

United Nations
GENERAL
ASSEMBLY

TWENTY-NINTH SESSION

Official Records



2300th
PLENARY MEETING

Wednesday, 27 November 1974,
at 10.30 a.m.

NEW YORK

CONTENTS

Agenda item 25:	
Restoration of the lawful rights of the Royal Government of National Union of Cambodia in the United Nations (continued)	1115

President: Mr. Abdelaziz BOUTEFLIKA
(Algeria).

In the absence of the President, Mr. Datcu (Romania), Vice-President, took the Chair.

AGENDA ITEM 25

Restoration of the lawful rights of the Royal Government of National Union of Cambodia in the United Nations (continued)

1. Mr. GIAMBRUNO (Uruguay) (*interpretation from Spanish*): First of all, I wish to associate my country and delegation with the tributes paid to the memory of U Thant. We who knew him appreciate the extent to which he loved mankind and how tirelessly he laboured, inspired by the inborn motivation of his moral conscience that was an example for all. I believe that the third Secretary-General of the United Nations leaves behind him a shining memory which we shall all remember in the future.

2. Once again, we have before us, as we had at the twenty-eighth session, the question of the Khmer Republic. It was not sufficient for the General Assembly at that session to reject the attempt to convert our Organization into a focal point of collective intervention. Regrettably, today we again have before us the same facts and the same arguments. This is perhaps the crudest attempt to violate the principles of our Charter and, above all, the principle of non-intervention.

3. We continue to hold the opinion that the Khmer people must have an opportunity to settle its problems in peace, free from outside interference or impositions; it must also be able to decide who it wishes to have as its leaders and what form of government it wishes to adopt.

4. Once again, an attempt is being made to prejudge that decision, which we consider to be a sovereign decision of the Khmer people. Yesterday we heard an exact repetition of the arguments we heard last year from countries which defend or are tied to the imperialist policy of a great Power—China. All they have done is restate the existence of facts they cannot prove and affirmations which cannot withstand the slightest rational analysis.

5. I do not wish to dwell excessively on refuting those arguments. What I do wish to say is that the first deceit, whereby efforts are being made to have us believe that the decision to propose this item was dictated by the unanimous will of the non-aligned countries, cannot succeed. We all know that draft resolution A/L.737/Rev.1, of which my delegation is a sponsor and which is intended to lay down the bases for national conciliation, is honoured to have some non-aligned countries numbered among its sponsors. So far as I know, that group of countries, which came into being under the generous inspiration of some leaders and which deserves our respect, has heretofore acted on the basis of consensus. It is therefore totally impossible—I would even venture to add that it is a manoeuvre which should be unmasked in this Assembly—to have reached such a consensus in favour of the restoration of the rights of the Royal Government of National Union.

6. On the other hand, I also wish to express some thoughts on what we heard last year and what we heard again yesterday.

7. At the twenty-eighth session, we were told that 90 per cent of the territory of the Khmer Republic—and, I would add, because I had the honour of participating from the very beginning in the discussion of these problems, which arose in the Credentials Committee of which my country was a member, that not just 90 per cent was mentioned then but as much as 99 per cent—was under the control of the members of the so-called Royal Government of National Union and that that Government also controlled more than 80 per cent of the population of the country. When we asked for a prudent delay and requested an official impartial inquiry, which would arrive at conclusions not influenced by one of the contending parties, we were told that that was not necessary because within a few weeks the few cities still under the control of the Khmer Republic would fall under the control of the representatives or the armies of Sihanouk. A year has gone by and we are still being told of the 90 per cent of the territory and the 80 per cent of the population. Obviously, those figures cannot stand up to a rational analysis and this continued insistence is the best demonstration that there is no definite basis for such affirmations and that perhaps the only sensible thing which this Assembly should have done would have been to provide for participation in a neutral committee to assist, through its good offices, in preventing the addition to the list of human lives lost all those who perished in that tormented region during this long year.

Mr. Bouteflika (Algeria) took the Chair.

8. I do not wish to dwell unduly on the arguments that have been adduced, but I do wonder whether the Assembly could recognize the rights of a Royal Government of National Union of Cambodia. I do not think it is possible to advance any arguments in favour of

such recognition. I wonder whether that pseudo-government is an effective government. Does it have responsibility? I wonder whether it even has any territorial integrity that can be demonstrated. What is even more serious—and this answers itself—I wonder whether it is independent, because it is indeed suspicious for a government that aspires to represent its people to establish itself and to maintain the appearance of an administrative organization by selecting the capital of a great Power. I would say that at the very least we are witnessing a new imperialist attitude. I do not believe that anyone can be unaware of the seriousness of setting up a puppet government and taking advantage of the great influence exercised by that imperialist Power.

9. Yesterday we heard the spokesman of that country. I have great respect for the culture and centuries-old traditions of China—and possibly in the interpretation we did not get the exact sense of a series of expressions which also habitually carry literary and poetic connotations—but when we heard that the rights of the Khmer Republic had to disappear, and I think the expression was “on to the garbage heap of history”, I thought with how little respect the rights of a small country were being treated. I thought also about the sad experience that we had had during the Second World War with such a lack of respect: Adolf Hitler used to speak in that way of the commitments that he never respected. And, like the rights of the people of Tibet, the rights of the Khmer people would have to end up on the garbage heap of history. But that is another matter, which I shall not dwell on.

10. Finally, I wish to mention that, while it is true that no change has occurred with regard to the attitude of the countries that favour the restoration of the rights of the Khmer Republic by attributing those rights to Prince Sihanouk, there has been a change in the attitude of those of us who oppose that course.

11. We have prepared a draft resolution in which we do not say that one party is right and the other wrong, because we believe that the function of the United Nations is actually not to throw out one government and to put another one in or to decide what government a country should have. As stated in the draft resolution, that would be an invasion of domestic jurisdiction. We believe that, in addition to its duty to maintain international peace and security, this Organization has other useful purposes, among which is the duty to try to settle by peaceful means any problems or disputes arising in the world.

12. Draft resolution A/L.737/Rev.1 is, precisely, intended to bring about peace, to make it possible with the assistance of the Secretary-General for contacts to take place between the conflicting parties, to arrive at a peace that will sanction the existence of a community united by common interests, thus putting an end to a struggle in which there can be no victors or vanquished.

13. We therefore appeal to the members of the General Assembly to follow this course, because we believe that the best way in which the United Nations can contribute to the well-being of the Khmer people and the Khmer nation is to express a genuine desire for the restoration of peace in that country and to concern itself with giving every possible assistance to

them, thus enabling that people finally to decide its own destiny by itself.

14. Mr. ROMULO (Philippines): My presence on this occasion, at this late stage of the twenty-ninth session of the General Assembly, and the fact that I have had to return from the Philippines to speak on this subject, attests to the importance that my Government attaches to the item under consideration.

15. Our views on the question at issue were expressed precisely and unequivocally during the twenty-eighth session of the Assembly last year. Those views were premised on a joint statement issued as an official document of the General Assembly,¹ at the request of the Governments of Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore, Thailand and the Philippines. I want to remind the Assembly of this document because it is very important and significant. We said in that document:

“Since the Khmer problem is of vital importance to the countries in the region,”—that is, our region—“it is strongly felt that the views of countries situated closely to the area should be taken into full consideration, and these views are:

“1. The Khmer people themselves should be allowed to solve their own political problems peacefully, free from outside interference in whatever form.

“2. Such political settlement should be reached by the indigenous parties concerned.

“3. The United Nations should not take any action which may prejudge the decision of the Khmer people themselves and which may prolong the tragic suffering and the loss of lives and property in the Khmer Republic.”

16. The foregoing principles were the primary considerations which prompted my delegation to vote for the deferment of the debate on this item at the twenty-eighth session of the General Assembly. I wish to announce that we adhere and shall continue to adhere firmly to these basic principles and remain adamantly opposed to draft resolution A/L.733 and Add.1-3, which would impose on the Cambodian people the government-in-exile of Prince Sihanouk.

17. It is a cardinal principle in relations among States that every country should be allowed to decide for itself its own form of government or its own leadership without interference from others. It would establish a dangerous precedent for the United Nations to become involved in an exercise which would interfere in the domestic affairs of a country in direct contravention of Article 2, paragraph 7, of the Charter of the United Nations.

18. However, we believe that the time has come when the General Assembly should do something constructive instead of merely postponing the question from year to year. It would be unworthy of the United Nations for its Members to fold their hands in an attitude of indifference when the opportunity presents itself to put into practice the purposes and principles enshrined in our Charter.

19. There is no doubt from the statements made at the twenty-eighth session that the sponsors of Prince Sihanouk expected that the fortunes of war would render unnecessary further consideration of the ques-

tion of Cambodia this year. In fact, since 1972 it has been announced repeatedly in the newspapers that Phnom Penh was to fall from hour to hour, that it had been encircled, that it was going to be in the hands of the other side at any moment. That did not happen. The tide has not turned. On the contrary, the Khmer Republic is more firmly established than ever. The Government in Phnom Penh has consolidated its control over a much wider area of the national territory and kept the loyalty of the great majority of the Cambodian people. If it is true, as is alleged, that most of the territory is now in the hands of the other side, why is it that the leader has not returned to that country but is still in exile? We hope the General Assembly, with due forbearance and circumspection, will not allow itself to be persuaded to deliver to Prince Sihanouk on a silver platter what he and his allies have not been able to obtain by force of arms.

20. The three basic principles which I quoted at the beginning of my statement as approved by the neighbouring countries in the region, which are therefore directly and vitally interested in this matter, fall squarely within the framework of the United Nations Charter. They form the basis of draft resolution A/L.737/Rev.1.

21. It is clear that it does not suffice to lay down the principle simply that the Cambodian people themselves should be allowed to solve their own political problems peacefully, free from outside interference. The indigenous parties must be encouraged or helped to engage in a dialogue for peace. We consider it a significant development that, on 9 July, the Khmer Republic issued a direct appeal to the Royal Government of National Union of Cambodia to come to the negotiating table without any pre-conditions. Is it not clear that what the former wants is peace, and only peace, when it asks the other side to come to the negotiating table without any pre-conditions?

22. Considering the outstanding skill and competence of the Secretary-General of the United Nations—which he is now displaying in the Middle East—his prestige and personality, we believe that he is the best person to lend assistance to the indigenous parties in achieving a political settlement of their own free choice. This, we respectfully submit, is a more positive approach than for the General Assembly to throw its weight in favour of one side only. That we should not do. We hope the parties concerned will accept the mediation of the Secretary-General and place their trust in the good faith of the United Nations.

23. There are already examples in our region where a peaceful settlement among the contending parties was reached by the parties themselves. We hope that an accord similar to that reached in Laos, where a Government of national concord and reconciliation has been successfully established, will be achieved also in Cambodia—and why not, if they are given the chance, without interference from outside?

24. In the meantime, may we respectfully urge the members of this Assembly to refrain from doing anything which might prejudice the decision of the Cambodian people themselves and which might prolong their tragic suffering and result in further loss of precious lives and property. In particular, we sincerely appeal to them to reject draft resolution A/L.733 and Add.1-3, sponsored by Afghanistan and other Powers.

25. I respectfully suggest that the Member States represented here ponder and think carefully about the grave and dangerous implications of that proposal. It is a very dangerous proposal. Today it is the Khmer Republic. Which small country will be next? Today it is South-East Asia. What region will it be tomorrow? This is a dangerous precedent.

26. Will there be a regional rotation of United Nations interference in domestic affairs in the same manner as there is a rotation of the presidency of this Assembly among the regional groups? Or will the weak and powerless Asian nations alone be the victims of such manifest injustice?

27. I ask my fellow representatives these questions. They are questions of far-reaching importance to all of us, but especially to the small, weak, powerless nations, those who cannot command powerful majorities but who only base their trust and confidence on the justice of their cause.

28. In other contexts, some of the supporters of the proposal I have referred to are fond of invoking the spirit of Bandung. May I remind my fellow representatives that I was in Bandung. I was an active participant in the Conference in Bandung.² I was one of the Committee that drafted the communiqué in Bandung, so I know what that spirit of Bandung means. They have referred to and are fond of invoking the spirit of Bandung. That is a mockery. Their proposal is its exact contradiction in practice. It makes a mockery of the principle of respect for each Member State's sovereign rights which we all profess to uphold.

29. That is why I came all the way from the Philippines. I was in Bandung, as I repeat, and this is in contravention of the spirit of Bandung. Our vote against this proposal is an affirmation of principle and at the same time an appeal to the conscience and sense of justice of this Assembly. And we have faith in the sense of justice of this Assembly.

30. Mr. RAE (Canada): I have recently transmitted to the Secretary-General the following message from the Secretary of State for External Affairs of Canada, the honourable Allan J. MacEachen:

“The Government and people of Canada are deeply saddened by the passing of U Thant who, in his years as United Nations Secretary-General, demonstrated total and selfless dedication to the principles enunciated in the Charter and to the betterment of mankind. In expressing our sorrow to you, as U Thant's successor, I also ask that you convey our sympathy to his wife and other members of his immediate family.”

31. We have listened with the closest attention to the moving statement of the Secretary for Foreign Affairs of the Philippines, Mr. Carlos Romulo. We know of his many contributions, over many years, to the work and the efforts of the United Nations.

32. The Canadian delegation would like briefly to explain its position on the question before us. The Canadian Government recognizes the Government of the Khmer Republic as the legitimate Government of Cambodia and we support the right of that Government to retain its seat in the General Assembly as a Member of the United Nations. Moreover, we firmly believe that the internal problems of Cambodia must be

settled peacefully by the Khmer people themselves. The Khmer people should be permitted to determine their political future free from outside interference in any form. We therefore oppose efforts in this Assembly to interfere in the domestic political situation in Cambodia and to prejudice in any way the decisions of the Cambodian people.

33. Canada is a sponsor of draft resolution A/L.737/Rev.1, which urges the parties directly concerned to hold talks, requests the Secretary-General to lend appropriate assistance to the parties, and calls upon Member States to respect the outcome of the talks. This appears to us to be the most reasonable and fair approach that this Assembly can adopt regarding the difficult and complex situation in Cambodia. For this reason, we consider that the General Assembly should endorse that draft resolution and give priority to its consideration.

34. Delegations should consider carefully the implications of the alternative to this reasonable approach. The General Assembly should not take any action on the question of representation which would prejudice the decision of the Khmer people themselves on their political future and which may prolong the tragic suffering and loss of life in Cambodia.

35. Draft resolution A/L.733 and Add.1-3 clearly involves such prejudgement. We maintain that the people of Cambodia themselves should solve their political problems free from outside interference and we commend this approach to members of this Assembly.

36. Mr. BELLIZZI (Malta): Mr. President, I should like first of all to associate my delegation with the tributes which you and many representatives before me have voiced on the occasion of the passing away of our illustrious former Secretary-General, U Thant.

37. The figure of U Thant, for so long closely associated with the United Nations, will forever be revered for his achievements, his tireless dedication to the cause of peace, his self-effacement and his humanity. To his widow and to the people and Government of Burma, my delegation proffers its most profound sympathy and condolences.

38. I have already had the opportunity, in my statement of 9 October [2263rd meeting], during the general debate, to stress that the foreign policy of my Government is based on one fundamental objective: namely, to promote peace and security throughout the world. Recent events concerning Cyprus and the Middle East have clearly demonstrated once again that a crisis in one particular area inevitably carries with it a threat to the wider peace and stability of all and that no area, no single country, can consider itself immune from any particular trouble spot, however distant it may be. This is amply proved by the anxiety with which countries far and near reacted to those events.

39. The situation in Cambodia is another instance threatening international peace. What happens in Cambodia is the common concern of us all, and it can in no way be considered as an issue which affects only the countries of one area. The principles of international collective security demand the active involvement of all, and no country can absolve itself of the duty to make its contribution, however modest, towards strengthening peace and security.

40. The issue before this Assembly has been made to appear complex and delicate, but in reality the decision we have to take is clear-cut and straightforward. We have to decide which is the lawful and legitimate Government of the Cambodian people, entitled to represent that people in this Organization. Is it the Lon Nol régime, or is it the Royal Government of National Union, led by Prince Norodom Sihanouk? From an analysis of the information available to us, my delegation feels that the Lon Nol régime can only be considered a puppet government, totally dependent on foreign financial and military aid and completely devoid of any significant local popular support. Moreover, it now controls only a very small part of the Cambodian territory, and even that would long ago have slipped from its grasp had it not been for the massive foreign aid already referred to.

41. The Royal Government of National Union of Cambodia, under Prince Norodom Sihanouk, not only has received official recognition as the sole legal Government of Cambodia from over 60 countries, but enjoys the overwhelming support of the Cambodian population and controls 90 per cent of the territory of Cambodia. One is tempted to wonder how a national leader who was removed from the leadership of his country on the pretext of popular discontent could in so short a time regain the confidence and support of the very people whom he was supposedly oppressing. The answer is self-evident. The removal of Prince Norodom Sihanouk was not the expression of the popular will but the result of a plot, instigated, planned and executed by foreign agents. For if his removal had indeed, as is alleged, been the expression of the people's will, then Prince Sihanouk would already have been cast into political oblivion. However, as his removal was obviously contrived and brought about by foreign elements, the Cambodian people have rallied massively to his cause and are now very near to obtaining complete victory. As for the present usurpers, they will inevitably be dislodged from the small area they still manage to control and will be exposed to the world for what they are: a small minority, which, by their connivance, brought about the cruelly intensive bombing of Cambodia, with its resulting death and destruction.

42. To those who want to look at the facts as they are, one major conclusion emerges from the illegal removal of Prince Sihanouk. The Cambodian leader's policy of neutrality in the Viet Nam war constituted a serious obstacle to the military effort of one side in that conflict. The only answer to that problem was therefore to remove Sihanouk from office by any means possible and to try to give that move a semblance of legality.

43. As a small, unarmed country, dedicated to peace and to the basic principles of the United Nations Charter, Malta can never condone the removal of any national leader by foreign intrigue and financial hand-outs. Recent revelations concerning events in other parts of the world have not failed to demonstrate—if proof were needed—that such inadmissible foreign interference in the internal affairs of sovereign States is still very much an uncomfortable reality in the contemporary world.

44. The position of Prince Sihanouk as head of the Cambodian people was strikingly brought to the

world's attention when, in that capacity, he represented his country at the Fourth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries held at Algiers in September 1973. That Conference issued a Political Declaration in which it recognized the Royal Government of National Union as the only legitimate and rightful Government of Cambodia,³ and its resolution on Cambodia asserted

“the legality and legitimacy of the Royal Government headed by Prince Norodom Sihanouk, victim of the coup d'état against Cambodian neutrality”.⁴

My country participated in that Declaration and we fully support it.

45. By its collective recognition of Prince Sihanouk as the legitimate leader of the Cambodian people, the Algiers Conference gave added impetus to the ultimate defeat of the illegal Lon Nol régime. In reaching its decision, that Conference had before it all the necessary evidence. It is certainly not my intention to suggest that this Assembly should automatically rubber stamp whatever may have been decided in other international forums, however exalted they may be. But this Assembly should certainly consider most carefully, with due weight and attention, a Declaration issued in the name of the heads of State of some 75 countries. Nor would my delegation wish to suggest that the non-aligned countries are somehow vested with the moral right to impose their views on the rest of the world, or even to impose any government on any particular country. But, by the same token, neither is such a right possessed by any single Power, however powerful it may be.

46. The excuse of non-interference in the internal affairs of States has been brought up too often in this Assembly to carry much conviction in those instances, such as the present, where it is a transparent excuse for refraining from taking action to redress a palpably unjust state of affairs. This has been the case, most notably, with the question of the relationship between South Africa and this Organization, a question on which the Security Council was unable to take any action.

Mr. Verret (Haiti), Vice-President, took the Chair.

47. My Government believes in non-interference. But that does not mean that we do not raise our voice whenever we see injustice and aggression. Non-interference, to us, does not mean running away from responsibility. Rather, it means condemning unjustified foreign intervention wherever and whenever it manifests itself. An article in last Monday's edition of *The New York Times*, commenting on Cambodia, contained the frank admission that the only thing that is keeping the Lon Nol régime afloat is the massive American economic and military aid. It is obvious that this support is not aimed at succouring a beleaguered ally with a foreign enemy knocking at its gates. Rather, it is an attempt to prop up a puppet régime against the justified wrath of its own people, and an attempt to prevent the Cambodian people from exercising their sovereign right freely to choose their own Government.

48. Another misleading argument which is frequently heard is that since the Royal Government of National Union does not control all the territory of Cambodia, we should await events and not precipitate them by

withdrawing United Nations recognition of the illegal Lon Nol régime. This argument ignores the fact that Lon Nol not only does not control all the territory of Cambodia but exercises such control over a mere fraction of that territory. Likewise, this argument does little credit to the memory of the Members of this Organization, which recall having heard it for so many years in the past in the context of the long efforts to keep the People's Republic of China from occupying its rightful place in the United Nations.

49. Finally, to those who assert that the Royal Government of National Union does not have a permanent seat of government, does not really exercise a stable administration and is not really in effective control of the areas claimed by it, one can do no better than to remind them that these same arguments were heard in this very Hall not so long ago in connexion with another question now happily resolved. I refer to the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, whose very existence was denied by many of those who would now deny the existence of the Royal Government of National Union. Just as the people of Guinea-Bissau emerged victorious in its long struggle, and its representatives are now seated among us, so do we confidently predict the ultimate victory of the people of Cambodia.

50. Draft resolution A/L.733 and Add.1-3, which was submitted on 1 October 1974 and of which Malta is a sponsor, invites this Assembly to take the historic decision to restore to the Royal Government of National Union, and hence to the Cambodian people, its rightful representation as the sole lawful representatives of Cambodia. By voting for this draft resolution, the Assembly will be rectifying the injustice committed against Cambodia by foreign subversion and aggression.

51. On the other hand, draft resolution A/L.737/Rev.1 is, in effect, no more than an attempt to mislead this Assembly into once again adjourning the debate on the item before us, thus enabling the Lon Nol clique to retain the seat they have usurped in this Organization. This is confirmed, if confirmation were needed, by the request before us, in document A/9875, to accord priority to draft resolution A/L.737/Rev.1. This demand not only goes against the accepted rules and practice of the General Assembly but is also an obvious manoeuvre to gag the Assembly and to prevent it from taking a decision on the only question which is properly before it, namely, the restoration of the lawful rights of the Royal Government of National Union of Cambodia in the United Nations. The Assembly, if it is to be faithful to its principles, cannot but reject such unworthy manoeuvres. In so doing, it will be making an inestimable contribution towards enhancing its own prestige and to the cause of peace and security in the world.

52. Mr. TEMPLETON (New Zealand): May I first express the sorrow of my Government and my delegation at the death of U Thant, a distinguished Asian, a devoted servant of the United Nations and a tireless worker for peace.

53. New Zealand is not an immediate neighbour of Cambodia, and the question of who should represent Cambodia in the United Nations is not a matter which would ordinarily be of special concern to my Government. New Zealand indeed regards any decision regarding the Government of Cambodia as a matter for

the Cambodian people. Had two rival authorities sent to this Assembly two delegations claiming the right to represent Cambodia, the Assembly would have had a legitimate question to consider. That is not the situation here; one Cambodian Government, constitutionally formed and resident in the capital, has sent a single delegation to represent it.

54. In our view, therefore, there is no question for the Assembly to consider in regard to the representation of Cambodia in the United Nations. What is of concern to my Government, however, is that a bloody civil war continues in Cambodia, with no end in sight. My Government is anxious to see peaceful conditions restored in Cambodia at the earliest possible moment, so that the Cambodian people as a whole may freely choose the form of government which they regard as best suited to their needs. Any attempt to impose a solution from outside, or to apply any kind of pressure which might affect the eventual decision of the Cambodian people, should, in our view, be strongly resisted. A decision by the Assembly to reject the delegation of the existing Khmer Government—a delegation which is here and which has been accepted in the past—in favour of a delegation which is not here and which, moreover, would represent a government which is not established in Cambodia, would constitute the kind of pressure to which we are opposed and which, in our view, would create a most dangerous precedent.

55. There is another reason why New Zealand has actively concerned itself with this issue, to the extent of sponsoring draft resolution A/L.737/Rev.1.

56. New Zealand is not a neighbour of Cambodia, but it has extremely close and friendly relations with five of Cambodia's neighbours—Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and the Philippines, which together form the Association of South-East Asian Nations [ASEAN]. The members of ASEAN have made their position on this issue very clear both in their statements in the general debate at the beginning of this session and in this debate. Indeed, the Foreign Secretary of the Philippines put their case most cogently only a few minutes ago. All the members of ASEAN are sponsors of draft resolution A/L.737/Rev.1. We may note in passing that, on the other hand, none of Cambodia's neighbours, except China, has sponsored draft resolution A/L.733 and Add.1-3. Indeed, although that draft resolution has a considerable number of sponsors from other regions, there are no sponsors, other than China, from South Asia, South-East Asia or East Asia.

57. No ASEAN representative spoke more eloquently on this issue than the Foreign Minister of Indonesia, Mr. Adam Malik, when he addressed this Assembly in the general debate on 24 September. Mr. Malik said that his Government had nothing against Prince Sihanouk or the so-called Royal Government. He went on to say:

“But the Khmer Parliament—his own Parliament—elected by the Khmer people in accordance with the Khmer Constitution, deposed him, and he is now making his claim to national leadership as an exile, from the capital of a foreign country.”
[2241st meeting, para. 31.]

58. Mr. Malik pointed out that if the Assembly were to embark upon the recognition of such régimes

in exile, it would not only be tantamount to interfering in the domestic jurisdiction of a State, but would set a precedent endangering the very structure of the United Nations. The choice, he said, should be allowed to remain with the people, and the United Nations should not adopt the practice of imposing a government upon a people.

59. “The choice should be allowed to remain with the people”. That phrase so exactly reflects the position of my own Government, that New Zealand has joined with Indonesia and the other members of ASEAN in sponsoring an alternative resolution to that put forward by the sponsors of the item, an alternative which we believe to be clearly preferable to the latter text, in that it is aimed at bringing about a peaceful settlement of the Cambodian question through negotiations between the indigenous parties.

60. In his speech yesterday, the representative of China said many things with which I could not agree, but he did make one remark with which those who support the concept of peace talks fully agree. Indeed, he repeated what Mr. Malik said and what the ASEAN countries have been saying for a long time—and I am quoting him—“Cambodian affairs must be determined by the Cambodian people themselves” [2298th meeting, para. 76].

61. But why then do he and the other sponsors of the item seek to have this Assembly decide who is the sole lawful representative of the Cambodian people and of the State of Cambodia? Why do those countries oppose a resolution calling for talks between the indigenous parties in Cambodia, which is surely the obvious means of settling the present differences which exist within that country?

62. My delegation has taken note of the comments offered by the Secretary-General on the situation in Indo-China in the introduction to his report on the work of the Organization and especially of his hope that “the time will come when the United Nations may be able to play a more active role in seeking areas of co-operation with all the entities whose interests and aspirations are factors in the establishment of a stable and just peace in the area” [A/9601/Add.1, sect. IX, p. 7]. We believe, in fact, that in Cambodia the time has come when the Secretary-General himself, acting with the strict impartiality which is required of his office and which he has always been scrupulous to maintain, can play a useful role in assisting the parties to come together for talks aimed at a peaceful settlement. The sponsors of draft resolution A/L.737/Rev.1 have therefore taken the initiative in asking the Secretary-General, in operative paragraph 2, to lend appropriate assistance to the parties.

63. It would obviously be inappropriate for the Assembly to attempt to reach a decision on the question of representation which would prejudice the outcome of the peace talks that we envisage. That is why the sponsors of draft resolution A/L.737/Rev.1 have asked that a decision be taken first on their proposal, and that the Assembly take no other action on the item at this session.

64. It is nonsense, incidentally, to suggest that this proposal is contrary to the rules of procedure. Rule 91 provides that the Assembly shall vote on proposals in the order in which they have been submitted, unless

it decides otherwise. What has been proposed on this occasion is that we should, for valid and substantial reasons, decide otherwise. The Assembly is perfectly competent to change the order of resolutions, and there are plenty of precedents for its doing so.

65. We have made this proposal in the belief that if the parties will engage in talks with a sincere will to negotiate, a solution can be found to the Cambodian question which will solve the representation issue in the context of a larger settlement. In doing so, it will remove the temptation for the Assembly to intervene in the domestic affairs of the Khmer people, setting a precedent which must cause all Governments represented here the gravest misgivings.

66. Mr. BAROODY (Saudi Arabia): U Thant is dead but his dedication to universal peace still abides with us. He once told me that it seems that man can only learn through suffering, and asked me if I thought that there was still a hope of salvation for mankind.

Mr. Bouteflika (Algeria) resumed the Chair.

67. I replied that if the United Nations failed as the League of Nations did before it, there would indeed be little hope for the survival of man.

68. Then I tried to persuade him to accept a third term as Secretary-General of this Organization. He replied, "My brother, I am tired and no one should be considered indispensable for bringing about world peace".

69. U Thant has been released from his suffering. He was the best example to us all in this Organization. May the Creator of the universe rest his soul in peace.

70. What was said by many of us at the twenty-eighth session still obtains. This same question of Cambodia has bedevilled us because, unfortunately, after 29 years we still resort to tactics that are fruitless. And when I say this I think I have a right to mention it, because I have seen how this Organization, time and again, forgot that every Member should be imbued with a sense of justice as well as a sense of the necessity of assuming his responsibility in a more serious manner.

71. I can do no better than to quote in part from the verbatim records of the twenty-eighth session, what I asserted, not suggested, to have been true:

"I cannot afford but to be frank, not because of my nature, but because, more than ever, we should try to be true to ourselves and not vote simply by groups, but to the best of our ability on the basis of analysis, an analysis which should be made to ascertain the truth alone and what should be done about it.

"The super-Powers, and most of those which go along with them, have not changed their policies which often as not are predicated on the basis of balance of power and maintaining fixed spheres of influence.

"One would think that after the so-called *détente* was proclaimed as paving the way for a better understanding between the super-Powers a different situation would exist. But unfortunately we find that for them, and indeed for all of us, only lip-service is still being paid to an allegedly better political atmosphere among them.

" . . .

"But do we still have Communists and capitalists, as such, nowadays? Of course the systems still prevail, but to what extent? During this session, I have said, and I shall repeat it again, that the capitalists are becoming Socialists by attrition, whilst the Communist countries are veering towards capitalism by accelerated evolution.

"Why do I say this? Are the super-Powers really fighting one another by proxy in order to maintain their political systems? To some extent that may be so. But to a large extent the super-Powers, like the small Powers, like every State, have petty national interests. When it suits them, as happened on the question of Korea, they work out a consensus. When some of us have reservations about their tacit agreements . . . they exchange views and say, 'Who are those States that come and upset the applecart for us?'

"I am not going to upset any applecart from this rostrum today, because there is neither a cart nor are there apples. There is no agreement, there is no consensus, there is no good will, there is no mutual trust. There is suspicion. There is one thing that is certain: each of the super-Powers wants to guarantee its own sphere of influence. No matter what we say and no matter what we do to rationalize our policies, the facts are still here to confront us, as they confronted the world before 1914: balance of power and spheres of influence."⁵

72. I can go on and on and read from my statement of last year on the Cambodian question but I do not want to tax your patience. However, why try to ad lib when something has already been said? Why not rightly repeat it, if there has been no change in position? And here, to be more specific on this question, I shall quote, also from this same statement, on this item:

"We have no assurance that even Prince Sihanouk has full control over the people of the North. We are told that the Khmer Rouge are playing politics with Hanoi, and that Prince Sihanouk has lost control. I do not know. What I know is that I must ask the super-Powers to leave small peoples"—the small Powers—"alone, just as I have been telling them about our region. Leave us alone. They will not leave us alone. They fight wars by proxy. For the benefit of my Algerian friend:"

Ambassador Rahal—when he stands on this rostrum looks like a Roman emperor, or like a professor of the Sorbonne; I highly respect him and cherish him, but he is human and makes mistakes like I do sometimes—

"une guerre par procuration. That is what they are doing and that is why we have so much trouble in the world.

"Now let us assume that the draft resolution before the Assembly wins by a majority."

I am talking about last year, that resolution to play musical chairs in Cambodia by changing the Government.

"I believe the President will have to ask the representatives of Cambodia who are sitting amongst us to leave. Suppose this is so. The war will continue. And would the leaders who are playing this game suffer, as I mentioned to some of my colleagues

here—we who are playing with the destiny of the Cambodian people, or any other people for that matter, where there is the foul play of super-Powers? No, we dress well, we eat, we have a restaurant here in the United Nations.”

For our convenience. Some of us live in palatial houses and that sort of thing, but who is suffering? The Cambodian people as a whole is suffering.

“And you here in the United Nations forget that sovereignty does not lie in Governments but lies in the people.

“We forget that and that is why we are blundering time and again. It will not be long before the people of the world will have to make their leaders adopt a new approach to international affairs lest, here, we totter and fall in the United Nations. And then what will happen?”⁶

I leave it to your imagination and will not continue to read.

73. I was really disappointed this year to find that nothing has happened since we discussed that question in the General Assembly in 1973. It seems that positions are fossilized and we are still voting by groups, out of political solidarity—“Do this for me, and I will do that for you”. Is it any wonder that for the last 10 years or so I would not sponsor with others any draft resolution as I wanted to be free? Like everyone, we should be dedicated to the United Nations Charter, its principles and its purposes, and how can you be one of the sheep of sponsors if when you change your mind or even want to make a noise, they ask: “Are you with us or against us?” The test of the United Nations should not be “Are you with us or against us?” I may be neither with you nor against you. Any one should be able to say that. We should be free to use our judgement and to find out what the consequences would be were we to huddle like sheep as sponsors, as if the weight were in the number of States. It is not. The power is in the hands of three or four States and also their clients who play the same tune and think that they have power though they have not.

74. Therefore, the voice of justice should be raised high from this rostrum lest we all suffer. Both the draft resolutions are unsatisfactory I find. By the draft resolutions I mean those in documents A/L.733 and Add.1-3 and A/L.737/Rev.1. My respected friend—I do not know whether he is still sitting there—whom it has been my privilege to know since 1945, none other than the illustrious Romulo—I do not want to say General Romulo any more; he served as a general in the Second World War, not a fighting general but a journalistic general—is one of the most humanitarian figures I have known. He will not compromise his conscience for anything and I must concur with him that it would be a most dangerous precedent that we in the General Assembly should sit as judges *in absentia* to make final and irrevocable decisions as to what faction in any country represents the people as a whole. Who are we? Many of us are appointed by Governments, sometimes perhaps in order to do something that we should do—not so much to tip the balance of great decisions but rather to learn from others. And here we come to sit as judges sometimes. Look at us! We have the votes. We do not have the votes. It is going to be a narrow vote. Perhaps we will get 50 and

the others will get 49, so what can we do to lobby and get 51? Shame! Can justice be served like that? Is this an auction room or auction hall? We want to know how many votes we can get and what we can do in order to induce a representative to vote for us. If he cannot vote with us, then maybe he will abstain. That is what has been happening here, and I must say it: I am not going to be here for ever with you. I have served for 29 years, but I must say that the United Nations will totter and fall if we pursue such a policy. I am not angry; that's just my style. Yes, it will totter and fall as an Organization.

75. Now let us have a look at the draft resolutions before us. I will start with the one in document A/L.733 and Add.1-3. Who are the major sponsors that come from the region? Afghanistan and China. Let us see who the rest are—Albania, Algeria, Burundi, the Central African Republic, the Congo, Cuba—good Lord, some of them are 10,000 miles away from Cambodia and they seem to know it all! Whom are you fooling here? China, rightly, is acting for the best according to its lights in so far as it is a Member State of the region. I am not going to say whether it is right or wrong. Who am I to tell the Chinese, also from East Asia, that they are wrong. I will not compromise my conscience and say to them: “Because you are a big country of 800 million people”—and I respect the Chinese people, their culture and their history—“you are right”. No, they will not get that from me.

76. Now let us see who are the sponsors of the draft resolution in document A/L.737/Rev.1: Australia—I do not think it is as far as Guinea or Iraq from Cambodia, or as Niger, Romania or Senegal—it is in the area, in the region, more or less; Japan—well Japan is East Asia and I do not think Cambodia is in West Asia; Malaysia—South-East Asia; New Zealand—like Australia; the Philippines—I do not have to repeat what our colleague the eminent representative of the Philippines has said, because it would be repetitive; Singapore; I wish the United Kingdom had kept out of it, but it did not. They have their own troubles with Ireland too. And I also wish that Uruguay had kept out of it. I kept out of it, why do they not do as Baroody does?

77. I can see that they—the United States—are getting subtle. “Why should we figure in that draft resolution so long as we can plant certain others there?” It is no longer funny. They are there in letter and spirit, I can assure representatives, just as China is there in letter and spirit in the first draft resolution. Those are the facts. Why should they appear? The super-Powers know how to pull the strings, but sometimes they lend weight by figuring in draft resolutions.

78. And now, let us be frank. Had the major Powers not intervened in South-East Asia, including Viet Nam, Cambodia and Korea, we would not have had so much trouble here in the United Nations. But, as I have said, they do not leave the people alone to decide for themselves, without undue pressure.

79. The only way to proceed in future—and this is my legacy should I not speak again on this question—is to neutralize those countries just as we did with Austria, in which I played my little role behind the scenes. “Hands off Austria, all of us big Powers” was the conclusion to which they finally came. Today Austria—one of the most respected Member States and one of

the most civilized countries in Europe—is represented here.

80. What is wrong with the Cambodian people? What is wrong with the Korean people? They are older than those European “children” in history that are only 500 to 600 years old in culture and history. Asia is the fountain of culture, the fountain of Europe. The Indo-Europeans came from Asia. Leave those people alone—the people of Korea, Cambodia, Laos, and Viet Nam. Are you bringing “civilization” to them? Leave them alone.

81. And I address my Chinese brothers—if they consider me a brother: Leave them alone; let them settle their affairs amongst themselves. We should not be judges, whether or not we come from the region.

82. I thought that both draft resolutions were unsatisfactory and that I should do something about them; and I did. I do not have to read every word of the amendments that I submitted yesterday [A/L.744 and A/L.745]; they are in the hands of representatives. I think that they form a sort of catalyst between the two draft resolutions, a sort of bridge, rather than creating a rift as draft resolutions do in the United Nations—creating more tension, more dissension and eliciting all kinds of rubrics.

83. They call one person a “traitor” and they also say Lon Nol is a “puppet”; others call Sihanouk “someone in the hands of the Chinese”. Why? Have some respect for a prince who has proved himself a very capable figure in South-East Asia. Have respect for Lon Nol and the people around him. Where is the human dignity, the dignity of the person that we elaborated in 1948 in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights? If we call someone a traitor and another a puppet, what do we gain? Where is the worth and dignity of the human person? Consider them as persons.

84. These letters were received within the last two days alone; mail that I received from my good friend—one of the aides, the ministers I should say—Sambath. He is with Prince Sihanouk. We were the closest friends; we used to sit and talk for hours about our common problems.

85. And here is a letter from my good friend Mr. Boret.

86. Both Sambath and Boret were friends: one is now Prime Minister in the so-called Lon Nol Government and the other is a Minister in the so-called Royal Government of Cambodia; one is “Khmer” and the other is “Cambodia”—they have even chosen different names. But instead of bringing those people together, we have created not a rift but a chasm between them. Is that fair here in the United Nations? And we are guided by petty political considerations that in the long run will not serve our national interests, because anything not based on justice and equity will finally totter and fall.

87. Here is a very persuasive letter from my good friend Sambath, sent from Yugoslavia—I do not know what they have to do with Yugoslavia. The letter was, I guess, sent by diplomatic mail and bears the annotation “Personal” by my good friend. Boret is not my friend because he is a Prime Minister. I have seen prime ministers and I have spoken face to face with

kings, princes and heads of republics and told them what I thought. I am not impressed by titles. It is a reasonable letter, and this man, Sambath, also wrote very reasonably. They both seem to be reasonable. Why not bring them together—not necessarily Prince Sihanouk and Mr. Lon Nol, but bring people with the same good intentions together. No, we have to have two separate draft resolutions. This game should be considered antiquated, futile, abortive.

88. And, then, as though that were not enough, I have received cables. This is one of them, and I ask Mr. Scali, United States representative, to listen to this:

“US executive branch carries out secret war in Cambodia against will of Congress and public.”

How do I know what is going on in the Congress and in public?

“Hundreds killed weekly on behalf of broad coalition. We urge you act for peace”—

This is to me, as if I had the whole question in my hands—

“by recognizing Sihanouk Government”.

This was sent by way of Western Union. I have received several other cables, but I shall not tax the patience of members by reading them out. No doubt many of you have been the recipients of such communications.

89. How can we in all fairness take a decision on this question that is based on equity and justice? Tell me how. Either we side with China and become antagonistic to the United States, or we side with the United States and become antagonistic to China. I do not know where the Russians stand on this question. They are between the devil and the deep blue sea on this question. They have not spoken up yet. I think they have a chargé d'affaires there. The Soviet representative has the privilege of correcting me if I am wrong.

90. You see what kind of game it is—changing colours. Is it the system? Come on—it is petty national interests based on balance of power and spheres of influence. What system? The great socialist system? The great capitalist free enterprise system? Look at the free enterprise system. It is bankrupt in the European countries and in this country. There are no more systems. There are people who should fare well under their Governments. In Arabic we say: “The leader of a people is their own servant”.

91. I have a small correction to make in my amendments to both draft resolutions. In my amendment to operative paragraph 2, the word “Governments” should be replaced by the word “parties”, so that the paragraph would read:

“2. Requests the Secretary-General, after due consultation, to lend appropriate assistance to the two contending parties . . .”

That is in keeping with the alterations that I introduced in the preamble of both draft resolutions.

92. I shall now read out those amendments that are identical in the sense that I think they will act as a bridge for the sponsors of both draft resolutions. I hope that the sponsors of both draft resolutions will spare us a long procedural debate and will accept my

amendments; otherwise, I can visualize an interminable procedural debate that would be followed by a substantive debate full of acrimony, accusation and recrimination, which will charge the atmosphere with tension and result in frustration for each of us.

93. My first amendment of the amendments [A/L.744] to draft resolution A/L.733 and Add.1-3 reads:

“Replace the second preambular paragraph by the following:

‘Taking into account that, while the Royal Government of National Union of Cambodia, presided over by Prince Norodom Sihanouk, exercises authority over a segment of Cambodia, the Government of the Khmer Republic still has control over a preponderant number of the Cambodian people.’”

That is a statement of fact. If anyone can challenge it, let him come up here and do so.

94. My second amendment reads:

“Replace the third preambular paragraph by the following:

‘Considering that the lawful rights of the two Governments are only valid if it is determined that these rights emanate from the sovereign people of Cambodia as a whole.’”

95. My third amendment reads:

“Add the following paragraph at the end of the preamble:

‘Mindful that the conflict in Cambodia is sustained by various external forces.’”

Who can refute what I say here?

96. My fourth amendment reads:

“Replace the operative paragraph by the following paragraphs:

‘1. Calls upon all the Powers which have been influencing’—out of courtesy to those Powers I do not use the word “interfering” but “influencing”. We all influence one another, I hope, by good deeds—the two parties to the conflict to use their good offices for conciliation between those two parties with a view to restoring peace in Cambodia.’”

Restoring peace—not conflict by widening the rift.

97. The second paragraph of that amendment reads:

“2. Requests the Secretary-General, after due consultation, to lend appropriate assistance to the two contending parties”—not Governments—“claiming lawful rights in Cambodia and to report on the results to the General Assembly at its thirtieth session.”

98. The same phraseology applies to draft resolution A/L.737/Rev.1, and I need not repeat it. When you study the texts of the draft resolutions carefully, you will find that the intent of my amendments applies equally to both texts.

99. If my warnings are not heeded, the alternative will indeed be very grim. The war will continue and no doubt the super-Powers will see to it that this chess game being played in that unhappy region will continue. And as I have said time and again, they are not playing chess with wooden pieces, but with the destiny of a people, and that is wrong.

100. I am sorry that I have taken such a long time in explaining the position as it should be after my statement. I hope that we shall not go on as we have done in the past and that I shall be spared the need to raise my voice again from this rostrum to tell you that indeed there is very little hope for the survival of mankind.

101. Mr. HARMON (Liberia): As U Thant, former Secretary-General of the United Nations, lies in state today, I wish, on behalf of the Permanent Mission, the Liberian delegation to the twenty-ninth session of the General Assembly and the Government and people of Liberia, to convey through the Burmese delegation to the family of the deceased and the people of Burma our heartfelt sympathy and condolences on the loss of so great and illustrious a son.

102. U Thant came to the United Nations at a time of great uncertainty and competing super-Power politics. However, in his quiet but effective manner he was able to achieve great stature and bring about understanding among the Member States. He will ever be remembered, therefore, for his important role and the bringing-about of the universal acceptance which helped immeasurably to strengthen the international image of our Organization. His memory will remain evergreen in the hearts of all those who knew and worked closely with him and we shall cherish the high ideals for which he stood and hope that this Organization will survive and continue to serve mankind everywhere in its quest for peace, security, and human dignity.

103. When our delegation spoke on the item under consideration during the debate at the twenty-eighth session of the General Assembly,⁷ we mentioned that, although Liberia was separated geographically by thousands of miles from the Khmer Republic, our attention was nevertheless drawn to this issue by a painful interest in the development of the tragic events which were then plaguing that country. We further based our statement on the fact that Liberia, as a peace-loving State, has a deep and abiding concern for the peaceful settlement of the problems that confront Member States of our Organization.

104. We shall not, therefore, go into the history of this issue because this has been well aired from this rostrum and many records have been made of the debates during the past two years. In particular, we have taken special note of the statement made at this session by the Prime Minister of the Khmer Republic [2263rd meeting], which gives a reasonable summary of the conditions which exist at present in his country. Therefore, to undertake any precipitous action at this session could only exacerbate the conflict and give comfort to those who seek to encourage the factions to continue this state of affairs.

105. My delegation is moved to suggest, therefore, that the General Assembly should avoid contributing to a continuing conflict by any intervention which might well tend by its action to encourage a plethora of self-proclaimed Governments attempting to avail themselves of this world Organization as a court of final appeal in which to win recognition denied to them in a domestic forum.

106. More than this, having followed with much interest the developments in the Khmer Republic since the twenty-eighth session, and having respect for the

concerted efforts made by some of the major Asian countries that have common boundaries with and understand the problems of the Khmer nation more than most of us in other remoter areas and have come forward with strong recommendations urging the United Nations to give full expression to the will and determination of the Khmer people, which must evaluate its own needs, aspirations and leadership, we are impelled to bring to the attention of this Assembly the fact that any resolution supporting the restoration of the lawful rights of the Royal Government of National Union of Cambodia in the United Nations without taking into consideration the constitutional procedure which led to the deposing of Prince Sihanouk would in fact introduce a procedure difficult to live with and one which could not be legally justified. To adopt draft resolution A/L.733 and Add.1-3, on the other hand, would be tantamount to pre-empting the right of the people of the Khmer Republic to decide which Government should represent them and would constitute definite interference in the internal affairs of a Member State, contrary to the principles of the United Nations Charter.

107. Speaking on this question yesterday [2299th meeting, paras. 89-103], the representative of Japan was able in his statement to make a true and correct assessment of the situation in the Khmer Republic. The Liberian delegation wishes to endorse that assessment and, to add emphasis, would like to join him in bringing this very serious matter to the attention of the General Assembly. The representative of Japan said, among other things, that the question confronting us with the utmost urgency was what we could do to help the Khmer people to restore peace. He said further that it was very late, but not too late for our Organization to make immediate efforts to help put an end to the fighting, restore peace and save our brothers in Cambodia from further misery and bloodshed, rather than engage in further ideological debate. Nothing was more telling than this, and I wonder how many members of our international community here have given serious thought to this important point of view. Cambodia's representation here, I fully agree, is irrelevant. Therefore, on behalf of the Liberian delegation, I wish to join in this urgent appeal and ask the General Assembly to listen to the earnest voice of conscience and vote for the adoption of draft resolution A/L.737/Rev.1, thereby giving the indigenous parties the sole responsibility for moving towards resolving their internal differences and restoring peace to that people and nation.

108. In conclusion, my delegation, having briefly outlined our position on this matter, strongly urges our fellow representatives to reflect reasonably upon the consequences of a course of action contrary to what we have recommended above, which in the end would continue to disturb peace and security in that region.

109. We must proceed with the utmost prudence and caution rather than act hastily without thorough and fair consideration of all the facets of this important issue.

110. What, therefore, seems to be logical and just in the opinion of the Liberian delegation? It is for this Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/L.737/Rev.1, which in principle calls upon the opposing parties to concern themselves with an effort to reconcile their

differences, preferably on the domestic level. The Liberian delegation therefore expresses the sincere hope that more time will be given to the Khmer people and all parties concerned to seek to bring to an early end a political situation which is the responsibility and the business of the indigenous parties only—and I insist on the word "only". We must also appeal to the parties to move speedily towards putting an end to the tragic suffering and loss of life and property in that country.

111. We wish to call upon all who wield some degree of influence in the area to press for an early solution to this political problem so that when we return for the thirtieth session of the General Assembly we may be heartened by the progress that has been made towards bringing peace and security to that area.

112. By way of explanation, we voted for deferment of the debate on this item at the twenty-eighth session because we were convinced that to have done otherwise would have been to set a dangerous precedent which was contrary to the cardinal principle in relation to the right of States and sovereign peoples to be allowed to decide what form of government or what leadership they choose without outside interference. Having stated this fact, we would say that we still maintain this position because nothing constructive has happened to change our point of view.

113. Mr. SCALI (United States of America): The issue presented to this Assembly by the two draft resolutions before us is in essence very simple. One draft resolution proposes negotiations without preconditions for a peaceful settlement of the tragic conflict in Cambodia. The other demands a one-sided solution and offers only the prospect of continued war and more suffering by the Cambodian people. Which of these alternatives is consistent with the purposes for which this Organization was founded? Which of these paths does our Charter stake out as the road to justice and accepted international law?

114. One draft resolution [A/L.733 and Add.1-3] would have the Assembly itself decide for the Khmer people that Cambodia is to be represented not by its present Government but by an exiled régime located over 2,000 miles from Phnom Penh. It should come as no surprise that the only nation located anywhere near Cambodia which sponsors this draft resolution is the country in whose capital this exiled régime happens to be located.

115. The other draft resolution [A/L.737/Rev.1] is sponsored by 23 nations, 5 of whom are among Cambodia's closest neighbours. They advocate a basic principle spelled out in the draft resolution in these opening lines: "that the Khmer people themselves should be allowed to solve their own political problems peacefully, free from outside interference". That draft resolution, unlike the other, does not call on the United Nations or anyone else to prejudge the decision of the Cambodian people. Instead, it proposes that the United Nations contribute positively to a settlement in Cambodia by calling on the parties themselves to begin negotiations. Furthermore, it asks the Secretary-General to lend appropriate assistance, as he has done so effectively in the past. Finally, the draft resolution sponsored by Cambodia's neighbours calls on all United Nations Member States to respect the outcome of these peaceful discussions between the

Cambodian parties, as my Government is prepared to do. The United States supports efforts toward an honest compromise solution in Cambodia.

116. I must, however, reply to some speakers who, again, in discussing this item have spread harsh and ugly charges against the United States. I reject these charges. They are false. If their accusations were true, that a brutal military dictatorship has been foisted on the Cambodian people, why is it that the Cambodian Government continues to operate effectively and that the Cambodian people continue to fight heroically and with increasing success against the invaders, all of this long after the United States has ended all air support and sharply reduced its military assistance? Could it be because the Cambodian people are fighting for their independence against foreign troops on their soil?

117. Attempts by some speakers to present their special version of Cambodian history are, in our view, an effort to divert this Assembly from the real questions: namely, which are the only foreign forces intervening in Cambodia today and which action by this Assembly seeks to deprive the Cambodian people of their right to self-determination?

118. For those who are unaware of, or who forget, Cambodia's real history, it may be useful to recall that Prince Sihanouk was not removed by a palace coup; that the Government of Cambodia, which dismissed Prince Sihanouk in 1970, had been formed by Sihanouk himself less than a year before; that the Khmer National Assembly, which ratified the decision and voted unanimously to depose Sihanouk was composed of members whom Sihanouk had personally selected and supported for election; that all during that period, while Cambodians fought for their continued independence, the total American Government presence in Phnom Penh consisted of two diplomatic officers and three military attachés, and that negotiations between the Khmer Government and North Viet Nam were broken off unilaterally by North Viet Nam on 25 March 1970. Four days later, North Vietnamese and Viet-Cong forces attacked Khmer police and military posts. The present hostilities in Cambodia date from those attacks.

119. The United States is proud of the role it has played in helping the Khmer Government and people to stave off the continuing military attacks by insurgents and foreign military forces. We have also, however, stressed the need to initiate negotiations to end this conflict and to bring reconciliation, harmony and self-determination to all Cambodia. The United States is quite prepared to see Cambodia ruled by whatever government the Cambodian people may freely decide upon. On 12 August, President Ford told our Congress that the United States "hopes to see an early compromise settlement in Cambodia".

120. It is not the United States but others who have refused to leave Cambodia to the Cambodians. Certainly the Government of the Khmer Republic has not put any obstacle in the way of a negotiated settlement. On 9 July 1974, that Government offered to enter into negotiations without conditions, at any time, with any representatives of the other Cambodian party in order to bring the conflict to an end. We have heard some speakers claim that the opposition forces in Cambodia control 90 per cent of that country's territory and 80 per cent of its people. If this is true, then why, we must wonder, has the opposition no

capital, no government, no machinery, no parliament, in fact none of the normal attributes of a government? Why, indeed, has their nominal chief of State taken refuge in a foreign capital? Why does he not go home to receive the acclaim of the people who, we are told, are eagerly awaiting his return? This seems to be a reasonable and fundamental question.

121. Reviewing the record I find, surprisingly, that these same speakers one year ago made identical claims in the debate in this Hall. One year ago they claimed that their protégés controlled 90 per cent of the territory and 80 per cent of the population. One might have expected that a year of alleged new victories would have been reflected in more impressive statistics this year. Why not claim 98 per cent of the territory and 95 per cent of the people this year? Indeed, why not ignore the hard reality of the existence of the Government of Cambodia altogether and claim 100 per cent?

122. The fact is that despite the best efforts of a foreign-inspired and assisted insurgency and of the North Vietnamese army, the Khmer Government has never ceased maintaining control over the vast majority of Cambodia's people and over the territory in which they live. North Vietnamese troops and their Cambodian supporters do indeed range through many areas of north and east Cambodia, but Sihanouk's supporters have neglected to explain to us that those areas of the country are very sparsely populated.

123. The truth is that Prince Sihanouk does not return to lead his people because he has no safe haven in Cambodia, no real government or real following to return to.

124. I should like to ask: Why should this Assembly be asked to choose between two rival claimants—one of which happens to be located outside the country—to Cambodia's seat in the United Nations? It is our view that the United Nations has no business deciding which is the legitimate Government of any Member State.

125. I urge that all Members of this Assembly consider carefully the views so eloquently set forth during this debate by the Asian neighbours of the Khmer Republic. Surely the vast majority of United Nations Members must share their desire to see peace in their part of the world by allowing Cambodia to determine its own destiny. Surely we will heed their warning about the dangers of continued conflict and join in their call for a negotiated settlement to the present hostilities. There is a decision which deeply involves their own security and their own future. We who live elsewhere, particularly those of us who live far away, have a responsibility to respect their views if we are to expect equal consideration in connexion with problems in our areas.

126. The United States Government believes that the United Nations has a fundamental obligation to support the process of negotiation as the best means of resolving disputes and settling conflicts, wherever and whenever they arise. We are convinced that such a process serves the real interests of all parties to a dispute, in Cambodia as elsewhere. A negotiated settlement in Cambodia is overdue. This process should begin now. Surely no one of us can really wish to prolong the agony of that country or its people. Surely we can all agree that it is time for the fighting to stop,

NOTES

for negotiations to begin, for compromises to be reached and for compatriots to be reconciled.

127. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): Before adjourning the meeting, I should like to remind representatives that the body of U Thant is lying in state near the Meditation Room and anyone who has not yet done so may pay his respects there.

The meeting rose at 1.25 p.m.

¹ A/9254.

² Bandung Conference of African-Asian Nations, held from 18 to 24 April 1955.

³ A/9330 and Corr.1, p. 12.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

⁵ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-eighth Session, Plenary Meetings*, 2190th meeting, paras. 130-132 and 135-137.

⁶ *Ibid.*, paras. 145-147.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 2189th meeting, para. 78.