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THE SITUATION IN KAMPUCHEA
QUESTION OF PEACE, STABILITY AND
CO-OPERATION IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA
REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
DECLARATION ON THE STRENGTHENING
OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY
PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES
BETWEEN STATES

 SECURITY COUNCIL
Forty-fourth year

Letter dated 1 November 1989 from the Permanent
Representative of Viet Nam to the United Nations
addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to enclose herewith the text of the interview granted to the Viet Nam News Agency on 29 October 1989 by His Excellency Mr. Nguyen Co Thach, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would arrange for the present letter and its annex to be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 31, 41, 72 and 141, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) TRINH XUAN LANG
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

ANNEX

Interview granted to the Viet Nam News Agency on 29 October 1989
by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam

Question 1

What are the main outstanding issues on a political solution to the Cambodian question?

Answer:

The Paris Conference reached an agreement on the total withdrawal of the Vietnamese troops from Cambodia, non-return to power of the genocidal régime in Cambodia, the cessation of foreign military aid to the Cambodian parties, the respect of the independence, sovereignty, neutrality and non-alignment of Cambodia, the implementation of the Cambodian people's right to self-determination through free, fair and democratic general elections, the international guarantee of agreements to be signed and the setting-up of an international control mechanism for the implementation of the agreements. That means all fundamental and long-term issues of an overall solution for Cambodia have been agreed upon. There remain two outstanding issues. The first is the setting up of a provisional authority with the task of holding general elections in the transitional period between the total pullout of the Vietnamese troops and the general elections (which could last 3 months at least and 12 months at most). The second is the United Nations role in an international control mechanism.

Question 2

What are the differences in the positions of the various parties about the provisional authority mechanism?

Answer:

First of all, there is a difference on principle. The setting up of a provisional authority is an internal affair of Cambodia. The other side demands that the International Conference decide the establishing of a quadripartite coalition government headed by Sihanouk, whereas our side holds that all foreign countries should respect the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of Cambodia, which should be settled by the Cambodian parties. The other major difference is that the other side's demand for the setting up of a quadripartite coalition government is in fact aimed at altering the practical political and military reality that has asserted itself in the struggle over the last 10 years; in other words, doing away with the State of Cambodia which is controlling the whole Cambodian territory. They ask for an equal division of political and military power among the four Cambodian parties, which means they demand that the International Conference recognize the legitimacy of the genocidal régime and grant the Pol Pot criminals a political and military power equal to the State of

Cambodia. That would create legal conditions for the Pol Pot criminals to kindle a civil war and re-establish their genocidal power in Cambodia. That is an immoral act and a crime against the Cambodian people and mankind. The three factions in the so-called Democratic Kampuchea do not control even a small part of Cambodian territory, but yet they demand three fourths of the political and military power in Cambodia. That is an unreasonable demand which cannot be accepted by the State of Cambodia.

The other side holds that, after the complete withdrawal of Vietnamese troops, the setting up of a quadripartite coalition government is the key to an overall political solution to the Cambodian question. That allegation is completely fallacious. The key issue to a settlement of the internal affairs of Cambodia is the exercise of the Cambodian people's right to self-determination in choosing a political system, electing a parliament and establishing a government of their own through free, democratic and fair general elections under international supervision.

The setting up of a coalition government before such general elections is a gross imposition and violation of the Cambodian people's right to self-determination, and at the same time, is an artificial obstacle aimed at undermining an overall political solution to the Cambodian question.

In furtherance of the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Indo-China, Cambodia did not set up a coalition government and a general election was held under the Sihanouk régime with international supervision. Likewise, in Namibia an interim coalition government was not set up and a general election will be arranged by the United Nations in the framework of the old régime founded by the South African authorities. So, what is at issue is an authority mechanism to organize free, democratic and fair general elections under international control. The State of Cambodia has proposed the establishment of a supreme national reconciliation council, comprising the two Cambodia sides - the State of Cambodia and Democratic Kampuchea - in order to implement all agreements signed and to hold a general election.

The question now is whether the other side wants to have a really free, democratic and fair general election or to impose upon the Cambodian people a government in which they would hold three fourths of the power and legalize the genocidal Pol Pot régime.

Question 3

In any case, the divergence of views on this provisional authority is the biggest obstacle to an overall solution to the Cambodian problem. How should it be settled in your view?

Answer:

The known points of view of the parties concerned may be classified into three different tendencies:

(a) China and Singapore want countries outside Cambodia to impose on the Cambodian parties a quadripartite coalition government;

(b) Owing to the divergence of views among various countries, the controversial problem of a provisional authority in the transitional period is altogether left open to the Cambodian parties to settle among themselves. Foreign countries will continue to support one Cambodian side against the other and will use Cambodian internal affairs to oppose one another.

(c) Foreign countries should not interfere in this conflict, nor let it harm the relations between countries, or cause a crisis beyond the framework of Cambodia's internal affairs; in other words, they want to neutralize the dispute about Cambodia's internal affairs.

The first tendency obviously is a gross violation of the principle that Cambodia's internal affairs must be settled by the Cambodians themselves. On the other hand, any imposition from outside will certainly be rejected by the Cambodian people.

The second tendency reflects the current situation. It is fraught with the great danger of turning the internal dispute in Cambodia into an international conflict.

In my view, the third tendency is not only consistent with the principle of respecting Cambodia's sovereignty but also helps prevent the internal dispute of Cambodia from being transformed into an international conflict, while creating favourable external conditions for an early solution to Cambodian internal affairs.

Question 4

Do you have any new comment on the United Nations role in an international control mechanism in Cambodia?

Answer:

I already expressed my view on this issue in an interview with the Viet Nam News Agency on 15 October. I wish to reaffirm that view and have no further comment.

Question 5

Do you have any comment on the Thai Prime Minister's proposal for an informal meeting to set up an international control mechanism?

Answer:

Viet Nam fully supports the Thai Prime Minister's proposal for an informal meeting to set up an international control mechanism. Some people have objected to this proposal, claiming that it could not bring an overall solution. I think that

it will be best if we can achieve an overall solution. However, pending such a solution we should solve an important part of the Cambodian question, while focusing all efforts towards reaching an overall solution. An informal meeting, as proposed by the Thai Prime Minister, should agree on the establishment of an international control mechanism to monitor the total withdrawal of Vietnamese troops, the cessation of all foreign military aid to all the Khmer factions and a cease-fire. If that can be achieved, it will help prevent a civil war and be a decisive step towards an overall solution. We also hope that, at this meeting, the Cambodian parties will discuss an interim authority structure during the transitional period and if possible, reach an agreement.

Question 6

Why has the other side put forth such unreasonable demands?

Answer:

Their demand for a quadripartite coalition government and for an overall political solution, while rejecting a step-by-step settlement towards an overall solution, clearly proves that they are not prepared to solve the Cambodian question by political means. They still hope that the total withdrawal of Vietnamese troops will lead to a change of the balance of force on the battlefield, that with the highest military efforts of the three factions in the Democratic Kampuchea coalition in this dry season they will be able to reverse the present political and military situation in Cambodia. That is the main cause which has prevented the Paris International Conference on Cambodia from reaching an overall solution to the Cambodian question. But they have miscalculated. The situation in Afghanistan after the complete Soviet pullout has not evolved as some people had predicted. The situation in Cambodia is more favourable to the revolutionary forces. The Cambodian people are resolved to fight against the genocidal Pol Pot clique. This is a fight for the survival of the Cambodian people in the face of a danger of extermination. There may be victories and setbacks in the military field, but, on the whole, the other side cannot reverse the situation in Cambodia.
