

Permanent Mission of
Cambodia to the United Nations

New York, 15 February 1968

No 891

Dear Sir,

I was most interested to read the article entitled "Means and Ends in South-East Asia" that appeared in the February 1968 issue of "The Minority of One". Unfortunately, however, there are a number of errors regarding Samdech Norodom Sihanouk's position vis-à-vis the USA which I should like to draw to your attention.

First of all, I should like to state that, despite the tendentious allegations in the American press, there has been no change in either the attitude or the policies of His Highness the Head of State of Cambodia (check exact title).

I must apologise for not having been in time to send you full information after the gross and dishonest mutilation by the American press of Samdech Norodom Sihanouk's actual words in the interview he held last December with Mr. Stanley Karnow of the "Washington Post", but I was away from the country attending the Cultural Congress of Havana (check title).

If the special correspondent of the Washington Post had been honest enough to publish the full text of the replies given by the Prince, world opinion would have been spared the misunderstanding and confusion that arose, to the detriment of Cambodia and in particular Prince Norodom Sihanou's policy of peace and neutrality. I therefore venture to wonder whether Mr. Stanley Karnow's failure - or that of the Washington Post - to publish the Prince's replies was not perhaps part of an overall scheme of the American authorities to compromise and discredit Samdech Norodom Sihanouk and Cambodia.

.../...

To return, however, to the article in question in "The Minority of One":

check quotation

You write that, "for a small country, there is no choice", and that Prince Norodom Sihanouk will have to face the terrible dilemma imposed by the USA: submission or napalm. You state that, without the support of a Power strong enough to counter-balance the United States, it would be suicide for a small country to attempt to defend itself. In conclusion you state that "towards the end of December, Prince Sihanouk began to intimate to Washington that Cambodia would not offer any military resistance if American troops pursued Vietnamese troops onto Cambodian soil. At the same time, the Prince invited an envoy of the President of the United States to enter into negotiations..."

As I stressed earlier, the lack of precise information prevented you from seeing how matters really stood and led you to draw hasty but erroneous conclusions.

I ~~am~~ deeply deplore your article on Cambodia and the undeserved insults it contained.

If you had consulted the Cambodian mission (during my absence), as Mr. Stanley K. Sheinbaum of the review Ramparts did, you would not have been so mistaken - or rather unjust - in your attitude to Prince Norodom Sihanouk and to the Cambodian State.

I am enclosing the December 1967 issue of "Sangkum", in which you will find the full text of the replies given by Prince Norodom Sihanouk to Mr. Stanley Karnow's questionnaire, together with a copy of the joint American-Khmer communiqué of 12 January and the accounts (records) of the Prince's (Head of State's) press conferences.

If you read these documents, you will see that:

(1) The Prince has no intention of authorising American troops to violate Cambodian territory by virtue of their so-called "right of pursuit" - a principle which does not exist in international law, but which does exist in the "jungle law" invented by the American imperialist aggressors;

(2) The Prince did not invite the President of the United States to send an envoy. The text of the press release from the White House of 4 January last is perfectly clear on that point.

I can affirm that - your allegations to the contrary - there was no "communication between Prince Norodom Sihanouk and Washington" last December regarding military actions by US troops.

Prince Norodom Sihanouk's decision is by no means an "agonising" one. As Head of State, it is duty to "preserve Cambodia and the Cambodians from war and from death", so that it is quite clear that whatever he has done in the past, is doing, or will do in the future has the sole purpose of "preserving the independence, neutrality and territorial integrity of Cambodia".

The fact that he received ~~and~~ the special envoy of the President of the USA and granted him one single interview, /does not mean that "Cambodia has submitted" and accepted the "principle of US suzerainty over Cambodian affairs."

According to your argument, it would be logical to conclude that the People's Republic of China, which has thus far held 134 talks with the USA, first in Switzerland and then in Poland, has submitted to and accepted US suzerainty, or, conversely, that the US has submitted to and accepted Chinese suzerainty. What is true for the People's Republic of China must also ~~be~~ hold true for Cambodia.

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To claim that Prince Norodom Sihanouk has submitted, and accepts "US suzerainty" is a gratuitous insult, for "the father of Cambodian Independence" is extremely nationalistic; he succeeded in achieving liberty and independence for Cambodia in 1953 without the help of any foreign power or international organization, and he certainly would not for a moment dream of "submitting" to foreign - even nuclear - Powers, let alone to the invading American aggressors. Every one of his statements and actions is an eloquent testimony to this.

It would be a gross insult to compare Samdech Norodom Sihanouk to the "leaders" of certain Asian, African, Latin American and even European countries who, by submitting to North American imperialism have surrendered ~~all~~ ^{their} dignity and honour.

The text of the joint American-Khmer communiqué of 12 January is very clear.

I should like to bring to your attention some significant paragraphs:

"The Hon. Chester Bowles, Special Representative of the President of the United States.... visited Phnom-Penh..." (If Samdech Norodom Sihanouk had invited a representative of the President of the USA, the text would have opened with the words "On the invitation of...").

"In the course of the discussions, Ambassador Bowles repeated American assurances that the sovereignty, neutrality and territorial integrity of Cambodia would be respected. He expressed the hope that the ICC would function effectively so as to avoid the violation of Cambodian territory and neutrality by troops operating in Vietnam..."

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"...His Royal Highness Prince Norodom Sihanouk has clearly expressed Cambodia's wish to keep the Vietnamese war away from its frontiers. He has emphasized that Cambodia intends that its territory and neutrality be respected by all nations, including the belligerents in Viet Nam. The Royal Government has decided to prevent any violation of the present frontiers of Cambodia. The Royal Government is therefore making every effort to ~~have~~ enforce recognition and respect for the present frontiers of Cambodia."

"Ambassador Bowles is convinced of Cambodia's good faith and has emphasized that the USA does not desire or intend to violate Cambodian territory. He has assured the Royal Khmer Government that the USA will do everything within its power to prevent any acts of aggression against Cambodia, as well as any incidents or accidents which might cause the inhabitants of Cambodia loss or property damage..."

check parts throughout

A study of these important paragraphs from the historic communiqué of Phnom-Penh will make it immediately obvious that the USA has been the one to retreat, and that Prince Norodom Sihanouk has for the time being succeeded in delaying the implementation of the American military authorities' scheme to extend the war in the direction of Cambodia.

The United States has, in fact, undertaken "to respect the sovereignty, neutrality and territorial integrity of Cambodia". The United States "is "convinced of Cambodia's good faith". The United States has declared that "it ~~has~~ does not desire or intend to violate Cambodian territory" and it has "assured the Royal Government that it would do everything in its power to prevent any acts of aggression against Cambodia, as well as any

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loss or property damage..."

In view of the fact that, despite the negative results of careful investigations by the ICC and denials by Cambodia, the American press and military authorities have for years accused Cambodia of being a sanctuary for the Vietnamese People's Army, and of being their accomplice, etc... the joint American-Khmer communiqué constitutes a great step forward, for in it the United States "acknowledges Cambodia's good faith". In other words, the United States has acknowledged, on the one hand, the truth of Cambodia's denials and, on the other hand, the falsity of its own accusations. It should be noted that, during his stay in Phnom-Penh, the American delegation was invited by the Prince to visit the Cambodian frontier, but the invitation was turned down by the Americans.

In the section (of the communiqué) dealing with Cambodia, Samdech Norodom Sihanouk and the Royal Government emphasize that, in order to prevent "any violation of the present frontiers of Cambodia", they have made every effort "to enforce respect and recognition for the said frontiers". It should be noted that, of all the belligerents in Viet Nam, only the USA and the S igon regime have thus far failed to declare that they "recognize and respect the present frontiers of Cambodia".

The joint American-Khmer communiqué of Phnom-Penh is a historical document of great significance, for it was drafted and freely signed by the Special Representative of the President of the United States.

If, after ~~the signing of this document~~ this document has been signed, there are any further acts of aggression by American-Saigonese forces against Cambodian territory, the whole world will be their judge and will denounce the United States for its violation of the communiqué and its bad faith.

.../...

I can assure you that neither Secretary of State Dean Rusk nor his successor will ever have the opportunity to add Prince Norodom Sihanouk's Cambodia to the list of countries accepting US suzerainty.

Cambodia, in accordance with its policy of national independence, peace and neutrality, has, with honour and dignity, done everything within its power to remain an "Oasis of Peace" in South-East Asia.

If, however, it is invaded and occupied by American armed forces, it will not only mean the "suicide" of Cambodia, but also of the United States and possibly, even, of the so-called "civilized world".

The Secretary-General of the United Nations, H.E. U Thant, is very well aware of the situation. In his press conference of 18 January, he not only requested all Member States to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Cambodia, but also drew their attention to the fact that "the preservation of Cambodia's neutrality is in the general interests of South East Asia and of the whole world."

I hope that the above information and the enclosed documents will enable you to write an article which will establish the truth of the matter and remedy the injustice/^{committed}with respect to Prince Norodom Sihanouk and the Cambodian State.

Thanking you in advance and expressing once again my deep regrets,

I remain, etc.

(Signed) HUIT SAMBATH
Permanent Representative of Cambodia