



Thammasat Institute of Area Studies

WORKING PAPER SERIES 2018

*Cambodia's Foreign Policy and China's Influence During
Khmer Rouge Era from 1975 to 1979*

Samnang Un

December 2018

THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY

PAPER NO. 06 / 2018

Thammasat Institute of Area Studies, Thammasat University
Working Paper Series 2018

*Cambodia's Foreign Policy and China's Influence During Khmer Rouge Era
from 1975 to 1979*

Samnang Un

Thammasat Institute of Area Studies, Thammasat University
99 Moo 18 Khlongnueng Sub District, Khlong Luang District,
Pathum Thani, 12121, Thailand

This publication of Working Paper Series is part of Master of Arts in Asia-Pacific Studies Program, Thammasat Institute of Area Studies (TIARA), Thammasat University. The view expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the view of the Institute.

For more information, please contact Academic Support Unit, Thammasat Institute of Area Studies (TIARA), Pathumthani, Thailand

Telephone: +02 696 6605

Fax: + 66 2 564-2849

Email: academic.tiara@gmail.com

Language Editors: Mr Mohammad Zaidul Anwar Bin Haji Mohamad Kasim
 Ms. Thanyawee Chuanchuen

TIARA Working papers are circulated for discussion and comment purposes. Comments on this paper should be sent to the author of the paper,
Mr. Un Samnang, Email: samnangun2999@gmail.com
Or Academic Support Unit (ASU), Thammasat Institute of Area Studies, Thammasat University

Abstract

The paper aims at exploring the influence of China on Cambodia's foreign policy formation and implementation and the extent its foreign aid contributed to Cambodia-Vietnam hostility during Democratic Kampuchea (DK) notorious for Khmer Rouge's reign of terror from 1975 to 1979. To achieve this objective, it will employ the retrospective and exploratory research design with mixed research methods, including content and historical analysis, archive research, retrospect perspectives and interview with four Cambodian specialists. Using the neoclassical realism theory for its theoretical framework, the study will focus chiefly on three vital variables: external environment, Pol Pot's perception and domestic factors, to identify and analyses the reasons behind Pol Pot's heavy dependence on China and the fragmentation of Cambodia-Vietnam relations.

The paper posits that China is a significant factor likely to have an influence on Pol Pot's foreign policy decision and implementation. In the attainment of national interests for absolute independence and self-reliance at the emergence of external and internal security threats, Pol Pot, the most influential Khmer Rouge leader, cannot survive without China's strong support. Thus, he needs to form whatever policies that must be consistent with what China's wants otherwise his regime might end up losing the latter's support. In this aspect, the more strictly he complies with those policies, the more likely his regime heavily depends on China. In sum up, this case precisely divulges the regime failure as a result of the stagnant policy enforcement and prodigious dependence on only one external actor, China, who is reluctant to offer more help when Pol Pot refuses to obey its advice.

Keywords: Pol Pot, foreign policy, China's influence, Cambodia-Vietnam conflict, neo-classical realism

1. Introduction

Cambodia, after obtaining independence from France in 1953, continued to go through several changes of regimes and government collapses because of internal and external conflicts as well as domestic power competition among different political factions. This led to changes in Cambodia's political order and foreign relations under the different leaderships of various regimes (Path et al., 2017, pp. 7–8).

As a small state, the kingdom's post-independence foreign policies often oscillate between non-alignment and sturdy alliance due to her indigent economic system, political insecurity and foreign powers (Path et., 2017). In this regard, Cambodia is seen depending on foreign assistance to cope with turbulent circumstance and secure survival. Likewise, some donor countries might utilize this help as a means to extract benefits from and inject influence over recipient countries (Roberts, Hite, & Chorev, 2014, p. 403). The recent study has discovered that Cambodia is one of the 16 most vulnerable countries to China's '*debt-book diplomacy*' from which the latter can attain strategic interests or diplomatic dominance (Parker & Chefitz, 2018; Westcott, 2018).

Given the connection between the provision of foreign aid and aid influence over recipient countries, this paper wishes to examine the influence of China on Cambodia during the Khmer Rouge era from 1975 to 1979. Specifically, it intends to explore the extent China impacting Cambodia's foreign policy formation and implementation and whether its aid pushed Cambodia into war provocation against Vietnam.

2. Problem Statement

While leading Cambodia from 1975 to 1979, Khmer Rouge received tremendous aid from China and at the same time reinforced the foreign policies of absolute independence, self-reliance and non-interference (Ciorciari, 2014b, pp. 218; 223–224; Mertha, 2014). To realize

these objectives, Khmer Rouge eliminated all forms of factors threatening its internal leadership and regime though it had to endure tough consequences such as a war against Vietnam, genocide, and even the regime collapse (Hill & Menon, 2014, p. 1650). Thus, the problem is whether or not China influenced Khmer Rouge's foreign policy decision and implementation.

2.1. Research Objectives

The ultimate purposes of this paper are the following:

- To explore the influence of China on Cambodia's foreign policy during the Khmer Rouge epoch;
- To dig out reasons behind Khmer Rouge's foreign policy decisions and international relations, especially its decisions to hugely rely on China and to break up the relationship with Vietnam

2.2. Research Questions

1. To what extent did China influence Khmer Rouge's foreign policy and relations? and
2. To what extent did its foreign aid contribute to Cambodia-Vietnam war during the Khmer Rouge time?

3. Literature Review

There are tremendous literature and academic studies/research in the field of Cambodian genocide under the Khmer Rouge regime, but the studies on influence of Chinese aid on Cambodia-Sino relationship and Khmer Rouge' foreign policy are quite limited, especially the discussion of Chinese aid on Khmer Rouge's foreign policy implementation at the sphere of international relations and of its leader's perception.

Through the literature review, the paper deeply discusses two aspects: state alliance behaviour which focuses on Cambodia's alliance strategy towards China and Vietnam as well as China's influence on the Khmer Rouge.

After thoroughly reviewing some books, publications and journal articles on various behaviours of state alliance by some IR theorists and scholars such as Wagner (1994), Chen and Yang, (2013), Stephen Walt (1987), Schweller (1994), Deny Roy (2005) , Ciorciari (2014a) and Thearith Leng (2017), the paper differentiates four types of state alliance patterns that explain reasons behind states' perception toward one another. They embrace balancing, hedging, bandaging and patron-client relations.

The paper notices that some of the most crucial reasons behind of these alliance patterns are reaping economic benefits, mitigating external threats and securing long-term survival, attaining national and political strategic interests and extending influence and material power where possible. For the case of Cambodia, it views that even though patron-client relation, bandaging and soft-balancing might help explain some elements of Khmer Rouge leader's alliance behaviours towards China and Vietnam, they are not well enough to explain the unique characteristics of Khmer Rouge leadership, perception and its foreign policy formation and implementation.

For China's influence on Khmer Rouge, the paper has found out two different points of argument as the following:

- **Argument of huge influence on Khmer Rouge**

Some scholars generally agree that China did have influence over Khmer Rouge because of the presence of its huge economic aid, military supply, advisers and technicians. Gough contends that Khmer Rouge's leadership was somehow influenced by Maoist ideas and practices given that thousands of Chinese advisers and technicians were attached to the regime leadership (1986, p. 16).

Moreover, after the collapse of the Khmer Rouge, there was a tribunal created in 1979 by a newly Vietnamese-installed Cambodian government. It accused China of backing Khmer Rouge in carrying out a ferocious genocidal policy against Cambodian people. Its judgment claimed that *'China massively increased their military aid and set up a thick network of advisors to supervise all the activities of the DK leadership which committed genocide and war against Vietnam'* (Ciorciari, 2014b, p. 216). Further, The current Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen used to accuse China of *'root of everything evil'* during the Khmer Rouge regime (ibid, p.7).

- **Argument of no huge influence on Khmer Rouge**

However, the recent studies have found out that China was unlikely to exert huge influence over Khmer Rouge leadership. Ciorciari (2014b) contends that the influence of China on Khmer Rouge was frail. China, in spite of its excessive aid and technical assistance, could not exert the huge influence on the Khmer Rouge regime (p.215-118). Similarly, Andrew Mertha has also found out that China was *'largely unable to influence Cambodia policy decisions'* in spite of lending crucial support of foreign aid and technical assistance (Mertha, 2014).

To sum up, the Chinese influence on the Khmer Rouge leadership is still the unfinished discussion. The findings of the said literature are also contentious. Some assert that China is likely the main actor having the huge influence over Khmer Rouge whereas the others rebuff the claim, denying any great influence.

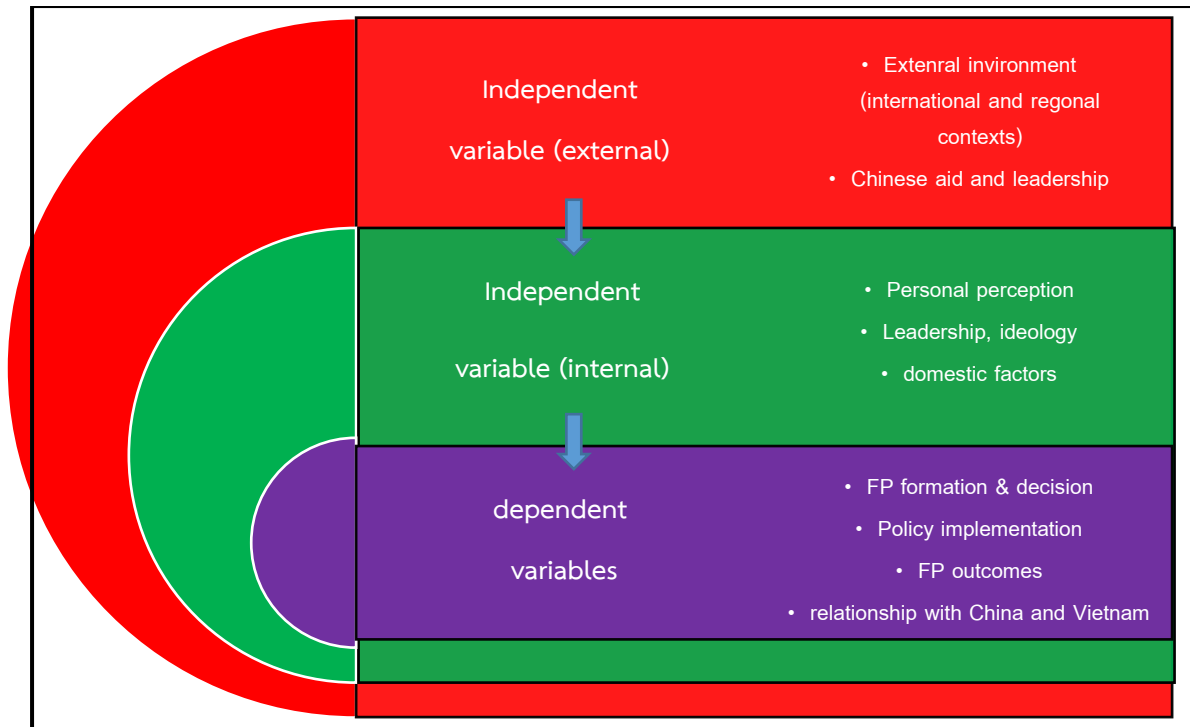
Having consolidated and evaluated the literature, the paper discovers the lack of leadership perception and characteristic in explaining state behaviour, its foreign policy decision and outcomes. Seeing these gaps, the paper intends to shed more light on the influence of China on Khmer Rouge's foreign policy decision and implementation by intensively analysing Khmer Rouge leader's perception towards China and Vietnam and the consequences.

4. Methodology

The study will follow a qualitative research method. In this regard, the retrospective and exploratory research design will be employed to explore the causes and effects of the main events occurring during the Khmer Rouge regime. Meanwhile, the influence of China and the extent its aid contributed to Cambodia-Vietnam hostility will be examined through the lens of neo-classical realism theory.

This theory is a combination of classical realism and neorealism with more focus on three important aspects: external environment, leader's perception and domestic factors of individual state in shaping the direction of foreign policy (Rose, 1998). It aims at "*examining the role of state and seeking to explain why, how, and under what conditions the internal characteristics of states intervene between their leaders' assessments of international threats and opportunities, and the actual diplomatic, military, and foreign economic policies those leaders are likely to pursue*" (Taliaferro, Ripsman, & Lobell, 2009). Within this perspective, the paper will find out how personal perception and leadership style affected Khmer Rouge's foreign policy and its foreign relations, especially with China and Vietnam.

Figure 1: Theoretical Framework



Source: Author's own calculation based on the neo-classical realism theory by Gideon Rose, 1998

Based on this framework, the paper will analyse two case studies to obtain more satisfactory explanation about the influence of China on the Khmer Rouge and the reasons behind Cambodia-Vietnam hostile relationship from 1975 to 1979.

5. Case study I: The Influence of China on Khmer Rouge's Foreign Policy

Within the framework of the neoclassical realism theory as a base for this case study analysis, the paper chiefly centres on three aspects such as external environment, leader's perception and domestic intervening factors in shaping Khmer Rouge's foreign policy decision and implementation.

The paper contends that China is a significant factor influencing Pol Pot's foreign policy decision and implementation. To obtain the national interest of absolute independence and self-reliance, as well as to implement his ultra-drastic changes in domestic policies, Pol Pot

cannot survive without China's strong support. Thus, his policies must be consistent with what China wants otherwise his regime would end up losing China's support.

The most important factors that compelled Pol Pot to heavily rely on China are as follows: external and internal threats, the leadership style and ideas of Chinese Chairman Mao Zedong, its continuing huge support and assistance, Pol Pot's eight-point policy to rebuild a new Cambodia and his perpetual purging campaign. To support this argument, the paper will present and discuss its findings in the following:

5.1 External environment (threats)

The key external threats to Khmer Rouge were likely the U.S, USSR, Vietnam and their respective agents. Vietnam, of course, was seemingly the most dangerous rivalry. Pol Pot underlined that

“After liberation on 17 April 1975, the enemies from outside always wanted to take possession of Democratic Kampuchea and subjugate her. These enemies included the U.S imperialists, the USSR international expansionists as well as the Vietnamese and their followers. [...] the USSR has a global strategy to control South East Asia. [...] the USSR and Vietnam have united together to attack our country” (Pol Pot, 1978b).

Further, Pol Pot regarded Vietnam as his ‘*main enemy*’, viewing that the latter continuously tormented his regime (Morris, 1999, p. 99). Meanwhile, there was an estimation of 20,000 Vietnamese troops inside Cambodia (Ciorciari, 2014b, p.218). Many Khmer communists who worked with the Khmer Rouge regime had received extensive political indoctrination and military trainings from Vietnam (CIA Report, 1973). Pol Pot perceived them as the Vietnamese agents working for the latter's interests. Thus, the presence of Vietnamese troops plus his accused Vietnamese agent group was absolutely a great threat to Pol Pot's reign.

Figure 2: List of Khmer Rouge’s alleged enemies

 Lon Nol Officials	 Vietnamese Agents	 CIA Agents	 KGB Agents	 Alleged Enemies
Soon after their victory, the Khmer Rouge eliminated officials and soldiers of the defeated regime	Ethnic Vietnamese and Khmer who were accused of being Vietnamese agents	The Khmer Rouge believed that there were agents from the U.S. hidden in Cambodia	The Khmer Rouge believed that there were agents from Soviet Union hidden in Cambodia	The Khmer Rouge constituted some daily actions as crimes. eg. eating food individually

Source: (Bophanna Center, 2017)

5.2 Pol Pot’s Cambodia foreign policy (1975-1979)

To get rid of foreign influence and internal interference, Pol Pot set the foreign policies as the following:

“Democratic Kampuchea adheres to a policy of independence, peace, neutrality and non-alignment. It will permit absolutely no foreign country to maintain military bases on its territory and is resolutely opposed to all forms of outside interference in its internal affairs, and to all forms of subversion and aggression

against Democratic Kampuchea from outside,” (DK Constitution, 1975; Pol Pot, 1978a, pp. 19–21).

The paper has discovered that the formation of Pol Pot’s internal and external policies as well as its operational behaviours are likely to be influenced by Chinese Chairman Mao Zedong’s concept of self-reliance, people’s war, the significance of human (mass) power and Cultural Revolution (Etcheson, 1984, p. 22; Morris, 1999, pp. 74–75).

For instance, in his letter addressed to the Chinese Communist Party (CPP) dated 06 October 1967, Pol Pot reported that *“Comrades, ... we are preparing the implementation of a people’s war... and will continue to put into effect the revolutionary work according to the line of the people’s war which Chairman Mao Zedong has pointed out in terms of its independence, sovereignty and self-reliance.”*¹ On June 21, 1975, during the meeting between Chairman Mao, Pol Pot underscored that *“I have read many books of Chairman Mao since I was young especially about the People’s war. The books of Chairman Mao have guided our whole party”* (Julio, 2000). Moreover, Pol Pot, at the Peking banquet on September 28, 1977, also stressed that *‘Mao Zedong’s thought is the inspiration behind his regime’s policies’*² (Morris, 1999, p. 70).

5.3 Analysis of domestic factors

Giving high priority to resolute independence and self-reliance, Pol Pot had a dream of bringing Cambodia back to the glorious Khmer Empire era. He emphasized that Cambodia, after liberation, would continue to defend the country, carry on the socialist revolution and edify well socialism (Pol Pot, 1978a, pp. 19–21). To this end, he introduced the 8-point policy, implemented the ideology of ‘super great leap forward’ to speedily build up a stronger and better Cambodia as well as perpetually exterminated his accused enemies. However, these policies and tough enforcement ended up causing more severe reverse

¹ As quoted in Tim Hieu p.44 and Quan Diem, p.14 cited by Engelbert and Goscha (1995), ‘Falling out of Touch’, pp. 80-81

² Quoted from NCNA, September 28, 1977, in FBIS-PRC-77-189, September 29, 1977, AI9 , and cited by Morris, 1999, p. 71.

impact to his regime (loss of human resources and the split of armed forces) and pushing Pol Pot to hugely depend on China for survival.

On 20 May 1975 Khmer Rouge convened a five-day extraordinary meeting in Phnom Penh with the participation of thousands of Khmer Rouge cadres from all areas across the country. It aimed at instructing the Party Centre's eight-point policy³ to be carried out nationwide. These policies are as follows:

Table 1: DK's 8-point policy

DK's 8-point policy	1. Evacuate people from all towns
	2. Abolish all markets
	3. Abolish all currency
	4. Defrock all Buddhist monks
	5. Execute all leaders of the Lon Nol regime
	6. Establish high-level cooperatives
	7. Expel the entire Vietnamese minority population
	8. Dispatch troops to the borders with Vietnam

Source: (Bophanna Center, 2017)

The paper stipulates that the purpose of carrying out these policies were to root out the remaining concealed enemies, to strengthen DK power and to control the whole population. However, these policies created a prison without walls in which all the population were under thorough scrutiny by the KR (Bophanna Center, 2017; Chandler, 2018; Hinton, 1998, pp. 93–94; Kiernan, 2008).

³ According to the interview between Ben Kiernan with Sin Song, Phnom Penh, 12 August 1980. Kiernan, Ben. *The Pol Pot Regime: Race, Power, and Genocide in Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge, 1975-1979*, 55 as cited by Bophanna Center, 2017.

Pol Pot also wished to accomplish his unattainable rapid transformation of war-savaged Cambodia into an ideal communal agrarian utopia, which was better and stronger than China and Vietnam. To realize this, he seemingly adopted and extended Chinese Chairman Mao Zedong's ideologies, especially the adoption of '*Great Leap Forward and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution*', to the extreme way of his radical and violent revolution (Chandler, 2018; Etcheson, 1984; Morris, 1999).

“We believe that we can build up the country quickly... We have only to organize the strategy and tactics to strike in whatever way is necessary. This is the Super Great Leap Forward”, a quote from Pol Pot in his four-year plan⁴ (Morris, 1999, p.71).

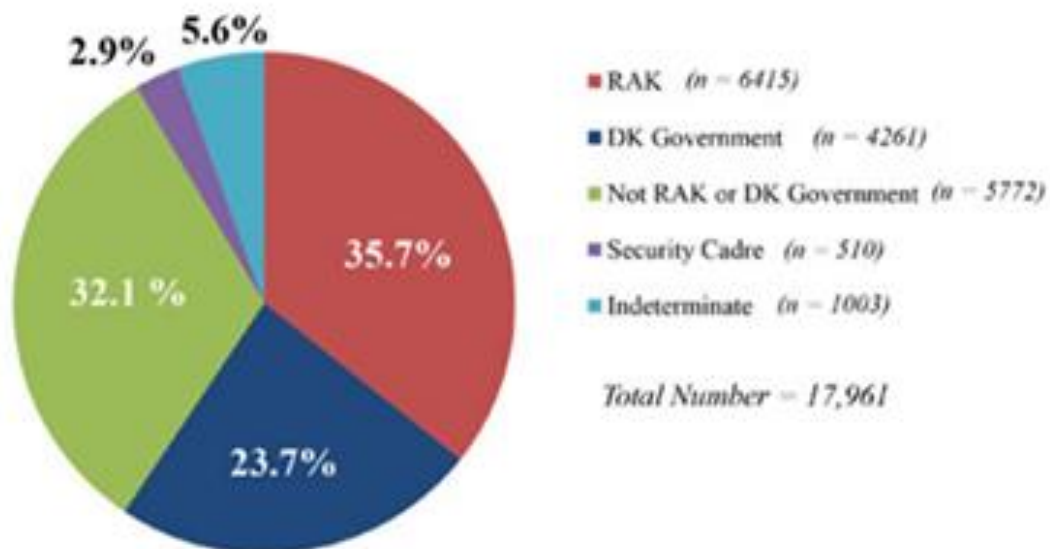
Khieu Samphan, the head of state, also emphasized that Cambodian needed to work “*twice, ten times as hard as the Vietnamese so that Cambodia could become stronger than Vietnam*” (Porter, 1982, p. 5). Khmer Rouge also issued a mission statement in 1977 with the core focus on '*storming constant attacks with the great movement of the masses at the speed of great leap forward*' (DK Letter of Honorary Red Flag, 1977). However, these most severe measures were only to weaken the country. Kieu Samphan acknowledged that “*the new DK faces obstacles in rebuilding Cambodia and counts on China* (Herald-Tribune, 1975; Ta Kung Pao, 1975; The Washington Post, 1975).

It should be reminded that during the Pol Pot regime, almost bridges were demolished, and the transportation was hardly possible. From 1969 to 1973 the U.S dropped over half a million (539,129) tons of bombs on Cambodia, three times as many as it dropped on Japan during World War II. This bomb-dropping campaign killed over 100,000 Cambodian people and destroying almost all infrastructures (Kiernan, 2002, p. 485; Etcheson, 1984, p. 89). Thus, to restore the damaged infrastructure, Pol Pot counted on China.

⁴ Exerted report on the leading views of the comrade representing the Party Origination at a Zone Assembly” Tung Padevat, June 1976, in Chandler, Kiernan, and Boua, eds., *Pol Pot Plans the Future*, p. 29, and cited by Morris, 1999, p. 71.

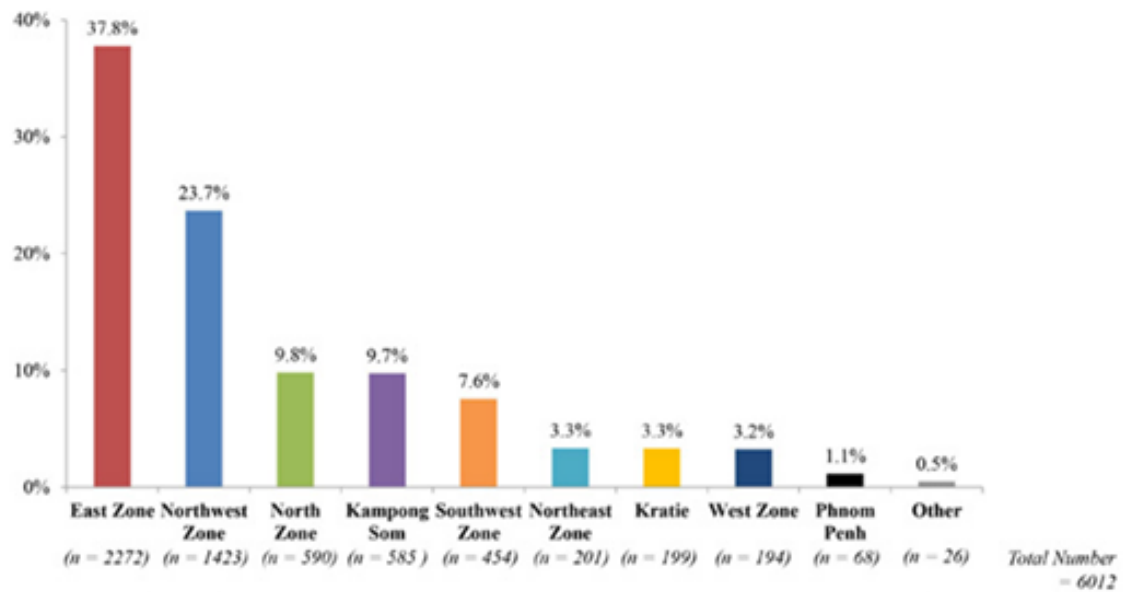
The last unachievable objective was his endless purge. With more aid, Pol Pot continued to purge his suspected external and internal enemies so that he could maintain his power and secure survival. The paper has found out that the more aid provided to Pol Pot, the more actions he carried out to eliminate his enemies, including those in the army, cadre, ministries and even his standing committee members (Heder, 1990; Mertha, 2014, pp. 5–9). Among the 10 eminent standing committee members, six were exterminated by Pol Pot during his rule (Thayer, 2012).

Figure 3: Origin of Prisoners at the S-21 prison



Source: (Bophanna Center, 2017). Note: RAK is a short form of Revolutionary Army of Kampuchea.

Figure 4: Percentages of Prisoners by Zone at S-21 prison



Source: (Bophanna Center, 2017)

Table: Estimation of death tolls under Pol Pot, 1975-1979

Social group	1975 pop.	Numbers perished	%
'New Citizens'			
Urban Khmer	2,000,000	500,000	25
Rural Khmer	600,000	150,000	25
Chinese (all urban)	430,000	215,000	50
Vietnamese (urban)	10,000	10,000	100
Lao (rural)	10,000	4,000	40
TOTAL New citizens	3,050,000	879,000	29
'Base Citizens'			
Rural Khmer	4,500,000	675,000	15
Khmer Krom	5,000	2,000	40
Cham (all rural)	250,000	90,000	36
Vietnamese (rural)	10,000	10,000	100
Thai (rural)	20,000	8,000	40
Upland minorities	60,000	9,000	15
TOTAL Base citizens	4,840,000	792,000	16
Cambodia	7,890,000	1,671,000	21

Source: (Kiernan, n.d., p. 84)

To sum up, these policies and tough enforcement gave so much disastrous impact on the lives and rights of Cambodian people throughout the whole period. As a consequence, approximately 1.7 million people died of extermination, severe exhaustion, starvation and diseases (Bophanna Center, 2017; Chandler, 2018; Hinton, 1998, pp. 93–94; Kiernan, 2008). While implementing these policies, Pol Pot did need China's strong support.

6. Case study II: The causes of Cambodia-Vietnam war during Pol Pot's rule

This case study intends to examine two aspects: factors leading to Khmer Rouge-Vietnam provocation and connection between China's aid and Cambodia-Vietnam conflict.

6.1 The causes of Cambodia-Vietnam war

To have an in-depth analysis of Cambodia-Vietnam conflict, the paper would like to portray the whole picture of power competition in Indochina by comprehensively examining three aspects: external environment, Pol Pot's perception and domestic factors.

6.1.1 External environment

At the international context, Indochina is a basis for three contenders, namely the U.S, the USSR and China, to further exert their respective political and material power into Southeast Asia and Asia-Pacific region (New Statesman, 1979). Therefore, the foreign policy and decisions of the three do have a great impact on the security of the small countries in Indochina.

For example, the split of USSR-Sino relations in 1969 did contribute to the hostile relations between Cambodia and Vietnam since Cambodia both countries received huge supported from these two big communist countries to enhance their internal and external affairs.

Further, the Sino-U.S joint communiqué in 1972 seemingly paved the way for China to play a key role in Indochina after the U.S retreat (U.S-China Joint Communiqué, 1972). Meanwhile, the USSR-Vietnam treaty in 1978 also permitted both countries to have a stronger position in Indochina and Indo-pacific region. For instance, the USSR could use the Vietnamese Cam Ranh Bay to strengthen its maritime power and expand influence in the region. Similarly, Vietnam also obtained full support from the former to contain China and deal with border skirmish with Cambodia (Indochina Issue, 1985; Peking Review, 1978; Ting Wai, 1987).

At the regional context, both China and Vietnam wanted to expand its influence in the whole Indochina while these two countries also had direct confrontation with each other over the issues of Chinese ethnic group living in Vietnam and border dispute, especially in the South China Sea (Julio, 2000; Ta Kung Pao, 1975; US Report, 1978).

Compared to China, Vietnam was so small and used to receive a lot of aid from China. Thus, to contain its former patron, Vietnam needed strong support from the USSR as its backer.

China also carried out a rapprochement policy toward the U.S in order to mitigate threat made by the joint effort between Vietnam and the USSR⁵. Further, it also needed Pol Pot on its side so that Cambodia could break away from Vietnam and be a buffer against the latter's influence and expansion in Indochina. Ciorciari (2014b) contended that Cambodia was a crucial hedge against Vietnam (p.221). Meanwhile, the U.S also indirectly supported China in influencing Cambodia to contain both the USSR and Vietnam. U.S Secretary of State Kissinger stressed that *"The Chinese want to use Cambodia to balance off Vietnam.[...] for the geopolitical reasons, the U.S, China and Thailand all supported the independence of Khmer Rouge regime, and the U.S did not discourage China and Thailand to tilt to Cambodia"* (Kieman, 2002, p.487).

⁵ The excerpt from the inward cablegram on Cambodia-China attitude apparently from the Australian Embassy in Peking, file 265/4/5/4 dated 28 April 1975, filed in DC-Cam collection, catalogue No. D70098

6.1.2 Pol Pot's perception and domestic context

Taken into serious account of Pol Pot's perception toward Cambodia-Vietnam war, the paper postulates that the tension and escalation of Cambodia-Vietnam conflict have resulted from several noteworthy factors such as historical context and sentiment of detestation over ethnic issue, unresolved border dispute and feeling of mistrust toward negotiation, overconfidence and miscalculation of Vietnamese strength as well as the tough implementation of Pol Pot's policies which caused the split among Khmer Rouge itself (Department of Press and Information Ministry of Foreign Affairs, DK, 1978; Ministry of Propaganda and Information of Democratic Kampuchea, 1978; Pol Pot, 1976; Searching for the Truth, 2001; US Report, 1978).

Further, in its official document called Black Paper, the Khmer Rouge elaborated some facts and information about the Vietnamese attempt and aggression to annex Cambodia as part of its Indochina Federation plan. This official document mentioned the latter's manoeuvres and illusion to annihilate and overthrow the Khmer Rouge Regime through various means including a series of small and large-scale armed attack, and the military coup by its concealed agents inside Cambodia, etc. In short, this Black Paper perceived Vietnam as an aggressor who wanted to incorporate Cambodia into its Indochina Federation ambition (DK Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1978).

The number of incidents of armed clashes along the borders and in nearby provinces between Cambodia and Vietnam increased worrisomely for the period from 1975 to 1978. The Vietnamese source has shown that the figure soared up sharply from merely 174 times in 1975 to 254 times in 1976, to 1,150 times in 1977, and 4,820 times in 1978⁶ Regarding these incidents, Path Kosal postulated that Khmer Rouge deemed it a preventive war to reclaim territory pre-occupied by Vietnam following its unification, while the Vietnamese viewed Cambodian hostility as China's strategy to undermine Vietnam and exert its control over Indochina (Path et al., 2017, p. 18).

⁶ The numbers taken from the Vietnamese Ministry of National Defense, 2010, p. 26

While the Cambodia-Vietnam conflict escalated to a large scale, Pol Pot's last request for more military aid and intervention from his close ally China was denied. Many scholars contend that China wanted to teach Pol Pot a lesson of not following its advice because China preferred Pol Pot to negotiate with Vietnam. Path Kosal contends that "*the alliance served China's broader strategic containment of Vietnam after the Vietnamese unification in 1975. The Khmer Rouge provocation of war with the Vietnamese against China's advice for restraint led to the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia. The Khmer Rouge was just a pawn in China's chessboard*".

6.2 Examination of involvement of Chinese aid in Cambodia-Vietnam conflict

Through in-depth interviews with four Cambodian scholars who are researchers and specialists in Khmer Rouge history, the review of numerous Khmer Rouge books and based on the primary and secondary data collected, the paper has found no concrete evidence proving that China's aid contributed to the said conflict. Nonetheless, it does not mean the aid is not significant to this conflict.

The paper discovers that the military aid provided to Pol Pot was aimed at protection not at invasion. China provided tremendous military supplies to Pol Pot in order to keep him in power and get rid of his rivalries as China did not want to lose Cambodia to Vietnam. However, without China's military supply, Pol Pot could not have any capability to thwart Vietnam's alleged aggression. With no Chinese aid, he could not even provoke any tension against its utmost rivalry, let alone wage war.

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, the paper would like to consolidate the findings from the said two cases as follows:

In the first case study, the paper would like to reiterate its argument that China is a significant factor likely to have an influence on Pol Pot's foreign policy decision and implementation. Pol Pot implemented the very limited options of foreign policy and radical change in domestic policies in pursuance of absolute independence and self-reliance. However, the severe enforcement of these policies caused millions of lives of Cambodian people, the outright divide of KR armed forces and the more reliance on China for survival.

In the second case study, the paper has found out that the Indochina issue, Cambodia-Vietnam war in particular, involved not only the conflicting countries but also the three great powers who contested one another to inject their respective political and material power into the region. Therefore, the foreign policy and decisions of the three do have a great impact on the security of the small countries in the Indochina and could change the status quo. Some of the important events are the split of Sino-Soviet relation in 1969, Sino-U. S joint communiqué in 1972 and the USSR-Vietnam cooperation treaty in 1978. These events paved the way for the big communist countries to compete with one another for a share of regional influence in the absence of the U.S. At the domestic context through the lens of Pol Pot's perception, the paper uncovers some key factors contributing to this conflict. They embrace the historical context and sentiment of detestation over the ethnic issue, unresolved border dispute and feeling of mistrust toward negotiation as well as Pol Pot's strict policy enforcement.

In the case of the involvement of China's foreign aid in the Cambodia-Vietnam skirmish, the paper would like to conclude that the military aid was only aimed at protection not the invasion. The key motive China provided tremendous military supplies Pol Pot was to secure his leadership so that he could serve China's strategic interests longer. The paper does not find any evidence to prove that China wanted Cambodia to antagonize Vietnam, except its intent to keep Cambodia independent from the latter's influence. Nonetheless, the Chinese military aid is also part of Pol Pot's strength in countervailing his mammoth adversary's aggression. While rejecting China's advice for negotiation, Pol Pot was at risk of losing aid and ended up with regime collapse.

Bibliography

- Bophanna Center. (2017). Learning on Khmer Rouge History. Bophanna Center.
- Chandler, D. P. (2018). *Brother Number One : A Political Biography Of Pol Pot*. Routledge.
- Chen, I. T.-Y., & Yang, A. H. (2013). A harmonized Southeast Asia? Explanatory typologies of ASEAN countries' strategies to the rise of China.
- CIA Report. (1973, July 20). Intelligence Memorandum: the Khmer Insurgent Factions and the Influence of Peking, Hanoi, and Moscow Thereon. Retrieved from <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA>
- Ciorciari, J. D. (2014a). A Chinese model for patron–client relations? The Sino-Cambodian partnership.
- Ciorciari, J. D. (2014b). China and the Pol Pot regime. *Cold War History*, 14(2), 215–235.
- Department of Press and Information Ministry of Foreign Affairs, DK. (1978, March 17). Interview with Comrade Pol Pot. Retrieved from DC-CAM collection
- DK Constitution. (1975, 1979). Democratic Kampuchea Constitution. Retrieved July 31, 2018, from http://www.dccam.org/Archives/Documents/DK_Policy/DK_Policy_DK_Constitution.htm
- DK Letter of Honorary Red Flag. (1977). Honorary Red Flag Letter to the Central Committee, 1977. Retrieved August 2, 2018, from http://www.dccam.org/Archives/Documents/Red_Flag/Red_Flag_Honoray_to_Central_Committee.htm
- DK Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (1978, September). Black Paper: Facts and Evidence of the Acts of Aggression and Annexation of Vietnam against Kampuchea. Department of Press and Information of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- Etcheson, C. C. (1984). *The Rise and Demise of Democratic Kampuchea* (1 edition). Boulder, Colo: Westview Press.
- Gough, K. (1986). Roots of the Pol Pot Regime in Kampuchea. *Contemporary Marxism*, (12/13), 14–48.

- Heder, S. R. (1990, August 28). Khmer Rouge opposition to Pol Pot: Pro-Vietnamese or Pro-Chinese. Retrieved from DC-CAM collection, catalogue No. D17520
- Herald-Tribune. (1975, August 19). Cambodian Says China Vows Free and Unconditional Aid. Retrieved from DC-CAM Collection, catalogue No. D28809
- Hill, H., & Menon, J. (2014). Cambodia: Rapid Growth in an Open, Post-conflict Economy. *World Economy*, 37(12), 1649–1668. <https://doi.org/10.1111/%28ISSN%291467-9701/issues>
- Hinton, A. L. (1998). Why Did You Kill?: The Cambodian Genocide and the Dark Side of Face and Honor. *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 57(1), 93. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2659025>
- Indochina Issue. (1985, December). The Stable War: Cambodia and the Great Powers. *The Center for International Policy, Indochina Project*. Retrieved from DC-CAM collection, catalogue No. D18308
- Julio. (2000). Sihanouk, Pot Pot and China. Retrieved from <http://www.dccam.org/Database/Lod/details.php?keyword=D61669&numRecords=100&lang=eng&page=1&idnum=D61669>
- Kiernan, B. (2008). *The Pol Pot regime : race, power, and genocide in Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge, 1975-79*. New Haven, Conn. : Yale Univ. Press, c2008.
- Kiernan, B. (n.d.). The Cambodian Genocide, 1975-1979. Retrieved from <https://www.niod.nl/sites/niod.nl/files/Cambodian%20genocide.pdf>
- Leng, T. (2017). Small state diplomacy: Cambodia's foreign policy towards Vietnam. *Pacific Review*, 30(3), 328–347.
- Mertha, A. (2014). *Brothers in Arms: Chinese Aid to the Khmer Rouge, 1975–1979*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Ministry of Propaganda and Information of Democratic Kampuchea. (1978, June 25). Press Communique of the Spokesman of the Ministry of Propaganda and Information of Democratic Kampuchea. Democratic Kampuchea. Retrieved from https://cambodiatokampuchea.files.wordpress.com/2015/08/1978_06_dk-note-on-coup-attempt.pdf
- Morris, S. J. (1999). *Why Vietnam Invaded Cambodia: Political Culture and the Causes of War*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.

- New Statesman. (1979, October 26). China Fall Victim to the Strategy of Its New, Powerful Ally. Retrieved from DC-CAM Collection, Catalogue No. D43778
- Parker, S., & Chefitz, G. (2018, May 30). China's Debtbook Diplomacy: How China is Turning Bad Loans into Strategic Investments. Retrieved July 19, 2018, from <https://thediplomat.com/2018/06/chinas-debtbook-diplomacy-how-china-is-turning-bad-loans-into-strategic-investments/>
- Path, K., Cheunboran, C., Var, V., Kry, S., Terith, C., & Vu Tung, N. (2017). *Cambodia's Foreign relations in Regional and Global Contexts*. Phnom Penh, Cambodia: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung.
- Peking Review. (1978, November 17). Viet Nam-Soviet Treaty Threatens World Peace and Security. *Peking Review*.
- Pol Pot. (1976, July 28). Interview with Pol Pot. Retrieved from DC-CAM collection, catalogue No. D28941
- Pol Pot. (1978a, January 17). The Valiant and Powerful Revolution Army of Kampuchea under the Leadership of the Communist Party of Kampuchea. Retrieved from DC-CAM Collection-catalogue No. D29070
- Pol Pot. (1978b, September). Let US Continue to Firmly Hold Aloft the Banner of the Victory of the Glorious Communist Party of Kampuchea in order to Defend Democratic Kampuchea, Carry on Socialist Revolution and Build up Socialism. Retrieved from DC-CAM collection, catalogue No. D40128
- Porter, G. (1982, May). Storms Over Indochina: A Political Primer. *The Center for International Policy, Indochina Project*. Retrieved from DC-CAM collection, catalogue No. D18274
- Roberts, J. T., Hite, A. B., & Chorev, N. (2014). *The Globalization and Development Reader: Perspectives on Development and Global Change*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Rose, G. (1998). Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy. *World Politics*, 51(1), 144–172.
- Roy, D. (2005). Southeast Asia and China: Balancing or Bandwagoning? *CONTEMPORARY SOUTHEAST ASIA*, (2), 305.
- Schweller, R. L. (1994). Bandwagoning for Profit: Bringing the Revisionist State Back In. *International Security*, 19(1), 72–107.

- Searching for the Truth. (2001, April). Interview with Brother Number One on 12 April 1978. *DC-Cam*, 16. Retrieved from DC-CAM Collection
- Ta Kung Pao. (1975, August 21). China-Cambodia economic agreement signed in Peking. Retrieved from DC-CAM collection, catalogue No. D28816
- Taliaferro, J. W., Ripsman, N. M., & Lobell, S. E. (2009). *Neoclassical realism, the state, and foreign policy*. Cambridge, U.K. : Cambridge University Press.
- Thayer, N. (2012, November 13). Lunching with Mass Murderers: The Khmer Rouge Were Not Communists; They were Cambodians. Retrieved August 20, 2018, from <https://natethayer.wordpress.com/2012/11/12/lunching-with-mass-murderers-the-khmer-rouge-were-not-communists-they-were-cambodians/>
- The Washington Post. (1975, August 19). China Grants Aid to Cambodia. Retrieved from DC-CAM collection, catalogue No. D16416
- Ting Wai. (1987). Soviet Global Strategy and the Specific Role of Vietnam. *Indochina Report*. US Report. (1978, October 4). Vietnam-Cambodia Conflict. Retrieved from <https://cambodiatokampuchea.files.wordpress.com/2015/08/1978-us-congress-cambodian-vietnam-conflict.pdf>
- U.S-China Joint Communiqué. (1972, February 27). U.S-China Joint Communique in Shanghai. Peking Review.
- Wagner, R. H. (1994). Peace, War, and the Balance of Power. *American Political Science Review*, 88(3), 593–607.
- Walt, S. M. (1987). *The Origins of Alliances*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Westcott, B. (2018, May 18). China using “debtbook diplomacy” to spread its strategic aims in Asia Pacific. Retrieved July 19, 2018, from <https://www.cnn.com/2018/05/15/asia/china-us-australia-debt-diplomacy-intl/index.html>

Interviews with four Cambodian scholars specialized in Khmer Rouge

1. Interview with Mr Youk Chang, Executive Director of Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam)
2. Interview with Dr In Sophal, Lecturer at the University of Cambodia and author of Cambodia in Vietnam War from 1953 to 1979
3. Interview with Mr Nhem Boraden, lecturer at the Royal University of Phnom Penh's Institute of Foreign Languages and the author of Khmer Rouge
4. Interview with Dr Path Kosal, Professor of Political Science, Brooklyn College, University of New York and the co-author of Cambodia's Foreign Relations in Regional and Global Contexts.

