno, who was privy to Khieu Samphan and Pol Pot.¹⁰³ Whereas Mao Savy had at least pretended to cooperate, Nuon Bunno dropped any pretence of goodwill and made it clear that UN personnel would only receive full freedom of movement once UNTAC arrived.¹⁰⁴ “If UNTAC is here,” Nuon Bunno told Loridon, “you can travel anywhere you wish.”¹⁰⁵ He also refused to mark the Khmer Rouge minefields and to cooperate with the deployment of liaison officers from the other factions to the Khmer Rouge headquarters in Pailin, while repeating the request to deploy sixteen additional MLO teams to the eastern part of Cambodia that were under control of the State of Cambodia.¹⁰⁶ Loridon resisted: “General, if you really want reconciliation you must put your

101 Cable Loridon to Goulding, “Situation au Cambodge.”

102 Letter Khieu Samphan to Boutros Boutros-Ghali, 17 February 1992, UNA, S-0797-0013-0006.

103 He explained that his colleague was indisposed because of a severe fever, but this was clearly an excuse. Record of Mixed Military Working Group 7th meeting, 20 February 1992, UNA, S-0794-0012-0001.

104 The disappearance of Mao Savy and the replacement by the very uncooperative Nuon Bunno was clearly a direct consequence of the Khmer Rouge’s leadership meeting on 6 February, which circumstantially confirms the authenticity of the document that was captured and translated in December 1992.

105 Record of Mixed Military Working Group 7th meeting, 20 February 1992, UNA, S-0794-0012-0001.

106 Letter Nuon Bunno to Loridon, 17 February 1992, UNA, S-0797-0013-0006; Record of Mixed Military Working Group 7th meeting, 20 February 1992, UNA, S-0794-0012-0001.

officers in place as soon as possible and cooperate with the UN. Make some gestures and I promise that the other factions will not attack. I give you my word. [. . .] Have confidence in me and in the other factions [. . .] we are determined to make peace among you.”¹⁰⁷ But the incessant attempts by UNAMIC officers to persuade the Khmer Rouge general were to no avail. The meetings of the Mixed Military Working Group turned into a dialogue of the deaf in which the Khmer Rouge refused to cooperate with any UNAMIC initiative and defended their position by making continuous references to the Paris Agreements and calling for UNTAC’s immediate arrival, exactly as Pol Pot had instructed. This was also the case when Loridaon requested the factions’ agreement to allow reconnaissance flights over their territory to allow the Mekong Committee of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to make maps of Cambodia:

Loridaon [UNAMIC]:	“I would like to speak on the subject of the flights for the Mekong Committee project. Can you give permission for overflight where the Mekong Committee must do its work[?]”
Kruoch Yoeum [ANKI]:	“Yes.”
Phoeung Siphon [CPAF]:	“Yes.”
Hay Run Song [KPNLAF]:	“Yes.”
Nuon Bunno [NADK]:	“No, because it is contrary to the Paris Agreement. In the Paris Agreement there is no mention of the Mekong Committee. You may understand that there is some fighting and some shells might hit the planes or the helicopters. We do not have any objection if UNTAC is here to supervise the withdrawal of foreign forces from Cambodia and to create the atmosphere of neutrality in Cambodia.” ¹⁰⁸

With the exception of Pailin, the Khmer Rouge-controlled territory remained terra incognita for UN officers. Though declaring that they wanted UNTAC to arrive quickly, the Khmer Rouge obstructed UN officers in surveying future locations for the UNTAC infantry battalions as well as for the cantonment camps of demobilised Cambodian soldiers. Australian Lieutenant Colonel Russel Stuart, who was in charge of the reconnaissance parties, stressed to Nuon Bunno that “we no longer have time for delay. We require full cooperation. Time for talking about it is over and time for action is now.”¹⁰⁹ But the Khmer Rouge said they were “not ready to give full protection” to the UNAMIC reconnaissance parties.¹¹⁰ Loridaon started to lose his patience with the Khmer Rouge and shared his frustration with journalists: “It is no problem for the other three [factions] but the [Khmer Rouge] are not fully cooperative . . . I was very strong with them . . . but they were delaying, saying, ‘yes possibly, not now, maybe next week.’”¹¹¹

Despite Loridaon’s reports and public statements about the fact that the Khmer Rouge were

107 Record of Mixed Military Working Group 7th meeting, 20 February 1992, UNA, S-0794-0012-0001; Cable French Ambassador Phnom Penh to Paris, 23 March “Fonctionnement du groupe militaire mixte de travail,” ADN, 10 POI/1 1310.

108 Record of Mixed Military Working Group 7th meeting, 20 February 1992, UNA, S-0794-0012-0001.

109 Ibid.

110 Ibid.

111 “UN General Says Khmer Rouge Not Cooperating,” *Bangkok Post*, 21 February 1992.

endangering the peace process, New York remained unalerted. The problems with the Khmer Rouge, if at all recognised, were considered to be only temporarily given their promises to start cooperating after UNTAC's arrival. On 20 February, while Akashi presented the implementation plan for UNTAC at UN headquarters in New York, the special representative admitted to the press that there were still "certain problems regarding the freedom of movement," but added that he had seen "nothing to indicate that the Khmer Rouge did not want UNTAC to succeed."¹¹² The next day, Loridon sent a new distressing message to Goulding in which he made the correct observation that "manifestly, the [Khmer Rouge] military has received orders to win time and stonewall our actions."¹¹³ The French general added that he felt the time had come for the Security Council to put some pressure on the Khmer Rouge, as Goulding had suggested earlier.¹¹⁴ But the Under-Secretary-General did not agree that this was the right time for such action. Referring to Loridon's cables, Goulding indicated to Akashi: "we seem to have a problem here."¹¹⁵ For Goulding, the "problem" was not the non-cooperative attitude of the Khmer Rouge. It was Loridon, who, to his mind, was demonstrating "a certain impetuosity."¹¹⁶ His suggestion that the UN should perhaps consider to threaten the Khmer Rouge with an armed intervention had not landed well in his office where the UNAMIC commander seemed to have lost his credibility. Goulding felt that the French general's suggestions stemmed from his "lack of previous UN experience" and "his difficulty in coming to terms with our financial and logistic constraints."¹¹⁷ But given the fact that it was difficult to "straighten things out" at such a long distance, Goulding indicated to Akashi that the "problem" would be resolved automatically when General Sanderson would arrive in Phnom Penh. Goulding believed that the Secretary-General would appoint a general from "the Third World" as UNTAC's deputy force commander and that Loridon would soon be sent back to France.¹¹⁸ Pol Pot had thus correctly sensed that the French general enjoyed little support within the UN and that he would soon be replaced. However, neither Pol Pot nor Goulding had reckoned with the deal that had been struck behind the scenes between the United States and France about Loridon becoming deputy force commander, which meant they both would have to wait a little longer before their "problem" would be solved.

Waiting for UNTAC

The Khmer Rouge continued to make the promise that they would start cooperating once UNTAC arrived. When, during an official visit of Prince Sihanouk to Pailin, journalists had an opportunity to ask Son Sen why his party was not cooperating, the Khmer Rouge commander-in-chief simply replied: "Let's wait until UNTAC comes. Then they can go everywhere they want.

112 Press briefing by Special Representative on Cambodia, 20 February 1992, UNA, S-0797-0013-0006.

113 Cable Loridon to Goulding, 21 February 1992, "situation après la 7ème réunion GTMM du 20 février," UNA, S-0794-0012-0001.

114 Ibid.

115 Cable Goulding to Akashi, 24 February 1992, "Planning for UNTAC," UNA, S-0794-0012-0001.

116 Ibid.

117 Ibid. Goulding later described Loridon as a "difficult number." See: Interview by James S. Sutterlin with Marrack Goulding, 30 June 1998, Oxford, United Kingdom, Yale-UN Oral History Project, Dag Hammarskjöld Library, United Nations, New York.

118 Cable Goulding to Akashi, 24 February 1992, "Planning for UNTAC," UNA, S-0794-0012-0001.

We have nothing to conceal.”¹¹⁹ With the deployment of the first UNTAC troops only two weeks away, the UN Secretariat and the Security Council did not take any further action, probably believing that the Khmer Rouge would keep their word.¹²⁰

It took the wounding of a UNAMIC officer by Khmer Rouge bullets before New York began to realise that the situation in Cambodia was deteriorating. On 26 February 1992, Lieutenant Colonel Russell Stuart, Australia’s highest ranking officer in Cambodia, was hit several times while sitting next to the open door of a Puma helicopter flying at 100 metres altitude over the jungle in Kompong Thom province. Suddenly the helicopter was hit by a salvo of small arms fire, wounding Stuart. A team of *Médecins Sans Frontières* provided first aid to the Australian officer who was subsequently transported to Bangkok where he was operated and, eventually, fully recovered from his injuries.¹²¹ All the factions denied responsibility for the shooting and an investigation was launched by UNAMIC.¹²² The investigators concluded that soldiers belonging to the Khmer Rouge’s 616th division under command of the notorious one-legged general Ta Mok – also known as “the Butcher” – were responsible for the shooting of the UN helicopter while they were moving south to prepare an attack on Kompong Thom provincial town.¹²³ Though Khmer Rouge leaders in Phnom Penh continued to deny responsibility, Khmer Rouge soldiers on the ground in Kompong Thom actually admitted to UN officers that they had fired on the helicopter, using the rather implausible excuse that they thought the black-painted letters of “UN” stood for “Viet Nam.”¹²⁴ The helicopter shooting could have been avoided if the Khmer Rouge would have had a liaison officer in Kompong Thom, but the deployment of a Khmer Rouge officer had been obstructed for weeks by Nuon Bunno who insisted on his unrealistic demand to simultaneously deploy liaison officers to the SOC military headquarters in Battambang and Siem Reap, which simply went beyond UNAMIC’s logistic capacities. Although all other factions agreed with the deployment of the liaison teams in two shifts, Nuon Bunno refused to accept UNAMIC’s

119 Sutin Wannabovorn, “Khmer Rouge say Cambodia still at war,” *Reuters*, 27 February 1992; “Les Khmers rouges refusent toujours le libre accès de l’ONU dans leurs zones,” *Le Monde*, 29 February 1992.

120 Cable Goulding to Karim/Loridon, 4 March 1992, “Khmer Rouge,” UNA, S-0993-0005-00001.

121 Cable Loridon to Goulding, 2 March 1992, “Résultats de l’enquête du général Loridon, SMLO MIPRENUC au sujet de l’incident du 26 février 1992,” UNA, S-0797-0013-0006; “Bloody duels continue despite peace accord,” *Bangkok Post*, 27 February 1992; Author’s interview with F. Motmans and E. Debontridder. During the session of the MMWG on 20 February, Nuon Bunno had warned UNAMIC not to go to Anlong Veng. After the meeting, the Khmer Rouge representative had confidentially asked UNAMIC officers not to effectuate any reconnaissance missions in a triangle between Siem Reap and Anlong Veng, twenty kilometres north of Kraya, “for security reasons.” Being aware of the mounting tensions in the region and wondering about the actual control the Khmer Rouge military leadership had on its forces in this area, Loridon took this request seriously and drew a red line on the map which the helicopters were not allowed to cross as to avoid any incidents. During the reconnaissance flight to Kraya on the 26th, the helicopter crew had respected these flight restrictions.

122 “Australian commander wounded in Cambodia,” *Bangkok Post*, 27 February 1992; Mark Dodd, “UN general to grill Khmer Rouge chiefs,” *The Nation*, 28 February 1992; “Cambodia still at war: Khmer Rouge,” *The Canberra Times*, 29 February 1992; Record of Mixed Military Working Group Eight Meeting, Friday, 28 February 1992, UNA, S-0797-0013-0006.

123 Cable Loridon to Goulding, 2 March 1992, “Résultats de l’enquête,” UNA, S-0797-0013-0006.

124 Author’s interview with Fabien Motmans and Eric Debontridder.

helicopter shortage as a valid excuse.¹²⁵ With their forces preparing an offensive in Kompong Thom province, the Khmer Rouge had no interest in contributing to cease-fire talks in that area, let alone UN helicopters flying over the area that would spot their forces. The wounding of a senior UN officer in Cambodia was a wake-up call for New York. On 4 March, Goulding shared, for the first time, his concerns with the ambassadors of the P5 about a “growing pattern of Khmer Rouge non-cooperation with UNAMIC,” and asked for their advice.¹²⁶ All P5 members, with the exception of China, agreed that as soon as Akashi arrived in Cambodia the special representative should immediately put pressure on the Khmer Rouge.¹²⁷

Meanwhile, the Khmer Rouge continued to fight Hun Sen’s army and successfully gained ground. On 10 March, a force of 2,000 Khmer Rouge soldiers launched a coordinated attack in Kompong Thom province, conquering some territory, blowing up key bridges, and forcing another 2,500 people to flee their homes.¹²⁸ In Phnom Penh, Nuon Bunno declared that his forces were merely acting out of self-defence.¹²⁹ A last attempt was made by UNAMIC to organise cease-fire talks on the spot, but the Khmer Rouge did not send a representative and refused to order a stop to the fighting.¹³⁰ On the eve of the transition from UNAMIC into UNTAC, there was no cease-fire and not a grain of trust left among the Cambodian factions.¹³¹

Scholars have not fully grasped how serious the erosion of Khmer Rouge cooperation already was before UNTAC had even arrived in Cambodia. Lise Morjé Howard, for example, has stated that even after the attack on Khieu Samphan in late November 1991, the Khmer Rouge remained “full participants” in the peace process, and most other students of UNTAC maintain the same perception.¹³² It is true that Khmer Rouge leaders continued to proclaim their strict adherence to the Paris Agreements, but evidence shows that this was part of their strategy of creating the impression of cooperation, while in reality they continued to conquer territory and obstruct the UN’s efforts. This calls into question John Connor’s observation that UNAMIC failed to effectively pave the way for UNTAC because its mediocre personnel neglected to give the

125 UNAMIC did simply not have enough helicopters at its disposal to facilitate a simultaneous deployment. Prince Sihanouk and his entourage used 50 per cent of the UNAMIC’s helicopter capacity for flying around the country for visits. Loridon and Karim felt this was justified because they considered the prince to be of central importance to the peace process and national reconciliation. Loridon repeatedly requested New York and Paris to send several light helicopters of the French Gazelle type to Cambodia, which would limit the use of the much heavier Puma helicopters and make the management of the air assets easier. Paris subsequently offered the UN Secretariat a maximum of six Gazelle helicopters. But the UN Secretariat responded only in April that UNTAC did not need these helicopters, declined the offer and instead asked France to contribute another six Pumas. See: Record of Mixed Military Working Group Eight Meeting, Friday, 28 February 1992, UNA, S-0797-0013-0006; Cable Karim to Akashi, 25 March 1992, “Political situation in Cambodia,” UNA, S-0795-0043-0003; “Telephone conversation between Marrack Goulding and General Michel Loridon,” 7 February 1992 10:30, UNA, S-0994-0002-0001; Cable Loridon to Goulding, 17 February 1992, “Situation au Cambodge,” UNA, S-0995-0001-0004; “Verslag van Maj. Schuering van UNTAC contingent commanders conference van 6 t/m 8 april 1992 bij de VN te New York,” NIMH, UNTAC-099, file 25.

126 Cable Goulding to Karim/Loridon, 4 March 1992, “Khmer Rouge,” UNA, S-0993-0005-0001.

127 Ibid.

128 Cable Loridon to Goulding, 12 March 1992, “Situation at Kompong Thom,” UNA, S-0995-0001-0004.

129 Record of Mixed Military Working Group Emergency Meeting, 13 March 1992, UNA, S-1854-0080-0006.

130 Ben Kiernan “The Cambodian crisis,” 22; Cable Loridon to Goulding, 15 March 1992, “Situation au Cambodge,” UNA, S-0995-0001-0002; Cable Loridon to Goulding, 12 March 1992, “Situation at Kompong Thom,” UNA, S-0995-0001-0004; Record of Mixed Military Working Group Emergency Meeting, 13 March 1992, UNA, S-1854-0080-0006; “The Khmer Rouge refuses to order end to fighting,” *Bangkok Post*, 15 March 1992.

131 Cable Loridon to Goulding, 15 March 1992, “Situation au Cambodge,” UNA, S-0995-0001-0002.

132 Morjé Howard, *UN Peacekeeping in Civil Wars*, 146.

planning for UNTAC the priority it required.¹³³ First, “planning for UNTAC” was not a task that had been clearly spelled out in UNAMIC’s mandate, nor in Goulding’s official instructions.¹³⁴ The UN Secretariat in New York was responsible for formulating UNTAC’s implementation plan, of which a draft was only sent to UNAMIC on 3 February, providing Phnom Penh with the necessary information to begin making concrete preparations for UNTAC’s arrival.¹³⁵ But these efforts were severely obstructed by the sudden withdrawal of Khmer Rouge cooperation in the same week. To this must be added that because of miscommunication, the UN Secretariat promised but did not provide UNAMIC with additional staff officers to man a dedicated planning cell, further handicapping the UN’s ability to conduct planning activities.¹³⁶ Second, it would have been difficult for UNAMIC to have started much earlier with preparations because the Khmer Rouge were only properly represented in the Mixed Military Working Group from 16 January 1992 onwards.

UNAMIC’s Military Liaisons Officers seem to have done everything in their power with limited means and practically no support from New York. In his last cable to Goulding, Loridon emphasised “the quality, competence and devotion of the quasi-totality of the officers, NCO’s and soldiers” serving in UNAMIC.¹³⁷ Cambodia watcher Raoul Jennar also lauded “the pragmatism and ingenuity of Loridon and his men,” who, though unable to prevent cease-fire violations, nonetheless succeeded with very limited means to keep the situation from escalating into full conflict.¹³⁸ Jennar observed that under Loridon’s command, UNAMIC demonstrated a strong determination to achieve its objectives.¹³⁹ Loridon indeed believed that in the effort of persuading the Cambodian parties to cooperate and respect their commitments, willpower and determination were of vital importance. His last message to all UNAMIC personnel illustrates this: “together, we will put our experience and all our willpower to the service of general Sanderson, and we will

133 Horner and Connor, *The Good International Citizen*, 137.

134 Directive à l’intention de l’officier de liaison principal militaire de la MIPRENUC, UNA, S-0994-0002-0002. In the report by the Secretary-General to the Security Council, it was stated that the Chief Liaison Officer, Ataul Karim, “would have responsibility for liaison with the Supreme National Council on the preparations for the deployment of UNTAC and on other matters related to the role of the United Nations in the implementation of the Comprehensive Political Settlement Agreement.” S/23097 Report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on Cambodia, 30 September 1991, UNA, S-0994-0002-0002; Security Council resolutions 717 and 718 (1991), UN Digital Library. In the fringe of the Paris Peace Conference, during a UNAMIC-preparatory meeting, there was no mention of how UNAMIC should prepare for UNTAC. This would have been difficult to establish because no calendar for UNTAC had been determined yet or the reason that certain members of the Security Council were reluctant to accept that UNTAC would become too big of an operation, and that consultations about UNTAC’s calendar were planned to begin only in January 1992. See: *Compte-rendu de la réunion du 22 octobre 1991 relative à la mission préparatoire des Nations Unies au Cambodge (MIPRENUC)*, Paris, 29 October, ADN, 521PO/2/27. It was the draft report of the survey mission, which was released by Dibuma on 24 December 1991, that stated that “some of the military staff officers deployed in UNAMIC headquarters will carry out detailed planning in the field regarding the deployment of UNTAC.” See: “Report of the United Nations Military Survey Mission to Cambodia 17 November–16 December 1991, United Nations New York, 24 December 1991,” NIMH, UNTAC-099, file 13.

135 Lt. Col. Russel Stuart, “MMWG update on preparation for UNTAC,” 3 February 1992, “Deployment of military component UNTAC,” UNA, S-0994-0002-0006; Record of first coordinating UNTAC planning conference Monday 2 March 1992 1100–1210 hours Operations Room UNAMIC HQ, UNA, S-0994-0002-0009.

136 Note to the file by Hisako Shimura, 31 December 1992, UNA, S-1085-0022-0001; “Telephone conversation between Marrack Goulding and General Michel Loridon,” 7 February 1992, 10:30, UNA, S-0994-0002-0001.

137 Cable Loridon to Goulding, 15 March 1992, “Situation au Cambodge,” UNA, S-0995-0001-0004; Author’s interview with Michel Loridon.

138 Jennar, *Chroniques Cambodgiennes*, 271.

139 Ibid., 299, 348, 349.

help him with all our heart to pursue the actions that have been started so well by UNAMIC.”¹⁴⁰

Despite all efforts of UNAMIC personnel, their good offices proved insufficient to keep the cease-fire. The military officers were essentially diplomats in uniform, and it was the absence of a credible military UN force that failed to impress the Khmer Rouge, deter them from violating the cease-fire and convince them of the UN's capacity to act. UNAMIC was misled by the Khmer Rouge's promises of forthcoming cooperation, while concrete demonstrations of their good intentions failed to materialise. In February, it became clear to Loridon and his officers that the Khmer Rouge were deliberately stalling the UN's effort and taking advantage of UNAMIC's inability to deter them from ceasing territory. But New York was unwilling to accept the idea that its prestige project in Cambodia was already unravelling before the main force had arrived. Everybody clung to the hope that with the arrival of UNTAC, the Khmer Rouge would change their attitude and that the significant delays that had been incurred could be made up for.

140 Ordre du jour Loridon to UNAMIC staff, 14 March 1992, UNA, S-0993-0005-0001; Also see: Cable Loridon to Goulding, 15 March 1992, "Situation au Cambodge," UNA, S-0995-0001-0004.