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THE POLITICS OF SUFFERING
THE THAI-CAMBODIAN BORDER: A CASE STUDY
ON THE USE AND ABUSE OF HUMANITARIAN
ASSISTANCE
M. Phil. (Peace Studies) Degree Awarded

21 October 1992
THE POLITICS OF SUFFERING

THE THAI-CAMBODIAN BORDER: A CASE STUDY ON
THE USE AND ABUSE OF HUMANITARIAN
ASSISTANCE

UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN

Dissertation submitted in partial requirement
for the degree of Master of Philosophy of
Trinity College, Dublin.

Norah Niland
Centre for Peace Studies
Irish School of Ecumenics
November 1991
THE POLITICS OF SURVIVING
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DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation which I am submitting as a requirement for a Master of Philosophy degree of Trinity College, Dublin is entirely my own original work; I also declare that this thesis has not been submitted in any form in connection with any other degree to any other University.

Norah Niland
17, November, 1991
Erroneous and widespread perceptions of disaster relief picture huddled masses awaiting the arrival of food convoys and caring medics. When help arrives it is generally understood that people will regain their former lives or at least move beyond the cataclysmic events which made them disaster victims. Lost in this hopeful prognosis is the debilitating reality of a complex mix of factors which produce and perpetuate deep-rooted disasters and the political context which often shapes the relief response to the detriment of intended beneficiaries. The politics of suffering refers to the usurpation of relief by actors who perceive the provision of humanitarian assistance as an opportunity to advance their own interests even when these are inimical to the goals of humanitarianism.

This dissertation is concerned with the experience of the relief operation on the Thai-Cambodian border. This "rescue" mission was launched in 1979 when the routing of the Khmer Rouge exposed the atrocities and unheralded suffering Cambodians had endured and the devastation which threatened the survival of many. Much of this dissertation is concerned with the problems and obstacles which derailed the relief process and maneuvered it into supporting, however inadvertently, a scenario that was clearly harmful to refugees held on the Border as well as Cambodians struggling to rebuild their lives in a country traumatized by Pol Pot and years of war and oppression.

Based on my own experience with this operation, and a review of available literature, this paper argues that relief agencies cannot pretend to operate in a vacuum. To be truly effective, compassion must be combined with wisdom and a forthright commitment to humanitarian principles. Inherent in this perception is the thesis that relief agents must be held accountable for their action.

A theme running through this paper is the importance of politics and decision-making which reflect universal values including publicly-acclaimed principles of humanitarianism and respect for human rights. This thesis concludes that humanitarianism cannot be seen as an expedient superlative. In a world undermined by growing polarization and desperation the incidence of disasters is likely to increase. The experience of the relief operation on the Thai-Cambodian border illustrates the importance of safeguarding a humanitarian space both for the well-being of victims directly affected by disasters and as a critical component in the search for peaceful and durable solutions.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It would be nice to individually thank all of the people who have knowingly or unwittingly contributed to my education and awareness of the nature of injustice and its consequences. To all of these people, friends and co-workers including those who disagree with my perceptions, I owe a debt of gratitude and genuine appreciation for their friendship, support, patience and erudition.

Working on the Thai-Cambodian border was often an excruciating experience but it was also, on occasion, exhilarating. The ability of Cambodian friends and colleagues to rise above the oppression and indignity which ensnared them time and again demonstrated the indomitable will of people to be free; to participate in such drama was a rare privilege that could never be adequately acknowledged by words of gratitude. Their fortitude and commitment to protect their humanity will always be a source of inspiration.

Special thanks are due to the faculty and staff of the Centre for Peace Studies and Irish School of Ecumenics for their patience and tolerance of non-academic approaches to divergent perspectives on the realization of global peace as well as their commitment to academic discipline and encouragement to explore or challenge unpopular ideas. The kindness and support of Peace Studies personnel during this year of study are equally appreciated. I am especially grateful to Professor Ita Sheehy for her open, helpful and supportive comments in the overall approach and progress of this dissertation notwithstanding her busy schedule. Numerous friends, and individuals I've never met, have been extremely kind in sending me material and keeping me informed of events unfolding in Cambodia and the Border during this past year; I am particularly indebted to Bob and Liz of the Coalition for Peace and Reconciliation.

Surviving this hectic year would not have been possible without the friendship, good humour and forbearance of family and friends, all of whom I am fortunate in knowing. This is particularly true of my sister Kate who has been a real friend and unfailingly kind and tolerant notwithstanding much disruption of her life and living space.

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I INTRODUCING HUMANITARIANISM:
MYTH AND REALITY

The generosity of the American people resuscitates the dream of fraternity among people at a time when humanity greatly needs charity and compassion.
Maxim Gorky, 1922.

At no time should relief supplies be used as a political weapon, and ..... no discrimination should be made in the distribution of relief supplies.
UN General Assembly Resolution 48(1) 1946.

The foreign policy budget of the US "..... is that portion of the total Federal budget which directly protects and furthers US national interests abroad"
George Schultz, Secretary of State, 1984.(1)

It is not too difficult to discern that the above quotations are concerned with the provision of humanitarian assistance. They reflect an enduring theme and the unending need for the relief of human suffering throughout this century. In a small way they also reflect evolving perspectives on the role and perceived relevance of humanitarianism.

As the title implies, this paper is concerned with the abuse of humanitarianism, a reality which is not widely appreciated. This chapter provides a brief overview of relief assistance in general both to situate the issue in relation to its historical foundations and to point to changes which threaten its future potential.

The urge and desire to help people in distress goes back a long way in human time. Indeed, wherever the brutalities of oppression and obscenities of war push people from their homes to create new disasters, and painful scenes of wretched misery, examples of compassion and a belief in our shared humanity abound.
Disasters: a Snapshot

In the Autumn of 1984, when people were confronted with the Fellini-like scenes in Ethiopia of starvation "from another era", they were appalled at their own Government's indifference to the nightmare unfolding in the death camps of Korem. In the Spring of 1991, in the aftermath of the Gulf War and persecution of the Kurds, people again demonstrated the unacceptability of being passive observers to human suffering.

Humanitarianism, in effect, is what distinguishes civilised society and peoples. Down through the ages it is the guiding light that has rescued humankind out of the barbarity of evil times. As the prophet Mohammed asked:

What actions are the most excellent? To gladden the heart of a human being, to feed the hungry, to help the afflicted, to lighten the sorrow of the sorrowful, and to remove the wrongs of the injured.

This fundamental principle - to assist the wounded, help the weak and reduce human suffering - is reflected in the world's major religions and cultures; it is at the heart of all philosophical thought. The right of sanctuary or refuge is exemplified from ancient times in Egypt's Temple of Osiris and the Temple of Apollo at Delphi in Greece.

Thomas Hobbes is long dead but life for many is still "nasty, brutish and short". Indeed, more people than ever before are caught in the turmoil of cataclysmic disasters, the so-called "emergencies" which grab our attention before the images fade from our TV screens or are pushed aside by the latest tumult.

The majority of uprooted people are fleeing armed conflict of some kind, disorder produced by social turmoil, or plain government failure to avoid the iniquities of injustice. These pitiful monuments to the inhumanity of the twentieth century
number at least 40 million in the Third World since the 1940s. (2) Yet disasters are still seen as aberrations although the conditions which produce such catastrophic events cannot be separated from the global structure or "general scheme of things". Masses of refugees are the assured outcome of continuing polarization between those who benefit from the current dominance of the poor by the rich world and those who don't; violent upheaval is a defining characteristic of nations mired in poverty. Between May 1985 and April 1986 the UN Disaster Relief Organisation (UNDRO) reported "80 major disasters which led to assistance from the international community". (3)

Early 1991 saw people gasping in horror, and perhaps also in shame, as Kurds streamed to the borders of Turkey and Iran. In their bleak mountain "refuge" some 6,700 children died. (4) This emergency "disappeared" as Bangladesh was engulfed by a cyclone which left 200,000 dead. When the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) issued an appeal for Bangladesh in May 1991, it was its 26th since the beginning of the year compared to 35 for all of 1990.

These "loud" emergencies crowd out the on-going disasters which continue to take their toll when the sound technicians and camera men and women pack up their equipment ready to swing into action when the next calamity strikes. Thus, while the TV crews panned the grief-stricken scenes of the Kurds struggling for survival on the mountain side, Palestinians, who were forced from their homes when the State of Israel was created in 1948, still seethe and fester with resentment as they await a solution to their plight. As headlines bewailed the cruel fate of Bangladeshis clinging to roof-tops amidst the devastation all around them, some 250,000 Biharis continue to subsist in crowded settlements in Dhaka; they were displaced in 1947.

All around, desperate chronicles of suffering, no less acute for their longevity, blight the lives of millions huddled in an arc of despair stretching from the Americas through Africa to Asia. According to some estimates, refugee figures have leaped 80% to
18 million in recent years. Estimates of disaster victims who are internally displaced range from 20-30 million. These include Salvadoreans who from the early 1980s have fled persecution in search of uncertain sanctuary abroad. Some 3 million Afghan refugees have camped in Pakistan and Iran for more than a decade; another 2 million have been internally displaced and an estimated 1 million have been killed. Tibetans who fled Chinese occupation in 1958 still hold to the dream of returning home which for many is a land they have never seen.

Meanwhile, not far from the attention-grabbing headlines of the Gulf War, and its movie-sounding titles of "Desert Shield" and "Desert Storm", the multiple tragedies then unfolding across the breadth of sub-Saharan Africa were, for the most part, beyond the lens-range of the world's media. All told, some 27 million were at risk of starvation, a reality which is unlikely to recede in the near future. While Ethiopians flee their war-scarred country and seek shelter in Sudan, the Sudanese move in the opposite direction to escape their oppressors and mayhem which exacerbate drought and food shortages. Liberia, which for years was pictured as relatively stable, has been tearing itself apart in a bloody war cum power struggle; the only assured outcome is that there will be more victims than victors. Impoverished Malawi, with a population of 8 million, is host to 1 million refugees fleeing the devastation of Mozambique.

As the incidence of disasters increase the level of resources has not kept pace with the number of people in need of help. Inadequate funding has been a major preoccupation of all recently appointed Refugee High Commissioners. The need for additional funding is one of their first pleas upon entering office. In August 1989, then High Commissioner Mr Jean Pierre Hocké indicated a shortfall of $85 million for the on-going annual programme.(5) Writing shortly before he left office in October 1990, High Commissioner Mr Thorvald Stoltenberg noted that scarcity of funding meant deteriorating conditions for refugees including the spread of "malnutrition and related diseases".(6) Shortly after her
appointment at the end of 1990, Mme Sadako Ogata was said to face a "severe financial crisis"(7).

Inadequate funding is a severe limitation and does impair the nature of assistance which for many could well mean the difference between life and death; children, who are always the most vulnerable, make up 50% of affected populations. Increasingly, "compassion fatigue" is seen as the key to understanding what ails the relief business. But in many respects this is too simple an explanation. Governments have undoubtedly become more niggardly, and are increasingly hostile to asylum-seekers, but experience shows that people in general continue to identify with humanitarian principles. Occasionally, public pressure has nudged governments in a more positive direction. In response to special appeals the general public has often surpassed itself in making personal donations and organising fund raising events. Band Aid, because it was innovative and glamourous, and "different" because it was associated with young people and rock music, stands out as a shining example of what can be done. But this concert was hardly unique; following in the footsteps of a long tradition in responding to people's genuine need to help, it merely provided a vehicle for doing so.

By and large, amidst the competing priorities of everyday life, people rely on established mechanisms - the UN and ICRC - to get on with the task they are mandated to undertake on behalf of the international community. In addition, a proliferation of NGOs (Non-Governmental Organisations) could not exist if they did not enjoy the support of many people. They likewise represent a clear manifestation of public commitment to humanitarianism. Yet problems do exist. It is obvious that relief operations are often overwhelmed, especially when disasters strike simultaneously, and face major hurdles in prompt provision of relief assistance. It is also obvious that such problems cannot be attributed solely to lack of finance.(8) A great deal of media coverage during the Kurdish crisis pointed to incompetence and bureaucratic wrangling as major factors in the slow take-off of the relief operation.(9) Jim
Hoagland writing in the *International Herald Tribune* complained that the UN had "again shown itself to be inadequately organised" and went so far as to claim that "if the Kurds had had to depend solely on Secretary General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar and UN organisations, the number of dead Kurdish babies on the world's conscience would be much higher than it already is".(10) Hoagland was one of many, including UK Prime Minister, Mr John Major, calling for the military to take over or beef up relief logistics.(11)

The goal of relief operations is to save lives. Public fear of "too little too late" and outrage at the sight of barefoot children huddled on the frozen slopes high above the mountain pass of Isikveren eventually did see army helicopters pressed into action. But except for the "lucky" few successful in scrambling for parachuted food-drops such supplies were more symbolic than significant. As was apparent from the beginning getting people off the mountain was essential both for their survival and to enable agencies to launch an effective relief programme.

The perception that disasters and relief can be understood in terms of logistics is widespread. The need to ship in large amounts of food, blankets, water-purification tablets and kindly medics to the hungry, homeless and destitute is the image vital for fund-raising. The implication is that as soon as supplies arrive people begin to rebuild their shattered lives. Such a portrayal of relief operations is not necessarily incorrect, but for many refugees it is a very false picture; it does nothing to explain the exploitation of misery which adds to, and prolongs, their suffering.

Relief operations do save lives. This is worth repeating and pointing to the evidence which supports this fact. Reporting from Bangladesh in the aftermath of the cyclone mid-May 1991, Peter Hillmore for *The Observer* stated that without the money NGOs had raised at home:

> more people here would have died. That is painfully obvious when you see the actual physical aid being distributed on the ground. It is even more painfully obvious in places where aid is not getting through.(12)
Blaine Harden, writing on issues of poverty and politics in Africa and its cycle of disasters noted:

In fairness, the UN appeals worked brilliantly. Money was raised, food was transported and Operation Lifeline succeeded in 1989 in preventing mass starvation in southern Sudan.(13)

Unpalatable Facts

But often the provision of relief is not as clear-cut as generally portrayed and people also die when the struggle to provide humanitarian assistance is influenced or distorted by considerations that are inimical to the very objectives the relief operation was established to achieve. The situation on the Thai-Cambodian border is a case in point.

For this past decade, people who fled the horror and devastation of Cambodia in the wake of Pol Pot's ouster from Phnom Penh have been held in camps strung out along the Thai-Cambodian border. Their status as refugees has never been formally recognised. In effect this means they are not allowed to return home if they wish to do so. Without being too facetious, the only way of exiting the barbed-wire enclosures is to join the military (if not already press-ganged into doing so), link up clandestinely with black marketeers and face the hazards of a border blanketed with mines, or to depart this world entirely; suicide is not an uncommon feature and people speak openly of the need to "escape" the numbing sameness and desolation of camp life. Essentially held captive by the different factions of the Khmer Rouge-dominated Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK) they are used to further its political and military objectives.

The painful and contorted history of "the Border" (as this operation has come to be known) encompasses many layers of conflicting realities. Indeed, the official portrayal of "displaced people" in need of "humanitarian assistance" is not inaccurate if
taken at face value. The people are certainly displaced and definitely in need of assistance given the absence of basic necessities, including water, for survival. But this whole exercise needs to be placed within the overall context of what has been happening in and around Cambodia. This includes an aid embargo which isolated a country and its people traumatized by years of genocidal rule, the relationship between the camps and the revival of the Khmer Rouge, and the role of relief assistance in relation to war and the conditions necessary for peace. It is also necessary to address the impact of ten years-plus of life in closed camps. From this perspective is it still possible to ignore the wider implications inherent in the provision of humanitarian assistance?

Since the "early days" of 1979 when the first influx of refugees crossed the Border after Vietnam had routed Pol Pot, food has been used as a political weapon and the posing of questions in this regard has invariably been deemed "controversial". Some will argue that it is too harsh to say that the relief operation was conducted in an ostrich-like fashion or that relief workers were largely prepared to go along with this. However, sustained and insightful discussion tended to trail off; there were no apparent signposts out of the "dilemma". Agonising alternatives meant either feeding refugees and tolerating abuse of people and supplies or withdrawing and washing one's hands of the situation thereby penalising the women and children who constituted the bulk of the refugee population. This may appear overly simplistic but this is generally how the "trade-off" was presented and perceived.(14) Even agencies with long experience of relief implementation could offer little guidance out of this apparent conundrum.

As time passed the extraordinary became routine. With few exceptions relief workers accepted they were "technicians", somehow separate and apart from the ugly politics which was the task of others to sort out. Wearisome questions were overtaken by the constant "crisis" and preoccupation of keeping the relief trucks rolling; with periodic shelling this was often a 25-hour-a-day exercise which did indeed leave little time for pause or reflection on what constituted the larger picture.
Even though human rights abuses were a constant feature of the Border including coercion to support the military, either as foot soldiers or porters, and refugees in Khmer Rouge camps were subjected to forced relocations which pushed them closer to battle zones, the logistics of keeping the camps supplied were always an overriding concern. In many respects the means had become an end in itself. In the Spring of 1991 a "senior UN official" was quoted as stating:

We have the least problems in the Khmer Rouge camps. A lot less corruption, their leaders are hard working and dedicated. Nobody wants to hear it but it happens to be true. (15)

Given such perspectives, questions on the overall purpose and raison d'être of humanitarian assistance within the context of the Border scenario were rarely posed. But the questions remain. Did it provide help, however short-term, or did it prolong the war and destabilisation of Cambodia? Is it really helpful to keep people locked in camps trapped in a war zone with no means of exercising any control over decisions which dictate their fate? Is it possible for the UN and non-governmental relief agencies to uphold the principles of humanitarianism and safeguard its neutrality when this conflicts with hidden agendas, political or otherwise? And how much more questionable is such assistance when it is suspected of being used to camouflage support for a group known to be responsible for heinous crimes?

The abuse of humanitarian assistance on the Thai-Cambodian Border may well be one of the most extreme examples but it is not an isolated incident. The report, Refugees: Dynamics of Displacement, which is closely associated with two former high-ranking HCR officials (Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees) who have spent their lives shuttling between disasters, notes that HCR staff "are constantly obliged to strike a balance between humanitarian ideals, political realities and institutional interests". (16)
Perhaps it is not too surprising that inter-governmental organisations dependent on "major donors" are subjected to pressure but the extent to which political bias affects the speed and scope of relief assistance is probably not widely understood. (17) Randolph Kent in his book *Anatomy of Disaster Relief* describes how the US in 1984 was able to respond quickly to the threat of small-scale famine in Kenya and a few months later "mobilised massive amounts of assistance for the famine ravaged Sudan"; this was in sharp contrast with the laid-back attitude and general reluctance to help avert the Ethiopian tragedy. (18)

The same author writes that "West Germany and the Netherlands were reluctant to provide emergency assistance to Nicaragua for fear of alienating the United States"; given that these two countries are relatively strong and independent-minded democracies the impact of pressure on their policy goes some way in highlighting the extent to which non-humanitarian considerations influence disaster relief. (19)

There are countless examples of imbalances in the allocation of resources. While HCR had $14 million a year for 40,000 refugees in Honduras, $2 million only was available for 20,000 refugees in neighbouring Nicaragua. (20) The use of "humanitarianism" to further Washington's policy and support for the Contras against the Sandinista government in Managua has been described as "one of the most shameful episodes of mendacity in recent American politics" and a "sleazy attempt to peddle logistical support for an invasion force as 'humanitarian assistance'. "(21)

The US is not alone in the promotion of foreign policy or military objectives through the pretext of assisting refugees. Leon Gordenker points to "Algerian support of Polisario guerrillas... sanctuary offered to anti-Government Ethiopian groups by Sudan" and "lavish assistance" from the Soviet Union to sponsored groups. (22)
Such pervasive misappropriation of relief programmes, and contempt for those in need of assistance, not only entails increased suffering for current refugees and displaced people, it jeopardizes the potential of relief programmes to assist future disaster victims and people in need of refuge. This central reality is crucial to understanding the implications of abuse and erosion of humanitarian standards; the ability of relief agencies to launch effective programmes will be endangered if the provision of relief is continuously discredited by the questionable character of many operations. Relief workers and personnel in charge of, or associated with disaster management, thus have an obvious responsibility, (a) to adhere to the values enshrined in humanitarian principles and (b) to protect their mandate from usurpation by actors who march to the tune of a different drum.

**Historical Benchmarks**

The quotations at the head of this chapter span a period of tumultuous and phenomenal change. We have lived through the carnage and devastation of two world wars. The unspeakable horror of those times, and the determination to never again tolerate the evil of genocide, prompted the survivors to unite their nations in a solemn pledge to shun the use of force and to safeguard respect for fundamental human rights. These twin and complementary objectives, to protect the peace, to protect the people, were the guiding principles to light the way forward in a new community of nations. This was the foundation for future peace and development, happiness and prosperity enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

At the first inaugural session of the UN General Assembly held in the war-blitzed London of January 1946, British Prime Minister Clement Atlee epitomised this new spirit of peaceful co-operation when he declared:
...let us be clear as to what is our ultimate aim. It is not just the negation of war, but the creation of a world...which is governed by justice and the moral law. We desire to assert the pre-eminence of right over might and the general good against selfish and sectional aims.(23)

The importance of humanitarian action as a central element in meeting the aims of the UN Charter was recognised in the adoption of one of the first General Assembly Resolutions (48.1) quoted above. President Harry Truman echoed this theme in October 1946. Welcoming the UN as a new beginning which recognised the interdependence of states and their mutual interests he said:

The American people....look upon the United Nations not as a temporary expedient but as a permanent partnership, a partnership among the peoples of the world for their common peace and common well-being. (24)

What has happened to this dream, these aspirations for peace, and commitment to put the welfare of humankind ahead of all other national interests ? What has happened since the days of Maxim Gorky when he wrote his letter of thanks to President Hoover ? Hoover received gratitude from Gorky because he, the president, did not allow his lack of enthusiasm for the newly created and troubled Bolshevik state, or the absence of diplomatic relations between Washington and Moscow, get in the way of a relief campaign which "distributed tens of millions worth of assistance" to the victims of famine during the harsh Russian winters of the early 1920s.(25) Hoover was helped by an important precedent when circumventing the 1917 "Trading with the Enemy Act" he discounted accusations of aiding "enemy children" and went ahead with the provision of relief supplies to Germany at the end of WW1.(26)

The history of the post-War bi-polar world, with its East-West competition for influence in the decolonising Third World arena, is the backdrop against which humanitarianism came to be seen as a
politically useful tool to advance partisan interests. But Cold War rivalries do not explain the abuses which have occurred; in many instances the relief agencies themselves are largely responsible. (27)

To many observers it appears that a broad spectrum of aid agencies have lost their moral bearings. Some, it would appear, have also lost their compass. Bruce Nichols, who uses the phraseology of "Rubberband Humanitarianism" in reference to contemporary relief operations, argues that the "pummelling of American humanitarianism is not simply the result of lawlessness and heartlessness in Government but a breakdown of political consensus"; Nichols assertion relates to the moral imperatives inherent in humanitarianism and the relationship between aid agencies and Government policy. (28)

**Humanitarianism: Definition and Context**

In a straw poll of friends not directly involved in relief work their descriptions of humanitarianism revolved around "helping disaster victims" or "helping people without caring about the politics". Many relief workers would give similar descriptions.

In the absence of an agreed definition in international law the term is often used loosely to describe assistance that is far removed from the philosophy or ethics of humanitarianism. In one of the more extreme such cases NGOs working in Central America requested Congress to end the Reagan Administration's "deceptive labelling of aid to military forces as 'humanitarian' " in connection with non-military support to the Contras. (29)

Analysis and descriptions of humanitarianism as a concept and set of guiding principles include that of Bruce Nichols who states that "...in its classic form, humanitarian assistance focuses on the immediate needs of victims of natural or political disasters". (30) Henry Shue who says that humanitarianism "is no one thing" makes a distinction between constraints, mandates, and ideals to highlight the difference between humanitarianism that is
compulsory in the sense of meeting the requirements of international justice and humanitarianism that is discretionary.(31) A pithy but apt description in the ICIHI Report Winning the Human Race defines humanitarianism as "an ethic of human solidarity" which puts the "well-being of people at the centre of our focus".(32) A comprehensive and detailed definition which elaborates on the three essential elements at the heart of humanitarianism - needs of victims, political neutrality and non-discrimination in relief distribution - is described by Nichols as a doctrine which demands:

that there be focus on the needs of victims; that these needs be met in a non-discriminatory fashion; and that the entire operation be politically impartial and remain ideologically neutral. In combat settings, humanitarian aid is to be directed to non-combatants.(33)

Given such straight-forward and fundamental dictums it is perhaps not too surprising that so many people are unaware of the ruthless exploitation of humanitarianism and the murky waters which most relief operations have to navigate. This is partly explained by the tendency to play down controversy to avoid discouraging the donating public. But equally significant is the reigning confusion as to the functional boundaries of humanitarianism. To an amazing extent, relief practitioners will insist they do not wish "to get caught up in politics". Almost invariably the debate is pitched as a duel between morality and politics; thus, given the unfairness of the contest it is necessary, however sad, to acknowledge that the interests of victims will not win out. This being the case it is the task of humanitarians to concentrate on bandaging the wounded.(34) Such tunnel vision disregards the need to take into account the implications of humanitarian inputs, or that humanitarians have a responsibility to ensure that assistance genuinely helps people.

Painting morality and politics into opposing corners is a false dichotomy which reflects a confused understanding of both "politics" and "humanitarianism".(35) Often such terms are used merely as clichés and reflect facile and shallow definitions in
support of arbitrary and erroneous distinctions as if politics and humanitarianism originated and operated on different planets.

Reference to political and ideological neutrality denotes the non-partisan nature of humanitarianism. The interplay of politics and humanitarianism is a different issue. Politics is used here in the sense employed by Aristotle when he told us people are political animals; as members of a group or polity people require a process which reflects values and allocates resources which allows for order (in the sense of individual freedom) or government.(36)

Thus, with respect to humanitarianism, it is necessary to recongise the interdependence of today's world and the complex realities which shape human survival. Not to do so demonstrates a woeful disregard for the root causes of disasters and the context within which relief programmes operate. Not taking cognizance of the forces which provoke a disaster is generally the precursor of another disaster in the making. The Thai-Cambodian border is but one example of this. Commenting on the cycle of famine and war which have rocked the Sudan in this past decade a Newsweek report (May 1991) notes that those at risk in the camps which have sprung up around Khartoum "are migrants from the great famine of 1984-1985"; an estimated quarter million perished in 1988-89 in the southern areas wracked by conflict which has hardly abated since.(37) Speaking on the recurrent crises and the problems blocking food distribution an exasperated relief worker declared: "anybody who tells you that politics has nothing to do with humanitarian aid is way off the wall".(38)

Unquestionably, all humanitarian action has a political content; this is more pronounced in situations of armed conflict. What needs to be recognised is how politics and humanitarianism interact; to borrow Reinhold Niebuhr's oft-quoted phrase:
Politics will always be an area where conscience and power meet,....and work out their tentative and uneasy compromises. (39)

In sum, politics needs to be informed by humanitarian values and humanitarianism needs to be aware of the nature of power politics.

Unfortunately for Cambodians on both sides of the Border* both axioms were cruelly missing when the world learned of the massacre and death of some one and a half million, and saw for themselves the horrifying state of survivors and their devastated country.

*Border is used throughout to refer to the Thai-Cambodian frontier and reflects local parlance: people go to the Border to visit refugees at the Border. It is a term that denotes both the political and relief arena.
Politics of Suffering

This thesis is concerned with the response of the international community when it learned of the atrocities in Cambodia and the looming disaster which threatened additional lives. It explores the role of governments which did not share the goals of the relief operation and essentially hijacked it for their own ends. Against the background of this decade-long "holding operation" of refugees confined to closed camps and an embargo which isolates and penalises Cambodians struggling to rebuild their country, it is necessary to separate out the strands of the argument which advocates "pragmatism"; too often this is a euphemism for acceptance of the status quo when geo-political objectives run counter to humanitarian needs. In the process, this paper will attempt to identify the nature of such "pragmatism", its implications and consequences.

Specifically, this paper will attempt to demonstrate (a) the necessity of critical analysis as an essential prerequisite for informed decision-making and responsible use of relief inputs (b) the unacceptability of passive support for policies and practices which are anti-humanitarian and (c) cognisance of the need for accountability to disaster victims and people everywhere who subscribe to and support relief organisations as an expression of their commitment to the application of humanitarian values.

My basic contention is that humanitarianism needs to be considered at least as important as political, economic and strategic (military) considerations. A humanitarian "space" which allows for unconditional relief to victims, cannot be seen as a "luxury"; it is fundamental to all societies which consider themselves civilised.

A corollary of this contention is the need to recognise that action which disrupts, bedevils, or erodes the quality of our humanitarianism is both wrong and counter-productive; it diminishes the potential for peace and the realisation of long-term
solutions which will allow people to live lives of dignity, and allow impoverished countries to embark on sustainable development.

This study is restricted to one particular situation concerning the abuse of humanitarianism. Obviously, it is not possible to draw generalised conclusions pertinent to all relief programmes based on this one experience; this thesis does not attempt to do that. Nevertheless, it must be borne in mind that the abuse of humanitarianism documented here is not a unique event in what can be described as the politics of suffering. The history of relief in Africa, Central America and elsewhere in Asia is replete with incidences of the needs of victims being trampled underfoot in a ruthless quest for power or wider sphere of influence.

This is also a good opportunity to clarify commentary in advance concerning the United States which has played a significant role in the contemporary history of Indochina and in shaping events on the Thai-Cambodian border. It was, and is by no means, the sole actor, nor is it necessarily the most important (although given its leverage this is open to dispute). But as a champion of democracy and freedom for all peoples the US demands that it be held to a different standard than totalitarian and authoritarian regimes. China is the major backer of the Khmer Rouge. Whatever revulsion and range of emotions is felt for such a policy, surprise is not an element given Beijing's bloody crackdown on its own citizens at Tiananmen Square and its long history of brutal repression in Tibet.

Likewise, it must be remembered that the United States does play a major role in the provision of relief worldwide. Thanks to a long and healthy tradition of American scholarship, study, and public debate, a large proportion of the literature on relief is concerned with American inputs. Thus, while a smaller country such as Ireland can and does play a role, its impact, when negative, is less controversial and far less prominent. Lack of reference to the Irish Government's role abroad does not in any way imply that it is more ethical or less self-serving than its larger neighbours.
"Angkor Wat" images on finely chisled wood carvings, delicate gold jewellery or robust models in make-believe stone, proliferated up and down the Thai-Cambodian border by the late 1980s. They found a ready market with relief workers and visiting dignitaries. Similar models did a brisk trade in Phnom Penh's yellow-domed central market. This image of a glorious past is a vision all Cambodians proudly point to; it is synonymous with their identity as a nation and the bedrock of their nationalism, an "ism" more potent than all others in a long and colourful history.

Earliest archaeological evidence dates active communities in the area now known as Cambodia from 3420 BC. It is a fascinating and convoluted history of glorious architectural wonders, engineering marvels and a rich cultural heritage that was dissipated and laid bare by feuding princes, over-extension, and the arrogance of empire which invited the attention of avenging neighbours - Thailand and Vietnam - still depicted as Cambodia's historical enemies.

To understand the forces which shape contemporary Cambodian politics, and how these buffeted the provision of relief, the historical context cannot be ignored.

This chapter takes a quick run-through of events leading up to the cataclysmic '70s, and the role of geo-political factors and realpolitik in setting the stage for the '80s; it includes the messy reality which relief agencies got sucked into in 1979 and are still struggling with in 1991.
History as Progenitor

At the zenith of its power in the twelfth century the empire of Angkor Wat stretched from the South China sea, incorporating the Mekong Delta of southern Vietnam to parts of Laos as far north as Luang Prabang, reached westwards as far as Burma encompassing large parts of present-day Thailand, and to the south as far as Malaysia. But as it weakened from within it was increasingly vulnerable to outside pressures; its frontiers, always vague on the outer reaches of the kingdom, were pushed back by its increasingly powerful neighbours, Siam and Vietnam. Between the sixteenth and nineteenth century Cambodia's territory dwindled to roughly its current size and retained only a limited measure of independence. This dual reality of a glorious past and its perceived vulnerability in the face of its powerful neighbours is a theme which endures and influences contemporary perspectives.

When the French, primarily interested in an opening to China, arrived on the scene their offer of protection, and Treaty of 1863, was seen as a bulwark against further encroachment. With an additional treaty in 1884, Cambodia was effectively colonized; a short while later it was incorporated into the French Indo-China Union.

The significance of the French presence remained relatively unchanged until the outbreak of World War II. One notable exception was the establishment of the Buddhist Institute in 1930. It was instrumental in the revival of, and respect for, Cambodian culture; according to Elizabeth Becker it became "the first home of anti-colonialism in Phnom Penh".(5)

The outbreak of the Second World War, and brief occupation by the Japanese, provoked dramatic changes throughout South-East Asia as elsewhere. In Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh was doggedly pursuing the goal of independence an aspiration shared by many Cambodians for themselves. Sihanouk, who was crowned King in
1941, proved himself a wily politician in the immediate post-War period. At the Geneva Conference on Indochina in 1954 Cambodia's sovereign independence and neutrality was recognized. Free at last, Cambodia basked in the aura of such fulsome descriptions, however inaccurate, as "the Gentle Land". But not for long.

Deepening Cold War rivalries and Vietnam's persistent struggle for independence left Cambodia little room for manoeuvre as the Second Indochina War encircled and enveloped it. Sihanouk's autocratic rule and playboy antics, coupled with economic mismanagement and disregard for the hardship endured by the peasantry, nurtured dissent as it polarized society; the country slowly fell apart.

Sihanouk's unhappy reign came to an abrupt and bitter end with the infamous coup of 1970. Lon Nol, as incompetent as he was corrupt, had brutally suppressed the peasant uprisings of 1967 as Sihanouk's Prime Minister. As the Head of State of the new Khmer Republic he was oblivious to the rage and destruction US bombing was unleashing on the hapless Cambodian peasantry. Seeing communism as the source of all evil he poorly understood the dynamics which were inexorably driving the Khmer Rouge to victory.

The impact of bombing was ferocious and direct. Between 500,000 and 1 million were killed; refugees pouring into Phnom Penh swelled the city from 600,000 to 3 million.(6) All told some 257,465 tons of bombs were dropped.(7) American journalist, Richard Dudman, in 1971 reported that "bombing and shooting was radicalizing the people of rural Cambodia..."(8)

The terror and devastation was shocking and was easily exploited by the Khmer Rouge.(9) But the bombing also had wider ramifications not immediately evident. When Vietnam signed the Paris Peace Accords in 1973, US B-52s were diverted to Cambodia for seven months of non-stop "carpet bombing". In Khmer Rouge eyes this was one more betrayal by the Vietnamese who, they
claimed, had abandoned the Cambodians to bear the brunt of the US war-machine. As Nayan Chanda explains, prior warnings from Hanoi on the implications of the Khmer Rouge refusal to negotiate and decision to continue alone, was perceived as "blackmail"; this stance, says Chanda, is "a classic example of how radical prejudice and feelings of historical enmity led the Pol Pot group to blame all their woes on the Vietnamese."(10)

Bombing and the mayhem of war were not the only factors which propelled the Khmer Rouge to power. Cambodians, no strangers to corruption, were severely tested by the venality of the Lon Nol regime and the chaos which marked its final days.(11) Washington continued to pump in aid and remained a close adviser of Lon Nol but by 1975 it was clear the regime had signed its own death warrant. When the Khmer Rouge marched into town on 17 April the weary populace were relieved the war was finally over. But peace was not to be.

Year Zero

It is not necessary to again detail how, within hours of proclaiming the city theirs, the sombre-faced youth of the Khmer Rouge rounded up its residents and herded them into the countryside. Words are woefully inadequate when called to "summarize" the "Khmer Rouge era", the rule of Democratic Kampuchea, from April 1975 to December 1978.

Incredulity still strains to comprehend what really happened even as we know all the grim statistics of "3 years, 8 months and 20 days", the short way of describing Pol Pot time. Survivors shake their head and listeners turn away. Tuol Sleng is still the unimpressive high school that it was. Seeing the rows of silent faces stare out from the meticulous records does not explain why number "282" or "1032" were led away to the torture chambers; their "confessions" have a numbing sameness.

To create a new era the Khmer Rouge were determined to wipe out the past. To prove that Democratic Kampuchea was superior
to all other revolutions, the Khmer Rouge set about the elimination of all talented people, skills, knowledge, resources or anything that smacked of the twentieth century. Erroneously described as "ultra nationalists", a major objective of the Khmer Rouge was the eradication of all things Buddhist, the very essence of Cambodian culture and national identity. "Year Zero" meant not only turning the clock back but stripping human beings of all vestiges of their individuality and what it meant to be Khmer.

"The Khmer Revolution has no precedent" said Ieng Sary, the DK Foreign Minister: "(W)hat we are trying to do has never been done before".(12) On this one, and perhaps only point, there is no disagreement with the Khmer Rouge.

There was no need for money, markets, or wages for slave-labour; private property did not exist. Neither did families as everyone was assigned their place in the "killing fields", the dawn to dusk work-camps which built canals that went nowhere or undid centuries of proven agriculture and irrigation systems. Decreasing rice yields were not a problem - people were expendable. An estimated 1.5 to 2 million Cambodians died as a result of torture, execution and the harsh conditions to which they were deliberately subjected including forced labour, starvation and denial of health care. A 1980 survey of people reaching the Thai-Cambodian border "found a mortality rate of roughly 25 per cent among urban Khmers...and 15 per cent among rural Khmers...".(13)

This self-destruct mission which gave new meaning to our understanding of genocide is explained by the Khmer Rouge in their slogan tuk meun chamenh, dak meun khat:"there is no profit in keeping them; there is no loss in removing them".(14) But this provides less insight into why the Khmer Rouge committed genocide than who they were - fanatics, blinded by their own sense of self-importance and achievement, who cruelly dispensed with all rational and human reasoning. (15)
But past tense is incorrect. The Khmer Rouge are alive and well, their political and military machine no less capable than it ever was. No longer the shadowy creatures of a Cambodia suspicious of, and hostile to, foreigners they share in supporting the international aviation industry as they fly executive or first class to meet with donors and patrons. To paraphrase Lord Byron, fact is stranger than fiction. Indeed, what movie producer could ever have thought of such a plot, such remarkable reversal of fortune, and expected it to play globally to such wide acclaim and for so long?

**Volte Face**

In early 1979, as the world became aware of Pol Pot's charnal house, it was stunned as more and more evidence of mass graves were unearthed. Refugees, fleeing in advance of the Khmer Rouge as they retreated westwards, gave horrific accounts of massacres and death from starvation; no family, it appeared, was left intact. But a short month later the UN Commission on Human Rights decided to shelve discussion and not take action on a report of human rights violations the Commission itself had authorized and requested. In 1978, Australia, Canada, Norway, the UK and the US had proposed to the UN Commission an investigation of alleged violations. In presenting its Report, the Chairman of the Sub-Commission on Human Rights referred to wholesale violation of human rights in Cambodia as "the most serious that occurred anywhere in the world since Nazism" and constituted "nothing less than autogenocide".(16)

The abrupt *volte face* of the Human Rights Commission can only be explained in terms of *realpolitik*. (17) In early 1978 when Western states proposed an investigation of Cambodia, and expressed grave concern upon receipt of documented evidence of violations by Amnesty International, the Soviet Union opposed this motion. (As voting is by simple majority the motion was carried.) But a year later the Vietnamese had routed the Khmer Rouge and Western states were firm in their opposition to the regime installed in Phnom Penh. Even though this anti-Vietnamese phalanx meant
Phnom Penh. Even though this anti-Vietnamese phalanx meant championing the Khmer-Rouge, and totally contradicted the position taken a few months previously, there was little apparent concern for such cynical disregard for, and manipulation of, such grave human rights issues. In many respects it is a microcosm of the sordid politics which have punished Cambodians for their unfortunate geography and continues to ensnare them in battles not of their own making.

Roots of History

The "wheels within wheels" of Cambodian, South-East Asian, and East-West politics are not easy to separate given the many strange and changing alliances of recent years. The 1970s are, perhaps, the most bewildering when Cambodia itself experienced an amazing array of radically different governments; Sihanouk's constitutional monarchy, Lon Nol's right-wing military dictatorship, Pol Pot's neo-fascist communist experiment and finally the Heng Samrin regime backed up by Hanoi's army.

In South-East Asia all three global powers, China, the Soviet Union and the US, opposed each other as they manoeuvered for ideological dominance, spheres of influence, and claimed threats to their alleged security interests.

At a regional level, Thailand and Vietnam are historical opponents, wary of each other's potential for expansion and opposing ideological orientation, and conscious of their looming neighbour to the north. Cambodia and Laos have limited capacity to withstand external manoeuvres which partly explains the propensity of Phnom Penh to opt for strategic alliances. ASEAN, notwithstanding many internal divisions, has coalesced around the need to fend off the reverberations of the second and third Indochina wars. (18)

From the earliest days of its independence Cambodia had difficulty protecting its neutrality. Faced with both North Vietnamese and American incursions Sihanouk tacked closer to China, an alliance that was strengthened when he opted to throw
in his lot with the Khmer Rouge in the wake of his overthrow and 1970 coup.

China has long seen South-East Asia as its domain, an area where lesser states traditionally paid tribute to the Middle Kingdom. The accession to power of the communists in 1949 did not change this. From the 1950s and throughout the Second Indochina War, Beijing formed an alliance, however uneasy, with Moscow to keep a check on the growing involvement of the US which was pledged to stopping communist expansion in the region. According to Nayan Chanda, "Zhou's principal concern was to prevent a US intervention in Indochina that might drag China into a wider conflict." (19)

As the Cold War froze perspectives, and confused nationalism with ideological conflict, the instinct of both Moscow and Washington was to oppose each other wherever and whenever possible. America's devastating and illusory defense of its "domino" theory, however, was no match for those better acquainted with Indochina's jungles and the aspirations of its people.

By the early seventies as the war, in principle, was winding down, alliances were not immune to the shifting winds of power politics. With the departure of the US and the threat of its "imperialist aggression" geo-political concerns came to the fore. (20) Referring to those power plays in what has become a pivotal corner of the world Craig Etcheson has described it as "who encircles whom?" (21)

China, a central character, sees Hanoi's alliance with Moscow, and perceived Vietnamese influence or designs on Indochina, as a threat, a challenge to its supremacy, and encirclement by hostile forces. Phnom Penh's alliance with Beijing is perceived in Hanoi as threatening. The Soviet Union, conscious of its populous neighbour on its southern flank, was anxious not to see China overwhelm Moscow's allies and thereby threaten its own perceived interests in the region.
Meanwhile, Washington having in principle abandoned South-East Asia to its fate in 1975 was plagued with painful and bitter memories, wishing both to forget and rewrite them. As Becker explains:

The United States would not accept defeat gracefully. Washington not only refused to have relations with Hanoi, it wanted the rest of the world to treat the new Vietnamese state as a renegade. (22)

Washington's growing rapprochement with Beijing helped set the scene for the next act of the long-running drama of Indochina. In an ironic reversal of its earlier fears of Maoist China, Washington's policy was informed by the deepening wedge between Moscow and Beijing as it steadfastly courted the latter; Sino-American rapprochement was bolstered by their mutual resolve to isolate and destabilize Vietnam.(23)

In 1975 Vietnam was a nation flushed with victory as it set about the reunification of the country now the third most populous communist state. But after three decades of war its economy was in ruins and it faced enormous political problems. Refused normalization of relations with Washington and denied war reparations, Hanoi was also encumbered with growing tensions and reduced assistance from post-Mao Beijing. Alarmed at the growing alliance between a hostile Democratic Kampuchea and the People's Republic, Vietnam was increasingly reliant on the Soviet Union. Meanwhile, Vietnam's totalitarian style of government and acute economic difficulties produced an outflow of refugees provoked renewed interest in Indochina and concern among ASEAN states.

Painting history in such broad strokes inevitably shades over much nuance and detail. But this picture of power politics, long-standing fears and opportunistic alliances are the outstanding features in the behind-the-scenes reality of the response to Vietnam's intervention in Cambodia and resuscitation of the Khmer Rouge.
Compassion as Sideshow

Power politics was also the background to the relief programme launched to help people exhausted by the nightmare of DK rule and the war which preceded it. Relief of suffering was the stated purpose of the programme and, indeed, the only objective for the vast majority of relief workers. But even before it began the programme was caught in a web of Machiavellian politics that seriously compromised its ability to remain true to its humanitarian mandate.

It is, of course, easier to be wiser with hindsight and to pin-point the pitfalls which should have been avoided. But as all relief managers know it is axiomatic that the way in which a relief programme begins determines to a large extent its overall approach and eventual outcome.

Early 1979, when the scale of the disaster which was Cambodia became known, it was imperative to get assistance to the suffering as quickly as possible. But it was some nine months later before UNICEF (UN Childrens' Fund) and ICRC were able to work out an assistance programme acceptable to Phnom Penh and its opponents.

Preoccupied with the remnants of the Khmer Rouge still active in their jungle hide-out in the remote mountainous regions of western Cambodia, the new regime in Phnom Penh was poorly equipped for the task of rehabilitation and reconstruction urgently needed to avert famine and to get the country back on its feet. Essentially nothing worked and few people with technical skills had survived the Khmer Rouge years.

In the immediate aftermath of the surprise attack by the Vietnamese and routing of the Khmer Rouge Cambodians were confused as they cautiously celebrated their deliverance from years of tyranny; they were unclear as to what precisely was happening and whether in fact the Khmer Rouge had been routed
for good. Criss-crossing the country to find their relatives, they stormed granaries to fill their empty stomachs and abandoned the DK "work teams" intended to cultivate the harvest. In the resultant chaos the new PRK (People's Republic of Kampuchea) authorities warned of impending food shortages in February shortly after their take-over. (24) In July, when Hun Sen, Foreign Minister of the new regime, made an appeal for assistance and warned of the danger of famine "only Vietnam and the Soviet bloc responded immediately to the appeals of the PRK." (25)

There was, of course, "politics" involved in the slow take-up of the West, led by the US, either to avert famine, or to help a country still reeling from years of bombing, war and the rule of the Khmer Rouge. The immediate response was a barrage of accusations of alleged misconduct and abuses by the PRK, including even, responsibility for the famine. No evidence was ever provided to support allegations of rice being shipped out of the country yet reports in the media to this effect were prevalent and persistent throughout 1979 and 1980. President Carter even accused the Heng Samrin government of "genocide" based on a CIA Report which also claimed, as reported by Evans and Rowley, "that the Vietnamese were burning crops and laying mines in paddy-fields to subdue the Cambodian population..." (26)

As noted by Shawcross the newly-created Kampuchean Emergency Group (KEG) based in the US Bangkok Embassy was instrumental in relaying information on Cambodia. As few people were able to visit Phnom Pehn, and fewer still the rural areas of Cambodia, the "situation reports" prepared by KEG on the basis of its "data collection" activities on the Border were widely used and disseminated; the Canadian Embassy in the US reported that it was Washington's view "that deliberate and willful Vietnamese actions....exacerbated or perhaps even directly caused the serious famine in Cambodia." (27)

Notwithstanding denials by relief officials of deliberate disruption pointing to poor management, lack of transport and communication equipment as the reasons for rice not moving fast
enough to vulnerable areas, respected columnists such as James Reston of *The New York Times* in December 1979 referred to US intelligence reports which claimed "...that Moscow is not merely refusing to relieve the suffering of the Cambodian people but is actually blocking the distribution of food and medicine from other countries."(28)

However, in January 1980 a report in the London *Guardian* indicated that US State Department sources the previous November had revealed "...their intention of mounting an international propaganda offensive to spread atrocity stories about Vietnamese behaviour in Kampuchea."(29) Such reports nonetheless continued even though they were denied by people such as Sir Robert Jackson, a distinguished internationalist; in 1979 he was appointed the UN Under-Secretary General responsible for humanitarian assistance to Cambodians.(30)

Phnom Penh continued to receive bad press even though the August 1980 rice crop was double that of the previous year. This obviously was due in part to some success in distribution of rice seed and also reflected "a retreat from collectivization with paddy land..." as observed by Stephen Heder, an American academic and one-time adviser to the US State Department.(31)

Analysts such as Michael Vickery, one of a small band of "Cambodia watchers", asserts there was a subtle orchestration of misinformation both to remove the spotlight from the Khmer Rouge and to present the new Heng Samrin government in a less than favourable light. As Vickery points out it was only a matter of time before the Phnom Penh authorities were deemed "as dangerous as their predecessors".(32) The net result was to downplay the continuing reality of the Khmer Rouge who at that point were periodically herding people back into malaria-infested jungle. Notwithstanding their straitened circumstances the Khmer Rouge were equally vehement in restricting the access of relief officials intent on the provision of humanitarian assistance to the starving and dying under the control of Pol Pot and his
lieutenants. Food was welcome but the presence of relief officials decidedly not.

**Operation "Lifeline"**

For relief agencies it was a preposterous situation. Cambodians in desperate need of help were under the control of the Khmer Rouge who made no distinction between combatants and non-combatants. Furthermore, relief agencies were dependent on donors intent on the revival of the Khmer Rouge and the "camouflage" of relief assistance for this task.

Shocked by the appalling conditions and destitution in Phnom Penh UNICEF and ICRC, subsequently designated the Joint Mission, were fearful of famine and suffering on an unprecedented scale.(33) Haunted by the fear of death these two organizations continually stressed the urgent need for assistance but instead found themselves caught in the crosswires of accusation and counter-accusation hurtling between Washington and Phnom Penh. It was not until mid-October 1979 that the first supplies were airlifted to Phnom Penh.

Essentially, Washington insisted that assistance could not be provided (and withheld funding) unless it was also provided up and down the Border. Taken at face value this made eminent sense. Early 1979 there was only a small trickle but by mid-year there were fears of thousands converging on the Thai frontier. People arriving at the Border left Cambodia for a variety of reasons and constituted a number of clearly distinct groups.(34). The Khmer Rouge were dug in south of Aranyaprathet. Cambodians in this area included KR soldiers, cadres and their families, villagers pushed out ahead of the retreating DK, and refugees who fled the fighting and inadvertently found themselves in Khmer Rouge encampments. Thailand, with the backing of the US, insisted that these be fed. Phnom Penh, already suspicious of the UN and Washington's role in dominating the relief exercise, bitterly objected to the provision of relief to Pol Pot's forces.(35)
The broad perimeters of this scenario, which saw relief agencies caught in the vortex of deep-rooted animosities and the struggle for dominance in Indochina, were staked out in the immediate aftermath of Hanoi's march into Phnom Penh.

On the 13th January 1979 China's Vice-Chairman Deng Xiaoping met with Ieng Sary, the DK Foreign Minister shortly after he was evacuated from Bangkok to Beijing. Future strategy, including the need to work with Sihanouk, was mapped out. On the same day Deng's representatives left for Thailand where they were greeted by Premier Kriangsak at Utapao, a former US military air base. At this unpublished meeting Chinese and Thai military officials worked out the modalities for a secret "de facto Sino-Thai alliance." As noted by Chanda, this agreement which concerned the use of Thai territory and support for the Khmer Rouge "proved to be the beginning of the most significant strategic relation developed by Peking in post-Vietnam South-East Asia." 

In February, Beijing with the full knowledge and tacit support of Washington (seen as a necessary bulwark against possible Soviet retaliation) launched an attack across Vietnam's northern borders with the aim of teaching Hanoi a "lesson". It is unclear who learned most from this pedagogical exercise but the lines were now clearly drawn as the West threw in its lot with China and ASEAN in a broad anti-Vietnamese alliance. This was underlined at a Special Session of the Security Council in March, and at the General Assembly in September; the Vietnamese were roundly condemned and the US supported Democratic Kampuchea when the latter was challenged in the Credentials Committee.

The reverberations of these manoeuvres and attempts to gain strategic advantage had immediate and decisive implications for Cambodians traumatized by the past and impending disaster.

Early in 1979 HCR had offered assistance to the Thai authorities but this was rejected. All new arrivals (in contrast to those who
fled prior to the toppling of the Khmer Rouge) were classified as "illegal immigrants". The majority of those who arrived north of Aran (as Aranyaparthet is known locally) were not aligned to any political grouping although the Khmer Serei (Free Khmer) had a presence in the area. Throughout these early months there were reports of many Cambodians being forcibly repatriated but HCR tended to keep a low profile. The visit of Kurt Waldheim UN Secretary General in May did little to ease the situation. In June the Thai army forcibly pushed an estimated 45,000 Cambodians over the cliffs of Preah Vihear generating an international outcry and renewed public pressure to end Cambodia's agony.

In Cambodia the Heng Samrin regime was extending its control beyond the central plains. Each new offensive sent waves of refugees pushing towards the Border. Alarmed with having lost its traditional buffer, and with the presence of so many refugees seeking assistance, Thailand finally agreed in September to a relief programme for both Phnom Penh and the Border. A major condition for this agreement was the provision of assistance through Thai "official channels" for the Border programme; Bangkok also stipulated that supplies be monitored. In practice, however, Thailand's major concern was that the Khmer Rouge be fed.

In August the Khmer Rouge, as the recognized government of Cambodia, had officially requested assistance for one million people. Anxious not to jeopardize negotiations in Phnom Penh the Joint Mission had responded cautiously. Mid-September, UNICEF and ICRC officials visited Khmer Rouge areas and were appalled by what they saw. Suffering from a lethal strain of cerebral malaria and starvation the people they encountered were in a shocking condition; they estimated there were about 10,000 Cambodians in whom "life barely flickered".

Since the beginning of the year when the threat of disaster first became apparent the organization of relief and delivery of assistance had been seriously impeded by the need to navigate between competing interests and sensibilities. Undoubtedly
people died as a result. By October it was no longer possible to avoid the issue. Reporting on the scenes south of Aran William Shawcross writes:

Daily, awful spindly creatures, with no flesh and with wide vacant eyes stumbled out of the forests and the mountains into which the Khmer Rouge had corralled them. They had malaria, they had tuberculosis, they had dysentry, they were dehydrated, they were famished, they were dying. (44)

On 17 October Prime Minister General Kriangsak visited the Border and was equally perturbed by what he saw. The following day he announced Thailand's "Open Door" policy. This would allow entry to Thailand and end forcible push-backs. UNHCR was caught off-guard but by 24 October Sa Kaeo (hastily transformed from a monsoon-soaked paddy-field into a "camp") some 40 miles inside Thailand was open and received the first group of 8,000 trucked from the most desperate areas south of Aran.(45) It was the image of these people, dying as they reached Sa Kaeo, which galvanized a massive international response. Rosalyn Carter visited in the midst of the US Presidential election campaign. Her husband had denounced the Khmer Rouge as "the world's worst violators of human rights" in 1978 but now there was no reference to their role in the agonizing scenes which shocked everyone who visited Sa Kaeo.(46)

Early November, HCR was requested to establish a camp for an estimated 30,000 pressing against the Border north of Aran. Khao-i-Dang was opened on 21 November. By January with some 150,000 refugees it was the largest Cambodian "city" outside Phnom Penh.(47) However, the rush to fill Khao-i-Dang was not as rapid as expected. Between 600,000 and 1 million were encamped along the Border north of Aran. In sharp contrast to the emaciated figures who staggered out of DK zones, Cambodians in this area had access to the Joint Mission and an assortment of NGOs. By Autumn of 1979 these settlements were booming trade centres dominated by warlords and black marketeers. There were
reports also of intimidation which inhibited people leaving the Border for Khao-i-Dang.

There were many who saw the "Open Door" policy and VOA (Voice of America) reports as a deliberate attempt to attract people to the Border, to siphon people away from the PRK, and to involve the international community and its funding. Unquestionably, there were mixed motives which became apparent as the danger of famine receded. However, throughout the latter part of 1979 images and fear of starvation predominated. The unwillingness or inability of the Heng Samrin regime to avert the threatened disaster was still a major theme. With thousands streaming towards the Border the idea of a "land bridge" quickly gained currency and was operational by 12 December. Phnom Penh was suspicious and saw it as yet another attempt to undermine and weaken its authority. By the end of December an estimated 6,000 Cambodians visited the Border daily to collect rice rations and then return home. Eventually, the land bridge was also used to send seed rice, farm tools and oxen to the Cambodian interior; a year later an estimated 148,500 tons or rice had been distributed.

Thus at the end of 1979, after a year of tense negotiation in the "rush" to avert disaster, the Cambodian relief operation included air and sea shipments to Phnom Penh, two HCR camps a safe distance from the war zone, a Joint Mission team operational on the Border, and the land-bridge feeding supplies to the interior. In addition, the World Food Programme (WFP) was providing supplies for the remote northern and southern Border areas. It was an accomplishment that no one was particularly proud of; Cambodians were still vulnerable to a potent mix of dangers and so was the relief operation.

**Rice-control**

In any disaster relief situation ensuring that victims receive supplies in a manner which allows them to rise above the conditions provoking their victimization is fundamental to the
operation's success. A key factor of such success is effective monitoring of the distribution of relief inputs.

1980 began with fighting between the warlords running the different camps north of Aran.(50) Food was power. As refugee numbers swelled the struggle for influence and control of rice distribution undermined the work of relief agencies.(51) Periodic shelling militated against orderly distribution and monitoring mechanisms. In sharp contrast to the lengthy negotiations and accusations levelled against Phnom Penh monitoring was not an issue for donors in relation to the Border.

South of Aranayaprathet (where the Khmer Rouge were concentrated) provoked equally perplexing food-distribution problems.(52) Located far beyond the Border relief officials did not have access to Khmer Rouge enclaves and had no way of verifying the end-use of assistance.

Various attempts were made by the Joint Mission to improve organization and implementation but competing perspectives among the different relief agencies weakened their overall bargaining position and strengthened the influence of donors. As noted in Rice, Rivalry and Politics:

...Thailand, the country that hosted the relief operation, and the US government, which funded the bulk of the relief operation, insisted that the Khmer Rouge be fed.(53)

Even in the absence of monitoring the Joint Mission was not unaware of corruption and diversion of supplies to soldiers. From March 1980 it made various attempts to extricate itself from the Border feeding programme. Part of its "escape plan" included shifting responsibility to the World Food Programme (WFP) which balked, however, at the prospect of being the sole operator on the Border.(54) In an ironic reversal of what is generally perceived as being "political" the US Embassy attributed "political" motives to ICRC when it announced its intention to withdraw from the
Border; this withdrawal was seen as indicative of ICRC's "support" for the Heng Samrin regime.(55)

Finding a way out of this problem was not easy but was partially facilitated by the willingness of CRS (Catholic Relief Services) to distribute rice to the Khmer Rouge-controlled Tap Prik camp which it commenced doing in June. Shortly thereafter shelling disrupted deliveries and the Joint Mission decided not to resume rice supplies. Thailand was not pleased and suspended shipment of ICRC-UNICEF assistance to Phnom Penh. It also threatened to halt the Joint Mission operation at the Border. ICRC, however, was adamant that "feeding soldiers violated its mandate" and began to review its overall involvement on the Border.(56)

Both World Relief and Christian Outreach indicated their willingness to distribute rice south of Aran but Bangkok and Washington were anxious to maintain an international presence on the Border. The fact that "like Thailand, the US preferred that the Khmer Rouge operation benefit from the credibility of an internationally known relief organization" provided some leverage to the Joint Mission but does not appear to have been exploited to any significant degree.(57)

By the end of July ICRC decided to withdraw from all aspects of the Border-feeding programme. UNICEF, on the other hand had begun to reassess its position in the face of mounting US criticism and decided to resume feeding on the basis of direct distribution in August.(58) However, the Khmer Rouge were unhappy with this approach and "attempted to make the new system fail completely so that UNICEF would revert to the former system." (59) The much vaunted discipline of the Khmer Rouge camps quickly disappeared as cadres encouraged disruption of deliveries. By the end of 1980, UNICEF, thoroughly discouraged, reverted to its former "indirect distribution" of dropping supplies with camp "leaders".(60)
Everyone to the Bunkers

The Joint Mission were not the only actors struggling with problems. HCR's experience, and that of refugees it was designed to protect, was no less problematical than its sister agencies and the people they were attempting to help.

On the 24th January 1980 Thai authorities advised HCR that refugees would no longer be admitted to Khao-i-Dang; this effectively meant its "Open Door" was now closed. Officially, HCR did not react and essentially pretended it had not happened. A small number of refugees continued to enter the KID (Khao-i-Dang) camp clandestinely although it was extremely dangerous to do so. In March, a Thai paramilitary force, Task-Force 80 (TF 80) was established ostensibly to provide security but in practice to restrict movement from the Border camps. Refugees sought to enter Khao-i-Dang since it was free of warlordism, it was outside the immediate war zone, and refugees could apply for resettlement to a third country.(61)

Whatever the original intention of the "Open Door" policy its initiation at the onset of the dry season, (when guerrilla activity has traditionally been most disadvantaged and at a time when the Khmer Rouge were facing major problems) and its abrupt ending a short three months later led many to believe that the relief operation was being manipulated for the sole purpose of sustaining an anti-Phnom Penh resistance.(62) Concern deepened when it became known that the closure of the "Open Door" coincided with the relocation of people at night-time from both Sa Kaeo and Khao-i-Dang to Khmer Rouge and Khmer Serei camps at the Border.

In February Heng Samrin proposed negotiations on the return of the refugees but this was frowned upon by Thailand and its allies anxious not to give "legitimacy" to the Phnom Penh government. There was clearly a certain interest in retaining a population on the Border as subsequent events demonstrated.(63)
HCR, skeptical of the Border operation from the outset was fearful of the "magnet effect" the overall assistance programme was likely to have.(64) HCR favoured voluntary repatriation - to home villages in the interior - and publicly advocated this.(65) However, as Nayan Chanda, referring to the views of Thailand, speculated in the *Far Eastern Economic Review*:

...the need for continued military pressure on the Vietnamese through the Pol Pot remnants along the Thai Border and concern for the views of China and the US could militate against such a move.(66)

The Khmer Rouge were equally unimpressed and denounced the policy as "inhumane".(67)

Night-time removal of refugees back to the Border continued through March and April. When HCR protested Thailand insisted the moves were voluntary. Donor countries did not express any concern. HCR then quietly negotiated with Bangkok to assume responsibility for repatriation on the understanding that HCR would individually interview prospective returnees and clandestine departures would end.

On 10 June Thai authorities announced details of the arrangement which upset Joint Mission officials already preoccupied with their own problems on the Border.(68) The exercise commenced on 17 June 1980. Altogether a total of 1,600 left Khao-i-Dang (out of a population of 128,000) and 7,464 departed Sa Kaeo.(69)

In many respects HCR felt vindicated. It was happy to point out that many more refugees would probably have left without HCR's involvement. But on 22 and 23 June the Vietnamese shelled encampments north of Aran sending refugees fleeing for their lives. An estimated 400 were killed. The attack, and brief incursion into Thailand, were seen as a signal of Phnom Penh's displeasure and retaliation for the removal of people to resistance-held areas.(70)
UNHCR was increasingly sidelined and was not itself anxious to get further involved on the Border. In August it tried again to involve donors in a scheme to provide assistance to returnees. The Heng Samrin government was enthusiastic and indicated some 300,000 were in need of help. Predictably, donors were not interested. In the run-up to the second General Assembly since the installation of Heng Samrin every move was construed to have strategic motivation. The US Embassy in Bangkok sent a "furious denunciation" of HCR's proposal to Washington; gathering all its ammunition it observed:

Finally, we cannot help but recall UNHCR's adamant refusal to get involved on the Border last year on the grounds that the Khmer there were not refugees. (71)

The US Embassy had a point but was using the facade of its own rhetoric to justify its position. (72) In this it was not unique. As the over-arching purpose of the major actors became apparent agencies struggled to disengage from the entangled web of the Border's messy politics.

There were very good reasons to reassess support for the status quo and to question the direction and effectiveness of the relief operation. From the outset (or at least from mid-1979) HCR had underlined the need for a "solution-oriented" approach. Its reluctance to extend its reach to the people on the Border at the end of 1979 was, in part, a reflection of its concern that it did not have enough clout to affect positive change. As noted by Rizvi in a cable at the time:

Situation at Border constitutes a significant source of tension which should not be perpetuated. Humanitarian assistance provided in the area should consequently not have durable character. (73)

By the mid-1980s agencies were all too aware of the problems which stymied their work. However, it is unclear why many considered walking away from a scenario they had helped shape.
would prove beneficial to the Cambodians who sought and needed assistance.

UNHCR has a mandatory obligation to provide protection to refugees. In Thailand it faced many obstacles but by removing itself from the Border it weakened its ability to be a witness and a voice; an HCR presence, determined to uphold its mandate, would have meant a level of protection, however fragile, that Cambodians were denied. Non-recognition of the Cambodians' refugee status had the precise effect which HCR was anxious to avoid; the situation on the Border was perpetuated and the population used to sustain the resistance. This, in turn, diluted the prospects of a durable solution to the crisis which engulfed Cambodia. In the process, countless Cambodians lost their lives.

Unquestionably, the Joint Mission and HCR had little room to manoeuvre and limited power to implement their mandates. But divergent perspectives, concern about their individual reputations, and inability to work together to counteract donor pressure further eroded their ability to provide humanitarian assistance. Both Bangkok and Washington were anxious if not insistent in having an international presence on the Border.(74) Coupled with widespread public support and concern this strengthened the hand of the agencies in setting out the parameters necessary for them to operate. In this connection it is unclear why the reality of the Khmer Rouge was hushed up rather than exposed. The paying public would have been appalled to learn of their continued and menacing existence (including at Sa Kaeo where captors continued to exert control over their captives) and would have restricted the ability of their respective governments to support the Khmer Rouge revival. This would have allowed agencies greater flexibility and independence from the pressure exerted by donors.

Of course, time was of the essence. Fears of famine were a major factor in the shaping of the programme complicated by anti-Phnom Penh propaganda. But the most logical response to the threat of disaster was massive support to and close co-operation with the Phnom Penh government. The Heng Samrin regime was
hesitant about the UN (after decisions in the Security Council and General Assembly) and faced major logistical problems which slowed down delivery of relief assistance. But additional not less help was the most reasonable and humanitarian response to the hunger and devastation which threatened the Cambodian people and undermined the new government's ability to launch effective remedial measures. There was little mobilization of support for this perspective, "a window of opportunity" that should have been help open as the agencies demarcated the space necessary for them to operate.

The Jigsaw takes Shape

Throughout the latter part of 1980 and 1981 more clearly defined lines of responsibility lessened inter-agency wrangling as the relief effort set out to retrieve a measure of independence from the whirlwind of big power politics. Off centre-stage, the anti-Vietnamese alliance was subject to its own conflict of interests.

From early 1980 China assiduously courted ASEAN countries to promote closer co-ordination and iron out policy differences. In October, Thai Prime Minister Prem and in November, Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew visited Beijing which laid the foundation for a United Front proposal. At the autumn session of the General Assembly, ASEAN called for an International Conference on Kampuchea (ICK) scheduled for July 1981.

However, while ASEAN and China agreed on the need to up-grade and sanitize the DK's image (and thus the proposed Coalition) ASEAN's primary concern was the presence of Vietnamese in Cambodia. Support for the DK was a means of pressuring Vietnam to withdraw but ASEAN was also prepared to acknowledge that Hanoi had legitimate security interests.(75)

Beijing's primary objective was to "bleed Vietnam white" and "to restore its Khmer Rouge allies, albeit chastened and reformed, to power in Phnom Penh."(76) Nayan Chanda states that China was fearful "that a quick settlement of the issue could only be
favourable to Hanoi."(77) Even though China publicly favoured an immediate withdrawal, in December 1979 Deng told visiting Japanese Prime Minister Masayoshi Ohira "it is wise for China....to force the Vietnamese to stay in Kampuchea because that way they will suffer more and more...".(78)

In the lead-up to the 1981 Kampuchean Conference and on-going attempts to form a Coalition, ASEAN favoured a non-alligned Cambodia and attempted to set conditions which would restrict the Khmer Rouge. However, Sihanouk's attempts to generate an alternative to Democratic Kampuchea "were cold-shouldered by the West."(79)

ASEAN's draft declaration for the Conference was considered too conciliatory to the Vietnamese. According to Chang Pao-Min, "China was even against any resolution or declaration that would put the Khmer Rouge either in a bad light or on the same plane as the Heng Samrin Regime."(80)

However, while ASEAN struggled for balance and was wary of Beijing's future interests in Indochina it was dismayed by Washington's position. New Secretary of State Alexander Haig "carried his Sinophilia to the extent of siding with Peking against America's non-Communist allies and friends" at the Conference. (81) In an interview with Chanda, an ASEAN delegate complained that "...behind the scenes they (Assistant Secretary of State Holdridge and Haig) pressured us to accept the Chinese position."(82)

In August, Sihanouk and Son Sann met for the first time since 1970 and the following month flew to Singapore "after much coaxing and cajoling by ASEAN and the United States" to sign the accord which established the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK).(83) Problems with portfolios delayed the official launching which transpired in Kuala Lumpur in June 1982. The Khmer Rouge were the dominant "partner" and retained representation at the UN. Sihanouk was its nominal President and Son Sann its Premier. Khieu Samphan who had "replaced" Pol Pot
as head of the Khmer Rouge (in an earlier public relations exercise) was the Coalition's Foreign Minister.

Meanwhile, back in the world of relief organizations, UNICEF had decided to leave the Border at the end of 1981. The World Food Programme (WFP) which had always been the most comfortable with its role in Thailand acquired the distinction of "lead agency" which it retained until it withdrew from the Border at the end of 1987. WFP was the anchor for the new entity, the UN Border Relief Operation (UNBRO) established specifically to work along the 750 km stretch of the Thai-Cambodian border.(84)

More than a decade since the first bedraggled refugees approached Thailand, they, their families and the many children born on the Border are still consigned to camps waiting for the day they will be allowed to go home. Their litany of woes is all the more painful when coupled with the realization that their suffering was exacerbated when it was exploited to gain strategic advantage.

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This chapter profiles the background to 1979 and the setting which shaped the delivery of relief assistance. The next chapter follows through on the implications of decisions which confined Cambodians to the Border as the war intensified. It also reviews the formation of the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea, its implications for people held on the Border, and its relevance in terms of international refugee law. Chapter III is also concerned with the purpose and application of humanitarianism in a transitional and interdependent world.
Throughout its years of "unimpeded revolution" the Khmer Rouge had shunned the outside world and was particularly venomous in its shrill denunciation of the West. In 1979, as it tenaciously clung to the task of sheer survival, it was amazingly agile in dropping its recent rhetoric and mouthing new slogans and proclamations of respect for democracy and the kind of stuff Western ears generally like to hear. Shortly before the creation of the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea the Khmer Rouge ratified all the major UN Conventions including the Covenants on Civil and Political Rights, and the Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices similar to Slavery.(1)

Refugees, who understood this for what it was, a grotesque and cynical farce, were unimpressed. Notwithstanding their new-found acclaim there was little evidence that the Khmer Rouge had changed. The CGDK was merely a useful acronym in camouflaging support for Pol Pot and his henchmen.

By 1983, UNBRO had achieved significant progress in monitoring the distribution of supplies and maintaining a certain order in the camps compared to the chaotic earlier days. But a large number of refugees were beyond the reach of the UN and ICRC in areas which became known as the "hidden border". These were "military camps" which for the Khmer Rouge included women and children. The only inkling of their existence came at times of severe shelling when they crowded closer to, and crossed into, Thailand. For those in the more accessible Border areas, the gripping scenes of 1979 and 1980 had given way to a new range of problems, less "photogenic", but equally acute. Death by
starvation was no longer a concern; killing by shelling was now the major hazard. Being blown apart by mines was an equally frightening reality. The Thai-Cambodian border is one of the most booby-trapped pieces of land on earth.

Between 1982 and 1986 UNBRO supervised 85 camp evacuation; 65 of these occurred under intense artillery fire. But the suffering of Cambodia was no longer newsworthy. Crises in El Salvador, Lebanon, Ethiopia, Somalia and Chad, to name but a few, briefly monopolized the headlines in the early '80s. Ronald Reagan had taken office in January 1981 and, in the wake of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, US policy had hardened toward Moscow and Hanoi. There was little apparent interest in a negotiated settlement. Fitful bursts of war took on a pattern of its own. Khmer Rouge fighters and their non-communist partners became known as the "resistance", always awkward to explain since they were also the recognized government. In the words of Shawcross:

As a result of the support they obtained from across the Thai Border, the resistance groups were able to mount guerrilla attacks upon the Vietnamese main force units occupying Cambodia...

War took on a pattern of dry-season offensives (approximately December to March) by Phnom Penh and Vietnamese troops and stepped-up guerrilla attacks by the KR when the monsoon rains bogged down the heavy equipment of their opponents.

Denial of Refuge

For all Cambodians this bloody stalemate meant no quick end to their wretched misery. After the initial euphoria of freedom and escape from the worst effects of famine, Phnom Penh was facing multiple problems as Western donors cut back relief supplies and blocked development assistance. Cambodians, amongst the most impoverished and traumatized in the world, gained the unenviable distinction of being the only people denied a UN development programme; this included, for example, the technical
expertise of the World Health Organization which could have helped in the training of medics and the organization of programmes to inoculate children.

On the Border, the early months of 1983 saw camps repeatedly shelled and hundreds killed. Nong Chan was totally destroyed. Further north, some 2,000 streamed across the border from the Khmer Rouge-held area of Phnom Chat to a new site called "Red Hill". All such evacuations were possible only when the Thai authorities gave permission for them to enter Thailand. There was a general understanding that they would return as soon as the fighting died down. In this particular instance many of the newly arrived residents of Red Hill objected and "begged that they not be sent back under the Khmer Rouge headmasters...". Both ICRC and UNBRO felt this scenario was outside their competence and passed the request along to HCR. Finally, it was agreed that these "evacuees" would be given the option of moving to other camps on the Border. Obviously this was not much of a choice to people tired of war and in need of refuge but it got them away from the Khmer Rouge.

The experience of Red Hill highlighted once again the no-win situation the agencies, and Cambodians in need of help, were now caught in. Short-term "solutions" were aggravating an untenable situation and provoking larger and evermore intractable problems. Relief assistance was being used to bolster the political and military standing of the CGDK. This worked against a settlement and boomeranged on the people humanitarian assistance was ostensibly geared to protect.

Then in the following 1984-85 dry season the PRK and its Vietnamese allies launched a withering offensive to dislodge the resistance from their Border bases. This time there was no return to the Border camps as they were totally destroyed. Still within shelling range, new camps were re-established on the Thai side of the Border. They tended to follow the same structure as before in that they were controlled by the different factions. A major difference is that these new enclosures were "closed camps"; this
effectively meant that the Border population associated with the non-KR factions were confined to a restricted area and had lost the limited mobility they had enjoyed previously. For those held by the Khmer Rouge mobility had never been an option.

The fact that camps were now inside Thailand allowed for a certain stability. Small "businesses" sprang up. Noodle shops did a brisk trade, enterprising farmers planted gardens and artisans once again laboured over the ubiquitous Angkor "souvenirs". Pagodas resonated with the sound of chanting and young children were everywhere, shrieking as they raced relief trucks or smiling impishly as they practiced their English, "OK, Bye, Bye," on the pink-nosed farang who could never resist one more photo. From many perspectives Site 2, now the largest of the Border encampments, was a bustling bamboo "city". But strategically located on the hot dusty plains between the Dongrek Range to the north and Cardamon mountains to the south, it, like the other Border camps, was still vulnerable to attack. Abuses, which were always a feature of the Border area, still endangered people's lives. Questions were raised anew on the limited rights of these people and the minimal options available to them. Clearly they lacked protection and it was difficult to decipher what options, if any, were available to them other than "wait and see" how others would decide their fate.

Of all the people in modern times who have been shot at, terrorized, bombed, pushed from their homes, tortured and persecuted, ravaged by hunger and disease, seen loved ones brutalized, massacred and their families torn apart, it would be difficult to find a group who have suffered such pervasive, persistent and monstrous abuse as the Cambodians held between competing armies oblivious to the harm they inflicted.

In 1979 and 1980 when Cambodians crossed into Thailand seeking refuge, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees seemed the obvious answer to help meet their needs. HCR was already well-established in the country; in 1975 it signed a Basic Accord with the Thai authorities. Between April 1975 and September
1979, HCR had assisted some 47,716 Cambodians; 32,447 of these had been resettled along with thousands of other Indochinese refugees. HCR is the sole body, internationally constituted, entrusted with the protection of refugees. In 1981 it won the Nobel Peace Prize. Its dependence on the co-operation and financial support of governments poses severe limitations on the implementation of its mandate. But it enjoys a great deal of goodwill amongst peace-loving people everywhere and it basks in the aura of its moral authority; it rightly sees itself as the only agency competent to deal with the protection of refugees.

Nonetheless, subsequent to the withdrawal of the Khmer Rouge from Phnom Penh, when Cambodians crowded into Thailand and many were forcibly returned back across the Border to obvious dangers, HCR essentially kept a low profile. It occasionally expressed concern but in a very muted fashion. In December 1979 when Thai Premier Kriangsak requested Secretary-General Waldheim to create a "safe haven", Washington supported this proposal. HCR was initially in favour but, as outlined above, eventually decided against active involvement on the Border. HCR had valid reasons for being apprehensive about big power machinations and the effect this would have on its ability to provide protection. It was also concerned about the danger of creating a "pull factor", but this is a problem inherent in practically any given refugee situation. Besides, ICRC and UNICEF were already operational and it was obvious that a relief programme, of whatever character and duration, was necessary. One of HCR's stated reasons for its general reluctance was that the Border was poorly defined; since the camps then straddled the frontier many of the people were inside Cambodia. Such concerns, however, were not an issue when HCR was requested a decade later to set up operations inside Iraq to help the Kurds - Iraqi nationals - fleeing the brutalities of Saddam Hussein.
CGDK "sanctuaries"

At the end of the 1984-85 dry season Cambodians were clearly inside Thailand. By this time, the CGDK, however fictitious, was the banner which provided a "United Front" for the anti-Phnom Penh alliance. Recognized as the Government which represented Cambodia, the people held in CGDK camps were identified as its citizens. This "reality" was seen to "complicate" recognition of the Border population as refugees. They are still described as "displaced people". This, in effect, meant they were denied even the minimal rights of refugees and were seen merely as "cannon fodder", a useful recruitment tool for the CGDK factions, and a useful buffer against the Vietnamese.

It is difficult to know who actually bought this cruel fiction of a "sovereign" Coalition Government dependent as it was on donated rice, canned fish and trucked water to keep its captive population fed. It is equally difficult to know if anyone actually believed that holding a population captive enhanced the credibility of the DK.

The coalition forged between Sihanouk, Son Sann (for the KPNLF) and the Khmer Rouge was an obvious ploy to make the latter more palatable to public opinion. But the CGDK's claim to represent the State of Cambodia as its functioning government was no less tendentious when faced with the facts. The Border camps were physically located in Thailand in an area subject to martial law imposed by the Thai army and clearly lacked independent sovereign status. It would be difficult to claim that they even enjoyed concurrent jurisdiction. They were not allowed to fly their own flag without authorization from Thailand. Even simple procedures and regulations (for example, permission to own a bicycle or use it as a "taxi" within the camp perimeter) were overturned or modified by the Thai authorities.

Concerning the issue of statehood, basic criteria as outlined in the Montevideo Convention on Rights and Duties of States (1933)
necessitates that the state as an entity (or subject) of international law should possess the following qualifications:

(a) a permanent population; (b) a defined territory; (c) a government; and (d) a capacity to enter into relations with other states. (11)

On the question of government, seen as necessary for a state to function as a member of the international community (and to ensure respect for the international rights and obligations of the state), Dixon writes that it is not surprising

...that one criterion of statehood should be that a territory have an effective government. The executive authorities must, in other words, be effective within the defined territory and exercise control over the permanent population. (12)

As Dixon also explains, an established state does not lose its statehood “when it ceases to have an effective government”. (13)

The Montevideo Convention is concerned with states and their role in international law. There are no legally enunciated principles a government must meet before it can gain or claim international recognition. However it is obvious that the credibility and de facto existence of what is normally understood as a functioning government rests on its relationship with the people and territory of the state it claims to govern and represent.

Notwithstanding the flimsy basis on which the CGDK claimed to be the legitimate government of Cambodia, it enjoyed widespread recognition at the UN General Assembly each year. None of the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries or those traditionally part of the Western bloc voted against acceptance of Democratic Kampuchea’s credentials. Five countries, Austria, Finland, France, Ireland and Sweden abstained throughout the four years the credentials were contested. Some governments tried to explain away their support for the CGDK by declaring that their vote in favour should not be interpreted as a vote in support of the policies of the DK. (14) This kind of
"diplomacy" was confusing but did little to disguise actual realities on the ground; the people on the Border were being used as pawns in the regeneration and rehabilitation of the Khmer Rouge whose objectives dovetailed with that of its supporters, political and military, in their joint endeavour to isolate and destabilize the Heng Samrin regime. The whole charade swivelled on the issue of recognition even though the West could have followed the non-aligned option of recognizing neither the PRK nor the DK.

For Cambodians locked in a war zone the net result was continuing years of tyranny and unrelieved misery. Their rights as refugees were never acknowledged. Even within the relief community it was considered provocative to refer to the Border population as refugees. HCR staff were forbidden by their own in-house rules to visit the Border camps.

Faced with the many crises which flared up and down the Border, UNBRO built on its experience and was deservedly proud of its reputation for its quick and flexible response. But it was poorly equipped to protect camp residents from abuses which continued to take a high toll of life and limb. As explained by Pierre Hazan, UNBRO as an entity was intrinsically flawed:

...à la différence des autres organisations humanitaires, elle n'était pourvue d'aucun mandat clair en termes éthiques, ni d'un véritable corpus juridique qui lui permette de protéger ses bénéficiaires.(15)

"International law seeks to define the minimum that should be offered to refugees" states Gil Loescher.(16) But given HCR's desire to steer clear of Border politics, Cambodians were denied the minimal rights afforded to refugees. Formally described as "displaced people", this in effect meant that the Border population were pressed into maintaining a status quo which actively discriminated against their wellbeing. However, HCR's decision not to get involved on the Border did not in any way reduce its mandatory obligation to provide protection to these de facto refugees.(17)
Refugees and International Law

Implicit in the everyday usage of the term "refugee", says Guy Goodwin-Gill, "lies an assumption that the person concerned is worthy of being, and ought to be, assisted and, if necessary, protected from the causes of flight."(18) This is the essence of the 1951 Convention which enables a person "outside his own country to enter a claim to a government for asylum, but gives him no right to it."(19) A refugee, as defined by the Convention (and Protocol) is someone "having a well-founded fear of persecution on political, religious or racial grounds"; a person meeting this definition "has legal protection against refoulement".(20)

The Convention is a multilateral treaty which is binding on the state parties acceding to it. Narrow in scope and content, its objective is to reinforce certain fundamental rights, such as non-refoulement and to ensure certain standards of treatment. It reflects principles earlier enunciated in Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Thus a minority of states, including Thailand, which have not yet acceded to the Convention, are equally obliged to respect and safeguard the basic human rights of individuals seeking asylum.(21) (Indeed, it would be rather disingenuous to propose that a state which had not, for example, ratified the Genocide Convention was somehow less obligated to refrain from such atrocities.)

The drafting of the Convention coincided with the creation of HCR which firmly established the notion of specific legal protection for refugees. The UNHCR Statute was adopted at the 1950 Session of the General Assembly. It sets out the functions of HCR which encompass "providing international protection" and "seeking permanent solutions"; as noted by Goodwin-Gill "the provision of international protection is of primary importance" since otherwise "there can be no possibility of finding lasting solutions".(22) This General Assembly Resolution, says Macalister-Smith "made it clear that international protection would be the main function of the High Commissioner."(23)
Both the Convention and the Statute contain similar definitions of "refugee", but the latter is more inclusive in that it extends to "any other person who is outside his country of nationality..." and meets the refugee criteria.(24) As noted by Goodwin-Gill:

> It is for UNHCR to determine status under the Statute and any relevant General Assembly resolutions, and for states party to the Convention and the Protocol to determine status under these instruments.(25)

The determination of refugee status, therefore, is on the basis of recognized criteria:

> In principle, a person becomes a refugee at the moment when he or she satisfies the definition, so that formal determination of the status is declaratory, rather than constitutive...(26)

In other words, once a person meets the definition of "refugee", he or she is a refugee.(27)

Not long into the 1950s, it became clear that the mandate of the High Commissioner needed to be enlarged to allow assistance to refugees fleeing events outside the time factor stipulated in the Convention (namely "events occurring before 01 January 1951"); this led to a series of initiatives and General Assembly Resolutions providing the basis for a "good offices" formula to extend the assistance of UNHCR to de facto refugees such as Hungarians (fleeing the 1956 uprising and crackdown) and, in 1957 to mainland Chinese refugees in Hong Kong.(28)

Commenting on the inadequacies of the Convention and the rapidly changing post-War world, Johan Cels writes:

> Through subsequent General Assembly Resolutions enlarging the mandate of UNHCR, UN Member States allowed the Office to use its good offices to provide humanitarian assistance and protection to those refugees and displaced persons who did not specifically come under the Convention definition.(29)
Thus the term "mandate refugee" came to signify all those within the competence of HCR "according to its Statute, according to specific General Assembly resolutions, or according to general resolutions on displaced persons."(30) Given the differences in definition, writes Goodwin-Gill, an individual may be recognized as a mandate refugee, but not as a Convention refugee; this can arise, for example, "where the individual is in a non-contracting state...."(31) Goodwin-Gill further states:

UNHCR is the agency charged with protection of refugees and is alone competent to decide who comes within its jurisdiction under the Statute or any relevant General Assembly resolution.(32)

Likewise, the application of HCR's mandate is not discretionary. The Statute, which constitutes the basis of its authority, imposes a mandatory obligation on the Office of the High Commissioner to provide protection to all individuals who fall within the scope of its mandate.(33)

Not unaware of the contradictions which kept refugees on the Border, and the ramifications of this decision for Cambodians on both sides of the frontier, relief workers did on occasion protest the absence of adequate protection in the face of widespread violence and abuse. There was also periodic concern expressed about the overall role of the relief programme and whether in fact it was now "more part of the problem than the solution".

Once the camps were definitely in Thailand, and were less prone to attack throughout the rainy season, problems which were camouflaged in the constant disruption of shellings now came to the fore. Rape, robbery, intimidation, mutilation, murder and torture were all documented. A report "Seeking Shelter" by the Lawyers' Committee of Human Rights indicated in early 1987 that in the two years since the camps had moved inside Thailand, violations of human rights were a common occurrence; undisciplined Task-Force 80 Rangers rampaged and terrorized camp residents with apparent impunity.(34) The Report also indicated that the proximity of the camps to the Border was in
itself a threat to the security of the camps' inhabitants and called for the strengthening of international protection including the application of HCR's protection mandate "to encompass the entire Border population of displaced Cambodians". (35)

However, requesting such a "radical" move was, at this stage, seen as a Don Quixote tilting-at-windmills exercise. All such proposals had effectively been torpedoed when in 1985 Arthur Dewey, Deputy Assistant Secretary, US Bureau for Refugee Affairs also expressed his Government's disquiet about the Border situation. Writing to Mr Kunugi, Special Representative for the Secretary General for Kampuchean humanitarian assistance, subsequent to a public hearing by the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Asia, he referred to the "continuing concern in the United States that the Khmer along the border lack international protection...". He further added:

I remain concerned that if it is perceived that the present informal protection practices are ineffective, the pressure for a role for another international organization, especially UNHCR, will become irresistible. This is a solution that none of us, including UNHCR, wants. (36)

Subsequent years did see various attempts at improving the protection capacity of UNBRO but always within the context of keeping a lid on the level of violence. Many seasons of killing later, when negotiations for a political settlement were losing momentum, the democratically-elected Thai Premier Chatichai Choonhavan called for the creation of a "neutral" camp free of control by the resistance factions. (37) However, as noted the following day in the Bangkok Post:

Although Gen Chatichai's proposal to set up neutral camps has won praise and support from United Nations organizations, aid workers, and the European Community, the move has caused concern with the US. (38)
Washington's response was disappointing if not too surprising. Although the US had persistently presented itself as a bit player following ASEAN's lead, it had never wavered in its determination to unseat the Heng Samrin regime, nor in "galvanizing" support for its objectives. But no less disturbing was the virtual acquiescence of the relief community to policies anathema to the purpose of humanitarianism and its apparent unwillingness to challenge the ramifications and false premiss of realpolitik. As Macalister-Smith points out, the relevance of human rights instruments "take on special significance in the humanitarian context" given the heightened vulnerability of people. (39) It is universally recognized that the right to life is the most fundamental. However, together with other basic rights, says Macalister-Smith, "insufficient attention has been given to the fact that (such rights are)...threatened both by the consequences of disasters and by the failures of humanitarian actions." (40) This can, in part, be explained, says Kent, by the way in which priorities are determined: "means not ends provide the focal points for resolving problems." (41)

This apparent difficulty in holding to the essential purpose and focus of humanitarian assistance is partially a reflection of an increasingly complex world. We live in an era which defies one-dimensional responses to disasters. Catastrophic events are the outcome of a global order which enshrines the on-going polarization between rich and poor; environmental degradation, debt, underdevelopment, the arms trade and militarization are all factors which provoke violence, conflict and upheaval and set the scene for ideological combat and geo-political strife. (42)

**Humanitarianism: Its Guiding Principles**

Indeed, the world has not remained unchanged since the bloodshed and suffering of the pitched battles of Solferino launched Henri Dunant on his crusade to institutionalize and legitimize the principle of alleviating human suffering. Since the adoption of the first Geneva Convention in 1864 with its focus on war wounded, and its expansion through some 600 Articles later
to cover non-combatants, this principle of humanity "is universally recognized as of cogent character and compulsory for all states...."(43) However, while the concept of humanitarianism finds few detractors there are many obstacles in the actual provision of assistance which will allow victims to regain their (former) capacity to live their lives free from the pain and ruination left in the rubble of disasters.

Inherent in, or directly allied with, the original grundnorm of helping individuals in need were the twin concepts of non-discrimination and impartiality.(44) The terms, non-discrimination, impartiality, neutrality and independence, are sometimes used interchangeably which partly reflects the complementary nature of these concepts.

Making reference to Jean Pictet and his seminal work "Les Principes de la Croix Rouge" (1955), Fritz Kalshoven explains impartiality as the sum of three distinct notions: non-discrimination is the "non-application of adverse distinctions" (on the basis of race, religion, gender, political leanings, etc.); proportionality "requires that every person in need of help shall be aided according to his/her need"; and impartiality, in its immediate sense, implies the absence of subjective distinctions so that those who suffer "are all equally entitled to help" irrespective of whether they are "innocent victims or persons guilty of hideous war crimes".(45) The concept of neutrality is described as a "necessary negative complement to the essentially positive notion of impartiality"; it requires "non-participation, whether direct or indirect, in active hostilities" and signifies "ideological neutrality, or...the non-acceptance of any ideology other than its own".(46) The notion of independence is indicative of the need for non-interference or absence of action which will adversely affect the implementation of humanitarian principles.

The tradition which gave rise to, and builds on the codification of humanitarian principles, incorporates both the Geneva Conventions and refugee law which provide the basis for the institutional and legal framework for the provision of relief.
assistance. Legal protection and material assistance are recognized as two mutually reinforcing aspects of humanitarianism. (47)

The significance of the First Geneva Convention says Macalister-Smith "is that a legal principle was created incorporating the moral principle of respect for the human person." (48) Some years later in the frenzy of rule-making in the aftermath of WW2 the adoption of the UN Charter in June 1945 in effect banned the use of war and "declared that basic human rights are the concern of the international community". (49)

These twin themes of material assistance and protection "unite when legal instruments incorporate rights and duties relating to relief which are fulfilled in practice only through functional operational measures" writes Macalister-Smith. He adds:

Protection of people in humanitarian emergencies appears to depend first of all on the existence of an effective relief system through which appropriate action can be taken. At the same time, legal measures in the form of both principles and rules can contribute to maintaining and improving the system. (51)

There is, however, no real consensus as to what constitutes an "effective relief system". It is obviously necessary for those who are hungry to be fed and those who are ill should receive medical care. But it is equally obvious that in the vast majority of cases this type of intervention is inadequate if the purpose is to allow people regain the level of independence they enjoyed prior to the onset of the disaster. The original intent of Henri Dunant was not just to end suffering but to bring about conditions that would put an end to warfare and give peace a chance. The UN Charter has similar purpose. "Relief which only perpetuates a state of marginal survival...." is at best a questionable exercise; such assistance says Macalister-Smith "may even contribute to worse disasters in the future". (52) The purpose of relief action, writes the same author "is not simply to efficiently administer a state of destitution, dependency and misery....". (53)
Yet, given the multiple sources of conflict and complex conditions which produce disasters, relief activity of itself is not equipped to solve problems that are outside its competence. However relief action is an important component in the mix of ingredients necessary to bring about an overall solution, and, as such, must adhere to its guiding principles.

As noted earlier, relief assistance is not provided in a vacuum. Almost invariably, relief programmes operate within a larger context that require political solutions. Given the presence of humanitarian needs genuine solutions will only be found when the political response takes these into account.

All too often, however, humanitarian principles are ignored. What happens, says Forsythe, is a clash "between consensus on humanitarian principle and sovereign insistence on political concerns."(54)

This issue as to where and how agreed-upon humanitarian principles fit in the overall context of global organization and international law is a crucial, if not the most fundamental factor, in a genuinely "effective relief system".

What needs to be understood is the extent to which foreign policy is rationalized as moral on the basis of "national interests" and alleged threats to security. A "basic sensitivity to humanitarian need" writes Forsythe has been "affected by the traditional egoism of states especially when they insisted on the primacy of narrow expediency".(55) Such expediency is all too apparent in the words of Henry Kissinger when he readily admitted in 1976 that "disaster relief is becoming increasingly a major instrument of our foreign policy".(56)

The question of the role or absence of morality and respect for international law in foreign policy and interaction between states has direct and immediate bearing on the provision of humanitarian assistance. It was a critical factor in the shaping of
the international community's response to the events unfolding in Cambodia in 1979 and subsequent management of the relief operation.

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The next chapter makes a quick review of the issues pertinent to this question of politics and morality and how these affected the organization of the relief programme on the Thai-Cambodian border.
You know and we know, as practical men, that the question of justice arises only between parties equal in strength, and that the strong do what they can, and the weak submit. Athenians to the Melians shortly before annihilating them. Thucydides, the Peloponnesian War, 5th century BC (1)

An earlier idea for the heading of this chapter was Principle and "Politics", but was discarded immediately as being too misleading. Since "politics" is blamed for a multitude of wrongs there is a certain trepidation in employing the term; too often it is used as a catch-all phrase that deflects and deflates further discussion and analysis. As briefly intimated in Chapter I politics is here understood as a process of prioritization, decision-making and resource allocation by those with the relevant authority within the state. As Kent explains:

groups both within and outside the government constantly promote and compete for particular values and resources...for in the final analysis, politics is about the strategies and tactics, the trade-offs and linkages, employed to promote what contending groups regard as priorities. (2)

Needless to say, such an understanding of politics does not imply a rational or satisfactory (in the sense of equable) outcome; this is almost invariably the case when contending groups command different levels of power and resources.

Some of the concern and justifiable apprehension about the way in which political power is used is rooted in the hypocrisy, double-standards, duplicitous behaviour and exploitation of opponents' weaknesses that is seen to characterise power politics at either the domestic or international level. Within the context of relief programmes such behaviour is even more abhorrent. With regard to Cambodia, relief practitioners did not, in general, consider themselves capable of challenging unethical behaviour and indeed many would argue it was not their role. However, as outlined in
the foregoing chapters, strategic interests and foreign policy considerations had a major impact on the organisation of humanitarian assistance for Cambodians. It is thus necessary to review the considerations which formed the basis of such policy and the rationale used to underpin the whole edifice of the anti-Phnom Penh alliance and support for the Khmer Rouge.

Foreign Policy for whom?

Humanitarianism and foreign policy are two distinct phenomena. But it is often difficult to separate one from the other given the level of interaction, over-lapping concerns, and competing priorities evident in practically all disaster relief situations. "The common interests of humanity", says MacAlister-Smith "are of a different order from the particular interests of states which tend to conflict."(3)

Ever since the formation of nation-states mechanisms to facilitate international relations, or the discourse and interaction inherent in, and essential to, the interstate system, have slowly evolved; the adoption of the UN Charter in June 1945 marked the high-point of this process. The history of this slow evolution from empires and colonisation to the current state system demonstrates at least formal recognition of the need for orderly interaction; a large body of law and international treaties is but one reflection of this. The law which governs relations between states is, Louis Henkins says, "basic and indispensable" even if it is often taken for granted or, alternatively, ignored.(4) In principle, international law plays an important role in international relations and the formation of foreign policy.(5) Henkin says, international relations and foreign policy:

...depend on a legal order, operate in a legal framework, assume a host of legal principles and concepts which shape the policies of nations and limit national behaviour.(6)
Unfortunately this is not a very accurate reflection of what generally happens. History tends to show that competition rather than co-operation has been the hallmark of international relations.

This is partly due to the imbalance in state relations; less powerful nations tend to have less say in the organisation of transnational arrangements and in matters which directly affect their interests. As Stanley Hoffman explains:

In world affairs, the principle of state equality is accepted as a formal norm, not as a substantive one. International politics severely restricts its operational consequences and remains dominated by the interplay of might and wealth - it is the big powers who tend to lay down the law.(7)

There are few who will disagree with Hoffman that power and wealth are still the major determinants or that the realist paradigm dominates in the analysis and practice of international relations.(8) Indeed, Charles Kegley states:

The realist political philosophy currently colours nearly all thinking about world affairs, with the result that the field of study 'has become intellectually totalitarian, dominated by one school of thought.'(9)

There are, nonetheless, opposing views of world order advanced by those who believe in the necessity of a morality which ensures that the ends do not justify the means. Such perspectives, however, are often written off as being "too utopian" or "excessively idealistic". This, in turn, keeps another school of thought busy trying to bridge these differences (between realism and it's opponents) by making distinctions between classical and neo-realism; they argue that realism, as originally understood, can be reconciled with morality.

According to the chief proponents and architects of realism "it is national interests first and foremost which guides the conduct of nations in their international dealings" as noted by Bill
McSweeney.(10) Referring to the works of Reinhold Niebuhr and Hans Morgenthau, McSweeney adds:

...the nature of international politics is such that national interest is, and can only be, the primary reason for acting in the international arena and the only safe indicator of the future course of foreign policy.(11)

Hans Morgenthau himself has written that:

The state has no right to let its moral disapprobation... get in the way of successful political action, itself inspired by the moral principle of national survival.(12)

As noted by Kegley, against this background "ethics are reduced to a secondary importance and are subservient to the dictates of national interests".(13)

In querying the basic and fundamental axioms of realism Noam Chomsky, in *Human Rights and American Foreign Policy*, raises questions as to what constitutes, and who defines national interest.(14) Equally to the point, William T. Fox, Director of the War and Peace Institute of Columbia, in 1949 challenged the most articulate exponent of realism to account for its anomalies:

According to Professor Morgenthau...national interest turns out to be another name for national security, and this in turn is revealed to mean the maintenance of the states' territorial integrity and its basic institutions. Now which institutions are basic? Can this question be answered except in the language of moral principle?...(15)

Acknowledging that national security is indeed central to national interest, does not, as many recognise, exclude other concerns; "national interest", says Henry Shue, "is survival as a certain kind of nation in a certain kind of world".(16)
How a nation sees itself and its future is closely intertwined with its history, culture and the formative framework which contributes to the identity of the nation. Indeed, there are few nations which would claim that their sole interest in being is to enlarge their power and prestige. Fewer nations still would argue that the realisation of their national interest gave them carte blanche to ignore, disrupt or exploit the rights and vulnerabilities of other states intent on their national interest.

Those outside the realist school argue that "moralism", or ethical behaviour, is actually in a state's long-term interests. Mutuality and reciprocity are of proven value in relations between states.(17) No nation is an island unto itself; national interests are best secured by recognising the extent to which they are entangled with, and conditional upon, the realization of other states' national interests.

As Kegley points out, "morality does not require a state to sacrifice its interests."(18) What the non-realist or "idealist" school does demand is principled behaviour; this is compatible with a nation's interests which are best achieved "when states bind themselves to a moral code which can restrain their struggle for power with one another."(19) In fact, states Stanley Hoffman, there is "...a quite extraordinary coincidence between morality and self-interest"; he adds that:

...it is not at all in America's interest to support blindly unjust corrupt and repressive regimes. These are precisely the weakest spots in the competitive dimension of international politics.(20)

What is missing in the over-simplification of "ends justify the means", and misperceptions as to what constitutes national interests, is an overall vision of what is best for humankind and the unacceptability of the harm inherent in power politics for the well-being of others.

As the record shows, some of the pitfalls of the realist argument is its persuasive but erroneous assumption of rational and coherent
decision-making in pursuit of national interests. When removed from the abstract, praxis and the reality of the last forty years have demonstrated that the perceived danger to the United States "was seen to be so imminent that support for repression and oppression abroad become magically moral".(21) US policy was rationalized by exaggerating the threat posed by the Soviet Union. In addition, says Forsythe, post-war years have seen the "US government overstate its own virtue while understating the virtue of its adversaries."(22) Commenting on this unique talent for self-appraisal and global analysis, the columnist William Pfaff speaks of the dual nature of US foreign policy which can incorporate the ideal of a "New World Order" while unabashedly exercising its power, and persisting in its support for Beijing in the wake of the Tiananmen Square massacre.(23) "These two American traditions" Pfaff says,

...are usually reconciled through more or less conscious hypocrisy. One speaks in the language of global reform but usually acts according to Realpolitik.(24)

The implications of ignoring moral principles and flouting standards basic to international law are many but the ability to rationalise any kind of policy as necessary for national interests is perhaps the most dangerous. It is necessary to remember, says Shue, that "national interests are legitimate only if they can be pursued within fundamental moral constraints."(25)

It is not a question of morality versus politics but rather, as cogently outlined in Winning the Human Race, "the kind of politics which allow moral restraints to emerge and to be observed. Such political activity", the report continues, "begins with a sober consideration of the under-lying self-interest that will persuade states and other actors to accept the precepts of common humanity".(26)

These considerations were not much in evidence when the world became aware of what was happening in Cambodia in 1979. The reality of mass murder, and what is now widely understood as genocide, took a lower "priority" than Vietnamese intervention
which resulted in the ouster of the Khmer Rouge. The rationalisation of policy since then hinges on a contorted interpretation of "sovereignty" which is used to justify the anti-Vietnamese coalition, shielding of the Khmer Rouge from action which would hold them accountable for their crimes, and resuscitation of the same perpetrators of genocide to their present position of strength. This, in turn, has involved the isolation and denial of development assistance to Cambodia while the Border population has been held captive to the very forces it sought to escape.

**Sovereignty**

The debate which has swirled around the role of Vietnam in Cambodia deserves some scrutiny given its influence in the policy which impacted upon the provision of humanitarian assistance.

International law, and the very concept of an international community, is structured on the notion of a world of nation states, each sovereign and independent, and responsible for the jurisdiction of the territory and people within it's recognised borders.(27) State sovereignty, says MacAlister-Smith, "remains the cornerstone of international law", a principle that is vigorously defended and held aloft to rally constituents at the slightest hint of encroachment.(28)

The term "sovereignty", says Patricia Mische, is derived from the medieval Latin *supremitas* (or *suprema potestas*) meaning "supreme power", and the French, *souveraineté*; in everyday use she says the term "refers to the decision-making process of the state".(29) In the Encyclopedia Britannica it is described thus:

...In the context of international law and relations (external sovereignty), it usually refers to 'the freedom of a state from external control'.(30)

According to Stephen Krasner "the assertion of final authority within a given territory is the core element in any definition of sovereignty".(31) He quotes J. Strayer who, in 1970, asserts that
"sovereignty requires independence from any outside power and final authority over men who live within certain boundaries". (32)

Yet while the notion of supreme authority remains the common perception of sovereignty there is growing discussion as to its actual purpose and the manner in which it functions. In an increasingly interdependent world there are divergent views as to how the core definition operates and the extent to which sovereignty, as it was originally understood, exists. As Krasner explains: even though the state is seen as paramount, there is a "growing disjuncture, however, between the nature of sovereignty in the contemporary world and [its] functional objectives". (33) This is true both in terms of the ability of states to exercise independent authority and the reality of the modern world which recognizes the need to "pool" and "share" sovereignty. No less significant is the extent to which states are influenced and affected by activities and phenomena outside their immediate control.

Apart from questions concerning the basis of legitimacy and sovereignty of a state (in terms of its relationship with the people it claims to represent) sovereignty cannot be understood without reference to the international community which gives it relevance. (34) Inherent in the concept of sovereignty are duties and obligations which need to be observed. (35) As Macalister-Smith points out, sovereignty does not constitute "unbridled freedom but rather is an attribute of equality between states and it is subject to the duty to comply faithfully with international obligations". (36) In this sense, sovereignty is seen as a necessary and functional requisite for orderly interaction and co-operation between states.

Issues of international law cannot be seen as matters purely within the domestic jurisdiction of the state. Indeed there are few who would argue on the basis of "absolute sovereignty"; the reality of the UN Charter is a clear indication that states recognize an area of responsibility that goes beyond the traditional concept of sovereignty. (37) This is not to deny the continuing debate,
(particularly concerning article 2(7) of the Charter) as to which matters are governed by international law and which are within the "reserved domain" of the state. (38)

In a world where no nation is free from the reverberations of big power politics, or ignores at its peril the transnational nature of environmental degradation, or the implications of the global economic and monetary system, sovereignty can no longer be explained in static terms. It needs to be seen, says Mische "as a dynamic, interactive process involving a system of relationship and flow of energy and information between different spheres of sovereignty". (39)

Once upon a time it could well be claimed that societies did function as independent entities. But the world has witnessed dramatic and profound changes since the days of the Chinese Emperor Qin and the construction of the 6000 kilometer Great Wall intended to protect the territorial integrity of his kingdom.

Yet the myth of sovereignty as an omnipotent and sacred heirloom - buttressed by the equally emotive concept of nationhood and its inherent nationalism - endures even as reality intrudes. This is nowhere more apparent than when one state is seen to violate the sovereignty of another through armed intervention.

**Intervention**

Intervention is not just frowned upon; it is widely condemned when it occurs. However, it is not exactly a unique or rare event. Chomsky advises that James Close, editor of *Foreign Affairs* counted no less than 159 instances of US armed intervention prior to 1945. (40) Since WW2 a range of countries from Afghanistan to Vietnam, including Czechoslovakia, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, Korea, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Sri Lanka and Panama have all experienced the reality of foreign military display and demonstrate their weaponry. This list is not exhaustive and does not include Sikkim, nor East Timor and Tibet, the latter two
occupied as they struggled for statehood. Neither does it include Cambodia which was "host" to both the North Vietnamese, who sought sanctuary in its jungles, and Americans, who sought to exfoliate the same greenery in their bloody showdown of the early '70s. All of the circumstances surrounding these military "initiatives" differ; the outcome in terms of lives lost have much in common but otherwise bear little resemblance to each other. Nonetheless, the rationale for each has had a familiar ring. The architects of these interventions, whether acting singly or in tandem with others, have only ever claimed the most noble of motives as they set out to defend "vital interests" whatever their nature or substance.(41)

Yet Brian Beedham says "one of the sternest lessons of the 20th century has been that countries should keep out of each other's internal affairs".(42) To a great extent, respect for this principle is seen as the raison d'être of the UN Charter, an international treaty which expressly forbids war; its first article states that its purpose is to "maintain international peace and security". This objective is substantiated by both Art 2(1) and 2(4) which reaffirm the principle of sovereignty and the need to refrain from activities not consistent with the purposes of the United Nations.(43)

However, there are problems in interpretation when the Charter is not read in its entirety. This is particularly relevant concerning the question of sovereignty and international obligations concerning respect for human rights and peace in the world. Too often the issue of sovereignty, and the provisions of Art 2(4), are seen to take precedence over other principles and debate centers on the "contradictions" between these. Vietnamese action in Cambodia is but one example of this although there has been precious little discussion on human rights violations notwithstanding the extent of crimes attributed to the Khmer Rouge.

As already seen, no state is totally separate from the international system and experiences some level of involvement with other states. The line between "interference" and "direct intervention"
are blurred particularly in the realm of economic relations which often have direct bearing on a state's security and ability to chart its future course. Thus, international lawyers make a distinction (or try to) between manipulative, self-serving or opportunistic intervention and the outcome of interaction inherent in the international system or global order which reflects the current organisation of international relations.

It is also necessary to make a distinction between matters understood as "essentially within" the domestic jurisdiction of states and the obligations of these states under international law by virtue of which their existence is legitimized. According to Ian Brownlie:

The general position is that the "reserved domain" is the domain of state activities where the jurisdiction of the state is not bound by international law: the extent of this domain depends on international law and varies according to its development.(44)

In other words there is clearly a sphere of activity answerable to rules of international law which states are obliged to respect. To quote Brownlie again:

...in particular contexts international law may place restrictions on the "internal" territorial competence of states as a consequence of treaty obligations...or as a consequence of territorial treaty and immunities created by custom.(45)

The extent to which a state's legitimacy is dependent upon meeting the criteria and recognized purposes of a state, is an issue that can not be dealt with in detail here but there is a clear relationship between a state's respect for the rights of the people within its jurisdiction and its obligations under international law. In its most simple form this doctrine points out that basic human rights (necessary for the realisation of all other rights) are universal and are not dependent upon political boundaries.
The UN Charter recognizes the implicit relationship between respect for human rights and the maintenance of peace. As Urquhart points out "the articulation of the principles of human rights has been one of the most important activities of the United Nations".(46) Indeed the origins of the Charter can only be explained as a response to the evils of Nazism and its consequences for global peace. The Charter reflects a determination to prevent such atrocities and reaffirms its faith "in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person" as outlined in the Preamble. Writing in 1950 the eminent Judge Lauterpacht explained:

the correlation between peace and observance of fundamental human rights is now a generally recognized fact. The circumstance that the legal duty to respect fundamental human rights has become part and parcel of the new international system upon which peace depends, adds emphasis to that intimate connexion.(47)

Indeed it could well be argued that respect for human rights is the ultimate purpose of the international community, the impetus which brought it into being, and the need for it to exist. In the absence of human rights the state and the larger community of nations are of little value to the individual. Indeed, there is a large body of opinion both, in and outside natural law which attests to the "inalienable" nature of fundamental human rights as evidenced by customary law.(48) Ever to the point, Judge Lauterpacht states:

Human rights and freedom, having become the subject of a solemn international obligation and of one of the fundamental purposes of the Charter, are no longer a matter which is essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of the Members of the United Nations...(49)

From this perspective it is obviously important to understand the provisions of Art 2(4) in terms of the overall purpose of the Charter.
In situations of gross violations which undermine the basis of legitimacy for the state and threaten international peace there is reason for the international community to take action.\(^{(50)}\) According to David Luban "...an illegitimate and tyrannical state cannot derive sovereign rights against aggression from the rights of its own oppressed citizens, when it itself is denying them those same rights".\(^{(51)}\)

Thus there are recognized exceptions (although the word is misleading) to the rule of non-intervention. Often termed "humanitarian intervention" (a term which can also be misleading) situations which are not exclusively within the ambit of domestic jurisdiction include "crimes against humanity".\(^{(52)}\)

Stowell, writing in 1921, on intervention to protect human rights argued:

...humanitarian intervention may be defined as a reliance upon force for the justifiable purpose of protecting the inhabitants of another state from treatment which is so arbitrary and persistently abusive as to exceed the limits of that authority within which the sovereignty is presumed to act with reason and justice.\(^{(53)}\)

Commenting on the same topic in 1953 Guggenheim re-affirmed the notion of fundamental rights substantiated by international law:

\[Le \ droit \ coutumier \ confère \ aux \ autres \ États \ le \ droit \ de \ mettre \ fin \ à \ la \ compétence \ exclusive \ de \ l'État \ qui \ fait \ subir \ à \ ses \ nationaux \ un \ traitement \ inférieur \ au \ standard \ minimum \ du \ droit \ des \ gens.\]

As in any situation where the use of force is employed its use is lawful only in so far as it meets with recognized standards and is proportionate to the danger it seeks to counteract. In this respect it is worth quoting Macalister-Smith who states:
...in situations of gross or persistent violations of human rights the UN Charter should be read as permitting humanitarian intervention, and if the UN does not act then groups of States or individual States are not precluded from taking remedial measures.\(^{(55)}\)

President Carter, no slouch when he came to articulating human rights policy, told the UN General Assembly "in his first major foreign policy speech" on 17th March 1977:

> No member of the United Nations can claim that mistreatment of its citizen is solely its own business...no member can avoid its responsibilities to review and to speak when torture or unwarranted deprivation occurs in any part of the world.\(^{(56)}\)

While President Carter did not specifically support intervention his speech reflects the general acknowledgement that gross violations have implications beyond borders. Henkin cites the case of the abduction and trial of Adolf Eichmann who was taken clandestinely from Argentina in 1960 and charged in Israel for crimes against humanity; he was subsequently executed. A complaint by Argentina was lodged in the Security Council and Israel apologised but did not return Eichmann. For the most part, Israel's action won passive approval; apprehending a war criminal took precedence over issues of territorial jurisdiction.\(^{(57)}\)

In the situation of Cambodia various governments have expressed concern that Vietnamese action was unilateral; their overall motivation was also queried since they did not withdraw their armed forces from the country until September 1989. Concerning the duration of the Vietnamese presence, Cambodians themselves have pointed out that the danger posed by the Khmer Rouge did not exactly disappear given the encouragement and support of their backers and the lack of any evidence to demonstrate either a change of philosophy or regret for past practices.

This is not to claim that Vietnamese motives were "purely humanitarian" or indeed that Hanoi is a great lover of human rights and freedom of expression. But it is a strange logic that
somehow tries to justify support for the Khmer Rouge by pointing to Hanoi's failure to fully respect its obligations to either its own citizens or those of other states. On the question of motivation, Luban says he agrees with Walzer "that pure motives and clean hands are not necessary to morally justify an intervention".(58)

Intervention or cross-border action of any kind does provoke understandable and genuine fears but primarily because of the exploitative purposes of such exercises in the past. Intervention per se is neither harmful nor illegal. Indeed it is easier to argue that non-intervention in the case of genocide is amoral and contrary to the principles of the international community. According to Luban, in situations of tyranny "an argument against intervention based on the people's right of self determination is merely perverse".(59)

Nonetheless in the case of Cambodia, Western governments justify their policy by pointing to Vietnamese intervention, even though Hanoi was responding to vicious Khmer Rouge attacks on its people and territory and Hanoi's action resulted in the routing of the genocidal Khmer Rouge.

But there are signs of change, however expedient. In the aftermath of the Gulf War the position of Western governments and the media took a 180 degree turn in comparison to their stance on Cambodia as they pushed for intervention in Iraq, and the removal of Saddam Hussein, denounced as a vile dictator. But such a change of heart or political philosophy cannot be attributed to any lessons which may have been learnt from the Cambodian experience given the insistence of the Permanent Five on the return of the Khmer Rouge to Phnom Penh. However, according to Stephen Rosenfeld, the days when despots could rule with impunity are fast disappearing and the frontiers behind which they claimed immunity to international censure are coming down.(60) Making reference to post-Gulf War sensitivities, UN Secretary General, Mr Pérez de Cuéllar said:

We are clearly witnessing what is probably an irresistible shift in public attitudes toward the belief
that the defense of the oppressed in the name of morality should prevail over frontiers and legal documents.(61)

Although Mr de Cuéllar's statement is unusual in that it is so outspoken in recognizing the imperatives that push the international community to go to "the defense of the oppressed" such perceptions are not unique. There is a long tradition that objects to willful murder by the state and takes exception to human massacre.

Genocide: Politics and Accountability

The language of human rights is new and its espousal is, perhaps, one of the most important achievements of the Carter administration. However, from earliest recorded time there is reference to, if not respect for, the elemental rights of individuals. When the Shah of Iran opened a Conference on Human Rights in Tehran (1968) he recalled how Cyrus the Great, some 2000 years earlier, had stressed the importance of individual rights and freedom. The Pharaohs of ancient Egypt gave instructions to the effect that "...all is done according to the law, that custom is observed and the right of each man respected."(62) As Robertson and Merrills point out, such laws and proclamations should not be taken out of context but "it is equally clear that the moral worth of the individual is an idea which no culture can claim as uniquely its own."(63) In a statement that could have been coined specifically for Cambodia, Robertson and Merrills stress:

The struggle for human rights is as old as history itself because it concerns the need to protect the individual against the abuse of power by the monarch, the tyrant or the state.(64)

However, while the universality of human rights is widely acknowledged, there is less consensus on means to ensure their application. Debate centres on whether violations threaten international peace and security including the need to avert massive refugee flows, and the issues relevant to domestic and international jurisdiction.
As already seen, there are clearly identifiable moral concerns which stress the unacceptability of wholesale slaughter. Likewise, violations of international law provide equally valid grounds to protest flouting of its standards. International human rights law is, to a great extent, a reflection of the fundamental principles which constitute inalienable rights and obligations. Known as *jus cogens*, or customary law, such rules contain "certain overriding principles of international law" in the opinion of many eminent jurists.\(^{(65)}\) Such rules, says Brownlie "cannot be set aside by treaty or acquiescence but only by the formation of a subsequent customary rule of contrary effect."\(^{(66)}\)

Customary law, it is widely held, includes prohibition on genocide and laws against humanity. As Leo Kuper advises, the Convention on Genocide is not innovative in the sense of creating new law:

> According to an advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, genocide was already a crime in international law.\(^{(67)}\)

This is not the occasion to provide a detailed review of the procedural aspects of international law and the mechanisms necessary for meeting the provisions of the Genocide Convention. However, a few salient points can be noted.

Although individuals are not recognized "subjects" in international law in the sense of being able to make claims this does not mean that an individual is devoid of legal personality. Says Bronwlie: "the individual as such is responsible for crimes against peace and humanity and for war crimes."\(^{(68)}\)

The absence of an international criminal court inhibits the effective application of the Convention since the UN does not enjoy automatic or direct jurisdiction. However Article VIII "specifically empowers any of the contracting parties to call upon the competent organs of the UN to take appropriate action under the Charter for the prevention and suppression of genocide."\(^{(69)}\)
In the much quoted Barcelona Traction case, the majority judgement of the International Court found that:

an essential distinction should be drawn between the obligations of a state towards the international community as a whole, and those arising vis-a-vis another state in the field of diplomatic protection. By their very nature the former are the concern of all States. In view of the importance of the rights involved, all states can be held to have a legal interest in their protection; they are obligations *erga omnes*...

Such obligations derive, for example, in contemporary international law, from the outlawing of acts of aggression, and of genocide, as also from the principles and rules concerning the basic rights of the human person including protection from slavery and racial discrimination.\(^{70}\)

This judgement of the Court is quoted at length given its obvious relevance to the international community's lack of response to the atrocities perpetrated in Cambodia during Khmer Rouge rule. Article IX of the Convention allows State Parties to seek a ruling as to whether "another party has failed to fulfil its obligations under the Convention."\(^{71}\)

The failure of Democratic Kampuchea to respect its obligations, including holding those responsible accountable for their crimes, constitutes the existence of a continuing dispute between the parties to the Convention says Professor Hurst Hannum, former Director of the Procedural Aspects of International Law Institute.\(^{72}\) Hannum concludes that "...the failure of any state thus far to institute proceedings before the Court is an indefensible abdication of international responsibility."\(^{73}\)

The reason for the failure of the international community (which here includes the collective membership of the UN and the relevant parts of its human rights machinery) to take action on genocide in Cambodia is best explained by the type of politics which put alleged geo-strategic interests ahead of the death of 1.5 million people. The UN's decisions not to take action or even
condemn Cambodia's holocaust, is partly explained by the fact that it is "a professional association of governments...(74) Morality and international law do not necessarily loom large in decision-making. Thus, disregard of genocide in Cambodia is in sharp contrast to the UN's response to Iraq when various governments opted for forceful action that eventually led to outright war. As explained by Leonard Doyle "....the US led coalition brought all of its influence to bear on the Third World to pass the (enforcement) resolutions with overwhelming majorities."(75)

Ignoring genocide is not only immoral and a dereliction of duty by the international community, it opens the way for future abuses. In principle, as Henkin points out, the "expectation that members will condemn and the organization will take a strong stand is likely to serve as substantial deterrent."(76) Non-action undermines the validity of mechanisms designed to deal with gross violations of human rights. It is possible even that people will get the impression that the UN is merely a convenient tool useful to "substantiate" or facilitate policy when considered expedient, a reality which further erodes the capacity of the UN to operate effectively.

Cambodia is a compelling example of the ramifications of setting aside international law and forfeiting the effectiveness of the UN. This message was underlined by Yang Sam, a former refugee who escaped from Pol Pot's Cambodia; a group of 200 survivors of the Khmer Rouge wrote to President Reagan in 1987 requesting his government to seek a judgement from the International Court and to "call upon the competent organs of the United Nations to take such actions as would securely preclude the re-occurrence of genocide in Cambodia."(77) These survivors also pointed out that:

the failure of the international community to respond and condemn the Cambodian genocide has in our opinion reduced the effectiveness of the United Nations to help bring about negotiations or a solution to the international conflict.(78)
However, as already seen, the powers that be were not interested in a settlement nor in taking action on genocide. Indeed, the reality of mass killings was totally irrelevant as evidenced by a report in the South-East Asia Chronicle in August 1980; it advises that:

in 1979, when the Soviet Union, Vietnam and Cuba were vainly trying to unseat the representative of Democratic Kampuchea in favour of the Vietnamese-sponsored Heng Samrin government, an attempt was made to woo Indonesia and her allies with the promise that support for East Timor would be dropped.(79)

This twardy deal in effect meant that the victims of gross violations in both East Timor and Cambodia were sacrificed once more for expedient politics.

The Khmer Rouge have never been censured for their crimes. For over a decade they have enjoyed the support of the international community even as they demonstrate the same contempt for human life which characterized their years of DK rule. Throughout the decade of assistance to the Border camps the appalling record of the Khmer Rouge was reiterated and redefined; rule by fear is still the hallmark of the KR but their diplomatic skills now ensure respectful analysis of their much-vaunted discipline and management talents. Meanwhile, the relief operation has juggled with the contradictory aims of its programme.

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The following two chapters return to the Border during the latter years of the 1980s when the world had essentially forgotten about the people held in camps and relief workers had difficulty remembering what they or their organizations had originally planned to achieve when the relief programme was first initiated.
Chapter V looks at the role of relief assistance struggling to operate in a war zone, the abuse of humanitarianism to camouflage support for the resistance, and the problems which this posed for both refugees and relief practitioners.

After the liberation of the胡子宾馆 and conquering the 1988–1989 army's forces, both relief and humanitarian re-established themselves in Afghanistan. As the relief agencies, who had followed the war, often found that they were forced to seek cover from sniper fire and roadside ambushes. Some agencies found shelter in government buildings, others in mosques, and many in private homes. They were forced to seek shelter in a two-tier system and were shaded and separated to ensure assistance for combat. The second tier, with a population larger than the initial war zone, was dependent on local supply of essential needs. As the offices of the KIPNLF were taken over by the resistance, local facilities were left in ruins. However, the most distinguishing feature of such camps was the political administration and lack of buffering with military endeavors.

Apart from Khan-i-Ding which was run by KIPNLF and had a population generally in the region of 20,000 throughout the latter part of the 80s, the zone with civilians were roughly divided into three categories.

Border Camps

One category included four smaller concentrations brought by relief agencies who had become during daylight hours. The KIPNLF’s 11th 2 camp within sight of a two-child and four-tense area from the border consisted of fast-recoverable administrative camps which comprised two major factions: the largest group being those on Gen. sak Setakhan, a former high-ranking army officer, and with the KIPNLF’s military Commander while the other faction was from the President of the KIPNLF and President of the CPDL. A small KIP camp with some 7,000 people (mid-1990s) was situated further south deep in a jungle area and mostly "patrolled" by the Khmer
After the destruction of the Border bases and camps during the 1984-1985 dry season both refugees and resistance re-established themselves in Thailand with the latter making occasional forays back across the border. Strung out along 750 kilometres and hugging the Thai-Cambodian border, the camps had much in common; they were stuck in the middle of a war zone and were almost totally dependent on external assistance for survival. Site 2, with a population larger than the capital of New Zealand, was dependent on a daily supply of trucked water; at the height of the dry season this often meant a round-trip of over 150 kilometres. However, the most distinguishing feature of each camp was its political administration and level of interaction with military endeavours.

Apart from Khao-i-Dang which was run by HCR and had a population generally in the region of 20,000 throughout the latter part of the '80s, camps with civilians were broadly classified into three categories.

Border Camps

One category included four major encampments assisted by relief agencies who had access during daylight hours. The KPNLF's Site 2 within sight of a tank-ditch and less than a kilometre from the frontier consisted of five separately administered camps which comprised two major factions; the largest grouping sided with Gen Sak Sutsakhan, a former high ranking Lon Nol General and now the KP's military Commander, while the other favoured Son Sann, President of the KPNLF and Premier of the CGDK. A small KP camp with some 7,000 people (mid 1980s) was situated further south deep in a jungle area mostly "patrolled" by the Khmer
Rouge. A few hours drive north of Site 2 in the Khmer-speaking area of Surin province, the Sihanouk-affiliated camp of Greenhill was located in an lightly forested hilly area. In 1985-86 Greenhill was receiving rations for approximately 41,000 people. An hour's drive south of Aranyaprathet, the headquarters of the relief operation's field activities, Site 8, shielded by an impressive outcropping of rock on its eastern perimeter, was the best known Khmer Rouge-controlled camp.

A second grouping, generally referred to as "remote" camps were four Khmer Rouge-controlled sites to which the UN had very limited access. Two were situated in the north, east of Greenhill in dense jungle; Natrao and Huay Chan had an estimated 21,000 people between them. In the south Borai and Ta Luan had approximately 8,000 people. Between 1986 and 1989, there was a long drawn-out struggle to acquire better access both to assist the Cambodians held there and to monitor the supplies provided by (or through) the UN Border Relief Operation.

The third grouping were the camps known as the "hidden border"; these were controlled by the Khmer Rouge and contained people who had no access to, nor received assistance from, the international community. Little was and is known about these camps other than a hazy picture pieced together from accounts by escapees. The critical issue, from the perspective of the relief community, was the presence of civilians including women and many children in extremely hazardous conditions.

Finally, there were also "satellite" camps, short-hand for military establishments, complete with rudimentary field hospitals, not far distant from the KP and Sihanouk camps. The existence of these camps was an open secret that was constantly denied by the Thai military authorities. Their proximity to refugee enclaves was a constant source of concern to both the relief community and refugees themselves.

At the outset, it needs to be understood that none of the camp Administrators could claim with any confidence that the people
under their control were actual supporters of any of three parties which made up the Coalition. The majority of the people on the Border arrived to escape war and perceived dangers of communism or to seek food, medical care or relatives. Indeed, it should also be remembered that the vast majority of people on the Border were children and adolescents; some 30% were less than four years of age and 60% less than 25 years. Camp "leaders" were appointed by the party and military hierarchy to which they were aligned. The goals of the resistance and, for some, financial enrichment, were the major preoccupations of all camp Administrators. In no way could they claim to be representative of the camp population.

Few questions were raised, however, on the overall structure of each camp's administration. Memories of the chaos and struggle which has shaped the delivery of relief assistance in the "early days" constituted the benchmark against which progress was measured.

By 1986 the relief programme was already eight years in operation and was justly proud of its many achievements and its ability to head off the worst effects of evacuations. UNBRO, its NGO collaborators, and Cambodians responsible for technical programmes in the camps, had developed a well-organised logistical apparatus complete with computer back-up and numerous print-outs that highlighted potential problems before they could arise. Visitors were invariably impressed with the well-ordered hum of the daily routine as trucks rolled off in a cloud of dust each morning to their scheduled destination. In the camps, "routine" was equally the order of the day but with all the debilitating implications of refugees lining up for their allocation of water, rice, dried fish, firewood and a few other items considered essential for survival.

The problems which now threatened the well-being of the refugees were of a different nature than those which had gripped the world and galvanised it into action in 1979. The spectre of famine had receded. It was war and its ominous uncertainties
which gave an edge to everyday living and disrupted all the positive aspects of the well-oiled routine.

"Emergency" as Stalemate

In 1986 the situation on the Border was still treated as a "temporary" emergency and was perceived as such by most relief agents. Even, and often particularly, those who had worked on the Border for a long period of time, tended to see relief work as marshalling a large quantity of items to respond to "basic" needs. This "bamboo, rice and medicine" brigade, as they were sometimes alluded to, saw survival in terms of keeping a stomach fed, thatch and bamboo provided for rudimentary shelter, and a ready supply of bandages to patch up the wounded. Such perspectives were most in evidence with each budget crunch as funds were earmarked for "basics". There was little accommodation for, and not enough sensitivity to, the repercussions of prolonged confinement and the accumulated trauma of multiple abuse; what is necessary for people to survive with acute emotional and psychological distress was seen as outside the basics of humanitarian relief.

The ability to see relief assistance in terms of logistics precluded the necessity of dealing with such complicating factors as the war which kept intruding and disrupting schedules. It also avoided the necessity of trying to determine where the operation was headed, or its role in relation to the political and military objectives of its backers and beneficiaries, intended or otherwise.

Issues of a troublesome nature tended to be "outside our mandate". However, there was even less clarity as to what issues were inside UNBRO's mandate even though the originating General Assembly Resolution (34/22) of 1979 appeared straightforward enough; having emphasised its concern for the situation in Cambodia, the first operative paragraph of the Resolution reads:
Strongly appeals to all States and national and international humanitarian organisations to render, on an urgent and non-discriminatory basis, humanitarian relief to the civilian population of Kampuchea, including those who have sought refuge in neighbouring countries.

What was clear by 1986, even if it was not articulated as such - annual reports invariably talked of progress - was that those Cambodians for whom a massive relief effort had been launched in 1979 were now being victimised by a situation the relief programme had helped, however unwittingly, bring into being.

Cambodians on both sides of the Border were desperately in need of assistance. But peace was of even more dire need. Somehow this reality, which is neither an equation nor a dilemma, got fudged beyond recognition; the intrinsic purpose, appeal and value of humanitarianism got relegated to a bygone era better suited for out-of-touch utopians.

Of course, there were relief workers and observers who did query the situation the assistance programme had got itself wedged into. There was persistent if sporadic soul-searching as to whether the net result contributed to conditions of oppression, prolonged the war, and impeded the realisation of a genuine settlement. There was also concern about the general reluctance to publicly acknowledge the misuse of inputs and the implications of providing assistance as if in a vacuum. Equally worrying was the high degree of tolerance exhibited at the regional and international level for the stalemate which reflected a cynical lack of will to find a political situation.

In the absence of clear and resolute direction on what the relief programme was meant to achieve, now that starvation was no longer an issue, there was a great deal of hand-wringing and anguished discussion as to what constituted humanitarianism within the overall context of Cambodia's needs.
In the highly-charged situation that existed, speaking out, or closing one's eyes to the realities which disrupted and abused attempts to provide humanitarian assistance, meant incurring the wrath of either of the contending parties and their supporters. Thus the choice was between the recriminations which were least tolerable or which provoked the least unease. Too often the response was that of least resistance; not to be a witness, or to condemn abuse, was generally considered the most conducive to getting the job done and avoiding putting programmes and careers in jeopardy.

Focussing on the short-term the general tendency was to identify objectives that could be articulated in a manner compatible with broadly defined humanitarian aspirations that were, at least theoretically, supported by the major donors who funded the Border relief programme; the US provided a third of UNBRO's funding while Japan contributed some 28% and the European Community 8% in addition to contributions by individual European states.(1)

The use of nifty wording to enshrine fundable objectives, however, did not help much with on-the-ground realities and necessitated a certain ambivalence towards the core contradiction which besieged the relief operation. The relationship between the resistance and relief assistance was an ever-present reality. Attempts to ignore it involved an impossible tightrope act that invariably came to grief whenever the balance shifted. Proclaiming one's neutrality while being part of the status quo was not an easy position to maintain.

Once the programme got sucked into being aligned with the resistance it could no longer identify a way out of its "dilemma". It tried to balance out competing interests but found that compassionate concern did not rank high in the scale of values prevailing at the Border.
Whatever the sincerity of those voting for the General Assembly Resolution which underlined the need for assistance on a non-discriminatory basis for all Cambodian civilians there are clearly identified principles which must be respected for assistance to meet the criteria of being humanitarian. Similarly, there are well-established standards which help determine the extent to which humanitarian assistance is effective.

Disregard or less than forthright commitment to these principles and standards both characterised and complicated the work of relief agencies. While struggling to remain aloof of geo-strategic ambitions the relief programme saw itself primarily as a "maintenance" operation. This involved discounting, or not holding itself responsible for, the implications of confining people against their will in closed camps where they were essentially held hostage to the whims of war and those underwriting it.

With the focus geared to short-term or "manageable" problems the eventual outcome of relief inputs and interaction with the resistance was not an issue that merited much discussion. For the most part such concerns were seen as somehow beyond the scope of the relief operation, concerns which others with more comprehensive mandates were better equipped to deal with. Of course, it is unquestionably true that a relief operation does not have the capacity to resolve complex, geo-strategic and ideological conflicts. But it is no less true that a relief programme should not contribute to, or reinforce, such conflicts.

The history of the Border throughout the late '80s is the history of a relief programme that was usurped by the politics of suffering. Unsure of its direction, unable or unwilling to act with a sense of determined purpose or principled conviction, its policy was informed by the urge to placate and accommodate interests totally at odds with the tenets of humanitarianism. Lacking clearly defined objectives geared to the realisation of its stated purpose, namely the provision of humanitarian assistance to alleviate the suffering of the Khmers, it lurched from crisis to crisis in a desperate attempt at damage-limitation. Having
allowed its fundamental principles to be compromised by those intent on expedient and partisan politics the relief programme was itself compromised in its ability to formulate and implement policy that would cut short the cycle of suffering. In other words, its ability to develop an "effective relief programme" was intrinsically flawed. This was all too apparent when the operation was confronted with the realities of working in a war zone, gross violation of human rights, the social implications of prolonged confinement, and blatant abuse and diversion of relief resources.

When Life is a War Zone

The hazardous world of "Borderland", the strip of territory or "CGDK country" which was "home" for the "displaced Cambodians", demanded a number of survival skills which did little to minimise the dangers which were exacerbated by the lack of refugee status.

It is a rule of thumb that refugee camps are located outside conflict zones wherever possible, a precaution easily understood in terms of safety for both refugees and relief workers. Not too surprisingly there is a marked correlation between proximity to the battlefield and the number of casualties. However, since the Cambodians were seen as a "necessary buffer", the donors who called the shots were not interested in the type of arrangements which would have allowed for a reasonable degree of safety and security.

Fear, shelling and being obliged to participate in the war were just some of the realities all Cambodians had to contend with on the Border. The people held in the "hidden border" were in the most wretched and vulnerable conditions. Estimates of people confined to such camps varied widely partly on account of shifting base areas and relocation of people in line with war strategies; by 1990 it was generally understood that up to 100,000 civilians were held in "hidden border" camps beyond the reach of relief assistance. (2)
Shelling was the most intense and hazardous for the people closest to battle areas. In one particularly terrifying and prolonged exchange in November 1988 people who had been herded out of the UN-assisted camp of Ta Luan were pounded by non-stop artillery fire for a period of days in their new bunkers at Khao Phlu. By one account, shells were landing every three seconds. Casualties were understood to be high but ICRC was not allowed to assist or evacuate the wounded. The shelling, the most intense and sustained since 1985, was apparently designed to forestall the movement of Ta Luan people closer to the Border; the KR eventually allowed some 5,000 people to return to Ta Luan. In a talk with an elderly and unusually voluble lady who had survived the barrage, she said she had spent all of her time in a bunker and had no desire to undergo that kind of experience again.(3) However, a few months later these same people were again taken away as the Khmer Rouge did not want them to move to the newly established and safer location of Site K.(4) Shortly before the Paris Peace Conference of August 1989 and the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops in September, the Khmer Rouge "launched several offensives around Pailin", a rich gem-mining area which resulted in heavy shelling and some 10,000 refugees from the "hidden border" area of Phum Thmei (in Thailand's Trat province) fleeing for shelter.(5)

All of the Cambodians held in different parts of the Border, as well as those whose rice fields and villages became part of the widening war, were daily victims of mines which have been liberally planted without any record or mapping. As control of the contested areas was constantly challenged and defended, previously planted minefields were "re-seeded" with the arrival of the latest "liberating" army. For Cambodians in the "hidden border" this was particularly dangerous since their location was largely dictated by the whims of war. A 1991 Asia Watch report says that in Cambodia itself "surgeons perform between 300 and 700 amputations a month because of mine injuries."(6) It is too mind-crippling to contemplate what happens to victims trapped in the "hidden border" and denied access to medical care. These people also suffered from the "ordinary" effects of being confined
to a malarial jungle as war raged about them. Tung Poeum and her husband Sao Chom were interviewed in the Sihanoukist Greenhill camp (Site B) shortly after they escaped in November 1988 from Camp 40, a secret military base on the northwest Cambodian frontier. They fled after both their children, aged three and five, died after the camp hospital had no medicine.(7)

Secrecy, and deliberately keeping the people under its control separate from the rest of the world, were two of the many characteristics which distinguished DK rule that were echoed and repeated along the Border. The international community, in the shape of UNBRO or ICRC, did not have access to the area known as the "hidden border", but it was, of course, supplied and maintained with the support and collaboration of Thailand and its allies. What happened behind the wall of secrecy was difficult to gauge but the world was not totally unaware of life and death in this hellish limbo.

The halting testimony of escapees provided chilling reminders of "Pol Pot time". Referring to these "military-run camps where foreigners are barred", Peter Eng AP (Associated Press) Bureau Chief in Bangkok in December 1988 wrote:

International aid officials say tens of thousands of Kampuchean refugees remain virtual prisoners in camps in Thailand where the Khmer Rouge force people to serve their war machine...(8)

Writing at the same time William Shawcross referred to the KR use of civilians as "slave labour".(9) Shawcross had access to a confidential ICRC report based on interviews with 200 escapees; commenting on abuses in UN-assisted camps, it also noted that conditions in the "hidden border" were "even more alarming: restricted or no access to hospital treatment, lack of doctors or medicines, total absence of personal freedom."(10) The same document also indicated that ICRC had received reports of "whole families, including children being beaten by prison guards until they were unconscious."(11)
Such documented evidence of abuse and periodic protests were occasionally pressed on concerned government authorities. However for the backers of the CGDK, ensuring the anti-PRK alliance had a ready supply of foot-soldiers took precedence over concrete measures that would give substance to the anguished sentiments Western governments readily expressed when made aware of the continuing atrocities of the Khmer Rouge.

No Fixed Address

Cambodians held in the four UN-assisted "remote Border" camps were no less immune to either the callousness of the international community (in the sense of Member States of the UN and its administrative machinery) or the Khmer Rouge who controlled their every move.

Once the camps were firmly inside Thailand the UN renewed its efforts both to separate civilians from the military and to improve monitoring, two goals which were intrinsically interlinked. Early in 1987, the outgoing Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General, Mr. Tatsuro Kunugi, warned that a deadline which had been set for the previous December as a cut-off date for supplies unless UBRO and ICRC were accorded better access, had passed without any noticeable improvement. The UN, he said, remained concerned since it could not confirm that assistance "which is meant for civilians only under UN resolutions, is not being siphoned off by the group's military personnel". Mr. Kunugi was concerned that this would jeopardize an "understanding" reached with the Phnom Penh government whereby civilian camps would not be attacked. This provided an added incentive to the UN to ensure supplies went to non-combatants only. The UN did express concern about monitoring problems at a Donor's Meeting held at the end of 1986 but with little apparent effect. As Mr. Kunugi explained, the UN continued to provide supplies since they were concerned about the well-being of the people in the camps and the KR had reassured them of their co-operation. (13)
The Khmer Rouge did continue to "negotiate" but in a manner not markedly dissimilar to their usual routine. Always hinting at a breakthrough, and assuring the UN of its highest esteem, on the ground they were no less intransigent or evasive. One of their tactics was to trot out lower-level officials who claimed not to have the authority or knowledge to answer basic questions or to allow access; camp-level officials invariably had to refer questions to a "higher authority" which involved huge time gaps and lack of coherence in the overall thrust of the discussion.

In what was described as the first ever "thorough tour" by "senior international relief officials" of the four remote camps, a report in The Nation newspaper in April 1987 cited general satisfaction with what had been seen but stressed the need for "regular and unlimited access."(14) In other words, camp residents appeared healthy and as reported by UNBRO officials "(T)hey were certainly not starving."(15) Apart from the fact that such visits were highly regimented, and were accompanied by Thai military personnel who were responsible for food deliveries to the camps, the tendency to narrow the focus to food and hunger of actual camp residents tended to produce a warped definition of what constitutes humanitarian assistance and the standards used to evaluate its effectiveness. The fact that people are not falling down dead from hunger does not in any way indicate that they are otherwise healthy and in acceptable conditions. This is an involved discussion which centers on what constitutes well-being in relation to humanitarian assistance but it would appear reasonable to presume that a population held in a war zone (under the control of such known henchmen as Ta Mok who ruled the northern frontier), isolated, and denied access to health care, would not be enjoying a level of well-being that could be described as satisfactory. Anyone with even a glancing knowledge of such conditions would be fearful of high infant mortality rates, as indeed was borne out by the testimony of escapees and subsequent interviews with residents of O'Trao, large numbers of whom talked of many young children dying. (16)
"Informed sources" as advised by Sinfah Tunsarawuth in the same report, indicated that UNBRO was "threatening to cut off supplies" if the question of access, necessary to ensure adequate monitoring, was not resolved.(17) UNBRO, the report said "is still concerned that food and medical supplies intended for Khmer civilians might be siphoned off to Khmer Rouge fighters since free access to the four camps is not yet available."(18)

Around the same time two Canadian Embassy officials also chalked up a first amongst Western diplomats when they visited the remote northern camps at the end of March 1987. While they "could not confirm if fighters lived there" they did confirm seeing "fighters carrying weapons in the camp."(19) In parenthesis it must be noted that throughout the years of the Border programme the Canadian authorities did periodically express concern about the diversion of supplies to the Khmer Rouge. In January 1990 the Canadian Ambassador in Bangkok wrote to UNBRO stipulating that none of the canned fish it contributed could go to any of the camps under the control of the Khmer Rouge.(10) However this was not very helpful if the intention was meant to counter KR abuse. It made no distinction between KR cadres and Cambodians corralled under their control nor between KR camps such as Site 8 where monitoring was comparable to the Sihanouk and KP-controlled camps. Also, the Canadian Government consistently voted for the DK and the CGDK at the UN General Assembly since 1979.(21)

Discussion on the nature of access and what would constitute minimum conditions necessary for the on-going provision of assistance continued throughout 1987. In August Mr. S.A.M.S. Kibria, who had taken over from Mr. Kunugi, received a letter, in itself seen as a major achievement, from Mr. Sim Son, Ambassador for the DK confirming their agreement to unimpeded access. However, given the nature of "progress" up to that point, Mr. Kibria counselled caution until such "concessions" could actually be tested.(22)
Earlier in August the UN had written to the Secretary General of Thailand's National Security Council, Mr. Suwit, explaining that UNBRO was interested in direct distribution given the changed circumstances which prevailed since 1985 when the camps were moved into Thailand and were thus physically accessible to the UN. It is unclear whether this letter prompted the response from the CGDK whose officials nonetheless were as unco-operative as they had ever been. By and large, relief workers felt that the DK were totally insincere and were merely stalling for time in these protracted negotiations. The Khmer Rouge were in effect insisting upon, and getting, assistance without being subject to the monitoring criteria used in other camps; in effect they were getting "special treatment" totally at variance with the legal rules of the UN.

A particularly agonizing concern which permeated this discussion was the issue of medical evacuation for patients urgently in need of treatment beyond the scope of the rudimentary facilities available at remote camps. There was one particularly celebrated test case concerning a Mr. Kim hospitalized in Borai; his case was raised persistently with the DK authorities but they insisted he could not leave. It was only after Thai military authorities had agreed to his transfer after repeated requests by senior aid officials that an ICRC delegate was able to spend a moment alone with Mr. Kim when he quitely explained: "Je veux aller à Khao-i-Dang" ("I wish to go to Khao-i-Dang"). He was subsequently transferred there.

At the beginning of 1988, the UN wrote to Thai authorities and to Mr. Sim Son indicating that they were again obliged to raise the issue of access and monitoring at the up-coming Donor's Meeting and planned to commence direct distribution to Huay Chan in February. This somewhat more fortright approach gave a boost to the sagging morale of relief workers increasingly frustrated with what they generally considered were feeble attempts in the face of blatant KR disdain for the principles of humanitarianism and their disregard for the UN's "quiet diplomacy". Those in charge at Huay Chan had already indicated
on the previous "negotiating" Border tour in early 1988 that apart from food, and occasionally medicine, "UNBRO's assistance was not welcome".\(^{(25)}\) As recounted by Wayne Cartwright, an UNBRO field officer and fluent Khmer speaker working with the northern remote camps since June 1986, Om An "the Huay Chan leader we met with the most, made no effort to downplay the camp's military function".\(^{(26)}\) According to Cartwright, Om An "never hesitated to tell even the most senior official or critical visitor that the camp was essentially a military base."\(^{(27)}\) Indeed, as was all too clear since the early days of providing relief to the Border, the Khmer Rouge had never wavered from their primary objective and any means were justifiable in its accomplishment. As described by one aid worker at the time:

The entire Khmer Rouge apparatus is geared to fighting the Vietnamese. Little else matters for them.\(^{(28)}\)

Yet there was a tendency to see a consolidation of achievement in the provision of assistance. At a Donor's Meeting in New York in March 1988 Mr. Kibria stated that "great progress had been achieved during the past twelve months."\(^{(29)}\) He emphasized that protection and security "remained one of the most pressing problems" but also stated that access to the remote camps "had greatly improved"; Mr. Kibria also pointed out that if the obstacles with regard to Huay Chan remained it would be necessary to take "categorical measures" in April.\(^{(30)}\)

Although it came as a surprise to many, at the end of April UNBRO did stop providing supplies to Huay Chan. It was a deliberately low-key affair with no admonishment of the Khmer Rouge who had forced this action. The majority of relief workers on the Border were not directly involved with Khmer Rouge-controlled camps.\(^{(31)}\) It was thus a relatively small number of relief personnel who were knowledgeable and interested enough to express concern about conditions in remote camps. For the most part such personnel were greatly relieved with the aid cut-off; many of them had bitterly complained about being a party to reinforcing the authority of the Khmer Rouge which is how "blind
distribution" was seen. However, while the UN had no option but to cut supplies, and was the action advocated by those who recognized the intransigence of the Khmer Rouge for what it was, to simply walk away, or "wash one's hands" of the situation, was not a great alternative. Since it was clear that in the remote camps there were many civilians who were refugees who were being abused and dragooned into the war effort, these people were obviously of continuing concern to an operation charged with providing humanitarian assistance to all Cambodians in need of help. Although it appears that many of the Huay Chan population were subsequently filtered into O'Trao, at a minimum the UN should have spoken out at the time of the cut-off and continued to express its concern; the Khmer Rouge should have been held accountable for the well-being of the people under its control. Throughout the history of the Border it is difficult to understand why the UN's human rights machinery was not actively engaged or alerted to violations notwithstanding its dismal record in relation to widespread abuse and genocide.

There was no dramatic change in Khmer Rouge attitude post-Huay Chan to UN and ICRC demands for better access. It was still a question of patient determination and periodic questioning as to whether any worthwhile gains were being achieved. It was difficult to evaluate what exactly were the intentions of the Khmer Rouge with regard to the people on the Border. For many, it was clear that any change in Khmer Rouge behaviour was merely tactical. But after another round of visits to the remote camps in November 1988, senior UNBRO officials could point to a number of pluses and decided to stick to its policy of "regular and patient negotiations."(32) Occasional medical evacuations were now allowed and it appeared that direct deliveries would soon be achieved. This eventually did materialize in 1989. However, free and random access to all sections of the camps was still not possible; neither the UN nor the ICRC had any apparent impact on the clandestine movement of people into situations of heightened risk. This reality put into question the approach of treading softly and attempts to work out a modus vivendi with the Khmer Rouge diehards; it was difficult to see how this "we are officers
and gentlemen" approach could have any significant impact on the ruthless and wily Khmer Rouge.

As if to underline this perception of a wily and capable KR question-marks of a different kind were raised by a letter which appeared in The Nation on 31 October 1988 written by Sim Son as "Representative of Democratic Kampuchea in charge of Refugees." He claimed that charges of human rights violations were "not justified"; since the camps were located in Thai territory they were, as Sim Son correctly pointed out, "answerable to the sovereignty of the Kingdom of Thailand."(33) Mr. Sim Son also advised that in a letter he had sent to the UNBRO Director on 20 August 1987, he told Mr. Y.Y. Kim the following:

In the spirit of co-operation and as a confirmation of the already established practice, I would like to inform you formally that UNBRO personnel will be welcomed to those 4 camps (Nattrao, Huay Chan, Borai and Ta Luan) everyday to distribute humanitarian relief items.(34)

This letter is unusual for a number of reasons. Normally, the Khmer Rouge were "shy" of publicity and preferred to hide behind the more acceptable face of their Coalition partners. Also, at this time, UNBRO had to face the fact that Ta Luan had been practically emptied; only the disabled and the infirm had been left behind. UNBRO was also trying to gain access to O'Trao near which aid officials had "stumbled upon a village of several hundred handicapped people who were believed to have been separated from the others because they were no longer of any use to the Khmer Rouge."(35) As explained by one doctor, remote camps were best understood as "Potemkin villages" where only small sections and small groups had access to, or were allowed contact with, the relief agencies.(36)

O'Trao itself raised a number of perplexing questions as its population continued to grow and people quietly moved into it from neighbouring "hidden border" camps. While for some it appeared to indicate a loosening of KR control, for others it
indicated a shift in tactics and preoccupation with the widening war; this movement of people was seen as "off-loading" various segments of the population to UN-assisted camps.(37) In the midst of this speculation the camp hospital was set alight on Christmas Eve. Christmas Day (1988) it was again torched and completely destroyed. This incident was seen as an indication of KR "disapproval" of increased contact between camp residents and the relief community. The KR also tried to obstruct a Thai army investigation of the incident which was not quite the approach to take when a guest in the Kingdom. Those KR cadres responsible were removed and assistance resumed in 1989 when the camp population grew to some 20,000.(38)

The issue of monitoring, however, remained critical since the Khmer Rouge made no distinction between civilians and military; portering duties, or being the army's "logistics corps", were common to all KR-controlled camps. Already by mid-1988 when the Khmer Rouge began emptying Ta Luan of the people who were eventually forced back by heavy shelling in November it was clear that war aims took precedence. From this period onwards there was a noticeable increase in fighting as the resistance battled to regain a foothold in Cambodia prior to the Paris talks and the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops in September 1989. The shift in focus from "political", or underground work in Cambodia which had been a major preoccupation since 1985, to a renewed emphasis on military strategies meant a generalized intensification of firefights and reshuffling of the Border population in remote camps.

Throughout 1989 O'Trao became better established. In the southern Border area a new camp, Site K, was initiated at the onset of the rainy season as a safer alternative for the Borai and Ta Luan population whose lives were constantly interrupted by the heavy thud of mortar fire. This plan was thwarted by the Khmer Rouge who claimed the people could not move in the monsoon and then took them to the frontlines.
"Closed" Camps and Combatants

Site 8, the KR-controlled "showcase" camp, Sites 2 and Sok Sann, the two camps associated with the KPNLF, and Greenhill Site B, the Sihanouk showpiece, were the four camps where both the UN and ICRC, plus NGOs, had access during daylight hours. Since 1985 an improved monitoring and management system geared to strengthening the civilian nature of the camps had been developed. However, apart from being in a war zone the camps were all influenced by military considerations which heightened their vulnerability. As a point of reference the HCR-managed Khao-i-Dang which was equally within shelling range was never subjected to artillery fire.

The extent to which these four camps were, or were not influenced by, and subjected to, military considerations was a highly sensitive and controversial issue. Having assured the Phnom Penh authorities of a separation of civilian and military, and the provision of assistance to non-combatants only as part of the "understanding" that these camps would not be attacked, there were compelling reasons to insist upon this. Given the implied consequences of tolerating a military presence or connection there was a general tendency to present the camps as civilian. No-one referred to "soldiers". Cambodians who turned up at the hospital with, for example, malaria which did not exist in the camps as a result of a stringent vector-control programme, were referred to as "people from outside the camp". This was the terminology that was widely used to refer to all such non-civilians. This type of chicanery was not only misleading, constant use of such sanitized language soon took on a life of its own and bred a certain psychological reluctance to acknowledge the presence of the military. The Report of the UN Secretary General to the General Assembly in October 1986 stated:

Through a separation of the civilian population from the non-civilian elements in all of the large evacuation sites along the border, the civilian nature of these encampments has been ensured in the past 18 months.
and this has contributed to reducing human suffering, danger and instability in the life of these civilians.\(^{(41)}\)

The inclination to present a positive and up-beat picture was counter-productive and contributed to a general acceptance of the \textit{status quo}. In the "hidden border" and remote camps it was recognized that the military had an overbearing presence and this was a problem which needed to be rectified. Unfortunately, in the closed camps, there was a tendency to disguise or downplay the role of the military. Over time camp Administrators, camp residents and relief workers began to accept "low profile soldiers" as the norm; the presence of off-duty soldiers was not a major issue. This had the accumulative effect of sending the wrong message to refugees who did not wish to be part of the war, nor agree with resources being siphoned off for this purpose, but were daily witnesses to UNBRO and the relief agencies general acquiescence to the policy and practices of camp Administrators.

Camps were no longer as prone to attack as they had been prior to 1985 but shelling was still sporadic. Eleven people were killed by shells which hit Site 8 in May 1986. However, there was much speculation as to whether these shells emanated from PRK and VN (Vietnamese) forces; as reported by the Lawyers Committee "a number of observers suspect that DK troops were responsible".\(^{(42)}\) The alleged intention was to discourage people from satellite camps moving to Site 8.\(^{(43)}\) On 26 January 1987, following skirmishes between KP and Vietnamese-PRK forces, Site 2 was hit by a number of shells. Also in 1987, at the end of May, seven refugees were killed when Vietnamese and Thai troops engaged each other near the sprawling settlement.\(^{(44)}\) The US Government which wanted an armed resistance, and supported CGDK policy of holding civilians in a war zone, denounced the attack. Charles Redman of the US State Department in a prepared statement said:

\begin{quote}
we deplore this tragic and unnecessary loss of innocent life and senseless injuries which are the direct result of the illegal Vietnamese military
\end{quote}
This type of hypocritical posturing did not go unnoticed; more than one refugee queried if this represented a change in US perspectives and why the US did not help get them out of their inferno.

In March 1989, as all factions jockeyed to enlarge their profile before the forthcoming Paris talks, there was another series of skirmishes by the KPNLF near Site 2. In fact, the KP launched their offensive directly opposite, and within a few thousand meters of, Site 2. In what became known locally as the "six-day war" some 5,000 elderly and disabled refugees were evacuated in anticipation of retaliatory attacks. Son Sann, the KP President called on Phnom Penh not to attack Site 2; he also appealed to UNBRO to protest the shelling even as his own troops, or at least those under the command of General Sak, were using teenagers from Site 2 to transport food to the front. Not only did the KPNLF deliberately put the people they referred to as their supporters in heightened danger there was speculation that once the PRK-Vietnamese forces did retaliate that this would result in a major propaganda coup for the resistance. UNBRO did object to Mr. Son Sann pointing out that it (UNBRO) was "responsible for the well-being of all Displaced Khmer civilians" and could not "tolerate actions which may result in further sufferings..."; UNBRO also objected to the KP endangering the lives of poor Thai villagers. Further rockets hit Site 2 in May 1989 upsetting US Vice-President Quayle's visit; it was considered too unsafe for him to spend his scheduled hour there so he went to Greenhill camp instead.

The upsurge in fighting also affected Site 8 which was subjected to two separate attacks in July 1989. With shells landing in the middle of the camp, killing four people, some 35,000 refugees fled in terror to the cornfields north of the area. (A few entreprising individuals stayed behind stripping the camp of much of its value, from bicycles and sewing machines to bamboo doors and desks). For quite a while many of the refugees were reluctant to return to
their former homes and camped out in makeshift tents they constructed at the foot of the mountain on Site 8's eastern perimeter. Commenting on the attack, UNBRO's Deputy Director said the UN was "appalled by the shelling" and added that "there can be no justification for the shelling of civilian camps."(50) Fierce fighting again erupted in the vicinity of Site 8 in September sending the same refugees fleeing for their lives.(51)

After the withdrawal of the Vietnamese the battle lines moved deeper inside Cambodia which meant there was less "spill-over" fighting affecting the camps. The effects of the war, however, were no less immediate. The presence of soldiers and weapons were a constant hazard; in March 1991 eighteen refugees died in a grenade attack at a party. A report on the incident advised that grenades could be purchased for as little as Baht 30 (just over US$1); these were available from KP soldiers who "make up 40 to 50 per cent of men living in Site 2 and stay in the camp with their families when they are not fighting" said Meas Nee, a Cambodian refugee health official in the camp.(52)

The role of the military in Site 2 was an issue of long-standing but primarily between the different factions who vied for supremacy. In December 1986 General Sak, outlining his position on Site 2, said:

since this was a total war, it was impractical to have a military leader and a civilian leader at the same time. The reorganization was a must to ensure that everybody at the rear-line base make contributions to the struggle against the Vietnamese.(54)

Such perceptions were obviously not shared by the relief community but are indicative of how those in authority in the KP viewed the Border operation.

Border Villages

Along the Border each time a camp was shelled, or resistance outpost targeted, Thai villagers were subjected to "stray" shells and mortar fire. In fact, villages were hit more often than camps.
Casualties were frequent and likewise reports of farming and school days being disrupted. To take a random sample such as the month of June 1988, shelling killed two villagers on the 13th in Phansuek village north of Aran; on the 17th, 30 artillery shells landed forcing 300 villagers to be evacuated to Ban Klong Yang school and the closure of five primary schools; on the 20th of June, 1,000 villagers were evacuated to three temporary shelters including Prachin Buri Agricultural College after heavy shelling had killed a mother and her 3 year old son the previous day in Klong Had sub-district, north of Site 8.(55)

The reality of peasant farmers and their families being subjected to a war over which they had no influence was an aspect of the Border situation and regional politics that received relatively little attention.

"Boy Scout" Duty and Apprentice Soldiers

Greenhill, dominated by the family of Prince Sihanouk, was set further back from the Border than the other camps and was thus much more secure. It was not, however, a safe haven from the war. When Tony Jackson, as a member of an official UN evaluation team, visited Greenhill in December 1986 he was handed a "Sihanoukist Information Bulletin" of the previous October which referred to volunteers carrying food to the interior; in other camps such personnel are known as porters.(56) The Administration of the camp explained to Jackson that some 10,000 of Greenhill's population were inside Cambodia; the Information Bulletin also indicated that in September "3,392 soldiers were in the camp for rest and recuperation."(57)

In August 1989 when Prince Sihanouk was holding forth at the Paris conference, relief workers learned that 1,000 teenage boys had been taken away on "boy scout training" to the ANS military camp. UNBRO protested and was told that the youths would be returned; commenting on the training, the Site B Administrator said:
We concentrate on political indoctrination, nationalism and patriotism as well as the history of Cambodia. (58)

It subsequently transpired that this exercise was interlinked with a US AID-funded programme. Documentation on the project captioned "ANS Military Oriented Youth Centre funding proposal" described the presence at the ANS base camp of 200 youths "who are between the ages of 12 and 16." (56) The US AID memo describes the need for a "secure environment" for those young people as well as a basic education based on the Greenhill curriculum developed by UNBRO. It is unclear why the children, many of whom the memo claims were orphans who had defected from the Heng Samrin army, were not sent to Greenhill. The fact that proposed instruction included "military discipline, first aid and military formation training" is perhaps a clue. The memo also states that the funding of this project "would relieve the ANS of a substantial burden and also allow the ANS to use those funds which would have gone to support the youth center for military purposes."

Many relief workers were not only appalled but angry. It was difficult to ignore the ironies of the situation. The Paris Meeting had broken down and opposing armies had returned to the battlefield. At a Press Conference in Beijing in late November a beaming Sihanouk was pictured with his prized white poodle Miki as he outlined new plans for an interim administration in Cambodia that essentially reaffirmed his Paris position when he insisted on the inclusion of the Khmer Rouge. (60) In New York, the Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted with much fanfare and positive commentary by President Bush and other Heads of State at the UN General Assembly.

None of this was very helpful to the children who made up the bulk of the Border population. Like their parents before them they were born into a life dominated by war and had little opportunity to understand the world from any other perspective.

These young people, together with the vast majority of their compatriots on the Border, were refugees. In principle, they were
the beneficiaries of a massive relief operation. But in reality they were the victims of a war they, and the assistance designed to help them, were used to propagate.

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The harsh reality of war was compounded by abuses which were endemic in all Border camps. These abuses were grounded in the reality of being confined to a war zone. They were also a reflection of the politics practiced by each of the CGDK partners and the timidity of relief agencies in countering harmful practices.

The next chapter examines the nature of violations both in terms of their immediate impact on victims and the ramifications of allowing widespread abuse to maim the relief exercise as the Khmer Rouge persisted with their reign of terror and commitment to dictate the future history of Cambodia.
VI Brutal Border: When Benevolence is Not Benign

Necessity is the plea for every infringement of human freedom. It is the argument of tyrants; it is the creed of slaves.
William Pitt the Younger 1783

A few years before William Pitt the Younger spoke these words to the House of Commons, William Pitt the Elder addressed the House of Lords when he stated with prospective clarity: "where laws end, tyranny begins." It is doubtful whether Pitt the Elder could have envisaged the holocausts which time and again would give meaning to these words. Assuredly, he could not have foreseen the situation which transpired along the Thai-Cambodian border as nations shocked to their core by the bloody revelations which emerged from Cambodia then proceeded to give sanctuary and support to the perpetrators of these crimes. This dark reality cast its shadow over the relief programme as it tried to steer clear of the intrigues which menaced its efforts to provide assistance to those in need. No matter how anyone hedged around it, the continuing reality of the Khmer Rouge was not easily set aside.

A central issue which confronted relief workers concerned the provision of assistance which, in the process of being abused, augmented the capabilities of the CGDK to wage war and hold large groups of people captive.

Even though agency personnel were preoccupied with the day-to-day focus of the operation, which had a tendency to narrow practitioners' field of vision, it was not possible to be unaware of the abuses which undermined the humanitarianism relief workers were dedicated to. The question which haunted many was whether they were a party to abuse, however inadvertently, since it was clear the camps were "directly" providing support though the siphoning of assistance and "indirectly" by maintaining a resource pool of personnel used to propagate the war.
There was also concern about the camps being used as "rest and recuperation" bases. No less difficult an issue which centered on the actual abuse of refugees, and the guarded response of the relief programme, was the "legitimacy" seen to be conferred on CGDK administrators by virtue of the support they received from, and close collaboration with, relief agents. To the many refugees who queried why the UN did not use its leverage to put an end to abuse and corruption it often appeared that the relief community was not concerned about violations perpetrated at the behest of camp Administrators or emanating from a camp management structure which denied them any possibility of redress.

A controversial issue in all of the camps was the extent to which camp residents did or did not support the policy of the various camp Administrations. Too often there was no distinction made between those who were, for example, controlled by the Khmer Rouge, and those who formed part of the DK hierarchy. This confused people's understanding concerning the appropriate role of assistance particularly in relation to relief management and the crucial question of responsibility. Although in retrospect it appears it should have been possible to argue for more concerted action, if only on the basis of our shared humanity, at the time there was an overwhelming tendency to see human rights abuses as "political". Thus while everyone decried massive violations which pointed to a persistent pattern of abuse in all of the Border camps it was generally felt that these were not issues that the relief programme could speak too loudly about or push too hard on.(1)

Nonetheless the implications of providing assistance which helped reinforce the authority of the abusers highlighted the many question marks on the programme's overall objectives.

**Born-Again Khmer Rouge?**

For many relief workers to query where the relief programme was headed, was to ask whether the Khmer Rouge had changed, and if not, what hope for the future of Cambodia?
There were some who genuinely felt, as a result of working in Khmer Rouge-controlled camps, that continued contact and interaction would have long-term beneficial effects; there was a perception that the relief programme would "tame" these fanatical DK stalwarts as they were weaned from their harmful ways. To a certain extent this perspective became both motivation and rationale to work alongside the Khmer Rouge however disquieting their record or disturbing their practices.

There was never a great deal of media interest in the Border camps which is not entirely unusual for "emergencies" that linger. Coverage did pick up throughout the late '80s as hints of a breakthrough after Sihanouk and Hun Sen's meeting gave way to the Jakarta and Permanent Five process; this, in turn, led to renewed interest in the capacity and strategies of the Khmer Rouge.

Secrecy and distrust of foreigners has been one of the chief hallmarks of the Khmer Rouge which kept journalists and relief workers busy trying to decipher what were their real motives, given their tendency to say one thing but act differently.

Newcomers to the Border were invariably taken aback, impressed, and confused by Site 8. Full of foreboding they approached the camp with trepidation, but were jolted out of their reverie and preconceived ideas immediately upon arrival as they were assaulted by throngs of children brandishing sharp-edged instruments used as chopsticks and bullet-tipped walking canes presented as "souvenirs" of Site 8; there was no escaping the frenzied "mob" before several sales were made! Although it took a while for the residents of Site 8 to adapt to foreigners in their midst by 1987-1988 they were relaxed and confident enough to smile to visitors. It took somewhat greater confidence to actually talk to them.(2) Indeed it was difficult to match Site 8 and its unruffled Administrators with the gruesome evidence of the "killing fields".
Knowledge of the remote Border camps was pieced together by the testimony of escapees and impressions picked up from the regulated visits of relief workers. The picture was not promising, but in the absence of fresh accounts of blood and slaughter, it was accepted in many quarters that the Khmer Rouge had "changed" in that they had distanced themselves from the worst excesses of the DK regime. However it was also clear that camp residents enjoyed little if any freedom, including access to available health care, and were subjected to a harsh regime of forced recruitment and portering. It is not easy to explain but 1975-1979 became the general standard against which the Khmer Rouge were measured even though it could be argued that the absence of bloodshed was as much due to change in circumstance as a possible change of will. Indeed such was the fascination and aura of the Khmer Rouge that all and every change made was seen as significant. The flourishing black market at Site 8 was a source of endless but perplexing wonder; it was difficult to reconcile this type of "capitalism" with KR "communism". By January 1990, an AP report talked of the break-up "of the secretive system of 'hidden' camps where virtually the only outsiders have been the Thai military intelligence officers". (3) A diplomat was quoted as saying that refugees don't care about "ideology"; the Khmer Rouge, he said "give them security and they give them care." (4) Aid officials were noted to explain that "the guerrillas may have shifted policies in response to their increasing isolation worldwide, or because their more moderate leaders are gaining influence."(5) Relief workers were also said to "consider the UN-aided Khmer Rouge camps much better than the oppressive camps, of the non-communist forces of Prince Sihanouk and of Son Sann."(6) Finally, an aid official is quoted as saying that the teachers trained in Site 8 "have created a new group of liberal-opinion makers." (7)

This rather alarmingly up-beat analysis also makes reference to some of the problems then being encountered in KR-held areas but the overall impression is one of positive change. However, such optimism did not reflect a consensus within the relief
community which during the previous months had to contend with the burning down of the hospital in O'Trao and shelling in the south which had sent thousands of refugees fleeing from the area they had been herded into.

Since this Associated Press report also appeared around the time the people of Borai were being forcibly relocated to areas of increased danger, a possibility which had been hanging over the relief community for some time, such reflections on the Khmer Rouge could not be attributed to a lapse of memory. Unquestionably, KR camps were "well-ordered" and "disciplined" given the stringent controls people's movements and thinking were subjected to, but not everyone perceived these as positive characteristics. Reflections on the Khmer Rouge were partly influenced by the need to retain the precarious relationship that had been developed with them coupled with the prevailing wisdom that they "must be involved" in any future settlement. There was also a small number of relief workers who saw the Khmer Rouge as misguided revolutionaries who had, allegedly, "learned their lesson".

But in all of this speculation the only fact that could be stated with certainty was that no-one could predict the future. The only reliable information on which the relief community could base its decisions was the knowledge of what happened in the past updated by the experiences of refugees and the relief community since their arrival on the Border in 1979.

By all accounts the leadership of the Khmer Rouge had not changed. Notwithstanding the claim that its most notorious architect of genocide had retired, Khieu Samphan was widely seen as a nominal leader whose real role was that of spokesman for Pol Pot. The Khmer Rouge have never apologized nor expressed regret for 1.5 million deaths they referred to as "mistakes". When interviewed by Newsweek magazine at the Paris Conference in September 1989, Khieu Samphan with his customary smile deflected discussion on genocide saying such talk was divisive and a trick used by the Vietnamese to derail the Paris Conference.
When continually pressed on the subject, Khieu Samphan reiterated his many previous denials that genocide had happened. "Its not like the papers say" he said. This is but one insight on the extent to which the Khmer Rouge may or may not have changed. And given the influential support of their backers, who were no less hypocritical, Khieu Samphan and company undoubtedly felt they had good reason to smile.

Throughout the eighties Western Governments have consistently expressed their revulsion over KR atrocities and their implacable opposition to their return to power. In July of 1988, then Secretary of State George Schultz said Washington was, "unalterably opposed to the Khmer Rouge ever again taking control of Cambodia." Schultz, who was then about to depart his post, also urged that "adequate safeguards" be taken to prevent the KR's return but did not indicate what these might be or indeed that the US should take any concrete steps that would actually have some effect. No less adamant, François Mitterand is quoted as saying that, "no compromise is acceptable with the Khmer Rouge". "We must not allow the return of the terrible Pol Pot regime", said Margaret Thatcher when she visited Greenhill camp in 1988. Such expressions of concern would possibly have been reassuring to the many refugees caught on the Border if they had been aware of them. But for anyone familiar with the true history of the Border such "assurances" merely underlined how vulnerable the refugees were. As pointed out by more than one commentator everyone got it wrong in the sixties and seventies as to the nature and purpose of Pol Pot. There were also chilling similarities between the tactics employed by Pol Pot in the late '80s and those used to such effect by him in the early '70s as the KR enmeshed themselves in the countryside and slowly encircled Phnom Penh. Prasong Soonsiri, former chief of Thai National Security summed it up best when he said the Khmer Rouge strategy, "would be one of patient political work, avoiding pitched battles 'and waiting for a ripe fruit to fall'."

This in fact, reflected the contents of a document which became available in 1988 when an escapee who had been under the
command of Ta Mok handed it to a western aid official. Dated 2nd December 1986 it is described as a training manual which apparently was used in the "education" of soldiers. This document highlights the unchanged ideological agenda of the Khmer Rouge. The enemy is everyone who does not agree with them including their allies, the KP and the Sihanoukists, and the international community. (14)

The document states that the Khmer Rouge "have a conscious and unshakable concept of political standpoint...we really believe that there is no other alternative than Democratic Kampuchea which can protect your interest." (15) Referring to their years in power, it says "we achieved a lot, considering it was only a short period of time. We were right on the target of basic strategy..." (16) The Manual categorises Cambodians into four groups defined by their level of empathy for the Khmer Rouge and their anti-Vietnamese feelings. Strategies are outlined on how to approach each of these. The second category, for example, is described as "an ally of the base people" in that they "hate and oppose the Vietnamese"; however they are consigned to the second category because "they are afraid to be miserable; they are afraid to die". (17) The third category, it says "stay quiet, looking for peace, for a free ride, for some business opportunity in the regime of the contemptible aggressive Vietnamese enemies." (18) Summing up, the Manual states:

Democratic Kampuchea is truly nationalist. It fervently and always loves the people. During over 30 years, it has always been with the nation and the people under every circumstance...it dares to sacrifice everything. It does not only say it loves people and nation but it acts. (19)

Continuing in this vein of outlining its many achievements, it also refers to outside recognition of Democratic Kampuchea's self-defined qualities. It reads:
some foreign leaders said, "Democratic Kampuchea had ruled the country for 3 years and had made mistakes, but compared to us who have ruled for dozens of years already, Democratic Kampuchea made far fewer mistakes than we."(20)

Finally, the last section of the document evaluates world history and personalities, including Napoleon, in relation to its own. It concludes:

Comparing these examples that truly exist in world history we see that the true character and value of Democratic Kampuchea is far higher. Democratic Kampuchea has never violated or abused anybody. (21)

Anyone who queried the authenticity of the document, or the extent to which it reflected DK analysis, ambition and ambivalence to their abominable crimes, had to look no further for confirmation of its validity than the testimony provided by escapees and the experience of trying to negotiate access to the remote Border camps. Time and again, escapees gave lie to the claim that the Khmer Rouge had changed.

In a story which appeared in the Boston Globe in 1987, Seng An, a young Cambodian girl recounts how her 14 year old brother, An Lungborn, "was shot in the back and killed" as they attempted to escape.(22) In the same report by Stefan Ellis, who spent a month seeking out the stories of escapees, he highlights the case of Vin Pheap who had recently left Site 8 which he said was patrolled at night "by unarmed cadres and informants"; Vin Pheap explained how a man arrested for stealing in October 1986 "was taken outside the camp and executed."(23) Refugees who had recently fled Natrao reported that "disappearances and interrogations are commonplace and numerous public beatings and executions have occurred."(24) Steven Erlanger, a frequent visitor to the Border, reported in The New York Times in November 1988 the travails of an escapee from Site 8, Mr. Hin Hon, who reported being pressed
into portering duties and the continuing fear of living under the Khmer Rouge; as explained by his wife Bun Choern:

They all could see the facts during the Pol Pot time. The innocent can be caught and killed easily. We all remember the past.(25)

Given what was known about the Khmer Rouge and life along the Border in 1980, 1985, or 1990 it was difficult to escape the conclusion that any change exhibited by the Khmer Rouge either in word or deed was merely tactical. As Erlanger said in 1988, available information pointed to "behavior that is not radically different from the xenophobic fanaticism that marked Cambodia from 1975-1979."(26)

Overall, it appears it was somewhat easier for "outsiders", as in people who visited the Border infrequently, to arrive at the conclusion that the Khmer Rouge were up to no good or that something should be done about the wholesale abuse of refugees held on the Border. There was always a number who did try to raise awareness and provoke co-ordinated action within the relief community but with a constant turnover of personnel, and no clear direction, such attempts were low-key and sporadic. ICRC periodically made representation to Cambodian and Thai authorities as did UNBRO which was also more forthcoming and outspoken on human rights issues by the end of the 1980s. But given the nature and level of abuse the overall approach can only be described as faltering and uneven. It lacked the vigour, tenacity and resources essential to any endeavour dedicated to ending human rights violations on such an alarming scale.(27) In general, there is an amazing amount of confusion on the relationship between upholding respect for human rights and the provision of humanitarian assistance even though it would appear obvious that neither can operate in a vacuum.

Relief without Rights

As outlined above, the activity and impact of the relief programme cannot be separated from the widespread abuse of
human rights which occurred along the Border. However at the outset it must be noted that focussing on violations which marred the lives of refugees held in Border camps, or abuses which occurred as a result of CGDK activities elsewhere, does not in any way imply that the reputation of the Phnom Penh regime was unblemished by activities which ran counter to the Declaration of Human Rights.(28) Indeed, Amnesty International produced a number of reports directly concerned with abuses in Cambodia under the rule of the PRK.(29)

We can no longer see human rights as so much rhetoric said Jan Martenson, UN Under-Secretary General for Human Rights in May 1990 when addressing a workshop in the Philippines; increasingly, people and states, he said "tend now to realize that human rights are the very substance of life...".(30) He stressed the inter-relationship of fundamental rights with human dignity, justice and freedom; the denial of essential rights, Mr. Martenson said, "contains the seeds of a wider disaster".(31) Emphasizing that "the watchword of human rights is eternal vigilance" he said "the implementation of human rights standards is currently at the heart of the work of the United Nations and clearly requires a much greater commitment by all concerned".(32)

Most probably the Under-Secretary General was not referring specifically to the situation on the Thai-Cambodian border but he could well have been. For the most part violations did not appear on the main list of agenda items the relief community was directly concerned with. When human rights issues did arise it was as an addendum to the main agenda. Incidents of abuse such as the forced relocation of refugees would, on occasion, generate some interest or even comment. But human rights abuses never provoked the level of attention or sustained interest as, for example, periodic scarcities of bamboo and thatch.

The relief programme was geared to physical survival in the sense of ensuring adequate supplies of food and shelter but aspects of the Border which were no less threatening to the physical well-
being and integrity of refugees somehow had the aura of being outside the relief programme's terms of reference.

Adequate supplies of building materials were, of course, ultra important but it was difficult to understand why issues no less crucial to survival were accorded a lower priority or fell off the agenda sheet entirely. When some 1,600 people were moved out of Site 8 under cover of darkness on three successive evenings in January 1987 it was essentially a non-issue either in relief or media circles.

Systematic documentation and analysis of violations did not occur before mechanisms to do so were initiated in the late 80s. Such information was classified as confidential and was not generally available to the public or indeed outside a small circle of individuals in the relief community. Nonetheless it is possible to piece together a history of abuse that is no less brutal because of its occurrence in refugee camps or because of the assistance provided to its perpetrators by the relief community.

Refugees suffered a wide range of abuse from *refoulement*, forced recruitment and forced relocation to use of child porters only 10 years old and summary execution of would-be escapees. Less well documented and widely misunderstood was the reign of fear and thought control which kept refugees submissive and unable to express independent opinion on their fate or that of their children.

What follows is a short summary of a long litany of violations indicative of the pattern and nature of abuse which formed the day-to-day survival of refugees unable to escape the brutal world of the Border.

*Refoulement*, and forced relocation of refugees, horribly reminiscent of the emptying of Phnom Penh in the first flush of DK victory back in 1975, was a perpetual threat which hung over all the DK camps. Concern centred on the fact that relocations resulted in refugees being denied access to relief services including health facilities and whatever modicum of comfort the
presence of international personnel may or may not have provided. Most often, relocation meant closer proximity to battle zones.

The removal of people from Ta Luan from mid-1988 onwards, is one of the most infamous examples partially because refugees were taken into the direct line of fire and also because the KR decided to leave the disabled and helpless behind. This move is also much commented on because the relief community actually knew about it in advance. During the long process of negotiation to gain better access to Ta Luan the camp Administrator, Luk Wan, reputed to be related to Pol Pot, advised both UNBRO and ICRC that the plan was to move the refugees to an area that was too unsafe for relief personnel to visit.(34) Thai authorities indicated that the area was needed for re-afforestation, a rather strange rationale given Ta Luan's location in the middle of a jungle; unusual for a camp, Ta Luan had actually retained a lot of its foliage which added to the shadowy and eerie ambience of the place. Later it transpired that refugee children had been told that "the mines around the camp made it too dangerous" to move around.(35)

The relief community did express its unhappiness and concern to the camp authorities but it is unclear why donors for example, were not alerted in advance. By October many of the refugees had already been relocated when the movement was reported at a Donor's meeting in New York when the media also began to take an interest. An Associated Press (AP) report dated 10 November 1989 states that "in front of aid officials, the guerrillas transferred everything from Ta Luan in Chinese-supplied trucks - entire houses, even papaya trees".(36)

Commenting on the new location (Khao Phlu) of the refugees a Thai Military official was quoted to the effect that he "was shocked. Conditions were desperate. They had no medical facilities and it was in a very malarious area. The people are in a very bad condition."(37) A few days later these Cambodians were caught in some of the most severe shelling recorded on the Border and were
subsequently pushed back to Ta Luan. Unfortunately this is not the end of the story since these same refugees were again forcibly relocated in May 1989, closer to the frontier even though Thai military officials had reported "almost continuous heavy fighting since mid-April". This put an end to the UN plan to have the Ta Luan population transferred to the safer location of Site K. As noted by a diplomat at the time, the "Khmer Rouge don't want to lose control of their civilians. They are a vital military asset." To watch this process unfold and the apparent "constraints" which inhibited UN action prior to the "Cocktail Party" (or first round of "Jakarta" talks at Bogor, 25 July 1988) and the desultory "preventive" action in or outside the relief community thereafter, was a numbing and debilitating experience.

This anaemic approach to human rights contrasts dramatically to what transpired when 16 KR officials were removed from Site 8 seemingly against their will (in that they were prevented from returning) at the end of September 1991. The response was swift and wide-ranging; it was loud and clear in its disapproval of this forced removal. In brief, it was excellent and just the type of action that was needed throughout the decade-plus of Border relief.

UNBRO's Deputy Director, Mitch Carlson said the UN had "made it clear that there should be no movement out of the camp"; UNBRO refused to recognize the new Administration. The Special Representative of the Secretary General issued a Press Statement condemning the relocation and advised that he had alerted the UN Secretary General, Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar; the Press Statement advised that Mr. Kibria had also contacted Prince Sihanouk, ally of the Khmer Rouge and President of the Supreme National Council, as well as the Thai Foreign Ministry. Both Refugee International (RI) an advocacy group and Amnesty International issued Press Releases. Referring to the Permanent Five Settlement, scheduled for signing in Paris on 23 October, the Executive Director of RI said "(I)t is imperative that the United States, other Perm 5 countries and Thailand pressure the Khmer Rouge to live
up to the agreement which prohibits forced repatriation". (43) A number of embassies in Bangkok were reported to have "strongly" expressed their concern. (44) A US State Department Official confirmed that his government "had asked Thailand to prevent the Khmer Rouge from moving refugees from camps in Thailand into controlled zones in Cambodia" as reported by the *Bangkok Post*. (45) Meanwhile, representatives of the Permanent Five met Mr. Rafeeudin Ahmed, the top UN official in charge of Cambodian affairs, to discuss the matter. (46) The Permanent Five eventually decided to take individual rather than collective action apparently in deference to China which reportedly "intended to chastise the Khmer Rouge." (47) Not to be outdone, Prince Sihanouk advised he had issued a special warning to his coalition partner, while in Bangkok Mr. Kibria met with Pech Bunret, a DK Official who affirmed such an incident would not occur again. (48) Out in Site 8, relief workers took it in turns to stay overnight "patrolling the labyrinth of alleys of thatched huts in the dark to make sure no coercion was used". (49) In O'Trao a tent emblazoned with the UN emblem was set up to provide a reassuring presence. (50)

The fact that Cambodian lives were suddenly important, and the KR were not to be totally trusted, was a truly remarkable reversal of perceptions that can only be applauded. Too bad such protest and outrage were not voiced on behalf of the thousands of Cambodians mercilessly pushed around the Border throughout the long decade of the '80s.

Site 8 itself, notwithstanding its reputation of being a showcase camp, had experienced forced relocations in May 1985 when up to 200 had been sent to the "hidden border" camp of Phnom Dey apparently for "re-education" as a result of being too friendly with foreigners and expressing interest in moving to a non-KR camp. (51) In August 1985 an estimated 5000 were moved to Phnom Dey. (52) The following month there was a report of ten men "being taken away at gunpoint, with their hands tied behind their backs"; it is understood they were marched away to do portering duties which they had been reluctant to do voluntarily. (53)
In January 1987, on three successive nights, 1,683 refugees were trucked from Site 8 to Natrao where Ta Mok one of the most brutal and oppressive of Pol Pot's lieutenants held sway. Although the movement was known in advance there was no structured attempt to interview those identified for removal. There was no public comment on the relocation. Subsequently, a number of these refugees were interviewed in Natrao where they indicated they had moved because of improved conditions or because of family reunification. Given the nature and ethos of DK-run camps, and the absence of independent sources of information, it was never clear to what extent implicit coercion may have been a factor. (54)

Another aspect of forced removals which received little attention was the abduction of villagers at gunpoint to swell the ranks of the Khmer Rouge. A number of escapees who lived to tell of their experience spoke of being subjected to "re-education" centres and strict surveillance before being sent on ammunition-carrying trips. Oll Sophol, interviewed in Site 2, spoke of captives being held up to a year in secret locations such as V4, reportedly close to where Pol Pot lived at the time, in the Trat province area of Thailand. (55) Asia Watch which held independent interviews with three escapees in Sok Sann camp reported a number of seizures in the rich gem-mining area around Pailin in July 1989 when the KR were waging a fierce battle to gain control of this lucrative stretch of territory. As recounted in the Asia Watch report:

Khmer Rouge soldiers rounded up 107 Cambodians... and marched them South for two days until they reached an outpost of a military camp...After several days in which they were fed only one bowl of rice per day, five of the men succeeded in bribing a guard and escaping to Sok Sann. (56)

It was not only those who were abducted who were obliged to do the work of the Khmer Rouge. Portering, being obliged to be human mules, was a dangerous and frequent experience for residents of all KR-controlled camps. Accounts of these treks, often
of a month's duration, are all dominated by the danger of landmines and the dangers presented by trying to avoid this "duty". Som Tha, an escapee interviewed in the southern KP Sok Sann camp, said she had been abducted in 1987. (57) "Sixty cans of rice, five grenades, 200 automatic gun bullets, five M-14 mines, three anti-tank shells" were the contents she listed for one of her consignments. (58) Mom Sokhom was 15 when she stumbled into Huay Chan having decided to leave Cambodia where six of her relatives had died during the Khmer Rouge years; she was pressed into service making punji sticks and "bamboo spears for impaling enemy soldiers" shortly after her arrival. (59) On each journey Mom said "mines blew off the legs of two or three women in the unit". (60) Another young woman who said she was only allowed to stop being a porter when she was eight months pregnant, recalled that on each trip "at least one or two women in her group were injured by land mines". (61) Chea, a 55 year-old farmer who also told of being abducted said in one month he saw "six people killed stepping on land mines". (62) "Their bodies were just cut in two pieces" he said. (63) A 1990 Report by Asia Watch provides a devastating account of the coercion used to make people submit to being porters, the different types of landmines, which maimed and killed those reluctant recruits, and surely the most barbarous of all, the use of kids as young as ten who were "educated" or coerced into doing their "patriotic" duty. (64)

Younger children were not exposed to the same dangers as porters who set out on 150 mile-long trails but they faced a range of risks inherent in a war zone when assigned to carry "rice, vegetables and tinned fish" on day-long trips in units of 40 boys and girls. (65)

It is no coincidence that all available information comes from escapees since the Khmer Rouge has always denied any element of coercion in portering. An administrator at Site 8 said that people transporting supplies were doing so voluntarily. (66) In Ta Luan, the "porters' camp" formed a separate part of the overall complex; an escapee said he was only allowed to go to the "main" camp, where relief personnel visited, when he fell ill. (67)
The human rights and humanitarian law issue which generated the most concern, consensus and concerted action was the question of health care and the denial of access to available facilities. More than any other issue, the reality of the Khmer Rouge deliberately prohibiting refugees often in desperate need of help from receiving medical care, exemplified their ruthlessness and crazed fanaticism. "The disregard for the sick and the disabled is extreme" said one aid official in 1988.(68)

Mid-1988, the 40-bed hospital in Ta Luan was found to be virtually empty, unusual for any refugee camp but particularly so in this jungle outpost. A young child in need of a blood transfusion was denied transferral to either a hospital close-by or to any of the hospitals in the other camps.(69) She had "puncture marks in her legs where camp medics had injected large quantities of the wrong drugs"; it was understood that the child subsequently died.(70) Asked an exasperated doctor at the time "who is going to take responsibility for this graveyard ?"(71) The correct use of medicine was poorly understood; Khmer Rouge medics often refused to follow the advice of experienced doctors. In Ta Luan, children were denied the full regimen of vaccination necessary to prevent childhood diseases; camp authorities decided they would do it themselves even though relief staff had advised them that their (KR) procedures could trigger paralysis in the event of a polio outbreak.(71) In August 1988 a medical emergency was declared in Ta Luan when a 15-year-old medic was found in charge of "110 patients, 45 of them seriously ill".(73)

Ta Luan was undoubtedly one of the most shocking examples of botched medicine and cold-blooded indifference to people who were ill or disabled but, of course, it was not known what occurred in the "hidden border" camps. A polio outbreak in 1989 was one indication of the suffering needlessly endured by children. In July and August aid workers at Site 8 "treated 35 polio patients all less than 5 years old"; three children died and thirty-one were paralysed.(74) Mothers of the polio victims who had arrived from the "hidden border" camp known as Site 8 North
advised that "many other kids had died before they were allowed to take their children to Site 8". (75) Eventually after much negotiation and emphasis on the danger of polio spreading to Thai villages, public health officials in Thailand helped in obtaining access to some 10,000 children who were immunized on the roadway leading to their "hidden" camps in the Site 8 area. (76) If the relief official primarily responsible for this roadside vaccination had not grabbed hold of the public health threat and persisted in her negotiation with Thai authorities, it is unclear how many of these children would have survived.

Even in 1991, as Khieu Samphan the smiling cheer-leader and accomplished frontman of the KR flew to Paris for the fanfare signing of the Permanent Five Plan on 23 October, one mother literally took the life of her sick child in her hands when she set out on an eight-hour trek; she spent the night of 20 October following a narrow trail through the mine-infested Border to arrive at Site 8 at 6 am "carrying her baby who was critically ill with malaria and practically comatose." (77)

It was difficult for many to understand how it was possible for the Khmer Rouge to retain, relocate and repress such large groups of people, a number of whom had access to guns and grenades, under the eyes of the international community. Until late 1988 access was sporadic to the remote camps but relief personnel did visit and help run Out-Patient clinics and workshops (to make protheses) for the disabled. Site 8 enjoyed the same kind of access as did Site 2 but refugees complied with portering duties rather than enlist the help of relief personnel to avoid such dangerous "work". For the most part they were only prepared to discuss their "dislike" for such activities once they had risked capture or worse by escaping from the camp. (78)

The short and the long answer to this question is fear; it is one of the most important clues to understanding the Khmer Rouge. It is how they maintained control and were able to command "support". With their reputation preceding them who could expect any impoverished peasant or captive refugee to challenge them?
Ta Luan for all its horrors was not a barbed wire enclosure; armed guards did not, it is understood, patrol its perimeter. Indeed the fact that one could reach it from a busy Thai highway some 20 minutes along a rutted track was all the more unnerving. Visiting it for the first time in July 1988 was to find a "gloomy silence"; there was no traditional Khmer greeting, just hand-made crutches and impassive faces, both silent testimony that this was no ordinary village.(79) As noted at the time, greeting people \textit{"joom reep soua"} (good morning) "seems a strange almost daring act." (80)

Up and down the Border, fear was the controlling agent. As noted by Peter Eng, relief officials "say little physical force is needed because the guerrillas control through their fearsome reputation..." (81) Fear and suspicion were cultivated by keeping people isolated. It was reinforced by control, both covert and overt, of practically every aspect of people's lives. The bare necessities of life were reduced to a minimum but it made people all the more dependent on their overlords for survival. People from Site 8, interviewed in October 1985, spoke of their experiences in an "instruction hall" (as described by Ieng Sary, DK Foreign Minister) subsequent to a failed escape attempt:

They received meagre rations of rice and worked two shifts a day (with a break in between) making punji sticks related to military purposes.(82)

Rules varied, but it appeared marriage was strictly controlled in some areas. An account in the \textit{Far Eastern Economic Review} of escapees from the northern Border area in 1987 states that a female porter "was executed for sneaking away to marry a Khmer Rouge soldier".(83) Buddhism, or any other religion, was not allowed. Refugees who escaped to Sok Sann "spoke of low food rations".(84) In an interview with Michael Adler escapees said "their lives were regulated, with passes from party cadres needed for medical care or to get married."(85)
One of the biggest and most spectacular "breakouts" by Cambodians held in "hidden border" camps occurred in June 1989 when some 700 made their way to Sok Sann where many expressed concern about being tracked down by the KR. Ouk Sambat, a 60 year old farmer who "led 210 people some 15km from the camp of Kaiche" said "he was fleeing shelling but also the restriction on movement, lack of free trade and ban on money in the Khmer Rouge camps." The Khmer Rouge were not happy; they visited Sok Sann on three occasions to request the return of these refugees. Said Luk Wan, the notoriously obnoxious Ta Luan Administrator, "our camp is our camp. Everyone must ask me first" even though it was obvious refugees had good reason not to.

When the Borai population was scheduled to move to Site K in January 1990 both UNBRO and ICRC officials were on hand to reassure the people and ensure safe passage. Not one refugee opted to travel on the UN trucks although a small number crept quietly into Site K having traversed the jungle at night-time. The idea of openly "disobeying" KR camp Administrators was too frightening a prospect for any refugee to contemplate.

In addition to re-education, and withholding food as a means of keeping people in line, summary executions (extrajudicial killings) were a no less potent message. Available data indicates that the killing of people in such a manner was not a frequent occurrence, partly, it is felt because camp residents tended to do as "requested". This being said, the threat or fear of summary execution was real enough. A number of escapees told of people being taken away and not returning.

In March, 1987 the Far Eastern Economic Review recounts the experience of a woman who escaped from Chan Krahom, a KR base near Huay Chan. Murray Hiebert who interviewed the woman writes that at the end of 1986
three female porters, who each headed up a unit of 15 women responsible for carrying weapons and food to Khmer Rouge fighters deep inside Cambodia, were executed after being caught trying to escape.(92)

In 1988, there were two killings in Site 8 that have been widely reported. On 24 April at around 8 pm Moeun Noeun, a KR soldier based at Site 8 South was visiting relatives to participate in Khmer New Year festivities. He was considered to be there without permission. While hiding out with friends he was discovered and the house (bamboo hut) immediately surrounded by armed soldiers. He was asked to surrender and when he refused, he was taken out and immediately killed by a spray of bullets in front of a number of eyewitnesses.(93)

In the second incident, a man named Rath who was also an escapee soldier was tracked down in Site 8, taken outside the camp and executed with a bullet through the back of his head. This incident occurred in June but his body was not located by relief officials until 08 July. Leaving the body like this was seen as a none too subtle warning.(94)

Amnesty International has documented the reported killing of 30 members of the National Army of Democratic Kampuchea (NADK) on 27 July 1990 in the interior of Cambodia. As recorded by Amnesty:

Those allegedly killed were apparently accused of being dissidents within the NADK...the victims were accused of having instigated several episodes of unrest since 1987...reportedly related to dissatisfaction over continuing restrictions on the means of livelihood, freedom of movement, contact with foreigners...(95)

Notwithstanding all the reported and documented evidence of human rights violations, the mind-numbing tyranny of the Khmer Rouge and its everyday manifestation along the Border had in
many respects become commonplace by the end of the 1980s. There were few dissidents to the general consensus that the Khmer Rouge were horrific but it was for the most part a hand-wringing concern.

Periodic protests were made and there was a dogged commitment to improving, where considered possible, the general well-being and safety of people held in KR camps. But for the most part, the KR were "tolerable"; the relief community had developed a certain immunity to, and fudged imagery of, tyrannical rule in Border camps. Indeed, less than ten years after the KR had been routed to the enormous relief of their victims, the *Far Eastern Economic Review* reported that "Western relief officials point out that Site 8 and the other Khmer Rouge controlled camps are far easier to deal with than the more populated camps of the KPNLF and Sihanoukists..."(96) By 1989, human rights violations and criminality which occurred in the non-KR camps tended to dominate perceptions of abuse within the relief community. There was genuine and valid concern about deteriorating conditions particularly in Site 2 which was seen as the epitome of lawlessness.

**Powerlessness: Structural Violence**

The two coalition partners of the Khmer Rouge, the KPNLF and the Sihanoukists, were habitually described as non-communist which tended to disguise the fact that they were also non-democratic.

It was the rule of camp Administrators rather than the rule of law which shaped the lives of the refugees. Site 2 was the only camp where refugees were not coerced into joining any of the Border armies. In 1989, some of the refugees who had escaped from the KR camps to Sok Sann re-escaped to the KR camp of Site K because of coercion to join the KP military.(97) In Greenhill there was no secret made of the fact that the men were considered part of the resistance; anyone who declined was put in jail and only a few males were allowed to apply for jobs such as medics or teachers. (98)
Until Task-Force 80 was disbanded in August 1988, it was a major source of insecurity to the refugees. Ostensibly established as a "security force", and partly funded by UNBRO, TF-80 was essentially a paramilitary outfit with little training; its origins were village-based defence militia initiated in the 1970s to combat insurgency in the Thai border areas. While there were many notable exceptions to the TF-80 norm, for the most part, refugees were seen as easy prey by the average Ranger. In general, says the Lawyers Committee Report "ranger units are ill-disciplined, unruly, and even violent. Some relief workers suspect that many ranger units include juvenile delinquents and paroled convicts."(99) Documented abuse provides a horrifying insight into the violence refugees were obliged to endure. Rape and robbery occurred routinely as did beatings, harrassment and general mistreatment. A number of refugees were tortured and killed. Violent and criminal action by Rangers typically occurred at night-time although daylight, and the presence of relief personnel, was not necessarily an inhibiting factor. On 31 July 1987 Mrs Sam Phol, three months pregnant and her husband Mr Say Ath "were forced at gunpoint to walk with the ranger up on the mountainside outside Site 2, within eyesight of an ICRC legal delegate"; the couple were killed even though the ranger knew he had an audience.(100) In June 1985, six Cambodians were killed near to Khao-i-Dang.(101) In one, particularly brutal incident, Amnesty International was criticized by Squadron Leader Prasong Soonsiri of Thailand's National Security Council when the human rights group said it had evidence "beyond any reasonable doubt" that three victims were tortured with hot pokers into signing a confession.(102) Persistent reluctance to acknowledge abuse and discipline the rangers added to the fears of both refugees and relief personnel. After many protests and widespread condemnation of the abuse and intimidation that the refugees were subjected to, TF-80 were replaced by DPPU (Displaced Persons Protection Unit) who were better disciplined and trained and less prone to the rapacious deeds of their predecessors. DPPU was a definite improvement on TF-80 but its arrival did not mean
an end to Cambodians suffering abuse at the hands of "security" personnel.

It was the task of DPPU to provide security and ensure order around the camp perimeter and its environs. Inside the camp, Cambodian Administrators were deemed to be in charge. Both Greenhill and Sok Sann were characterized by firm application of camp rules with little accommodation for dissenting views. Site 2, by contrast, was less regulated and was known for its lawlessness and thuggery. Obviously either extreme did not bode well for individual refugees; in both instances, hierarchical camp structures ensured the majority of refugees were at the mercy of those who wielded power. In Site 2, this was complicated by the reality of a criminal underworld of organized prostitution, gambling and smuggling rackets; such activities could not have survived in the absence of corrupt Administrations. Such abuse and criminality was seen to have seeped deep into the ethos of Site 2 and took a heavy toll in human life, dignity and well-being. The presence of off-duty soldiers, with personal caches of guns and grenades, effectively meant they were a law unto themselves; they openly resisted improved-policing initiatives.

Violence and victimization was also the outcome of the bleakness and misery of camp life. People struggled to cope in different ways but as tension mounted so did domestic disputes and the number of families which split apart; social workers spoke of "second wife" syndrome and the problems which trailed in its wake. A persistent feature of life in Site 2 were the monthly statistics on rape, wife-beating and suicide attempts; on average, over 80% of the latter were female.(103)

Reporting from Site 2 at the end of May 1989, Tom Nagorski’s account of "a week in the life of a refugee camp" illustrates what was happening to a people too long confined in their bamboo enclosure; making reference to two people who had used a grenade to settle a squabble, he said, this was a week which included "two other grenade attacks, an axe fight, three arrests for wife beating and another for selling children."(104) Andy
Pendleton, who had seen the Border evolve from its origin, said the place was "ready to explode"; referring to a spate of murders he had to investigate, he said:

It's not just a cut here or a cut there. They're stabbed multiple times, 20 or 30 times. People are axing, knifing, throwing grenades, and hitting each other in record numbers.(105)

Grenades were available for little more than a dollar; by mid-1988 they were the "weapon of choice" in Site 2. At the time Nagorski visited the camp, he said recent months had seen "a four-fold increase in domestic violence, a rising suicide rate, and an influx of deadly weapons and a rash of brutal behaviour."(106)

Alarm bells first began ringing in 1987 and had grown to an incessant din by mid-1988 when the violence curve shot off the page. Armed robberies were noted to have increased "nearly seven-fold in 1988" while the incidence of "rape and sexual harassment tripled". (107) As elsewhere, rape was under-reported; "Khmer women suffer harassment in silence" concluded a report prepared on the psycho-social problems of Site 2. (108) Addressing the annual conference of the CCSDPT (Co-ordinating Committee on Services to Displaced People in Thailand) in July 1988, Mr. Y.Y. Kim, UNBRO's Director said the human costs of camp life "are far too high to be ignored." (109)

An avalanche of reports, commentary and analysis on the surge of violence in Site 2 pointed to a combination of factors which were not difficult to identify. Residents of Site 2 were confined to a war zone in closed camps. Both "government" and "law enforcement" were identified with corruption and extortion; workers were "taxed" to make supplies available for the military. The camps were overcrowded, congested and did not allow for privacy; it was a utilitarian urban slum in the middle of a hot laterite plain, dependent on minimum rations of water. A small few were employed in the public sector as medics, or teachers or in the camp administration. For the vast majority there was nothing to kill the time and it had become a killer. Referring to the numerous
children in Site 2, Colin Campbell in 1987 said "a few years from now they will be old enough to carry guns. It will give them something to do."(110). Coupled with accumulated traumas from the past and an uncertain future, the present for many was one of hopeless despair. Powerlessness, lack of freedom, no sense of self-worth were all the terms used. It was a vicious cycle that fed on itself as the social fabric unravelled further.

The source of the problem was clear but what could be done about it less so. To borrow from military jargon a two-track policy ensued. Action was initiated on problems which could be addressed or contained. Acquiescence essentially characterized the policy of trying to jog along with Administrations which were not distressed to be in a war zone nor concerned about corruption which worked mostly to their advantage.

Given these contradictions it was widely accepted that even with the best of programmes this was band-aid therapy; all kinds of activities and measures were urgently needed but within the context of Site 2 such programmes could not of themselves cure its deep-rooted ills. The same was true of other camps where such programmes were also established. Yet, the focus was to concentrate on what was attainable. The "green light" and long-awaited approval from the Thai authorities to allow education and skills training unleashed an intrepid array of ambitious programmes all geared to head off the looming disaster threatening to engulf Site 2 and spreading inexorably to the other camps.

Security and protection were revamped. TF-80 departed and new ground rules were established for the in-coming DPPU. Protection officers were recruited and set to work documenting and following through on abuses in Site 2.(111) A police-training programme was developed together with the formation of "Justice Committees" designed to work as an independent judiciary. An ambitious education programme was developed to allow 60,000 children to attend school; it was launched with a dedicated troupe of some 30 fluent Khmer-speaking teacher-trainers. Community
Support Services, a project covering a wide range of activities from early childhood care, agriculture and adult literacy to skills training for women, stove-making and youth centres, was geared to enhancing survival skills and off-setting the corroding impact of camp life. Its pièce de résistance was the Khmer Citizen newspaper, a simple newsheet launched with much trepidation and in-built censorship but soon accepted as a valid source of independent news and information.

To wide acclaim, a Buddhist education programme was also developed for both populace and novice monks; it covered elements of human rights education and was probably the first structured monk-training programme since the Khmer Rouge marched into Phnom Penh. Other important initiatives included officially-sanctioned markets where Thai merchants could exchange goods with refugees who traded rice for items which allowed some diversion from the monotony of their diet; the erosion of black market trade also meant a reduction of abuses associated with it. There was an attempt to move away from the grid-plan housing in Site 2 but the only extension of the camp allowed was eastward; few refugees were enthusiastic about moving closer to battle-zones and trails used by soldiers and smugglers.

All of these programmes were helpful to some degree in ameliorating the painful conditions of survival within the context of the Border but for many life was no less desperate. Camp Administrators, while formally welcoming such programmes and initiatives, were reluctant to see their authority diminished.

Greenhill, for example, objected to receiving the newspaper and had some very anachronistic views on education that harked back to the days of the ancien régime. The Sok Sann Administrator was also reluctant to accept the newspaper since he apparently believed not many in his camp would be interested. Greenhill was also reluctant to participate in the monk-training programme even though it was managed by a respected expatriate Cambodian monk.
UNBRO's reluctance to seriously challenge Administrators or think more imaginatively about a different style of camp management which would allow for the representation and participation of refugees in the organizational structure of services which directly affected their well-being, undermined the effectiveness of programmes designed to curtail victimization and the debilitating trauma of hopelessness and despair. "Le mot liberté n'y existe pas" said Pierce Marc Johnson after he visited Site 2 early in 1988.(113) "This is no longer a relief programme" said Urs Boegli, head of the ICRC delegation in December of that year.(114) "We've treated the symptoms - the hunger, the sickness, but a cure is political" Boegli added.(115)

Commenting on the same refugees in 1991, Steven Erlanger talked of the "stupefying boredom" of camp life.(116) The Administrations had remained unchanged. Violence and corruption were no less endemic.

The Perversion of Humanitarianism

In Site 2 "soldiers can act with impunity" it was reported in a study undertaken mid-1991 to assess the impact of violence on women.(117) Author of the report, Miles Schuman, refers to an "UNBRO source (who) said that most of the perpetrators of domestic violence were men who had returned from or would return to the battlefield to fight."(118) This report also describes the alleged complicity between some of the Site 2 Administrators, police and brothel owners in organized prostitution.(119) Schuman states that the police and Justice Committees are afraid to prosecute soldiers "even in the unlikely event that they are arrested by the police in cases of domestic violence."(120) A report in The Nation (March 1990) on the continuing high level of violence in "closed" border camp states that according to the "UNBRO field office here (Aranyaprathet), an average of five Cambodians were killed and 88 wounded per month in 1989...in incidents involving military weapons."(121) The same report states relief officials "said house searches have been successful in
seizing large numbers of firearms, and hand grenades at Site B" the Sihanouk camp (122).

In November 1988, a front page article in the Washington Post reported on the concerns of the relief community and on "roving teams of armed bandits terrorizing camp residents"; bandits was the euphemism used for soldiers gone AWOL.(123) Some three years later Site 2 was still making the headlines. On the night of 24 August 1991 a large group of invading "bandits wielded M-79 heavy machine guns, B-40 rocket launchers and AK-47 assault rifles", and carried "sophisticated multi-channel radios".(124) In this well-planned attack, which lasted almost three hours an estimated 80 intruders systematically robbed households while the petrified population scattered; 3 children were killed and 30 refugees were wounded, eight of them critically.(125)

Violence fed on the corruption which was symptomatic of the deep-rooted problems of Site 2, its relationship with the war, and the politics which nurtured it. In this entangled web the relief programme sought to identify with the victims but was reliant on Administrators whose policies and practices directly contributed to the suffering of the refugees.

Pointing to the contradictions of Site 2, Fr. Tom Dunleavy, a Maryknoll priest who had worked eight years there said:

"We've built an empire of crooks and con men...There is no process of right and wrong anymore. There are no lies just statements and consequences. To be honest and truthful is dangerous.(126)

Corruption was pervasive and undermined the relief programme's capacity to be effective. Refugees knew what was happening; as corruption flourished many came to believe that widespread abuse was acceptable, if not condoned, by the relief community. One of the many mechanisms used for the diversion of supplies included inflated numbers and phantom names, the stratagem many KP Generals had employed in the days of Lon Nol. Even though UNBRO had developed a sophisticated family-book system
which had been operating since 1986-1987, there was room for abuse, particularly in the registration of individuals and those claiming to be new arrivals. (127) In 1989, in a determined effort to roll-back corruption, UNBRO started planning the organisation of a census, a massive, complex, and risky undertaking given the population of Site 2. This involved grouping all the refugees in pre-selected areas and counting them simultaneously. Special arrangements were made for people who were not ambulatory and those left to protect houses and facilities. Co-operation of Administrators was essential since they were responsible for the direct management of the camps and had control of the "information system". A major concern was the concentration of large numbers of people in one area given the danger of shelling or provoked panic. Camp Administrators were not enthusiastic about such an exercise; reduced numbers meant less rice and a smaller gravy-train. Administrators received "admin rations" at a rate of 6% of the overall camp population for distribution as payment to those involved in administrative work and camp-management activities. (128)

A headcount in Site 2 was conducted early on 4 July, a date which was kept secret until the morning of the event; it resulted in a population figure of 140,000 rather than the previous 180,000 (129). All of the elaborate preparations appeared more than worthwhile until it transpired that an arrangement to provide an additional 14,595 rations had been agreed upon before the actual headcount. (130) The ostensible purpose of these additional rations was to help "single women", an arrangement which evolved during discussions designed to elicit Administrators' collaboration. (131) However, given the existence of an on-going social-welfare programme which included quantities of rice, above the basic ration, for families with special needs such as single-parent families, and the absence of specific criteria and monitoring mechanisms for the new 14,595 rations, there was much concern that these were destined for "absent" men. (132) It was also clear that the arrangement, whatever its intention, had a number of deficiencies and questionable coincidences in that the amount of new rations coincided with the number of soldiers.
claimed by the KP in that area. After a short period these rations were terminated much to the anger of the camp Administrators involved.(133).

Commenting on what happened a few months later Asiaweek states:

An UNBRO official maintains that the rations were genuinely arranged for widowed mothers. But he concedes: 'some of the rumours about the single-parent rations are right..' (134)

When UNBRO stopped delivery of the extra rations in October 1989, the Administrators of Site 2 refused to accept any of the rice intended for general worker distribution or for basic rations. Eventually this was resolved but the issue had proved extremely divisive and raised questions anew as to the purpose and impact of the programme. There were many who felt the "arrangement" should never have arisen and that refugees had been made to suffer as a result of decisions made by others. There was also a small number of relief workers who felt any extra rice delivered to camp should be welcomed and that allowance should be made for soldiers returning to rest and visit their families.(135)

Clearly, what the whole episode indicated was the extent to which the relief programme had slipped from its humanitarian moorings, and the fragility of the concept itself. Years of working in the Border environment, and the vague awareness of most that supplies did go to soldiers, had helped dilute the core concept of humanitarianism in everyday programme management. In some respects it showed that the means had become an end. The immediate goal of the census was to counter corruption and reduce inflated figures but this somehow over-shadowed the overall objective of providing humanitarian assistance which necessitated a separation of civilians and combatants.

The issue was also "complicated", and made all the more controversial, by the political and military events then unfolding pursuant to the breakdown of the Paris talks in August, the
Vietnamese troop withdrawal in September, and the upsurge in fighting as the CGDK partners pushed to establish their own "liberated" zones. While many camp residents were genuinely baffled, camp Administrators objected to the cut-off of the rations in terms of "sabotage"; reduced rations were seen as undermining the latest offensive then being launched in the wake of the Vietnamese departure. One high school student in Nong Samet camp in Site 2 had this to say:

UNBRO has been supporting the military for 10 years now... why are they abandoning us now, just when we are getting strong, fighting and winning some... it's like a mother who nurtures her child and then takes away the milk when the child starts to walk...(137)

The issue was finally resolved and Administrators agreed to distribute rice after UNBRO issued a statement directly to each household explaining its position and its interest in ensuring that camp supplies destined for refugees were not diverted. Although some relief workers considered that UNBRO had unfairly placed all of the responsibility for this ill-conceived plan on the Administrators it was no less clear that this mode of directly transmitting information to refugees had much merit. It was, of course, perplexing to many refugees that the UNBRO statement was seemingly critical of camp Administrators but many also expressed relief that overt efforts were now being made to curtail diversion and corruption. "Hallelujah" as one relief practitioner exclaimed: "we're finally going to work for refugees!"(138)

Regrettably, this lesson was not extended to the recently-established Site K. In July 1989, its population of some 2,000 swelled rapidly when a massive influx of approximately 10,000 converged on the camp after reportedly killing their guard to escape heavy shelling in the Phum Thmei-Kaiche area. In the confused situation which ensued, there was much hardship since the camp was barely established, the incidence of malaria was high and with heavy monsoon rains the access "road" was a 11 km glutinous track which challenged UNBRO engineers to their utmost; in the last stretch deliveries had to be winched in over the final
hill. Thus the camp did not provide the most hospitable environment to these arrivals, some of whom claimed they had been held in the jungle for 20 years. Shortly after the July arrival there were reports of night-time departures at gunpoint and the deliberate withholding of supplies in a standard "pour encourager les autres" exercise. Although protests were made to the Thai authorities, reports of removals, and disruption or mishandling of relief supplies, persisted.

Notwithstanding the difficult conditions, there was much that could have been done to staunch the haemorrhage of forced removals. UNBRO did not have a regular camp officer to assign to Site K, but was lucky in having some exceptionally dedicated and alert personnel who were quick to identify what needed to be done and forge a relationship with refugees, many of whom openly expressed their disenchantment with the Khmer Rouge. Various recommendations were made to bombard the place with messages and measures that would illustrate UNBRO's interest in the well-being of camp residents. However, notwithstanding years of Border experience, new camps, the Khmer Rouge and the vested interests of Administrations, the overall approach was the same as before namely reliance on, and acquiescence to, the structures imposed by a self-appointed Administration.

The camp Administrator, a tense chain-smoking individual, was clearly in an awkward position having to balance the demands of UNBRO with those of his superiors. He was clearly as much victim as those he was meant to control notwithstanding violations he may or may not have been responsible for. A Section Leader of the camp approached UNBRO to advise that the camp's population were fearful of being moved out, an extraordinary occurrence for a cadre at that level. A Reuter's report in September 1989, some two months after the first major influx of refugees indicated that aid officials "gave different figures for the Site K population, saying it fell from 14,000 to 8,500 in the last month."

This report was primarily concerned with the diversion of supplies which reflected a preoccupation within UNBRO at the
time. Unfortunately, the disappearance of so many did not generate the same level of sustained interest even when refugees had specifically requested protection. It was not considered possible to have an aid official full-time in the camp or to generate the kind of outcry that was so effective in the October 1991 Site 8 experience.

When refugees poured into the camp and chaos reigned this was an opportunity for UNBRO to develop and impose its own system of camp management and distribution of supplies, rather than insisting that a harried Administrator who had difficulty locating adequate workers, who were themselves busy trying to build their houses, take responsibility. As accusations and tensions mounted in the face of haphazard and poorly managed distribution one senior field official stated it was UNBRO's responsibility merely to get supplies to the camp. As these logistical problems were ironed out, Site K settled into the usual routine of Border camps. There were regular reports of clandestine removals and the usual speculation as to whether or not it was voluntary. If it were not so evil and sad such passivity would be banal. In October 1991, in the wake of events in Site 8, there were reports that the population had decreased by 30% since the previous May.

No Peace in the Killing Fields

From mid-1989, up to the signing of the Permanent Five Agreement in October 1991, Cambodians on both sides of the Border were again subjected to intensified fighting. As opposing armies sought to gain and defend territorial claims a wide swathe was turned into a "free-fire" zone with different groups alternatively claiming they had "liberated" it.

Increased offensives ensured new waves of Cambodians were sent scurrying for their lives. A new phenomenon was the necessity of Displaced Persons camps inside Cambodia. Together with reports of Khmer Rouge using tanks for the first time, 130,000 poverty-stricken peasants were estimated to be displaced "in at least nine
provinces" in August 1990. (147) By October 1990, the Khmer Rouge had "bulldozed a network of supply roads through thick jungle around the temple complex of Angkok Wat and the north-western city of Siem Reip" noted a report by an AP journalist who "was taken through guerrilla-held areas." (148)

The acquisition of territory heightened fears of refugees being forcibly relocated and the refugee programme being dragged into supporting the expansion of the war. In addition to goods being siphoned off, trained refugee personnel were also recruited to work in the so-called "liberated" zones. Some NGO's advocated cross-Border programmes but the majority, including UNBRO and ICRC, were not in favour and issued statements that they would not provide assistance to groups on the Cambodian side of the border. (149) US AID, however, was heavily involved in a cross-border "hearts and minds" campaign. A February 1991 report said guerrilla leaders, "say the United Sates has asked them to stop seizing more territory and instead consolidate their control". $20 million had been authorized, the report says, "mostly for areas of western and northern Cambodia under non-Communist control." (150)

The thrust to intensify and widen the war in the run-up to the Paris talks and the subsequent push to enlarge the "resistance" influence through battle-field gains was not universally welcomed either in or outside the refugee camps.

Within Thai political circles, and particularly within the Administration of Premier Chatichai Choonhavan, there was resistance to the lethal build-up of arms which were seen to disrupt attempts to find a political settlement. When Stephen Solarz, a significant actor in the shaping of Washington's Cambodia stance and a proponent of increased arms supplies, was visiting Asia, an editorial in a leading daily, The Nation, states that "Thai leaders pointedly warned Solarz when he was in Bangkok late last month that US arms would prolong the conflict in Kampuchea." (151) When Vice-President Quayle visited a short time later Kraisak Choonhavan, the Premier's son, and one of his
advisers who struggled hard to create the space and environment necessary for peace negotiations, openly objected to an increased flow of arms; he said, each "Cambodian party is excessively armed to the point where they could continue the war for a long time without any further aid."(152) Proponents of lethal aid insisted it was necessary both for a settlement and to combat the Khmer Rouge; they eventually did succeed in having both covert and overt aid approved.(153)

Even though Solarz is often described as an expert on Asia, it is difficult to understand the logic of providing support which strengthened the military prowess of the CGDK and undermined the PRK regime, while insisting that the policy was designed to prevent the return of the Khmer Rouge to power; Phnom Penh was the only group battling a takeover by the Khmer Rouge, a struggle which absorbed a huge proportion of the country's limited resources. Apart from the supreme irony of Washington's support for a group, that earlier US policy including the financial under-writing of Lon Nol, was designed to vanquish it is inconceivable that the House Sub-Committee Chairman on Asian and Pacific Affairs, Mr. Stephen Solarz, was unaware of the extensive collaboration between the Khmer Rouge and its ANS and KP allies.

"Thai officials", reported the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, believe that, despite its publicly expressed revulsion towards the Khmer Rouge, the US has been quietly aiding the Khmer Rouge war effort for several years. 'We would like to see a lead against the Khmer Rouge taken by the US before we close the Chinese supply route', one senior Thai official said.(154).

A report by Nate Thayer, a journalist who travelled extensively with the resistance, particularly the KP, and had intimate knowledge of their operations, referred to KP sources who "say the United States has been providing the guerrilla group with high-resolution satellite photographs of Western Cambodia, training its fighters in the use of sophisticated anti-tank weapons
and giving other valuable assistance." (156) Evidence of battlefield co-operation which would undoubtedly have meant the sharing of information fed by the US, was confirmed by various reports emanating in January and February 1990. These referred to close collaboration and co-ordination in terms of both strategic and political manoeuvres. Philip Smucker reported:

...a week of interviews with Khmer Rouge and non-communist commanders revealed their close collaboration on the battlefield south of Ta Pho and north of Sisophon, a strategic government stronghold. (156)

Even though Prince Sihanouk rejected claims of collaboration, he nonetheless admitted that on the field of battle, in "certain places at certain times it happens that the ANS units and Khmer Rouge units fight side by side against a common enemy". (157) A short while later in April 1990 in a speech made to honour the Buddhist New Year, he called on the Khmer Rouge to take Phnom Penh; in the speech monitored by Agence France Presse, Sihanouk said "to really end this war, the Khmer Rouge must penetrate all the way to Phnom Penh and there you have the end of this aggressive war in Cambodia." (158)

Meanwhile, back on the Border, refugees who had high hopes before the Paris talks, and the upsurge in fighting, of going home found themselves instead hemmed in by new uncertainties as the possibility of peace and repatriation receded. A number of refugees, however, decided to risk the journey home on their own and attempted to leave Site 2 even before the departure of the Vietnamese troops; "apparently fed up with waiting for peace", some 3,000 to 5,000 "left site 2 for the treacherous walk across the border to Cambodia" noted a report at the time. (159) However when the KPNLF became aware of these night-time departures exit routes were reportedly blocked. (160) In September 1989, a small group of refugees circulated a petition requesting their relocation, together with other refugees who did not wish to participate in the war or to be associated with any of the factions, to a neutral camp. The terminology of "neutral camp" was
employed to make the distinction between a camp free of military and political control and Khao-i-Dang which was automatically associated, in the minds of many, with resettlement to a third country which was no longer an option for the vast majority of refugees languishing in Indochina.(161)

All of the CGDK partners, either the Khmer Rouge or their non-communist allies, were freaked at the idea of reduced numbers and particularly when this involved refugees voting with their feet. Captive refugees were seen as political capital and much propaganda effort was devoted to instilling in people the notion that life in Cambodia was not an attractive option. As explained by Beat Schweitzer, head of the ICRC sub-Delegation in Aranyaprathet at a gathering of relief agencies on repatriation in October 1989, Site 2 Camp Administrators had refused to accept "that a video they were shown that included crowded streets and traffic jams was actually taken in Phnom Penh."(162) They were unable and unwilling to acknowledge that it was a bustling, active city.

The non-existence of a neutral camp or place where the Border population could be treated as refugees was an issue of such long-standing and of such sensitivity that it was only rarely dusted-off and its merits tentatively articulated. It was clear to many that the inability of refugees to exert their rights and return home when many of them wanted to do so was a gross injustice and a major determinant in the resistance's ability to wage war.

In January 1990, while visiting Thailand and one of the Border camps, EC Commissioner Abel Matutes called for the establishment of a neutral camp. A non-political camp should be available said Mr Matutes for, "(Cambodian) people who feel they are not involved in any of the parties in conflict".(163) A short while later on the eve of a trip to Europe, and shortly after another round of inconclusive Jakarta talks, Thai Premier Choonhavan announced his support for a neutral camp. According to the Interior Minister Banharn Silaparcha the "Premier said most of the displaced
persons have been forced against their will to live under the control of the Cambodian resistance groups". (164)

Such proposals were widely welcomed within the relief community although there were many who doubted its eventuality. (165) Predictably, the CGDK was not enthusiastic and claimed such a camp "would only strengthen the bargaining power of Phnom Penh"; the KPNLF indicated "a neutral camp is not necessary for the time being because we are already under the United Nations and Thai authorities". (166) The Thai military, who have always had their own interests along the Border, including alleged logging and gem-mining deals with the KR, were not in favour of neutral camps either. (167) Neither was the US Embassy overly enthusiastic. As Steve Erlanger put it "Washington has little desire to see the faltering non-Communist guerrilla factions damaged further by the loss of the camps". (168) A Western diplomat was noted to have said "the closing of Site 2 would be a disaster" for the KPNLF. (169) The US Ambassador, Daniel O'Donohue apparently voiced concern about the possible budget implications even though it would be no less expensive to house people in a neutral camp. (170)

The refugees never did get their neutral camp. Thai politics is such that the influence of the military cannot be ignored. In February 1991 Prime Minister Chatichai was overthrown in a coup d'etat ending the first democratically elected government in many years.

The situation of the refugees did not improve even though HCR was designated as the Agency responsible for their safe repatriation. UNBRO suffered a series of financial crises which resulted in many programmes being squeezed. As with each money crunch debate centred on what constituted "essential services". Of course, water, shelter and food were essential although rice rations were cut in May 1991 from 3.4kg to 3kgs per week. (171) However, no less essential was the need for education and the network, or safety-net, of social services developed for the thousands of children and young people born
into the dehumanising and artificial environment of the Border camps. The violent and oppressive sub-culture which had taken hold in Site 2 had resulted in some 40 deaths in the first 3 months of 1991. (172)

A minority perspective argued that the relief community should have resisted cut-backs and argued instead that lack of adequate funding for basic services was an added incentive to convince donors to allow the people they wanted held on the border to go home. Surely the most obvious way of solving a budget crisis was to allow refugees who did not want to be held in a dangerous war zone, nor see their children grow more alienated and marginalised, to return home, and bringing this reality to bear on the donors primarily responsible for their plight?

However, prevailing wisdom held that nothing could be done pending the outcome of the Permanent Five negotiations which, as time has shown, has failed to acknowledge the necessity of action on crimes committed against humanity or the implicit dangers of "rolling out the red carpet" for the Khmer Rouge return to Phnom Penh.

Refugees and relief workers have both long been aware of their role in the tragedy and cynical politics which sentenced all Cambodians to yet more years of hard labour and work in the killing fields even after the Khmer Rouge had been routed and effectively defeated in 1979.

Since then Cambodians on both sides of the Border have seen their hopes and homes destroyed as a new generation of children were used as cannon fodder in a war fought to return their oppressors to power.

Words will never be adequate to record the agony that Cambodia and its people have endured. Theirs is one of the most cruel histories of the twentieth century. There is no forseeable end to this suffering because future generations will continue to bear the scars of a society decimated and cauterised by years of tyranny.
For the relief community it must surely prove a sobering experience if it takes the time to reflect on what is meant by humanitarianism and the strange nature of our compassion that allows us to bandage the wounded but impels us to avert our eyes from the misuse of our ministrations that makes the wound to fester.
VII A HUMANITARIAN CONCLUSION?

Morality cannot be legislated but behaviour can be regulated
Martin Luther King, 1963

Early November 1991 as this conclusion is being written the Permanent Five Agreement has been signed in Paris and Prince Sihanouk will soon return to Phnom Penh. There is much hope that peace will evolve and open the way for a new era in Cambodia. There is also much hope that the people on the Border will finally escape their bamboo cages. With the prospect of "going home" so tantalizingly close it is difficult to imagine what refugees are feeling. What do children imagine a daem tnaught, the ubiquitous sugar-palm tree that outlines every Cambodian horizon, looks like? How do they envisage a place called "home" they have never seen?

Home is a concept dear to many, an image suffused with warm memories of happy days, but for Cambodians all such memories are tinged with sadness, a sadness that also makes them fear for the future. Crystal-gazing is neither helpful nor necessary; the return of the Khmer Rouge will inevitably complicate the realization of a peace that is sure-footed and secure. There may be some who take solace in the words of a smiling Khieu Samphan who, a short time before his Site 8 co-workers were abruptly removed, said the KR "programme will be (to) let bygones be bygones. We have to heal the wounds of our nation."(1) But not many will find these words reassuring; there are few who are not fearful for the future however much they wish Cambodia well.(2) One of the dangers is that Cambodia will again be forgotten as new scenes of sorrow absorb our attention and Year Zero recedes from memory.

No less probable is that the relief community will likewise move on to its next "emergency", albeit with some backward glances, as reminiscing of the laughter and the pain dulls the latter. There are many awkward and busy days yet before this happens which will no doubt leave little time for genuine reflection. Speaking
early in 1990, when it was still difficult to discern any "light at the end of the tunnel", an aid official shrugged as he explained "they would do the same again in those circumstances."(3)

There are many who will agree with this assessment. Relief personnel who have had experience of other disaster-response situations tend to see the Thai-Cambodian exercise as comparably superior. Notwithstanding the very ad hoc and informal nature of these off-the-cuff assessments the general tendency still is to perceive emergencies in terms of logistics. Not to recognize the underlying nature of disasters and the evolution of events likely to occur once the disaster process has been set in motion is to invite further suffering for its victims.

Perhaps disasters are best understood as a failure of politics. Disasters need also to be understood as a failure of the development process, development in the sense of conquering the impediments which block the enlargement of people's choices. The differences which fuel the gap between rich and poor, and the growing number of people trapped in a hand-to-mouth existence which allows no margin of manoeuvrability between normalcy and disaster, is indicative that more, not less, catastrophic events will occur. Disasters are complex phenomena. They are symptomatic of the marginalization which results from an inequitable global order that is held in place by the nature of our interdependent world.

Relief programmes cannot of themselves solve these problems but this does not detract from the vital role humanitarianism must play in ameliorating suffering and allowing disaster victims the necessary "breathing space" to recuperate and regain their ability to survive beyond dependence on disaster relief.

For humanitarian assistance to be effective, indeed to be worthy of the name, it must remain true to its core principles. Not to do so is to jeopardise both its own survival and the lives of those it directly and indirectly affects. However, the transformation of humanitarian principles into effective relief is less straight-
forward than generally appears as evidenced by the experience of the Thai-Cambodian border operation.

Humanitarianism, the essence of which is to save lives, necessarily incorporates the concept of protection with its twin components of physical and non-material needs; the safety and dignity of the human person is no less important than food and medicine.

What the Border demonstrates is the absolute necessity of relief agencies having both a clear understanding of the constituent elements of humanitarianism and an undiluted commitment to its fundamental objectives. While such assertions will not raise any objections the history of the Border also shows that agencies are in need of a "code of conduct" to ensure that those operating under the banner of humanitarianism respect its values. In the complex world in which we live, defining appropriate action under this "banner of humanitarianism" requires informed as well as compassionate decision-making. Preoccupation with short-term goals is no excuse for ignoring long-term ramifications.

The Border camps did provide a measure of relief, and assistance was urgently required for all Cambodians when the country was re-opened to the outside world in 1979. The preponderance of attention to the Border can only be partially explained by the lack of adequate information, infrastructure, and the fear of starvation threatening to wipe out a nation. Developing mechanisms with the Phnom Penh authorities to avert famine, while simultaneously providing assistance to those on the Border, did eventually happen but with emphasis on the latter and in a begrudging manner to the former. If the relief community had not been divided within itself and had been more confident in asserting its mandate it would have been better able to resist the pressures dictating when, how and where it could provide assistance. An informed public is an important resource that should be harnessed to push forth on policies that the international community as a whole has defined and acknowledged as important.
By 1982-83 when Cambodia's harvest seasons had regained much of their potential the emergency which had provoked such a massive response in 1979 had largely subsided. There were many on the Border who needed and were entitled to refuge but those who controlled the camps were primarily interested in money-making or the accumulation of political capital. With the termination of the land-bridge exercise the relief programme should have arranged to extricate itself from the Border and provided support only to a bona fide refugee camp outside the war zone. But already the relief agencies were caught up in the "dilemma" of which they were a part even though two large organizations, ICRC and UNICEF, had withdrawn from the Border-feeding programme and HCR had declined to get involved. The 1984-85 dry season offensives which pushed the refugees inside Thailand should have been an opportunity to reassess the purpose and approach of the relief programme but there was no discernable effort to do so nor to involve HCR.

By the late '80s one of the most shocking and frightening aspects of the relief operation was the laissez-faire approach to human rights violations. No less scary was the intellectual rationalization and pragmatic reasoning which essentially set aside such issues. There was no campaign to have the Border population's rights as refugees recognized or to remove them from the control of their oppressors. Concern about abuse and corruption were periodically aired, and abusive behaviour disapproved of, but for the most part tyranny was tolerated. When pressed, no relief agency was happy with the situation, but there was a noticeable dearth of imagination in identifying and articulating the nature of the problem and what could be done about it. The "solution" for many lay in analysis which made myopic distinctions between "political" and "non-political" issues. Such distinctions were patently absurd. This ostrich-like approach hand-cuffed thinking to the point where it was almost considered blasphemous to openly query the extent to which the programme had been hijacked for the achievement of non-humanitarian goals.
In situations of abject lawlessness as existed on the Border it is but a thin line that separates harmful and helpful activities, a thin line between life-enhancing and life-threatening behaviour; not to acknowledge this is to increase the risk of abuse and unleash a chain of events over which a relief programme has little control.

It is easy to be cynical about what occurred on the Thai-Cambodian border but to fully understand what happened it is necessary to appreciate that relief practitioners were highly motivated and well-intentioned. The presence of so much suffering demanded immediate attention and was, in effect, the rationale for all action notwithstanding a certain awareness of the wider implications and ramifications of the relief programme. Missing was an analytical approach to the process of providing assistance or alternative means of doing so.

Being "parachuted" onto the Border for a relatively short period which was the experience of most relief workers, helped frame a perspective which pictured lots of women and children desperately in need of help. How could we abandon them? How could any decent human being argue with this? But abandon them we did. Not by stopping the cortège of rice trucks but by ignoring their pleas for help. Time and again people were forcibly returned to situations that for many meant certain death. Thus what is the nature of our compassion which extends to keeping tummies fed but is aloof to these self-same refugees being pushed down dangerous trails to have their limbs torn apart as they transport the death warrants of others in their portering packs?

The tyranny of the Khmer Rouge was never seriously questioned partly because of the backing they received from their powerful sponsors; to do so would have meant challenging the status quo which the relief operation, however reluctantly, was helping to maintain. Question-marks were blurred by a skewed understanding of impartiality and what was deemed "political"; not to act on issues that were inevitably controversial encouraged the tendency of sticking to safe "humanitarian" activities without considering, or being held accountable for, the consequences. To
question the basis and orientation of the relief operation was to question the cynical manipulation of refugees and relief agencies which helped maintain Border realities. The provision of assistance that helped maintain unacceptable camp conditions for a small number of Cambodians, who were then used to wage war and devastation on the majority of their compatriots denied development assistance, was not an equation that the relief community could comfortably ponder.

Yet, given the impromptu assessment of many, it would appear that not much was learned from the Border experience notwithstanding all the heartache and agonizing decision-making. For the most part, no clearly envisaged alternatives were foreseen which partly explains the relative lack of initiative and imagination in articulating or developing these.

International law is explicit in what is and is not permissible but the UN is a political organization whose members do not have equal clout; interpretation of rules and behaviour, and formation of policy, is the outcome of political decision-making that has more to do with power and protection of special interests than respect for international law. There is no separate tribunal or panel to decide the merits of contending claims other than the court of public opinion. An informed public, as has been demonstrated by the Cambodian experience, is the only assurance that Governments will pursue policies that reflect universal values; lest there be any misunderstanding on this, activist groups were instrumental in provoking a reassessment of Western government policy in the late '80s. UN officials have a noted reluctance to interact with the media; not to comment or have an opinion is the preferred course even when this means not querying action that impinges on the work of the UN and runs counter to its objectives.

The work of the UN is by its nature political. However, this reality does not in any way detract from the principles and legislation which are the result of a political process and reflect the values and standards established by the international community. Even
though it has never been applied there are few who would argue that the Genocide Convention is unimportant or that it can be set aside and renegotiated at will. The same is true for refugees. The international community has long recognized that the plight of people obliged to abandon their homes cannot be ignored. To this end it established mechanisms which are designed to provide assistance including protection. Again, no one would argue that this legislation needs to be renegotiated every time disasters provoke refugees to flee; procedures and mechanisms necessary to give effect to refugee legislation will differ but the law itself stands. Those who pledge to give effect to these principles, including relief practitioners, have an obvious duty to ensure that humanitarian principles are respected.

A primary function of the UN is the enforcement of international law which confers on the UN Secretariat an implicit responsibility to give effect to these principles and uphold established standards; UN personnel are obliged to carry out their duties independent of any government and in a non-partisan manner. On this basis alone the operational arm of the UN has certain prerogatives and responsibilities in the management of its activities and how the decisions of the UN’s policy-making machinery are implemented. General Assembly or Security Council decisions that hinder or obstruct the task of humanitarian agencies must be held up for public scrutiny and debate and the implications of such decisions made known.

No less fundamental to the work and integrity of the UN is the need to ensure respect for human rights. It is inconceivable that in circumstances where the UN is actively engaged, and shares in the responsibility for the organization and management of a situation which is in itself an abuse of fundamental rights, that the moral authority of the United Nations is not forcefully brought to bear in putting an end to violations.

In practically all instances where violations occur, Governments and others will demur and object to comment which highlights the
existence of abuse. At some point all human rights advocates must recognize that they are the voice of victims who cannot speak out; to be effective, human rights advocates must necessarily confront the abusers should "quiet diplomacy" not bring results. Not to do so is to confer by default a certain legitimacy on those wielding power however illegitimate and to condemn victims to further tyranny.(4) Of all the tragedies which have befallen the Cambodian people the "inability" of the United Nations to live up to its promise will scar the memory of all concerned for generations to come. It will stand out as one of the most tragic lost opportunities since the creation of the United Nations.

The importance of safe-guarding a humanitarian space, and nurturing the conditions which will allow it to be maintained, cannot be over-emphasized. Not to do so is to become a party to the politics of suffering. The fact that there has been much erosion, and that relief programmes are usurped for partisan purposes, ought to provoke greater not lesser commitment on the part of everyone convinced of the value of humanitarianism and to carve out the space necessary for it to operate. Power politics will not disappear. The need for humanitarianism will continue both to ameliorate the suffering of victims and to staunch the flow of events which further suffering will exacerbate.

Compassion as an expression of the desire for justice is neither a luxury nor an indulgence in a community of nations struggling to reach greater equilibrium, peace and security in a world striving for a new order. As Dag Hammarskjold would say:

the constant struggle to close the gap between aspiration and performance now, as always, makes the difference between civilization and chaos. (5)
Dr. Rieux resolved to compile this chronicle, so that he should not be one of those who hold their peace but should bear witness... so that some memorial of the injustice and outrage done to them might endure...

He knew that the tale he had to tell could not be one of a final victory. It could be only the record of what had to be done, and what assuredly would have to be done again in the never ending fight against terror and its relentless onsloughts... by all who, while unable to be saints but refusing to bow down to pestilence, strive their utmost to be healers.

Albert Camus, The Plague (1947)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Range</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3420 BC</td>
<td>Earliest archaeological evidence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC/AD</td>
<td>Indian travellers bring Hindu political and religious beliefs and Sanskrit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300 BC</td>
<td>Arrival of Buddhism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300-600</td>
<td>Part of Funan kingdom; conquered by Khmers in 6th century.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>600-900</td>
<td>Chenla Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>802</td>
<td>Identify with the concept of &quot;devaraja&quot; or god-king, the uniting of the images of divinity, royalty, and fertility (prosperity).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>802-1432</td>
<td>Angkorian Empire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1432-1863</td>
<td>Depletion of Empire. Angkor Wat attacked by the Siamese kingdom of Sukothai. Cambodian capital moved to Oudong, north of the current capital Phnom Penh. From the east it was under pressure from Vietnam. By end of the 18th century Cambodia was effectively a vassal state to both its neighbours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1863</td>
<td>Cambodia, under King Norodom, became a Protectorate of France. Treaties signed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1884</td>
<td>Another Treaty with France which effectively made Cambodia a colony.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1887</td>
<td>Cambodia incorporated into the Indo-Chinese Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>Buddhist Institute established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WW2</td>
<td>Japanese take-over and Thai annexation of Battambang.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>Sihanouk, 18 years old, crowned King.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950s</td>
<td>Rise of Cold War tensions. Leftwing groups and Communist party cadre begin organizing and cultivating a membership; nationalism is a potent issue.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sihanouk years

Elections in Cambodia

Sihanouk resigns in favour of father. Attends Bandung, first Non-Alligned Conference.

Vietnam (Second Indochina) War intensifies. Infiltration via "Ho Chi Minh" trail; Sihanouk struggles to keep Cambodia neutral. Cultural Revolution in China.

Pol Pot becomes Secretary General of Party; many flee to maquis. Diem assassinated in Saigon. Sihanouk terminates all US aid and opts for "nationalization."


Severe economic problems, corruption and rising dissent plague Cambodia. Khieu Samphan resigns from Sihanouk's Cabinet. Lon Nol becomes Prime Minister.


Tet offensive in South Vietnam


18 March Sihanouk on vacation in France overthrown in coup by Lon Nol.

23 March Sihanouk announces formation of United Front which is dominated by the Khmer Rouge.

30 April US and South Vietnamese forces invade Cambodia to attack North Vietnamese without prior knowledge of Lon Nol.
09 October  Lon Nol declares the Khmer Republic.

1971  Lon Nol suffers a significant defeat by North Vietnamese in the "Chenla II" operation. Corruption is endemic; Khmer Rouge purchase arms from Lon Nol soldiers.

1972  President Richard Nixon visits China

1973  Paris Peace Accords to end Vietnam War signed in January. Art 20 stipulates that all foreign countries "put an end to all military activities in Cambodia."

Saturation bombing of Cambodia, equivalent to five Hiroshimas, results in massive exodus from countryside and halt to farming.

Khmer Rouge step up activities against North Vietnamese who are, in principle, their allies and commence in earnest their "Democratic Revolution"; Sihanouk makes radio appeals on their behalf.

US Congress calls a halt to the bombing on 15 August.

1974  President Nixon resigns after Watergate scandal. Khmer Rouge tighten the noose on Phnom Penh as they purge the insurgency movement of ethnic and North Vietnamese.

1975  

01 January  Khmer Rouge launch major offensive. US President Ford appeals unsuccessfully to Congress for more aid to strengthen Lon Nol's "negotiating position".

17 April  Khmer Rouge take over Phnom Penh and order evacuation.

30 April  Vietnamese declare victory as they take Saigon.

May  Khmer Rouge attack Vietnamese islands and capture US ship, the "Mayaguez", which results in US bombing. Khmer Rouge consolidate control as people dispersed to work-camps and purges commence. Cambodia cut-off from the outside world.

August  Beijing pledges massive economic aid to Phnom Penh but not to Hanoi.

September  Sihanouk returns to Cambodia as nominal Head of State.
Appendix I

October  end 1975
Moscow pledges economic assistance to Vietnam.

1976
The phenomenon of refugees, the "boat people", leaving Indochina commences.

Khmer Rouge decide to accelerate their "one step" Revolution; additional evacuations and forced relocations. Purges of party members with links to Vietnam. New Constitution of "Democratic Kampuchea" announced.

02 April
Sihanouk resigns as Head of State.

1976
Mao Tse-Tung dies and "Gang of Four" arrested in China.

1977
Purges continue.

30 April
Khmer Rouge attack Vietnamese border villages.

03 May

20 June
Hun Sen flees to Vietnam.

September
Cambodia penetrates deep into Vietnam's Tay Ninh province; many civilians killed. Pol Pot visits Beijing; reveals existence of CPK (Communist Party of Kampuchea).

03 December
Chen Yoggui, Chinese Vice-Premier, visits Cambodia.

25 December
Vietnam retaliates massively to Cambodian incursions.

31 December
Democratic Kampuchea announces temporary break with Vietnam.

1978

January
China increases arms supplies to Cambodia.

February
Phnom Penh rejects Hanoi's ceasefire and negotiation proposal. Hanoi sends representatives to Beijing.

April

May
Beijing cuts back on aid to Hanoi. Brzezinski visits Beijing.
24 May Thousands of Cambodians flee to Vietnam from East Zone massacre, the bloodiest in DK's history of slaughter; the Pol Pot group is the undisputed "leader" after elimination of other factions.

June Vietnam, with Soviet Union prodding, joins COMECON.

July DK Defense Minister, Son Sen, returns from Beijing with assurances of Chinese support. Washington and Beijing meet for secret talks on normalization.

August US Senator George Mc Govern urges overthrow of DK regime through intervention by international force. UN Sub-Commission on Human Rights considers the question of genocide in Cambodia.

September Secret US-Vietnam talks at UN, New York make progress on normalization of relations.

October President Carter decides normalization with Beijing takes precedence over Hanoi.

November Deng assumes leadership of Central Committee in Beijing.

02 December Vietnam announces formation of anti-DK alliance, the National Salvation Front, headed by Heng Samrin.

15 December Normalization of US-Chinese relations announced.

25 December Heng Samrin and 120,000 Vietnamese troops push deep inside Cambodia.

1979

07 January Vietnamese and Salvation Front arrive in Phnom Penh recently abandoned by DK. In disarray, Khmer Rouge head for Thai Border. Heng Samrin declared head of the new People's Republic of Kampuchea. (PRK)

13 January ASEAN condemns Vietnamese intervention.

14 January Secret Thai-Chinese Meeting at Utapao reviews anti-Vietnamese strategy and support to Khmer Rouge. Agreement on provision of supplies via Thailand. Massive disruption in Cambodia for remainder of year as people criss-cross the country looking for relatives and former homes. Few crops are planted or harvested.
16 February
Chinese launch attack across northern Vietnamese border to deliver Hanoi a "lesson" concerning action in Cambodia. China withdraws in March.; both sides suffer heavy casualties.

February
UN Commission on Human Rights declines to pursue action on the report it requested concerning atrocities in Cambodia during DK rule.

March
Emergency Session of the UN Security Council condemns Vietnamese intervention in Cambodia.

April
As Vietnamese flush out Khmer Rouge along Border, 30,000 refugees push into Thailand. Bangkok rejects HCR offer of assistance. 1,700 "illegal immigrants" forced back across Border. 8,000 KR soldiers with 50,000 destitute civilians allowed to cross into Thailand south of Aran and march 20 miles to rejoin KR bases further south.

June
Thai push-back of 40-45,000 refugees at cliffs of mine-strewn border at Preah Vihear causes outcry and mobilizes international action. ICRC officially protests action.
A joint ICRC-UNICEF Mission visit Phnom Penh to offer assistance. Problems concerning distribution to Border and Phnom Penh discussed.

July
Hun Sen, Phnom Penh Foreign Minister appeals for help; fear of famine on the horizon. Soviet Union and Vietnam send in large amounts of rice.
Khmer Rouge officially request UNICEF for assistance and complains about assistance to Phnom Penh.

mid-1979
Much discussion in Western capitals on nature of Phnom Penh regime, its role in crisis, threat of starvation, and utter devastation of Cambodia. Reports of thousands streaming towards Thai border. Washington holds that relief could not go to Phnom Penh unless provided also to the Border. Ominous predictions and fear of famine widespread.

26 August
Oxfam representative arrives in Phnom Penh.

September
ICRC-UNICEF (Joint Mission) survey of Khmer Rouge areas provokes protest from PRK. Thailand sets out conditions and distribution of responsibilities for UN and ICRC provision of assistance.
UN General Assembly Resolution condemns Vietnam; no comment on KR atrocities and genocide.
10 September  Son Sann, former Sihanouk Prime Minister establishes the Khmer People's National Liberation Front (KPNLF).

18 September  US Credentials Committee in New York votes for DK with support of US and other Western bloc states.

24-26 September  Joint Mission receives confirmation from PRK for aid programme; Joint Mission issues press release on assistance to Phnom Penh and to Border. Hanoi objects to relief supplies to KR. Thailand insists on distribution to Border including the provision of supplies to KR.

5 October  First substantial delivery of assistance to Nong Pru, in a KR enclave south of Aran and scene of the "living skeletons" marks the beginning of the Border operation.

6 October  Oxfam concludes agreement with PRK pledging no assistance to Khmer Rouge.

10 October  Vietnamese launch attacks on Phnom Malai, KR positions south of Aran.

14 October  Joint Mission commence daily airlifts to Phnom Penh.

19 October  Scenes of destitution, and fears of large numbers of Border population dying, prompts Bangkok to reverse its position and agrees to "Open Door" policy.

24 October  UNHCR opens Sa Kaeo refugee camp; arrivals are primarily the destitute and dying from south of Aran, DK areas. (Subsequently understood the KR on brink of defeat at this point). Rosalyn Carter visits camps.

Thai Prime Minister, Kriangsak also agrees to creation of HCR "Holding Centre", Khao-i-Dang.

HCR present $1 million to help defray costs of refugee influx.

Proposal for over-land aid-programme, a "land bridge", endorsed by visiting US Congressmen; PRK objects as it fears abuse, destabilization and magnet effect.

November  UNICEF Director visits Phnom Penh to speed up aid distribution; little evidence of diversion but massive logistical problems.

12 December  Opening of land-bridge to distribute rice to interior very controversial. US discuss flying supplies to interior and talk of the right to save lives. Voice of America
broadcasts urge people to come to the Border which is strenuously objected to by Phnom Penh.

1979

An estimated 600,000 Cambodians on Border north of Aran.

Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

Both Bangkok and Washington urge HCR to become operational on the Border. (Sa Kaeo is some 40 km inside Thailand.) HCR insists camps should not act as magnet and sends representative, Mr. Zia Rizvi, to Phnom Penh to discuss voluntary repatriation. US accuses HCR of seeking to legitimize Phnom Penh government.

March

First shipment of rice seed airlifted to Phnom Penh; also included in land-bridge.

Covert night-time removal of refugees from Sa Kaeo to Border by KR cadres with Thai military assistance.

April

Phnom Penh reintroduces the "riel" as Cambodia's currency.

May

Thai-HCR discussion on modalities for "repatriation"/return to Border in daylight hours; agreed refugees had to indicate individually their wishes.

June

Sihanouk announces withdrawal from politics.

10 June

Bangkok announces details of scheme to return Sa Kaeo people to Border. Phnom Penh objects. UNICEF and ICRC in charge of relief on Border also express reservations. Eventually, some 7,000 moved from Sa Kaeo to Border.

21 June

Heng Samrin block land-bridge routes; re-opens in July.

22-23 June

Vietnamese launch an attack north of Aran and brief incursion into Thailand. About 400 refugees killed. Relocation of refugees to Border seen as reason behind VN action.

25 June

Bangkok suspends airlift of supplies to Phnom Penh; lifts the ban on 02 July.

04 July

Joint Mission express reservations about security and ability to supply food to non-combatants only south of Aran. Bangkok stresses need for aid to all camps.

30 July

Joint Mission attempts direct distribution south of Aran (KR) camps.
August

October
UN General Assembly votes to continue recognition of DK. ASEAN calls for International Conference on Kampuchea.

November
Nutrition surveys show major improvement since beginning of year in camps. Ronald Reagan elected heralding onset of "new" Cold War.

December
Good rice harvest reported from western Kampuchea. Donor's Conference in New York results in $63.6 million in pledges.

1981
January
Ronald Reagan sworn in as US President.
February
Khieu Samphan meets Sihanouk in attempt to form united front.
April
China provides arms to KP and ANS.
July

KR announce abolition of Communist Party of Kampuchea.
August
Sihanouk and Son Sann meet in Singapore to sign Accord for joint action against Phnom Penh.
September
General Assembly again votes to retain DK as Cambodia's representative.
December
UNICEF withdraws from Border.

1982
January
WFP appointed as lead Agency, or co-ordinator, of UNBRO.
June
Vietnamese Foreign Minister Co Thach proposes disengagement plan on visit to Bangkok.
22 June
Sihanouk, Samphan and Sann join together in formation of CGDK (Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea). Both Son Sann and Sihanouk privately claim they did so under pressure giving rise to many claims that it was neither a coalition, a government, it was not democratic and could not claim to be representative of the Kampuchean people.

1983
UNBRO consolidates. Monitoring much improved. Many non-governmental agencies winding down operations on Border.
KPNLF launch offensives but driven back. Heavy shelling in Border area. Nong Chan camp (KP) destroyed.
Khmer Rouge also driven back; refugees arrive in "Red Hill" and request not to be returned to KR control.

February
Non-Alligned Meeting in New Delhi: Cambodian seat remains vacant.

April
Upsurge in fighting along Border.
US provides Thailand with 155 mm howitzers.

May
Sihanouk and Samphan meet to discuss war strategy. Vietnam announces troop withdrawals.

June
Sihanouk threatens to resign.

October
KR officials represent CGDK as latter takes Cambodia's seat at UN General Assembly.

December
Heavy shelling reported along Border.

1984

January
Hun Sen discounts possibility of reconciliation with Sihanouk and Son Sann.

September
Nguyen Co Thach says VN troops will be withdrawn when support to resistance in Thailand ends.

End-1984

March 1985
Major dry-season offensive results in all Border bases being over-run. Combatants, non-combatants and refugees all pushed into Thailand.
1985

March
Hen Sen sets forth conditions for a settlement including removal of Pol Pot forces, withdrawal of Vietnamese troops, and internationally supervised elections.

March
As a result of Solarz initiative some $5 million US assistance approved for KR allies.

April
Tenth anniversary of Khmer Rouge takeover in Cambodia.

August
Vietnam announces its intention to withdraw its troops by 1990 irrespective of a political settlement.

September
Khmer Rouge announces the retirement of Pol Pot as military leader. Subsequent events indicate this is not true.

1986/
1987/
1988
Reports of human rights abuses increase. Attempts to gain access to remote Khmer Rouge camps, with focus on monitoring and medical evacuation, continues. Growing concern about psycho-social problems and non-material needs.

1987

May
Sihanouk steps down as head of CGDK for a year.

July
Vietnam and Indonesia, representing ASEAN, call for talks amongst all Kampuchean parties.

December
Hun Sen and Sihanouk meet in Paris for unprecedented talks which prove inconclusive but mark launch of a roller-coaster quest for peace.

April
WFP withdraws as lead Agency from UNBRO. UNDP acts as official link between the Border Relief Operation and UN.

1988

January
Sihanouk and Hun Sen meet in Paris for the second time.

April
Cut-off of supplies to Huay Chan, a KR-controlled camp in northern border area.
May  
Hanoi announces it will withdraw half of its forces by end of year

July  
Khmer Rouge begin removal of Ta Luan residents.

July  
Sihanouk resigns saying Khmer Rouge are attacking and killing his forces.

25-28 July  
At JIM I (Jakarta Informal Meeting, "Cocktail" Party Talks) at Bogor in Indonesia, CGDK and PRK meet for the first time.

November  
Sihanouk and Hun Sen meet for third round of talks. Heavy shelling in Ta Luan Border area kills many refugees.

December  
China announces it will halt all aid when VN withdraw. Vietnam commences pull-out of 50,000 troops. Khmer Rouge burn hospital in O'Trcao on Christmas Day.

1989

January  
Hanoi officials visit Beijing to discuss troop withdrawal and assistance to Khmer Rouge. Hun Sen in surprise visit to Thailand at the invitation of Premier Chatichai Choonhavan. Edward Shevardnadze, Foreign Minister of the USSR, visits China; this is the highest-level official to visit in 30 years. The situation in Cambodia is an important item of discussion.

February  
CGDK proposes a four-party interim government and UN force to supervise Vietnamese withdrawal. Second Round of Jakarta Talks with each side accusing the other of blocking the negotiating process. Hun Sen objects to the return of Pol Pot and top KR hierarchy.

April  
Hanoi announces all its troops will be withdrawn by September.

May  
PRK remolds its flag and begins using the name "Cambodia". Chinese-Soviet Summit overshadowed by Tiananmen Square events. There is no apparent agreement on Cambodia.

June  
Tiananmen Square massacre provokes wide condemnation and concern but is not of major consequence in Chinese foreign relations.
July

10,000 refugees break away from Khmer Rouge and flood into the new Site K camp

August

19 nations convene in Paris and send a UN fact-finding mission to Cambodia. Talks break down over the future of the KR; Hun Sen opposes Sihanouk's Chinese and Western-backed proposal for their inclusion.

21 September

Vietnamese troop withdrawal commences; initially withdrawal greeted with much scepticism but by end of year generally accepted.

30 September

KP launch offensive and seize Thmar Pouk near Thai border. Reports of US AID providing support to "liberated" zones. A pattern of seizing, trying to hold, and reseizing strips of territory near to border commences. Upsurge in fighting results in new refugees fleeing to frontier and many Cambodians displaced internally.

1990

Crackdown on liberalization in Phnom Pehn and scale-back of Soviet and former East-bloc aid fuels fear of economic collapse.

January

Call for neutral camps by EC officials and Thai Premier go unheeded.

February

Soviet Union proposes moratorium on foreign military aid to all factions.

The Five Permanent Members of the UN Security Council unable to agree on Plan for ceasefire and disengagement of forces but agree to seek UN role in ending the war.

Hun Sen and Sihanouk meet in Bangkok; they agree on a UN presence and a Supreme National Council (SNC).

Various calls for a ceasefire by Sihanouk and Thai Premier Chatichai go unheeded.

June

Tokyo talks produce agreement on a voluntary ceasefire. Talks boycotted by Khmer Rouge. Fighting continues.

July

Various supporters of the CGDK indicate they will no longer support the seating of the CGDK at upcoming General Assembly. The US decision to withdraw recognition surprises many and represents a major policy shift.

August

Permanent Five agree to a Framework Plan with a central role for the UN and the return of the Khmer Rouge.
September
Jakarta Talks stall on formation and composition of Supreme National Council and whether Prince Sihanouk, as Chairman, should act as an additional member.

October
UN General Assembly seats the SNC.

November-December
Proposals to strengthen the Permanent Five document amid growing fears of Khmer Rouge plans. The PRK remains the most outspoken on the threat represented by the Khmer Rouge and the issue of genocide. PRK accepts draft Permanent Five Plan but objects to dismantling its government and armed forces.

January
Reports of Khmer Rouge continuing to receive Chinese arms and lots of money from Pailin gem-mining scheme and logging deals. Gulf War diverts attention from Cambodian stalemate amid fears of deals to soften reproach of China in lieu of support for Gulf War.

February
Thai military leader General Sunthorn, known for hawkish views and links to commercial sector, topples Premier Chatichai in coup; Cambodian resistance not displeased.

May
Call for ceasefire prior to Jakarta talks welcomed and commences 1 May. Both sides accuse each other of violations. Calls for cross-border UN support to resistance-held areas generate concern within the relief community; US bilateral assistance continues.

2-4 June
Jakarta Meeting produces agreement on an expanded SNC resolving the problem of Sihanouk's extra seat. Parties agree to end external military assistance. Khmer Rouge seen to be increasingly isolated. The question of genocide and return of the KR remains outstanding. Sihanouk agrees to convene a meeting of the SNC in Pattaya Thailand.

26-26 June
Pattaya Meeting agrees to an unlimited ceasefire, continuation of the status quo until elections are held.
Appendix I

installation of the SNC in Phnom Penh, and the role of UNTAC (UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia). It is widely reported that Pol Pot was in Pattaya for the duration of the Meeting.

July

Momentum of Pattaya is carried through in additional meetings in Beijing.

August

The UN Sub-Commission on Human Rights, a group made up of independent technical experts, agrees for the first time since 1979, to take a stand on atrocities committed by the Khmer Rouge and passes a Resolution that refers to genocide.

At a further Meeting of the SNC in Pattaya all factions agree to disbanding and disarming a large proportion of their fighters. A timetable is agreed for the return of the CGDK to Phnom Penh. Prince Sihanouk and Hun Sen declare the war is over.

September

SNC represents Cambodia at the UN General Assembly. Site 8 Administration officials removed by Khmer Rouge generating much fear and loud disapproval.

18 October

Phnom Penh Government declares it is in favour of a multi-party state and disavows communism.

23 October

Signing of the Permanent Five Plan in Paris with its chief architects expressing warnings about the return of the Khmer Rouge, a reality these same architects of the CGDK and non-action on genocide have helped nurture through their support.

14 November

Prince Sihanouk ends 13 years of exile with his return to Phnom Penh shortly after the arrival of the first UNTAC troops.

17 November

Son Sen, Pol Pot's Minister of Defence returns to Phnom Penh in line with the Permanent Five Agreement.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AFP</td>
<td>Agence France Presse (news agency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANS</td>
<td>National Sihanoukist Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP</td>
<td>Associated Press (news agency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aran</td>
<td>Aranyaprathet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASEAN</td>
<td>Association of South East Asian Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATV</td>
<td>Affected Thai villages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AWOL</td>
<td>Absent Without Official Leave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCSDPT</td>
<td>Co-ordinating Committee on Services for Displaced People in Thailand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CGDK</td>
<td>Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPR</td>
<td>Coalition for Peace and Reconciliation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRS</td>
<td>Catholic Relief Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DK</td>
<td>Democratic Kampuchea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPPU</td>
<td>Displaced Persons Protection Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HCR</td>
<td>High Commissioner for Refugees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICIHI</td>
<td>Independent Commission on International Humanitarian Issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICK</td>
<td>International Conference on Kampuchea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICRC</td>
<td>International Committee of the Red Cross</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JIM</td>
<td>Jakarta Informal Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KEG</td>
<td>Kampuchean Emergency Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KID</td>
<td>Khao-i-Dang refugee camp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KPNLF/KP</td>
<td>Khmer People's National Liberation Front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KR</td>
<td>Khmer Rouge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NADK</td>
<td>National Army of Democratic Kampuchea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRK</td>
<td>People's Republic of Kampuchea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RI</td>
<td>Refuge International</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNC</td>
<td>Supreme National Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TF-80</td>
<td>Task Force 80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNBRO</td>
<td>UN Border Relief Operation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDRO</td>
<td>UN Disaster Relief Operation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>UN Children's Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VOA</td>
<td>Voice of America broadcasts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VN</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WFP</td>
<td>World Food Programme</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MAP 2
SKETCH MAP SHOWING LOCATIONS OF THAI/CAMBODIAN BORDER CAMPS SUPPORTED BY UNBRO

THAILAND

CAMBODIA


Beneficiaries of UNBRO Food Distribution – as of December 1986

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Camp</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Huay Chan</td>
<td>8,375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natrao</td>
<td>12,309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Hill</td>
<td>41,712</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site 2</td>
<td>143,711</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site 8</td>
<td>30,922</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bo Rai</td>
<td>3,438</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sok Sann</td>
<td>7,483</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ta Luan</td>
<td>4,238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>252,188</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Satellite military camps (hidden border) not shown on this map.
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The Economist, London.


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The Sunday Times, London.

The Washington Post, Washington D.C.

Time, New York.
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2. Zolberg, Aristide R; Suhrke, Astri; Aguayo, Sergio; Escape from Violence: Conflict and the Refugee Crisis in the Developing World; Oxford University Press (1989) p229


5. International Herald Tribune, 22 August 1989. In making his plea in the same article, Mr. Hocké also pointed out that more funding was required so that peace would not be "allowed to falter because of a lack of resources to support the unique role" of HCR.


7. International Herald Tribune, 21 December 1990. In the same article it was pointed out that "the world's refugees have doubled in number over the last decade" while "the agency's budget has remained frozen at about $500 million a year after adjustment for inflation."

8. The relative lack of evaluation and accountability in disaster relief is an acknowledged fact. It is often attributed to lack of resources including time even though a constant refrain amongst intended beneficiaries, relief workers, officials and decision-makers is the need for "improved co-ordination". However, recent years have witnessed a growing awareness of the need for training, analysis and research, including the relationship between disasters, respect for human rights and development, and the significance of disaster preparedness. It must also be noted that this paper is not directly concerned with organization and operational aspects of disaster relief.

9. a) "crisis" in this sense refers to the Kurds fleeing the bombardment of their villages and is not meant to imply that the underlying issues of autonomy and the necessity of freedom from persecution have since been addressed.
b) Notwithstanding an amazing amount of media interest in the multiple disasters confronting the world in the early part of 1991 it was striking the way in which relief actors (UN agencies, NGOs, Donors) generally refrained from articulating perspectives which would help explain the complex nature of disasters and the need to address root causes.

10. *International Herald Tribune*, 16 May, 1991

11. Advocacy of the use of military, or even placing relief operations under their overall command, is based on a number of assumptions and stratagems which can not be dealt with here. However, anybody with experience of disasters will rapidly point out that such events are not easily understood in numerical terms nor can victims be understood in terms of statistics. Whole families flee and sometimes they get separated. Often women must assume the role of "head of household" for the first time. Even in acute emergencies babies continue to be born! This is but one element of the social dimension of disasters. It is not the intention here to impugn the motives of John Major when he put forward various proposals at the London Summit (July 1991) in relation to disaster relief. Describing the proposal, *The Guardian* advised that Mr Major envisaged "that the new body under the command of a senior military figure... in the General Schwarzkopf mould, will absorb existing UN relief agencies...with the necessary authority to work across national boundaries." Needless to say there is much room for thought and pause here. See *The Guardian*, 14 May, 1991.

When Jim Hoagland outlined his proposal (see No.10 above) he argues that "military forces of the world's great powers....are the ideal core of a new disaster relief system" and notes further that "in the post-Cold War era there could be no better rationale for keeping a significantly sized military force with global logistic capabilities."Perhaps there is even more room for pause here. Not too surprising Third World governments have not proved very receptive to these proposals. See the *International Herald Tribune*, 16 May 1991.


14. Relief workers tend to be young. Given the nature of emergencies there tends to be a high turnover of personnel and thus poor institutional memory and carry-over of experience. Documentation, analysis and evaluation of experience is at best considered a luxury or, at the other end of the scale, escapism.
from the real work of sloshing through muddy camps and "doing" relief work; "reinvention of the wheel" could well be seen as the hallmark of disaster management.


Sadruddin Aga Khan, Co-Chairman of the Commission was formerly UN High Commissioner for Refugees. More recently he has been co-ordinator for Afghan relief and the humanitarian assistance programme in Iraq. Zia Rizvi, Secretary General of the Commission was appointed HCR's Representative in Bangkok end-1979. Previously, he was involved with the Bengali influx (10 million) to India (1971) and subsequently worked on the Afghan and Iraq relief operations.

17. In either "sudden onset" disasters such as cyclones or earthquakes, or "slow evolving" disasters such as famine due to drought speed is of the essence in saving lives. Providing assistance before people are herded into camps is a significant factor in containing the number of victims and in the length of time it takes for beneficiaries to resume lives free of dependence on relief supplies.


In the same account Kent explains how "the fact that the Helms-Kirkpatrick lobby in the United States felt that 'the Ethiopians should ask the Soviets' for famine aid in 1984 is but an extreme reflection of the difficulty of divorcing emergencies from a more abiding political context." p 80


20. ICIHI (Refugees) op. cit., p 27


22. Gordenker, Leon "Refugees in International Politics" Croom Helm, Kent (1987) p 155

24. Ibid, p 110


Note: A detailed account of this experience makes fascinating reading. It highlights the role of public interest, both for and against Hoover's position.


27. Bruce Nichols in "The Uneasy Alliance" (see no. 25 above) explores the issue; referring to the role of US-based NGOs working alongside the US military during the Second Indochina or Vietnam war, he concludes that "the US Government regarded the voluntary agencies as an integral part of the war effort in Vietnam." p. 103


29. Ibid p 402

30. Ibid p 191

31. Shue in Nichols and Loescher (eds), op. cit., p 13-16


33. Nichols "Rubberband" op. cit., p 194

34. Such an across-the board generalization is bordering on caricature even as it does represent a large portion of disaster "thinking". In every situation there is a constant struggle to implement policy to the best advantage of victims.

35. There is a certain unease with the term "moral" given its past association with dogmatic (and mostly illiberal) strictures. Here it is used in the sense of ethical and unethical behaviour relevant to both moral and political philosophy. See: Brown, Alan *Modern Political Philosophy, Theories of a Just Society*, Penguin London
36. Bernard Crick explains that "politics arises from accepting the fact of the simultaneous existence of different groups hence different interests and different traditions, within a territorial unit under a common rule." Noting, as Aristotle points out, that politics "is only one possible solution to the problem of order" Crick states that "politics represents at least some tolerance of differing truths, some recognition that government is possible, indeed best conducted, amid the open canvassing of rival interests. Politics are the public actions of free men. Freedom is the privacy of men from public actions."


38. Ibid

2. Even if there was not much time for embroidered handiwork in Khmer Rouge-controlled camps reference to Angkor Wat was always assured a ready smile, a rare commodity in the more remote camps.

3. "Cambodia", the country's current name is used in the text throughout except when citations and official designations using the name "Kampuchea" are included. Although political connotations are sometimes inferred from the use of these names, none is intended here. "Kambuja" is a Sanskrit term from the time of Hindu and Indian influence. When Pali became widespread this was transcribed as "Kampuchea"; from this came the French "Cambodge" and English "Cambodia". The capital of China is referred to as "Beijing" except when citations which use the spelling "Peking" are referred to.

4. Given the constraints inherent in a paper of this size the "Chronology" listed in Annex I supplements this historical overview.

5. Becker, Elizabeth When the War was Over, Simon Schuster, New York (1986) p 56


7. Becker op. cit. p 34

8. The bombing, continued Dudman, "was turning the countryside into a massive, dedicated and effective revolutionary base..." Quoted in Ablin and Hood op.cit., p xxviii

9. Expressing his analysis of perceptions from behind the Khmer Rouge lines, Michael Vickery notes: "During the severe US bombing of the first eight months of 1973, there was no reaction in Phnom Penh other than relief and it must have seemed to NUFK that their urban compatriots were quite willing to see the entire countryside destroyed as long as they
could enjoy a parasitical existence as US clients." Quoted in Ablin and Hood op.cit, p xxviii


11. As Ablin and Hood explain: "To a large degree, the country was run by Lon Nol, his brother, several of their cohorts, and the American Embassy." American aid in 1974 "exceeded the total Cambodian national budget for 1969"; an estimated total of $1.18 billion was provided to Lon Nol in military assistance and some $7 billion spent in bombing the country. Ablin and Hood op.cit., pp xxviii-xxxi

On the question of corruption, William Shawcross in "Sideshow" states: "As the economy became dependent on American aid and as Cambodians exercised less and less control over their own economic and political life, a sense of responsibility and caution diminished."


13. Ibid p 94

People arriving at the Border are considered by some researchers as an unrepresentative sample of Cambodia as a whole. Likewise, there has been some discussion on the level of atrocities between different zones - some were worse than others. Few will dispute, however, the widespread nature of Khmer Rouge terror and the proportion of people affected.

14. Phrase widely recounted by refugees to explain DK mores.

15. Making reference to a major speech by Pol Pot to 3,000 soldiers and cadres in Phnom Penh in 1975 Elizabeth Becker states that the speech had little to do with history "but is an accurate reflection of the myths and legends these Cambodian communists had created for themselves to survive years of obscurity and near-extinction". See Becker op.cit., p 43
Chapter II

The speech also highlights the paranoia of the Khmer Rouge, their self-delusion and ability to distort and exploit any given situation for their own propaganda purposes. Excerpts from the speech cited by Becker include:

"In our 2,000 year history, we have never before liberated our country and achieved full independence like this....Only the Cambodian nation, Cambodian people, Cambodian revolutionary army, and the Kampuchean Communist Party have managed to liberate their own country and people completely, definitively and cleanly." Referring to the 1973 Paris Accords and US bombing Pol Pot continued "...Kissinger threatened that 'if after the Paris agreement the Cambodians continue to spurn compromise and negotiations, B-52s will be sent to destroy them....'" As Becker notes, by denying the role of North Vietnamese and Chinese assistance, Pol Pot's claim of having built "a revolutionary army independently and self-reliantly into a purely Cambodian revolutionary army without hesitation or foreign support" opened the way for assertions of self-reliance and "one-step" revolution. Becker op.cit., p 44-45.

16. UN Doc. E/CN.4/SR.1510

17. The UN Commission on Human Rights is a subsidiary organ (as such mechanisms are called) of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) which is elected by, and reports to, the General Assembly. The Commission is comprised of 43 UN Member States which in effect means that it is Government representatives who decide policy and take decisions...or decide not to as is often the case. The five Permanent Members of the Security Council are always members of the Commission. The other 38 are elected on a rotating basis. Non-voting UN member states may participate in discussion or co-sponsor Resolutions.

Part of the Commission's responsibilities include investigation of human rights violations. Its record in this respect is pretty dismal. This can be partially attributed to the "ping pong" nature of human rights deliberations; the US, for example, would express concern about human rights in Cuba while the Soviet Union would draw attention to abuses in El Salvador. However, there has not been any demonstrable change in these patterns since the end of bi-polarity.

18. As Becker points out "the ASEAN countries had actively participated in the Vietnam War on the losing American side". After the withdrawal of the US "ASEAN countries acted separately,
with varying degrees of panic and fear". But by 1976 ASEAN "found a new purpose by presenting a single non-communist face to what seemed to be a communist Indochina bloc."

Becker op. cit., p 376

19. Chanda also points out that China favoured a multiplicity of smaller states on its borders and indicated this to the French at the Geneva Conference (1954). Subsequently, says Chanda, "Peking has consistently followed the policy of maintaining by all means at its disposal a fragmented Indochina free of the major powers."

Chanda op.cit. p. 127.

20. Becker notes: "By winning their wars the Indochinese communists removed the one remaining basis for even token co-operation between China and the Soviet Union..."

Becker op.cit., p 378


22. Becker op.cit. p 373

23. Referring to the turbulence which rocked political realities in the early 1970s including the Watergate scandal which put Nixon's 1972 China initiative on hold and the post-Mao power struggle in Beijing, Chanda says "China, which had counted on building its relations with the United States as a strategic counter to Moscow, was deeply concerned by the US drive for détente with the Soviet Union". However, with the arrest of the Gang of Four in late 1976, the rehabilitation of Deng with its emphasis on the modernization of the economy, and Washington's continuing apprehension about Soviet moves in Africa and the Middle East, Beijing's idea "of an international united front against Moscow and its Vietnamese friends received a new boost from President Carter's National Security Adviser, Zbigniew Brezezinski."

Chanda op.cit., p 273

24. The PRK authorities warned that "the quantity of rice available for the people is negligible". Evans and Rowley in Red Brotherhood at War state that "American officials attacked this statement as 'alarmist' but UN and Red Cross officials went to investigate the situation, and were appalled by what they found." Evans, Grant and Rowley, Kevlin, Red Brotherhood at War, Verso editions, London (1984) p 180
25. Ibid p 181

Sheldon Simon referring to UN estimates indicates that the late 1979 harvest "only produced one-fifth of what the country grew in normal times."

26. Evans and Rowley, op.cit., p 185


Evans and Rowley write that "Despite statements to the contrary by the Red Cross and UNICEF, the Americans insisted that the PRK was deliberately blocking the aid effort...(and)...claimed that the Vietnamese were withholding food from the population in order to starve them into submission..."
Evans and Rowley op.cit., p 184


30. When queried about the diversion of aid Sir Robert Jackson replied:

"In terms of the Vietnamese army living in say, Kampuchea, we have never had one complaint from anywhere nor have any of our people. There's been all these allegations; governments come to us and say, 'our intelligence sources indicate this' - always in very general terms. We've said 'Look, for heaven's sake, will you give us the time, date and place and we'll follow through'. We've never had one response when we've asked that question."
Vickery also quotes Heder in reference to the effect of various changes throughout 1980 in rural life; according to Heder the PRK in effect encouraged "...the emergence of an economically privileged and powerful upper stratum of the peasantry..." As Vickery points out this is at variance with the view that rice cultivation was geared to benefit the Vietnamese. Vickery op.cit., p. 224

32. Ibid p 37

33. ICRC offered assistance in February and was joined by UNICEF in May. However, it was not until June that a joint delegation (2 people) was able to visit Phnom Penh to ascertain the dimension of the problem. A long negotiation process then ensued concerned primarily with the modalities of relief assistance and monitoring. These discussions were clouded by questions of legitimacy, the continuing reality of the Khmer Rouge and the support it enjoyed from Western, ASEAN and Chinese states.

34. People arrived at the Border to escape the fighting, because they were unsure of what was happening or what were the intentions of the Heng Samrin regime. A great number were looking for family members. Some came because they were destitute and needed food and medicine. Many of those under the continuing control of the Khmer Rouge had no choice and were rounded up as the DK fled westwards. Some Cambodians arrived at the Border to do trade, to join the Khmer Serei, or to seek resettlement. Some were lured by VOA (Khmer-language Voice of America) broadcasts. Inevitably for many there were mixed motives in moving to the Border as they awoke from the nightmare of the Pol Pot years.

35. Phnom Penh was justified in its concerns and was undoubtedly influenced by Hanoi's experience during the Vietnam War. In 1967 Michael Novak, on behalf of the National Catholic Reporter, conducted a study which concluded that "Catholic Relief Services had diverted up to half of the food aid it had been given for aiding Vietnamese refugees to the Popular Forces, the South Vietnamese militia." When this was reported in the *New York Times*, this was denied by CRS. Nichols advises that "CRS quietly discontinued the programme in early 1968". Quoted in Nichols, Bruce J "Uneasy Alliance", op. cit., p 102
Jørgen Lissner who quotes from the doctoral dissertation of Robert R. Sullivan (The Politics of Altruism: a Study of the partnership between the United States government and American Voluntary Relief Agencies..." John Hopkins University, Baltimore 1968) recalls how "Sulliven reports the efforts of the American agency CARE to secure the endorsement of General Maxwell Taylor for its involvement in Vietnam. The draft letter of endorsement by CARE to General Taylor included a number of openly pro-war statements such as this one: 'The CARE relief campaign offers a very American way to take a personal part in the winning of this war.'" Lissner advises that "General Taylor did give his endorsement but was wise enough to tone down the militant language suggested by CARE."


In the latter part of 1979 in the midst of anti-Phnom Pehn rhetoric and fears of famine, Leo Cherne, head of IRC (International Rescue Committee, a large US relief agency) and, according to William Shawcross "a supporter of the American war in Indochina" is quoted thus: "We will place the heaviest focus of our efforts in stimulating the formation of an outcry of the human conscience aimed at Hanoi, which determines what happens in Phnom Penh..." Shawcross, "Quality of Mercy", op.cit., p199-200.

36. Deng also advised Sary to adapt to changed circumstances: "For the moment don't put the communist party in the foreground; rather, emphasize patriotism, nationalism, and democracy." Chanda op.cit., p 348

37. Ibid p 349

This "shadowy agreement" as Shawcross describes it included the provision of oil to Thailand "at favourable prices" and "even more importantly, decreased their aid to the Thai Communist Party". Shawcross "Quality of Mercy" op.cit., p. 261

38. Chanda op.cit., p 349

39. At the Credentials Committee the Congolese delegate proposed that the seat be left vacant. But it would take another eleven years before this materialized. In the meantime Cambodia was subjected to an embargo. Japan and the EC cut off economic assistance to Vietnam; the US brought pressure to bear on the UN to restrict its loans.
40. According to Shawcross and others HCR adopted a policy of least resistance and "made no effective protest"; notwithstanding many forced removals "it was HCR policy not to protest officially to the Thai authorities", although the High Commissioner Poul Hartling repeated his offer of assistance. Shawcross "Quality of Mercy", op. cit. pp 84-85

During the visit of Kurt Waldheim in May the Thai authorities spelt out their conditions pointing out that the problem was not of their making. Reports in the Thai media complained of Western hypocrisy and preoccupation with the boat-people who then numbered approximately 350,000 in camps throughout Indochina.

Prime Minister Kriangsak complained to Shawcross that the Cambodian refugees "were conceived by US policies during the 1970-1975 war and were delivered by Vietnam. Why should they be left on our doorstep?"
Shawcross, "Quality of Mercy", op.cit., p 88

41. ICRC protested but both HCR - specifically mandated to protect refugees - and the US embassy remained silent. The US embassy later explained that it feared undermining Kriangsak who was under pressure from the Thai military. To many HCR staff the disaster proved "that the policy of trying not to offend the Thais had failed."
Shawcross, "Quality of Mercy", op.cit., p 91-92

42. Thailand was not alone in these concerns even if motivation sometimes differed. The Sino-Thai understanding concluded early 1979 constituted the bulk of material support to the Khmer Rouge but was evidently not in itself adequate. During the crisis in the Autumn of 1979 the Swedish Ambassador Christophe Oeberg who explained later that his concerns "were both humanitarian and political" arranged for Joint Mission officials to meet with DK representatives; Oeberg explained that "thousands of ordinary people in Khmer Rouge areas were starving and would soon pour into Thailand" where they were in danger of being pushed back. It is not clear why such logic did not extend to support for relief assistance which would allow the Cambodians to distance themselves from their captors.
Shawcross "Quality of Mercy" op.cit., p 127-128

43. Ibid p 136
45. As noted by Shawcross the Thai military emphasized "that although the Khmer Rouge could survive military attack they might not survive starvation...(and)...recommended that they be allowed sanctuary in Thailand."
Shawcross, "Quality of Mercy" op.cit., p 172

46. Evans and Rowley op.cit., p 221


48. The original concept of the land bridge is credited to Robert Ashe, a young relief official who had worked with Cambodian refugees from the mid-70s and Kong Sileah, the Cambodian military commander of Nong Chan, a camp at that time distinguished by the absence of warlordism and corruption. Together, they devised a system which facilitated quick distribution and rapid turnaround of farmers and their ox carts and bicycles. Says Shawcross: "Perhaps nowhere in the world were so many oxcarts with their oxen and their drivers gathered together at one time." By early 1980 "10,000 were coming each week from the interior to pick up rice." Undoubtedly an important success in getting rice distributed directly and rapidly to those in need, the fact that the land bridge was initially championed by three conservative American politicians, and largely financed by the US Government, added to Phnom Penh's fears.
Shawcross, "Quality of Mercy", op. cit., pp 221-231

49. Ibid.

50. The most well-known camps included Mak Mun, Nong Chan and Nong Samet. Since 1975 small groups of Cambodians, in addition to refugees, had existed on the Border. They were primarily interested in smuggling although they were also seen as "Khmer Serei" or anti-communist Khmer guerrillas. With the massive influx of refugees in 1979 money-making initiatives expanded rapidly...and remained a major preoccupation at this part of the Border. Nong Chan was the only camp which attempted a
semblance of order and separated civilians from soldiers and individuals carrying weapons.

51. The World Food Programme (WFP) made deliveries direct to the Thai army. This food was intended for refugees in the far northern and southern sectors which were mountainous and not covered by the Joint Mission. As noted by Shawcross, "the Royal Thai Army had a discreet relationship with the World Food Programme which simply delivered food to army warehouses for disposal as the army wished." According to Shawcross, who makes reference to internal WFP correspondence, WFP and UN officials "were well aware that the food was used by the Thai army to feed either the Khmer Rouge and other resistance groups..."
Shawcross, "Quality of Mercy", op.cit., p 229

Supplies were also provided by WFP for "Affected Thai Villages" known as the ATV programme; this acronym was often explained to newcomers as "Affluent Thai Veterans". Corruption was rife and fed petty theft and violence. As recorded by Shawcross, a "lot of rice was freely distributed to the ordinary people for whom it was intended. But a lot was also being sold to them by corrupt warlords. Some found its way back into the Thai wholesale market, and a part of this was even sold a second time around to the World Food Programme which had just purchased it."
Shawcross, "Quality of Mercy", op cit., p 233

52. Nong Pru, Tap Prik and Khao Din were among the better known settlements.

53. Shawcross "Quality of Mercy " op.cit., p 136

54. Since WFP was already handing over supplies to the Thai military it was generally perceived as being ambivalent in relation to the Khmer Rouge-feeding issue; when requested by the Joint Mission in October 1979 and January 1980 to stop unilateral deliveries (fearing that these would jeopardize relations with Phnom Penh) WFP persisted at Thailand's request. In February 1980 WFP allowed Thai military to use its trucks to move refugees from Khao-i-Dang to Ban Sangae on the Border, an incident which Mason and Brown say "highlighted WFP's passive attitude towards control and accountability."
Mason and Brown, op.cit., p 142

Concerning the problem of diversion of supplies and corruption in general a December 1979 survey in Khmer Serei camps found that
"49% of all rice delivered was taken straight to the military section."
Mason and Brown, op.cit., p 67

Shawcross writes that by the Spring of 1980 education and medical programmes were working well "but organizations still had no control over the feeding..."; he states further that aid officials were well aware "from at least 1980, that a considerable amount of supplies - at least 30% in some camps - went directly to Khmer Rouge troops"
Shawcross "Quality of Mercy" op.cit p 342

55. Since many of the relief workers tended to see Washington's interest in the Border as primarily "political" and geared to weakening the Phnom Penh regime this was an interesting if deplorable accusation on the part of the US. At the time ICRC was facing a number of problems in Phnom Penh where the government remained suspicious and unco-operative. In June "a Joint Mission proposal to the Heng Samrin government for improved distribution and transportation inside Kampuchea was rejected."
Mason and Brown op.cit., p 148

56. Shawcross, "Quality of Mercy", op.cit., p 157

Many UNICEF officials were equally concerned. In April, its Border chief Ulf Kristofferson noted "as we are without doubt operating outside our mandates by providing relief to Khmer Rouge concentrations basically consisting of fighting forces, the policy of distributing relief for humanitarian reasons has to be taken up at a central level."
Shawcross, "Quality of Mercy", op cit., p 343

57. Explaining why the State Department preferred the involvement of the Joint Mission a senior official said:
"Because the problem became a political one, we wanted international organizations who were both in Phnom Pehn and the border to feed in the Khmer Rouge camps. We wanted the situation to be treated as a whole. We wanted ICRC and UNICEF to do the feeding because we didn't want it to be a US effort. We couldn't let WFP do it because it would seem as if the Joint Mission was abandoning it." Emphasis added.
Both citations quoted in Mason and Brown, op.cit., p 159

58. UNICEF resumed feeding after a series of "surveys". These were described as being "far more useful for justifying policy than
determining it, and UNICEF was prepared to begin justifying its resumption of aid to the Khmer Rouge."
Mason and Brown, op.cit., p 162

Throughout this battle of wills the Americans "did not use their influence to try to effect any change in Thai policy." Shawcross, "Quality of Mercy", op.cit., p. 345.

The Australians were equally helpful and suggested "that the Thai government 'might not be very receptive' to arguments unless similar safeguards against aiding the military were enforced inside Cambodia".
Ibid p. 347

59. Mason and Brown, op.cit., p 167

60. UNICEF's frustration was compounded by the realization that its efforts were duplicated by secret night deliveries which it traced to WFP supplies given to the Thai army for "affected Thai villages". (Within the relief community the ATV programme was often described as the "key" to the Border.) Throughout August UNICEF was also disturbed to find that YWAM (Youth With a Mission) CRS and World Relief made unauthorized shipments to Tap Prik and Khao Din which were seen as undermining UNICEF's attempts to enforce a monitoring regimen.

61. Resettlement opportunities were only available to refugees who entered KID prior to 24 January 1980. However, as the number of "clandestine" refugees increased, this policy was occasionally relaxed and various categories ("illegals", ration-card holders etc) came to denote when refugees arrived and who could apply for resettlement.

62. Khao-i-Dang just north of Aran, five miles inside Thailand and approximately 20-30 miles from the Khmer Serei Border camps, had a large proportion of middle-class and urbanized people.

In Sa Kaeo the population was predominantly rural, poor villagers taken by the Khmer Rouge out of Cambodia. Although HCR was in charge, a large number of KR cadres and soldiers "policed" the camp. The atmosphere was described as "menacing". Commenting on Phak Lim, a KR official and his cadres, an HCR field officer reported to his Bangkok office that they "have attempted to control the Khmer by physical punishments, methods of terror, intimidation and controlling all camp services and food distribution
system. Colonel Lim and his men have been promoting the Khmer people in Sa Kaeo to return to Cambodia against their will."
Quoted in Shawcross, "Quality of Mercy" op.cit., p 309

63. This position, which was central to ten years of Border history, never stopped Thailand and others complaining about the refugees being a "burden".

64. In September 1991, after years of torturous negotiation to find a solution for the Boat People encamped around Indochina, HCR decided to stop its returnee-incentive scheme for Vietnamese in Hong Kong and other camps; UNHCR Regional Director, Mr. Jamshid Anvar reported that "the $360 payments introduced as an incentive for boat people to return...were actually encouraging departures."
The Irish Times, 24 September 1991

65. In February 1980, HCR's Regional Representative, Mr. Zia Rizvi visited both Hanoi and Phnom Penh much to the annoyance of Sir Robert Jackson, who as head of the overall relief operation, was doing a tightrope act in trying to maintain a balance between the interests of various parties.

66. Nayan Chanda's article also reported: "Thanks to food assistance filtering through the international organizations and arms supplies from China, Khmer Rouge forces are both in better shape and better armed than last year. Any arrangement for massive repatriation to Kampuchea would not only put that many people back under Heng Samrin control but would also hamper guerrilla resistance."

67. Ibid.

68. ICRC formally disassociated itself from the scheme and indicated to the Thai Foreign Ministry that it had "...reservations as to whether conditions currently prevailing within Kampuchea are such that safety and physical integrity of those wishing voluntarily to return to their homes can be considered adequate and as to whether they will be able to reach their villages."
This last point of course was crucial.
Quoted in Shawcross, "Quality of Mercy " op.cit., p 315
The voluntary nature of the programme was always difficult to ascertain given intimidation and rumours. In Sa Kaeo, the Khmer Rouge had a tune "pour encourager les autres":
Those who go back first will sleep on cots
Those who go back second will sleep on mats
Those who go back third will sleep in the mud
And those who go back last will sleep under the ground.
Shawcross, "Quality of Mercy", op.cit., p 316

69. Evans and Rowley op.cit., p 234

70. HCR denied that there was a connection but on 15 June, Hun Sen the PRK's Foreign Minister sent a message to Mr. Poul Hartling HCR's High Commissioner. Hun Sen expressed concern about the proposed "...so called 'voluntary repatriation' of Kampuchean refugees..."; the statement pointed out that "this voluntary repatriation" is simply an attempt to introduce into Kampuchean territory armed bands of the Pol Pot-Ieng Sary and Sereika clique, supplied and trained in Thailand...". The message also requested Hartling "to give your representative in Bangkok the necessary instructions to put an end to the participation of the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees in such an undertaking."
Quoted in Greve, "Between Tiger, Crocodile " op cit., p 278

71. Quoted in Shawcross, "Quality of Mercy" op.cit., p 321

72. On its part, the US Embassy conveniently forgot that HCR had always insisted that assistance should be "solution oriented", that all issues and inputs were "interdependent" (even if HCR tended to forget this itself) and HCR's reluctance at the end of 1979 stemmed partly from Washington's concept of "safe haven".

73. Quoted in Shawcross, "Quality of Mercy" op.cit., p 230

74. As Chang Pao-Min explains, Beijing was also anxious to have an international "umbrella": "In internationalizing the Kampuchean issue and insisting on a role for the United Nations in the Kampuchean conflict, China apparently sought to generate a degree of pressure on Vietnam which she herself was unable to exert..."
Chapter II

75. Rowley and Evans op.cit., p 215

76. Chanda op.cit., p378

77. Ibid

78. Quoted in Chanda, op.cit., p 379

79. According to Chanda, who interviewed Sihanouk at the time, the Prince solved his dilemma (of withdrawing from public life or working for a solution without viable support) "by announcing his readiness to join the Khmer Rouge and then setting conditions that would make such an alliance impossible."
Chanda, op. cit., p 385

80. Chang, op.cit., p 128

Chanda states that the ASEAN draft acknowledged "the legitimate concerns of neighbouring states of Kampuchea (i.e. Vietnam) that it should not in any way become a threat or be used by any state for subversion or armed aggression against them." This draft, he says "reflected an ASEAN consensus that...a weakened Vietnam and restoration of the pro-Chinese Khmer Rouge would seriously upset the regional balance." Thus, the ASEAN draft "sought a Vietnamese withdrawal from Cambodia to be followed by the disarming of all the Khmers and institution of an interim and administration to hold a free election."
Chanda op.cit., p. 387

81. Chanda op.cit., p 388

82. Quoted in Chanda op.cit., p 389

In the same interview, the ASEAN diplomat recalled with bitterness Washington's duplicity; noting how Haig and Holdridge walked out of the General Assembly as Ieng Sary, the DK Foreign Minister rose to speak, he said "That bit of theatrics made the front page of The New York Times..." while at the same time the US was pressuring ASEAN to fall into line with China.
Ibid p 388

Nayan Chanda's account of Deng's "American Nursemaids", as he describes it, makes lurid if depressing reading.
83. Both the Sihanoukists and KPNLF (Khmer People's National Liberation Front) headed by Son Sann, later claimed that it was more a question of arm twisting than coaxing; Son Sann's house in Bangkok had both its electricity and water supply cut off. Chanda also reports that ASEAN and the United States made it clear "that they could give assistance only to a legal government like the DK and not to a guerrilla movement"!
Both citations from Chanda op.cit., p 391

84. In an internal draft briefing paper prepared in 1985 by a young intern UNBRO was described as "a fully operational relief machine" created "in a pioneering attempt to bring coherence to the diverse, often disjointed humanitarian response" in the Border area.
1. In ratifying the Genocide Convention the DK was ahead of the US which finally got round to doing so in November 1988.

2. It needs to be noted that all along the Border in areas denied access to health care, environmental conditions, lack of safe water, and the drug-resistant falciparum strain of malaria prevalent in the jungle, were major killers. Children denied access to immunization were particularly vulnerable.

3. A report (issued September 1991) by the New York-based human rights group Asia Watch states that Cambodia has "the highest percentage of physically disabled inhabitants of any country in the world....the highest percentage of mine amputees of any country...." "These grim statistics" says the report "mean that the Cambodian war may be the first in history in which land mines have gained more victims than any other weapon."


Tony Jackson actually says there were 85 evacuations between 1982 and 1984 which may well be correct, but my own recollection is between 1982 and 1986.

5. Shawcross, "Quality of Mercy", op.cit., p 354

A report first published in 1982 by a Finnish Enquiry Commission largely composed of academics and public officials states: "Without extensive support areas suitable for cultivation, the organization of resistance by the Khmer Rouge came to be based largely on international food and arms supplied by China."


6. Shawcross, "Quality of Mercy", op.cit., p 408

7. ICRC's chief delegate in Thailand at the time said: "I do not think any of us should be overproud of the level of protection we are able to provide to the population which remains stuck between armies, in an area interspread with armed groups as well as armed black-marketeers, in forests riddled with mines. Every civilian
casualty evacuated to the ICRC surgical hospital represents a failure of protection."
Quoted in Shawcross, "Quality of Mercy" op cit., p 407-408.

8. Commenting mid-1983 on the overall achievements and the obstacles which still worked against the realization of humanitarian objectives, Sir Robert Jackson the Secretary General's Special Representative said:
"The fundamental objective of preserving the lives of the people has been achieved, but much more could have been achieved if the humanitarian operations had not been subjected continuously to conflicting political pressures. Like the victims of Yalta, the Cambodians are victims of international politics beyond their control. Inside the country, the aid has been far less than the scale of destruction - the dreadful bombing and the murderous civil war - warranted. As for the refugees, one can take only partial satisfaction in resettlement - repatriation to a peaceful Cambodia would have been far better. As for the border, it's sheer, unending, bloody tragedy." Jackson, a great humanitarian, was genuinely saddened and perplexed with the political manoeuvering which obstructed relief assistance. Says Shawcross, he "tended to place the principal blame on the superpower confrontation to which the Cambodians were prey." Other than subtle negotiation Jackson did not see a way out of the maze of these "conflicting political pressures."
Quoted in Shawcross, "Quality of Mercy", op.cit., p. 414-415.


10. When Michel Moussalli, UNHCR's Director of Protection visited Thailand towards the end of 1979 he was astonished to find that "in spite of UNHCR's restraint before and after the forced repatriation of the 40,000" over the cliffs of Preah Vihear the previous June other agencies, including ICRC, had more active roles than HCR. Shawcross, "Quality of Mercy", op.cit., p. 175.


12. Ibid p. 55
13. Ibid

14. In 1982 at the 37th Session of the General Assembly, in an explanation of the vote Ireland stated that it was "...in agreement with the general thrust of the resolution"; Ramses Amer advises that the Irish representative ended his explanation with a reference to the fact that "Ireland abstained in the vote as it had done in previous years when the questions raised in connection with presentation of the report of the Credentials Committee." (A/37/PV. 48 p. 832)

At the same session the representative of the Netherlands explained:
"However, it should be made clear that our vote against the amendment was in no way intended as a contribution to the re-establishment of the Pol Pot regime". (A/37/PV. 45 p. 772)

At the 35th Session in 1980 the UK delegate stated: "I would simply make it clear that, in casting our vote today for wider reasons, we have no intention of contributing to the re-establishment of the authority of the Pol Pot regime, nor do we see any grounds for expecting this to happen". (A/35/PV. 35 p. 721)

At the same Session the US explained its vote as follows:
"As previously announced, the United States supported on technical grounds acceptance of the credentials of the representative of the Democratic Kampuchean authorities. When there is no superior claim, the General Assembly should seat the representative of the Government whose credentials were accepted by the previous session of the General Assembly. There is no superior claim for the Kampuchean state". (A/35/PV. 35 p. 718)

All of the foregoing citations and references from UN documents are quoted in


16. Loescher, Gil "Refugee Issues in International Relations" in Loescher, Monahan (eds) op.cit. p. 9.
17. “In the case of the Khmer, however, UNHCR deliberately held back from assisting the people stranded along the Thai-Cambodian border, where at first ICRC and UNICEF carried the main burden”. Gordenker, op.cit., p. 59.


Goodwin-Gill also states that the core elements in international refugee law "define a refugee as a person outside his or her country of origin, who is unable or unwilling to return there owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted on grounds of race, religion, nationality, social group or political opinion". p. 216.

Circumstances in which refugee status may be lost or denied include:
1) situations where individuals decide to withdraw voluntarily from the status, for example, when they return home
2) "change of circumstances" which would include the replacement of a tyrannical regime or the source of persecution
3) persons who have received asylum elsewhere or the "country of first asylum" principle
4) persons responsible for crimes against peace, war crimes, and crimes against humanity.

19. Ibid p. 30

The drafting of the Convention on Refugees and the creation of UNHCR was the outcome of the "American-led policy process of the United Nations" says Gordenker; the Convention reaffirmed the notion evident in the make-up of the IRO (International Refugee Organisation established in 1948) that "the international responsibilities for general relief and protection of refugees would be limited in both time and place". Gordenker, op.cit., p. 29

The 1967 Protocol is a separate instrument which complements the 1951 Convention; it was introduced "to extend its (the Convention's) benefits to refugees from later events in other parts of the world". ICIHI "Refugees" op.cit., p. 20

20. Gordenker, op.cit., p. 31
21. As noted by Goodwin-Gill "basic human rights derive from customary international law"; no derogation is allowed, he says "from those provisions which guarantee the right to life, or which forbid torture or inhuman treatment....The obligation of respect and protection (of basic human rights) are incumbent on states, irrespective of ratification of treaties." Goodwin-Gill, op.cit., p. 138-140.

Likewise the concept of non-refoulement is a fundamental raison d'être of HCR's existence. The term derives from the French word refouler "which means to drive back or to repel" and is different from expulsion or deportation; it is a widely accepted principle as noted by Goodwin-Gill who advises that "General Assembly resolutions dealing with the report of the High Commissioner and consistently endorsing the principle of non-refoulement have tended to be adopted by consensus". Ibid p. 69, 98.

In the case of Thailand which participates in HCR's deliberations it claims it does not violate the principle of non-refoulement which tends to indicate its acceptance of the principle. Greve, "Between Tiger, Crocodile" op.cit., p. 164.

A "Declaration on the Protection of Refugees" (1989) states "In situations not covered by the international agreements on the status and protection of refugees, asylum seekers and refugees remain under the protection of the general principles of international law derived from established custom, from the principles of humanity and of fundamental human rights as well as from the dictates of public conscience." 14th Round Table on Current Problems of International Law, Institute of Humanitarian Law, San Remo (12-16 September, 1989)


23. Macalister-Smith also states that "the Statute recognised that permanent solutions could only be achieved through the co-ordinated efforts of nations...(and) by reiterating the international character of the problems it recognized that international cooperation formed part of the solution". Macalister-Smith, Peter International Humanitarian Assistance, Disaster Relief Actions in International Law and Organisation, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, Dordrecht (1985) p. 38, 39.


27. Dr. Greve is no less precise when she writes: "A person does not become a refugee because of recognition, but is recognised because he is a refugee"; this is "a de jure recognition of a de facto situation." In other words, recognition does not make a person a refugee but merely declares that he is one.
   Greve op.cit., p. 128

28. The 1967 Protocol was partially designed to meet the inadequacies increasingly evident in the 1951 Convention.

29. Cels, Johan "Responses of European States to de facto Refugees" in Loescher, Monahan (eds) op.cit., p. 187.
   Gordenker writes that "government have rather often deliberately or quitey acceded to a fudging of the formal definition of the term refugee".
   Gordenker, Leon "Early Warning of Refugee Incidents" in Loescher, Monahan (eds) op. cit., p. 357.
   Jean Pierre Hocké while UN High Commissioner for Refugees said "...the vast majority of to-day's refugees and asylum seekers in the developing countries of the Third World do not correspond to the formal definition of a refugee provided for in the 1951 Refugee Convention".
   Hocké, Jean Pierre "Beyond Humanitarianism, The Need for Political Will to Resolve To-day's Refugee Problem" in Loescher, Monahan (eds) p. 43

30. Goodwin-Gill, op.cit., p. 20n
   David Forsythe writes "...there is now an international regime on refugees whose scope is greater than the 1951 Treaty and 1967 Protocol. Rules are derived not only from conventional law but also from General Assembly resolutions and UNHCR practice".
   Forsythe, David P "The Political Economy of UN Refugee Programmes" in Forsythe, David P (ed) The UN in the World
Chapter III


31. Goodwin-Gill, op.cit., p. 21

32. Ibid p. 217

33. Chapter I of the Statute reads:
"The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees...shall assume the function of providing international protection, under the auspices of the United Nations, to refugees who fall within the scope of the present Statute and of seeking permanent solutions for the problem of refugees..."
See Note 24 above.

Notes Greve with reference to those on the Border:
"...there is no legal basis for excluding a person from refugee status and UNHCR's mandate...as long as there is only one Kampuchean state the fact that it has two competing leaderships...does not mean that the subjects controlled by the one or the other have a different nationality."
Greve "Between Tiger, Crocodile" op.cit., p. 376.

In 1976, then High Commissioner, Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan said:
"The function of protection is mandatory for the High Commissioner...(it) constitutes a strict obligation for him, and hence he does not need, as is the case with material assistance, to receive a request from a Government before he exercises it."
Quoted in letter by UNBRO personnel to UNBRO Director, 20 October, 1987.


35. Ibid p. 105.

As WFP was considering its withdrawal from the Border (as UNBRO's lead agency) towards the end of 1987, a number of UNBRO field personnel put in writing their desire to have HCR assume its protection function on the Border. The letter states: "it is a rare day that is free of another 'incident', an act of violence, rape or intimidation that assaults the psychological well-being and dignity of the Khmer...As refugees, they have the right under international
law to seek the protection and assistance vested in the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees".

Letter from UNBRO field staff to UNBRO Director, 20 October, 1987.


37. Interior Minister Banharn Silaparcha explaining Chatichai's proposal indicated that: "The premier said most of the displaced persons have been forced against their will to live under the control of the Cambodian resistance groups..." The Nation, 07 March, 1990.

38. The Bangkok Post, 08 March, 1990


40. Ibid


42. Urquhart and Childers write of the "proliferation of phenomena which transcend national boundaries..." and how these coupled with the excessive use of resources and population growth combine "to produce the most precarious conditions our planet has ever known". They state further that "...peace and security are increasingly an indispensable complement of the resolution of the world's economic, ecological and social problems, which have themselves become security problems." Urquhart, Brian and Childers, Erskine A World in Need of Leadership: Tomorrow's United Nations, Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, Uppsala, Sweden (1990) p. 10, 21.

43. Patrnogic, Jovica, Current Problems of International Humanitarian Law, Statement of 14th Round Table, Institute of Humanitarian Law, San Remo (12-16 September, 1989) p. 2

The focus and parameters of this paper do not allow for adequate treatment of the role of ICRC which since 1979 has played an extremely important role both on a practical level in relation to its
mandate and also in pushing forwards the boundaries of protection available to Cambodians on both sides of the Thai-Cambodian frontier. It has been more outspoken than most other actors in highlighting and articulating deficiencies of the relief operation. It has also been consistent in resisting the influence of regional, East-West and partisan politics.

Other than the texts quoted, books which have been helpful in understanding the role and background of humanitarian law and principle and its institutional framework include:


44. Patrnogic also adds that the principle of humanity necessitates that those called upon to render assistance are “recognized as neutral, and, as such, protected and respected.”
   Patrnogic op.cit., p. 1


46. Ibid

47. Macalister-Smith writes:
   “Humanitarian assistance may be viewed as an adjunct to legal protection inasmuch as the status of refugees established by international instruments includes a number of rights which require appropriate material measures in order to be effective”. He adds “...at the other extreme should the very survival of refugees be at stake, emergency or other relief measures are a fundamental prerequisite in the overall scheme of protection”. Macalister-Smith “*International Humanitarian Assistance*” op.cit., p. 48.
In 1968, a UN Conference reaffirmed the need to safeguard human rights in both times of peace and war. Since this Conference, Patrnogic advises that deliberations in the UN General Assembly deals with the issue of violations and war under the title “Respect for human rights in armed conflicts” which is the angle from which international humanitarian law is now seen. Humanitarian and human rights law have much in common says Patrnogic in that they are both preoccupied with the rights and well-being of the individual.

See Patrnogvic op.cit., p 4

50. Macalister-Smith “International Humanitarian Assistance” op.cit., p. 148

51. Ibid

52. Ibid p. xi

53. Ibid p. 167

54. Forsythe “Political Economy” op.cit., p. 141

55. Ibid

56. Kent “Anatomy of Disaster Relief” op.cit., p. 81
1. Livingstone, Sir Richard, edited in translation by: Thucydides, The History of the Peloponnesian War, Oxford University Press, (1943) p. 267 Commenting on the "Melian Debate", Sir Richard Livingstone underlines its relevance to modern times. He states: "...no iniquity of modern Realpolitik is new; here is Power, acknowledging no limits except itself, denying any meaning to religion, justice, and pity - a cold cruelty, not of passion but of intellect, the nearest thing to the devil that human nature can achieve."
Livingstone op.cit., p. 266

2. Kent in Loescher and Monahan (eds) op.cit., p. 65

3. Macalister-Smith "International Humanitarian Assistance", op.cit., p. 53


Henkin also points out that "the nation ('state') is not only a political conception; it is also a fundamental legal construct with important consequences." see p. 16.

5. Henkin says:"Foreign policy is the sum of all the attitudes reflected in myriads of relationships and numberless points of contact that one nation has with others, large and small." Henkin op. cit., p. 13

6. Ibid p. 22


Note: Kegley's citation is from Michael Banks "The International Relations Discipline; Asset or liability for Conflict Resolution" in Azar, Edward E and Burton, John W (eds) *International Conflict Resolution*, Lynne Rienner, Boulder, (1986) p 13

10. Mc Sweeney in Keogh, op.cit., p 114

11. Ibid.


13. Kegley op.cit., p 175

14. Chomsky writes:
"In the United States as elsewhere foreign policy is designed and implemented by narrow groups that derive their power from domestic sources: in our form of state capitalism, from their control over the domestic economy including the militarized state sector." He continues: "Within the nation-state, the effective 'national purpose' will be articulated, by and large, by those who control the central economic institutions, while the rhetoric to disguise it is the province of the intelligentsia." Chomsky, Noam 'Human Rights' and American Foreign Policy, Spokesman, Bertrand Russell House. (1978) p10


16. Ibid p20
Mc Sweeney says:
"But this (the primary role of national interest) does not necessarily mean the acceptance of power politics as the only factor which can and should determine the relationship of nations." Mc Sweeney in Keogh, op. cit., p 114
17. Commenting on the tunnel and short-term "vision" of realism Kegley states:
"...(a) cumulative macro-process will not emerge from realist thinking that operates primarily from the parochial perspective of the immediate interests of the national unit, the state; such an orientation does not include interactional phenomena and collective consequences in its picture of reality. In contrast....an advantage of idealist theories is that they make long-term interactive effects an organizing principle, and this permits otherwise overlooked reciprocal symbioses in the relations of interdependent states to be recognized."
Kegley op.cit., p 194

18. Ibid, p 196


20. Hoffmann, Stanley op. cit., p 137


Morgenthau himself is quoted in 1985 as saying "The moral limitations upon the struggle for power on the international scene...are weaker today than they have been at any time in the history of the modern state system."
Quoted in Nichols "The Uneasy Alliance" op.cit., p 12

22. Forsythe in Nichols and Loescher op.cit., p 65

23. Winston Lord, US Ambassador to China from 1985 to 1989 writes: "Three weeks after the Beijing massacre he (Bush) sent his national security adviser, Brent Scowcroft, to confer with the perpetrators secretly. A few months later, in the wake of executions, jailings and persecution, Mr. Scowcroft returned to China to toast them publicly."

24. In the same article, William Pfaff states that the "New World Order" proposal of President Bush "...rests on the familiar
assumption that we Americans are qualified for such a role because we are not like the others." Pfaff also advises how Paul Nitze, a prominent policy-adviser to the US Government, in an address at West Point, November 1990, described the US as being "unique" in having "no territorial or ideological ambitions."!

Pfaff William "A Dose of Realpolitik in this 'New Order'

25. Shue in Nichols, Loescher, op.cit., p 14

26. ICIHI "Winning the Human Race?" op.cit., p.11

Pointing to the need to reconcile politics with morality Vaclav Havel, the playwright-President of Czechoslovakia and hero of its "velvet revolution" in 1989 is quoted as saying: "Politics require exceptionally moral people as it is exceptionally easy to besmear oneself..."

Quoted in *The Independent* (London), 19 June 1991

27. Brownlie says:

"The sovereignty and equality of states represent the basic constitutional doctrine of the law of nations, which governs a community consisting primarily of states having a uniform legal personality. If international law exists, then the dynamics of state sovereignty can be expressed in terms of law, and as states are equal and have legal personality, sovereignty is in a major aspect a relation to other states (and to organization of states) defined by law." (and to organization of states) defined by law.

Brownlie, Ian *Principles of International Public Law*

28. Macalister-Smith "*International Humanitarian Assistance*", op. cit., p 56


30. Quoted in Mische op.cit., p 394

32. Ibid.

33. Ibid.

34. As Hoffmann points out states are artificial constructs: a state "...benefits from the presumption that it is the expression of the national wish to independence". He states further "...states derive their rights from two sources. One could be called international society, the other and more fundamental, is domestic society." In other words, states enjoy rights as a consequence of their existence. Indeed it is difficult to conceive of these rights, embodied in the concept of sovereignty, without cognizance of the people for whom the state came into being.

See Hoffmann, op.cit., p 39, 57-58

35. Brownlie advises:

"The principle corollaries of the sovereignty and equality of states are: (1) a jurisdiction, prima facie exclusive, over a territory and the permanent population living there; (2) a duty of non-intervention in the area of exclusive jurisdiction of other states; and (3) the dependence of obligations arising from customary and treaties on the consent of the obligor."

Brownlie, op.cit., p 287

36. Macalister-Smith *International Humanitarian Assistance.* op.cit., p. 56

37. Former Under-Secretary General Brian Urquhart says: "The purpose of the United Nations Charter can be fully attained only by an observance of the provisions of the Treaty and by the rule of law." Much of this "impinges" on the internal rule of states.

38. Article 2 (7) reads:
"Nothing contained in the present Charter shall authorize the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state or shall require the Members to submit such matters to settlement under the present Charter; but the principle shall not prejudice the application of enforcement measures under Chapter VII."

Brownlie notes: "The relativity of the concept of the reserved domain is illustrated by the rule that a state cannot plead provisions of its own law or deficiencies in that law in answer to a claim against it for an alleged breach of its obligations under international law..."

In reference to Art 2 (7) Brownlie also states: "The provision in the Charter was intended to be flexible and non-technical."
Brownlie op.cit., p 292-293

39. Mische op. cit., p 396

40. Chomsky op. cit., p 32

41. Concerning events in the Dominican Republic Robert Klein explains:
"After the success of Fidel Castro in Cuba, the United States had become increasingly jittery about another Communist takeover in the Caribbean." Thus, notwithstanding Juan Bosch's election (with 64% of the vote) on a reformist platform in the dirt-poor Dominican Republic, his overthrow by a military junta and subsequent attempts to reinstate him, Washington was fearful that "a band of Communist conspirators was threatening to take control"; President Johnson sent in the Marines explaining on nationwide TV that "(we) 'cannot, must not and will not' permit it to happen."

End December 1979 Soviet troops went to the defence of socialism, newly sprouted in dirt-poor Afghanistan, at the "request" of Barbar Kamal who had emerged as leader after an internal power struggle of the PDPA (People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan) aggravated by unrest led by fundamental Muslim groups.
Says Henkin: "every nation resists interference in its affairs, and no nation admits that it has in fact intervened in another's affairs."
Henkin op.cit., p 141
42. Beedham, Brian "Neither Quagmire nor Empire, but Cautious Help", *International Herald Tribune*, 06 May. 1991

43. "The Organization is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its Members." Art 2 (1)

"All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purpose of the United Nations." Art 2(4)

It is not possible to summarize here opposing interpretations of the Charter in terms of Art 2 (4) and Art 51 which deals with the right of self defence. Reference can, however, be made to the *travaux préparatoires* which indicate a restrictive view to possible exceptions to Art 2(4).

Dixon op.cit., p 185

44. Brownlie op. cit., p 291

45. Ibid p 292

Brownlie states:
"Today one can regard responsibility as a general principle of international law, a concomitant of substantive rules and of the supposition that act and omissions may be categorized as illegal by reference to the rules establishing rights and duties."

Ibid p 433

46. Urquhart "*The UN and International Law*, op.cit., p 11


Opening the first General Assembly in 1946 Clement Atlee observed:
"...the Charter of the United Nations does not deal only with Governments and States or with politics and war, but with the simple elemental needs of human beings whatever be their race, their colour or their creed. In the Charter we re-affirm faith in fundamental rights. We see the freedom of the individual in the State as an essential complement to the freedom of the State in the world community of nations. We stress, too, that social justice and
the best possible standards of life for all are essential factors in
promoting and maintaining the peace of the world..."
Ibid p 172

48. "Some rights are not rights created by States for the benefit of
their nationals or of foreigners; namely, the right to life, the right
to liberty, and the right to own property. The community has
simply recognized the existence of these rights and States have
mutually undertaken to ensure the possibility of enjoying
them...Before these rights, nationality sinks into the background,
because they belong to the man as a human being, and are not,
accordingly, subordinate to the will of the State."
Report of the Sub-Committee of the League of Nations Committee of
Experts for the Progressive Codification of International Law cited
by Reisman in Lillich, op.cit., p 168.

49. Quoted by Reisman in Lillich op.cit., p.173

50. "Humanitarian intervention is an extraordinary remedy, an
exception to the postulates of state sovereignty and territorial
inviolability that are fundamental to the traditional theory if not
the actual practice of international law. The validity of
humanitarian intervention is not based upon the nation-state
oriented theories of international law; these theories are little more
than two centuries old. It is based upon an antinomic but equally
vigorous principle, deriving from a long tradition of natural law
and secular values: the kinship and minimum reciprocal
responsibilities of all humanity, the inability of geographical
boundaries to stem categorical moral imperatives, and ultimately
the confirmation of the sanctity of human life, without reference to
place or transient circumstance."
Reisman in Lillich, op.cit., p 168

Also "(I)nsofar as human rights deprivations giving cause for
humanitarian intervention constitute a 'threat to the peace' or 'act
of aggression', the Security Council, under Chapter VII of the
Charter, is seised with a mandatory jurisdiction."
Ibid p 175

51. Luban, David, Just War and Human Rights, Philosophy and Public
Affairs, Volume 9, Number 2 (Winter 1980) p 169

52. According to the respected Professor Newman: "crimes against
humanity are not within domestic jurisdiction"
Lillich op. cit., p 131
According to Dixon: "It seems clear that piracy, war crimes and crimes against humanity (e.g. genocide) are crimes susceptible to universal jurisdiction under customary international law."
Dixon op.cit., p 76

David Luban makes reference to Michael Walzer's just war theory: "Intervention is allowable in a nation when a national minority is seceding from it; when a foreign power has intervened in a civil war it is fighting; or when it is massacring, enslaving, or expelling large numbers of people." According to Luban this is too restrictive and makes a plea for intervention before violations reach such a toll.
Luban, David The Romance of the Nation-State, Philosophy and Public Affairs, Volume 9, Number 4 (Summer 1980) p 394

53. Quoted in Lillich op.cit., p 170

54. Ibid p 169

55. Macalister-Smith "International Humanitarian Assistance" op.cit., p 169

Says Reisman "an even more direct statement is offered by American authorities"; he quotes from Thomas and Thomas The Dominican Republic Crisis 1965 (I Carey ed. Hammarskjöld Forum, 1967) as follows:
"When a state abuses its right of sovereignty by permitting within its territory the treatment of its own nationals or foreigners in a manner violative of all universal standards of humanity, any nation may step in and exercise the right of humanitarian intervention."
Quoted by Reisman in Lillich (ed) op.cit., p 171


57. Henkin op.cit., p 269-278

58. Luban, "Just War and Human Rights" op. cit., p 172n
Or as Leo Kuper points out in relation to genocide: "It is certainly not compatible with any conception of international justice that a people should be obliged to submit to extreme oppression and to massacre in the interests of preserving 'unity' and territorial integrity".


60. Rosenfeld, Stephen S "When There is Good Cause to Meddle", International Herald Tribune, 12-13 October, 1991.
Concerning the obligations of a state to the international community Hannum quotes Judge Riphagen who stated specifically that "customary international law recognizes - in particular, since the Second World War - respect for fundamental human freedom as an interest of the international community." Hannum op. cit., p 120

Note: The term erga omnes is explained by Brownlie as "opposable to, valid against 'all the world' i.e. all other legal persons irrespective of consent on the part of those affected." Brownlie op. cit., See Glossary.

71. Kuper "Prevention" op.cit., p 180
72. Hannum op.cit., p 96-97
73. Ibid p 184
74. Frank and Rodley quoted by Kuper "Prevention" op. cit., p 83

Kuper himself refers to the UN as "an organization of the ruling classes of member states."
Ibid

76. Henkin op. cit., p 157-158
78. Ibid
79. Kuper "Prevention", op.cit., p 169


3. Personal records dated 13 December, 1988
   The chief delegate of the ICRC in Thailand is quoted as saying: "We are on the alert. We understand that there has been casualties but none have been brought in to Red Cross centres yet. There is a lot of concern about this. We are ready and willing to help but no one has been brought to us.”
   *The Nation*, 28 November, 1988

   A report by the human rights group, Asia Watch provides a detailed account of the forced relocation and shelling. Asia Watch *Khmer Rouge Abuses along the Thai-Cambodian Border*, New York, Washington (February 1989) p 13 - 17


   *The Nation*, 11 July, 1989
   *The Bangkok Post*, 24 July 1989
   Personal records, 24 July, 1989

   The same article "Return to Year Zero" by John Pilger further quotes from the Asia Watch (1991) Report "Cambodia: The Cowards' War" to explain that British soldiers "are or have been involved in training Cambodian resistance factions in the use of mines and explosives against civilians as well as military targets."


10. Ibid

11. Ibid

12. Tunsarawuth, Sinfah "29,000 Khmers face food supply cut-off" *The Nation*, 09 February, 1987
13. Mr. Kunugi said:
"If we cut the food supply, thousands of Khmer civilians including
women and children will have to suffer. We want to avoid that."
Ibid.

14. Tunsawawuth, Sinfah "UNBRO demands free access to four Khmer
Rouge camps", The Nation, 07 April, 1987

For background information it is worth noting that these four
camps were constantly fluctuating both in relation to the numbers
of people they contained and actual location which also had a
bearing on the name. Thus, of these four camps which existed in
1987 - Natrao and Huay Chan in the north, Borai and Ta Luan in
the south - none of them remained by mid-1990. Their
populations or part of them had been reassembled in two camps,
namely O'Trao in the north and Site K in the South.

15. Ibid
16. Personal records; 11 October, 1989
17. Tunsarawuth, Sinfah The Nation op.cit., 07 april, 1987
18. Ibid

21. At the 1980 session of the General Assembly Canada explained its
vote on an amendment which contested the Report of the
Credentials Committee which was in favour of seating Democratic
Kampuchea. It said "if adopted, the amendment would deprive the
representative of Democratic Kampuchea of their place in this
Assembly. On the other hand, the seating of any Member in this
Assembly carries no suggestion of endorsement of the actions or
policies of that member."
It is improbable that the Canadian authorities did not know that
the issue was the representation of Kampuchea and not, as they
seemed to imply, that the DK government should not be deprived
of "their" seat. Likewise, the amendment called for the rejection of
the credentials of the DK which did not imply approval of the PRK.
As noted earlier, the seat could have been left vacant.
Amer, Ramses, op. cit., p. 79

22. Tunsarawuth, Sinfah "Khmer Rouge agrees to free access" The
Nation, 28 September, 1987
23. Personal records, 03 August, 1987
25. Personal records, 24 February 1988
27. Ibid
28. Asiaweek 29 July 1988
30. Ibid
31. Of course, this was directly linked to the question of access but there was also a marked reluctance to acknowledge the complicated problems "working with the Khmer Rouge" presented. The issue was considered highly sensitive; any written commentary emanating from relief workers, either to record events or to provoke discussion, was considered "classified" and labelled "confidential". This was counter-productive; it had the effect of fuelling resentment and frustration and put a clamp on discussion and field perspectives that were essential to finding the most appropriate way forward. It also gave the impression of not wanting to offend the Khmer Rouge and their backers.
32. Personal records, 21 November 1988
33. Sim Son "Khmer Rouge clarification" in the letters column, The Nation, 31 October, 1988
34. Ibid
36. Ibid
37. As always, there was the rather sterile hypothesis of some Khmer Rouge being better than others or, at least, some who were less horrific than others. Obviously, there were different degrees of ruthlessness and the extent of blood-baths varied during DK rule as internal power struggles fluctuated and rivals were disposed of. But this is hardly an adequate explanation to differentiate
strategies employed in different circumstances for purposes that were ultimately defined by Mr Pol Pot.

38. Swain, Jon "Refugees hospital burnt by jittery Khmer Rouge", The Sunday Times, 15 January 1989

39. Jackson, Tony op.cit., p 22

40. On my first visit to Greenhill at the end of 1986 I was taken aback to see two ten-wheel trucks full of Cambodians clad in fatigues departing amidst lots of cheering. When querying the purpose of this transport system in a closed-camp I was taken further aback to hear that the camp Administrator should not allow this (the departure of soldiers for the front, as it transpired) in daylight and that this even happened when there were visitors around.


42. Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, "Seeking Shelter", op.cit., p.75

43. Ibid

44. The Nation, 31 May, 1987

45. The Nation, 06 May, 1987


47. Discussions with refugees and relief workers, March 1989

48. Personal records, 21 March 1989

49. The Bangkok Post, 03 May, 1989

50. The Nation, 23 July, 1989

51. Commenting on a "hectic evacuation" a report in The Nation described events thus: "The deafening sound of artillery and mortar firing erupted at about 5am and lasted until about noon, causing the refugees to race for about 800 bunkers built since the July fighting. They also headed for the base of the Ta Ngoc mountains further inside Thai territory which is a naturally well-protected shelter for the camp dwellers. A number of mortar shells landed in the compound of the deserted refugee camp but no injuries were reported...The sources said the Khmer Rouge apparently launched the strike at a
military outpost to pre-empt an expected government offensive and also to capture the two strategic hilltops of Phanom Rang and Phanom Champa..."


52. Ross, Martha "Site 2, where a New Year holiday could turn sour", *The Nation*, 08 April, 1991
Some reports indicated a death toll of 28 people; see CPR (Coalition for Peace and Reconciliation) Report, Taphraya 01 March - 27 April, 1991


54. "Son Sann seeks control over Site 2 camp", *The Nation*, 28 May, 1988

55. *The Nation*, 13 June, 1988
   *The Bangkok Post*, 17 June, 1988
   *The Nation*, 20 June, 1988

56. Jackson, op.cit., p 9

57. Ibid p 10

58. Personal records, 02 October, 1989

59. All references in this connection are related to a US-AID Memo dated 01 November 1989 and attached documentation which includes reference to the payment of Baht 1,662,960 for the said project; additional installments were subsequently made.


Sihanouk's proclamations were never easy to unravel. As outlined in the article, while warning against a KR takeover by force, his interim administration called for a "quadripartite provisional administration whose membership must be approved by all factions." This effectively gave the KR a veto.
1. The February 1987 Report of the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights which visited the Border in 1986 said the "abuses we describe seemed a virtually forbidden topic in Thailand". It adds: "Even personnel with humanitarian organizations discussed the abuses in hushed tones, fearing their possible expulsion from Thailand if they raised the issues before appropriate authorities. The local press was all but silent on the subject. And the US Embassy in Bangkok did little to break the silence, appearing all but indifferent to the abuses."


2. The Lawyers Committee 1987 Report referred to the "rigid control" which was a continuing feature of camp life. It states: "most persons interviewed, for example, reported that the camp administration issued injunctions against the residents' approaching the ICRC or other foreigners with complaints or requests for transfer to non-communist camps".

Ibid p.70

3. The Bangkok Post, 09 January 1990

4. Ibid

This diplomat is also quoted as saying: "They stay with the Khmer Rouge because the Khmer Rouge tell them two main things No.1, we fight for Prince Sihanouk and No.2, the Vietnamese are taking away our land."

5. Ibid

6. Ibid

7. Ibid

8. Newsweek, 04 September, 1989

9. The Bangkok Post, 08 July 1988

10. Ibid
Chapter VI


13. de Renzio, Joseph "Cambodians fear return of 'Om 87' "*The Bangkok Post*, 25 September, 1989


Note: The translator of the document says it is an informal translation "of a document received at the border from a Khmer Rouge defector who had been under the command of Ta Mok." An educated native speaking Khmer suggested that the document "may have been written originally in French and translated into Khmer." The translator says this translation "is as literal as would be understandable, with all the redundancies and occasional misstatements that were in the original."

16. Ibid p.16

17. Ibid p.7

18. Ibid p.8

19. Ibid p.17

20. Ibid p.18

21. Ibid p.19
22. Ellis, Stefan "Many still working the 'Killing Fields'", *The Boston Globe*, 18 October, 1987

23. Ibid

24. Ibid


27. The struggle to obtain better access to people in remote camps could also be seen as an attempt to safeguard their human rights even though the exercise sprang from the need to ensure better monitoring of inputs and was geared to this objective.

28. In other words, it is not the intention here to imply comparisons which set the record of one regime against another; no level of abuse should be tolerated and it is difficult to see how external actors can quantify the suffering endured by others. This, however, does not deny the relevance and necessity of objective analysis which documents the nature and extent of abuse.

29. Amnesty International's Report for 1987, which covers the period January to December 1986 states it was "concerned about human rights violations". It goes on to report: "Several thousand prisoners were held without trial, among them some prisoners of conscience. Amnesty International was also concerned about reports of torture, about unfair trials of political prisoners and about the death penalty." Amnesty International Report 1987, London p.239.

In 1988 Amnesty again expressed its concern about political arrests. A Summary Report on the issue said: "There are grounds for concern about the legal competence and political independence of Kampuchea's judiciary, and Amnesty International considers the PRK legal system may need to be reformed if political defendants are to receive fair trials." Amnesty also reported: "In 1987 and again this year government officials have admitted there are imperfections in the legal system and procedures, and
the Chair of the PRK National Assembly urged government bodies to deal with such deficiencies. "Amnesty International, Kampuchea, Officially Reported Political Arrests and Allegations of Torture and Arbitrary Detention, Amnesty AI Index ASA, London (April 1988)

Although political prisoners remain a concern recent years have seen a general loosening of government control and liberalization in political, economic and religious affairs; however, there was a noticeable crackdown in May 1991 when a number of high-ranking officials, reportedly intent on forming an opposition party were arrested. The death penalty has been abolished.


31. Ibid p.4

32. Ibid p.10, 6

33. Obviously it was necessary to safeguard the confidentiality of informants and victims but this is not incompatible with, for example, the publication of periodic reports showing patterns of abuse.


35. Asia Watch "Khmer Rouge Abuses along the Thai-Cambodian Border" (1989) op.cit., p.14

The area was dangerous. In line with the rest of the Border it was heavily mined. Out of approximately 2000 people left in Ta Luan, some 500 were amputees.

Ibid

36. Eng, Peter The Bangkok Post 10 November 1988

37. Ibid
Forced relocations were also reported throughout 1990. In January some 4,000 were taken out of Borai "notwithstanding the presence of UN and ICRC personnel". Mid-July 1990 approximately 60,000 were reported to have been moved out of "Ank Bal Leo, Chum Sala and Chang Gha 'hidden border' camps near to O'Trao."


Within decision-making circles there was, apparently, an over-riding concern not to offend the Khmer Rouge or to do anything that would "rock the boat" before the Jakarta or JIM I talks. However, since the Khmer Rouge were dependent upon the good will of the international community for survival and were intent on enhancing their bargaining position, while remaining obdurate, it was difficult to understand the logic of this perspective. Apart from the need to act on human rights violations irrespective of partisan or other interests, exposing the reality of the Khmer Rouge could only have been beneficial to those interested in a negotiated settlement. The fact that the Khmer Rouge were openly marching the hapless residents of Ta Luan closer to the field of battle, and were using refugees as porters to stockpile weapons, was more indicative of preparation for a military showdown than reaching a settlement through political means. Throughout the long search for a political solution, it was the Khmer Rouge who were the most intransigent and content to see the talks derailed.

No less a personage than Prince Sihanouk warned that a "new holocaust ... is becoming inevitable" making reference to the "mortal danger of the Khmer Rouge" on the eve of the Jakarta Meeting. He also said, as reported by Elizabeth Becker, that "countries supporting the Khmer Rouge dominated coalition government in Cambodia" must accept "the entire responsibility of a new holocaust of the Cambodian people." Sihanouk described the Khmer Rouge as "abominable" and said "90 percent of Cambodians whether inside or outside Cambodia hate in the highest degree Pol Pot, Ieng Sary and the Khmer Rouge". He also suggested that the Cambodian seat at the UN be left vacant "to show respect for the Cambodian people". However implausible his gyrations, there were a number of things Sihanouk did understand which included the need not to take the Khmer Rouge
at face value and that their hold on power was not omnipotent in the absence of their friends.


44. *The Bangkok Post*, 17 October, 1991


46. Ibid

47. Ibid

48. Ibid


51. Lawyers Committee for Human Rights "Seeking Shelter", op.cit., p.71

52. Ibid p.74

53. Ibid p.73

54. Personal records, 20 February, 1987

   The escapees also reported that "the captured men were dressed in the uniform of Hun Sen's forces, photographed, then lectured on the importance of reclaiming Cambodia from 'the contemptible Vietnamese aggressors'."


58. Ibid

59. Eng, Peter "Khmer Rouge's horror begins again", *The Bangkok Post*, 22 December, 1988
   Punji sticks are sharply-pointed bamboo spears. They are embedded in the ground in hidden holes; the idea is to trap or impale unsuspecting victims. Some were said to be poison-tipped and can be quite lethal.

60. Ibid

61. Magistad, Mary Kay "A Profile", op.cit., p.5

62. Ibid p.6

63. Ibid

64. Asia Watch "Violations" (1990) op. cit., p 8 -11

65. Ibid p.12

66. Eng, Peter *The Nation*, 22 December, 1988
67. Munro, Ross "Facing a Grim Reality", *Time*, 05 June, 1989

68. Eng, Peter *The Nation*, 22 December, 1988

69. *Asiaweek*, 29 July, 1988

70. Eng, Peter *The Bangkok Post*, 10 November, 1988

71. Personal records, 08 June, 1988

72. Personal records, 22 July, 1988

73. Eng, Peter *The Bangkok Post*, 10 November, 1988

74. Niland, op.cit., p 3

75. Ibid

76. Ibid


78. It may be interesting to speculate what would have happened if a large number of refugees had invaded the hospital and reported "sick" so as to receive medical care to cope with their inability to work as porters because of fear? What would have happened if UN tents had been set up to provide a modicum of protection as happened in October 1991 in O'Trao?

79. Personal records, 22 July, 1988

Any attempts to explain what Ta Luan was like has always proved impossible; no words could capture the "glum reticence" of the place. Sticking to static facts such as "few elderly", "no vegetation" (apart from tall trees that blocked the sunshine) or
"houses made of empty ammo boxes" fails to project the unreal reality of the place. As noted at the time, the "whole scene would be more believable as a movie set."

Personal records, 22 July, 1988

80. Ibid

81. Eng, Peter "Khmer Rouge's horror begins again", The Nation, 22 December, 1988

82. Lawyers Committee "Seeking Shelter", op.cit., p 72


84. Adler, Michael, "Khmer Rouge still marching to the same drum", The Bangkok Post, 08 December, 1988

85. Ibid

86. The Bangkok Post, 23 June, 1989

87. Ibid

88. Ibid

89. Ibid

Unfortunately for these refugees freedom from the Khmer Rouge was not the end of their troubles. Thai authorities had proposed that they be moved to the KR camp of Site 8 as a "compromise" after earlier indications that they might be returned to the Khmer Rouge. In response to a US State Department statement which indicated it was "strongly opposed to the return of these Cambodians to Khmer Rouge control" Lt. Gen. Naruedol Dejprodiyudh, spokesman of the Thai Supreme Command, said it was up to Thailand to decide where these refugees went; he said "I don't know who made allegations that the Khmer Rouge violated their refugees' human rights but if (it was) the State
Department then I have to ask whether State Department officials have ever visited the camps."
*The Nation*, 29 June, 1989 and 30 June, 1989

The end result was that a number of these refugees moved to Site K (KR controlled) ostensibly for family reunification reasons but also to avoid being drafted by KP authorities in Sok Sann. "It ain't no fun being a refugee" was the conclusion of all astute observers.


91. Ellis, Stephan, "Many still working the 'Killing Fields' " *Boston Sunday Globe*, 18 October, 1987


93. Personal records, 24 April, 1988
Asia Watch "Khmer Rouge Abuses" (1989) op.cit., p 21-22. As explained by Asia Watch "Khmer Rouge officials cremated the body early the next morning".
Ibid

94. Ibid
Rumours of the event had been circulating but in contrast to the killing in April refugees were reluctant to answer questions. Making reference to these deaths, Mr.Kibria said: "These executions have been brought to the attention of the Thai authorities as well as the Khmer Rouge representative, and I hope that firm action would be taken to put an end to such outrageous violations of human rights".
Ibid

As noted by Amnesty, the alleged freedoms sought were "in accordance with the Partie of Democratic Kampuchea's statements in favour of the establishment of a liberal system in Cambodia." 
Ibid
96. Tasker, Rodney "Order in the camps!", Far Eastern Economic Review, 02 November, 1989


98. Personal records, 13 October, 1989


101. Lawyers Committee "Seeking Shelter", op.cit., p 38

102. The Nation, 14 January, 1987


104. Nagorski, Tom "Wanted at Site 2: Law and Order", The Nation 09 June, 1989

105. Ibid

106. Ibid

107. Maat, Bob op.cit., p.23, 25

Mr Kim also said:
"On reflection, the international assistance which has been available to the Khmer displaced persons has principally catered to the needs of the first category, namely physical survival. The preoccupation with this major and immediate basic need has resulted in the other more subtle needs not having been more fully addressed. A socio-cultural survey conducted in Site 2 underlined the ever present sense of deprivation among the Khmer. It extends beyond its effect on physical well-being; it has taken a serious social and psychological toll. This is not apparent to the casual visitor... There is a very poignant message when we hear the Khmer say "we may smile during the day but we cry at night".
Ibid


111. Occasional forays were made to the other camps but the Unit was understaffed and preoccupied with the tide of violence in Site 2.

112. All the foregoing, on new programmes and reactions, is based on personal experience and daily log notes.

113. Johnson, Pierre Marc "Entre l'absurdité et le désespoir" Le Devoir, Quebec 15 February, 1988


115. Ibid


118. Ibid p.4

119. Ibid p.5

120. Ibid p.6

121. Poopat, Thana "UNBRO urges crackdown on Site 2 violence" The Nation, 21 March, 1990

122. Ibid


124. The Nation, 27 August, 1991

125. Ibid
CPR, Bandits Again Murder and Pillage Khmer Refugee Camp, Statement, Baltimore 26 August, 1991


127. At the initiation of the system, a headcount of all females over a certain height was conducted and a multiplier used to arrive at a figure for the total camp population. In the early '80s when rice distribution was often chaotic and soldiers openly commandeered supplies, a system of ration cards and distribution to females was initiated. This did help cut back on abuse and help ensure children were fed but as camps became more settled there was concern that a number of refugees, for example families with many males and few females, lost out. Thus the Family Book was introduced; it was definitely an improvement and helped ensure fairer and more equitable distribution. However, no system could ever be 100% satisfactory or even hope to fully meet its limited objectives; it could, not, for example, cover situations of alcoholism, family break-up or families getting into debt when books were sold and had to be repurchased.
128. Worker rations were also provided to NGO-managed programmes such as hospitals or other Khmer-managed programmes such as Education or the Khmer Women's Association.

129. Secrecy was necessary to minimize large groups of Thai villagers being paid to come in and sit for a few hours. Its purpose was also to ensure large groups of soldiers were not filtered back into the camp specifically for the occasion. Everyone disliked headcounts, relief workers as well as refugees.


131. In the long dénouement leading up to and surrounding the reversal of this decision the purported use of these rations included "single women", "widows", "social rations", "special cases", and "certain well-identified groups such as single parent families" as noted in an UNBRO statement issued 10 October 1989. (The Bangkok Post, 11 October 1989) A report in The Bangkok Post, on 12 October referred to special cases as "members of a peacekeeping force numbering about 15,000". Part of the controversy surrounding the rations arose from the secrecy in which it was shrouded. It was also considered strange that a scheme ostensibly designed for "single women" had not been envisaged for the other camps.

132. As a result of the headcount in Site 2, all residents had to be re-registered in a new Family Book together with a numbered photograph of each family. Spouses of female-headed households who were on "active duty" were marked in as "absent".

The Social Workers programme, managed by the Khmer Women's Association and supported by UNBRO, received a set quantity of supplies each month for poor or "Needy Families" identified on the basis of "identifiers" and specific events such as a new baby or a death in the family. As in any situation the social and familial determinants of poverty vary widely. This programme had an in-built monitoring system including the recording of supplies in the Family Book of the beneficiary.

133. A report in Time magazine, for example, said the KPNLF "has roughly 14,000 fighters."

Time, 09 October, 1989

The decision to suspend delivery of these rations was taken on 29 September; given the schedule of deliveries, termination of
rations was effected on 10 October which coincided with the documented removal (07 October) of UNBRO-supplied rice from Site 2 by camp administration officials. Thus for a short period admin rations were also cut. A report in *The Bangkok Post*, noted the Administrator for San Lor "said that camps would refuse the rations even though the people may starve to death unless he is promised the same amount of rations as before ". *The Bangkok Post*, 12 October, 1989.


135. Personal records, July to October 1989

136. Personal records, 12 October, 1989

137. One of many similar comments recorded by an expatriate teacher at Rithysen (Nong Samet) High School, 23 October, 1989.

138. Personal records, 15 October, 1989

139. Personal records, 24 July, 1989

140. Ibid.

Describing the endurance required to survive in Site K a colleague, who was instrumental in identifying the human implications of relief logistics, penned this profile:

"Bo is a former soldier aged 32. He lost his leg a year ago. His stump is very painful and he still has shrapnel in his stomach. He lives in Section 4. He made himself a crutch which he uses to move about. He is not married but lives with an old woman who is his adopted mother. This woman has two grandchildren living with her aged 7 and 9. When Bo goes to receive thatch, food or other 'survival' materials at the distribution field, he must walk down a hill with poorly defined paths strewn with debris (such as fallen trees) from the jungle. Several deep pools of undrained water punctuate the path. He must pass several open latrine pits which are over 15 feet deep and filled with rain water. The slippery, muddy ground around the pits makes them very hazardous for all passers-by but especially those on crutches. After reaching the base of the hill, Bo must cross a swampy field to the UN road. Then he must ford a swift running stream and ascend a steep hill. After receiving thatch (if there is any left) or
food, he must carry the materials back down the slope, over the stream, across the swamp, up the hill, and past the pits to the house. All of this is accomplished on one leg and a crutch."

Personal records, 26 June 1989

141. Personal records, 13 July, 1989

142. Personal records, 13 January, 1990
Each camp was broken down into Sections, and sub-proportioned into "ilots" with Rows being the "streets" on which houses were built.


144. Personal records, 24 July, 1989

145. Commenting on the "exodus of about 20,000 women, children, old people and wounded" in the O'Tapok area a Reuters report in March 1990 refers to a "refugee official in Aranyaprathet" who indicated:
"He believed that most of the civilians crossed the border willingly because they were members of guerrillas' families. Reports that this had been a forced march were exaggerated he said."

Reuters report by Angus MacSwan "KR return to Cambodia from secret camps", The Nation, 19 March 1990
Since it is understood that the said relief official had not spoken to any of these individuals such a comment was merely indicative of how vulnerable refugees on the Border were.

146. CPR records, 09 October, 1991

147. Erlanger, Stephen "In Cambodia, a new round of refugees adds to instability", International Herald Tribune, 10 August, 1990

148. Whitaker, Raymond The Independent, 09 October, 1990

149. The Nation, 31 August, 1989
The US and China were not alone in their support of the CGDK. A June 1989 report states: "The Thai army has repeatedly denied having allowed foreign lethal aid to flow through its territory but a senior Thai army officer in April admitted having allowed France's military aid to go through Thailand to the forces loyal to Sihanouk and Son Sann." The Nation, 23 June 1989

John Pilger quoting from the Asia Watch report "Cambodia: The Cowards' War" states British soldiers "are or have been involved in training Cambodian resistance factions in the use of mines and explosives against civilians as well as military targets".

Pilger, John "Return to Year Zero", The Guardian, 23 October, 1991

When Dan Quayle visited the Border in May 1989 relief workers wanted to meet with him but were kept at a safe distance by his "security detail" which essentially "commandeered" the arena for the brief duration of his visit; one of the proposed posters, "MORE ARMS=LESS LEGS", was not in the end considered an appropriate "photo op". Personal records, May 1989

Given the questionable distinction between lethal and non-lethal military assistance, figures were difficult to tie down. Indochina Issues says Nayan Chanda of the Far Eastern Economic Review "had broken the story about covert assistance in 1984, and people conversant with Southeast Asian Affairs were generally aware of such aid (State Department denials notwithstanding)." A figure of $35 million was referred to during the visit of Sihanouk to the US in October 1988. At the same time reports about corruption, uncovered by the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, indicated "that Thai officials and perhaps businessmen had stolen at least $3.5 million" which would appear to give credence to the large amounts allocated.

Clymer, Kenton J Assistance to the Cambodia Resistance Forces, Indochina Issues (April 1990) p.5

155. The same report refers to General Dien Dell "acting KPNLF commander" who "claimed the United States also was providing his fighters with covert lethal assistance". Dien Dell subsequently retracted his statement after the US Embassy denied his story but few were convinced.
Thayer, Nate "US said to increase role in Cambodian resistance", *The Nation*, 13 October, 1989

A November 1989 report by Jeremy Stone, President of the Federation of American Scientists, refers to the operations of the secretive "Cambodian Working Group", its links to the CIA and its role as a "conduit for all arms, matériel and financial aid to the non-Communist resistance". Stone said the US "pays $24 million a year to support the resistance and the Son Sann group is getting $150,000 a month for operating expenses alone."


Reporting on the encirclement of Phnom Penh in April 1990, Sompong Kittinaradorn said:
"In another major battle zone east of Seam Reap province in Kampong Thom, also situated on the same strategic highway, three ANS divisions (1, 5 and 15), two Khmer Rouge divisions (616 and 712) and one KPNLF division (972) swept into Staung district just north of Kampong Thom provincial seat on April 12 after having overrun the districts of Krayeas, Pralay, Nipich and Prasath Borlang northwards." *The Nation*, 22 April, 1990


158. *The Bangkok Post*, 23 April, 1990


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161. Personal records, 06 October, 1989


165. An agency which did express concern was the Washington-based Refugee International headed by Lionel Rosenblatt who had long experience of Indochina and the Border situation having working with the US Embassy on refugee matters in the early '80s. While acknowledging that neutral camps "could be a step forward" he and Sidney Jones of Asia Watch expressed concern about "potential pitfalls" particularly in relation to forced relocation. But since forced relocations were a constant threat and reality, and a major purpose of a neutral camp was to avoid such violations, it was surprising that refugee and advocacy groups did not express more support for the Thai Premier's relatively isolated position. *The Nation*, 25 March, 1990


167. *The Nation* 02 June, 1990
   *The Bangkok Post*, 14 October, 1991


169. Ibid

170. Ibid
   "Of course the Americans oppose it on political grounds but they don't have to say so" a Thai official said. Ibid.

171. Shari, Michael "Outbreak of hostility feared in Site 2 Camp", *The Nation*, 11 April, 1991
Chapter VI

172. Ibid.


4. In an interview with Newsweek in September, 1989, Khunzai, referring to the international community said that they refuse to condemn (in or in line to accept that which Khunzai is demanding" Newsweek, 04, September 1989.

1. Brunstrom, David "Khieu Samphan says 'let bygones be bygones'"
   *The Nation* 31 August, 1991

2. This is not the occasion to open a discussion on the dangers peace, as a slow and painful process, will undoubtedly face before it does break out in Cambodia. In a country that will remain traumatized for years to come by the memory and legacy of Pol Pot, the return of the Khmer Rouge with the backing of the international community, will complicate the healing process and the ability of the country to unite in forging a new beginning. There is much evidence to suspect that reports of KR stockpiles are valid and that an untrammelled Khmer Rouge will hang like the sword of Damocles over the country's nascent democracy. The argument that those responsible for genocide could not be excluded from the power-sharing arrangement (a) ignores the fundamental principles of the Genocide Convention, (b) ignores the suffering and fear the Khmer Rouge still engender, (c) ignores the fact that the inclusion of the Khmer Rouge is no guarantee of reform, and (d) ignores the reality that the Khmer Rouge are not guerrillas in the conventional sense but are dependent on their reputation and the extensive support of their patrons to survive. As any farmer will explain, you do not put the fox in charge of the chickens and to defang the beast will remove much of its harmful potential.


4. In an interview with *Newsweek* in September, 1989 Khieu Samphan, referring to the international community said "But they refuse to condemn (us) or in fact to accept that which Vietnam is demanding" *Newsweek* 04 September 1989

5. Quoted in Urquhart "A Life" op.cit., p378