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# China, Cambodia Set Air Link

By H.D.S. Greenway

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HONG KONG — Direct regular air service between Peking and the Cambodian capital of Phnom Penh was inaugurated Friday, according to the official New China News Agency.

A flight will leave Peking every other Friday, the agency said, describing the development as an outcome of the "common efforts of and friendly cooperation between the governments of China and Cambodia."

Although Chinese planes began landing in Phnom Penh soon after the Communist insurgents captured the capital last April, this is the first regular service Cambodia has had with the outside world since the change of government.

The New China News

Agency spoke of the air service as a "bridge of friendship" that would help in "strengthening the militant unity of the Chinese and Cambodian people and in promoting political, economic and cultural exchanges between the two countries."

Last year, theorists of the domino school speculated that when Laos and Cambodia fell to the Communists, Vietnam would absorb them into its sphere of influence. While that trend may already be apparent in Laos, the new air service indicates China is emerging as the most influential foreign power in the new Cambodia.

In the broader theater of the Chinese-Soviet quarrel, the difference is even more striking. In Laos, hundreds of Soviets have arrived recently to take over many of the

technical functions that Americans once performed. But in Cambodia the Soviets are not allowed even an embassy.

That is not to say that the Chinese in Cambodia are playing a role similar to the Soviets in Laos. The highly nationalistic and xenophobic Cambodians, with their ruthless policies of depopulating cities and forcing people into vast migrations across the countryside, are taking a far more independent road to social revolution than are the more tolerant Laotians.

The Cambodian attitude toward the Soviet Union can be explained by the fact that it maintained diplomatic relations with the pro-American Lon Nol government until the 11th hour and therefore forfeited their chances for post-war influence.

Soviet diplomats caught in Phnom Penh when the city fell were handled as roughly as all the other foreigners.

The Cambodian attitude toward the Vietnamese may be more complicated. Although the Cambodians depended heavily on the Vietnamese during their civil war, it was clear during the last two years of the conflict that they were much more on their own than were the Pathet Lao in Laos. This is perhaps because the Pathet Lao movement grew up over a long period, with close ties to the North Vietnamese Communists, while the Cambodian insurgency amounted to next to nothing before Prince Sihanouk was overthrown in 1970.

Hanoi-trained Cambodians, many of whom had left their homeland in 1954, then came back to Cambodia. But contrary to expectations, they never managed to control the movement or mold it in Hanoi's image. Even before they captured Phnom Penh it was clear that the Cambodian insurgents were going about their revolution in ways that ran contrary to Vietnamese advice.

There has always been a deep racial and cultural hostility between the Cambodians and the Vietnamese that was never shared by the more amenable Lao.