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Memo. for D.H.

UNITED NATIONS
MEMORANDUM

9 February 1959

CONFIDENTIAL

1. The Secretary-General's Representative arrived in Bangkok about 3.30 p.m. on 20 January. There was no ceremony but he was received by H.R.H. Prince Wan, the Chief of Protocol and representatives of ECAFE. He held a brief press conference at the airport during which he delivered a statement, the text of which was communicated to United Nations Headquarters. The United Nations Representative was lodged at the Krawan Hotel as the guest of the Revolutionary Party of Thailand.

2. In a preliminary discussion on 20 January, Prince Wan expressed agreement with the United Nations Representative's suggestion that after the usual diplomatic courtesies in Bangkok and a preliminary contact with officials, the Representative should visit Phnom-Penh to hear the views of the Royal Government of Cambodia. It seemed appropriate that the Cambodian authorities should have an early opportunity to express their grievances. This would provide the United Nations Representative with the necessary information and would guide him as regards further activities in the area. Because of the identity of views a preliminary programme in Bangkok was established, providing for a

Courtesy call on the Acting Foreign Minister and on Field Marshal Sarit, and a Meeting at the Foreign Office with Prince Wan and other members of the Inter-Departmental Committee.

3. The principal exchange of views at this stage took place at the meeting on 21 January at the Foreign Office with the inter-Departmental Committee under Prince Wan, who had been formally appointed as the Thai Representative in dealing with the Secretary-General's Representative.

(a) At the outset of the meeting Prince Wan expressed, on behalf of Thailand, the greatest confidence in the United Nations and in the Secretary-General. He welcomed the appointment of the Secretary-General's Representative who, Prince Wan hoped, would help the parties to find a solution. The Thai authorities believed that it was very appropriate that the United Nations Representative should operate on an "informal good offices basis". They considered that more could be accomplished in this way than through a formal mission. Field Marshal Sarit had indicated (and he later confirmed this) that Thailand wished to co-operate fully with the United Nations Representative and would make available whatever facilities might be considered desirable to enable the United Nations Representative to visit and see the affected areas. Any information requested would be made available.

(b) Later Prince Wan expressed the opinion that difficulties had arisen because of suspicions on the part of the Cambodians about the intentions of Thailand. It was most desirable to remove these suspicions and this should be possible with the help of a third party and especially if that party should be the United Nations. Both Thailand and Cambodia were strong supporters of the United Nations. This should help in the process of creating a situation in which diplomatic relations could be resumed.

(c) In response the United Nations Representative said that he had no wish to go beyond what the parties themselves wished as regards his activities in the area. He hoped that the Thai authorities would understand this and would frankly let him know if they considered that he was exceeding his terms of reference. For the moment, the United Nations Representative had no definite programme because he wished first to hear fully from the parties their views about the difficulties which had arisen.

(d) Prince Wan said that the immediate problem was the resumption of diplomatic relations and for Thailand this meant relations at the ambassadorial level. Thailand was not disposed to "resume" relations at the level of chargé d'affaires because this would not be a resumption of what had existed before the break. It might have been possible before the actual severance of diplomatic relations to agree on the reciprocal establishment of chargé d'affaires for a temporary period. But efforts to do this did not succeed. Now that relations had actually been suspended, it was the Thai view that their resumption implies re-establishment in the form which existed before the break. Thailand earnestly desired full resumption of relations with Cambodia and it was the Thai understanding that Prince Sihanouk had not really intended to break off relations. In these circumstances, there was hope that relations could be restored.

(e) Thailand believed that as a condition for re-establishment Cambodia should release the 32 Thai nationals who had been arbitrarily arrested. The Cambodians had recently said that there were 31 Thais in this group. The Thai authorities had heard from the Government of Burma, who were representing Thailand in Phnom-Penh, that the 31 persons had been brought before a Cambodian court on 24 November and sentenced to two months imprisonment for illegal entry (presumably this sentence would have been completed by the end of January). Prince Wan pointed out that there were frequent crossings of the border by peoples in the frontier border, that if it wished Thailand could produce cases of the same category as the one about which the Cambodians had complained. The Thai authorities, although they could, did not wish to complicate the current situation by indulging in charges and counter charges. For this reason information about illegal entry in Thailand had not been communicated to the United Nations.

(f) If the Thai nationals now held could be released, there was no reason on the Thai side why diplomatic relations could not be resumed at the ambassadorial level. In these circumstances Thailand would promptly consider reopening the frontier. Prince Wan said, in response to questions, that there were no technical problems involved in reopening the frontier. Thailand wished to negotiate with Cambodia concerning a new frontier traffic agreement, which was designed to be uniform with the agreement existing for Malay and Laos. Negotiations concerning the agreement had been in train with Cambodia and they would be pursued once diplomatic relations had been resumed. In the meantime, this would be no obstacle to reopening the frontier.

(g) As for the Cambodian complaint about troop concentrations at the frontier, Prince Wan said that there were no regular army forces

stationed at the border. There were, however, 20 platoons (46 men each) of border constabulary established in Police posts along the 400 kilometre frontier. In reply to questions, the Thai authorities said that recently the border constabulary had been reinforced by 5 additional platoons. The constabulary had small arms but no large caliber weapons, not even light mortars and no vehicles other than bicycles. The constabulary performed police duties including prevention of smuggling and illegal entry.

(h) Concerning the Temple of Phra Vihar, Prince Wan said that there was a strong sentimental attachment in Thailand for the Temple which, however, was a ruin and was not used even as a place of pilgrimage. There had been frequent visitors to the Temple from both sides of the border. The Cambodians' claim to the Temple was based on a rough sketch of the borderline which had not conformed to the description of the border contained in the relevant treaties. The argument about ownership of the Temple and the immediately surrounding areas had existed for some time. Thai authorities had proposed that both countries should establish an international commission which, among other things, could survey and mark the border in accordance with the treaties. It might also make arrangements for restoring the Temple and in this endeavour the Thais were prepared to allow French experts to assist in the work. The Cambodians, although they complain frequently about the Temple, seem ill disposed to adopt measures which the Thai authorities consider wholly in accordance with international law. The Thais were prepared to continue negotiations about the Temple after diplomatic relations had been resumed.

4. In response to enquiries about radio and press propaganda, the Thai officials said that the campaign in Cambodia had not increased in recent days and there seemed to be a trend in the direction of tranquillity and calm. For their own part, the Thai authorities were doing everything in their power to restrain press and radio commentators.

Cambodian visit, 23-30 January 1959

5. The Secretary-General's Representative arrived in Phnom-Penh shortly after 2 p.m. on 23 January. He was received by the Foreign Minister, the Chief of Staff of the Army (General Lon-Nol), the Chief of Protocol, the Secretary-General of the Foreign Ministry, the Minister of Burma, the former Cambodian Ambassador to Thailand and the Resident Representative of the United Nations Technical Assistance Board. There was a guard of honour and the official airport was decorated with United Nations and Cambodian flags. The Representative made a statement to the Press at the airport, along the lines of the one made in Bangkok on 20 January. The United Nations party was lodged at H.R.H. Prince Sihanouk's Villa, at Government expense. In the afternoon of 23 January, the Secretary-General's Representative made a courtesy call on H.R.H. Prince Sihanouk and had an audience with His Majesty the King. On 24 January, the United Nations Representative met the Foreign Minister to discuss the programme for the visit. It was finally agreed that the visit should last until 30 January and should include an aerial tour of Cambodia from 26-29 January. The programme is attached.

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6. Also on 24 January the United Nations Representative met H.R.H. Prince Sihanouk, the Chief of Staff and the Foreign Minister to discuss various questions concerning relations between Cambodia and Thailand. This was the principal discussion of substance during the visit. Following are the main points:

(a) H.R.H. Prince Sihanouk expressed readiness to give whatever information was desired and to co-operate in whatever way he could. In response to a question from the United Nations Representative, H.R.H. Prince Sihanouk said that all Thai nationals held in Cambodia would at once be placed at the disposal of the United Nations Representative. He explained that one of the so-called 32 had been a baby which accounted for the discrepancy in figures. Three of this number had died while in detention but from natural causes, which could be attested to by the Minister of Burma and by a doctor of the World Health Organization. There was no doubt that the 32 and other Thais had entered Cambodia illegally. Ordinarily, the Cambodians were inclined to close their eyes to these irregularities but in times when relations with Thailand were strained, and the frontier was closed, a different situation was created and the arrests became necessary. In the South, for example, Thai fishermen were clearly guilty of poaching in Cambodian territorial waters. Other incidents involved carrying arms, cutting wood and stealing rice. All detainees would now be released, however, to the United Nations Representative without conditions. They could be transported at once to the frontier and handed over to Thai authorities. The necessary arrangements could be made through the Burmese Minister.

(b) As for the resumption of diplomatic relations, H.R.H. Prince Sihanouk willingly agreed to the United Nations Representative's suggestion that the former ambassadors should return to their posts as soon as possible. This would avoid lengthy formalities and would create a better atmosphere for renewed relations. H.R.H. Prince Sihanouk explained some of the provocations and irritations which had led to the rupture of relations. He was particularly annoyed by the unjust Press and Radio criticisms against him in Thailand. This involved interference in Cambodian domestic affairs.

(c) For this reason H.R.H. Prince Sihanouk was most grateful for the Secretary-General's letter of 13 January, which urged both parties to keep at a minimum their official public pronouncements on matters of dispute in the hope that the Press and Radio would respond moderately. H.R.H. Prince Sihanouk referred to past examples of Press attack on him. He readily agreed though that in the current situation the future was more important than the past. He accepted the United Nations Representative's position that he had not been sent to judge or arbitrate past facts but rather to assist the parties in restoring normalcy in their relations.

(d) H.R.H. Prince Sihanouk and the Chief of Staff referred to Thai military activity at the frontier. They acknowledged that the military reinforcements may have been withdrawn once the United Nations Representative was appointed. They were concerned, however, about the training of refugee Cambodians in Thailand; these were being prepared to infiltrate into Cambodia. The Chief of Staff gave the location of the guerilla

training camps at Phnom Ainek (north of Kg Kleang) and Phnom Phoung Seung (north of Choam Kean).

(e) Concerning the Temple at Preah Vihear, H.R.H. Prince Sihanouk explained at length the history of the dispute. He and the Foreign Minister described the course of negotiations in August 1958. They were glad to hear that Prince Wan was anxious that negotiations should be continued, once diplomatic relations had been resumed. The Foreign Minister expressed the hope that unresolved differences of Preah Vihear would not block negotiations on other subjects like the linking of the railways, the control of epidemics, the regulation of trade and commerce. The Cambodians said that they were quite prepared to have the Preah Vihear question decided by the International Court of Justice. But they were most anxious that this and other frontier questions could be settled so that possibility of incidents with Thailand would be removed.

(f) H.R.H. Prince Sihanouk referred to Thai accusations that he was too friendly with Communist China. He explained Cambodia's adherence to strict neutrality. He denied charges about Communist infiltration through Cambodia, which had no common frontier, as had Laos, with Communist China. He pointed out that French and United States officers serving with the Cambodian Army could attest to the fact that there were no military advisers from Communist China. Besides there were already in Thailand over 3 million Chinese, who could be a real threat to that country.

(g) In response to a question from the United Nations Representative, H.R.H. Prince Sihanouk said that Cambodia attached great importance to the question of Preah Vihear because of the principle involved. The Temple area had clearly been awarded to Cambodia by the 1946 Treaty. Thailand had forced the Cambodian guards (civilian) to quit the area. This illegal seizure of Cambodian territory could not be allowed without protest because Thailand had other claims which they might seek to achieve through the same means. Thai public opinion, moreover, had been artificially excited about Preah Vihear. In the same way, the demonstrations organized against the Cambodian Embassy had been inspired by Thai Government officials. H.R.H. Prince Sihanouk emphasized, however, that these Cambodian grievances should not be a cause for continuing bad relations.

7. After this discussion the United Nations Representative arranged with the Minister of Burma for conducting the Thai nationals to the frontier. Messages were sent by the Representative to Prince Wan and the Secretary-General informing them about developments. On 29 January, after the tour of Cambodia, the United Nations Representative met the Foreign Minister to discuss the details of releasing the Thai nationals. The Foreign Minister raised some related questions concerning Cambodians held in Thailand. He hoped that these (fourteen) would now be released by way of reciprocity. He also hoped that, pending negotiations, the Thai flag would be removed from Preah Vihear and that the military guard be withdrawn. He and the United Nations Representative then drafted a brief joint communique concerning the resumption of diplomatic relations and the return of the old ambassadors on 20 February. The delay was occasioned by the absence of the Cambodian Ambassador in Indonesia in connexion with the visit there of Prince Sihanouk.

Return to Bangkok on 30 January

8. On 30 January, the United Nations Representative discussed with Prince Wan the joint communique and brought to his attention the other questions which had been raised by the Cambodian Foreign Minister on 29 January. Details concerning the detained Cambodians were transmitted. Prince Wan undertook to raise all these matters with the appropriate authorities. On 31 January, Prince Wan informed the United Nations Representative that the joint communique was satisfactory. He said that the other questions would be considered by the Thai authorities. The United Nations Representative expressed the hope that Thailand would be able to make some concession in response to the co-operation shown by Cambodia. He hoped too that the Press would deal calmly with the whole question, especially the release of Thai nationals. On 2 February, Prince Wan stated that 7 a.m. would be better than 11 a.m. for the release of the communique. He also said that the freeing of Cambodians was under consideration as were the questions of relaxing the precautionary measures at the frontier. Later in the day, by arrangement, the Indian Ambassador was handed a letter from the United Nations Representative to the Cambodian Foreign Minister, which was to be transmitted by Indian courier. Confirmation was required concerning the exact time for releasing the communique.

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9. On 3 February, the United Nations Representative visited the Temple at Phra Viharn (programme attached). He found that a Thai flag was flying at the highest point and that the area was heavily guarded by Thai police, who were equipped with small arms and a few jeeps. He was shown the lines of access from Cambodia and from Thailand. The so-called "civilian guard", which Prince Wan had mentioned, was something of a misnomer in that the Thai police were as well armed as an infantry rifleman.

10. On 4 February, the United Nations Representative met Prince Wan to complete arrangements for the joint communique and press conference, one for Prince Wan and one for the United Nations Representative (the latter at ECAFE Headquarters). Since final confirmation had not yet been received from Phnom-Penh, a message seeking it was sent through the UNTAB Representative there.

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11. On 5 February the United Nations Representative visited Aranya Pradet and other military installations (programme attached). He was informed that there had been no reinforcements of the frontier by Thai military. In the evening he received confirmation from Phnom-Penh about the release of the joint communique. During the day he had raised with Ambassador Khoman the question of Cambodian prisoners.

12. On 6 February the joint communique was issued and press conferences were held by Prince Wan at the Foreign Ministry and by the United Nations Representative at ECAFE Headquarters. Ambassador Khoman informed the United Nations Representative that the 14 Cambodians would be released soon. On 7 February the press dealt with the result of the mission in a friendly way. Statements were factually reported and the atmosphere seemed greatly improved. The Foreign Minister of Cambodia was informed about the release of the Cambodian nationals held in Thailand. On 8 February the Thai press continued to discuss developments in a constructive way. There were helpful statements about the release of Cambodians and about forthcoming negotiations on other matters.

13. On 9 February the United Nations Representative had a further talk with Prince Wan about the release of Cambodians and about the possibility of further concessions on Thailand's part. The United Nations Representative emphasized that Thailand's standing in international circles would be enhanced if it showed forbearance in this regard. Prince Wan acknowledged this but referred to domestic difficulties. He believed nevertheless that the Cambodians would be released, the frontier opened on 20 February, and negotiations resumed shortly thereafter on other questions.

14. By 10 February the United Nations Representative believed that he had done as much as he could for the moment to bring about a better atmosphere between the two countries. He intended to remain in Thailand until 21 February, that is, until the two ambassadors had returned to their posts. He doubted whether he should remain longer, although Ambassador Khoman had suggested that this might be desirable. (Khoman suggested that the United Nations Representative might help with the resumed negotiations and that in any event his continued presence was beneficial.) There might be disadvantages in becoming too much involved in the future development of relations between the two countries and the preferable course would be to adhere to the more limited role of helping to bring about a resumption of diplomatic relations.