

At the U.N.: everyone attacks Pol Pot's rule

From Jan. 11 to 15, the UN Security Council debated the issue of Cambodia. The United States and Great Britain, who over the past two years have repeatedly cited human rights and anti-terrorism arguments as a justification for foreign intervention into internal affairs of other sovereign nations, now balked at what they claimed were the historical complexities and ambiguities in the Cambodia situation — but condemned what they claimed was “outside” Vietnamese interference into Cambodia. In effect, the major nations of the West found themselves — from whatever motives — defending the interests of China and its client government.

The Soviet Union, Cuba, and Vietnam, however, noted nothing ambiguous in the abolition of the barbaric Pol Pot regime, whose history is acknowledged even by the most vehement supporters of Pol Pot's continued right to govern.

We reprint below excerpts from the speeches at the Jan. 11 Security Council session by the Vietnamese, Soviet, and Cuban delegates making their case against China and the former Pol Pot government and against the Chinese resolution to condemn Vietnam. Also excerpted are the counterarguments offered by the U.S. and Prince Sihanouk.

Vietnam, USSR, Cuba say Maoism is to blame

**Mr. Ha Van Lau, Vietnam:
Problem is Peking**

In order to draw a clear picture of the problem of Kampuchea, it is appropriate to make a clear distinction between two wars: one, the border war started by the Pol Pot-Ieng Sary clique against Vietnam, which the Vietnamese people have been forced to deal with, the other, the revolutionary war of the Kampuchean people against the dictatorial rule of the Pol Pot-Ieng Sary clique, which is an instrument in the hands of the reactionary ruling circles of Peking.

First of all, as regards the border war between Vietnam and Kampuchea, the Pol Pot-Ieng Sary clique started it very early, immediately after the liberation of Phnom Penh early in 1975. Confronted by that war, which had been imposed upon it, Vietnam clearly showed military restraint, and the entire world witnessed its persistent efforts to put an end to the conflict by peaceful negotiations.

On many occasions during the years 1976 and 1977 we proposed talks with the authorities in Kampuchea, who invariably categorically refused. And after waging that border war even more vigorously, the clique at the time in Phnom Penh unilaterally broke off diplomatic relations with Vietnam

on Dec. 31, 1977. In spite of that, the government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, sincerely trying to avoid a breakdown in diplomatic relations, in its declaration of Feb. 5, 1978 put forward a well-known proposal made up of three points to bring about a peaceful settlement of the conflict; that proposal was put forward again on April 10, 1978, and yet again on June 6, 1978. Regrettably, though, it always encountered the obstinate refusal of the Kampuchians.

Throughout that period, in various international bodies, the Vietnamese side showed the same restraint and continued to put forward proposals aimed at settling the conflict by peaceful negotiations. On Mar. 10, 1978, Mr. Pham Duong, Chargé d'Affaires of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam at the United Nations, spoke with Mr. Kurt Waldheim, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, in an effort to determine what measures the Security Council could take to provide a positive response to the three-point proposal put forward by Vietnam on Feb. 5, 1978. In reply to our representation, the Secretary-General said that he was of the opinion that it would be difficult to achieve unanimity in the Security Council on a decision of that kind. We then interpreted the thinking of the Secretary-General as being concerned with the opposition of China — and that interpretation has been borne out by events. Once again, in Nov. 1978, the Pol Pot-Ieng Sary clique objected to consideration of the problem of Kampuchea by the Security Council.

In July 1978, at the Conference of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Coordination Bureau of Nonaligned countries in Belgrade, Vietnam proposed that an appeal be made for a settlement of the conflict between Kampuchea and Vietnam by negotiations. Thereupon, on July 28, and then on July 29, 1978, the Yugoslav President of the Conference and the Sri Lanka President of the Nonaligned Movement asked Vietnam to withdraw its proposal following opposition from the Kampuchean side.

A number of countries, which have relations with both Vietnam and Kampuchea, frequently demonstrated their desire to help both sides to settle the conflict by negotiations, but the Kampuchean side always put forward unreasonable conditions to justify its refusal.

It is perfectly clear from the events of the past four years that while as Vietnam has, militarily speaking, shown restraint and persevered in its efforts to pursue peaceful negotiations, the Pol Pot-Ieng Sary clique had endeavored to pursue its war against Vietnam to the bitter end. One wonders: why has the Pol Pot-Ieng Sary clique acted in this way?

The truth is that the problem has its origin in the politics of the Peking authorities who are endeavoring to realize their aims of expansionism and hegemony as a great power in Southeast Asia. That policy is aimed at controlling the entire eastern sea, at pitting the three countries of Indochina against each other, and, at the same time, at using Chinese nationals and other pro-Chinese forces to intervene in the internal affairs of the Southeast Asian countries.

A Vietnam that is independent and master of its destiny seems, however, to be the greatest obstacle to this policy of Peking.

It is perfectly obvious that all these actions on the part of the Peking authorities have been coordinated according to a concerned plan aimed at weakening Vietnam and subjecting it to China's policies.

Like any other self-respecting country, Vietnam cannot accept such hostile maneuvers against its independence, its sovereignty and its territorial integrity, as well as against peace and stability in Southeast Asia.

That is the sacred right of self-defense of people faced with aggression. The slanderous allegations of the former Phnom Penh authorities, relating to the so-called aggression of Vietnam against Kampuchea and the alleged establishment of the Indochinese federation, were in reality made with the aim of camouflaging their crimes against the Vietnamese people, the Lao people and the Kampuchean people themselves.

I now turn to the revolutionary war of the Kampuchean people against the Pol Pot-Ieng Sary clique.

After their complete liberation, the people of Kampuchea might have enjoyed peace and prosperity as they stanch the wounds of war and set about the task of national reconstruction.

But the Pol Pot-Ieng Sary clique stripped the people of Kampuchea of all their rights, pursued inhumane policies, made that heroic people slaves and turned the entire country into an immense concentration camp: The towns were emptied of their inhabitants. The entire population of the country was treated like an enemy. They were registered under new names; they were categorized. All traditional links were disrupted: family ties, marital ties were all broken as new forced marriages were imposed. All freedoms and elementary rights were suppressed. There were no more markets, no more currency. All young people of 14 and 15 years of age had to enlist and were turned into professional killers. Women and children were murdered. Forced labor became the rule. There was famine, distress, and a lack of medicine and medical care, all on a very wide scale.

The society of Kampuchea became unique in the world and in history. It became living hell....

A new era is now dawning in Indochina. The Pol Pot-Teng Sary regime, a serious threat to the peace and stability of the area, has been abolished. The victorious National United Front for the National Salvation of Kampuchea has formed its new government, and has advocated building a truly independent and free Kampuchea, pursuing a foreign policy of peace, friendship and nonalignment, and of friendly cooperation with neighboring countries. This is a new factor which should benefit peace and stability in Southeast Asia.

In Southeast Asia, which has for many long years been suffering from instability because of numerous imperialist and colonialist acts of aggression, Vietnam is prepared to begin a new page of history in its relations with the countries of the area.

Mr. Troyanovsky, USSR:

The concepts of the Cultural Revolution

With support from outside, a narrow group of people usurped power in Kampuchea and deliberately placed the country in isolation to hide from the world the horrifying regime they had begun to implant in the country, converting Kampuchea into a bloody proving ground for barbarous experiments in accordance with the concepts of the notorious Cultural Revolution.

For some time the antipeople ruling clique managed to mislead world public opinion, and it had the temerity to describe

itself as democratic and even as a socialist state. But, in the final analysis, its secret crimes were exposed. The doings of the rulers of Kampuchea, which everyone knows about now, were really highly improbable. They were hard to believe. In a country with a population of 8 million, the rulers destroyed from 2 million to 3 million people, according to statistics reported in, among others, the Western press. The vocabulary used in normal international practice to describe mass violations of human rights is simply inadequate for these monstrous crimes. After all, what human rights can we possibly be talking about, when the Pol Pot clique has methodically and systematically been destroying the Kampuchean people individually, by whole families and by whole villages, not sparing the sick, the old, or the children, and when it has been the goal to totally eliminate the intelligentsia — that is, all those with higher education, including teachers and doctors — and when young people have been transformed into butchers of their own people?... Just as grim a fate awaited the survivors. There was a massive resettlement of urban dwellers in rural regions.... *The Wall Street Journal* pointed out that in Kampuchea the population growth was brought to a total halt; there were practically no children younger than three years old, since most of the newly born died in the very first days after birth from their half-starving mothers' lack of breast milk. On the whole, as was reported by *Time* magazine, Kampuchea was reduced to the status of a primitive society. Everywhere there was manual labor; money was taken out of circulation; there was no postal service, no telephone service; there was a total absence of books; there was no system of education, and religion was prohibited. A night of terror and of the Dark Ages had descended upon Kampuchea....

Mr. Roa Kousi, Cuba:

An Infamous Regime

In our opinion, the point that needs to be considered is not the communication signed by Ieng Sary — even if the signature is authentic — but the fact that that person today represents no more than his protector, Teng Hsiao-ping. Indeed, the regime, which for three long years slaughtered the Kampuchean people with a ferocity passing all logic, ceased to exist four days ago.

The sons of Kampuchea, driven out of the cities by Pol Pot and his Maoist advisers and required to engage in forced labor in the fields and criminally decimated, are now returning joyfully to Phnom Penh and to their homes. They are now speedily restoring civilized life in that country, which had long enjoyed great culture....

Why then has it been necessary to convene this meeting of the Security Council? Can it be that here there will be condemnation of the crimes committed by the tyrant Pol Pot, inspired by the monstrous and ill-named "Great Cultural Proletarian Revolution" with its senile leader and his gang? Has the Council met to condemn the interference of the new mandarins of Peking in the internal affairs of Kampuchea, their constant encouragement of the Pol Pot regime against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam....

Young, Sihanouk defend Pol Pot's sovereignty rights

Andrew Young, United States:
We should have acted long ago, but. . .

The invasion by Vietnam of Kampuchea presents to this Council difficult political and moral questions. The issue is affected by history, rival claims and charter principles. It appears complex because several different provisions of our charter are directly relevant to our deliberations. These are that: the fundamental principles of human rights must be respected by all governments; one state must not use force against the territory of another state; a state must not interfere in the affairs of another state; and if there is a dispute between states, it must be settled peaceably. . . .

There is little doubt that all these provisions of key importance to the international community have been violated. One country has been attacked by another; its government has been overthrown. There was no recourse to the various international mechanisms to assist in the settlement of international disputes. Within Indochina, and particularly within Kampuchea itself, some of the worst violations of human rights in recorded history have taken place. In these circumstances, what is the responsibility of this council?

In answer to that question, my government believes we must look at one essential, contemporary fact. The troops of one country are now occupying the territory of another and have imposed a new government upon it by force of arms. That fact leads us to the conclusion that the solution to the problem we are discussing is clear: Vietnam must immediately withdraw its armed forces from Kampuchea, must respect that country's territorial integrity, and must make credible its intention to respect the territorial integrity of other states in the region. . . .

Whatever the origin or the character of the so-called Salvation Front, which now claims to govern Kampuchea, there can be no question that Vietnam has conquered its neighbor. The use of Vietnamese troops, weapons and supplies, supported by Vietnamese aircraft, permitted the takeover of much of Kampuchea in a very brief period of time. The number, reliability and consistency of reports on this developing situation over the months leave no room for doubt.

The claim of the Salvation Front is that it has the support of the Cambodian people. The facts are that it now rules thanks to Vietnamese bayonets and that there has been no effort to determine the wishes of that people. . . .

Regarding the brutal violations of human rights which took place under the Pol Pot government in Kampuchea, we believe the international community long ago should have brought the full weight of international condemnation to bear. We believe the Cambodian people deserve a government that will protect the fundamental human rights of all citizens in that country.

There were legitimate concerns raised by Vietnam about

Kampuchean activities against Vietnamese citizens within Kampuchea and along the common border of the two nations. But Vietnam's responsibility as a member of the United Nations was to bring its complaint to the United Nations. Border disputes do not grant one nation the right to impose a government on another by military force.

Prince Norodom Sihanouk:
New government as bad as Pol Pot

As a patriot, as former King of Cambodia, as a man who loves his people more than his own life, I cannot sit idly by as my country loses its own personality; I cannot condone the prospect of my country becoming Vietnamized. . . .

And what about Heng Samrin, Hun Sen and Samay? They are no Petains — far from it: they are unknown in our country. Nobody in our country has ever heard of these puppets of Moscow and Hanoi.

Would you accept that kind of person? If you would, Von Ribbentrop and Keitel should not have been hanged; Rudolf Hess should not have been condemned to life imprisonment, either. What is the point of maintaining the vast Spandau Prison, at such great expense to the four occupying powers, including the Soviet Union, merely to keep poor Rudolf Hess in captivity for his whole life, when you would accept here people worse than Rudolf Hess — the likes of the representatives of a so-called sovereign Cambodia? . . .

I turn now to the question of my alleged collaboration or cooperation with the Pol Pot regime. As President Jimmy Carter has correctly said, the Pol Pot regime is:

“The worst violator of human rights in the world. . . .”

I now return to the subject of violations of human rights by Pol Pot. The representatives of Cuba yesterday cracked some sinister jokes at my expense. According to the lackey of the Soviet Union, it would seem that I am unfeeling about the sufferings of my people, that I have accepted to plead for the archcriminal Pol Pot and the archcriminal Ieng Sary in order to be in a position to play a part here — sheer love of acting and for love of Peking duck and the luxury and comfort that is being afforded me by the Peking regime. I am not as bad as all that. . . . But there are matters that are more serious than that. As members of the Council know, I have suffered much, but not because Pol Pot kept me under house arrest, not because I could not communicate with my friends by mail or other means. . . .

For many months my government made it appear that I was an impolite, ungrateful individual with no understanding of international life. Does the Council believe that in those circumstances I did not suffer? . . . I have suffered, and that is why the insults addressed to me by the Soviet bloc, beginning with Cuba, are unfair. I have suffered much. Deep inside me there is much suffering. Please understand that. There is a great deal of suffering. I simply cannot enjoy life.