

WASEDA UNIVERSITY

Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies

Ph.D. Dissertation

**Revisiting Cambodia-US Relations From the Lens of
Norodom Sihanouk and Lon Nol: the Portraits of
Leadership**

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4019S005-2

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my profound gratitude to my supervisor, Professor Shinohara Hatsue of the Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies at Waseda University. She consistently and patiently guided me in the right direction in my research. I also wish to extend my sincere gratitude to my committee members, Professor Lee Jong Won, Professor Hayase Shinzo, and Professor Yamada Mitsuru for offering their constructive advice to furnish my manuscript.

I would also like to thank the Japanese Government (MEXT) Scholarship for granting me the financial support and the Haraguchi Memorial Asia Research Fund for providing funds necessitate for conducting my research and field trips for data accumulation. Without the MEXT scholarship and the Haraguchi Memorial Asia Research Fund, the dissertation would not have been successfully accomplished.

Most importantly, I must express my gratitude to my parents, and all my family members. They are the very source of inspiration for me to start researching this topic. The appreciation is also extended to my dear friends and colleagues. Without their unfailing support and continuous encouragement throughout these years and through the process of researching and writing this dissertation, this accomplishment would not have been possible. Finally, I owed this special thanks to my good friend, William Kilgore for taking his valuable time to check and comment on my first article for publication.

CHHUN Lynamata

September 2022

PREFACE

It started with a bedtime story; the one that I grew up listening to every night sometimes with dread that the story would once again turn into reality –a living nightmare like what my parents had once stumbled upon. Sometimes I would let my imagination run wild and helplessly pray that miracle could happen so that the story ended up with a plot twisted happy ending; that my grandparents would still be alive somewhere and one day they might reunite with us. However, my parents made it clear that is impossible because they can still recall the scenes when their parents were taken away to be ‘re-educated’ or killed like it was just yesterday.

Decades later I still listen and ask my parents about the stories. Had my grandparents survived and chosen to refuge at that time, I believe my parents would not have met. Had the Lon Nol government won the war, Cambodia would not have gone through such a tragic episode in history. That was when my “what if-then” moment strummed up in my system. The inspiration to search for the “lost episode” of the history, the stories of heroes and victims who braved through battlefields and sacrificed their lives for the sake of the country—the ones whose names and stories are unwritten in the chronicles of history.

Born to a wealthy family, my father was raised to supervise a number of workers even at a young age. His father was an accomplished entrepreneur making his family an easy target for the revolutionary government.

My mother, on the other hand, was the first daughter of a military family. Growing up with rules yet spoiled by her father, she was the young lady of the house fear of no other. Her father was once an exchange student to Peking during the early 1950s often alerted her to at least expect something like she had never seen in her favorite Nazi documentaries; the lives of elites, intellectuals, and businessmen, once the revolutionary troops took over, would never be the same again.

As a military man himself, my grandfather had seen and anticipated more or less what could happen to his family once the Khmer Rouge captured Phnom Penh. On April 17th, 1975, while his colleagues and his subordinates urged him to board the last flight for

Thailand, my grandfather's decision was already fixed. Instead of fleeing to the third country, he would rather embrace all the pride and dignity as a proud Cambodian military commander and stay. He too had anticipated the atrocity of the new regime since the beginning of the war; regardless, leaving his beloved country behind was not his choice. Eventually, like what he had seen in his dream a month prior to the defeat of the Lon Nol government, he was taken away and killed with a bullet shot right into his left chest. Just like that my grandmother witnessed how my grandfather was left to perish amidst the unknown forest leaving no chance of bidding goodbye. His name was Neang Morn, a.k.a. Preah Ream (the nickname that his colleagues and subordinates gave him for his diligence and benevolent like the main character in the Hindu epic, Rama from the Ramayana); the name that I have been searching through many archival documents with the tiny hope that one day I would eventually come across his records somewhere; the family project I have set my mind to accomplish; and above all, a life story that inspired me to conduct this research.

This dissertation dedicates to my grandparents from both sides with whom I never had a chance to meet in person; the ones now only live inside the memories of my parents as they repeatedly relay those memories to the next generations in form of bedtime stories.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Problem Statement

In the 1950s, Cambodia was just another newly independent country in the Southeast Asian region. Though having a rich history and known as one of the ancient most powerful kingdoms of the region, she was still in the process of nation-building after gaining independence from the France colonial power when the Second Indochina War flared up just along her border. Now besides having to focus on maintaining her hard-earned sovereignty, Cambodia soon found herself trapped amidst the dilemma encountered by most newly independent countries; having to choose between two blocs of ideologies. The well-known policy of 'neutrality' embraced by Norodom Sihanouk, the 'Father of Independence', soon proved to be no longer favorable; Lon Nol, the successor of Sihanouk shifted the country back to the US and went all out against the communist ideology. By 1975, the long struggles to stay afloat above the flame of war did not last too long. Just two decades after gaining her independence, Cambodia once again fell into the abyss known to most historians as the darkest age of the country—the genocide by the Khmer Rouge.

For decades there have been numerous scholarly works attempting to study the foreign policy of Cambodia, the US, as well as other countries that were deemed to have involved whether directly or indirectly in the historical events of the Second Indochina War and/or the Vietnam War. Among all, the study of the US foreign policy during the period of the wars can be found scattered almost in every aspect. For instance, the US advancement into Southeast Asia for the sake of reconstruction of trade and economy

post-WWII;¹ the US involvement in the Indochina conflicts under the containment policy;² and the US foreign policy through the Vietnam War, the obstacles, and impacts on the US and/or Vietnam;³ military strategies and histories.⁴

The list of scholarly works regarding the US foreign policy could go on, indicating that great attention had been placed on the great powers' sides of the stories. Of course, It would be unfair to say that there is no one interested in the stories of smaller states like Cambodia, Vietnam, and Laos, the three countries that were engulfed in the Second

¹ The literature concerning the US advancement into the region of Southeast Asia can be found for instance in the following scholars' works. Amry Vandenbosch and Richard Butwell, *Southeast Asia among the world powers*. (University Press of Kentucky, 1957); Russell H. Fifield, "The Path to Vietnam: Origins of the American Commitment to Southeast Asia, by Andrew J. Rotter." *Pacific Historical Review* (1989): 398-399; Charles H. Stevenson. "US foreign policy in Southeast Asia: implications for current regional issues." *Contemporary Southeast Asia* (1992): 87-111; and Diane K. Mauzy and Brian L. Job. "US policy in Southeast Asia: Limited re-engagement after years of benign neglect." *Asian Survey* 47, no. 4 (2007): 622-641.

² The examples of scholarly works on the US containment policy in Southeast Asia are as follows: George H. Quester. *American Foreign Policy; The Lost Consensus* (Praeger, 1982); William Duiker. *US containment policy and the conflict in Indochina* (Stanford University Press, 1994); and Bhanubhatra Kaan Jittiang. "The American Foreign Policy toward Southeast Asia in the Twenty-First Century: The Second Front or the Containment against China?" Proceeding of the 12th Thailand National Conference on Political Science and Public Administration, 8 – 9 December 2011, Chiang Mai University, Chiang Mai, Thailand, 2011, 728–63.

³ Another category of literary works regarding the US and the Vietnam War includes G. John Ikenberry, *American Foreign Policy: Theoretical Essays / Edited by G. John Ikenberry*. Glenview, (Ill: Scott, Foresman, 1989); Jeffrey Record. *The wrong war: Why we lost in Vietnam* (Naval Institute Press, 1998); Henry Kissinger. *Ending the Vietnam War: A history of America's involvement in and extrication from the Vietnam War* (Simon and Schuster, 2003); Ole R. Holsti. *Making American foreign policy* (Taylor & Francis, 2006); Jonathan Colman. *Foreign Policy of Lyndon B. Johnson: The United States and the World, 1963-1969: The United States and the World, 1963-1969*. (Edinburgh University Press, 2010); John Dumbrell. *Rethinking the Vietnam War* (Macmillan International Higher Education, 2012); and George Herring. *America's longest war: the United States and Vietnam, 1950-1975* (McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 2014).

⁴ Here are several scholarly works concerning military tactics and histories: Townsend Hoopes. "Legacy of the Cold War in Indochina." *Foreign Affairs* 48, no. 4 (1970): 601-616; Ilya V. Gaiduk. *Confronting Vietnam: Soviet Policy toward the Indochina Conflict, 1954-1963* (Stanford University Press, 2003); Alexander De Conde. *A History of American Foreign Policy / Alexander DeConde*. 3d ed (New York: Scribner, 1978); Peter Dale Scott. *The war conspiracy: The secret road to the Second Indochina War* (Bobbs-Merrill, 1972); William Shawcross. *Sideshow: Kissinger, Nixon, and the destruction of Cambodia* (Simon & Schuster, 1979); and Mervyn Edwin Roberts III. *The Psychological War for Vietnam, 1960-1968* (University Press of Kansas, 2018), etc.

A detailed discussion of the above-listed literature can be found in chapter two.

Indochina War and the Vietnam War, likewise. To mention a few, literary works of the three countries involved in the war can be categorized as follows: foreign policy;⁵ impacts and lessons learned;⁶ and militaries and histories.⁷

It is noteworthy that up to recent dates, most scholarly works including those listed above have conducted observation and narration extensively on Cambodia's foreign policy under Sihanouk's administration. In other words, it can be emphasized that the topic that mostly sparks interest among historians and political scientists, likewise, evolves around Sihanouk's legacy in upholding the notion of 'neutrality' as the backbone

⁵ As for Cambodia, the followings are a set of literary works concerning foreign policy mainly in Sihanouk's administration: Michael Leifer, "Cambodia and her neighbours." *Pacific Affairs* 34, no. 4 (1961): 361-374; Michael Leifer, "Sihanouk: A Prince among Neutrals." *The Australian Quarterly* 34, no. 4 (1962): 38-49; Michael Leifer, "Cambodia: The Politics of Accommodation." *Asian Survey* (1964): 674-679; Michael Leifer, "Reviewed Work: Cambodia's Foreign Policy. By Roger M. Smith." *Pacific Affairs* 38, no. 3/4 (1965): 435-36; Michael Leifer. *Cambodia: The search for security* (Praeger, 1967); Roger M. Smith. *Cambodia's foreign policy* (Cornell University Press, 1965); Roger M. Smith, "Cambodia's Neutrality and the Laotian Crisis." *Asian Survey* (1961): 17-24; Bernard K. Gordon. "Cambodia: Where foreign policy counts." *Asian Survey* (1965): 433-448; Norodom Sihanouk and Wilfred G. Burchett. *My war with the CIA: the memoirs of Prince Norodom Sihanouk*. (Pantheon, 1973); Norodom Sihanouk. *War and hope: The case for Cambodia* (Pantheon Books, 1980); Sok Udom Deth. "The geopolitics of Cambodia during the cold war period." (2009); Milton E. Osborne. *Sihanouk: Prince of light, prince of darkness* (University of Hawaii Press, 1994); John Lawrence Scott Girling. "Cambodia and the Sihanouk myths" *Institute of Southeast Asian Studies*, no. 7 (1971); Saphan LinDa. "Norodom Sihanouk and the political agenda of Cambodian music, 1955-1970." *The Newsletter* 64 (2013): 4-5; Toch Sothiary. "Cambodia's Foreign Policy Leadership." *International Journal of Innovative Science and Research Technology* 3, no. 6 (2018); and Kao Hourn Kim. *Cambodia's Foreign Policy and ASEAN: From Non-alignment to Engagement*. (University of Hawai'i, 2001).

⁶ Here are several literary works concerning the impact and lessons learned from the Vietnam War: Kenneth Ray Young. "Neutralism in Laos and Cambodia." *International Studies Quarterly* 14, no. 2 (1970): 219-226; Stuart Simmonds. "Laos and Cambodia: The Search for Unity and Independence." *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)* 49, no. 4 (1973): 574-583; etc.

⁷ For literature on Lon Nol's administration concerning military tactics and histories, see Sak Sutsakhan. *The Khmer Republic at war and the final collapse* (US Army Center of Military History, 1980); Milton E. Osborne. *Sihanouk: Prince of light, prince of darkness* (University of Hawaii Press, 1994); Sok Udom Deth. "The geopolitics of Cambodia during the cold war period." (2009); and Nhem Boraden. *The Chronicle of a People's War: The Military and Strategic History of the Cambodian Civil War, 1979-1991*. (Routledge, 2017), and so on. The detailed descriptions of these works are included in the upcoming Chapter.

of Cambodia's foreign policy until the moment it fell into the abyss. That is, from the late 1940s towards the end of Sihanouk's reign in 1970. Whilst the topic concerns Cambodia's foreign policy during the five years gap from 1970 to 1975, Lon Nol's administration, barely has its spotlight. Does this mean that these five years in between have no other sufficient elements worth to be observed regarding the foreign policy of Cambodia besides military tactics as a history coverage? Does this last administration hold no key factor that could have altered the outcome of Cambodia's involvement in the war at all, had the top political leader at that time acted differently from what we have already known from history? Or, in other words, could Cambodia have avoided the catastrophe had her relations with the US did not go south?

With the existing historical evidence, this dissertation adopts the conceptual framework from political psychology together with the political regime to clarify and re-examine the abovementioned questions; and on top of that, hopes to unveil other layers of interpretation regarding the foreign policy-making attributes of the top two political leaders at that time — Norodom Sihanouk and Lon Nol.

1.2 Objectives

This dissertation has Cambodia as the main focus for she is a country second after Vietnam to be dragged into the Second Indochina War along with Laos, which suffered the destruction from the war. Yet, Cambodia was the only country to encounter the catastrophic aftereffect of the war, the genocide that washed away almost half of her total population at the time.

With the research question ‘what went wrong in Cambodia’s foreign policy in the context of Cambodia-US relations under Sihanouk’s and Lon Nol’s political administrations?’, this dissertation dedicates to exploring possible underlying factors deemed to contribute to the making of Cambodia’s foreign policy towards the US amid the wartime crisis like the Second Indochina War and the Vietnam War. Particularly, this work intensively examines the individual top political leaders at the time, Sihanouk and Lon Nol. In other words, this research aims to decipher the two top political leaders’ perspectives concerning Cambodia’s relationship with the US in the wake of the war. Besides trying to examine their perspectives on the relationship between Cambodia and the US, it is anticipated that this dissertation could also hint at the underlying factors that led to the fluctuation point(s) of Cambodia’s foreign policy under the previously mentioned political administrations: 1949-1970 and 1970-1975.

One might ask why this dissertation confined its research timeframe from 1949 to 1975 as the period to be observed? While the Second Indochina War erupted merely several years later and thus covered the rest of the research timeframe, would not it have been less complicated to study the period of the Second Indochina War, instead? To answer these questions, it is worth noting that even up to date, the term “the Second Indochina War” remains debatable among scholars. While the majority of scholars in this field share a common ground that the event itself happened somewhere in between the later mid-1950s, the most common ‘orthodox’ starting year of the Second Indochina War agreed upon by most historians is 1954.⁸ Nevertheless, the starting point of the Second

⁸ In *Historical Dictionary of United States— Southeast Asia Relations*, the term ‘the Second Indochina War’ refers to the period from 1954 to 1975 meant for conflicts among Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia with military intervention from the US in coping with the widespread of Communism. See Donald

Indochina War is being demarcated differently among historians depending upon what spectrums they intended for their interpretation to be. Several scholars pointed out a similar view on the lack of consensus among historians when it comes to the question—‘what year?’. Heather Stur noted in her article that although historians have yet to reach a consensus on which year to be considered at the starting point of the war, the borderline seems to be drawn somewhere around the events deemed to be core to their research.⁹

Likewise, in ‘The Vietnam War as a Vietnamese War: Agency and Society in the Study of the Second Indochina War,’ Edward Miller and Tuong Vu studied the parties involved in the Second Indochina War; the authors noted the period from 1959 to 1975 as one of the prominent episodes of the American history as the country began to step into the Vietnam War. The work questioned the ‘orthodox’ interpretation of how and why the American involvement in the subject matters of Vietnam no earlier than the 1950s and how the war escalated drastically afterward. And, had America joined the war anytime later or earlier than that ‘year’, would the Second Indochina War and/or the Vietnam War have the same result as what is being recorded in world history otherwise? Simultaneously, the article called attention to another important point— Vietnam and/or the non-American actors, shifting the spotlight entirely away from Americans.¹⁰ From this work, it can be indicated that the year 1959 was considered the point when America was involved in the War with Vietnam; in other words, a subtle hint of saying that 1959 is the

E. Weatherbee. *Historical Dictionary of United States-Southeast Asia Relations* (Scarecrow Press, 2008), p.311.

⁹ Heather Stur and Southern Missouri Read More. "Why the United States went to war in Vietnam." *Foreign Policy Research Institute* (2017).

¹⁰ Edward Miller and Tuong Vu. "The Vietnam War as a Vietnamese War: Agency and Society in the Study of the Second Indochina War." *Journal of Vietnamese Studies* 4, no. 3 (2009): 1-16.

year to be significantly marked as the so-called “Second Indochina War” or the Vietnam War interchangeably. On a similar ground, focusing on parties involved in the Second Indochina War and how the war itself took its course, Jeffery Race deemed the period from 1954 to 1959 as the most significant phase to study the root of the war by problematizing the research around the event of the Geneva Accords.¹¹ However, Wilfred G. Burchett recounted otherwise. In his work, *The Second Indochina War: Cambodia and Laos*, Burchett fixated April 30, 1970, as a threshold of this historical event. The date when the US troops took their first step into South Vietnam. As he narrated, “When, on April 30, 1970, American troops and tanks rumbled across the South Vietnamese frontier into neutral Cambodia, the second Indochina war started.”¹²

In this regard, it can be inferred that while most scholars agree that the Second Indochina War took place in the mid-1950, some discern otherwise. Yet, as mentioned earlier, this work examines the making of Cambodia’s foreign policy under the context of Cambodia-US relations in reflections on Cambodia’s top political leaders (Sihanouk and Lon Nol) and their political administrations rather than simply answering the ‘what happened?’ question in the Second Indochina War and the Vietnam War. Although Sihanouk began his political career as early as 1941 when he was selected to throne the kingdom while he was still in his teen,¹³ the country at that time remained in a tight grasp of the French colonial power. After many attempts domestically and the changing ambiance in other occupied countries in Indochina and inside the region, the French

¹¹ Jeffrey Race. "The origins of the second Indochina war." *Asian survey* 10, no. 5 (1970): 359-382.

¹² Wilfred G. Burchett. *Second Indochina War: Cambodia and Laos Today* (Lorimer Publishing Limited, 1970), 5.

¹³ Norodom Sihanouk, and Wilfred G. Burchett. *My war with the CIA: the memoirs of Prince Norodom Sihanouk* (Pantheon, 1973), 268-271.

administration finally loosened the grip allowing some degree of autonomy for Cambodia to conduct her foreign relations with other countries and some economic activities under the Franco-Cambodian treaty on November 6, 1949.¹⁴ It was only until then that Cambodia began to inhale her first breath before the actual independence.¹⁵

In this sense, this research's timeframe expands from the latter half of the First Indochina War toward the end of the Second Indochina War; that is from 1949 to 1975, tracing back a few years prior to the so-called event of the Second Indochina War. To be specific, the research timeframe was set to fully grasp the entire ambiance that fosters the development of the foreign policy at a very early nation-building stage and to ensure the continuity in observing the fluctuations point(s) during the two political administrations: Sihanouk and Lon Nol. Thus, 1949 is deemed as when Cambodia was finally able to make some motions of her own after the French loosen their control for the first time in Sihanouk's reign; and the timespan extends to until before the genocide took place in 1975 as the end of the Lon Nol's political administration. The abovementioned rationales are for

¹⁴ Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff. "Cambodia moves toward independence." *Far Eastern Survey* 22, no. 9 (1953): 105-111. For details on the Franco-Cambodian Treaty (Traité Franco-Khmer), see *Journal judiciaire de l'Indochine française* (1949-01). Digitized Archives (NUMM-50740732), Bibliothèque Nationale de France (BNF), Paris, pp. 397-398. See also "Combat: hebdomadaire du Mouvement de libération française". *Mouvement de libération nationale (France)*. (1949-10-26) Digitized Archives (NUMM- 4592993), 2. For further information on the timelines of treaties and other related official documents being signed during the French colonial period in the Indochina, see Luc Thanassecos. *Chronologie des relations internationales 1914–1971: Exposés thématiques*. (Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co KG, 2020), p.362.

¹⁵ There were different viewpoints regarding the Franco-Khmer Treaty on November 6, 1949, and its annexed conventions on November 8, 1949. While history inscribed of the degree Cambodia could gain from the French's grip provided by the treaty, it was still far from the real sense of full sovereignty and freedom Cambodia desired. Thus, to most Cambodians at the time, especially the Khmer Issarak—the group of Cambodians who were always ready to fight for the kingdom's independence, the treaty was merely another unfair treaty imposed upon Cambodia by the French colonial power. For further details on reactions from one of the famous Khmer Issarak's leaders regarding the treaty, see Wilfred G. Burchett. *Mekong upstream* (Red River Publishing House, 1957), 109-110.

the explanation as to why this dissertation refrains from solely referring to the term “the Second Indochina War” or rather ‘the Vietnam War’; instead conforms to the period from 1949 to 1975 as the core of the research.

1.3 Research Design

This research encompasses the field of history, foreign policy analysis (FPA) with political psychology. In other words, while this dissertation appears to lean more on the history’s side, it should be kept in mind that this research’s nature is not of ‘pure history’ but the analysis of foreign policy in the context of historical phenomena, in this sense the period of 1949-1975, with the focus spectrums on top political leaders’ psychological aspects and their political regimes.

1.3.1 Methodology

This research adopts the qualitative method. The author extensively explores and inspects historical and diplomatic documents and employs content analysis to observe the fluctuations in the foreign relations between Cambodia and the US during the years of the two political administrations of Sihanouk and Lon Nol, and to probe possible underlying psychological aspects of the top political leaders that could alter the course of the foreign policy of Cambodia towards the US in the brink of war.

Data accumulations of this dissertation are obtained through multiple sources. The majority of primary sources used and referred to in this dissertation resulted from extensive archival research. Both printed and digitized materials including personal bibliographies, memoirs, old newspapers, magazines, diplomatic notes/cables/telegrams,

and so on were mainly retrieved from the National Archive of Cambodia (NAC), Document Centre of Cambodia (DoC), the United Nations Archives (New York), Digital National Security Archive (DNSA), the Digital Collections of the US National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), the US Library of Congress, the Richard Nixon Presidential Library, the Collections of General Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Records, the Department of State Bulletin, Bibliothèque Nationale de France (BNF), Le Monde, Le Monde Diplomatique, the New York Times, etc. In addition, this research also consulted secondary sources such as books, journal articles, unpublished papers, and so on to reference information as well as concepts deemed relevant and necessary for analyzing the theme topic and the research timeframe.

As mentioned in the earlier part of this section, this dissertation takes on a multi-disciplinary approach. In the intersections between history and political psychology, the abovementioned historical-related materials are to be referred to as evidence to enunciate the logic explained by political psychology in uncovering the leadership features of the two top political leaders in question. Whilst facts and information during the period of the research timeframe are meant to be the supporting proof to further accentuate the functioning of the two political regimes; thenceforth, shedding light on the underlying factors potentially influencing the making of the foreign policy of Cambodia towards the US during the wartime.

On another note, the comparative approach is also employed in the analytical part. Since this research stretches over two political administrations, the comparisons between Sihanouk and Lon Nol leaderships features and their political regimes are meant for the sake of highlighting the fluctuations in foreign policymaking; thus, ultimately leading us

towards the answer to the research question ‘what went wrong in Cambodia’s foreign policy in the context of Cambodia-US relations under Sihanouk’s and Lon Nol’s political administrations?’

1.3.2 Conceptual Framework

This section is a brief introduction to the conceptual framework adopted in this dissertation. A comprehension demonstration to justify the use of the selected conceptual framework can be found separately in chapter three.

This research’s core focus is on individual and domestic factors. In this manner, the individual factors refer to the analysis of the top political leaders; while the domestic factors are the elements of political regimes embedded in these two political administrations will be discussed. In this dissertation, the international system along with the wartime crisis like the Second Indochina War and/or the Vietnam War are being taken for granted; the circumstance that forced small non-democratic countries to choose between greater powers. In this sense, Cambodia too was inevitably dragged into the abyss.

To be precise, for the individual factors, this dissertation explores the psychological aspects behind both leaders: Sihanouk and Lon Nol. Leadership elements that determined the characteristics of political leaders as proposed by one of the prominent scholars in the field of political psychology, Margaret G. Hermann. In her work, ‘political psychology’ suggested factors notably to study the personal characteristics of political leaders; and among them, there are five so-called *ingredients* commonly employed by scholars of this field: political beliefs; leadership style, motivation, reactions to stress, and

background factors.¹⁶ This dissertation examines historical documents in reference to these *ingredients* to assess the leadership characteristics of the two political leaders and checks for any viable similarities and/or differences between them.

As for the domestic factors, this research addresses the functioning of the two political administrations by inspecting the perspective of the concepts related to political regimes. On this wise, Cambodia from the period of 1949 to 1975 was another non-democratic state in the region of Southeast Asia to had gained independence and was in the process of nation-building when everything started to go downhill all too soon. This research deemed the non-democratic Cambodia as an authoritarian, or to be precise, autocratic regime.¹⁷ Autocracy refers to “a system of government by one person with absolute power.”¹⁸ Barbara Geddes et al. gave a more explicit definition of the *autocratic regime* as “a set of formal and informal rules for choosing leaders and policies.”¹⁹ In her other work, the *Autocratic Regimes Code Book*, Cambodia was coded as an autocratic regime.²⁰

¹⁶ Margaret G. Hermann. "Political psychology." In *The Oxford Handbook of Political Leadership*. 1986. pp.167-192. A detailed explanation of these analytical concepts is presented in the third chapter of this dissertation.

¹⁷ In this dissertation, the key term *autocratic* is used interchangeably with *authoritarian* and/or non-democratic states.

¹⁸ See the definition of the term *autocracy* in Oxford English Dictionary Online, s.v. "autocracy, n.," Last accessed January 05, 2019, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/autocracy>.

¹⁹ Barbara Geddes, Joseph Wright, and Erica Frantz. "Autocratic breakdown and regime transitions: A new data set." *Perspectives on politics* 12, no. 2 (2014): 313-331.

²⁰ The *Autocratic Regimes Code Book* consists of data related to autocratic regimes of independent countries from around the world counting from 1946 to 2010. This *Code Book* also used the term autocratic interchangeably with *authoritarian*. Definitions, coding rules, and selected variables are included in the introductory part (pp.1-9). Cambodia can be found listed as an autocratic regime on page 13. For details of the coding and variables, see Barbara Geddes, Joseph Wright, and Erica Frantz. "Autocratic Regimes Code Book, Version 1.2." *The National Science Foundation* (2014).

By studying the function of Cambodia's political regimes at the time under the perceptive of the autocratic regimes, one would be able to fathom more layers of factors that contribute to the collapse as well as the reasons for the instability of each administration; on the ground that in the studies of political regimes, this particular classification of autocratic offers rich explanations and analysis regarding the stability of the regime and how it meets its end. Additionally, assessing from this approach, the 'domestic factors' could emphasize the perspective of a small non-democratic state like Cambodia as she had to encounter a greater superpower like the US and might as well highlight the dilemmas she faced in the time of wars.

Lastly, in this dissertation, the Second Indochina War and the Vietnam War stand as the background scenario to curb the research timeframe in a more constrainable fashion; in a way that it provides basic information concerning significant historical events that triggered the decision-making of the individual leaders.

It is anticipated that by assessing individual leaders' psychological aspects incorporate with the political regimes of the two administrations, the underlying factors that influenced the foreign policy-making of Cambodia towards the US would be unveiled piece by piece; therefore, completing the entire jigsaw puzzle to the quest in seeking the answer to 'what went wrong in Cambodia-US relations?'

1.4 Significance and Originality

The dissertation significance and originality of this study are described as the following. Firstly, this work contributes to the existing literature on the foreign policy of the smaller states like Cambodia which most of the time are outnumbered by that the greater

powers, like the US for instance. In such a manner, this dissertation not only mends the existing gaps but also presents the perspective of a small non-democratic state into the spotlight.

Secondly, the scholarly works concerning the observation of Lon Nol's administration and his foreign policy remain scarce even up to recent dates. This research is among a handful of scholarly works to study Lon Nol's administration in-depth and to analyze the foreign policy of this administration toward the US extensively resounding with his personal characteristics instead of solely narrating the aspects of military tactics and the history of it. In this manner, the research recovers the missing episode in the history of the foreign policy-making of Lon Nol and his administration.

Thirdly, the very core originality of this research as well as the most important contributions to the academic field lies in the application of political psychological concepts to explore the personal attributes of Sihanouk and Lon Nol to better comprehend their decisions in making the foreign policy; adding more layers to the explanations that suggested by referencing the commonly known IR theories.

In sum, this research can be considered as one among the scarce scholarly works to observe Cambodia's foreign policy in the context of Cambodia-US relations by revisiting Sihanouk's and Lon Nol's political administrations. That is, by inspecting the psychological aspects of Cambodia's top two leaders at the very stage of nation-building; exclusively, the Lon Nol and the foreign policy of his administration. Relatively, the originality also lies in the fact that this research inspects the political regime of Cambodia. Under the classification of the so-called *autocratic* regime, this dissertation presents extra

layers in understanding Cambodia's perspective as an *autocratic* regime; thus, explicitly accentuating the prominent perspectives of the non-democratic state which might have been overlooked by scholars with the same interest in the research topic.

1.5 Road Map

This dissertation begins with a brief introductory chapter illustrating the backbone of the entire research. The critical reviews of relevant scholarly works are designated in chapter two. The second chapter consists of four main sections divided in accordance with thematic topics relevant to the foreign policy of the US toward the region of Southeast Asia, Cambodia, and during the Vietnam War; the latter section of this chapter lists the existing previous literature concerning Cambodia's foreign policy; thence, finishing up by highlighting the knowledge gap of concerning with the theme research.

Chapter three of this dissertation is deliberately designed for providing explanations of the main conceptual frameworks used to analyze the topic of research. This chapter first demonstrates the discipline of this research and where it stands in academic fields. The forthcoming section reviews conceptual frameworks and approaches commonly used to study the FPA. The following part discusses the significance and reasonings to why the conceptual framework is selected to apply in the analytical chapters, whilst the last part of this chapter displays anticipated risks in employing the conceptual framework.

The fourth chapter of this dissertation is a descriptive chapter on Cambodia's foreign policy from 1949 to 1975. This chapter starts with briefing background information on Cambodia's history under the French colonial power and her encounter with the US.

The following section narrates the atmosphere of Cambodia in the changing of new eras of the post-independent era –Sihanouk's *the Sangkum Reastr Niyum* and the *Khmer Republic* under Lon Nol. This chapter ends by providing the overall image of Cambodia-US relations during the research timeframe along with the notable of Sihanouk's neutrality policy compared to other countries' declaration of neutrality.

Chapter five presents the application of the conceptual framework to assess Cambodia's relations with the US pertaining to Sihanouk's and Lon Nol's psychological aspects and their administrations. This chapter is divided into five main sections. The first section demonstrates the psychological aspects of Sihanouk in his political career, followed by the appraisal of his political administration from the angle of autocratic regimes. In the same manner, the third section discusses Lon Nol and his psychological aspects with respect to his political career, then his political administration. The last section of this chapter offers a brief wrap-up of the overall assessment of the Sihanouk and Lon Nol along with any noteworthy factors deemed to be the activators of the declining of the relations with the US amid the war.

Last but not least, is the concluding chapter. Divided into three sections, this chapter firstly writes a concise summary of the afore chapters. The latter part accumulates the essential factors unraveled in previous chapters and generates the long-awaited answer(s) to the research question. And the last part of the concluding chapter remarks on the theme topic.

Chapter 2 Critical Review of Relevant Literature

The studies of the Second Indochina War and the Vietnam War have been dominated by curiosities about the greater powers' sides of the story and their ways of conducting foreign policy amid that time of crisis. Following up on the list, Vietnam's side of the story often appears after either the US, China, USSR for instance. In other words, it can be considered that the field of FPA during wartime has been eclipsed by the perspectives of the greater states whilst the voices of smaller states involved are frequently overlooked.

This chapter brings about a set of prominent literature to have studies the related details of the Second Indochina War and the foreign policy of the countries involved. Following the research design, the relevant scholarly works are filtered to particularly comprehend to what extent the existing literature has been conducted about the foreign policy of the US and Cambodia.

The chapter starts with sets of literature discussing the US foreign policy in Southeast Asia before and amid the war. The latter part of the chapter presents scholarly works concerning "neutrality"—the infamous foreign policy of Sihanouk followed by existing works on Sihanouk's and Lon Nol administration. Lastly, this chapter recaps with noteworthy knowledge gap concerning the topic.

2.1 The Changing Trends of the US Foreign Policy in Southeast Asia

The historical evolution of the US foreign policy in Southeast Asia was nicely summarized in Donald E. Weatherbee's work as follows. Prior to the twentieth century, Southeast Asia was one of the regions of great importance, "geostrategically" to the US

forasmuch as the security interests were concerned. Having secured relations with countries of the region would mean securing the “freedom of the sea lanes of communication...as well as seaborne commerce.”²¹ Besides being one of the important trading partners in the nineteenth century, the US added another priority on the list by the end of WWII; now the region of Southeast Asia was viewed as another “geopolitical region” for the US with her policy to contain the expansion of communism. Shifting priority among political, economic, and strategic access to the region, the US foreign policy in the post-WWII towards the end of the Cold War was mainly to achieve her interests to full potential; and as Weatherbee put it, to “maintain its presence in the region in competition with other extraregional Great Powers.”²²

Similar to Weatherbee, another author offered vibrant layers of the US foreign policy in the Southeast Asian region with historical backgrounds of the countries along with their viewpoints. William Henderson looked through the aspects considered as problems rooted in the history of Southeast Asian countries, their value, their views of the US and her policy, and so on. He also accumulated criticisms of the US foreign policy towards the region when operating the communism containment policy.²³ It was during the 1950s when the US attention greatly shifted towards the Southeast Asian region in the attempt to tackle the widespread of communism. The US policy was evaluated, as Henderson emphasized, “a sad mélange of improvisations and stopgap measures;” in other words, not effective in serving the objectives which had not been clearly set since

²¹ Donald E. Weatherbee. *Historical Dictionary of United States-Southeast Asia Relations*. (Scarecrow Press, 2008), 1.

²² Weatherbee, *Historical Dictionary of United States-Southeast Asia Relations*, Ibid., at 1-16.

²³ William Henderson, ed. *Southeast Asia: Problems of United States Policy*. (Mit Press, 1964).

the beginning.²⁴ He also questioned the very core of the US interests in exercising the containment policy, whether or not it was “*vital* national interests.”²⁵ Raising the example of the US actions in the region— SEATO, the author added that such an instrument appeared to be “ill-advised, inadequate, and occasionally downright foolhardy.”²⁶

Eugene R. Black, another scholar to shared common ground with Henderson when it comes to criticizing the changing trend of the US foreign policy in Southeast Asia.²⁷ In his work *Alternative in Southeast Asia*, Black stressed the notion of “moral and rational dimensions of policy” on the ground that Americans should see the world as it is instead of what they “think it ought to be.”²⁸ Black argued on alternative diplomacy that America should have considered for her involvement in the Vietnam War. In addition to critics, Black also suggested a new approach for the US in terms of providing foreign aid to the region as an outlook for the future. By reflecting on mishaps during the Vietnam War, he called the US to express her willingness in adjusting her foreign policy in cooperating with the diversity of partners to achieve “facile” and “practical” cooperation.²⁹

The foreign policy of the US in the region of Southeast Asia has witnessed several changing trends throughout the course of diplomatic relations. Since stepping out of a long haul of seclusion from the world in the nineteenth century, the US has been in constant determination to maximize her national interests whether in terms of political, economic, or security.

²⁴ Henderson, ed. *Southeast Asia: Problems of United States Policy*, 249.

²⁵ Henderson, ed. *Southeast Asia: Problems of United States Policy*, 252.

²⁶ Henderson, ed. *Southeast Asia: Problems of United States Policy*, 251.

²⁷ Eugene R. Black. *Alternative in Southeast Asia* (Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., Publishers, 1969).

²⁸ Black, *Ibid.*, 2-8.

²⁹ Black, *Ibid.*, 19-28.

At the early stage of re-engaging in worldly affairs, the US relations with countries of Southeast Asia were not all smooth for the fact that she had to compete with other early birds of extra-regional powers as well as the complicated relations among Southeast Asian countries. Then, when the Indochina conflicts happened, the US now had to put in more effort than ever to maintain her role and 'presence' in the face of the communism expansion. From there on toward the end of the Second Indochina War or the Vietnam War, one would witness a sharp shift of priority of the US interests toward the security-related issues; yet once again the Southeast Asian region maintained its spot as "geostrategically" important for the US.

2.1.1 Tiptoeing into the Indochina Conflicts

Scholarly works regarding the development of the US foreign policy together with her involvement in the Indochina conflicts can be categorized as follows: the US advancement into Southeast Asia for the sake of reconstruction of trade and economy at the post-WWII; the US involvement in the Indochina conflicts under the containment policy; the US foreign policy through the Vietnam War, the obstacles, and impacts on the US and/or Vietnam; and military strategies and histories, and so on.

For example, Amry Vandenbosch and Richard Butwell examined the US foreign policy in the region of Southeast Asia, along with obstacles the US encountered post-WWII. Distinctively, the authors highlighted the fact that most of the countries in Southeast Asia went through colonization, making it hard for the US to maintain smooth relations with them. Both authors also stressed that the US treats the Philippines differently from the rest of the countries in the region. It was only around 1948 that the US expressed more concern about the spread of Communism in Southeast Asia. Afterward, in 1956 the

US policy was notably shifted in response to the Russian foreign policy “New Look.” However, the US’s commitment to providing assistance to prevent the spread of communism was mainly placed upon the military sector; and according to the willingness of nationalist leaders. While recognizing the strategic importance of Cambodia,³⁰ the book embraces the notion of Indochina and included three countries: Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam briefly combine into only one chapter.³¹

On a similar note, Russell H. Fifield emphasized the dilemmas the US foreign policymakers had encountered in the decision to involve in the Vietnam War and the Southeast Asian region. From the perspective of political economy, the book stressed the US efforts in safeguarding the region from communists and ensuring its development after the colonization. The author projected that the US policymakers were concerned about the victory of Communists in China. In addition to that, the book pointed out the US attempted to revive the economy in Southeast Asia against the Communist expansion which to some degree contributed to the ultimate objective of reconstructing the global political economy post-WWII.³²

Charles H. Stevenson is another scholar to shares a similar interest in observing the US foreign policy at the post-WWII. In his article, he offered a brief image of the US foreign policy and demonstrated how US foreign policy has taken its shape during the post-WWII. With overarching objectives, as the author pointed out – stability, trade, and access were the core elements of the policy. Then the author also included critical

³⁰ Amry Vandenbosch and Richard Butwell, *Southeast Asia among the world powers*. (University Press of Kentucky, 1957),136.

³¹ Amry Vandenbosch and Richard Butwell, *Southeast Asia among the world powers*, Ibid.,110-155.

³² Andrew J. Rotter. "The Path to Vietnam: Origins of the American Commitment to Southeast Asia."

discussions focusing on the deviations of US foreign policy toward the countries in the region in the 1990s.³³ Diane K. Mauzy and Brian L. Job, on the one hand, emphasized the decreasing of the US influence in the region of Southeast Asia during the post-Vietnam War, counting from 1975 as China's capital overflowed into the region. Whilst pointing out further how the US foreign policy toward the region had shifted significantly to focus on anti-terrorism and anti-Muslim especially in the Bush administration; making the relations with ASEAN more than ever embarked on the essence of cooperation against terrorism.³⁴

Having the timeframe of research evolved around the Indochina conflicts, the following thread of literature turned their spotlights on the US infamous 'containment policy. For example, George H. Quester shared his examination of US foreign policy throughout the spans of the world wars. He then emphasized the shifting trends of US foreign policy through different administrations, in comparison with other countries, under the notion of 'power politics.' His study compared the US commitment to containing communism in each of the Southeast Asia countries; as he argued, the commitment the US had established toward the region was initially not as strong compared to that toward Europe.³⁵ In addition, in William Duiker's work –*US Containment Policy and the Conflict in Indochina*, the book contemplated from the US perspective in terms of Containment policy in Indochina. The work analyzed and traced the involvement of the US in the Indochina conflicts as well as strategies used in order to achieve the objectives. Besides

³³ Charles H. Stevenson. "US foreign policy in Southeast Asia: implications for current regional issues." *Contemporary Southeast Asia* (1992): 87-111.

³⁴ Diane K. Mauzy and Brian L. Job. "US policy in Southeast Asia: Limited re-engagement after years of benign neglect." *Asian Survey* 47, no. 4 (2007): 622-641.

³⁵ George H. Quester. *American Foreign Policy; The Lost Consensus* (Praeger, 1982).

examining each of the US presidents (Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson), the author also studied other actors involved in the conflicts. But particularly, the attention was placed on addressing the perspective of Hanoi's leader, Ho Chi Minh.³⁶ Gary R. Hess is also among the scholars to call for the shift of attention toward the Vietnamese perspectives. Hess browsed through existing works of literature on the Vietnam War in the last few decades. The study revealed how previous works had suggested plausible interpretations concerning the War as one looked from different perspectives which he referred to as the orthodox and the revisionism or neo-orthodox scholarship. Hence, Hess proposed a more vibrant way of interpreting the war or international conflicts by examining a wide range of issues including economic, social, military, and so on.³⁷

Meanwhile, Bhanubhatra Kaan Jittiang also observed the containment policy as a reflection on the twenty-first century, addressed in his work that the US foreign policy of 'containment' enforced on the region of Southeast Asia in the post-Cold War era retained its influence on the current US foreign policy; only in the twenty-first century, the aim is for containing the influence of China in the region. The author noted the long-time establishment of the US and Southeast Asian relations and how the US had developed its strategy so far despite the obstacles encountered over time.³⁸

³⁶ William Duiker, *US containment policy and the conflict in Indochina* (Stanford University Press, 1994).

³⁷ Gary R. Hess. "The Unending Debate: Historians and the Vietnam War." *Diplomatic History* 18, no. 2 (1994): 239–64.

³⁸ Bhanubhatra Kaan Jittiang. "The American Foreign Policy toward Southeast Asia in the Twenty-First Century: The Second Front or the Containment against China?" Proceeding of the 12th Thailand National Conference on Political Science and Public Administration, 8 – 9 December 2011, Chiang Mai University, Chiang Mai, Thailand, 2011, 728–63.

2.1.2 The US and the Vietnam War

The list of studies on US foreign policy regarding the Vietnam War can go on and on. To mention a few, below are a few examples selected from various categories concerning the topic of the Vietnam War. For instance, Jeffery Record wrote in *the Wrong War*, which he blamed the defeats of the US in the Vietnam War was not only due to military tactics but also civilian leadership. Ignoring and misinterpretation of the historical root cause of the conflict in Vietnam, overestimation of the US military effectiveness, as well as underestimating the capacity of the counterpart made the US involvement in the Vietnam War doomed to failure.³⁹ On a similar note, in Henry Kissinger's memoirs, *Ending the Vietnam War*, he recalled details about the US involvement in the Vietnam War and the negotiations among parties. Kissinger also indicated what the domestic situation in the US looked like during the war.⁴⁰

In another analytical section about the Vietnam war according to Ole R. Holsti's work, domestic opinions were highlighted. Associated with the fact that the majority voices of the Americans, it appeared that domestic opinions shared not too positive light regarding the military activities in the war; therefore, this led to the withdrawal from the war later on. To put it differently, Holsti examined US foreign policy from the angle of the decision-making process, the factors deemed to influence the decisions making such as beliefs, public opinion, and so on were the core of the observation. The work covered various analytical issues from history like that of the Vietnam War to contemporary ones

³⁹ Jeffrey Record. *The wrong war: Why we lost in Vietnam* (Naval Institute Press, 1998).

⁴⁰ Henry Kissinger. *Ending the Vietnam War: A history of America's involvement in and extrication from the Vietnam War* (Simon and Schuster, 2003).

like the 9/11 terrorist attack.⁴¹ Meanwhile, Jonathan Colman shifted the focus to study the administration of president Johnson and his foreign affairs in coping the international issues such as the Vietnam war, and the relations with the US close alliances like Britain, France, the NATO Nuclear offset, the Soviet Union, and China, and so on. Colman maintained that President Johnson's decision in the Vietnam War was "a rational and well-considered".⁴² John Dumbrell on the other hand emphasized the international context of the Vietnam War. He discussed the domestic settings in the US and internal conflict within Vietnam. Dumbrell pointed out the main terms of "Nixon's War", Kissinger, and the "Madman" foreign policy while he explained the US foreign policymaking at the top-level at the peak of the war.⁴³

George Herring additionally scrutinized the US president's decision to enter into the Vietnam War starting from Kennedy to Nixon. He also identified other factors both internal and external, the nature of conflict in Vietnam, how the Communist leader in Vietnam came to power, the influences of France colonization, the involvement of Europe, the Soviet Union, and China.⁴⁴

Observing from the historical perspective, Townsend Hoopes traced the notion of "power struggle" amidst the Cold War. The author then questioned the "immorality" of the US intervention in the Vietnam War despite having objections domestically in the US.

⁴¹ Ole R. Holsti. *Making American foreign policy* (Taylor & Francis, 2006), 105-150.

⁴² Jonathan Colman. *Foreign Policy of Lyndon B. Johnson: The United States and the World, 1963-1969: The United States and the World, 1963-1969*. (Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 4. See also in Matthew Shannon. "The Foreign Policy of Lyndon B. Johnson: The United States and the World, 1963-1969 - By Jonathan Colman." *Political Studies Review*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2012.

⁴³ John Dumbrell. *Rethinking the Vietnam War* (Macmillan International Higher Education, 2012).

⁴⁴ George Herring. *America's longest war: the United States and Vietnam, 1950-1975* (McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 2014).

Thence, Hoopes pointed out the so-called term “the Cold-war syndrome” to describe the US intervention in Indochina which was the aftereffects of the power struggle during the Cold War.⁴⁵ In relation to the power struggle, Ilya V. Gaiduk studied the Soviet policy in the Indochina conflict from the year 1955 to 1963 and how the US came into the picture. The book noted upon two main historical events the fluctuations in the Soviet policy: the 1954 Geneva conference, and late 1963 marked the collapse of the South Vietnamese government as well as the assassination of John F. Kennedy.⁴⁶ Likewise, Alexander Deconde offered an overview of American foreign policy particularly throughout the Vietnam War by observing each US president and their determinations in tackling the issue regarding the war as they face opposing domestic opinions. The episode of the Vietnam War started from the case of Tonkin Gulf incidents that led to Johnson’s administration’s decision to jump into the Vietnam war, its escalation of the confrontation with Communist China, and Nixon’s episode of Watergate scandal as he intensified the bombing in Cambodia.⁴⁷ Peter Dale Scott was another scholar to observe Nixon’s administration. In his book *The War Conspiracy: the Secret Road to the Second Indochina War* embarked on the quest to explain the conspiracy of the American involvement in the Indochina looking from the “intelligence community”. His work highlighted the conspiracies of the CIA and Nixon’s doctrine upon “the military-bureaucratic” system as the elements reflecting the US poses as the global power.⁴⁸ On a similar note, William

⁴⁵ Townsend Hoopes. "Legacy of the Cold War in Indochina." *Foreign Affairs* 48, no. 4 (1970): 601-616.

⁴⁶ Ilya V. Gaiduk. *Confronting Vietnam: Soviet Policy toward the Indochina Conflict, 1954-1963* (Stanford University Press, 2003).

⁴⁷ Alexander De Conde. *A History of American Foreign Policy / Alexander DeConde*. 3d ed (New York: Scribner, 1978), 360-381.

⁴⁸ Peter Dale Scott. *The war conspiracy: The secret road to the Second Indochina War* (Bobbs-Merrill, 1972).

Shawcross too worked on narrating Nixon's decisions during the Vietnam War. In his famous book titled *Sideshow: Kissinger, Nixon, and the destruction of Cambodia* exposed how Nixon together with Kissinger dragged Cambodia into the war with Vietnam. The book consists of data and information from Shawcross's interviews with military men as well as research on the US government documents that revealed another side-story of the Vietnam War.⁴⁹

Mervyn Edwin Roberts III looked further into the US military operations in the war (1960-1968). Roberts III examined the psychological operations (PSYOP) employed by military personnel during the time to entice groups of the individual to act in favor of the US. The book emphasized that the Vietnam War was beyond military aspects but "the battle for 'hearts and minds.'"⁵⁰

In short, the US foreign policy in Southeast Asia is conducted on the basis of access to trade and the stability of the US influence in the region. The goals started to shift in the wake of the First and Second Indochina War when countries of the region began to seek their own independence as well as participated in the spread of Communism that threaten the US influence. The involvement of the US in the Second Indochina War and the Vietnam War was an action taken to maintain control over the changing landscape inside the US foreign policy. And throughout decades even after the Vietnam War itself ended, the debates among scholars, in particular, the historians. One of the most problematic issues called upon by scholars of the twentieth century and up to

⁴⁹ William Shawcross. *Sideshow: Kissinger, Nixon, and the destruction of Cambodia* (Simon & Schuster, 1979).

⁵⁰ Mervyn Edwin Roberts III. *The Psychological War for Vietnam, 1960-1968* (University Press of Kansas, 2018).

date remains yet skeptical matters ⁵¹ are based on whose perspectives and how this historical event shall be interpreted.

2.2 Existing Literature on Sihanouk's *Neutrality*

When studies about Sihanouk, it is almost inevitable for scholars to come across the term *neutrality*—the infamous foreign policy that Cambodia embraced in the wake of her freshly gained independence. Carefully crafted and advocated for years, Sihanouk's neutrality remains one of the debatable topics. Those whose research interests involve Cambodia's foreign policy, as well as history, cannot shy away from mentioning the key term *neutrality*. Below are set of literature discussed on Sihanouk's neutrality.

The study of Cambodia's foreign policy would not have been complete without mentioning Norodom Sihanouk's "neutrality". There have been numerous works of literature discussing the policy of neutrality of Sihanouk. Among them, Norodom Sihanouk, a sole architecture of the policy itself also offered some insightful pieces of literature himself. Sihanouk wrote in one of his early works "Cambodia neutral: The dictate of necessity" which stressed the reasons why this former king decided to have his country be neutral. Neutrality, for Cambodia as reasoning by Sihanouk, was the only integral foreign policy that could protect the country's sovereignty by that Sihanouk drew attention to the country's geography; to quote, "a glance at a map of our part of the world will show

⁵¹ On the debate and discussion regarding approaches to study the US foreign policy, G. John Ikenberry, for instance, inscribed in his book series choices of approaches and theoretical frameworks used to scrutinize US foreign policy. The book accumulated theoretical essays on the study of US foreign policy, the problems encountered, and how to address such problems when explaining the policy. See more in G. John Ikenberry, *American Foreign Policy: Theoretical Essays / Edited by G. John Ikenberry*. Glenview, (Ill: Scott, Foresman, 1989).

that we are wedged in between two medium-sized nations of the Western bloc... two of the Eastern bloc.”⁵² In the same paper, Sihanouk clarified Cambodia’s neutrality which seemed to be highly confused by the Western bloc that its elements alike to those referred to the term neutrality that it shall not be confused with “neutralism”, for Cambodia’s neutrality “is fundamentally different” in a sense that Cambodia is not “‘aligned’ with those of the bloc of ‘neutralist’ nations.” It can be implied that although Nehru shared a fair encouragement on Sihanouk’s idea for being neutral, Sihanouk hinted that his neutrality was not of the same grouping with neutralism of the Afro-Asian states.⁵³

Michael Leifer is one of the well-known authors whose works often easily seen cited among fellow scholars. Leifer contributed largely to the chronicle of Sihanouk’s Neutrality since the early years that Sihanouk had declared to uphold the policy of neutrality for Cambodia. His works touched upon various aspects of Cambodia’s ranking from the Kingdom’s historical setting with her bigger neighbors like Thailand and Vietnam,⁵⁴ the core arguments reasoning for Sihanouk’s stern stance on neutrality, Cambodia’s foreign policy in the face of international conflict, etc. Leifer also discussed the element of Cambodia’s foreign policy in relation to her two bigger neighbors Thailand and Vietnam. The neutrality embraced by Sihanouk in the post-independent Cambodia was meant to protect the country’s sovereignty and integrity. He highlighted the fact that

⁵² Sihanouk referred to Thailand and South Vietnam that closely allied with the Western bloc, the US in particular; while North Vietnam and the People’s Republic of China were of the Eastern. In this sense, he explained that Cambodia had no choice but to be neutral if she wants to remain unified. See in Norodom Sihanouk. "Cambodia neutral: The dictate of necessity." *Foreign affairs* 36, no. 4 (1958): 582-586.

⁵³ Michael Leifer. "Sihanouk: A Prince among Neutrals." *The Australian Quarterly* 34, no. 4 (1962): 38-49.

⁵⁴ Michael Leifer. "Cambodia and her neighbours" *Pacific Affairs* 34, no. 4 (1961): 361-374.

Sihanouk depended on aligning with both blocs of ideologies so that Cambodia was able to secure her small territory from her neighbors. However, the situation turned sour as Sihanouk decided to side with Communist China when the US failed to meet the expectations of helping Cambodia tackle her territory disputes with Thailand and South Vietnam.⁵⁵

Roger M. Smith discussed the diplomatic history of Cambodia in the wake of independence. While sharing similar thoughts that Sihanouk's neutrality served as an important backbone in maintaining the country's security, Smith analyzed further concerning dilemmas Cambodia had to encounter down the road of neutrality as the war escalated and the situation called for Cambodia to pick sides among the great powers.⁵⁶ Similar to Smith, Bernard K. Gordon emphasized the troubled background of Cambodia's relationship with Thailand and Vietnam as well as within the international context. The fundamental goal of Cambodia's foreign policy, as Gordon projected, was the continued existence of the state, and Sihanouk's choice of neutrality is understandable.⁵⁷ In this regard, Gordon highlighted the reasons behind Cambodia's foreign policy of neutrality akin to Leifer's; that is, the country's survival and her problems with neighbors.

Michael Leifer also shared his view on Smith's work; added more of a burden on Sihanouk and his leadership as he began leaning toward Communist China. Reversely, Leifer questioned Sihanouk's expectation towards the US regarding the intervention in the issues of Thailand and Vietnam; and more importantly, what value would the US gain

⁵⁵ Michael Leifer. "Cambodia and her neighbors", Ibid.

⁵⁶ Roger M. Smith. *Cambodia's foreign policy* (Cornell University Press, 1965).

⁵⁷ Bernard K. Gordon. "Cambodia: Where foreign policy counts." *Asian Survey* (1965): 433-448.

from pressuring Thailand and South Vietnam especially when the US was of no obligation to do so for the sake of Cambodia.⁵⁸ Relatively, Kenton J. Clymer indicated the US attitude toward Sihanouk's neutrality in relation to the breakdown of the US-Cambodia diplomatic relations in the 1960s. Clymer captured moments causing the relations to fall apart in association with a few notable red flags. Among the errors in the US-Cambodia relations, Clymer noted that it was due to the "American reluctance to support Sihanouk"⁵⁹ in his efforts to seek international recognition of the country's sovereignty by calling for convincement of the Geneva conference; in which the US failed to express the support. That could only be interpreted that the US does not support the idea of a neutral Cambodia.⁶⁰ Another related account was the border conflicts Cambodia encountered with South Vietnam and Thailand, the two close alliances with the US; the issues that the US would remain a low profile when Cambodia complained about causing Sihanouk to believe that the US valued the relationship with Thailand and South Vietnam more than with Cambodia.

Besides his famous work *My War with the CIA: The Memoirs of Prince Norodom Sihanouk*, which documented his experience in China after being ousted by a coup in 1970, Sihanouk wrote a number of works himself expressing his foreign policy to the international community and most importantly to seek support for the international

⁵⁸ Michael Leifer. "Reviewed Work: Cambodia's Foreign Policy. By Roger M. Smith." *Pacific Affairs* 38, no. 3/4 (1965): 435-36.

⁵⁹ Kenton J. Clymer. "The perils of neutrality: The Break in US-Cambodian relations, 1965." *Diplomatic History* 23, no. 4 (1999): 609-631.

⁶⁰ Also, in Laura Summers. "Cambodia: Model of the Nixon doctrine." *Current History* 65, no. 388 (1973): 252-276. This work of literature hinted that the US, particularly, Nixon's administration had a fair share in making the neutrality of Cambodia lose its balance. In other words, it was the US foreign policy that caused a serious scar on the relations with Cambodia.

community not to recognize the Lon Nol government;⁶¹ most importantly, asked the US to stop intervening in Cambodia's affairs for that would only deteriorate the country's neutrality even further. And when the neutrality was lost, the US would be seeing what she had always feared; Cambodia leaning closer to the communist world.⁶² Sihanouk's voice for the country's neutrality did not go in vain. There are scholars who perceived that neutrality could have supported the country's prosperity if the balance was maintained in the sense that the economic aid would be flowing in from both blocs.⁶³ In the same manner, like economic well-being, neutrality was also the answer to the country's unity.⁶⁴

Several other scholars also emphasized the benefits of neutrality; that it was not only for Cambodia in ensuring the country's survival with her bigger neighbors but also for the stability of the region as well as the international politics amid the Cold War; that is, the neutrality of Cambodia (also Laos) could have worked as a "buffer zone" ⁶⁵ amid the rivals among the West and the Communist bloc. In later years, Sihanouk authored *War and hope: the case for Cambodia*. The book noted Sihanouk's remembrance of how the kingdom struggled through years of war and internal conflicts in the reflection on the heated international scene back then. Sihanouk also took the chance to stress his desire for the country to restore "neutrality."⁶⁶

⁶¹ Norodom Sihanouk. "Let My People Go." *The Nation* 211, no. 7 (1970): 198-199.

⁶² Norodom Sihanouk. "The Future of Cambodia." *Foreign Affairs* 49, no. 1 (1970): 1-10.

⁶³ P. C. Pradhan. "Sihanouk and The Formulation of Cambodian Foreign Policy." In *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, vol. 37, pp. 457-463. Indian History Congress, 1976.

⁶⁴ "Cambodia: Country without Parties." *Journal of Southeast Asian History* 8, no. 1 (1967): 40-51.

⁶⁵ Bernard Fall. "Cambodia's International Position." *Current History* 40, no. 235 (1961): 164-170.

⁶⁶ Norodom Sihanouk. *War and hope: The case for Cambodia* (Pantheon Books, 1980).

Akin to Smith and Gordon, Sok Udom Deth, a Cambodian scholar, studied the reasons behind the tragedy Cambodia suffered in the following decades in the post-Second Indochina War. His main arguments rest on three factors: the Vietnam war, the legacy of French colonial rule (the country's territorial disputes with her neighbors), and the rivalry of the hegemonic powers in the region under the circumstances of the Cold War. It was due to her geopolitical position in the Cold War that led Cambodia to such a tragic fate. Deth offered contextual analysis regarding the Cold War and the Vietnam War.⁶⁷ Yet, the aspects of foreign policy, as well as the detailed analysis of decision-makers, are not included in the equation.

Meanwhile, there are a handful of works that can be referenced on the individual level. Some renowned works closely examine Sihanouk and his foreign policy, like that of Milton Osborne who endeavored to give a deeper observation on Sihanouk as a leader who influenced the fate of the country; tracing from the beginning of his political life and how the young monarch matured in his political career.⁶⁸ Osborne's work hinted at Sihanouk's attribute in handling Cambodia's affairs throughout the Second Indochina War. Another work of literature—*Sihanouk Speaks*, recounted neutrality as “a permanent feature of Sihanouk's foreign policy.” The author provided explanations for Cambodia's neutrality, particularly through the perspective of Sihanouk with whom he had conducted interviews, personally. Armstrong concluded that Sihanouk “sees neutrality as an essential element in creating and maintaining national unity.”⁶⁹ Conversely, John L.S.

⁶⁷ Sok Udom Deth. "The geopolitics of Cambodia during the cold war period." (2009).

⁶⁸ Milton E. Osborne. *Sihanouk: Prince of light, prince of darkness* (University of Hawaii Press, 1994).

⁶⁹ John P. Armstrong. *Sihanouk speaks*. (New York: Walker, 1964), 143.

Girling examined Sihanouk's perspective in relation to both domestic and external affairs. In particular, his study presented how Sihanouk's "personification" myths linked to his overthrow in 1970. Girling also emphasized that Sihanouk imposed his myths on the nation leading to his miscalculations in conducting foreign policy.⁷⁰

Saphan Linda mentioned different sides of Sihanouk during his years in a political career. In her work, Linda's interest was placed upon Sihanouk's talents in arts. The author highlighted several masterpieces of Sihanouk in form of movies, songs, and so on. More importantly, Linda emphasized how Sihanouk inserted his political agenda into those artistic masterpieces while at the same time giving birth to "Cambodian Rock and Roll."⁷¹ Toch Sothiary, another Cambodian scholar, also briefly examined Sihanouk's leadership. The work however mainly focused on the current context of leadership in contemporary Cambodia that is based upon three main factors: strategic, operational, and responsive rather than the Second Indochina War period. Meanwhile, the Sihanouk and Lon Nol administrations in particular were emphasized briefly as background information.⁷²

To summarize, scholarly works concerning Sihanouk's foreign policy–neutrality can be seen in the following categories. Firstly, those that sought to explain the reasons behind Sihanouk's decision to be neutral. The second group highlighted the benefits and the shortcoming of foreign policy. Last but not least, the group that narrated Sihanouk's

⁷⁰ John Lawrence Scott Girling. "Cambodia and the Sihanouk myths" *Institute of Southeast Asian Studies*, no. 7 (1971).

⁷¹ Saphan LinDa. "Norodom Sihanouk and the political agenda of Cambodian music, 1955–1970." *The Newsletter* 64 (2013): 4-5.

⁷² Toch Sothiary. "Cambodia's Foreign Policy Leadership." *International Journal of Innovative Science and Research Technology* 3, no. 6 (2018).

journey of pursuing and/or verifying Cambodia's neutrality in the regional and international contexts. Despite various facades of focus, the most common ground concerning Sihanouk's foreign policy of neutrality is that at the beginning it was deemed well-suited for Cambodia and even successful to some extent. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that while there are numerous studies regarding Cambodia's foreign policy, particularly during Sihanouk's political administration during the Vietnam War crisis, literature work that examines Sihanouk's leadership characteristics in reflection on the policy of neutrality and Cambodia-US relations remain scarce in number.

2.3 Existing Literature on Lon Nol

The topic that seems to be of great interest to historians towards Cambodia would be Cambodia under the Sihanouk administration in the post-independent era, the military history of the civil war as well as the leading causes of the genocide that wiped out more than half of the country's population. Yet, currently, the scholarly works that study the details of Sihanouk's successor, the Lon Nol administration remain scarce in number.

For example, Kenneth Conboy studies the CIA covert operations in Cambodia as an effort of the US to assist the anti-Communist forces in Cambodia as well as to support the US military stations in the Vietnam War. He analyzed the period of the US assistance to the Khmer Republic and the period of Reagan and Bush presidencies (1981-1991); mainly highlighting the dark side of the role of the US and the CIA in Cambodia's civil war.⁷³ Likewise, Kenneth J. Conboy's book, *FANK: A History of the Cambodian Armed*

⁷³ Kenneth Conboy. *The Cambodian Wars: clashing armies and CIA covert operation* (University Press of Kansas, 2019).

Forces 1970-1975, listed comprehensive details of military armed forces within the period of the Khmer Republic. Although his work focused purely on military history, the book holds detailed descriptions of the Khmer Republic armed forces from the names of commanders in-charge to military regions to the sub-divisions of regiments, air force, navy, etc.⁷⁴ Kenneth R. Bowra wrote in his thesis about the military assistance provided by the US to Cambodia within the period of 1970-to 1975. He focused on the delivery of military equipment teams and the analysis of such assistance programs in the field of military training and tactics which the US had exercised at the time.⁷⁵

Similarly, Sak Sutsakhan a high-ranking military officer during the Khmer Republic, wrote a monograph of the situation in Cambodia while the Republic was on the verge of collapse. The monograph included precise details of major military operations, the military equipment under the US assistance program as well as the political situation in Cambodia under the Republic regime.⁷⁶ Another Cambodian author, Chantrabot Ros also took note of Lon Nol's administration. The book titled *La République Khmère* provided descriptive information of the Khmer Republic ranging from how the government was initially established, a timeline of significant historical events, government composition, and so on.⁷⁷ There is another scholarly work to inscribed detailed information of the Khmer Republic— *Area Handbook for the Khmer Republic*. Whilst the work only covered

⁷⁴ Kenneth J. Conboy. *FANK: a History of the Cambodian Armed Forces 1970-1975* / Ken Conboy. (Jakarta: Equinox Publishing, 2011).

⁷⁵ Kenneth R. Bowra. *Cambodia: Analysis of US Military Assistance to Cambodia, 1970-1975*. (Army Command and General Staff Coll Fort Leavenworth KS, 1983).

⁷⁶ Sak Sutsakhan. *The Khmer Republic at war and the final collapse* (US Army Center of Military History, 1980).

⁷⁷ Ros Chantrabot. *La Republique Khmère: 1970-1975*. (Editions L'Harmattan, 1993).

significant information about the republic up to 1973, Donald P. Whitaker wrote a vibrant historical background of Cambodia before and during the Khmer Republic.⁷⁸

In the same manner as Sak Sutsakhan, Boraden Nhem too studied the military history of Cambodia; only with a different timeframe of 1979-1991. His work *The Chronicle of a People's War* provided a comprehensive narration of Cambodia's civil war history. With the brief background of the Lon Nol administration as the starting point, he mainly examined the military tactics and decision-making in historical battles as well as the relations of weapon technology and tactics employed in the battlefields of the civil war at that time.⁷⁹

There are a few pieces of literature shying away from military aspects. For example, Sheldon W. Simon studied how various actors involved in the Indochina Conflict took their course under the control of mass media. The book highlighted the analytical aspects underlying the communications among the actors and/or governments during the time; for instance, how the greater powers like China and the US perceived Cambodia, and Vietnam(s) and attempted to achieve their goals respectively.⁸⁰ Peou Sorpong observed from a societal perspective within Cambodia throughout various political administrations. Her work covered a series of issues from armed conflicts, violence, legal development, the transition towards democracy, gender, and racial and economic development; among that, Lon Nol's administration was also included in one of the chapters. In short, the book

⁷⁸ Donald P. Whitaker, *Area Handbook for the Khmer Republic (Cambodia)*. Vol. 550, no. 50. (US Government Printing Office, 1973).

⁷⁹ Nhem Boraden. *The Chronicle of a People's War: The Military and Strategic History of the Cambodian Civil War, 1979–1991*. (Routledge, 2017).

⁸⁰ Sheldon W. Simon. *War and politics in Cambodia: A communications analysis*. (Duke University Press, 1974).

accumulates journal articles that offer insight regarding complex developments and transitions within Cambodian society that could lead to either further conflict or peace.⁸¹

2.4 Knowledge Gap

After a thorough examination of previous relevant scholarly works concerning the research topic— Cambodia’s foreign policy under the context of the Second Indochina War and the Vietnam War, it can be summarized as follows. The majority of scholarly works concerning the Vietnam War as well as the Second Indochina War are dominant by the focal point being placed on the greater powers’ side of the story; the examples are raised above from among studies focusing on the US. The second on the list of being put into the spotlight is Vietnam as well as the impacts of the war on the country. Whilst there are existing bodies of literature on Cambodia in the same timeframe, large proportions of studies mainly draw attention to Sihanouk’s regime and his policy of neutrality; most works stopped at that. On the one hand, Lon Nol’s administration has not been thoroughly discussed. It is almost rare to find scholarly works written about the administration; if any, the works tend to be in descriptive and/or narrative form of historical events.

The most common type of scholarly work found to be examined in Lon Nol’s administration is oftentimes associated with the military tactics and war aspects. In other words, the foreign policy aspect of Lon Nol’s administration has yet to be thoroughly examined. On a similar note, the research on foreign policy focuses on the perspective

⁸¹ Peou Sorpong, ed. *Cambodia: change and continuity in contemporary politics*. (Routledge, 2017).

of Cambodia– a country that became heavily involved in the Vietnam War, from the initial stage until the very end, written by Cambodian scholars is even scarce.

In this respect, this dissertation contributes to the current literature with the in-depth observation of not only the Sihanouk but also the Lon Nol administration regarding foreign policy analysis in reflection of their leadership characteristics and the Cambodia-US relations. Furthermore, this dissertation highlights the perspectives of Cambodia as a small state in Southeast Asia that was dragged into the nearby War soon after her independence. Essentially, this study's contributions also lie exclusively in thorough elucidations on the individual leaders' psychological facades which in this case not only on the famous Sihanouk administration but also his successor, the Lon Nol administration. The adoption of political psychological concepts intersecting with history will unveil the underlying determining factors in the making of Cambodia's foreign policy in the Second Indochina War and the United States from a broader dimension.

Chapter 3 Conceptual Framework

Man does not arrange his problems or divide them up neatly along lines laid down by academic disciplines...⁸²

For many decades after the birth of the study of Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA), almost like the mixing of various chemical substances for the sake of experiment in the laboratory, scholars of the field had been in constant race attempting to search for the exact hallmark for FPA. The puzzle is whether the FPA is of the social science, political science, international relations, or a combination of them all. Up to this point, prominent scholars of the related fields have yet clearly had their answer as to where exactly the FPA stands on the map. The race did not stop at just questioning where FPA belongs; scholars of the fields also embark on a more sophisticated quest — which approaches are best used in explaining and understanding the field of FPA. Employing the existing approaches ranging from the very fundamental social science theories to psychology, history, political science, international relations theories, etc., the discussions yet still go on.

One may ask is it important to even pinpoint the FPA onto the map of the mainstream fields of social science? This chapter aims to address the abovementioned questions and then demonstrates reasons how the multidimensional approach would best

⁸² Muzafer Sherif and Carolyn W. Sherif. "Interdisciplinary coordination as a validity check: retrospect and prospects." *Interdisciplinary relationships in the social sciences* (1969): 7. See also in Shanto Iyengar and William James McGuire. *Explorations in Political Psychology*. (Duke University Press, 1993), 3.

fit and thus be employed to analyze the foreign policy of small non-democratic states in times of crisis or wartime like Cambodia.

It should be noted that this chapter aims to explore and enunciates a suitable approach to understanding the foreign policy of small non-democratic states toward the greater powers amid political instability and/or international crisis like the world wars, and so on under the historical context. Since the core concern embeds in the lost episode of the state's foreign policy during crises and wartimes, finding a fitting approach to study the already scarce existing primary sources remains a great challenge to scholars interested in unveiling that missing piece of the history. This is another main reason not many scholars take up the challenge to examine the foreign policy of Cambodia, particularly Lon Nol's administration, the small non-democratic state; instead, many studies rather place the spotlight on the great powers or middle powers.

This chapter is divided into four sections. First, the work provides definitions of foreign policy commonly used among scholars and a brief of spectrums of the study of FPA. The second part discusses the mainstream approaches and debates among scholars regarding the approaches. The following section articulates how the use of the multidimensional approach would portray the study of Cambodia-US relations and its foreign policy amid the political administrations of Sihanouk and Lon Nol. Lastly, the anticipated risks in employing the multidimensional approach in the cases where history left us almost no evidence to quarry any deeper under the surface.

3.1 Understanding Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA)— by Definition

To quote one of the recent works of FPA, Chris Alden and Amnon Aran offered an overview of the study of FPA as below.

In a nutshell, foreign policy analysis (FPA) is the study of the conduct and practice of relations between different actors, primarily states, in the international system. ... At the heart of the field is an investigation into decision making, the individual decision makers, processes and conditions that affect foreign policy and the outcomes of these decisions.⁸³

Before jumping into the discussion regarding the abovementioned questions, it is crucial to first grasp the very idea of what foreign policy refers to. One can tell at a glance that the term “foreign policy” is the combination of two words: “foreign” and “policy”.

If to take the term as it is, “foreign policy” may infer to “policy” that is considered “foreign”. In the Cambodian language, for example, the term “foreign policy” is “នយោបាយការបរទេស” which refers to “policy for foreign affairs”.⁸⁴ Miriam M. Müller explained the term from the basic of the German word “Außenpolitik” for “foreign policy” whereby “Außen” literally means “external”.⁸⁵ Another German author, Wilfried Von Bredow, also used the notion of “außenpolitik” to coin out the definition for “foreign policy” as:

⁸³ Chris Alden and Amnon Aran. *Foreign policy analysis: new approaches*. (Routledge, 2017), 3.

⁸⁴ The term “នយោបាយការបរទេស” is rather an explanation rather than the literal translation of the term “foreign policy” itself. In Khmer language, the word “policy” is “នយោបាយ” and “ការបរទេស” means “foreign affairs”. Therefore, the term “នយោបាយការបរទេស” in Cambodia can be explained as “all policies designed for the sake of coping or dealing with matters associate with foreign countries.”

⁸⁵ Miriam M. Müller. *A Spectre is Haunting Arabia: how the Germans brought their Communism to Yemen*. (transcript Verlag, 2015), 49. For further discussion on the foreign policy of France and Germany, see also Ulrich Krotz. *History and foreign policy in France and Germany*. (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

The sum of all interactions of a state with other states or non-state actors outside its territorial borders. The state is represented by its government and claims [...and takes] ultimate responsibility for all external relevant actions of its citizens.⁸⁶

“Politique étrangère,” in French, is similar to that of Khmer with the combination of two words: politic and foreign drawing a clear yet simultaneously ambiguous line between external and domestic. Panayotis Soldatos discussed the concept of foreign policy—politique étrangère under the context of the European Community. The work offered distinctive definitions and debates of the term. “Politique étrangère” was explained in the context of the community by Soldatos as follows.

... a general rule, proactive and unilateral, responding to a specific systematic need of the actor, a community phenomenality (external relations) ... characterized by many periods of inaction...⁸⁷

Marian D. Irish and Elke Frank in *US Foreign Policy: Context, conduct, content* explained the general concept of “foreign policy”, for the US at least, as follows:

The foreign policy of the United States refers to the courses of action which official US policymakers determine to take, beyond the territorial jurisdiction of the United States, in

⁸⁶ See the original text in German in Wilfried Von Bredow. "Die Außenpolitik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland." [The foreign policy of the Federal Republic of Germany] *Eine Einführung, Wiesbaden* (2006):38.

⁸⁷ Panayotis Soldatos. "La théorie de la politique étrangère et sa pertinence pour l'étude des relations extérieures des Communautés européennes." [The theory of foreign policy and its relevance to the study of the external relations of the European Communities] *Études internationales* 9, no. 1 (1978): 7-42.

order to secure and advance the national interests of the American people, and to enhance the power and prestige of the United States in world affairs.⁸⁸

The abovementioned definitions are mere to exemplify how ambiguous the term “foreign policy” can get. The common grounds among them mainly give out the blurry image of how the affairs between the “external” and “internal” are differentiated. Soldatos too stressed several notches on what is missing out from the definitions of the term foreign policy. And what seems to be the most alluring part of studying the concept of foreign policy to most scholars apart from the definition, is the ambiguous “grey zone” demarcating between internal and external, the aims, purposes, and tools embedded in the conducting of the policy, and the actors involved, and so on. To quote P.J. McGowan, “at present there does not exist an agree-upon definition of foreign policy, nor do there exist well known and validated typologies and scales of foreign policy behavior.”⁸⁹

On the same ground, Charles F. Hermann pointed out that there are plenty of loopholes in between as to how the notion of “foreign policy” is being used so often yet remains undefined. He also underlined the importance of how one defines the concept of “foreign policy” would ultimately shape their understanding of how much foreign policy is being conducted or employed to achieve a certain goal. In other words, how one defines the term “foreign policy” is closely linked to how one perceives what is the designated

⁸⁸ Marian Doris Irish and Elke Frank. *US Foreign Policy: context, conduct, content*. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975), 1. See also in Maurice A. East, Stephen A. Salmore, and Charles F. Hermann, eds. *Why nations act: theoretical perspectives for comparative foreign policy studies*. Vol. 2. (SAGE Publications, Incorporated, 1978), 28.

⁸⁹ P. J. McGowan (éd.), *Sage International Yearbook of Foreign Policy Studies* (Beverly Hills, 1973, vol.1.) 11.

goal of the policy; this is where problems happen. It is still unclear or at least to Hermann, as he asks, "How does the analyst discern the true nature of a government's goals?"⁹⁰

3.2 Mainstream Approaches to FPA— The Intersection or New Borderlines?

The questions raised by Charles F. Hermann were not at all unprecedented; other scholars who work in this field also uncovered further intertwining knots— who has the power to set the "goals"? is it the individual leader, the government, or merely the reflection of the international system?

Without knowing where exactly the FPA belongs in the vast spectrums of social science, it is hardly possible to propose any approach to study FPA to its full potential. Thus, in answering the questions posit earlier in the introductory part of the article why scholars of various fields of social science have been trying to constantly situate FPA into the map, or in other words, into their fields of expertise, that is to find the fitting approaches to study foreign policy among nations. Below are examples of the predominant approaches use in studying the FPA.

Joseph De Rivera, one of the prominent scholars in the field of FPA, is famous for his attempt in taking the comprehension of FPA to another new level. He proposed the observation of the FPA from the perspective of psychology. In his book, *The Psychological Dimension of Foreign Policy*, he wrote:

⁹⁰ Charles F. Hermann, "Foreign policy behavior: That which is to be explained." *Why nations act: Theoretical perspectives for comparative foreign policy studies* (1978): 25-47. 31.

One danger of taking psychology for granted is the danger of failing to see that things could have happened differently if man had behaved differently— something he is quite capable of doing when he achieves an awareness of his determinants. ...Any analysis that divorces history, political science, psychology, and other social sciences is apt to be incomplete and somewhat misleading.⁹¹

With his work, De Rivera highlighted one important clue that later sparks the interest of other researchers; that is, to shift the conventional approach of using IR theories to examine FPA to a look through a psychological perspective. He stressed on the unique nature of mankind as one of the elements not to be taken for granted.⁹² Prior to De Rivera, Herbert C. Kelman also demonstrated the crucial element that scholars should not overlook when studying international relations; that is, individual attitudes as he writes “I shall try to show, first, that there are certain specific aspects of foreign policy to which the study of individual attitudes and cross-national interactions does have direct relevance.”⁹³

Sharing the same view on employing a multidimensional approach, Joseph Frankel suggested the incorporation of historical context into the analysis of foreign policymaking. His suggestions included an in-depth inspection of three stages — the pre-decisional, the decisional, and the post-decisional. In addition to that, Frankel examined not only decision-makers, he also explored domestic and international settings making

⁹¹ Joseph De Rivera and James N. Rosenau. *The psychological dimension of foreign policy*. Columbus, (Ohio: CE Merrill Publishing Company, 1968),2.

⁹² De Rivera and Rosenau, *Ibid.*, 3.

⁹³ Herbert C. Kelman. "Social-psychological approaches to the study of international relations: Definition of scope." *International behavior: A social-psychological analysis* (1965): 566.

the observations even more vibrant.⁹⁴ Similar to that of Joseph Frankel, Robert Jervis et.al. employed a psychological approach to explain the making of foreign policy by incorporating several historical events. Observing psychological variables including motives, policy-makers emotions, and so on, Jervis and his colleagues eventually develop the well-known theory of deterrence in relation to psychological determinants.⁹⁵

The application of multidisciplinary approaches to observe the FPA soon becomes a trend. Scholarly works of the following decades no longer place the focal point only on state or international context, attention is now being shifted to the psychological facades of the individuals. Eric Singer and Valerie M. Hudson in their work *Political Psychology and Foreign Policy* emphasized the connections between cognition, perception, and personality, the main determinants of political psychology, and the conducting of foreign policy. In the international context where political leaders face various dilemmas, their personalities share a fair amount of impact on the making of foreign policy.⁹⁶ Valerie M. Hudson took another step further by bridging three major fields — history, political psychology, and theory of IR, the author conceptualized the *actor-specific* theory from the

⁹⁴ Joseph Frankel. *The making of foreign policy: An analysis of decision making*. Vol. 200. (London; New York: Oxford University Press, 1963).

⁹⁵ Robert Jervis, Richard Ned Lebow, and Janice Gross Stein. *Psychology and deterrence*. (JHU Press, 1989).

⁹⁶ Eric Singer and Valerie M. Hudson. "Conclusion: political psychology/foreign policy, the cognitive revolution, and international relations." *Political psychology and foreign policy* (1992). The latest version of the book is published in 2020. See further in Singer, Eric, and Valerie M. Hudson. *Political psychology and foreign policy*. Routledge, 2020. Eric Singer and Hudson also shared their scholarly work with Helen E. Purkitt in 1992 in conceptualizing the political decision-making process of small groups using the Cuban missile crisis as their case study. For further information, see Helen E. Purkitt. "Political decision making in small groups: The Cuban missile crisis revisited—One more time." *Political psychology and foreign policy* (1992): 219-245.

conventional IR theories that focus mainly on states as the key actors in conducting affairs across nations.⁹⁷

Resounding with the previous works, Rose McDermott advocated the importance of multidisciplinary in the field of political science and international relations. Challenging with major IR theories like realism, liberalism, constructivism, and rational choice theory, McDermott stresses that individual matters for each policymaker might have their uniqueness; therefore, when deciding on foreign policy, they do not always follow a pattern of rational behavior. On the other hand, Aaron Rapport partly embraces the conjunct part of political psychology and IR theories. Departing from the *rational choice* theory and the *role* theory of the constructivist, he proposed the use of cognitive approaches in FPA in which he based his observation on individual leaders' beliefs, identities, images, and so on.⁹⁸

The discussion on crossing boundaries between FPA and political psychology would have been incomplete without mentioning literature works from Margaret G. Hermann. Her works can be considered as one of the hallmarks that insert sets of conceptual schemes of political psychology determinants into the field of FPA along with empirical datasets for further fellow scholars. For instance, her work *Explaining foreign policy behavior using the personal characteristics of political leaders* examined the personal characteristics of political leaders of 45 heads of government and the impacts

⁹⁷ Valerie M. Hudson, "Foreign policy analysis: Actor-specific theory and the ground of international relations." *Foreign policy analysis* (2005): 1-30.

⁹⁸ Aaron Rapport. "Cognitive Approaches to Foreign Policy Analysis." In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*. 2017.

the characteristics have on foreign policy behaviors.⁹⁹ In 1986, Hermann authored *Ingredients of Leadership* proposing conceptual schemes explaining political leaders' behavior in the making of foreign policy as well as conducting domestic affairs.¹⁰⁰

By this point is almost clear that the field of FPA has been developed indeed from the interactions among states and non-state actors in the international system; that is part of the undeniable connections the FPA shares with the field of IR and political science. The shared connections are so close that scholars of these related fields tend to overlook the 'amalgam' nature of FPA and limit the approach in studying the FPA to either that of IR theories or solely of social science. However, as established in the relevant literature above, through decades of ongoing discussions and debates on which approach is suitable for understanding the complicated nature of FPA, it appears that the combination of approaches of major fields of social science like that of IR theories, political psychology, political science, and history, is still appropriate in picturing the FPA rather than the use of merely one conventional approach.

Likewise, besides pinpointing the intersection between FPA and the three major fields of social science mentioned above, the figure itself also indicates the stance of this research in the academic fields; that is where each sphere of the major fields collided. The author illustrated the figure below so to sum up the exemplification of the literary works mentioned above.

⁹⁹ Margaret G. Hermann. "Explaining foreign policy behavior using the personal characteristics of political leaders." *International studies quarterly* 24, no. 1 (1980): 7-46.

¹⁰⁰ Margaret G. Hermann. "Ingredients of leadership" In *Political Psychology*. (San Francisco, 1986), 167-192.

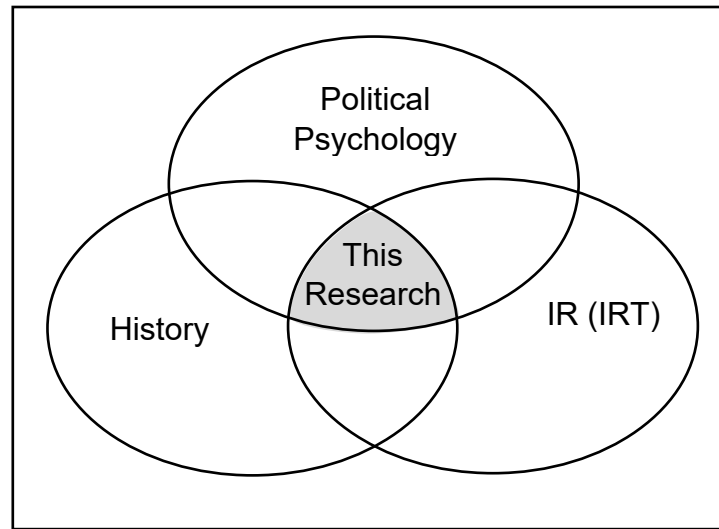


Fig. 1: Intersections between FPA and three major fields of Social Science.

Note: Each borderline represents fields (FPA, History, Political Psychology, and IR) and approaches of social science discussed previously in the section above.

Source: Illustrated by the author.

3.3 The Conceptual Framework

This section illustrates the conceptual framework employed in this dissertation. Particularly, the section articulates factors to be examined at each dimension, namely individual factors and domestic factors. Figure 2 below shows the author's proposition to include in the multidimensional approach of FPA to reflect the intricate nature of small non-democratic states during wartime.

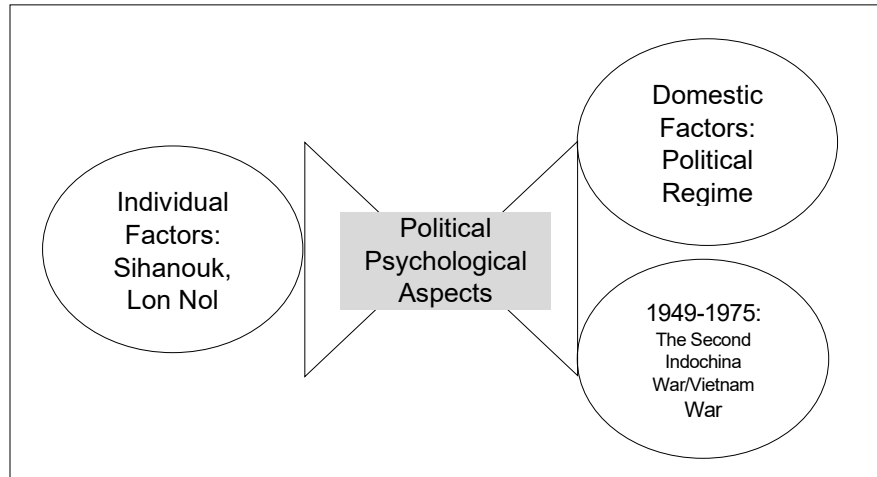


Fig. 2: The application of a multidimensional approach to the theme topic

Source: Illustrated by the author.

To reiterate precisely, for individual factors, this research explicitly examines the top political leaders of Cambodia during the Second Indochina War, namely, Sihanouk and Lon Nol. The political psychological aspects (political beliefs, leadership style, motivation, reactions to stress, and background factors) are used to decipher the perspectives and attributes of both leaders in conducting the foreign policy toward the US. As for domestic factors, the author inspects the political regime of Cambodia at that time; that is, the autocratic regime under a monarch and military man. Through this, the study probes for possible the fragilities existing in the regime and the manners the autocratic leaders cope with such frails. Last but not least, the situational factor– the period of both Sihanouk and Lon Nol political administration from 1949 to 1975 that covered the Second Indochina War along with the Vietnam War; the political phenomenon that Cambodia

inevitably had to encounter. It is a given historical event serving as background information when assessing the individual and domestic factors.

3.3.1 The Individual Factors

To be precise, as shown in the diagram, the author suggests the political psychological concepts as the backbone to examine the underlying factors deemed to influence or impact the perception and behavior of the top political leaders of small non-democratic states. The political psychological concepts suggested by Margaret G. Hermann will be employed in order to thoroughly articulate top political leaders' attitudes and characteristics.¹⁰¹ The main concepts are summarized in table 1 below.

Political Beliefs	Each political leader is bound by his/her own basic political beliefs; such beliefs determine the strategies or route in which he/she would lead the country.
Leadership Style	How a leader interacts with his/her political units. The leader's preference in working individually or with a team, for instance, can indicate his or her effects on the subordinates.
Motivation	The main motivation to be in one political position, for example, to seek approval or recognition, will drive the leader to take action to achieve that motive.
Reactions to Stress	Being a political leader by no means makes them resilient to stress; yet, with such challenging and supreme positions, stressful situations serve as trials to his/her leadership.
Background Factors	The background factors such as previous political experiences, how he/she was recruited into the position; and the political context when he/she starts to rule would help determine the political behavior afterward.

¹⁰¹ Margaret G. Hermann. "Explaining foreign policy behavior using the personal characteristics of political leaders." *International studies quarterly* 24, no. 1 (1980): 7-46; also in, Margaret G. Hermann. "Ingredients of leadership" In *Political Psychology*. (San Francisco, 1986), 167-192.

Table 1: Five Personal Characteristics

Source: This table was compiled by this author to simplify the *Personal Characteristics* of political leaders used to further analyze the political leadership of political leaders based upon Rhodes, Rod AW, and Paul T. Hart (2014).¹⁰²

There are three reasons the author proposes the concept of political psychology to assess the individual factors for this research. Firstly, as emphasized earlier that the work particularly studies the timeframe of the wartime crisis. Not long after her independence in the 1950s, Cambodia was soon dragged into the Second Indochina War followed by decades of political instability and the genocide in the 1970s that almost totally scrapped off the entire Khmer race of world chronology. Thus, in the case of Cambodia which went through genocide and decades of unrest, a fair number of primary sources were destroyed by war and the genocide while some perished due to poor preservation methods. Primary sources under Sihanouk's administration (the 1940s-1970) can be accessed vastly and have been studied by both westerns and Cambodian historians as well as other related specialists. On the contrary, the remaining primary sources of his successor, Lon Nol's administration (1970-1975), are so scarce in number; consequently, there is barely a handful of previous scholarly works bold enough to study of FPA of the Lon Nol. That being the case, by observing from the psychological aspects of the top

¹⁰² See full text in R. A. W. Rhodes and Paul T. Hart, eds. *The Oxford handbook of political leadership*. (Oxford University Press, 2014). The table was firstly included in another article by the author in the Journal of the Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies. No.39 (2020.3), 1-15.

political leaders, one would be able to grasp underpinning clues from another dimension with the existing primary sources in hand.

Secondly, given the imbalance of the number of primary sources available, the attempt to compare the foreign policies of two political administrations amidst the wartime would have invited many contested views. Thus, assessing the foreign policies of Cambodia toward the US from the political psychological approach would help avoid or to the very least mitigate any viable misapprehension from referring to the unequally remaining primary sources of the two administrations. Relatively, this approach will not only unveil the underlying factors behind the making of the foreign policies of the administrations from another dimension that has yet to be explored by other researchers but will also compensate for the lack of primary sources and help maintain the consistency while comparing the two administrations.

Thirdly, in particular, for a small non-democratic state at the nation-building stage like Cambodia, the top political leader often has the power to make the final call in the making of foreign policy in contrast to the democratic way. Therefore, public opinion might have little to no effect on the final decision. Gabriel A. Almond and G. Bingham Powell emphasized that “every political system is continually involved in *recruiting* individuals into political roles.” Such individuals bring along their beliefs, values, and so on as they take up their political roles.¹⁰³ Thus, without an in-depth examination of top political leaders’ psychological facades, there is a fair chance that one would be inclined to conclude that the outcome of the foreign policy is merely one of the stereotypes of the

¹⁰³ Gabriel A. Almond and G. Bingham Powell. *Comparative politics: A developmental approach*. No. JF51 A57. 1966: 22.

“non-democratic states”. In other words, by scrutinizing from the political psychological approach, one would be able to uncover different grounds that explicate the making of the foreign policy of the administrations.

In sum, the function of the political psychological aspects (as shown in figure 2) is like the lens through which individual leaders see their state and the international environment; and it is also through this very same lens that reflects individual leaders’ beliefs and values to the state and the international world in forms of decisions, the so-called “foreign policy”.

3.3.2 The Domestic Factors: Autocratic Regime at the Nation-building Stage

The author examines the political regime as a domestic setting for the small non-democratic states. In this dimension, the author refers mainly to relevant literature on political regimes in particular those of the non-democratic countries at the nation-building stage. Before going into detailed concepts regarding autocratic regimes, it is noteworthy to cast a quick glimpse at some of the scholarly works of comparative politics. The set of literature below includes the integrations and the study of correlations between individual leaders and political types.

For instance, Harold D. Lasswell’s work, *Power and Personality*, studied the personality of political leaders concerning power and exemplified some powerful leaders in ancient times like Genghis Khan, and Alexander the Great who were raised in favorable circumstances. Lasswell stressed the environment in which those eminent leaders were trained and educated to be “the subject of power” and those who were behind them. These factors were considered as the pushing forces to cultivate the personality of such

great and powerful leaders. He also emphasized the link between political types and basic forms of personality development.¹⁰⁴

Gabriel A. Almond and G. Bingham Powell provided overviews on the development of approaches to comparative politics. In their work, both authors defined the term “political system” as “made up of the interacting roles of nationals, subjects, voters, ...” The authors also demonstrated the flow of inputs and outputs used to explain the interactions among ‘*roles*’ of individuals in society and how that gradually make the entire structure evolves into what they called ‘the *psychological dimension*’ of political culture — attitudes, beliefs, values.¹⁰⁵ Meanwhile, Jeffrey S. Lantis and Ryan Beasley examined the evolution of comparative foreign policy analysis as the subfield of IR. Key indicators including ‘*role theory*’, international pressures, and/or momentous events are deemed as external factors influencing individual decision-makers in conducting foreign policies. The article also highlighted some significant scholarly works that draw attention to key variables— individual leaders, and internal and external factors.¹⁰⁶

Bahgat Korany studied the foreign policy of Third-World countries. The work's focal attention was placed upon the empirical data of countries in the Middle East and North Africa. This work also critiqued the contemporary FPA theories that despite the awareness of barriers like local political, social taboos, ‘*lesson of history*’, and so on.

¹⁰⁴ H. D. Lasswell. *Power and Personality*. Transaction Publishers, 2009. pp.41-61.

¹⁰⁵ Gabriel A. Almond and G. Bingham Powell, *Comparative Politics: A developmental approach*, 19-25.

¹⁰⁶ Jeffrey S. Lantis and Ryan Beasley. "Comparative foreign policy analysis." *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics* (2017).

Additionally, the author noted that FPA scholars are still prone to bias and generalization when it comes to selecting suitable case studies and theory-building.¹⁰⁷

Scholarly works above emphasized the close connections the individual leaders shared with the internal and external factors as they came into their political positions. In other words, the individual leaders and their surrounding environment. In this sense, ranking from their history, the society in which they were raised and grown in are gradually inflicted into their way of making choices in their political sphere.

To assess Cambodia's relationship with the US from the aspects of the political regime— the autocratic regime, the first thing one needs to grasp is the perspectives of both political leaders; the second is what kind of regimes they were leading. In this sense, it is to understand the notion of what an 'autocratic regime' is and how is it that Cambodia is one of the kind. Therefore, it would be helpful to first understand the concepts related to the autocratic regime.

The study about the autocratic regime would have been incomplete without mentioning a set of literature from prominent scholars. *Autocracy*—the concept dated back even before the notion of the modern sovereign state. The earliest autocratic government is believed to have existed in the ancient Greek and Athenian sometime around the fifth century.¹⁰⁸ Fast forward to the twenty-first century where the world order had changed

¹⁰⁷ Bahgat Korany. "Analyzing Third-World Foreign Policies: A Critique and a Reordered Research Agenda." In *The Political Economy of Foreign Policy in Southeast Asia*, pp. 21-37. (Palgrave Macmillan, London, 1990), 22.

¹⁰⁸ Mark Douglas Fisher. "Heroic Democracy: Thucydides, Pericles, and the Tragic Science of Athenian Greatness." PhD diss., (UC Berkeley, 2017), 1.

several times, the concept is yet to be given a clear definition; not to mention unify definition of what is “autocracy.”

The most fundamental definition of autocracy refers to “a system of government by one person with absolute power.”¹⁰⁹ Barbara Geddes, one of the prominent scholars in the field came up with the definition of an autocratic regime as “a set of formal and informal rules for choosing leaders and policies.”¹¹⁰ Despite the ambiguity in defining the concept itself, the study of autocratic regimes had been thriving significantly along with those of democratic regimes since the end of the Cold War.¹¹¹ Until the early twenty-first century, studies on autocracy had been constantly debated particularly regarding the nature of the regime, its category and how or what made it fail, and so on.¹¹²

To name a few scholars, Barbara Geddes, among the aged scholars in the field, accentuated and interpreted empirical data of autocratic regimes in the world then proposed typologies for the autocratic regime: party-based, military rule, and personalist.¹¹³ Adding upon Geddes, fellow scholars of autocratic studies have been contributing to the existing typologies of the regime by taking into account more detailed

¹⁰⁹ See Oxford English Dictionary Online, s.v. “autocracy, n.,” Last accessed January 05, 2019, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/autocracy>.

¹¹⁰ Joseph Wright, and Daehee Bak. “Measuring autocratic regime stability.” *Research & Politics* 3, no. 1 (2016): 2053168015626606. See also, Barbara Geddes, Joseph Wright, and Erica Frantz. “Autocratic breakdown and regime transitions: A new data set.” *Perspectives on politics* 12, no. 2 (2014): 313-331. See also, Barbara Geddes. “Authoritarian breakdown.” Manuscript. *Department of Political Science*, UCLA (2004).

¹¹¹ Aurel Croissant, and Stefan Wurster. “Performance and persistence of autocracies in comparison: introducing issues and perspectives.” *Contemporary Politics* 19, no. 1 (2013): 1-18.

¹¹² Anastassia Obydenkova, and Alexander Libman. “Understanding the foreign policy of autocratic actors: ideology or pragmatism? Russia and the Tymoshenko trial as a case study.” *Contemporary politics* 20, no. 3 (2014): 347-364.

¹¹³ Barbara Geddes. “What do we know about democratization after twenty years?” *Annual review of political science* 2, no. 1 (1999): 115-144.

information. For instance, Axel Hadenius and Jan Teorell diligently observed datasets from the sociological approach to reckon the necessity of including the legislature and institutional settings into the equation; making typologies more diverse than those suggested by Geddes.¹¹⁴

In a different manner, José Antonio Cheibub et al thoroughly inspected the original status of autocratic leaders whether he or she was a monarch, military personal, or civilian as a major factor for the classification.¹¹⁵ In conjunction with her previous work, Geddes included another fundamental element in measuring the very structure of autocratic ruling, personalism, to disburse previous methods of the regimes proving that structure of autocratic regimes can be measured from other dimensions even with the same existing datasets.¹¹⁶

By understanding various types of autocratic regimes, these scholars have implanted seeds for further analytical literature on how a particular type of autocratic regime could maintain its existence and stability. Notably, in addition to dissimilar methods in clustering regimes typology, some scholarly works also offered inspection of the regime stability by observing different dimensions of information including the size of

¹¹⁴ Axel Hadenius, and Jan Teorell. "Pathways from authoritarianism." *Journal of democracy* 18, no. 1 (2007): 143-157.

¹¹⁵ José Antonio Cheibub, Jennifer Gandhi, and James Raymond Vreeland. "Democracy and dictatorship revisited." *Public choice* 143, no. 1-2 (2010): 67-101.

¹¹⁶ Barbara Geddes, James Honaker, and Joseph Wright. "'Measuring What You Can't See' The Latent Characteristics That Structure Autocratic Rule." In *Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Philadelphia, PA*. 2014.

government, group, or individual values in which autocratic leaders accumulated their support using the Polity index¹¹⁷ as the indicators in measuring the foregoing variables.¹¹⁸

Notwithstanding the fact that a series of previous studies on autocratic regimes attempt to explore comprehensive explanations as well as to seek feasible methodologies to measure the stability of the regime, the majority of standards and variables used in scrutinizing the regimes are heavily based upon the standard measurements of the democratic regime.¹¹⁹ Exploiting this deficiency Joseph Wright and Daehee Bak introduced new barometers to probe the political stability of the autocratic regime. They detected the government's attributes in allocating the non-tax revenue and unearned foreign income then evaluate whether these factors disturb the stability of the regime.¹²⁰

Hitherto, another cluster of literature concerning autocratic regimes expands from the typologies of the regime to elucidate on how the regimes survive, fail, or head toward transition along with determining forces behind the phenomena. For example, Axel Hadenius and Jan Teorell, employing different typologies from Geddes, revealed various

¹¹⁷ Polity Index refers to a set of indicators in the dataset used in the "Polity IV Project" to document and analyze the political regime characteristics and transitions of countries in the world from 1800-2016. For further details, see Monty G. Marshall, Ted Robert Gurr, and Keith Jagers. "Polity IV project: Political regime characteristics and transitions, 1800–2016." *Center for Systemic Peace* (2017).

¹¹⁸ Jennifer Gandhi. "Political institutions under dictatorship." (2008). Also see Bruce Bueno De Mesquita, Alastair Smith, Randolph M. Siverson, and James D. Morrow. "The logic of political survival." (2003).

¹¹⁹ Barbara Geddes, James Honaker, and Joseph Wright. "'Measuring What You Can't See' The Latent Characteristics That Structure Autocratic Rule." In *Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Philadelphia, PA*. 2014.

¹²⁰ Joseph Wright, and Daehee Bak. "Measuring autocratic regime stability." *Research & Politics* 3, no. 1 (2016): 2053168015626606.

life spans of autocratic regimes. Among all, monarchy lasted the longest, up to 25.4 years on average while the military-led regime's average life span could last up to 11.1 years.¹²¹

On the other hand, Timothy Besley and Masayuki Kudamatsu embarked on the examination regarding with leader of the autocratic regime; they argued that the survival of autocratic does not necessarily limit to economic growth but the role of the institution as well as the nomination of accountable leader, too, contribute to the persistence of the regime.¹²² Correlated to the hypothesis about leader turnover and growth, Joseph Wright analyzed how foreign aid could be the leading force of democratization to autocratic regimes along with a comprehensive discussion on how autocratic leaders respond distinctively to foreign aid conditioned with democratization in the future.¹²³ Similar to the notion of foreign aid nurturing democracy, Abel Escribà-Folch and Joseph Wright looked deeper into the aspects of foreign policy tools including foreign aid, economic sanction, and military interventions. These foreign pressures could be the essential tool in disrupting the survival of autocratic regimes; thus, opening the door for democracy to prevail or at least destabilize the regime.¹²⁴

In addition to the observation of the leader of the regime, some scholars emphasized the level of openness of autocratic regimes to international actors or communities when it comes to promoting democracy. Their hypothesis stressed how far

¹²¹ Axel Hadenius, and Jan Teorell. "Pathways from authoritarianism." *Journal of democracy* 18, no. 1 (2007): 143-157.

¹²² Timothy Besley and Masayuki Kudamatsu. "Making autocracy work." *Institutions and economic performance* (2008): 452-510.

¹²³ Joseph Wright. "How foreign aid can foster democratization in authoritarian regimes." *American journal of political science* 53, no. 3 (2009): 552-571.

¹²⁴ Abel Escribà-Folch, Joseph Wright, and Joseph George Wright. *Foreign pressure and the politics of autocratic survival*. (Oxford Studies in Democratization, 2015).

the authority of autocracies may employ legal and legitimacy in dealing with domestic issues like protest or repression. The strategy chosen by the autocratic authority in coping with such issues could shed light on how the regime transit to another type of political system.¹²⁵

On the other hand, Geddes et al investigated deeper on a new set of data from the codebook of authoritarian regimes, democracy and dictatorship, Polity index, and so forth to study possible routes for autocratic transitions. They found that different types of autocratic regimes or dictatorships may result in different routes of transition. In other words, typologies determine the upcoming regime in which they suggested three main routes. That is, the autocratic regimes continue to persist but with new leaders coming from the same ruling group; leaders coming from different groups bring about a new type of autocracy; and the democratic election takes place as the leadership of the autocratic ruling loses control.¹²⁶

In the meantime, there is also literature on autocracy with the main focus placed upon economic facets. Essentially, Easterly studied the relations of economic growth and factors in autocratic regimes such as leadership role, administration system itself, and so on. He also explained these variables in comparison with those of democratic.¹²⁷

¹²⁵ Peter Burnell. "Autocratic opening to democracy: why legitimacy matters." *Third World Quarterly* 27, no. 4 (2006): 545-562.

¹²⁶ Barbara Geddes, Joseph Wright, and Erica Frantz. "Autocratic breakdown and regime transitions: A new data set." *Perspectives on politics* 12, no. 2 (2014): 313-331.

¹²⁷ William Easterly. "Benevolent autocrats." *Work. Pap., Dev. Res. Inst., New York Univ., New York* (2011).

Correspondingly, Dag Tanneberg et al also touched explicitly upon the economic aspects. Based on arguments from previous studies hinting that autocratic failed due to economic crisis, the authors explicated the clue that autocratic have their ways of tackling the economic mishap. Particularly, they explained the risk of economic problems that might lead to mass demonstrations which resulted in repression from the autocratic leader in either soft or hard repression, accordingly; the process of repression might as well provoke transitions towards democracy.¹²⁸

In short, from the set of previous studies mentioned above, there are several basic assumptions about autocratic regimes that can be summarized as follows.

1. Majority of scholars agree upon three main typologies of autocratic regimes: Monarchy, military, and Party.
2. Fragilities of autocratic regimes come in form of poor economic performances, inefficient allocation of government revenues, and the role of the institution.
3. The outside forces that can stir up the stability of the autocratic regimes are foreign policy tools including foreign aid, economic sanctions as well as military intervention.

In answering how Cambodia was included in the list of autocratic regimes, one needs to refer to the definition of the regime once again. As stated earlier in the introductory chapter, this dissertation references Barbara Geddes's definition; "a set of formal and/or informal rules for choosing leaders and policies; there can be multiple

¹²⁸ Dag Tanneberg, Christoph Stefes, and Wolfgang Merkel. "Hard times and regime failure: autocratic responses to economic downturns." *Contemporary Politics* 19, no. 1 (2013): 115-129.

regimes within an autocratic spell.” Based on this definition and coding rules,¹²⁹ Barbara Geddes and her colleagues coded Cambodia into the list of autocratic regimes: Cambodia from 1953 to 1970 monarchy-ruled, and from 1970 to 1975 personal-ruled.¹³⁰ Henceforth, in observing the domestic factors, the autocratic regimes’ elements including economic performance, life spans, and foreign aid will be examined into-depth.

In this manner, the analysis of domestic factors serves as additional dimensions layered upon the perception of leaders. There are several reasons for exploring the relationship between Cambodia and the US from the dimension of domestic factors with the concept of the political regime—the autocracy. Firstly, as each type of autocratic regime has its very own characteristic, examining the political regime of Cambodia at the time would provide sophisticated and fundamental circumstances of the political administrations; that could hint further on to the country’s attitude toward foreign assistance, as well as how the regime flourish or worst, collapse.

Secondly, that is, not to disregard any possible variable as well as the unique characteristic of the non-democratic countries at the nation-building stage during wartime. The non-democratic states at the nation-building stage tend to have poor economic performance.¹³¹ For example, amidst the Second Indochina War and the Cold War, the world was divided into two blocs of ideology; the region of Southeast Asia too was no exception from such international dilemmas. Countries like Indonesia and Cambodia,

¹²⁹ Geddes, Joseph Wright, and Erica Frantz, *"Autocratic breakdown and regime transitions: A new data set."*, 1-19.

¹³⁰ Geddes, Joseph Wright, and Erica Frantz., *Ibid.*

¹³¹ Dag Tanneberg, Christoph Stefes, and Wolfgang Merkel, "Hard times and regime failure: autocratic responses to economic downturns."

although chose to remain neutral during the early phase of the Second Indochina War, were eventually forced to lean toward either side of the ideological bloc in turn for foreign assistance for the sake of their nation-building. Thence, assessing from this approach would highlight various perspectives of small non-democratic states like Cambodia in war as well as the dilemmas they encountered when conducting the foreign policy toward the greater powers.

3.3.3 The Situational Factors

There are also plenty of scholarly works that studied the relations of individual leaders and the surrounding circumstances beyond the domestic factors. Listed below are some examples of literature that looked into how the leadership of an individual comes into connection with a war-like situation.

Jesse S. Michel studied leadership coherence in a social-cognitive approach. In his work, Michel pointed out two main approaches to understanding leadership behavior: person-oriented and situation-oriented. Then he proposed the integration of both models (Person x Situation Interaction Approaches) along with psychological theories used in discussing the approaches.¹³² In addition to Jesse S. Michel's work, Stephen Benedict Dyson attempted to integrate the multi-dimensional approach (Individual level x War/International level) to explain Tony Blair's decision in attacking Iraq alongside with Bush administration. The work mined into the personality of Tony Blair to understand the underlying reasons behind Blair's decision to support Bush in the War in Iraq despite having to encounter criticism at home. Dyson concluded that the leader's personality

¹³² Jesse S. Michel. *Leadership coherence: Initial validation of a social-cognitive approach to leadership*. (Wayne State University, 2007).

under some circumstances becomes a crucial factor in making foreign policy.¹³³ On similar grounds, Deborah Welch Larson is another author to focus on “situational crisis” to construct the origin of the infamous ‘*containment policy*’ of the US. Deborah employed psychological theories as the core approach in explaining the origin of containment policy under Truman’s administration.¹³⁴

Based on Waltz’s three images, Elias Götz revisited the case of Russia’s involvement in the Ukraine crisis. Götz proposed the integrated version of the three images as a synthetic approach to examining the foreign policy of Russia. The work studied Putin’s personality, belief system, as well as his view of the world to discuss how Russia would have conducted foreign policy differently without Putin as the top decisionmaker. On the state level, Götz looked at institutional elements like regime survival and domestic politics. In his work, Götz incorporated the theory of regime-security where he linked this to how Putin’s leadership draws public opinion from domestic instability toward the current crisis in Ukraine instead. Here, Götz highlighted the connection between domestic politics with the situation abroad. Then, on the international level, Götz’s assumption placed upon the national identity and prestige; what he referred to as ‘*ideational explanations*’ and ‘*geopolitical explanations*’, the urge to seek prestigious status as the great power and pressure or opportunity presents in the international system.¹³⁵

¹³³ Stephen Benedict Dyson. "Personality and foreign policy: Tony Blair's Iraq decisions." *Foreign Policy Analysis* 2, no. 3 (2006): 289-306.

¹³⁴ Deborah Welch Larson, *Origins of containment: A psychological explanation*. (Princeton University Press, 1985).

¹³⁵ Elias Götz. "Putin, the state, and war: The causes of Russia’s near abroad assertion revisited." *International Studies Review* 19, no. 2 (2017): 228-253.

As previously stated in the introductory chapter that situational factors like war and/or international crisis are considered to be a fixed variable of the entire equation; the core focus of the re-visiting Cambodia-US relations is being placed on the individual and domestic factors. Precisely, Cambodia's side of the story and her perspective in conducting the relations and foreign policy towards the US. Since under the context of wartime crises like the Second Indochina War and Vietnam War, a small non-democratic country like Cambodia had no chance of evading the war due to the fact that geographically she directly shared the border with the Vietnams. Not to mention, in either the Second Indochina War or the Vietnam War itself, Cambodia was not the actual party to the war, but simply the nearest by-passer who happened to be dragged into the event. Therefore, this political phenomenon essentially serves as the background scenario to limit the research timeframe as well as to provide basic information regarding significant historical events that triggered the decision-making of the individual political leaders of Cambodia.

3.4. The Anticipating Risks

It is a well-aware fact among scholars working in the field of FPA that there have been many attempts in integrating multiple approaches from different spectrums of social science. However, like the abovementioned scholarly works, though the level-of-analysis and multidimensional approach are often seen used among scholars, those who attempt to employ all multi-level/dimensions at a time to scrutinize the case study remain small in number. And very often, the attempts to use the three-in-one formula invite critiques and are always under watchful eyes as it is considered to be the overarching objective or even unrealistic.

J. David Singer¹³⁶ and Barry Buzan¹³⁷ are among scholars who look into details and calculate the risks in integrating the level of analysis and/or the bold attempt in squeezing more than one approach in IR as well as FPA. Metaphorically, they emphasize, it is like having to “choose between the flowers or the garden, the rocks or the quarry, the trees or the forest, the houses or the neighborhood, ...”¹³⁸ Miriam M Müller also emphasized the risk of employing more than two levels or images at once, as she referred to Waltz’s work.¹³⁹ Chris Alden and Amnon Aran also echoed such risks mentioned in previous literature.¹⁴⁰ Maurice A. East, too, included the anticipated risks of integrating different perspectives in his work and added that the risks however cannot outweigh the pros of combining multiple approaches, either.¹⁴¹ Stephen A. Salmore et.al. took a leap of faith and proposed an integrated model though underdeveloped at that time and remains yet the most sophisticated model until now.¹⁴²

George B. Graen and Mary Uhl-Bien, for instance, are on the same page in the idea of incorporating multi-levels of analysis to the field, particularly those closely associated with leaders’ behaviors and leadership. Graen and Uhl-Bien suggested the importance of engaging in multitude of domains to investigate and theorize leadership

¹³⁶ J. David Singer. "The level-of-analysis problem in international relations." *World Politics* 14, no. 1 (1961): 77-92.

¹³⁷ Barry Buzan. "The level of analysis problem in international relations reconsidered." *International relations theory today* (1995): 198-216.

¹³⁸ J. David Singer, Ibid.

¹³⁹ Miriam M. Müller, *A Spectre is Haunting Arabia: how the Germans brought their Communism to Yemen*.

¹⁴⁰ Chris Alden and Amnon Aran. *Foreign policy analysis: new approaches*, 1-4.

¹⁴¹ Maurice A. East, Stephen A. Salmore, and Charles F. Hermann, eds., Maurice A. East, Stephen A. Salmore, and Charles F. Hermann, eds. *Why nations act: theoretical perspectives for comparative foreign policy studies*. Vol. 2. (SAGE Publications, Incorporated, 1978), 28.

¹⁴² Maurice A. East, Stephen A. Salmore, and Charles F. Hermann, eds. *Why nations act: theoretical perspectives for comparative foreign policy studies*, Ibid, 191-210.

and issues concerning the relationship of such leadership as well as the outcomes of it.¹⁴³ In short, both Graen and Uhl-Bien stressed how the multidimensional approach contributes to further validation of understanding leader behavior, their perspectives, and the relationship of their leadership with followers; in a sense, the multidimensional approach provides a more comprehensive close-up view from both leader's domain and follower's domain in the relationship which highlights in-depth of the missing elements leadership at each domain. Fred Dansereau and Francis J. Yammarino too called for attention to infuse multiple levels of analysis in the field of political science. Both authors echoed the idea that it is essential to observe the existing variables from different levels in order to fully understand the perception of individual and their leadership.¹⁴⁴ That is, not to focus on only variables at the individual level, but Dansereau and Yammarino also suggested the examination of the interactions among variables of different levels in a given situational context in order to draw the conclusion on the perception of the leader.

The scholars mentioned above shared common views on the strengths and weaknesses of applying the multidimensional or multi-level approach in the field of FPA and leadership-related issues like perceptions and behaviors, for instance. Yet, they also agreed that the risks are worthwhile under some circumstances. It indeed undeniably takes both time and effort, but not impossible.

¹⁴³ George B. Graen and Mary Uhl-Bien. "Relationship-based approach to leadership: Development of leader-member exchange (LMX) theory of leadership over 25 years: Applying a multi-level multi-domain perspective." *The leadership quarterly* 6, no. 2 (1995): 219-247.

¹⁴⁴ Fred Dansereau and Francis J. Yammarino. "Overview: The many faces of multi-level issues." *The many faces of multi-level issues* (2002). For further explanation on multi-level approach, see also in Francis J. Yammarino and Fred Dansereau, eds. *The many faces of multi-level issues*. Vol. 1. (Elsevier, 2002).

The foreign policy in the real world itself is just like the reflection of occurrences in the international arena. With such a multi façade, the approaches used to capture the entire image of the FPA, too, should not be confined to just one dimension. Imagine looking at the map of the world on a *globe* in comparison to the map printed on a piece of paper. They both show the exact locations of countries and places on earth; yet, the differences among them are uncanny. It is up to researchers to weigh the pros and cons and decide whether or not it is worth taking the risks.

Likewise, in the case of this dissertation, the earlier discussion and suggestions proposed to employ a multidimensional approach are to demonstrate that this research too has its nature of multi-facades—the intertwining of the study of top-level political leaders’ perspectives, their leaderships in the relations of Cambodia and the US amid wartime. Thus, to at least simulate the mirroring scenarios as similar as possible to what happened back in wartime through the eyes of the two men who led Cambodia, and to understand the attributes they conducted of foreign policy with the US, the multidimensional approach is the best fit in unraveling layers of elements beyond the surface. For, in reality, the entire equation of foreign policy-making does not simply take place under just one factor but, instead, the combinations of many other underlying determinants at once.

To reiterate, in this chapter, the main aims are to explore and enunciate a suitable analytical approach deemed fit in understanding the foreign policy of the small non-democratic states toward the greater powers during wartime or international crisis under the historical context. Thus, the possible risks and problems in employing

multidimensional approaches in this dissertation are within the anticipated calculations based upon the conditionalities of the selected theme topic and research timeframe.

Chapter 4 Cambodia-US Relations and Foreign Policy: 1949-1975

This chapter presents a brief background on Cambodia's foreign policy under the two political administrations: Sihanouk and Lon Nol, along with the Kingdom's relations with the US. Precisely, this chapter examines the formulation of Cambodia's foreign policy of neutrality and in what way the practicing of Sihanouk's neutrality in comparison to other types of neutrality declared by countries like Switzerland, India, and Laos. The chapter is divided as follows: a brief history of Cambodia-US relations; followed by Cambodia's foreign relations from during the French Colony to the post-independence; the notion of neutrality pertaining to Cambodia's foreign policy.

The table below summarized key historical events that happened in Cambodia's history from the arrival of France until 1975.¹⁴⁵

Table 2: Summary of key historical events.

1863: France colony, lasts for 90 years.
1941: Prince Norodom Sihanouk becomes king at age 18.
1942: Japanese occupation began in March. ¹⁴⁶
1945: Japanese occupation ended in October and the return of France.
1946: France reimposes colonialism.

¹⁴⁵ Sihanouk and Wilfred G. Burchett. *My war with the CIA: the memoirs of Prince Norodom Sihanouk*, 268-271. For the latter part of the timeline about Lon Nol and his administration, the author translated and summarized from *La Republique Khmère: 1970-1975*. See full timeline in Ros Chantrabot, *La Republique Khmère: 1970-1975*, 195-209. For detailed information after the March 18, 1970 Coup d'état to the proclamation of the Khmer Republic in 1972, see also Sak Sutsakhan. *The Khmer Republic at war and the final collapse*, 16-17.

¹⁴⁶ Hideo Sasagawa. *Japan's Involvement in Cambodia During World War II*. (Waseda University Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies (WIAPS), 2017).

1953: Declared independence from France.

1955: Sihanouk abdicates to becoming Prime Minister.

1956: Cambodia starts to receive aid from China.

1960: King Norodom Suramarit dies; Prince Sihanouk became the Chief of State leaving the throne empty.

1963: Sihanouk rejects the US aid program.

1965: Cut off diplomatic relations with the US.

1969: Resumes diplomatic relations with the US Bombing against Communist Vietnam started on Cambodia's soil.

1970: Coup d'état led by General Lon Nol.

1971: February–Lon Nol suffered from stroke [Hémiplégie]; headed for treatment in Honolulu, Hawaii.

April – Lon Nol returned from the US.

1972: Lon Nol took the position as the "President of the Khmer Republic"

1973: Lon Nol declared "No negotiations with Sihanouk."

Signing the Paris Peace Accords on Vietnam.

Cessation of the US military operations (and assistance) in Cambodia.

1974: January– Attacks from the communist forces intensified.

May– The Parliament declared the status of "Nation in Danger."

1975: The starting of the Khmer Rouge regime led by Pol Pot.

4.1 US Earlier Encounters in Southeast Asia and Cambodia

The first encounter between Cambodia and the US could have happened as early as the nineteenth century, had the Great Khmer Empire still had her golden glory intact. When countries of the west began their journey to roam the world in search of new trading routes, Southeast Asia was among the famous destinations to various colonial powers. For instance, the Dutch took over the Indonesian archipelago in 1799; Britain controlled Burma in 1886 after a long fight since 1824, then extended to Malaya in 1874; the Philippines was in their struggles with the Spanish; and the French claimed the so-called Indochina territories — Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia in 1887.¹⁴⁷

The United States back in the nineteenth century was still overwhelmed by chaos from civil war and its aftermaths including debts to other countries; to put it differently, the US was “a country-in-the-making.”¹⁴⁸ In this manner, it can be said that the US was a latecomer to settle in Southeast Asia as a colonial power compared to others. The relations between America and the region can be traced to even prior to her independence around 1665-1667.¹⁴⁹ Then, the first contact of America with the region came in a clearer and what looked more like official form; in 1821, recorded the very first American ship anchored in Siam along with the letters from James Monroe the US president, to the King of Siam.¹⁵⁰ The next stop was somewhere around the coast of

¹⁴⁷ “Southeast Asia, 1800–1900 A.D.” In *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000—. <http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/ht/?period=10®ion=sse> (November 24, 2021).

¹⁴⁸ Farish A. Noor, *America's Encounters with Southeast Asia, 1800-1900*. (Amsterdam University Press, 2018), 21-38.

¹⁴⁹ Noor, *America's Encounters with Southeast Asia, 1800-1900*, Ibid., 33.

¹⁵⁰ Noor, *America's Encounters with Southeast Asia, 1800-1900*, Ibid., 248.

Sumatra under the soi-disant “the first Sumatran Expedition” when the US set sail with her “heavy frigate the USS *Potomac*.”¹⁵¹

Other recounts include the arrival of the “American sloop of war— *Peacock*” bore the letters to negotiate treaties with the Cochin China (also later known as Annam, present-day Vietnam) successfully conducted bilateral relations in 1833.¹⁵² With Edmund Robert as an envoy;¹⁵³ the “government-appointed Resident in Southeast Asia” saw its first settlement in Singapore in 1834. Followed by, the “Treaty of Peace, Friendship, Commerce and Navigation” with Brunei in 1850; and the colony over the Philippines in 1902 after having fought the war since 1899,¹⁵⁴ etc. Yet, among all, the Kingdom of Siam was the very first one to have established formal relations with America in 1833 and was recognized as ‘one of the oldest Asian allies’ in 1881.¹⁵⁵

Lao’s relationship with the US started way later compared to those in the same region, almost sometimes around the latter half of the twentieth century. Recorded in the *Historical Dictionary of United States — Southeast Asia Relations*, the US involved in the

¹⁵¹ Noor, *America's Encounters with Southeast Asia, 1800-1900*, Ibid., 249.

¹⁵² In a work Michael Lee Lanning and Dan Cragg wrote a summary of the US and the Vietnam relations from the beginning of the historical timeline until the Vietnam War. See in, Michael L. Lanning and Dan Cragg. *Inside the VC and the NVA: The Real Story of North Vietnam's Armed Forces*. (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2008), 17-18.

¹⁵³ Robert Hopkins Miller. *United States and Vietnam 1787-1941*. (DIANE Publishing, 1990), 30. For the Edmund Roberts’s mission in negotiating with the Cochin China, see in, Edmund Roberts. *Embassy to the Eastern Courts of Cochin-China, Siam, and Muscat: In the US Sloop-of-war Peacock... During the Years 1832-3-4*. (New York, Harper, 1837). Also see, Peter Eicher. *Raising the Flag: America's First Envoys in Faraway Lands*. (U of Nebraska Press, 2018).

¹⁵⁴ In the early nineteenth century, the Philippines remained in the grip of Spanish colonial power that was established in 1565. Then in 1898, the Philippines fought for their independence only to find themselves falling into another war with the newly emerged colonial power, the US in 1899. The Philippines-American war lasted almost years. With the US’s victory, therefore, establishing control over the archipelago in 1902. See Noor, *America's Encounters with Southeast Asia, 1800-1900*, 14, 36-37. For further history regarding the Philippines and her colonial powers, see also Dana R. Herrera. “An Overview of the Colonial Era.” *Education about ASIA* 20, no. 1 (2015).

¹⁵⁵ Noor, *America's Encounters with Southeast Asia, 1800-1900*, 249-254.

Laos fight against Japanese during the World War II.¹⁵⁶ Prior to the event, the earlier records on the small kingdom can be traced back to the 'self-referential text' of American travelers. Among them was the famous work of Frank Vincent— *The Land of the White Elephant: Sight and Scenes of South-Eastern Asia* published in 1874 in New York,¹⁵⁷ in which he recalled his trip to “a town in north-eastern Siam” called *Lonang Prabang*¹⁵⁸ and his visit to French Indochina.¹⁵⁹ There are not many records on the Kingdom of Lan Xang (modern-day Laos) in the nineteenth century.¹⁶⁰ The formal diplomatic relation with the US was only established after Laos declared her independence from France, in 1950¹⁶¹ at chargé d'affaires level and upgraded to ambassador level in 1955 after the 1954 Geneva Accords.¹⁶²

As for Cambodia, her fated encounter with the US too was yet to be unfolded upon the arrival of the Americans in the Southeast Asian region in the nineteenth century. Whilst the US relationship with the Kingdom of Siam was already in the progress as early

¹⁵⁶ Weatherbee, *Historical Dictionary of United States-Southeast Asia Relations*, 202-210.

¹⁵⁷ Noor, *America's Encounters with Southeast Asia, 1800-1900*, 194.

¹⁵⁸ Frank Vincent. *The Land of the White Elephant Sights and Scenes in South-Eastern Asia* (Sampson Low, Marston, Low, & Searle, 1873), 168.

¹⁵⁹ Weatherbee, *Historical Dictionary of United States-Southeast Asia Relations*, 1.

¹⁶⁰ The kingdom of Lan Xang dated back to the early fifteenth century until it was torn apart by the new emerging kingdoms of Ayudhya (later become Siam) and Burma. Then by the late eighteenth century, the Kingdom of Lan Xang no longer existed as the kingdom was later divided into Luang Prabang supported by Siam, and Vientiane (now the capital city of Laos). By the arrival of the Americans in the nineteenth century, the kingdom had undergone constant bombard among Siam and Vietnam, then, eventually became one of the countries of the French Indochina.

For further detail of the earlier history of Laos, see Arthur J. Dommen *Laos: Keystone of Indochina*. (Routledge, 2019).

¹⁶¹ Weatherbee, *Historical Dictionary of United States-Southeast Asia Relations*, 204-205. For Laos's revolution and her independence movements, see also Pholsena, Vattana. "The Early Years of the Lao Revolution (1945–49) Between History, Myth and Experience." *South East Asia Research* 14, no. 3 (2006): 403-430.

¹⁶² For later information on Laos-US relations afterward, see "Timeline: US-Laos Relations." *Contemporary Southeast Asia: A Journal of International and Strategic Affairs* 32, no. 3 (2010): 469-469.

as the nineteenth century, to the US, Cambodia was merely a kingdom that went into war with the Cochin China and the kingdom of Siam in 1831-1834.¹⁶³ By 1846, Cambodia was already swallowed into the 'Protectorates' of her two bigger neighbors, the Kingdom of Siam and the Kingdom of Annam. At this point, Cambodia must have been aware that the US would not be of much assistance if she wished to be free from her neighbors. Cambodia's King tried reaching out to France on several occasions only to be fell on deaf ears.¹⁶⁴ It was only until 1863, approaching Cambodia from Vietnam's side, French offered to be a new protector of the kingdom.¹⁶⁵ The treaty signed on 11 August 1863 allowed France to have full authority over the kingdom's trade and foreign affairs.¹⁶⁶ The relations between Cambodia and the US were nowhere close to formal, not to mention on equal footing.

Fast forward to the early half of the twentieth century, Cambodia finally gained her partial authority in exercising her foreign affair in 1949.¹⁶⁷ The kingdom started to send ambassadors abroad and welcomed foreign aid from other countries; among them was the US. Under the campaign of containing the spread of Communism, the US provided financial assistance and started to supply military equipment to the Kingdom in the late 1950s;¹⁶⁸ anything prior to that was all channeled through France.¹⁶⁹ According to the US-

¹⁶³ Noor, *America's Encounters with Southeast Asia, 1800-1900*, 84.

¹⁶⁴ David P. Chandler and Leonard C. Overton. "Cambodia." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, March 10, 2021. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Cambodia>. (November 25, 2021).

¹⁶⁵ Roger M. Smith, *Cambodia's foreign policy*, 15-17.

¹⁶⁶ Lawrence Palmer Briggs. "The Treaty of March 23, 1907, Between France and Siam and the Return of Battambang and Angkor to Cambodia." *The Far Eastern Quarterly* 5, no. 4 (1946): 439-54.

¹⁶⁷ Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff. "Cambodia moves toward independence." and accompanying text.

¹⁶⁸ Kenton J. Clymer. "Cambodia: The View from the United States, 1945-1954." *The Journal of American-East Asian Relations* 6, no. 2/3 (1997): 91-124. See also Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff. "Cambodia moves toward independence."

¹⁶⁹ Smith, *Cambodia's foreign policy*, 55.

Cambodia Relations Booklet, the first direct encounter between the two countries commenced on June 29, 1950; and the embassy was established two years later on June 25, 1952.¹⁷⁰

To wrap up, breaking out from a long period of isolation and domestic chaos as “a country-in-the-making”, the Americans set sail to explore the world in search of new trading opportunities and partners. It was in the early nineteenth century that America finally arrived in the region of Southeast Asia only to find that most of the countries there were already in the struggle with the other colonial powers. Although America’s encounters with countries of the Southeast Asian region took place respectively around the nineteenth century, the remaining free from being occupied and was the first one to be approached by America was the kingdom of Siam who soon became the oldest ‘friends’ seconded by the Philippines. The Kingdom of Annam (Cochin China) saw her relations with America on and off after several attempts to negotiate the treaty on trade and army. While Cambodia and Laos were among the latest to share diplomatic relations with the US for the fact that both countries were still under the control of their bigger neighbors most of the time. Thus, it was only natural for the US to have their priorities sorted and approach those with power to make the final call at that time instead.

The initial encounters of the US in Southeast Asia may help lay the foundation in understanding how the US came into terms in established relations with her counterparts;

¹⁷⁰ *US- Cambodia Relations Booklet*. US Embassy in Cambodia, 2010. https://kh.usembassy.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/80/book_us_cambodia_relations.pdf (September 5, 2018), 9.

in this sense, also guides us to better grasp the core values of the US foreign policy in the region and how that had changed through the course of the Indochina conflicts.

4.2 Cambodia on the Brink of French Protectorate and the New Encounters

As iterated above, the early encounters between the US and the Southeast Asian countries, the Kingdom of Cambodia/Khmer relations the US came way later compared to her other neighbors; to be precise, the one to foremostly contacted with the US was the Kingdom of Siam. Also, the Kingdom of Cambodia and the two neighboring countries had shared coinciding history in terms of territories that waxed and waned through a time when the strong conquered the weak; the pattern that could be considered as almost natural in the region of Southeast Asia. The US too was not the first on the list of coalitions that Cambodia could rely on when it comes to the territorial problems with her bigger neighbors. That was when France came into the picture.

It was in 1846, that the kingdom of Cambodia was no longer free; the Kingdom of Siam and the Kingdom of Annam had decided the fate of Cambodia; they were to become the small Kingdom's protectors. Ang Doung was to be enthroned as the new king, and he was also the first king to attempt to reach out to France for assistance. After almost two decades, the French finally responded in 1863; only after having secured a footing in Vietnam.¹⁷¹

¹⁷¹ Smith, *Cambodia's foreign policy*, 15-17.

The French upheld the so-called notion of *Mission Civilisatrice*;¹⁷² that is, they came with a mission to civilize the Indochina region. In reality, the civilizing mission embeds with their striving for natural resources and to secure their trading strategy with China.¹⁷³ They situated the core administration office in Hanoi– the *Governor-General of the Union Indochinoise*,¹⁷⁴ the authoritative institution that controls the affairs of the protectorates. This means that, unlike Vietnam, Cambodia was not the main priority in terms of economic development, but for the sake of defense. On this wise, Cambodia came in handy to serve as another labor supplier and geostrategic point to fend off British influence.¹⁷⁵ The arrival of France, as the new protector of Cambodia, indeed helped secure Cambodia from being sandwiched by her neighbors; however, that did not last too long. As one of the French protectorates, Cambodia's king remained merely a figure of the country with no power in political affairs while external affairs were under the control of French and other administrative officers trained from either Saigon or Hanoi, instead of the local Cambodians.¹⁷⁶ Many unequal treaties were signed by the French authority.¹⁷⁷ A new administration system was also introduced including a severe tax system imposed upon local people. By the 1940s, there were many insurgencies against the French administration through time.

¹⁷² "Mission Civilisatrice" translates as Civilizing mission. See more in James A. Tyner. *The Killing of Cambodia: Geography, genocide and the unmaking of space*. (Routledge, 2017),24.

¹⁷³ Michael Leifer. *Cambodia: The search for security* (Praeger, 1967), 22.

¹⁷⁴ Leifer, *Cambodia: The search for security*, Ibid., 23.

¹⁷⁵ Smith, *Cambodia's foreign policy*, 21.

¹⁷⁶ Malcolm Caldwell and Lek Tan. *Cambodia in the Southeast Asian war*. (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1973),31.

¹⁷⁷ Osborne. *Sihanouk: Prince of light, prince of darkness*,15.

In 1941, the atmosphere in the Indochina region became unstable with many independent movements amidst the French recent loss to Germany along with the new emerging confrontation, the Japanese. In the meantime, Cambodia was mourning for king Monivong with the rightful heir, Prince Monireth awaited to ascend the throne. However, to the French who already had too much on the plate, Monireth seemed too hard to control to be the next king; thus, the French went against the old tradition of having the oldest son as the king, they instead picked a safer choice, the nephew of Monireth, the young prince Norodom Sihanouk ascending the throne of Kingdom of Cambodia in early 1941.¹⁷⁸ Later in the same year, the Japanese imperial army gained victory over the French and occupied some parts of Indochina including Cambodia. The Japanese occupation of Cambodia lasted from late 1941 to 1945. The brief occupation of the imperial army handed Cambodia and the young king, Sihanouk, the opportunity to march for independence.¹⁷⁹ By the time the French regained strength and pushed the imperial army off the kingdom in 1945, the ambiance in Cambodia had drastically changed; the country was now torn between the return of the French and her own independence which she might be or not at all prepared for what to expect after gaining the independence she had been longed for.

To soothe the tension, France agreed upon the establishment of *Commission d'Etudes Franco-Khmères* (the Franco-Cambodian Commission) to draft the first constitution of the kingdom of Cambodia along with *modus vivendi*,¹⁸⁰ the agreement that promised Cambodia her self-governing power. Cambodia was allowed to deal with her

¹⁷⁸ James A. Tyner. *The killing of Cambodia: Geography, genocide and the unmaking of space*, 24.

¹⁷⁹ Smith, *Cambodia's foreign policy*, 26.

¹⁸⁰ P.B. "L'Indochine et ses Traités 1946", *International Affairs*, Volume 25, Issue 1, 1 January 1949.

affairs regarding diplomatic relations and economics-related activities autonomously but limited under the supervision of the French while military conducting remained in the grasp of France.¹⁸¹ In 1947, the first constitution of Cambodia was established turning Cambodia from an absolute monarchy to a Constitutional based monarchy where King no longer has absolute power in politics but merely serves ceremonial purposes.¹⁸² The reforms did not end there; 1947¹⁸³ was the year of the first-ever national assembly election involved by political parties from liberal to democrat and even independent, etc. Most of those political parties emerged and dissolved through time; nonetheless, their diverse opinions toward the future of Cambodia remained intact. Particularly, there were three main groupings: the Liberals consisted of elites and monarchs sharing considerably close ties to the French whose aim was to retain the status-quo; the *Khmer Issarak*¹⁸⁴—the anti-French, essentially aimed to liberate Cambodia from the French colonization; and the Democrats consisted of young scholars strive for independent democratic Cambodia.¹⁸⁵ The result of the first election handed out victory for the democrats. The brand-new assembly under democrats viewed that the relations between French and Cambodia should alter; meanwhile, the future of Cambodia's independence was still under negotiations.

¹⁸¹ William J. Rust. *Eisenhower and Cambodia: Diplomacy, Covert Action, and the Origins of the Second Indochina War*. (University Press of Kentucky, 2016), 21.

¹⁸² Leifer, *Cambodia: The search for security*, 33-34. See also, Cambodia Const. art. 21, 35 (1947).

¹⁸³ Smith, *Cambodia's foreign policy*, 36. Some author states that the first national assembly election was in 1946. See also James A. Tyner. *The killing of Cambodia: Geography, genocide and the unmaking of space*, 33.

¹⁸⁴ *Khmer Issarak* [ខ្មែរឥស្រាវៈ] (Free Cambodia) initially consisted of both left and right-wing to fight for Cambodia independence, initially supported by the Thai government and later on closely associated with Viet Minh and Ho Chi Minh as Thai gradually lost interest in Cambodia affairs. The ties with Viet Minh could not last long either due to historical mistrust. See more David P. Chandler. *The tragedy of Cambodian history: Politics, war, and revolution since 1945*. (Yale University Press, 1991).

¹⁸⁵ James A. Tyner. *The killing of Cambodia: Geography, genocide and the unmaking of space*, 39.

The young king was under pressure from all angles; the current constitutional monarchy status imposed on Cambodia upon the return of French was about to strip away his absolute power over his own country; the democrats desired the reforms where democracy serves as a major route for Cambodia instead of monarchy; the Khmer Issarak that were so anti-French were simultaneously not too favor with royalty for being too attached on the French administration, especially when the king agreed upon the reinstitution of the French rule after Japanese retreated. Meanwhile, the French still doubt Sihanouk's move whilst they were absent during a brief Japanese occupation. Domestically, the Democrats still refused to acknowledge Sihanouk's efforts despite the king's numerous attempts to soothe the disagreement on the coming back of the French. The French, on the other hand, were not too keen on the king's proposal of handing Cambodia the authority over military control after many rebels by Khmer Issarak and the situation with Viet Minh. Yet, eventually in 1949, a treaty was signed, the Franco-Khmer treaty, delivering more freedom to Cambodia in conducting her foreign relations and economic activities; but, within the scope of the French Union.¹⁸⁶

By 1949, France now had to deal with both independent movements in Cambodia and increasing threats from other protectorates, especially Vietnam that closely incorporated with Khmer Issarak. The route of post-independence Cambodia remained ambiguous; nevertheless, the march for independence had started, regardless. In addition to domestic pressure, King Sihanouk also had to persuade France and other countries in the international community about the need for the French to redeem

¹⁸⁶ Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff. "Cambodia moves toward independence." *Far Eastern Survey* 22, no. 9 (1953): 105-111.

Cambodia's independence considering the current circumstance with the uprising of Viet Minh threat, gripping too tight on Cambodia could only make the independent movements against the French more menacing.¹⁸⁷ The French were still unpersuaded by the king's reasoning but gently took cautious steps agreed upon granting Cambodia her autonomous authority to determine her foreign trades relations with other countries under the Pau Agreement;¹⁸⁸ again associated with Indochina states framework.

Step by step, Cambodia seemed to be a bit closer to her anticipated dream of full independence. It was partly due to the abovementioned agreement that Cambodia started to obtain financial aid from other countries; The US in particular was among the earliest countries to grant aid to Cambodia even prior to her real independence.¹⁸⁹ However, the US, believed that the country would be straight off swallowed by Viet Minh or Communism the moment France step away; therefore, echoed the French¹⁹⁰ and stood on the opposite side with Cambodia when it comes to her independence.

Even the French loosened her clench gradually, but that did not satisfy the king's desire. The military, judicial authority, and executive power were not for Cambodia to decide. The king went public with his pledge for Cambodia's independence from one country to another seeking support and recognition of Cambodia's independence; not many sympathies were received while some hesitate to even welcome the monarch. Thailand, for instance, was to some extent pressured by France to limit the king's activities

¹⁸⁷ Leifer, *Cambodia: The search for security*, 38.

¹⁸⁸ The Pau Conference took place in 1950 where various debates about the fates of states of Indochina. The Pau Agreement was signed later on in early 1951.

¹⁸⁹ Smith, *Cambodia's foreign policy*, 55.

¹⁹⁰ William J. Rust. *Eisenhower and Cambodia: Diplomacy, Covert Action, and the Origins of the Second Indochina War*, 18.

during the self-imposed exile in early 1953. The tension reached its climax in 1953 when France had to face the combined troops of both Cambodian (including Khmer Issarak) and Viet Minh¹⁹¹ readied to battle for independence should the king fail his promise to secure the country's full independence back¹⁹² Eventually, Cambodia had victory over her struggle for independence from France colonization and declared her full independence on November 9th, 1953.

However, the independence itself was merely a new beginning for real struggle in building the Kingdom of Cambodia, once again from scratch by the Cambodian ruler. The idea was essential to maintain the full sovereignty of Cambodia without any influence or pressure from foreign countries. In other words, the post-independence Cambodia shall be able to fully decide her own fate in all aspects be it in terms of economic activities, political regimes, and so on. Yet, the route ahead was not all smooth.

4.3. Cambodia at the Post-Independence

For the first time in centuries, Cambodia finally became a sovereign state. However, conflicting settings in Cambodian politics, as well as insurgents along the border associated with Viet Minh, had never been solved. It was only swept under the rug temporarily during the *Royal Crusade*¹⁹³ for the sake of chasing away the French out of

¹⁹¹ William J. Rust. *Eisenhower and Cambodia: Diplomacy, Covert Action, and the Origins of the Second Indochina War*;36-38.

¹⁹² William J. Rust. *Eisenhower and Cambodia: Diplomacy, Covert Action, and the Origins of the Second Indochina War*, Ibid., 34.

¹⁹³ King Sihanouk called for all groupings in the country to unite for the march for independence in early 1953 before he left Cambodia on the journey to convince the international community to support Cambodia's independence from the French. See also, Geoffrey Gunn. "The Passing of Sihanouk: Monarchic Manipulation and the Search for Autonomy in the Kingdom of Cambodia." *Asia-Pacific Journal-Japan Focus* 10, no. 50 (2012).

the country. Soon after the independence was acknowledged by France and the international community, the country fell into chaos once again.

To ward off international fears of Cambodia being engulfed by Communists, in 1954, Sihanouk embarked on another journey to seek a further guarantee from the international community—the Geneva Conference,¹⁹⁴ anticipating that the fruition could assure Cambodian peace with her neighbors and the region as a whole. The newly independent Cambodia did not only inflict concerns among the international community but domestic as well. In spite of the king's efforts and triumphs, he was not applauded by all his countrymen.

The king's supporters were mainly the conservative group consisting of high-ranking officials, those with ties to the monarch, and the incredible majority of peasants; meanwhile, the democrats were not too happy arguing the fact that King Sihanouk's actions to some extent contradicted the king's role stipulated in the constitution while others questioned whether Cambodia at the post-independence needs royalty at all.¹⁹⁵ By 1955, the king's next move surprised all; the first time ever in the history of Cambodia to had her king renounce his kingship to be a mere *citizen*¹⁹⁶ in order to fully engage in politics with no more restrictions.

Just one month after abdication, Sihanouk with merely his Prince title set forth another historical movement that he would name the Sangkum Reastr Niyum [សង្គមរាស្ត្រ

¹⁹⁴ Though still sensed the threat of communism, it was in that conference that the US eventually showed her support for Cambodia. See also, Zoltan M. Szaz. "Cambodia's foreign policy." *Far Eastern Survey* 24, no. 10 (1955): 151-158.

¹⁹⁵ Osborne, *Sihanouk: Prince of light, prince of darkness*, 81-83.

¹⁹⁶ Osborne, *Ibid.*, 91.

និយម] (People's Socialist Community) not a political party but an organization to bring together assorted political opinions across the nation. The prince also proposed a national general election in which the result came out to be a landslide victory for him; although others doubted whether trickeries were being played.¹⁹⁷ Sihanouk's vision for Cambodia at her post-independence more than ever became crystal clear; that is, neutrality. He desired self-reliance, full territorial integrity, respect for sovereignty as an independent state, and non-interference in internal affairs.¹⁹⁸ On the other hand, Sihanouk also knew too well that his young Cambodia still did not have enough capacity to achieve such propensity just yet. Thus, Sihanouk made his notion known to the international community at Afro-Asian Conference as below.

My country has adopted these principles and wishes to apply them to the fullest extent. In doing so, she only requests that her independence, her integrity, her security, her traditions and political ideology be not threatened. It will be the task of more powerful nations to set the example, to give proofs and guarantees to smaller nation.¹⁹⁹

To reaffirm Cambodia's stance of neutrality to the international community once again, Cambodia abstained from the idea of being part of the SEATO protecting zone.²⁰⁰

For instance, during his visit to Manila in early 1956, Prince Sihanouk said:

¹⁹⁷ Nhem Boraden. *The Chronicle of a People's War: The Military and Strategic History of the Cambodian Civil War, 1979–1991*, 4.

¹⁹⁸ Sihanouk utterly echoed Indian Prime Minister, Nehru's notions at Afro-Asian Conference held in Bandung, Indonesia in late April 1955. See also, Russell H. Fifield. "The five principles of peaceful co-existence." *American Journal of International Law* 52, no. 3 (1958): 504-510.

¹⁹⁹ For Afro-Asian Conference, Bandung, Indonesia, April 18-24, 1954, see George McTurnan Kahin. *The Asian-African Conference, Bandung, Indonesia, April 1955*. Vol. 10. (Cornell University Press, 1956).

²⁰⁰ The United States encouraged countries like Cambodia, Laos to take part in the organization hoping to contain further spread of Communism in the region.

The fact that we are neutral does not mean that we are simple-minded to the extent of being lured by the amiabilities of communist governments towards us. As in the past, we will not tolerate any interference in our affairs, nor threats, nor pressure on their part....²⁰¹

Accordingly, as a new head of government, Prince Sihanouk also recognized the need to explain not only to the international community but also to his people why Cambodia needed to walk the path of neutrality amid the communist threat in the region. In his press conference in Kompot province on April 6th, 1956, the prince explained three reasons. First, he recalled his disappointment from the event back in 1953 in Paris and Washington while he was on the Royal Crusade; and while the French busied fighting against communist Vietnam; yet, Cambodia too was dragged in and then fell as the victim of the clash. The second reasoning was based on Article 7 of the Geneva accord that Cambodia had agreed upon the military neutralization; meaning that there shall be no military alliance's base in the country. Last but not least, the prince restated his likeminded with Prime Minister Nehru's Five Principles back in Afro-Asian Conference in 1955.²⁰²

4.3.1 Welcoming the New Era— *the Sangkum Reastr Niyum*

With this “neutrality” policy, Cambodia would be able to rely on foreign assistance from both blocs without having to choose otherwise. Diplomatic ties were established with both ends of the spectrum. The US was among the earliest to officially establish

²⁰¹ William J. Rust. *Eisenhower and Cambodia: Diplomacy, Covert Action, and the Origins of the Second Indochina War*, 84-85.

²⁰² Norodom Sihanouk. *Analyse de la Conference du Prince Norodom Sihanouk à Kampot*. (Phnom Penh, April 6, 1956), 4-5.

diplomatic relations with Cambodia in 1950,²⁰³ Czechoslovakia, Poland, and the Soviet Union in 1956; and China in the mid-1958 and so on.²⁰⁴ Along with the US as a major donor, France, Japan, and Germany also contributed to developing the country's infrastructure.²⁰⁵ Cambodia was on a steady phase to build her country's prosperity under the umbrella of neutrality along with assistance from her foreign donors of both blocs. Infrastructure, factories, hospitals, etc. were built according to the development plan.²⁰⁶ Cambodia's economic development was still in the progress; this country already had a lot on her plate to deal with. Apart from her economy, now this small kingdom also had to put more effort into protecting her territory's integrity.

In the early 1960s, Cambodia and her neighbors, Thailand and South Vietnam were having their die-hard territory disputes; only this time around, these neighbors shared close allies with the US. While Cambodia expected that the US would be able to intervene effectively in the disputes, the US responded otherwise.²⁰⁷ Consequently, Cambodia had to bring the issues to the UN. Cambodia won the case with Thailand over the issue of the Preah Vihear temple;²⁰⁸ however, the diplomatic relations with Thailand

²⁰³ *US- Cambodia Relations Booklet*. See also *Le Programme de L'Aide Economique Americaine au Cambodge 1955-1959*, Administration de Cooperation Internationale Mission D'Aide Americaine au Cambodge, (Phnom Penh, 1960).

²⁰⁴ "Intelligence Handbook for Special Operation Cambodia," CREST, 1 October 1970, General CIA Records, CIA-RDP80-01444R000100130001-4. <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP80-01444R000100130001-4.pdf>. 8 (December 15, 2018)

²⁰⁵ Chhair Sokty, and Luyna Ung. *Economic history of industrialization in Cambodia*. No. 2013/134. (WIDER Working Paper, 201). 3.

²⁰⁶ *Le Cambodge s'aide lui-meme*, Ministry of Information of Cambodia, (Phnom Penh, 1963).

²⁰⁷ *Le Rejet de L'Aide Americaine: Trois Exposes de S.A.R Le Prince Norodom Sihanouk*, Ministry of Information of Cambodia, 15.

²⁰⁸ For further detail on the dispute over the Preah Vihear Temple. See also UN Security Council, *Security Council resolution 189 (1964) [Complaint concerning acts of aggression against the territory and civilian population of Cambodia]*, 4 June 1964, S/RES/189 (1964), available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3b00f1c454.html> (January 4, 2019).

had to end in 1961. Meanwhile, the case of South Vietnam troops intruding into Cambodia territory was set aside; only until 1964 that the UN Security Council issued a resolution calling for further investigation on the cause of the incidents as well as compensation from South Vietnam to the Cambodian government. But Cambodia had already chosen to cease diplomatic relations with South Vietnam in 1963 followed by the rejection of the US aid and eventually cease the diplomatic ties in 1965.²⁰⁹ As the US now out of the picture, Sihanouk's version of neutrality was under the watchful eyes not only of the US but also of his people and subordinates.

Terminating diplomatic relations with the US which had always been the biggest foreign donor did not just hurt Cambodia's economy, the public opinions were also divided as Sihanouk had to shift the entire ship toward new possible donors. The fright that the west and the pro-Americans in Cambodia had been trying to avoid had now turned into reality; the next donors in line were the Communist bloc, the Soviet Union, and China. As though the situation was not serious enough, the Soviet Union and China appeared to be in competitive mode in infusing their communism in Cambodia causing clashes with the pro-Americans in the capital accompanied by insurgencies in the western part of the country.²¹⁰

Just as the neutrality scale began to crumble, Sihanouk shifted back to the US once again as he sensed the widening communism inside the country and that the South-Vietnam was not the only threat; the communist North-Vietnam too can no longer be

²⁰⁹ Smith, *Cambodia's foreign policy*, 205.

²¹⁰ "Intelligence Report Annex Ten Years of Chinese Communist Foreign Policy Section II: South and Southeast Asia," CREST, 9 April 1968, General CIA Records, CIA-RDP85T00875R001000010027-7. <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/polo-18.pdf>. 15-16. (December 20, 2017).

ignored.²¹¹ By 1969, Cambodia re-established diplomatic ties with the US though merely on the Chargé d’Affaires ad interim level.²¹² The US bombardment of Cambodia soil also started in the same year. Getting back to the US, however, did not soothe down the lasting tension brewing within the society. In March 1970, the Sangkum regime ended abruptly with a military coup.

4.3.2 Turning over a “New Leaf” with *the Khmer Republic*

The coup d’état on 18th March 1970 took place while Sihanouk was on his trip for further negotiations with Peking and Moscow. As soon as the military coup took place, General Lon Nol who hold the military power and his accomplice, Prince Sirik Matak, Sihanouk’s cousin who had secured support from most of the National Assembly members were able to gain the anticipated votes to remove Sihanouk from his position as the chief of state in the afternoon of the same day.²¹³ The new government was soon formed– *the Khmer Republic*.²¹⁴

Two years after Sihanouk’s overthrow, the new constitution was ready to enter into force after the referendum on April 30, 1972.²¹⁵ The roadmap for Cambodia under the new regime was clearly stated in the preamble of the 1972 Constitution; promoting democracy, devoting to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and so on. Yet; the

²¹¹ “Intelligence Handbook for Special Operation Cambodia,” 11.

²¹² William J. Rust. *Eisenhower and Cambodia: Diplomacy, Covert Action, and the Origins of the Second Indochina War*, 84-85.

²¹³ Justin Corfield. *The history of Cambodia* (ABC-CLIO, 2009) 72-73. See also Osborne, *Sihanouk: Prince of light, prince of darkness*, 209-216.

²¹⁴ Ben Kiernan. "Introduction: conflict in Cambodia, 1945-2002." *Critical Asian Studies* 34, no. 4 (2002): 483-495.

²¹⁵ See further detail on the official Website of the Constitutional Council of Cambodia, https://www.ccc.gov.kh/historyccc_en.php.

most notable thing among all was the defense against the restoration of the monarchy.²¹⁶

In his book– *Neo-Khmerisme*, Lon Nol wrote the main visions of the republican government as follows.²¹⁷

- At the present time is the War of resistance.
- With this war, we will obtain independence from outsiders, the North-Vietnam and Vietcongs. Monarchy is now obsolete.
- After this and at the same time, proceeding to the internal unification among all the republicans who are all Khmer citizens.
- And finally, the war is being fought for reconstruction and rebirth of the country, the spread of traditional culture, and the absorption of the thoughts of world civilization in search of property for the people.

It seemed that Lon Nol made it clear that Sihanouk is no longer welcomed. Although the leaf had turned over, the Republic was originally intended to remain with the foreign policy of neutrality;²¹⁸ however, the situation with Communist Vietnam did not allow such an arrangement. At first, in the initial step of nation-building, the Lon Nol's administration embraced the *laissez fair* approach to reconstructing the country's economy.²¹⁹ The primary agricultural products were rice, rubber, corn, etc.; those were supposed to be harvested and “preserved for [the] population.”²²⁰ However, the actual

²¹⁶ Collections of Constitutions of Cambodia 1947-1993, [ប្រជុំរដ្ឋធម្មនុញ្ញខ្មែរឆ្នាំ ១៩៤៧-១៩៩៣], pp 27-47. National Archive of Cambodia. Box 363.

²¹⁷ Lon Nol, *Néo-Khmerisme* (Phnom Penh, undated), 5; Justin Corfield, the author of *Khmer Stand up!* dates the publication as in late 1972.

²¹⁸ “Intelligence Handbook for Special Operation Cambodia,” 17.

²¹⁹ Chhair Sokty and Luyna Ung. *Economic history of industrialization in Cambodia*, 3-4.

²²⁰ A secret Letter from the US embassy in Phnom Penh to Washington on December 15, 1970, recorded the conversation between General Haig, Lt. Col Bonner with General Lon Nol. The letter

implementation of this new policy was disturbed by civil war and eventually, Cambodia still depended heavily on foreign aid, particularly from the US.

Despite the fact that the Khmer Republic embraced the spirit of democracy as well as aspired to follow the ideas of Sun Yet Sen,²²¹ the reality of the Vietnam War forbade the regime to undertake the intended course. Like Lon Nol termed—the War of Resistance, the regime’s main priority to reconstruct the country was indeed through force rather than diplomacy.²²² To fend off the intruders from Cambodia’s territory especially the Communist Vietnam, the Lon Nol’s government soon had to seek further military assistance from the non-communist bloc; the US once again became the biggest supplier.²²³ And by this point, Neutrality was no longer the option.

Lon Nol’s regime went down in the history as a regime torn by civil war, bombing raids, and violence.²²⁴ The new government that seemed to be upholding the principles of democracy and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights soon turned into a military dictatorship determined to repel the Communists from her country.²²⁵ Ethnic Vietnamese

wrote about Lon Nol’s optimistic view on the ongoing civil war despite being lost in a few battles previously. Lon Nol mentioned the rice harvesting was for the use of population; requesting further support of heavy weapons and other artillery. See in “Conversation with Lon Nol,” CREST, 26 May 1970, Library of Congress, LOC-HAK-511-3-23-5. <https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/LOC-HAK-511-3-23-5.pdf>. (13 June 2019).

²²¹ Lon Nol, *Néo-Khmerisme*, 25.

²²² “Cambodia: No Hands are Clean,” CREST, 18 March 1985, General CIA Records, CIA-RDP90-00965R000403080002-8. <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP90-00965R000403080002-8.pdf>. (September 30, 2019).

²²³ “Intelligence Handbook for Special Operation Cambodia,” 17.

²²⁴ See also Peou Sorpong, *Cambodia: Change and Continuity in Contemporary Politics: Change and Continuity in Contemporary Politics*. (Routledge, 2001).

²²⁵ Ronald H. Spector. *The Fall of South Vietnam*. Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., September 27, 2019. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Vietnam-War/The-fall-of-South-Vietnam>. (September 30, 2019).

who resided in Cambodia were forced to flee back to Vietnam and some were killed.²²⁶ With the Paris Peace Accords spelling the end of the Vietnam War in 1973, Lon Nol's administration remained hectic with negotiations with Vietnam regarding the exchange of civilian prisoners.²²⁷ As soon as the US withdrew from Vietnam, the military supports channeled through South Vietnam soon terminated. With no longer support from the US and the South-Vietnam, Lon Nol's government was left with scars resulting from the US heavy bombardment and lost complete control of the real revolutionary troops; the extreme leftist– the Khmer Rouge.

The Khmer Republic lasted only five years from 1970 to 1975. On April 17, 1975, the Khmer Rouge forces completely gained control over Phnom Penh forcing innocent citizens to the countryside.²²⁸ The collapse of the Lon Nol's Khmer republic might mark the ending of a decade-long brewing civil war inside the country but also the starting point where Cambodia met her tragic fate of a real dark age filled with the bloodshed of her own race; the genocide that lasted just enough to wipe out more than half of her population.

²²⁶ Ben Kiernan. "Introduction: conflict in Cambodia, 1945-2002." *Critical Asian Studies* 34, no. 4 (2002): 483-495.

²²⁷ Conversation; Henry Kissinger and President Lon Nol; October 22, 1973; John Negroponte Negotiations Files 1972-1973. Vol. II; Box 3; National Security Council Files: POW MIA: Vietnam Subject Files; Richard Nixon Presidential Library Museum, Yorba Linda California. See also "Declaration of Marshal Lon Nol, President of the Khmer Republic, after the Paris Conference held on February 26, 1973." National Archive of Cambodia. Box 332.

²²⁸ Ben Kiernan. "Introduction: conflict in Cambodia, 1945-2002," Ibid.

4.4 The Formation of Neutrality as Cambodia's Foreign Policy

Before going into deep about Cambodia's foreign policy of *neutrality*, it would be best to first comprehend the notion of the problematic key term itself. Neutrality sees its birth in Western history long before gaining its popularity among the non-Western countries amid the Cold War.

Dating back to some time at the end of the Middle Age, the concept of neutrality was still taking its form. Associated with the newly merged notion of "sovereignty," neutrality was understood as "the right of states to abstain from war whenever this seemed to better fit their interests."²²⁹ In a strict sense, the concept meant for the sovereign states to excuse themselves from entering into war at the cost of their interest. The practice of being neutral among sovereign states during wartime continues as the concept itself keeps evolving over time.

Switzerland is among the oldest cases to have declared the status of neutrality since 1815;²³⁰ Sweden also is another well-known successful case of upholding neutrality.²³¹ Then, in 1907, neutrality was put into a legal document—the Hague Conventions, legally binding the status of sovereign states being neutral by international law solidified with sets of regulations.²³² No sooner than before the First World War cool

²²⁹ Laurent Goetschel. "Neutrality, a Really Dead Concept?" *Cooperation and Conflict* 34, no. 2 (1999): 115–39.

²³⁰ Peter Lyon. "Neutrality and the Emergence of the Concept of Neutralism." *The Review of Politics* 22, no. 2 (1960): 255–68.

²³¹ Ralf Emmers. "Unpacking ASEAN Neutrality: The Quest for Autonomy and Impartiality in Southeast Asia." *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 40, no. 3 (2018): 349–70.

²³² Jessica L. Beyer and Stephanie C. Hofmann. "Varieties of neutrality: Norm revision and decline." *Cooperation and Conflict* 46, no. 3 (2011): 285–311. See also in Wolfgang Mueller. "Two Differing Concepts of Neutrality." In *A Good Example of Peaceful Coexistence?: The Soviet Union*,

down, the notion of neutrality was being brought into discussion among the Western countries countering the League of Nations' idea of "collective security." It was then speculated that the "collective security" at the time might possibly put an end to neutrality, for Article 16 of the Covenant of the League of Nations stipulated duties and obligations for all Members toward the aggressor, including economic and military measures.²³³ Such stipulation raised questions about Switzerland's status as permanent neutrality. It was only later that the League of Nations compromised and exempted Switzerland from taking stances in opposition to her neutral policy without having to leave the League of Nations for good.²³⁴ Switzerland's type of neutrality was the first of its kind after facing the challenge of the League of Nations; yet, the status of permanent neutrality of this country remained unshaken even during World War II.

The practice of neutrality in Western countries faced its second wave of the challenge; it was in 1955 when Austria unilaterally declared herself as a permanent neutral upon independence.²³⁵ This sparked yet another round of debate for interpretation of the status of Switzerland, drawing the line between the neutrality of the pre- and post-1945.²³⁶ As Anton Pelinka pointed that, Austria's model of permanent neutrality root is

Austria, and Neutrality, 1955-1991, (Austrian Academy of Sciences Press, 2011), 41–76. Also, in the Hague Conventions of 1907.

²³³ See the original text in The Covenant of the League of Nations 1924.

²³⁴ Austria's declaration to be neutral is considered to be the emergence of the debates among scholars on the previous idea of Switzerland's neutrality. See for instance Alfred Verdross. "Austria, Neutrality and The United Nations." *India Quarterly* 16, no. 1 (1960): 24–30. See also Alfred Verdross. "Austria's Permanent Neutrality and the United Nations Organization." *The American Journal of International Law* 50, no. 1 (1956): 61–68.

²³⁵ Michal Kořan. "Austrian Neutrality: Burden of History in the Making or Moral Good Rediscovered?" *Perspectives*, no. 26 (2006): 23–45.

²³⁶ Anton Pelinka. "The Politics of Neutrality." *German Politics & Society*, no. 21 (1990): 19–32.

“primarily, military.”²³⁷ While the type upheld by Switzerland is deemed as “the guardian of the Alpine passes;” that is through both peace and wartime, Switzerland’s neutrality stands on the basis of “a moral obligation to establish justice, law, and peace.”²³⁸ Both cases of “permanent neutrality” abiding by Switzerland and Austria gave out dissimilar interpretations among western countries.

The concept and practice of neutrality had its long journey before it could reach the non-western countries, particularly, Cambodia. And similar to what happened in the west, the notion of neutrality is being deciphered in a different sense than that of the Western countries. In the third-world countries where the process of decolonization was still on its way, the notion of neutrality, neutralism, and non-alignment became in trend and simultaneously being the center of the issue when it comes to relations between the Western and non-Western countries.

Parting ways from the classical notion of permanent neutrality of Switzerland’s model, neutralism and nonalignment in the newly independent third-world countries became more than merely a legal status of neutral which deeply tied to legal obligations,²³⁹ but “an orientation of foreign policy.”²⁴⁰ Supporting this claim, Anwar Syed wrote, “Neutralism...is seemingly an article of faith with foreign policy makers in several important countries of South and Southeast Asia.”²⁴¹ In the post-1945 entering the Cold

²³⁷ Michal Kořan. “Austrian Neutrality: Burden of History in the Making or Moral Good Rediscovered?”, Ibid. See also in Constitutional Law on the Neutrality of Austria (26 October 1955).

²³⁸ Laurent Goetschel. “Neutrality, a Really Dead Concept?”, Ibid.

²³⁹ Laurent Goetschel. “Neutrality, a Really Dead Concept?”, Ibid.

²⁴⁰ Wolfgang Mueller. “Two Differing Concepts of Neutrality.” In *A Good Example of Peaceful Coexistence?: The Soviet Union, Austria, and Neutrality, 1955-1991*, 41–76.

²⁴¹ Anwar Syed. “Asian Neutralism.” *Pakistan Horizon* 13, no. 3 (1960): 203–8.

War era, the third-world countries now had to drive their countries through relations with countries of diverse blocs of ideologies creating a burden to the new independence as superpowers of each bloc clash; here, came the notion of non-alignment.

Perhaps the person to has brought fame to the idea of non-alignment and called for the attention of the international community toward Asia and other third-world countries is the Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru. Concisely, non-alignment, as observed by Nehru, is emphasized on the basis of “independent policy”, “peaceful co-existence”, “keep aloof from blocs”, and so on;²⁴² particularly, the incorporation of the five principles of peaceful co-existence (Pancha Shila) into the notion of Indian foreign policy.²⁴³

4.5 Unravelling Sihanouk's Notion of Neutrality

Neutrality is rather like virginity. Everybody starts off with it, but some lose it quicker than others, and some do not lose it at all. Unlike virginity, however, neutrality once lost can sometimes be recovered, albeit with difficulty.²⁴⁴

It was in 1954 dating back to the first official visit by the Indian Prime Minister Nehru to Phnom Penh;²⁴⁵ what must have been the starting point for Sihanouk's notion of

²⁴² T. N. Kaul. "Non-Alignment: Retrospect and Perspective." *Perspectives on Non-Alignment* Rasheeduddin Khan (ed.). New Delhi, India: Kalamkar Prakashan Ltd (1981), 47. Also in Twarakavi Venkata Subba Rao. *Non-alignment in international law and politics*. (Deep & Deep, 1981) 19-50. See also, Samir N. Anabtawi. "Neutralists and Neutralism." *The Journal of Politics* 27, no. 2 (1965): 351-361.

²⁴³ "Record of the First Meeting between Premier Zhou and Prime Minister U Nu," June 28, 1954, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, PRC FMA 203-00007-03, 37-45. Translated by Jeffrey Wang. <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/112438>.

²⁴⁴ Cited in Wolfgang Mueller. "Two Differing Concepts of Neutrality." In *A Good Example of Peaceful Coexistence?: The Soviet Union, Austria, and Neutrality, 1955-1991*, 41-76.

²⁴⁵ *The Far East and Australasia 2003*. (United Kingdom: Taylor & Francis Group, 2002), 243. In the meeting in 1954 between Prime Minister Nehru and Sihanouk, it was noted that Nehru encouraged

neutrality was deemed to be partly inspired by Nehru,²⁴⁶ for, later on, Cambodia for the first time opted to embrace “neutrality” as her foreign policy abided by the five principles of peaceful coexistence.²⁴⁷ In addition to that, Sihanouk made clear Cambodia’s position at the Asian-African Conference in Bandung in 1955 that the Kingdom adopted the “Pancha Shila” and called for peaceful cooperation without division between the communist world and the anti-communist world.²⁴⁸ In this sense, it can be concluded that Sihanouk’s neutrality shared a fairly similar root with the *Pancha Shila* of peaceful coexistence;²⁴⁹ that is, the foreign policy implanted with the idea seeks to protect and respect each other territorial integrity and sovereignty. And for starters, Sihanouk seemed so convinced with the idea of neutrality as being fit for Cambodia’s foreign policy soon after her independence.²⁵⁰ Nonetheless, came the next question– how did Sihanouk’s neutrality depart from the neutral and shift towards the communist world? Could it be due to the special brand of neutrality designed by Sihanouk? The key to unlocking these questions can be found scattered in earlier works of literature related to Sihanouk and his infamous foreign policy.

Cambodia to be neutral and that India would diplomatically support Cambodia’s independence. See in “National Intelligence Estimate” *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), 1955–1957. Vol. XXI*, p.474-484.

²⁴⁶ Martin L. Lasater. "Cambodia: the politics of survival (The shaping of Cambodian foreign policy, 1954-1963)." (The University of Arizona, 1969),46-48.

²⁴⁷ Roger M Smith. *Cambodia's foreign policy*. (Cornell University Press, 1965), 74, 236. See also, Kao Hourn Kim. *Cambodia's Foreign Policy and ASEAN: From Non-alignment to Engagement*. (University of Hawai'i, 2001),17. Also in, Kenneth Ray Young. "Neutralism in Laos and Cambodia." *International Studies Quarterly* 14, no. 2 (1970): 219-226.

²⁴⁸ “Summary of the Introductory speeches at the Bandung Conference (18-19 April 1955)”. Telegram dated 26 April 1955, the British Embassy in Djakarta provides a summary of all the introductory speeches that were given on 18 and 19 April at the Bandung Conference.

²⁴⁹ Norodom Sihanouk and Wilfred G. Burchett. *My war with the CIA: the memoirs of Prince Norodom Sihanouk*, 163-164.

²⁵⁰ Bernard K. Gordon. "Cambodia: Where foreign policy counts." *Asian Survey* (1965): 433-448.

Michael Leifer is one of the prominent authors to extensively study Sihanouk's neutrality since the early stages of the country's independence pointing out the fact that the country was trapped within both domestic and external affairs. In one of his works, Leifer explained that Sihanouk's foreign policy of neutrality shared its core with Nehru's "non-alignment; it was called neutrality for the fact that Sihanouk did not want his neutrality to be perceived as having closely associated with neutralism of "other Afro-Asian states."²⁵¹ Sihanouk also wrote the reason why he referred to the term neutrality and that it shall not be confused with "neutralism", for Cambodia's neutrality "is fundamentally different" in a sense that Cambodia is not "'aligned' with those of the bloc of 'neutralist' nations." That element is what makes Cambodia's neutrality similar to that of Switzerland and Sweden.²⁵² Such distinctions pointed out by Sihanouk laid out the pattern where Cambodia's brand of neutrality parted way from the notion of Nehru's original encouragement. Furthermore, while Prime Minister Nehru was not too keen on perceiving the communists in a good light,²⁵³ Sihanouk on the other hand, stated the necessity for Cambodia to treat both blocs equally.²⁵⁴

²⁵¹ Michael Leifer. "Sihanouk: A Prince among Neutrals." *The Australian Quarterly* 34, no. 4 (1962): 38-49.

²⁵² Norodom Sihanouk. "Cambodia neutral: The dictate of necessity." *Foreign affairs* 36, no. 4 (1958): 582-586.

²⁵³ It was said that Prime Minister Nehru once used the term "aggressor" to describe communist China. See in Anwar Syed. "Asian Neutralism." *Pakistan Horizon* 13, no. 3 (1960): 203-8. Also in his autobiography, Nehru mentioned how he "dislike" communists' "dogmatism". See for instance in Jawaharlal Nehru. *Jawaharlal Nehru, an autobiography: with musings on recent events in India*. (Bodley Head, 1942). In addition to that, Prime Minister Nehru also mentioned of India-China relations in a territorial sense hinting that it would be hard for India to not rely on the West despite being in the non-alignment position. For further descriptions see also in Cecil V. Crabb Jr. "The Testing of Non-Alignment." *Western Political Quarterly* 17, no. 3 (1964): 517-542.

²⁵⁴ Sihanouk. "Cambodia neutral: The dictate of necessity."

It can be denoted that although initially, the idea of Nehru's non-alignment sounds alluring to Cambodia at the early stage of her independence for Sihanouk had his mind fixed on "Cambodia's desire to be left alone...from ideological entanglement..."²⁵⁵ Yet, simultaneously, the Prince was also aware that his country was yet ready to "govern" herself.²⁵⁶ For this reason, Sihanouk saw the necessity for Cambodia to be "steadfast neutrality" for the benefit of gaining aid from both blocs;²⁵⁷ and should either of the bloc decide to withdraw their aid program from the country, they would only risk seeing Cambodia slide closer toward another.²⁵⁸ Robert McClintock, the US ambassador to Cambodia too shared a similar analogy. McClintock observed that it was necessary that the US respect Cambodia's desire for neutrality for by doing so "Cambodia will be preserved from Communist penetration..."²⁵⁹ It should be noted that not only Sihanouk alone was aware of how important it was for the countries under the former French colonial power to remain neutral. China²⁶⁰ and the U.S.S.R, too, echoed the idea proposed by Cambodia's declaration of neutrality;²⁶¹ while part of Vietnam at the time had already

²⁵⁵ Roger M. Smith, "Cambodia's Neutrality and the Laotian Crisis." *Asian Survey* (1961): 17-24.

²⁵⁶ "National Intelligence Estimate" *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS)*, 1955–1957. Vol. XXI, p.474.

²⁵⁷ P. C. Pradhan. "Sihanouk and The Formulation of Cambodian Foreign Policy." In *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, vol. 37, pp. 457-463. Indian History Congress, 1976.

²⁵⁸ Smith, Ibid., "Cambodia's Neutrality and the Laotian Crisis." *Asian Survey* (1961): 17-24.

²⁵⁹ In Telegram from the Embassy in Cambodia to the Department of State on May 11, 1956, ambassador McClintock shared his observation of Cambodia's neutrality and how the US should support the country militarily. See further in "Telegram From the Embassy in Cambodia to the Department of State" *FRUS*, 1955-1957. Vol. XXI, p. 518-20.

²⁶⁰ "Memorandum of Chairman Mao's Conversation with Sihanouk on 17 December 1960," December 17, 1960, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, PRC FMA 106-00274-01, 1-7. Obtained by Yiming Feng and translated by Jake Tompkins. <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/120870>. Even a decade later, when Sihanouk was ousted by the Lon Nol's coup and sought exile to Peking, the Prince still secured support from China. Upon his arrival in Peking, Premiers Chou En-Lai said to Sihanouk that "... Cambodia should remain neutral." See in Sihanouk and Wilfred G. Burchett. *My war with the CIA: the memoirs of Prince Norodom Sihanouk*, 31.

²⁶¹ Bernard Fall. "Cambodia's International Position." *Current History* 40, no. 235 (1961): 164-170. See also in Smith, "Cambodia's Neutrality and the Laotian Crisis." *Asian Survey* (1961): 17-24.

slid into the Communist soon after winning the battle with the former colonial power, Laos was still trapped in between the two blocs.

In the wake of independence from the French, Cambodia, and Laos almost shared the same starting point of being uncertain of how the countries should position themselves in the Cold War era. This invited many scholars' interests in comparing the two countries' neutrality.

Stuart Simonds explained in his article the distinct features between Cambodia and Laos in terms of "geography." He pointed out that Laos is a land-lock country full of mountain ranges making it difficult for the country of various ethnic groups to be unified under one central power; on the contrary, Cambodia's plains provide a better environment for the country to be unified; yet also easily exposed the country to external pressures. In other words, although both countries are surrounded by bigger neighbors like Thailand and Vietnam, the geographical distinctions of Laos inflicted on the country's internal unity he described Laos as "lack of a sense of nationhood."²⁶² Compared to Cambodia, the country had a greater sense of "national identity" solemnly adhering to the King/Prince Norodom Sihanouk. In short, Stuart's observation can be summarized that even though Laos and Cambodia share borders with bigger neighbors, geographical features placed a burden on Laos' unity making the country prone to suffer from both internal and external pressure. Meanwhile, Cambodia started out with unity, securing the country's neutrality since the early stage of her post-independent.²⁶³

²⁶² Stuart Simmonds. "Laos and Cambodia: The Search for Unity and Independence." *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)* 49, no. 4 (1973): 574-583.

²⁶³ Nicholas Tarling, *A Concise History of Southeast Asia*. (New York: Praeger, 1966), 265-267.

Sihanouk himself also shared his assessment concerning the neutrality of Cambodia in comparison to Laos' in which he pointed out differences between the two countries. Cambodians, in particular as the Prince repeatedly stressed "have been led to feel a dedicated loyalty to their own king and country." That at the same time was the integral key he used "in cementing the people of his country;"²⁶⁴ the element that Laos does not have, making it hard for Laos to follow Cambodia's model of neutrality.

Associated with the unity factor was an important feature that added more weight to how Prince Souvanna Phouma of Laos' neutrality differs from that of Sihanouk's. Prince Souvanna Phouma's fear of the spread of Communism in his country in the face of the Pathet Lao;²⁶⁵ Sihanouk on the other hand is "friendly with China."²⁶⁶ To put it another way, while Sihanouk was capable of solely deciding which bloc of foreign aid shall be used to foster the country, the post-independence Laos was already divided. Prince Souvanna Phouma's idea of neutrality could not have turned into reality without having to compromise with the other half, the Pathet Lao. the same manner goes for the decision to seek foreign aid from different blocs; Prince Souvanna Phouma's dislike of Communism caused hesitation in receiving aid from them and at the same time drew him closer to the US and its allies. Such ambiguous behavior of Prince Souvanna Phouma made it hard for his neutrality to take form whilst Sihanouk's engagement with both blocs

²⁶⁴ "Memorandum of Conversation" *FRUS, 1961–1963. Vol XXIII*, p.162-166.

²⁶⁵ Robert Gilkey. "Laos: Politics, elections and foreign aid." *Far Eastern Survey* 27, no. 6 (1958): 89-94.

²⁶⁶ William E. Willmott. "Cambodian Neutrality." *Current History* 52, no. 305 (1967): 36-53.

welcomed more positive connotations to his version of neutrality among scholars, at least at its early stage.²⁶⁷ To quote Henry Kissinger, for instance,

In leading his country Sihanouk skillfully walked a tightrope between East and West in global politics, between the Soviet Union and China in the emerging Communist schism, between the opposing sides in the battle over Vietnam, and between right and left in his own country.²⁶⁸

In short, it can be indicated that the essence of Sihanouk's neutrality shared its core idea with the Indian Prime Minister's non-alignment along with the five principles of peaceful co-existence (Pancha Shila). Despite the likeliness of his neutrality and the non-alignment of Nehru, Sihanouk preferred to isolate his neutrality from the rest of the "non-aligned" grouping and at the same time equated Cambodia's neutrality with that of the neutral status of Switzerland and Sweden. Nonetheless, the neutrality that Sihanouk had crafted as he always stressed was for the territorial integrity, and independence of the country to be free from the foreign military base of neither bloc, in other words, non-interference. In his visit to the Philippines in 1956, Sihanouk told the President of the Philippines at the time, Ramon del Fierro Magsaysay, that "if ever the day comes that your independence is threatened, we will not remain neutral... if you become the victim

²⁶⁷ Kenneth Ray Young. "Neutralism in Laos and Cambodia." *International Studies Quarterly* 14, no. 2 (1970): 219-226. Sheldon is another author to agree with the idea that Sihanouk's 'neutral' policy was a successful attempt in balancing amid the maze of power struggling among greater powers as well as her bigger neighbors, at least in the early 1960s. See in Sheldon W. Simon. *War and politics in Cambodia: A communications analysis*. (Duke University Press, 1974). Also, in Kao Hourn Kim. *Cambodia's Foreign Policy and ASEAN: From Non-alignment to Engagement*. (University of Hawai'i, 2001), 24.

²⁶⁸ Henry Kissinger. *White House Years*. 1st ed. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1979), 457-458.

of aggression, and this applies also to communist aggression.”²⁶⁹ It can also be accentuated that at the beginning of Sihanouk’s architecture of Cambodia’s neutrality, it was clear that the model stood sternly on the basis of the country’s independence; thus, once the country’s independence is at stake, abandoning neutrality is not an impossible choice either.

At a glance, these abovementioned main elements of Sihanouk’s model of neutrality indeed made it look almost identical to the non-alignment idea. Yet, what makes the Prince’s version renowned and distinct from the rest can be seen on several notable fronts. Firstly, Sihanouk made himself the brand of Cambodia’s neutrality.²⁷⁰ He sought the balance not merely among external forces of great power rivals but also aimed to balance different ideologies groups within the country. The ex-King, now holding the power in the politic was able to put himself at the top of the pyramid,²⁷¹ a finishing touch of the equilibrium;²⁷² by being neutral means both right and left-wing parties in the

²⁶⁹ Sihanouk and Wilfred G. Burchett. *My war with the CIA: the memoirs of Prince Norodom Sihanouk*, 79.

²⁷⁰ To reiterate the words of John Gunther Dean, an ambassador of the US to Cambodia (1974-75), indicated that the unity and neutrality of the country would disappear the moment Sihanouk was gone. Cited in Samir Indar Singh. "For Whom the Blame Tolls: Richard Nixon, Henry Kissinger, and the Plight of Cambodia." PhD diss., (Emory University, 2014), 370.

²⁷¹ In a domestic radio broadcast on December 9, 1963, in Phnom Penh, Sihanouk said in his speech to the people of Cambodia, calling for unity of the nation, "We Khmers must unite, more than ever before, behind the throne, and Samdach Aou..." [Sihanouk referred to himself]. For a full translation of his speech, see in, "Editorial Note" *FRUS, 1961-1963. Vol XXIII*, p. 281.

John Lawrence Scott Girling explained how Sihanouk saw himself in the myth that was embedded in the ancient Angkor when the Prince is the core to create harmony and the "unison of the people;" therefore, Sihanouk was the one to "incarnated" the people’s will. See more detail in John Lawrence Scott Girling, "Cambodia and the Sihanouk myths", 3-4.

²⁷² Kissinger recalled a moment when President Thieu [Nixon] shared his assessment regarding Sihanouk with President Nixon, in which President Thieu said, "Cambodia is a weak country and if Sihanouk were overthrown, or if we encouraged his overthrow, it is likely the Communists will take over." Both Kissinger and Nixon, too, agreed with Thieu’s assessment that Sihanouk was indeed the one who maintained the "equilibrium." See further in Henry Kissinger. *White House Years*. 1st ed. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1979), 459.

countries could co-exist in his newly formed “political system” where he would hold the power to make the decision while simultaneously make it appears like their ideas were much appreciated.²⁷³ In addition, Sihanouk was an eminent figure to advocate his neutrality through every level of Cambodian society reaching from elites to a peasant as John P. Armstrong wrote, “No corner of Cambodia is too remote to escape his tireless scrutiny.”²⁷⁴ In this regard, Sihanouk perhaps was the only one to attach himself so much to the foreign policy of neutrality turning it into his very own lifelong renowned masterpiece.

Secondly, while others like Laos and Nehru declared to be neutral and to be in friendly manner with the communists, Sihanouk was the one who actually took a step further; if not a bit too friendly, to rigidly stand up for the friendships he built with the communist blocs despite being critiqued by the Western blocs. He considered highly of Cambodia’s friendship with China²⁷⁵ and other communists; to quote Sihanouk’s words,

²⁷³ “Cambodia: Country without Parties.” *Journal of Southeast Asian History* 8, no. 1 (1967): 40–51. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20067611>. Also, Gérard Brissé nicknamed Sihanouk’s fame regarding his neutrality as “the weathervane prince”; see further in Norodom Sihanouk. *War and Hope: the Case for Cambodia/ by Prince Norodom Sihanouk; Translated by Mary Feeney*. 1st American ed. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), xxxi.

²⁷⁴ John P. Armstrong described how far Sihanouk had reached out to the people in remote areas throughout the country to educate the people of the country’s politics. See in John P. Armstrong. *Sihanouk Speaks*, 20-21.

²⁷⁵ See in “Letter From the Ambassador to Cambodia (Trimble) to the Deputy Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs (Johnson)” *FRUS, 1961–1963. Vol XXIII*, p.181-188. In the letter, Trimble wrote of his assessment on the spread of Communism in Southeast Asia which he also stressed Sihanouk’s idea regarding Red China; Trimble wrote, “...his profuse and repeated expressions of friendship for and confidence in Communist China...” and how China was able to establish close relations with Cambodia by flattering Sihanouk. Later, Sihanouk actually composed three songs dedicated to Cambodia-China’s long friendships, listed as follows. 1) Nostalgie de la Chine [Nostalgia of China/ 怀念中国] This song, Nostalgia of China, was said to be composed around the 1960s after Sihanouk and his Wife (Monique) visited China in 1965; 2) 万岁，人民中国；万岁，主席毛泽东 [Long live, people’s China; long live Chairman Mao Zedong] it was described that Sihanouk composed this song when Sihanouk was ousted by the coup led by Lon Nol on March 18, 1970. The song was meant to express Sihanouk’s gratitude towards China, and especially Chairman Mao for offering support for Sihanouk; 3) O Chine, Ma Bien-Aimee Seconde Patrie! [Oh China, My dear Second Homeland/ 啊，中国，我亲爱的第二祖国] This song was said to be written around 1975 when the Lon Nol’s regime collapsed.

“...Do not ask of us the impossible—to have for your country and your satellites the same friendship and esteem as we hold for the countries that respect us and support our just cause... not only the People’s Republic of China but France and others.”²⁷⁶ Sihanouk’s undaunted approach toward the Communists did not stop only with China.²⁷⁷ He also expressed his deep condolence on the occasion of Ho Chi Minh’s death in which the Prince praised Ho Chi Minh for his bravery and dedication to Vietnam’s independence. As he wrote later on in his memoir, “I had deeply admired ‘Uncle’ Ho [referred to Ho Chi Minh]. He belonged not only to Vietnam, but to Indo-China, to Asia, and even to the world, for he stood for the rights of oppressed people everywhere...”²⁷⁸ Undeniably, Sihanouk’s

Sihanouk dedicated this song to China’s helping hands when he asked to return to Cambodia. In a meeting between Premier of State Council Chou En-lai and the Assistant to the President for the National Security Affairs, Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, PM Chou mentioned of his suggestion for Sihanouk while he was composing the song “Nostalgia of China”. See in “Memorandum of Conversation” *FRUS, 1969-1976. Vol XVIII*, p.167. See also in “Memorandum of Conversation, Beijing, October 21, 1971, 4:42-7:17 p.m.” *FRUS, 1969-1976. Vol E-13*, p.2-28. For the list of songs that famous songs that the Prince composed for China, see also in Consulate-General of the People’s Republic of China in Fukuoka Official Website posted to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the founding of the communist party of China on 07 June 2021, http://www.chn-consulate-fukuoka.or.jp/chn/zt/zggcdclbzn/202106/t20210607_8990909.htm. For a list of songs composed by Norodom Sihanouk in dedication to friendships and support for the Communists like Laos (Ode To the Lao People), Vietnam (Khmer-Viet Nam Militant Brotherhood), North Korea (Amitié Khméro-Coréenne [Khmer-Korean Friendship]), see also the official website of HM Father King Norodom Sihanouk of Cambodia, https://www.norodomsihanouk.info/media/song_171.html. See translation of Nostalgie de la Chine (The original versions are in Khmer and Chinese. English translation is done by the author.) in the Appendix I.

²⁷⁶ Norodom Sihanouk. “Sihanouk Gives His Views: Cambodia’s Leader Attacks US Policy in Southeast Asia.” *The Washington Post, Times Herald (1959-1973)*. Washington, D.C: WP Company LLC d/b/a The Washington Post, 1966. For Sihanouk’s close relation with China, see for instance, Julio A. Jeldres. “A personal reflection on Norodom Sihanouk and Zhou Enlai: An extraordinary friendship on the fringes of the Cold War.” *Cross-Currents: East Asian history and culture review* 1, no. 2 (2012): 323-337.

²⁷⁷ In an intelligence note from the Director of intelligence and research, Roger Jr. Hilsman, to the Secretary of State described the possibility that Cambodia is leaning to the Left. Hilsman wrote, “... Sihanouk’s neutralism always included friendship and cooperation with the bloc...” See full text in “Memorandum From the Director of Intelligence and Research (Hilsman) to Secretary of State Rusk” *FRUS, 1961-1963. Vol XXIII*, p.166-167.

²⁷⁸ In most Asian cultures, it is common to refer to an elder person as “Uncle/Aunt” even though the person is not their relative. It is a form of respect for elder people. See in Sihanouk and Wilfred G. Burchett. *My war with the CIA: the memoirs of Prince Norodom Sihanouk*. (Pantheon, 1973), 36.

close relationship with the communists discourage the Western opinions toward the Prince's neutrality,²⁷⁹ yet the balance was deemed skillfully maintained.²⁸⁰

One can draw a simple assumption that Cambodia's foreign policy of neutrality fell apart at the moment Cambodia-US relations broke down; that is in 1965. Although the diplomatic relation was restored in 1969, the hard-built equilibrium was no longer in the air. But what happened before that official date of diplomatic severing between the two might tell a better tale of how the well-groomed neutrality that Sihanouk had been nurturing lost its charm.

²⁷⁹ Seymour Topping, Special to The New York Times. "Neutral Cambodia Serves as Showcase for Peking: Neutral Cambodia Becomes a Showcase for Coexistence with Communist China Influence of US. Has Disappeared Peking, as Sihanouk's Key Adviser, Puts Pressure on Vietnam and Thailand." *New York Time*. New York, N.Y: New York Times Company, 1964.

²⁸⁰ Henry Kissinger. *White House Years*. 1st ed. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1979), 457-458.

Chapter 5 Assessing Cambodia- US Relations: the Roller-Coaster Ride

This chapter demonstrates the application of the conceptual framework to the historical facts and events presented in the previous chapter. By the end of this chapter, the readers are anticipated to at least be familiar with the top two political leaders' characteristics or perceptions to a certain degree. The chapter is divided into five sections. The first section presents the application of the political psychological concepts to inspect Sihanouk's leadership elements; followed by the assessment of his political administration, the *Sangkum*. The forthcoming part explores the underlying leadership elements of Lon Nol together with his administration. This chapter then concludes by highlighting prominent similarities and/or commonalities if any, between the two leaders.

5.1 Sihanouk and His Aspiration of *Neutrality*

There are numerous records on Norodom Sihanouk and his legacies. Although this dissertation does not aim to narrate Sihanouk and his private life in detail, the analysis on the individual level is inevitably required for one to dig deeper into some aspects of the personal life of that respective individual as well as his/her political career.

Sihanouk was born in 1922, the eldest son of the monarch, prince Norodom Suramarit. Like other elites of that time, the little prince undertook Francophile education in Phnom Penh, Saigon, and later Paris. The young prince sought comfort from Music, acting, and so on to lift himself up from having to be separated from home and family from a young age. Before he could even return to the country, the royal family and the French authority were already in heated debates on the next candidate to ascend the throne. Among all, his father was also on the list. Unexpectedly to the young prince, he was

chosen by the French to be the next King in 1941 at the age of nineteen, as most historians put– bypassed his father.²⁸¹

Sihanouk and his infamous foreign policy of *neutrality* were recorded countless times without fail in the history of Cambodia as well as any study related to the country's foreign policy. Howbeit this part inspects deeper for reasons behind his strong grips upon such policy by demonstrating his psychological aspects infiltrated beneath such reason.

5.1.1 Political Beliefs

Sihanouk remained unshakable in his stance for Cambodia to walk on the path of *neutrality* from the beginning of his newly formed government– the *Sangkum* in 1955, continued onward to when Cambodia terminated diplomatic relations with the US in 1965. Sihanouk, the ex-King, walk Cambodia on the path of neutrality soon after he had secured his full authority as the Chief of State. And amidst the war and fear of communism spread over the region, Sihanouk often found himself in close relations with the Communist bloc. As the Chief of Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) Cambodia mentioned in his evaluations concerning the situation in Cambodia noted that “Sihanouk does not think that communism or Communist China are threats to Cambodia ... the communists taking over S.E. Asia eventually...”²⁸² Thus, by associating closely with Communist China,

²⁸¹ Armstrong. *Sihanouk Speaks*, 18.

²⁸² “Telegram From the Chief, Military Assistance Advisory Group, Cambodia (Scherrer) to the Commander in Chief, Pacific (Felt)” *FRUS*, 1961-1963. Vol XXIII, p.175-178. Also, in a telegram From the Embassy in Cambodia to the Department of State on May 3, 1961, described that “Sihanouk, who formulates Cambodia policy, has expressed conviction that eventual Communist hegemony over world inevitable and in particular that ChiComs “wave of future” in SEA.” See the full assessment in the situation in Laos and Cambodia in “Telegram From the Embassy in Cambodia to the Department of State, *FRUS*, 1961-1963. Vol XXIII, p.147-148.

Cambodia would be able to secure herself to a certain degree once the communist actually takes over the region. As far as the policy of being neutrality is concerned, Sihanouk speculated that “Cambodia must readjust its position to growing Communist strength in Southeast Asia.”²⁸³

Even decades after the Second Indochina War ended, Sihanouk remained proud of his choice of the policy of neutrality. Stressing repeatedly as soon as he assumed power as the leader of the *Sangkum*, Sihanouk seemed to have tied his very existence to the policy itself. He established in one of his articles in 1958, *Cambodia Neutral: The Dictate of Necessity*, that it was all thanks to ‘neutrality’ that kept Cambodia united as well as defending his stand that only such policy could safeguard the kingdom’s “longstanding tradition of monarchy” while spontaneously addressing himself in the article as “prince” and “former king”.²⁸⁴ In other words, Sihanouk has cautiously attached his presence to the policy he claimed to be essential and a “necessity” for the country to remain united.

In addition to defending his rigid stance on being neutral, Sihanouk took the opportunity to also express his opinion on the US foreign policy toward Cambodia. He pointed out that the US had misunderstood the notion of “neutrality” in which he asserted that “we are neutral in the same way Switzerland and Sweden are neutral—not neutralist like Egypt or Indonesia.” Meaning that Cambodia, like Switzerland and Sweden, does “not often “aligned” with those of the “neutralist”. And such a misperception of the US had was a mistake. Sihanouk subtly voiced his displeasure toward the US and her aids program,

²⁸³ “Memorandum From the Director of Intelligence and Research (Hilsman) to Secretary of State Rusk” *FRUS, 1961-1963. Vol XXIII*, p.166-167.

²⁸⁴ “Editorial Note” *FRUS, 1961-1963. Vol XXIII*, p.281. See the explanation in *supra* note 271.

to quote his exact phrasing, "...a great Power tries to submerge us beneath a flood of propaganda or to tempt our youth away from its duty to King and Country." It was all too clear which great power he intended to refer to, for in the previous part he had deliberately praised how Chinese aid was "flexible" and "with no conditions attached."²⁸⁵

Sihanouk had, on many occasions, keep reminding the country and international community that the neutrality was meant for Cambodia; the existence of the country on the world map depended on it. One of the examples showed Sihanouk reiterated his choice for Cambodia; in an interview with "the National Guardian" in 1965, two years after Cambodia cut diplomatic ties with the US, Sihanouk proclaimed "... you can't give the Asian peoples only a choice between the US and communism. Another choice is needed: nationalism and real liberty under democracy."²⁸⁶ The former king was still proud of his political belief, proclaiming Cambodia—*the Oasis of Peace*,²⁸⁷ although the country was halfway gliding into the Vietnam War. Decades later, when the Vietnam War had subsided, Sihanouk retained his position in the policy of "neutrality" and how the policy, he believed to be best maintained Cambodia's sovereignty and independence; telling the world through his interview with *the Playboy* in 1987 quoted as follows.

I did not switch, never!... The other nations, they changed their policy. In the Seventies, I supported the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese because I believed they were

²⁸⁵ Norodom Sihanouk. "Cambodia Neutral: The Dictate of Necessity." *Foreign affairs* 36, no. 4 (1958): 582-586.

²⁸⁶ Norodom Sihanouk and William Worthy. *Interview with Prince Sihanouk*. The National Guardian. Ministère de l'information, 1965, 3.

²⁸⁷ John P. Armstrong wrote of how Sihanouk proudly took pride in his leadership of the Kingdom and his neutral policy. To quote, Armstrong penned his book on Sihanouk as follows, "Neutrality is a permanent feature of Sihanouk's foreign policy. He sees neutrality as an essential element in creating and maintaining national unity". See in Armstrong. *Sihanouk Speaks*, 143-147. Also, in Osborne. *Sihanouk: Prince of light, prince of darkness*, 5.

defending a just cause, leading a just struggle for the freedom of Vietnam. And I fought the Americans because I could not accept their illegal intervention in the internal affairs of my country. ... I am in favor of an independent Cambodia.²⁸⁸

On this note, it can be emphasized that Sihanouk had put significant efforts into advocating his policy of neutrality as the foreign policy for Cambodia to protect her full independence and territorial integrity;²⁸⁹ and by that he meant non-interference in the country's internal affairs. Ironically, to Sihanouk, the US had to do just that; intervening in the way of Cambodia's practicing neutrality.²⁹⁰ Sihanouk firmly believed that the US deposed him for being a neutralist and that the US got did not grasp the sense of Cambodia's neutrality. Particularly, in an interview with Peter Schier, Sihanouk mentioned "... I have never been an agent or a friend of the CIA—the CIA deposed me! I had lost my crown because of the CIA and Nixon and I had no reason to cooperate with the Americans!"²⁹¹ In other words, it can be underlined that Sihanouk was not too keen on the relations US. And the US was not totally uninformed of the Prince's view.²⁹²

²⁸⁸ Norodom Sihanouk. Interview by Debra Weiner. *Playboy Interview: Norodom Sihanouk*. Playboy, May 01, 1987. http://www.sihanouk-archives-inachevees.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Sihanouk_Playboy.pdf. (September 2018).

²⁸⁹ "Memorandum From the Officer in Charge of Cambodia Affairs (Arzac) to the Director of the Office of Southeast Asian Affairs (Koren) *FRUS, 1961-1963. Vol XXIII*, p.211-214.

²⁹⁰ In a telegram from the Embassy in Cambodia to the Department of State in November 13, 1963, Philip D. Sprouse, Ambassador to Cambodia, evaluated the situation in Cambodia after the coup d'état in Saigon and the death of Diem. Sprouse noted that Sihanouk fears that the assignation and the coup to overthrow his regime would be the next one on the list after Saigon and Diem's regime. Sprouse added that "Sihanouk convinced of US complicity in coup d'état and of CIA backing Khmer Serei activities." See in "Telegram From the Embassy in Cambodia to the Department of State" *FRUS, 1961-1963. Vol XXIII*, p.247-248.

²⁹¹ Peter Schier and Manola Schier-Oum. *Prince Sihanouk on Cambodia: Interviews and Talks with Prince Norodom Sihanouk*. (Inst. für Asienkunde, 1985), 19.

²⁹² By the end of 1963, the relations between Cambodia and the US hit its critical point. Sprouse voiced his assessment in a telegram to the Department of State on December 19 that "There is no real improvement US-Cambodian relations as long as Sihanouk is unquestioned arbiter this country's

To phrase this in another manner, Sihanouk's firm political belief in neutrality was meant for Cambodia to maintain her national unity and territorial integrity; but his speculation of the future that the Communists would soon take over Southeast Asia drew him closer to Red China. Such behavior clouded Sihanouk's declaration of being neutral and that does no good for Cambodia's relationship with the US. Nonetheless, it should be noted that it is still too early for one to conclude so by just solely observing Sihanouk's political beliefs, thus leading us to the next element of leadership.

5.1.2 Leadership Style

As demonstrated earlier in the chapter on the conceptual framework, the interaction between a leader and his subordinates indicates his/her effects on the subordinates; for leaders would be skeptical in selecting subordinates with whom he/she shares similar personality; the same goes with the surroundings, the leaders tend to choose to be with whom make he/she feel comfortable.²⁹³ Likewise, Hermann also explained, "leaders willing to challenge constraints often come to their positions with an agenda and seek 'true believers'..."²⁹⁴ This statement was partly true in Sihanouk's case. The former king had hand-picked a few individuals he deemed closed in the earlier years of his political career and considered his supporters; among those close advisors who stood by Sihanouk was Lon Nol. As Sheldon W. Simon described in his book *War and*

destinies and policies." See in "Telegram From the Embassy in Cambodia to the Department of State" *FRUS, 1961-1963. Vol XXIII*, p.297-299.

²⁹³ Thomas Preston and Margaret G. Hermann. "Presidential leadership style and the foreign policy advisory process." *The domestic sources of American foreign policy: Insights and evidence* (2004): 363-80.

²⁹⁴ Margaret G. Hermann, "Political Psychology." In *The Oxford Handbook of Political Leadership* (1986), 167-192.

Politics in Cambodia: A Communications Analysis, how Sihanouk meticulously chose his subordinates; to quote, "... the Prince hand-picked all national assemblymen on the basis of personal loyalty and statist economic predilections."²⁹⁵

Nonetheless, Sihanouk also displayed the trait that Hermann termed as 'go it alone' and the '*challenging*' type; to simply reiterate, that means those who seek "to challenge the constraints and restrictions in the environment."²⁹⁶ Among all of his legacies, the most surprising event was when he abdicated the throne of the kingdom so that he would be able to be fully involved in political affairs without being bound by the kingdom's constitution. It was the first time recorded in the contemporary history of Cambodia to ever had her king relinquish such a majestic position.

Not to mention, his 'go it alone' personality also once caught the French colonial power off-guard when the young king back then embarked on his *royal crusade* for the kingdom's independence; his action proved the French authority's underestimation of the young Sihanouk for putting him on the throne expected him to be manipulated easily.²⁹⁷ Another clear example of how Sihanouk sought to challenge the restricting environment of course did not end there. Placing his political belief regarding his foreign policy of neutrality on the table, Sihanouk dared to bet on North Vietnam's side in the Vietnam War; the war that the rest of the world got to witness how the ant won against the elephant. Despite having to pay the tremendous price for placing the bet on what the rest of the

²⁹⁵ Sheldon W. Simon, *War and politics in Cambodia: A communications analysis*, 22.

²⁹⁶ Margaret G. Hermann. "Explaining foreign policy behavior using the personal characteristics of political leaders." *International studies quarterly* 24, no. 1 (1980): 7-46.

²⁹⁷ Osborne. *Sihanouk: Prince of light, prince of darkness*, 25.

world speculated as a losing side, Sihanouk regardless had his point proven with the end of the Vietnam War itself.

The list of Sihanouk's legacies confirming him being the *challenging* type can also be seen in other actions both inside and outside his political sphere; that included how Sihanouk defied the trend of the international community while most countries were expected to choose siding with either bloc of ideologies; how he emerged himself into activities the author, composer, actors, etc. showing the world and Cambodia various masks of her monarch; or when he dared put an end to the diplomatic relations with the US despite the country being Cambodia's biggest donor; or later in the 1990s when he once again made his name in the history of the Kingdom or perhaps the world for returning to the throne after the abdication and so on.

5.1.3 Motivation for Position

To requote from Leonie Huddy et al., "the important leaders...of the past are dead... have taken their personality characteristics...or power motivation—with them."²⁹⁸ On the other hand, Hermann explained in her work *Explaining foreign policy behavior using the personal characteristics of political leaders*, the leaders' motives are interpreted into their foreign policymaking behavior. She suggested the trends in which political leaders likely act to serve their need for either power, affiliation, and/or approval.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁸ Leonie Huddy, David O. Sears, and Jack S. Levy, eds. *The Oxford handbook of political psychology*. Oxford University Press, 2003. p.113. For the original quote, see Betty Glad. "Contributions of psychobiography." *Handbook of political psychology* (1973): 296-321.

²⁹⁹ Hermann, "Explaining foreign policy behavior using the personal characteristics of political leaders", also in Hermann, "Political Psychology," 167-192.

Fortunately for the Sihanouk case, there is plenty of historical evidence for one to decipher his *motivation for position*, for he often voiced his opinions loudly; scholars who have worked closely in observing Sihanouk's era also shared their observations. Arthur J. Dommen agreed that for Sihanouk, observing his writings "are the best source for his motivations."³⁰⁰ Nonetheless, it should be noted that some of his wording did not carry all the facts it originally intended. To raise one example, Sihanouk once said in one of his interviews, reassuring those he speculated having the desire to oust him that "The gentlemen of the right have no need to organize a coup d'état against me; I am not really attached to power."³⁰¹ Yet, such exclamation Sihanouk made then did not seem too well-matched with his actions later given the fact that the history of Cambodia has recorded many attempts of Sihanouk returning to power in his political career; ranking from soon after he was ousted by the coup d'état in the 1970s, to in the 1990s after Cambodia eventually settled in peace under the Paris Peace Accords.³⁰² Therefore, while Sihanouk's leadership style can be observed seemingly through some of his notable actions mentioned above, to actually validating his *motivation* is no easy task. It is by no means impossible; only, one needs to be explicitly cautious in selecting and interpreting the existing historical evidence.

³⁰⁰ Arthur J. Dommen. *The Indochinese Experience of the French and the Americans: nationalism and communism in Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam*. (Indiana University Press, 2002), 724.

³⁰¹ Cited in Charles Meyer. *Derrière le sourire khmer*. (Paris: Plon, 1971), 310. See also Arthur J. Dommen, *Ibid*.

³⁰² Sun Narin. "Paris Peace Accords' Legacy in Cambodia Is Mixed and Politically Contentious as 30th Anniversary Nears," VOA Cambodia. <https://www.voacambodia.com/a/paris-peace-accords-legacy-in-cambodia-is-mixed-and-politically-contentious-as-30th-anniversary-nears/6211020.html>. (December 18, 2021).

Milton Osborne wrote, in his famous book, *Sihanouk: Prince of Light, Prince of Darkness*, presented his view of the 'prince' as follows. "...the relationships Sihanouk has had and still has with the political leaders of other countries are a further testimony to the rich diversity of his remarkable life and to his never-ending thirst for recognition as a figure of importance on the world stage."³⁰³ Explicitly, Sihanouk's interview with the *Playboy* years later added more weight to what seemed to be his *motivation for position*. To quote from his answer to the question of how he wished history to remember him, he said:

The only thing I want history to remember is what the world ignores—that after obtaining my country's independence from France, I was the only leader in contemporary Cambodia who built schools, universities, colleges, hospitals, roads, seaports, bridges, airports, factories for his homeland and for his people. But the world ignores that. History does not want to record that. But I did it, I did it. I have proof. I have pictures of my achievements that I can show the world. After that, they can say I'm Machiave[l]lian, that I slept with devils. They can say anything, but they must acknowledge that I am the man who built up his country, not destroyed it. You know, even my worst enemies agree on one point: If I am not the best leader Cambodia could have had, surely I am the least bad...³⁰⁴

From what Sihanouk mentioned in the interview, it can be deciphered that Sihanouk was motivated to be in power to sate his needs for power and/or approval along with acknowledgment from both his countrymen and the world. Apart from the interview, another example that associates Sihanouk's actions with his needs for approval and/or

³⁰³ Osborne. *Sihanouk: Prince of light, prince of darkness*, 10.

³⁰⁴ Norodom Sihanouk. Interview by Debra Weiner. *Playboy Interview: Norodom Sihanouk*. Playboy, May 01, 1987.

acknowledgment was his self-proclaimed title as “Father of Independence.”³⁰⁵ There was a song composed to celebrate his triumph in getting independence for the Kingdom. Titled “Monseigneur Papa” [King Father/ Samdach Aou], the song was said to be highly cherished by Sihanouk.³⁰⁶ Other famous songs repeatedly played in every national festival even generations later including “Phnom Penh”, “Beauté de Kep” [Beauty of Kep], were composed by Sihanouk himself or sometimes his kins, praising the beauties of the cities – Phnom Penh and Kep describing the well-developed infrastructures along with the peacefulness;³⁰⁷ thus the cities and the kingdom deserved to be called “Pearl of Asia”³⁰⁸ and “Oasis of Peace.”³⁰⁹

Sihanouk, since the early stage of his political career, had been trying to convince his countrymen that he alone would be able to unite the country and protect the country from foreign interventions.³¹⁰ The main motivation was to be acknowledged of his efforts in nation-building that his countrymen as well as the international community had always been discounted.

Be it was for the fact that whether he really had such motivations for power and/or acknowledgment as interpreted using the psychological concepts above or not, one thing is certain; Sihanouk’s choice of actions in implementing his “neutrality” foreign policy amid

³⁰⁵ Osborne. *Sihanouk: Prince of light, prince of darkness*, 54.

³⁰⁶ Saphan LinDa, "Norodom Sihanouk and the political agenda of Cambodian music, 1955–1970".

³⁰⁷ See the full list of songs composed by Sihanouk along with his other pieces of art on the “Official websites of e of HM Father King Norodom Sihanouk of Cambodia”. https://www.norodomsihanouk.info/media/song_170.html. (December 18, 2021).

³⁰⁸ Saphan LinDa, "Norodom Sihanouk and the political agenda of Cambodian music, 1955–1970".

³⁰⁹ Sak Sutsakhan, *The Khmer Republic at war and the final collapse*, 149.

³¹⁰ Osborne. *Sihanouk: Prince of light, prince of darkness*, 113.

the War did put him in the international limelight. Should he really had held in mind such motivations, in either way he had already succeeded.

5.1.4 Reaction to Stress

Hermann demonstrates that leaders respond to stress differently according to circumstances whether it is life-or-death related or the one that involves directly his self-esteem or position. The former circumstance might be cast aside or diverted the attention elsewhere whilst the latter could cause internalization.³¹¹ In this regard, the situation that appeared to be threatening to Sihanouk's political position can be observed when he dealt with the democratic party when they won the first election in 1947; the national assembly was formed only to be dissolved merely a few months later.³¹² Another example was during the *royal crusade* in early 1953 where he imprisoned some democrats without proper trial.³¹³ These moves were made to save himself the leading position as well as to prove he was suitable for one.

Nonetheless, Sihanouk's reactions to stress were not always fierce. It was observed that he from time to time indulged himself in other types of distractions like his interest in romance, horse-riding, films, and music, etc instead of being directly confronted with the situation. Sihanouk and his passionate ways of distracting from domestic affairs were other things that made him earn his fame in the international community. In his early year, he proudly proclaimed himself as "randy as rabbit"– *Chaud lapin*.³¹⁴ Richard Nixon

³¹¹ Margaret G. Hermann. "Political psychology," 167-192.

³¹² Leifer, *Cambodia: The search for security*, 162.

³¹³ Osborne. *Sihanouk: Prince of light, prince of darkness*, 73.

³¹⁴ Osborne. *Sihanouk: Prince of light, prince of darkness*, 34

wrote in his memoir after his visit to Cambodia in 1953 that "...He seemed prouder of his musical talents than of his political leadership, and he appeared to me to be totally unrealistic about the problems his country faced."³¹⁵ Even Sihanouk's reputation was not accepted by all, some still unable to refuse his ingenious way of handling problems at home.

Even though from foreign leaders' perspectives Sihanouk appeared to be too indulged in his habitual pleasures instead of seriously handling the situation at home, he indeed had his inventive ways in tackling such a problem. Taking the benefit of his popularity among urban people and his artistic heart, Sihanouk knew just the right way to capture the hearts of his people. He turned his talent in arts into his political tools to soothe down the tension domestically. He produced and acted in dozens of films³¹⁶ and composed songs embodied with his political propaganda so catchy then let the most famous singers who held the heart of every Cambodian of every social class sing his works.³¹⁷ This artistic angle of Sihanouk remained in every Cambodian memory for decades to come whenever they hear those famous oldies songs.³¹⁸ As General de Langle, the French military commander in Cambodia before independence wrote in his memoir "Sihanouk was a *mad man*, but he is a *madman of genius*."³¹⁹

³¹⁵ Shawcross, *Sideshow: Kissinger, Nixon, and the Destruction of Cambodia*, 51.

³¹⁶ See the film *Shadows over Angkor* produced in 1967 featured by Sihanouk himself and his favorite mistress Monique. The film's storyline indirectly uncovered how the US and CIA attempt to plot against the government of Cambodia along with other foreign countries involved in Cambodia's domestic affairs at the time. See also, Osborne. *Sihanouk: Prince of light, prince of darkness*, 111.

³¹⁷ Saphan LinDa, "Norodom Sihanouk and the political agenda of Cambodian music, 1955–1970".

³¹⁸ Saphan LinDa, *Ibid*.

³¹⁹ Osborne. *Sihanouk: Prince of light, prince of darkness*, 79.

5.1.5 Background Factors

Past Political Experiences— the young prince was merely in his teens when he was dragged into the country's affairs by the France protectorate. Being a king, he lived a privileged life lacking nothing. Inside the royal palace, his words were absolute, and no one shall dare to defy; flatters and praises are welcomed while criticism is out of the question. Yet, such traditional absolute power did not apply when it comes to royal court matters.

Although, the young king did not have full authority to administrate his country, this pristine position, and the royal blood embedded deep inside him since birth made him so used to the indisputable power as saying goes "Once a king always a king." Most importantly, Sihanouk knew exactly just how to exploit such a position and image. As soon as Sihanouk held a steady stand in his political career after the establishment of the Sangkum, the Prince embarked on his country-wide voyage to educate his people on the matters of politics. He was the first monarch in the contemporary history of Cambodia to reach out to his people and listen to their complaints and ideas.³²⁰ The Prince was well aware that he had the ability to touch the hearts of Cambodians and was able to utilize that in his favor.³²¹

³²⁰ Armstrong described the scenes when Sihanouk held the Samarch [the mass gathering of people who lives in remote areas], "He calls them his children and they look upon him as their father... The feeling of being in the midst of a large family gathering... The proceedings are broadcast." See full description in Armstrong. *Sihanouk Speaks*, 21. In "Telegram From the Chief, MAAG Cambodia to the Commander in Chief, Pacific also noted that Sihanouk had strong support from the Cambodian people that "the vast majority feel he can never be wrong." See in, "Telegram From the Chief, Military Assistance Advisory Group, Cambodia (Scherrer) to the Commander in Chief, Pacific (Felt)" *FRUS, 1961-1963. Vol XXIII*, p.175-178.

³²¹ In meeting with President Kennedy during the Sixteenth Session of the UN General Assembly Prince Sihanouk mentioned how he utilized Cambodians' loyalty and their dedication toward the king

How he was recruited into the position— as mentioned in the previous chapter, Sihanouk based on the royal lineage and according to law was not even the rightful heir to ascend the throne of the kingdom. He was a young charming prince educated in Saigon. The rumor had it that he caught the attention of Governor-General Decoux's wife.³²² Meanwhile, the French added logic behind the selection that 1.) Sihanouk was favored among elites and popular among commoners; 2.) he was believed to be the descendent of both royal rivalries that had a conflicting history long before the French arrived; thus, making him king would save them from unnecessary dramas in the royal court. 3.) he was young therefore would be easy to control compared to the rightful candidate await in line.³²³ In other words, the position that Sihanouk was placed upon by the French colonial power was not based on his merits but out of convenience for the French. Regardless, Sihanouk appreciated the decision, even later on; he mentioned in his interview for the New York Review³²⁴, "I like France and the French people and France made me king in 1941."

Political context when he starts ruling— Sihanouk started his political career as the king of Cambodia in the 1940s; that was amid the second world war where France was also fully engaged in their fight in Europe meanwhile Japan the new rising imperial power took the opportunity in the continent of Asia. Sihanouk seized the opportunity handed by the Japanese to encourage further independent movement. The returns of the French

in uniting the country. See more in "Memorandum of Conversation" *FRUS, 1961-1963. Vol XXIII*, p.162-166.

³²² Osborne. *Sihanouk: Prince of light, prince of darkness*, 24.

³²³ Osborne. *Sihanouk: Prince of light, prince of darkness*, Ibid., at 25-27.

³²⁴ David Ablin, Norodom Sihanouk, and Marlowe Hood. "The Lesser-Evil, an Interview With Sihanouk, Norodom." *New York Review of Books* 32, No. 4 (1985): 21-26.

caused some blow to the young king; yet, as the world welcomed the new era of the cold war, Sihanouk decided to take a further step in his role as the Chief of State and called out for the *royal crusade* for independence.

Through the observation above, one was able to revisit the chaotic situations of the past history amid the war without being clouded by the past political experiences of that time as well as the propaganda between both blocs of ideologies. By inspecting his political beliefs, the utmost motivation in his political career, the manners he reacted to stress, as well as experiences that Sihanouk had encountered throughout the years of his political administration, many underlying details regarding Sihanouk's leadership elements have been revealed. Among all, what has become is how Sihanouk, as an individual, perceived the relations with the US. In an interview with New York Times, Sihanouk told his past disappointments with the US. When he was asked "did you always hate the Americans so much? to which, the Prince said,

Someone told me that the Americans weren't like the French; they believed in freedom and democracy and rejected colonialism. So I flew to Washington...for help in the name of freedom, democracy, etc., and he replied arrogantly: "Go home, Your Majesty, and thank God that you have the French. Without them, Ho Chi Minh would swallow you in two weeks. Good-by[e]."³²⁵

That would have been the beginning of Sihanouk's disappointment with the US. And the list keeps piling up throughout his political career. In his visit to New York for the

³²⁵ "Sihanouk: 'Changed? Not at All, Mademoiselle! I Am Still the Same Sihanouk. A Bit Original or, If You Wish, Bizarre!' The Man We May Have to Settle for in Cambodia." *New York Times*, (1973-08-12), 226.

Fifteenth Session of the UN General Assembly in 1960, Sihanouk recalled him being mistreated by the protocol team and more. He told as follows:

On my arrival in New York, a policeman was assigned to guard the door of my room. By contrast, President Sukarno, who lived in the same hotel as I did, found himself furnished with detectives, bodyguards and uniformed police escorts. Must I state that I sent my unfortunate, sad and solitary policeman on his way?... As Chief of State of Cambodia, I should have enjoyed at least the same privileges and facilities as those of the Vice President of the Moroccan Council...³²⁶

Another example of the unmet expectations with the US could be seen in the case of border issues Cambodia had with her bigger neighbors, Thailand and Vietnam. On this regard, Sihanouk's expected that the US could have at least help Cambodia to put pressure on Thailand and Vietnam for the fact that both are the allies of the US. Hence, the US would be able to exert the bargaining power given the fact that the weapons supplied to both neighbors were from the US. To his disappointment once again, the US did not respond positively to the Prince's request. In relation to that, Sihanouk decided to take the matter internationally calling for an international conference to "guarantee the neutrality and territorial integrity of Cambodia."³²⁷ Even when the issue of Cambodia's neutrality was brought to the international stage, the US remained hesitant in voicing the support for Sihanouk's proposal; weighing the US relations with Thailand and the

³²⁶ Armstrong. *Sihanouk Speaks*, 85-86.

³²⁷ Explanation on the issue of Cambodia's border was noted in Footnote 2 in "Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Thailand" *FRUS, 1961-1963. Vol XXIII*, p.198.

commitment in Vietnam, Dean Rusk, the Secretary of State suggested that the US should not yield to “Sihanouk’s threat”.³²⁸

To put it differently, it can be interpreted that Sihanouk’s actions in enforcing the foreign policy of neutrality through the course of his political career amidst the War reflected his perceptions of disappointment from unmet expectations, and distrust;³²⁹ this will also be illustrated by more examples in detail in the upcoming part. And by this point, it is clear that, to Sihanouk, the US and other Western countries that he had verbally referred to as “friend” on many occasions were not too in favor of him; and the arrow pointed both ways.

5.2 Neutrality Under the Autocratic Regime at the Nation-building Stage

5.2.1 Assistance or Interventions?

Mirroring the case of Cambodia in the Sangkum Reastr Niyum regime, Cambodia was reconstructing the entire system under the Cambodian ruler. Aside from constant clashes with neighboring countries over territory issues since ancient times, her economic

³²⁸ “Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Cambodia” *FRUS, 1964-1968. Vol XXVII*, p.258-259. See also in, Lyndon B. Johnson, (Lyndon Baines), and David M. Barrett. *Lyndon B. Johnson’s Vietnam Papers: a Documentary Collection / Edited by David M. Barrett*. 1st ed. (College Station, Tex: Texas A&M University Press, 1997), 159, on the discussion on the situation in Vietnam and whether the US should take any action to Sihanouk’s updated terms of the proposal for a conference in 1965.

³²⁹ Philip D. Sprouse, the US Ambassador to Cambodia back in the early of 1960s speculated a similar tone. In recommendation regarding neutrality proposed by Sihanouk, Sprouse reminded the US to be mindful of Sihanouk’s temperament, believing that it “undoubtedly had effect on his thinking and attitudes.” See in “Telegram From the Embassy in Cambodia to the Department of State: *FRUS, 1961–1963. Vol XXIII*, p.234-236. In another observation, Sprouse wrote, “Sihanouk either because of strong convictions of wisdom his policy of because of his pathological hatred for US, determined let neither practical considerations nor apprehensions of more moderate Cambodians stand in way of course he has charted...” See in “Telegram From the Embassy in Cambodia to the Department of State” *FRUS, 1961–1963. Vol XXIII*, p.297-299.

potential was not that strong just yet. This means, under the political insights that Prince Sihanouk had for the country, the very main priority was to strengthen her economy alongside military strength. In this respect, Cambodia had to divide her already small amount of government revenue, to begin with into a military aspect for the sake of defending her territorial sovereignty as well.

In his early years as the chief of state, Sihanouk received astounding popularity from the urban population. The majority of the population was applauding the proclamation "Father of Independence."³³⁰ The prosperity gradually widespread throughout the country.³³¹ The entire economic structure was built in accordance with the plan; that is, to turn Cambodia into an industrial-based economy.

Nonetheless, Sihanouk knew too well that economically, the newly independent Cambodia was still fragile that she had to rely heavily on foreign aid from a former colonial power, the French, US, Japan. Yet, walking on the path of Neutrality warranted Cambodia the advantageous opportunity to fling with both blocks. China, the Soviet Union, Poland, and Czechoslovakia for example were also dialogue partners contributing to reconstructing Cambodia. Proportionately, the US contributed more than 50 percent, 23 percent came from China, and 17 percent was contributed by France while Cambodia's government revenue merely added up to 2 percent of the entire budget.³³² The US however remained to be the major donor to Cambodia in both financial and military assistance. From 1955 until 1963, the US aid program to Cambodia was approximately

³³⁰ Osborne. *Sihanouk: Prince of light, prince of darkness*, 54.

³³¹ Yong Weena. "Prince Sihanouk: The Model of Absolute Monarchy in Cambodia 1953-1970." (2013). p.29. See also Donald P. Whitaker, *Area Handbook for the Khmer Republic (Cambodia)*, 175.

³³² Chhair Sokty, and Luyna Ung. *Economic history of industrialization in Cambodia*, 3.

worth up to \$309.6 million in terms of economic aid while roughly \$83.7 million was categorized as military assistance.³³³ By the first decade of the regime, Cambodia had enjoyed real prosperity in her economy. Statistically, Cambodia's per capita income increased from 2.76 in 1953 to 4.22 in 1966.³³⁴ For starters, Cambodia indeed did well in rebuilding her economy.

However, the growth was merely the beginning of the story. Apart from the brief growth, the figure also revealed another side of the coin. After Sihanouk secured the national congress support to reject the US aid in late 1963, Cambodia had undergone through massive structural change in her economic function in order to mend the missing proportion contributed by the US; the changes were believed to cause economic deterioration afterward due to Sihanouk's proposal to refuse the US aid program.³³⁵ Along with the downward sloping trend of her economy, Cambodia's society too was at the fringe of falling apart.

The economic well-being that Cambodia enjoyed for a brief moment was all due to contributions from the abovementioned donor, and not all came without strings attached. Geographically, Cambodia could not distance herself from the bubbling heat of the Vietnam War that was encroaching the entire region. Sihanouk at the beginning believed that "neutrality" would armour Cambodia from falling into the war. Who would

³³³ "Intelligence Handbook for Special Operation Cambodia," 6-10.

³³⁴ Sophal Ear, "Cambodia's Economic Development in Historical Perspective: A Contribution to the Study of Cambodia's Economy Aug. 1995", Aprenet, August 01, 1995, 34-35. <https://nautilus.org/aprenet/cambodias-economic-development-in-historical-perspective-a-contribution-to-the-study-of-cambodias-economy-aug-1995/>. (December 20, 2017).

³³⁵ "Intelligence Handbook for Special Operation Cambodia," 10. Also in Girling. *Cambodia and the Sihanouk myths*. 11-14.

have thought that the solution he thought to be the perfect way out turned out to be another open door inviting many unwanted events to his country?

The imbalance of Sihanouk's neutrality did not happen overnight; it was the consequence of past political experiences and historical mistrust embedded inside the memory of the man who once was a young king seeking foreign assistance for his country's sovereignty. And without doubt, Sihanouk remembered them well, both those that helped and those who did not.

Echoes with the notion of political style explained at the individual level in the previous sections, Sihanouk was likely to choose to associate with those with whom he felt comfortable or at least share common ground on his political beliefs. In this sense, autocratic Cambodia was led by Sihanouk towards the foreign countries withholding similar interests at best. Recalling back to when Cambodia was struggling for her independence and recognition from the international community, Sihanouk and the notion of Neutral Cambodia were not applauded by many countries. For instance, SEATO was suggested by the US for Cambodia soon after her independence; Sihanouk refused. In 1956, Sihanouk made his remark during his visit to Manila that "China's policy towards my country has so far been friendly and correct."³³⁶ In his interview with William worthy in 1965, Sihanouk pointed out as follows.

We are grateful to China... The Chinese never try to interfere in our internal affairs and never try to interfere or advise us in our foreign relations. China respects our dignity, even

³³⁶ William J. Rust. *Eisenhower and Cambodia: Diplomacy, Covert Action, and the Origins of the Second Indochina War*, 83-84.

though we are small. There is equality between China and us. Also, China supports us when we have to face threats and aggressions from outside. China gave us aid without strings attached in the military and industrial field. We have received arms from several of our friends: France, China, the Soviet Union.³³⁷

Sihanouk's constant comparison between major powers' relations with Cambodia particularly China and the US partly contributes to the chaotic situation at home too. The fraction within Cambodian society left under the rug during the fight for independence now re-emerged once again, the issue of pro-American and Anti-Sihanoukism and communism. The neutrality that Sihanouk had been reaffirming to the international community appeared to be leaning towards Communist China as the US had feared. However, the relations between Sihanouk and China were also at stake. In 1966, Sihanouk turned closer to the Soviet Union for military aid worth around \$2.3 million; this "renewal of friendship" with the Soviet Union caused fractures in the existing relationship with China. Sihanouk then started to criticize China that "the Chinese policy of 'Let us be as poor as possible as long as possible,' is not for Cambodia."³³⁸ As the relationship between Sihanouk and Peking became critical, the situation in Cambodia domestic turned chaotic once again. Sihanouk sensed the spread of Chinese communist influence inside his country; the pro-American and communism clashed in the capital city while insurgencies started to take actions along the western part of the country.³³⁹ Regarding these issues, both Sihanouk and Peking sides had engaged in a series of negotiations;

³³⁷ Sihanouk and Worthy. *Interview with Prince Sihanouk*, 6.

³³⁸ "Intelligence Report Annex Ten Years of Chinese Communist Foreign Policy Section II: South and Southeast Asia," 15-16.

³³⁹ "Intelligence Handbook for Special Operation Cambodia," 12.

the diplomatic relations were maintained but at the “non-friendly” stage. By the end of 1967, Peking agreed to mend the fraction by offering “new unconditional aid” to Cambodia to defense against the US and South Vietnam troops’ intrusion in Cambodia’s borders.³⁴⁰ Sihanouk welcomed Peking’s new offer, but the relations now were questioned by both sides.

5.2.2 Territorial Integrity on the Verge of War

Cambodia’s relations with the US and the US allies, Thailand and South Vietnam gradually crumbled down in the early 1960s due to a series of military invasions of Cambodia’s territory; the territory integrity Sihanouk fought so hard to maintain. The tension that manifested the cracking point of the diplomatic relations between Cambodia and the started in 1958 when the South Vietnam troop intruded in Cambodia province, Stung Treng, and annexed the territory for months. Sihanouk asked the US to intervene with the South Vietnam government on the issue only to receive a disappointing response. Ambassador Carl explained that the United States could not intervene in the dispute between the two countries; he added that it was strictly forbidden for Cambodia to use the weapons aids by the US to fire on the US allies as the weapons were meant to fire against the Communists.³⁴¹ In 1961, Sihanouk cut diplomatic relations with Thailand due to the issue of the Preah Vihear temple, and in 1963 relations with South Vietnam were cut off too. By 1965, Sihanouk had cut ties with one of the biggest donors, the US, and

³⁴⁰ “Intelligence Report Annex Ten Years of Chinese Communist Foreign Policy Section II: South and Southeast Asia,” 25-30.

³⁴¹ *Le Rejet de L’Aide Americaine: Trois Exposes de S.A.R Le Prince Norodom Sihanouk*, 15.

the territory issue with the US allies were taken up to the U.N.³⁴² Three years after the breakup with the US, Sihanouk now the attempts to shift back to the US support as the relations with China turned sour.

In 1968, Sihanouk re-approached Washington on the condition that the US recognize Cambodia's border that had been violated by the South Vietnam troop. He wrote in a letter to *La monde* newspaper in early 1968 that Peking and Hanoi were scheming to oust him. He also added that "It is perfectly clear that Asian Communism does not permit us any longer to remain neutral."³⁴³ Sihanouk hoped that the US would be able to tackle the problem of communist Vietnam in Cambodia;³⁴⁴ however, the large-scale bombing with B-52 was not desired.³⁴⁵ By mid-1969, the diplomatic relation between Cambodia and the US was restored;³⁴⁶ the US attacks on North Vietnam troops residing along the Cambodia border commenced along with the B-52 bombardment.³⁴⁷ Like in the case of relations with Peking, Sihanouk's rapprochement towards the US did

³⁴² Smith, *Cambodia's foreign policy*, 205. See also UN Security Council, *Security Council resolution 189 (1964)*.

³⁴³ Sihanouk expressed his idea on Communism in Asia. See in *Foreign Assistance Act of 1968: Hearings on S. 3091: Parts. 1-2, March 11-May 17, 1968*. Superintendent of Documents, (United States: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1968), 11.

³⁴⁴ The US was trying to confront Sihanouk regarding the North Vietnam troops over Cambodia's soil and on was considering whether B-52 strikes would be an acceptable option. See in "Telegram From the Commander in Chief, Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (Westmoreland) to the Joint Chiefs of Staff" *FRUS, 1964-1968. Vol XXVII*, p.469-470.

³⁴⁵ While the Prince showed his concern over the increasing spread of Communism in Asia harming the neutrality of Cambodia and her territory, Sihanouk was still not on the same page with the US in handling the issue with heavy military operations. On this view, the US on many attempts sought Sihanouk's cooperation. See in "Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Vietnam" *FRUS, 1964-1968. Vol XXVII*, p.356-358. Also in "Notes of Meeting" *FRUS, 1964-1968. Vol XXVII*, p.473-478. Also cited in Shawcross, *Sideshow: Kissinger, Nixon, and the Destruction of Cambodia*, 70-71.

³⁴⁶ Sihanouk and Wilfred G. Burchett. *My war with the CIA: the memoirs of Prince Norodom Sihanouk*, 270.

³⁴⁷ The consideration to start the B-52 Strike on Cambodia had turned into more solid and accurate plans by early 1969. In "Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon" *FRUS, 1969-1976. Vol VI*, p.69-74.

not cast away the mistrust among both parties. Bowles, the ambassador to the U.N at that time expressed his analysis to Washington “We should not let Sihanouk’s intemperate and sometimes childish outbursts deter us from the main business at hand: to keep Cambodia neutral, to keep the Viet Cong and NVA out of its territory and, with an eye to the future, to improve our relations with this small but important country.”³⁴⁸ However, the Prince was able to safely resume the relations with the US,³⁴⁹ where soon after he would take the opportunity to briefly retreat to France in early 1970.

5.2.3 The Final Ride

Although on the surface, it appeared that Sihanouk had secured his neutrality for Cambodia after he successfully reengaged with both blocs, the trust was not re-established among parties. It was actually their interests that draw them back together once again. CIA report back in 1966 during the crack of Sihanouk relations with Peking that “Mao apparently began to view him as a duplicitous and opportunistic trafficker with the ‘revisionists.’”³⁵⁰ Sihanouk himself must have been aware of that fact as well; he was fully aware that though the issue of neutrality was solved, anti-Sihanoukism did not disappear.

³⁴⁸ “Telegram From the Embassy in India to the Department of State” *FRUS, 1964-1968. Vol XXVII*, p.507-510.

³⁴⁹ Prince Sihanouk was able to soothe the relations with the US after the border issue had slightly subsided with him agreeing on releasing “American airmen.” See full text of recommendations of Secretary of State, William P. Rogers in “Memorandum From the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon” *FRUS, 1969–1976. Vol VI*, p.164.

³⁵⁰ “Intelligence Report Annex Ten Years of Chinese Communist Foreign Policy Section II: South and Southeast Asia,” 15.

Before his departure to France, Sihanouk appointed General Lon Nol to be a new Prime Minister for the new government he established hoping to settle the impair inside Cambodia's society. The new government he named "Gouvernement de Sauvetage."³⁵¹ The government led by Lon Nol was supposed to reunite the society by having both anti and pro-Sihanoukism shift the attention towards the common circumstance, anti-communist. Rumor has it that Sihanouk planned on having Lon Nol stage the demonstration to chase the unwanted Vietnamese from Cambodia territory once and for all while he, himself, would later depart from France to Peking and Moscow to obtain their assistance to put more pressure on Vietnam.³⁵² The demonstration was staged as planned on March 11, 1970. However, the situation escalated beyond what was previously planned. Lon Nol now shifted to his original intention; instead of neutrality he now wanted Sihanouk to be more aggressive toward Communist Vietnam.³⁵³ However, Sirik Matak took the opportunity to really force Sihanouk from the executive authority. Sihanouk now was in total outraged from Paris. The information was spread drastically by the CIA ensuring Sihanouk that he holds no chance of returning. Seven days later, Lon Nol and Sirik Matak acclaimed full control over the government. On March 13th, 1972, Lon Nol took up the position as President of the "Khmer republic" along with Sirik Matak

³⁵¹ Pierre Gourou. *Études de géographie tropicale offertes à Pierre Gourou*. Germany: De Gruyter, 2017. 176-177. Also in Shawcross, *Sideshow: Kissinger, Nixon, and the Destruction of Cambodia*, 113.

³⁵² The Military Assistance Command, Vietnam shared the assessment on the situation in Cambodia concerning the formation that Sihanouk entrusted to Lon Nol and Sirik Matak in late 1969. It was emphasized that the government was meant to tackle the ongoing economic problems and the widening Communist force in Cambodia. But it appeared that the original plan was abandoned afterward. In "Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon" *FRUS, 1969-1976. Vol VI*, p.683-685.

³⁵³ Neil Sheehan, Special to the New York Times, "Ouster of Sihanouk Depicted as Almost an Accident," *New York Times*, June 30, 1970.

as the Prime Minister and completely abandoned the notion of Sihanouk's neutrality.³⁵⁴ The new government gained total support and was recognized immediately by the US.³⁵⁵ Various actions from the US during that time and other evidence he acquired so far convinced Sihanouk to believe that the US and the CIA were behind everything. Sihanouk's autocratic regime the Sangkum Reastr Niyum and his foreign policy of neutrality for Cambodia could have worked and survived should we exclude the escalation of the Vietnam War from the equation. Nevertheless, in reality, Cambodia was geographically too close to the war to distance herself from the entire situation at hand. The Vietnam War outburst so close by, pushing countries to take one side or another; the no grey area was not a choice for most countries, but Sihanouk chose "neutrality" otherwise.

Substantially, Sihanouk's policymaking behavior was shadowed by factors including his previous political experiences, political beliefs and motivation, and most importantly his past political experiences. Once a king always a king; Sihanouk's royal blood had bound him into a proud characteristic that tends to manoeuvre others to do as he desired instead of actually lowering his head to ask or request assistance. Shifting back and forth between the two blocs ultimately cast further doubts and overwrote the

³⁵⁴ Ros Chantrabot, *La République Khmère: 1970-1975*, 200.

³⁵⁵ Upon the news of Lon Nol's Coup, the US was considering the high possibility that the Lon Nol government would make it easier for the US's work on curbing Communism in the region. See the assessment in "Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon" *FRUS, 1969-1976. Vol VI*, p.704-706. Also, Kissinger recommended for President Nixon to subtly go with the flow of the Proclamation of the new government. See in "Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to Present Nixon" *FRUS, 1969-1976. Vol VI*, p.707. Then roughly one month later, the US reckoned to recognize the new Lon Nol's government for the fact that this government was deemed to be upholding the pro-US policy, and thus, could cooperate well with the assistance from Thailand to fight against communism. See in "Memorandum From John H. Holdridge of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)" *FRUS, 1969-1976. Vol XX*, p.128.

existing historical mistrust in Cambodia's relations with China and the US. Eventually, as the war nearby reached its climax, Cambodia was inevitably dragged inside the flame faster fuelled by the inner breakage inside her own society left unattended since the period of independent movement.

5.3. Lon Nol and the vision of the *Neo-Khmer*

As mentioned in the introductory part, the studies about Sihanouk have more than enough attention among academia both domestic and international. But for Lon Nol, how much does one know of this last republic's leader that faced the revolutionary force and witnessed the fall of the Khmer's ancient civilization into ash? This section brings the readers' attention to get closer to this so-called introverted leader's leadership aspects and his perception as an individual, regarding Cambodia and the US relations amid the heat of the Second Indochina War.

Lon Nol, born to a family of a civil servant during the French Colonial period, 1913.³⁵⁶ Receiving education under the French administration system like Sihanouk, Lon Nol went to "elementary school in Phnom Penh,"³⁵⁷ then Lycee Chasseloup-Laubat in

³⁵⁶ There are different records regarding the family status of the young Lon Nol. While most documents agree that Lon Nol was born in a government official family, for example, Ten Soksreinith. "Lon Nol Biography," VOA Cambodia Adrift. <https://projects.voanews.com/cambodia-election-2018/english/biography/lon-nol.html>. (December 19, 2021). Likewise, as Peter Kerr wrote in the New York Times, that Lon Nol is a "son of a civil servant." See the original text in Peter Kerr. "Lon Nol, 72, Dies; Led Cambodia in Early 1970's." *New York Times*, Nov 18, 1985. Another source also recorded Lon Nol's origin as "a wealthy family of landowners...", see the original text in OEMV, "Lon Nol," *Mass Violence & Résistance*, [online], published on: September 10, 2012. <http://bo-k2s.sciences-po.fr/mass-violence-war-massacre-resistance/fr/document/lon-nol-0>, ISSN 1961-9898. (April 15, 2019).

A record from the *Area Handbook for the Khmer Republic (Cambodia)* mentioned that "Lon Nol was of poor peasant origin." See Donald P. Whitaker, *Area Handbook for the Khmer Republic (Cambodia)*, 54.

³⁵⁷ Peter Kerr. "Lon Nol, 72, Dies; Led Cambodia in Early 1970's." *New York Times*, Nov 18, 1985.

Saigon for high school, the same school that Prince Sihanouk would join later. Lon Nol was also a student of “the Khmer Royal Military School.”³⁵⁸ Starting his career soon after graduating from high school in a “judicial administration” post, then up-leveled into the administrative sector in 1937.³⁵⁹ By 1952, Lon Nol already secured his footing in his military career, ranked as “lieutenant colonel.”³⁶⁰

5.3.1 Political Beliefs

In the wake of independence, Sihanouk’s vision was to lead Cambodia on the road of neutrality that could guarantee her full sovereignty, territorial integrity, and self-sufficiency free from foreign intervention in her choice of conducting both internal and external affairs. Sihanouk believed Cambodia is united unless with the “long-standing tradition of monarchy.”³⁶¹ On numerous occasions, Sihanouk would express his view on the US by penning down his opinions in articles including, *Foreign Affairs*, *Le Monde Politique*, etc. In *Foreign Affairs* 1958, Sihanouk wrote that the US seemed to be confused by Cambodia’s notion of “neutral” which differs from that of Egypt or Indonesia.³⁶² In his interview with *The National Guardian* in early 1965, he pointed out his stance about Cambodia embracing neutrality.³⁶³

³⁵⁸ J.-C. POMONTI. “Le maréchal Lon Nol est mort.” [Marshal Lon Nol is dead.] *Le Monde*, November 19, 1985. Le Monde’s digital archive, https://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1985/11/19/le-marechal-lon-nol-est-mort_2751675_1819218.html. (December 7, 2021).

³⁵⁹ Kerr, “Lon Nol, 72, Dies; Led Cambodia in Early 1970’s,” Ibid. See also, Henry Kamm, “Lon Nol Reads no Newspapers and Never Uses a Telephone: Lon Nol.” *New York Times*, Dec 13, 1970.

³⁶⁰ Henry Kamm. “Lon Nol Reads no Newspapers and Never Uses a Telephone: Lon Nol.” *New York Times*, Dec 13, 1970. <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/lon-nol-reads-no-newspapers-never-uses-telephone/docview/118990101/se-2?accountid=14891>. (December 19, 2021).

³⁶¹ Sihanouk, “Cambodia Neutral: The Dictate of Necessity”.

³⁶² Sihanouk, “Cambodia Neutral: The Dictate of Necessity,” Ibid. Also see in Smith, *Cambodia’s foreign policy*, 137.

³⁶³ Sihanouk and Worthy, *Interview with Prince Sihanouk*, 3.

Lon Nol, similar to Sihanouk, strived for the territorial integrity of the country whilst embracing the notion of Buddhism. Though initially sharing the same view on the notion of neutrality as being best for Cambodia, Lon Nol shadowed greater despise of Communism while keen on “the French Colonial ways.”³⁶⁴ In other words, at the early stage of Lon Nol’s newly formed government, neutrality was still considered as the core foreign policy of Cambodia.³⁶⁵ In contrast to Sihanouk who often found himself criticizing the Western countries,³⁶⁶ Lon Nol on the other hand, despite being known as a nationalist did not have that much of a bad impression of the Western countries; but the General was known for his anti-communism making him well associated more with the US.³⁶⁷

And no doubt, Lon Nol did not forget to incorporate his belief in Buddhism into his vision for the Khmer Republic. In *Neo-Khmerisme*,³⁶⁸ Lon Nol repeatedly mentioned the principles within Buddhism of “sincerity and justice”, and “the sense of peace and brotherhood” that Cambodia had long been embracing since ancient times along with the legacy of the Angkorian Kings.³⁶⁹ Another account took note of how Lon Nol

³⁶⁴ Kamm, "Lon Nol Reads no Newspapers and Never Uses a Telephone: Lon Nol", Ibid.

³⁶⁵ In addressing the policy of the US towards Cambodia after the Coup, President Nixon was recommended to reassure Lon Nol that the US would support the neutrality policy of Cambodia. Moreover, the US also intended to provide economic and military assistance to the country. The inflow of military aid can be expected to support the government from falling into the Communist grips. See in “Memorandum From the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon” *FRUS, 1969–1976. Vol VII*, p.64-65.

³⁶⁶ Norodom Sihanouk. "The Future of Cambodia." *Foreign Affairs* 49, no. 1 (1970): 1-10. Also in Norodom Sihanouk. "Let My People Go." *The Nation* 211, no. 7 (1970): 198-199.

³⁶⁷ As far as the territorial issue and Communism is concerned, Lon Nol was ready to take action as noted in the article contributed to the new York Times on the issue of Sihanouk being ousted. See in A. J Langguth. "Dear Prince: Since You Went Away." *New York Times*. August 2, 1970. On Lon Nol’s attitude toward Vietnam and the Communists, see also in Sheldon W. Simon. *War and politics in Cambodia: A communications analysis*. 23-25.

³⁶⁸ The *Neo-Khmerisme* was said to also be written according to Lon Nol’s gravitation in Buddhism, the predictions of the Buddha [Puth Tumnéay–ព្រះពុទ្ធនាយ]. See Ros Chantrabot, *La République Khmère: 1970-1975*, 82.

³⁶⁹ Lon Nol. *Neo-khmerisme*, 2.

encompassed his passion for Buddhism into his political career. William Harben, a former Political Counselor of the US embassy in Cambodia described Lon Nol's superstition—"magical cotton T-shirts which would deflect enemy bullets..."³⁷⁰

The vision for Lon Nol's nation-building was to lead Cambodia toward the modern idea of Democracy. The arrival of Communism in Cambodia is "...the dismissal of the monks into the rice field followed by fratricidal war... of the Atheist ...;"³⁷¹ which is the equivalent to the end of Buddhism and the 1168-year-old of the ancient Khmer civilization.³⁷² Thus, one thing that is crystal clear for Lon Nol's political belief in Communism is most definitely not for Cambodia. And in contrast to Sihanouk's Neutrality, Lon Nol turned his compass toward the US for military assistance.³⁷³ It can be summarized that Lon Nol's political beliefs built upon his anti-communism sentiment and the protection of the country's territory making his policy lean toward the Western Bloc, in

³⁷⁰ "The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project: William Harben." *The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project* (1998). 53-55. Also cited by Stéphanie Benzaquen-Gautier. "The relational archive of the Khmer Republic (1970–1975): re-visiting the 'coup' and the 'civil war' in Cambodia through written sources." *South East Asia Research* (2021): 1-19.

³⁷¹ Lon Nol. *Neo-khmerisme* Ibid.,3.

³⁷² The Marshal was so famous for his dedication to Buddhism. Sihanouk noted in his memoirs, *My War with the CIA* that Lon Nol was so superstitious that he delayed the plan for a Coup due to Buddhist ceremonies and to wait for a "propitious moment". In Sihanouk and Wilfred G. Burchett. *My war with the CIA: the memoirs of Prince Norodom Sihanouk*, 37. Also in "The President's Daily Brief 12 October 1971," FOIA, 21 October 1971, President's Daily Brief 1969-1977, 0005992930. https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/DOC_0005992930.pdf.

³⁷³ Besides being highly dedicated to Buddhism, Lon Nol reminisces again and again on the country's glorious history in the ancient time; linking this to the urge for the unity of the country and the Khmer race against foreign aggressors (Vietnam, in particular) in his discussion with the US. See for instance in "Memorandum of Conversation" *FRUS, 1969–1976. Vol VII*, p.860-861. Also in a report by General Haig on the military and political situation in Cambodia, he wrote "...Cambodia at all levels distrust the Vietnamese..." See his full assessment in "Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon" *FRUS, 1969–1976. Vol VI*, p.1008. On Lon Nol's policy and treatment of Vietnamese, Le Duc Tho, the representative of the government of the DRV (Democratic Republic of (North) Vietnam) complained to Kissinger on how the Lon Nol government "massacred" Vietnamese nationals resided in Cambodia. For a full conversation of the meeting, see "Memorandum of Conversation" *FRUS, 1969–1976. Vol XLII*, p.1515-1539.

other words, the pro-US side.³⁷⁴ In this sense, it can be indicated that though neutrality was brought up into the picture, Lon Nol policy did not too dedicated to it; the opportunity to shift entirely to the US's side would be left open, as far as the issue of Communism is concerned.

5.3.2 Leadership Style

As explained by Hermann, “leaders willing to challenge constraints often come to their positions with an agenda and seek ‘true believers’...They are interested in controlling the flow of information...unless they pertain to or affect the implementation of their agenda.”³⁷⁵ Sihanouk appeared as Hermann termed—“go it alone” and sought to challenge the constraints and restrictions in the environment. A clear example of this is when Sihanouk abolished his throne to seek more freedom in his political career; everyone took the news by surprise. No one was aware he had such intentions; not even his parents.³⁷⁶ He was the very first king in Cambodia's history to challenge such a tradition.

Yet, there is another pattern of leadership style besides the *challenging* type; that is, those who instead “focus on respecting constraints often seek out other perspectives, are interested in diverse opinions, work well in a team, and focus on building consensus

³⁷⁴ Lon Nol's political tendency as being Pro-US was known among his political circles. And the US was well aware of that even decade before the coup happen. See for instance in “Telegram From the Embassy in Cambodia to the Department of State” *FRUS, 1958–1960. Vol XVI*, p.388-398.

In Haig's conversation with then the First Deputy Prime Minister, Sirik Matak concerning the neutrality of Cambodia, Sirik Matak conveyed Lon Nol's message that Cambodia would be flexible in the long run. See full text in “Memorandum From President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon” *FRUS, 1969–1976. Vol VI*, p.1009-1010.

³⁷⁵ Hermann, “Political Psychology,” 167-192.

³⁷⁶ Osborne. *Sihanouk: Prince of light, prince of darkness*, 91.

and working towards a compromise.”³⁷⁷ Not necessarily contrasting to the challenging style, but to some extent, Lon Nol’s style is leaning towards the *respecting* type compared to Sihanouk’s. In other words, Lon Nol was not as “go it alone” as Sihanouk.

Although being known as an introvert compared to his brother Lon Non, Lon Nol had his share of popularity among his military men and Cambodian citizens due to his dedication and passionate belief in Buddhism.³⁷⁸ Furthermore, with respect to bureaucratic life, there were several men that Lon Nol placed his trust in, especially his military officers, including Prince Sirik Matak, Srey Saman, Sak Suthskan.³⁷⁹ And compared to Sihanouk, Lon Nol might have put his trust too much in his subordinates, to the point that the matter of accuracy in the reporting on actual situations was being questioned from outside the circles of the government.³⁸⁰ Nonetheless, Lon Nol was perceived to be unable to choose the right advisors in supporting his leadership.³⁸¹ By the end of the regime, Lon Nol’s regime was given a poor evaluation and not considered effective in handling the situation in the country well enough. For instance, Senator Hubert Humphrey in the discussion concerning the US assistance to Cambodia, Humphrey

³⁷⁷ Hermann, "Explaining foreign policy behavior using the personal characteristics of political leaders".

³⁷⁸ William J. Rust. *Eisenhower and Cambodia: Diplomacy, Covert Action, and the Origins of the Second Indochina War*, 120. Also in, John R. Thomson, "Lon Nol: Cambodia's Confident Leader." *Human Events*, Sep 12, 1970. 22.

³⁷⁹ "Lon Non: Cambodia's Prime Troublemaker," CREST, 16 March 1973, General CIA Records, CIA-RDP85T00875R001100160041-4. <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP85T00875R001100160041-4.pdf>. (October 7, 2019).

³⁸⁰ "Lon Non: Cambodia's Prime Troublemaker", Ibid. Also in Kissinger's assessment of the situation in Cambodia, Kissinger wrote, "Lon Nol is much more self-assured...somewhat unrealistic." See full text of Kissinger's preliminary assessment in "Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon" *FRUS, 1969–1976. Vol VII*, p. 221-222. On a similar note, General Haig also mentioned that "The information on which decisions were being made by General Lon Nol was frequently based on out-dated intelligence or inaccurate rumor." By the end of his observation, Haig concluded that "Cambodia...lacking in experienced leadership..." See in "Memorandum of Conversation" *FRUS, 1969–1976. Vol VII*, p.223-230.

³⁸¹ "Telegram From the Embassy in Cambodia to the Department of State" *FRUS, 1969–1976. Vol X*, p.542

remarked that “I personally think Lon Nol is a dead duck. I have great sympathy for the Cambodian people.”³⁸² Issues of corruption and nepotism soon plagued the Lon Nol administration.³⁸³

5.3.3 Motivation for Position

The research by Hermann suggests that “aggressive leaders are high in need for power...distrust of others, nationalistic...” while leaders whose motives are in high need of affiliation would be more likely to trust others, “low in nationalism, and likely to exhibit little belief in their own ability to control the events in which they are involved.”³⁸⁴ Based on such suggestions, it can be interpreted that Lon Nol’s motive is in need for affiliation; to a certain extent judging by the way he placed his trust in his subordinates. However, this is by no means ensuring that his level of nationalism was any lower than that of Sihanouk’s.

Lon Nol was famous for his nationalism³⁸⁵ which was deeply embedded within his faith in Buddhism.³⁸⁶ Did this condition of being nationalistic make him an aggressive leader and instead make Sihanouk the leader in need of affiliation? Even though driven by the motive to ward off communism from Cambodia led Lon Nol’s government to drift closer to the US, caused further fracture inside the divided society, and threatened the

³⁸² “Memorandum of Conversation” *FRUS, 1969–1976. Vol X*, p.672-673.

³⁸³ Sak Sutsakhan. *The Khmer Republic at war and the final collapse*, 36-42.

³⁸⁴ Hermann, “Political Psychology,” 6.

³⁸⁵ A telegram sent from the embassy in Cambodia to the Department of State back in 1960 took note of how Lon Nol took pride in being a “true Cambodian”. Even though he was considered a pro-US as far as the cooperation was concerned with Thailand and Vietnam, Lon Nol was not too eager to involve in one. See in “Telegram From the Embassy in Cambodia to the Department of State” *FRUS, 1958–1960. Vol XVI*, p.388.

³⁸⁶ In “Telegram From the Embassy in Cambodia to the Department of State” *FRUS, 1969–1976. Vol X*, p. 544. Also in Donald P. Whitaker, *Area Handbook for the Khmer Republic (Cambodia)*, 182-183.

stability of his new republic, Lon Nol did not shy away from his “war of resistance.” Concerning whether or not Lon Nol craves power, the evidence might not provide a crystal-clear image; but one can observe from his actions. In the assessment of Lon Nol’s leadership, John Gunther Dean, an ambassador of the US to Cambodia ended his evaluation he mentioned that “...The Marshal has told us at one point that he is willing to leave if his departure will help bring peace.”³⁸⁷

5.3.4 Reaction to Stress

With merely five years of administration, there are a handful of records regarding Lon Nol’s private’s life compared to Sihanouk. Unlike Sihanouk, Lon Nol’s artistic side was rarely heard of.³⁸⁸ Apart from being referred to as an introvert that became even more reserved as time went by, Lon Nol as Thomson wrote, “settled for his quiet home in the country, away from even the modestly fashionable areas;” and compared with Sihanouk who enjoyed being welcomed and applauded by crowds, Lon Nol often traveled with minimal crowds of armed forces; “the quiet, almost aloof general.”³⁸⁹ Similarly, Corfield and Kamm also note Lon Nol’s modesty including the passion Lon Nol had for the Buddhist way of life, how Lon Nol situated his villa far from crowds and other high-ranking

³⁸⁷ “Telegram From the Embassy in Cambodia to the Department of State” *FRUS, 1969–1976. Vol X*, p. 546. Additionally, on March 6, 1975, barely a month before the collapse of the Republic, in the discussion on aid to Cambodia and whether the US should ask Lon Nol to leave, John J. Sparkman one of the Senators mentioned the reports; stating that Lon Nol “is willing to step aside and form a coalition.” See the full discussion in “Memorandum of Conversation” *FRUS, 1969–1976. Vol X*, p.673. Also in Sydney H. Schanberg. Special to The New York Times. 1975. “Lon Nol Is Said to Pack for Eventual Departure: Lon Nol Reported Packed for Exit.” *New York Times (1923-Current File)*, Mar 23, 1975.

³⁸⁸ For further details see, Saphan LinDa, “Norodom Sihanouk and the political agenda of Cambodian music, 1955–1970”.

³⁸⁹ John R. Thomson, “Lon Nol: Cambodia’s Confident Leader.” *Human Events*, Sep 12, 1970. 22.

elites, and how “Buddhist monks are always welcome.”³⁹⁰ In many accounts, Lon Nol was described by his passion for Buddhism.³⁹¹ Corfield recorded that Lon Nol and his beliefs in Buddhism, as well as astrology, had cost him approximately US\$20,000 per month in astrological fortune-telling.³⁹²

Sharing Buddhist wisdom and great vision through meditations appeared to be more of Lon Nol’s preference rather than penning down political articles, directing films, or other sources of entertainment; it was the passive life that he embraced. In a scholarly work by Kenneth R. Bowra wrote the timeline of Cambodia under the US military assistance during the Khmer Republic; the timeline listed the event when the president suffered from a stroke in February 1971 and had to leave the office to receive a rehabilitation program in Hawaii.³⁹³ A Memorandum sent from Kissinger to President Nixon on the news concerning Lon Nol’s resignation described “Lon Nol’s physical and related emotional incapability of bearing the burdens of the office have become clear...”³⁹⁴ Also, General Haig who had a conversation with Lon Nol in 1970 mentioned that “Lon Nol is emotional and not very realistic (towards the end of the conversation he broke

³⁹⁰ Kamm, "Lon Nol Reads no Newspapers and Never Uses a Telephone: Lon Nol," Ibid.

³⁹¹ In the observation of Lon Nol’s leadership, Lon Nol was described as “devotion to astrologers and geomancers...” In “Telegram From the Embassy in Cambodia to the Department of State” *FRUS, 1969–1976. Vol X*, p. 544. See also John R. Thomson, "Lon Nol: Cambodia's Confident Leader," Ibid.

³⁹² Justin James Corfield. "Khmer stand up! A History of the Cambodian Government 1970-1975." Ph.D. diss., Monash University, 1994. p.41.

³⁹³ “Minutes of Meeting of the Washington Special Actions Group” *FRUS, 1969–1976. Vol VII*, p.388-394. The minutes of the meeting discussed military operations in South Laos and North Laos. And while off the topic from Laos, Kissinger asked his colleagues about Lon Nol’s condition. It was reported that Lon Nol “suffered a serious stroke that paralyzed his left side.” Due to his health, Lon Nol resigned and planned to leave for Hawaii for treatment. Also in Bowra, *Cambodia: Analysis of US Military Assistance to Cambodia, 1970-1975*, 212. See also, “Lon Nol ill”, *The Guardian* (1959-2003); February 11, 1971.

³⁹⁴ “Memorandum From the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon” *FRUS, 1969–1976. Vol VII*, p. 566. Also in, "Lon Nol Resigns, Blaming Health: Cambodian Chief Had Stroke -- Cabinet Also Quits Lon Nol Resigns, Blaming Health." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Apr 20, 1971.

down).³⁹⁵ This past medical history of Lon Nol and evidence pointing to his emotional sensitivity could partially be indicated that he was not too resilient to stressful situations, considering the fact that the stroke happened soon after the coup took place and while Cambodia had to undergo the entire process of nation-building with the new government.

5.3.5 Background Factors

Past Political Experiences – the young Lon Nol was born in a civil servant family in Prey Veng province during the French administration in 1913.³⁹⁶ Kerr penned down brief information about Lon Nol's career paying tribute to the late Lon Nol as follows. He was well-educated at the Lycee Chasseloup-Laubat in Saigon; the high school shared by other elites including Sihanouk and Sirik Matak. Lon Nol served in an administrative post for almost ten years and then became the governor of Kratie province.³⁹⁷ His experience in administrative service soon earned him a higher post as a director of administrative service in Phnom Penh in 1949. He became a lieutenant colonel in 1952; then a military Chief by 1955. As he rose to be lieutenant general in 1961, Lon Nol gained trust from Sihanouk due to his contribution in fighting for the country's independence.³⁹⁸ Up until the overthrow of Sihanouk in 1970, Lon Nol remained the most powerful man second only to Sihanouk.³⁹⁹

³⁹⁵ "Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon" *FRUS, 1969–1976. Vol VI*, p.1009.

³⁹⁶ "Telegram From the Embassy in Cambodia to the Department of State" *FRUS, 1969–1976. Vol X*, p.542-546.

³⁹⁷ "Telegram From the Embassy in Cambodia to the Department of State" *FRUS, 1969–1976. Vol X*, p.542-546 Ibid.

³⁹⁸ Kerr, Kerr, "Lon Nol, 72, Dies; Led Cambodia in Early 1970's," Ibid. See also, Henry Kamm, "Lon Nol Reads no Newspapers and Never Uses a Telephone: Lon Nol," Ibid.

³⁹⁹ John R. Thomson, "Lon Nol: Cambodia's Confident Leader," Ibid.

How he was recruited into the position – Lon Nol was known for his utmost loyalty to the prince since his early days as the Chief of State. Before Sihanouk traveled to Peking and Moscow, Lon Nol was entrusted as the Prime Minister to the new government to restore the fragments inside Cambodia.⁴⁰⁰ Until the last moment, as Osborne describes, Lon Nol was threatened by Sirik Matak to join in the Coup or be shot; the initial plan also included the killing of the prince but Lon Nol refused the latter option.⁴⁰¹ Despite his position as the leader of the Republic, Lon Nol maintained his humble character regardless of his newfound power.⁴⁰²

Political Context when he starts Ruling – what Lon Nol inherited from the Sangkum was a country with a troubled economy and divided public opinion. Now that he embarked on uprooting Communism from the Country, financial assistance from the Communist bloc was no longer an option. The Republic government heavily depended on US assistance. The corruption among the elites was still looming over the new government while the society was torn between the republicans, the pro-Sihanouk, the communists, and the US bombardment.⁴⁰³ The complications and tricky political issues even Sihanouk had long been tackling for almost two decades still needed some time to sort out.

⁴⁰⁰ Shawcross, *Sideshow: Kissinger, Nixon, and the Destruction of Cambodia*, 113.

⁴⁰¹ Osborne. *Sihanouk: Prince of light, prince of darkness*, 202-216.

⁴⁰² John R. Thomson, "Lon Nol: Cambodia's Confident Leader," Ibid.

⁴⁰³ OEMV, "Lon Nol," *Mass Violence & Résistance*, [online], published on: September 10, 2012. <http://bo-k2s.sciences-po.fr/mass-violence-war-massacre-resistance/fr/document/lon-nol-0>, ISSN 1961-9898. (April 15, 2019).

5.4 The *Neo-Khmer* and the Autocratic Regime

Though there are few primary sources remaining to attest how the functioning of the autocratic regime during Lon Nol's political administration, it should not be disregarded from the entire equation. Like Sihanouk's the *Sangkum*, Lon Nol's administration was also included in the *Autocratic Regimes Codebook*. Having shared similar fragilities to his predecessor, the Khmer republic did not only have unstable economic growth, it was on the verge of collapsing; the social dimension of the republic was already fractured.

The autocratic under the "military personnel" is estimated to have an average life span of up to at least 11.1 years. However, for the Khmer Republic, the life span of the regime was barely half when it collapsed. Without taking into consideration the types of autocratic regime the Khmer Republic was in, one would have speculated that the fall of the regime itself could be due to the complications of the Second Indochina War. Yet, was that really all? With the foreign assistance of a greater power like the US and her allies, the regime could have survived, at least, longer. Even when the US withdrew from the war with Communist Vietnam, would not the Khmer Republic have other sources of revenue to keep the regime alive? That could be possible had Lon Nol was not a military man. Here comes the part explaining why types of autocratic regimes can also be as one of the contributions to the conduct of foreign policy as well as the collapse of the regime.

This indication helped put more weight on asking the question of what exactly went wrong in this regime as well as its foreign policy? Or to the very least, leading the way to inspect other dimensions. Though Lon Nol's initial intention was to lead the country with

democratic ways, during that short five years, Cambodia found herself trapped in another autocratic spell before witnessing herself transform into a full democracy. Similar to Sihanouk, Lon Nol also had the power to make the final call in conducting the country's foreign affairs which resulting the country's drifting back closer to the US.

5.4.1 Economic Status and Foreign Assistance

Lon Nol's administration did not build the economy of the country from scratch like the Sangkum. However, the regime had inherited the deteriorating economic status from its predecessor.⁴⁰⁴ The republic was in the process of executing the economic restoration. In late 1971, a new economic policy was announced attempt to stabilize the situation.⁴⁰⁵ After almost two decades under the Sangkum, the country's economy was still heavily dependent on the agricultural sector with 85% peasants out of the total population.⁴⁰⁶ The detailed information regarding the nation's budget of found in the existing historical evidence noted merely from the period of 1969 to roughly 1973.⁴⁰⁷ As mentioned by Whitaker, the data and documents related to the total expenditure of the country "had not been registered for many years."⁴⁰⁸

⁴⁰⁴ Lon Nol's new government was recorded as facing severe economic problems and had to depend on foreign aid in both economic and military aspects causing its popularity weakened drastically. See the full report on the situation in Cambodia just several weeks after the Coup in "Memorandum by Director of Central Intelligence Helms" *FRUS, 1969–1976. Vol VI*, p.962-966.

⁴⁰⁵ Donald P. Whitaker, *Area Handbook for the Khmer Republic (Cambodia)*, 248-260.

⁴⁰⁶ J.D. "Le maréchal Lon Nol et l'avenir politique du Cambodge." [Marshal Lon Nol and the political future of Cambodia.] *Le Monde*, April 29, 1972. *Le Monde's* digital archive, https://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1972/04/29/le-marechal-lon-nol-et-l-avenir-politique-du-cambodge_2400804_1819218.html. (December 7, 2021).

⁴⁰⁷ In Donald P. Whitaker, *Area Handbook for the Khmer Republic (Cambodia)*. Also in, Ros Chantrabot, *La République Khmère: 1970-1975*.

⁴⁰⁸ Donald P. Whitaker, *Area Handbook for the Khmer Republic (Cambodia)*, 248.

Mirroring the “military” type autocratic regime, Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler pointed some insights on how the expenditure of such a regime would have looked like; the coup d'état would lead to more spending in the military sector.⁴⁰⁹ Relatively, Abel Escribà-Folch provided similar explanations that the military regimes “keeping the military budget high...and getting good state-of-the-art military equipment... devoting a significant amount of public resources to goods and services or military expenditures.”⁴¹⁰ These suggestions reflected well the Khmer Republic's situation. As Whitaker described the increased spending of the national budget in military expenditure plunged by 300% in 1970 while the expenditures on civilians dropped. Then in 1972, the military expenditures remained on the upward slope rising approximately to 45% of the total national expenditure.⁴¹¹ This part also parallels what was suggested by Hermann regarding the leadership style. To reiterate, the analysis of Lon Nol's leadership style in the earlier section indicated that Lon Nol was *respecting* type; particularly “focus on respecting constraints...building consensus and working towards a compromise.”⁴¹² Barbara Geddes as well as Eric A. Nordlinger too emphasized that the military regimes pay great attention to “the cohesiveness and the status of the armed forces.”⁴¹³ In this manner, Lon Nol being a military man and the top leader of the autocratic regime magnetized him

⁴⁰⁹ Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler. "Military spending and the risks of coups d'etats." (2007).

⁴¹⁰ Abel Escribà-Folch. "Authoritarian responses to foreign pressure: Spending, repression, and sanctions." *Comparative Political Studies* 45, no. 6 (2012): 683-713.

⁴¹¹ Donald P. Whitaker, *Area Handbook for the Khmer Republic (Cambodia)*, 251.

⁴¹² Lon Nol was described as a “Yes-man” when referring to his leadership where he was too dependent on his subordinates without questioning much about reality. “Telegram From the Embassy in Cambodia to the Department of State” *FRUS, 1969–1976. Vol X*, p. 542-546.

⁴¹³ Escribà-Folch, "Authoritarian responses to foreign pressure: Spending, repression, and sanctions," *Ibid.* See original text in Barbara Geddes. "What do we know about democratization after twenty years?" *Annual review of political science* 2, no. 1 (1999): 115-144. See also, Eric A. Nordlinger. *Soldiers in politics: military coups and governments*. (Prentice Hall, 1977).

closer to the US who was the top supporter to provide military assistance and operations to Cambodia.⁴¹⁴

5.5 Two Sides of the Same Coin?

To wrap up, one needs to refer to this simple question – what did Sihanouk have but Lon Nol did not? For Cambodia, Sihanouk and his foreign policy of neutrality was the pioneer of the kingdom's new era after almost a century under the French Colonial power.

Building up the country from scratch, Sihanouk had the privilege to set the tone for the newly independent kingdom. Having exhibited the trait parallels to the “*challenge to constraints*” type, Sihanouk refused to be confined by the international order and setting, then cast the die to have Cambodia walk the path of neutrality. And another part of the privilege as a starter of such a new era, Sihanouk, if not all, won the hearts of most Cambodians; he also cautiously hand-picked subordinates who supported his vision in politics. Such actions allowed Sihanouk to be exposed to both blocs of ideologies and donors, handed him a favorable environment for accumulating experiences over the course of his political career.

Counting from being positioned as a king in his teen to when he was in power over the *Sangkum*, that was approximately more than two decades of witnessing and being part of the changes himself, in both domestic and international ambiances. With long exposure to world political affairs, Sihanouk was able to maneuver and divert situations into his favor and speculate the wave of changes.

⁴¹⁴ Sak Sutsakhan. *The Khmer Republic at war and the final collapse*, 50.

Lon Nol, on the other hand, switched to side with the US as soon as his new government was formed and sailed the country against the wind of Communism. Even though he was once a loyal subordinate of Sihanouk, most of that time he was in the position of military fields instead of being exposed to complicated political affairs among blocs of ideologies; not to mention, the US had always been the biggest donor in terms of military-related assistances.

Spontaneously, Lon Nol displayed the tendency of leaning toward the non-communism side since he was Sihanouk's subordinate. It was only later in the 1970s that Lon Nol turned to involve more in his political career, but it was short-lived. In addition to that, most of the diplomatic communications he made during those years were with the US in terms of military operations and assistance-related programs. In other words, Lon Nol had his hands involved more in the non-communist bloc; not only that he had less direct contact with the communist, but his government was also in the war against it.

In addition to his limited exposure to the communist bloc, Lon Nol, who exhibited a leadership style close to what was described as the *respecting* type, placed so much trust in his subordinates; most of them were supporters of the *Sangkum*. Relatively, his popularity was not too high due to the hush enforcement of policy against communism domestically. More importantly, as mentioned previously the Lon Nol government was built upon the ash of the *Sangkum*, meaning that he had to bag the social unrest along with the economic burden from the past administration. Relying mainly on foreign aid, the government saw itself falling into the abyss as soon as the US withdrew from Vietnam in 1973.

To the country that had relied on foreign aid from both blocs for almost two decades, the sudden suspension from the US inflicted a severe scar on the already fragile economy. In this sense, it can be said that, unlike Sihanouk, Lon Nol did not effectively speculate on the outcomes or the surrounding atmosphere. On the one hand, it can also be emphasized that considering the background in which Lon Nol came into power, Cambodia was already trapped in chaotic circumstances both domestically and externally. Despite his efforts, Lon Nol also did not have time on his side to tackle those predicaments in such a short period of time.

Conclusion

This chapter is divided into three sections: a summary of each chapter; a synthesis of the assessment in chapter five; and last but not least the concluding remarks for this research topic.

The introductory chapter of this dissertation comprises of problem statement leading to the observation of categories of literature found to be relevant to the theme topic under the keywords: Cambodia's foreign policy; the US foreign policy before and during the Second Indochina War/ the Vietnam War; political psychology; Sihanouk; Lon Nol; and autocratic regime. The upcoming section posits the research question "what went wrong in Cambodia-US relations in Sihanouk's and Lon Nol's political administration?"; followed by the objectives of the research which is to examine Cambodia-US relations from the period 1949 to 1975. The upcoming session is the research design, the backbone of the entire research; this part shows the methodology and a brief conceptual framework employed in assessing the relation of both countries through Sihanouk's and Lon Nol's perspectives. The latter section presents significance along with the core originalities of this research and wraps up the first chapter by providing the road map to the entire dissertation.

In this dissertation, the critical reviews of the existing scholarly works are assigned to a separate chapter. Chapter two provides a refined landscape of how vast and diverse in dimensions the studies regarding the theme topic have been covered up to recent date; anon to point out the existing knowledge gap without having to confine the discussions in the already-packed introductory chapter.

The second chapter starts with a brief history of how the development of US foreign policy in the region of Southeast Asia over time, and her involvement in the Indochina conflicts followed by literature works on Cambodia's foreign policy; then closes with a knowledge gap of the current topic. It can be summarized that the studies of foreign policy amid the Indochina conflicts as well as the Vietnam War are largely focused on 1.) the US or greater powers' foreign policy, their perspectives, and rivalry among greater powers in the regions; 2.) impacts and/or lessons learned from the Vietnam War which most of the time highlight the role of the US and Vietnam as the main characters of the story; 3.) military history including tactics, operations, and the list keeps going on. As for Cambodia's foreign policy, one of the most common key terms that have received a lot of attention from historians and political scientists likewise would have been no other than the well-known "neutrality" policy embraced by Sihanouk. Most scholarly works that examine Sihanouk's administration share similar views that the 'neutrality' was somewhat an integral part of Cambodia's foreign policy in surviving her newly gained freedom and sovereignty from the early 1950s until toward the end of the 1960s. But that does not completely cover what makes up the foreign policy of Cambodia through the rest of the War, not to mention the policy toward the US.

After having examined most literature related to the foreign policy of Cambodia of both administrations throughout the Vietnam War, it can be noted that there is a lack of continuity in the studies of Cambodia's foreign policy during the period of the Vietnam War, particularly the Lon Nol's years when the bombardment of the war was at its peak. Very often the inspections mainly focus on Sihanouk's administration and end there. Whist some literature did extend further narrations on Lon Nol's years, the highlight of the

analysis remains on the US sides ranking from the topic of military assistance, advisors, and other sorts of relevant operations the US enforced to contain the situation with Vietnam. In other words, the observation of Lon Nol's foreign policy is by far overshadowed by the US involvement in the war rather than a thorough examination of the very being of the administration or of the regime itself.

In the third chapter, the dissertation provides a detailed explanation of the conceptual framework used for the analytical part of the research. The first section of the chapter presents the stance of this research in the academic fields— the intersections of history, FPA, and political psychology. The following part reviews prominent approaches in the aforementioned fields and emphasizes the selected concepts within the intersections along with rationales behind why such concepts are being employed in the research. Thence, the chapter finishes by presenting notable anticipating risks in applying such an approach.

With a multidimensional approach, this research dissects the analytical part into two dimensions which explores explicitly on individual and domestic factors. For the individual factors, this work inspects the psychological aspects of the top political leaders: Sihanouk and Lon Nol. In particular, this research refers to renowned psychological concepts commonly used among scholars when studying the characteristics of political leaders including political beliefs, leadership style, motivation, reactions to stress, and background factors. As for domestic factors, this dissertation looks from the perspective of political regime — the autocratic regime, and its types incorporate with related concepts in explaining the stability and the collapse of the regime.

The fourth chapter of this dissertation is a descriptive chapter on Cambodia's foreign policy from 1949 to 1975. This chapter starts with briefing background information the encounter with the US, and Cambodia's history before and after the arrival of the French colonial power. The following section narrates the atmosphere of Cambodia in the changing of new eras of Sihanouk's *the Sangkum Reastr Niyum* and the *Khmer Republic* under Lon Nol. This chapter ends by providing the overall image of Cambodia-US relations during the research timeframe and presenting the policy of Sihanouk's neutrality in comparison to other countries like India, Laos, and so on.

At a glance, this chapter may seem like it merely narrates what happened to Cambodia during the research timeframe. However, the information posit within this chapter is an integral "filling" in completing the entire anatomy of analyzing Cambodia's foreign policy toward the US in the period of the Second Indochina War. This chapter traces back to just a few years before Cambodia gained her independence. In late 1949, what looked just like every other year for Cambodia being under the French colonial power. Yet, that year Cambodia for the first time in nearly a century had sensed a very faint breeze of freedom that she had long forgotten once belonged to her. Through years of struggles, finally, France had too much on her plates to even retain the relationship with Cambodia. The Franco-Khmer treaty and annexed conventions which had been under negotiations for years had eventually worked their charms realizing Cambodia her freedom in conducting her foreign affairs with other states, though remaining under the watchful eyes of France. Even then, the relationship between Cambodia and the US remained pretty much in shadow for the US was not too sure of what would lie ahead of Cambodia's independence specifically, which side she would

lean on after France left. For this reason, the US did not show too much edger to support the kingdom for her independence; yet, financial assistance still flowed through France. It was not official until 1952 that the US and Cambodia agreed to take the relationship further to the ambassador level with Cambodia celebrating her independence the next year.

Fast forward to two years later, Cambodia saw her king, Sihanouk improvising the very long existence of traditional monarchy into something she barely acquitted. For the first time in Cambodia's contemporary history, Sihanouk showed his country and the world 'the new face of monarchy'; he abdicated the throne and fully bathed himself in politics without further restriction from the constitution. The new political administration he named *the Sangkum Reastr Niyum*. This new image Sihanouk had so cautiously crafted was a masterpiece winning the hearts of Cambodians as much as their excitement to be the living witnesses of the 'god-like' monarch descending on earth; the mirage one had never dreamed to ever witness in a lifetime.

Neutrality, Sihanouk declared to the world, was the policy Cambodia abided by; for, she would no longer wish to see any foreign interrupting her hard-earned sovereignty. The US did not applaud for the fact that Cambodia failed to pick her side; yet maintained her status as the kingdom's main donor in both financial and military fields. Then, a new character residing close by appeared. China came into the picture in 1956 reconnecting the long-lost relations with the kingdom and starting to provide assistance to Cambodia. Afterward, Cambodia welcomed donors from both blocs of ideologies keeping the regime afloat for almost two decades. However, somewhere along the way, the US had drifted apart as Cambodia was hopping back and forth between two blocs. By the 1960s, the

relationship with the US started to lose its charm. In 1963, Sihanouk remarked that the kingdom would reject the US aid program; and by 1965, the relationship hit its rock-bottom; the diplomatic relations between the two no longer exist. By 1969, the US would stand with the allies- the South-Vietnam and started the bombardment over Cambodia's soil attempting to chase away communist Vietnam. With the biggest donor of the non-communist bloc out of the picture, the 'neutrality scale' that Sihanouk had tried so hard to maintain the balance too could no longer play its original function. Lon Nol, as one of the well-known loyal subjects to Sihanouk, was not too keen on the kingdom sliding closer to communism, but barely made his thought known. In 1970, Sihanouk was on his trip to France for a health check-up, Lon Nol seized the opportunity as recorded in history as a coup that ousted Sihanouk and put an end to the *Sangkum Reastr Niyum* era.

By 1972, the newly formed government— *the Khmer Republic* had its stance strengthened under Lon Nol leading Cambodia back closer to the US. The 'neutrality' now overlayed by the stronger sense of 'anti-communism.' Cambodia under Lon Nol's leadership was more than ever drifting apart from the communist bloc and the US once again became the main donor to the kingdom. However, the new republic route was not all smooth since the beginning. The 'anti-communism' policy abruptly enforced by the republic only caused further pressure to the already-fractured domestic harmony. Lon Nol was more occupied handling domestic unrest that soon escalated into the fiercest civil war ravaging the country and dragging Cambodia closer into the blaze of the Second Indochina War. With the Paris Peace Accords spelling the end of the Second Indochina War in 1973, the US sponsorship to Cambodia would soon be terminated despite how vulnerable the republic was. The country was now left to fend by herself with little

resources that had been long exhausted due to years of unrest. By late 1974, the country's remaining resources already spread too thin; the revolutionary force obtained consecutive victories over the republic. In the morning of April 17, 1975, the revolutionary force— the *Khmer Rouge* declared its triumph of successfully taking full control of the capital city, Phnom Penh; thus, marking the end of the Khmer Republic. And the rest is history— the *three years, eight months, and twenty days* of genocide that wiped away almost half of the population.

Chapter five presents the application of the conceptual framework to the scenarios of Cambodian history. This chapter consists of the assessment of psychological aspects of the top political leaders Sihanouk and Lon Nol; each also followed by the assessment on the facets of political regimes under both leaders' administrations. Thence, the chapter wraps up on any noteworthy factors deemed to be the activators of the downfall of Cambodia-US relations amid the War. This chapter guides readers to travel back into time and witness the very starting point of the story, how each character in history encounters their dilemmas and is engulfed by the flames of war as their version blurred out by their past experiences.

The examinations of individual factors of Sihanouk and Lon Nol revealed that their personal experience with the US plays great role in determining the relations of the two countries. While the domestic factors of both administrations can be considered as the catalyst in accelerating and decelerating the tension in the relationship of the two countries.

Cambodia had witnessed the fluctuation of her foreign policy from neutrality in the 1950s until the early 1960s. The shift from neutrality to the Left by Sihanouk drew Cambodia even further from the US. Sihanouk's neutrality policy faced many downturns starting from the mid-1960 when Sihanouk tried time and time again to seek the US's support in easing the tension between Cambodia and her neighbor. Nonetheless, the US reluctant refrained from taking action as requested by the Prince causing him to turn to China and internationalize the issue. In the same manner, the shift to China fueled the US's doubt about Sihanouk's neutrality even more. After the fall of in Saigon followed by the death of Diem, Sihanouk began suspicious that he would be the next target; such fear pushed Sihanouk to take more actions which only deteriorate the relationship with the US even further until it eventually fell apart in 1965.

Putting the US's side of the story aside, it can be speculated that, had the US responded more positively to Sihanouk's requests or even flattered the Prince a bit more, Sihanouk's doubts and fear would have been soothed down and might have saved the relations between the two countries. Then with the new regime of the Khmer Republic coming into the picture in 1970, Cambodia saw a brief reunion with the idea of neutrality again; but it was short-lived. The Lon Nol's regime depended heavily on foreign aid, particularly from the US, in the war against Communism; turning Cambodia-US into a positive setting once again. With Lon Nol known as being a Pro-US and against Communism, the relations between Cambodia and the US saw a better light, Lon Nol's administration did not have the capacity to survive independently, both economic and militarily all in bad condition. No sooner, the relationship had become more of a burden

to the US. Even though it did not deteriorate like when Sihanouk was in reign, Lon Nol's leadership was poorly evaluated by the US.

Synthesis: A Too-Abrupt Shift or A Too-Late U-Turn?

By this point, it can be emphasized that the relationship between Cambodia and the US amidst wartimes saw its difference and continuity if one was to observe it through the lens of Cambodia's top political leaders: Norodom Sihanouk and Lon Nol. To be precise, this dissertation accentuates how Sihanouk and Lon Nol had exhibited difference attitudes toward the US causing various turns throughout the route of the relations between the two countries.

Sihanouk, a monarch by birth, a former king then transformed himself into an influential political figure upheld his belief that *neutrality* was the best choice for the kingdom in post-independence. And with his unshakable confidence asserted that Cambodia would break apart without 'monarchy' in other words, his eminent presence. His leadership style can be interpreted as of 'the challenging the constraints and restrictions' type like the way he abdicated the throne for the sake of his full freedom in political affairs and bet on the smaller opponent against the giant-like US in the Vietnam War. Throughout many years of his political career, Sihanouk revealed his utmost motivation of how much he wanted to be remembered in history as 'the man who built up his country...' and expressed his desire for the world to acknowledge his efforts. Be it was for the fact that it was of his motivation to gain the world and his countrymen's acknowledgment of his efforts or all that he had ever done was meant for power, his expression of disappointment regarding those matters suggested that he did care about

it; failing to claim such acknowledgment disappointed him so much that he felt the urge to bring back the topic even after decades had passed.

In the face of stressful situations like how other political leaders are bound to come across, Sihanouk found himself multiple ways in handling it as well as diverting the situation into his favor; attesting his leadership in the maneuvering manner possible. Among many pieces of evidence, the most eye-catching among all would have been his artistic side which came in the forms of songs, movies as well as journal articles, and so on. Embedded with hidden messages, sometimes propaganda in those pieces of art, Sihanouk was able to divert his stress while expressing his displeasure through the work of art without putting himself in too much confrontation in the finger-pointing games. Sihanouk who had exposed himself to political affairs since his teen had been accumulating his experiences in the field and was ready to put them into use at any opportunity allowed.

The *Sangkum* under Sihanouk underwent almost two decades of prosperity which to the present day still regards as one of his legacy seconds after his momentum triumph in retaining the Kingdom her full independence. From what appeared similar to the way the democratic country would have led, Cambodia embarked on a slightly different route at the post-independence; for scholars of political regimes like Geddes, the regime was categorized as a 'monarch' or 'personalist' ruled autocratic regime. And not far too different from other typologies of the autocratic regime, this type is often associated with fragilities raking from lack of stability in terms of economic growth; dependent on foreign assistance which opens more opportunity for foreign interventions or influences in domestic affairs. The final fate would often be the collapse of the regimes themselves,

changing of a political leader, or in some cases transit to democracy. The *Sangkum* was not of any exceptional case. Yet, what was worth note-taking was the manner its leader was able to solely grasp the power of decision-making in conducting its foreign affairs. To Cambodia, Sihanouk was a pioneer of the kingdom's new era. Even without a self-proclaimed title like 'Father of Independence' Sihanouk's initiative in establishing the *Sangkum* granted him the power to call the shots in conducting the country's foreign policy.

Here, one might be able to posit a reversed scenario; what would happen should Cambodia under Sihanouk be a democratic instead of an autocratic regime? Would he be able to strongly assert his belief in 'neutrality' unfadingly until the end? Or would he be able to befriend or allowed to be befriended with the communist bloc.? The psychological aspects dissected in chapter five was meant to shed light on what Sihanouk would have perceived the relations with the US after what had happened to Cambodia, how he encountered the world arena after Cambodia's independence, for instance; thus, led us back to the biggest question, would Sihanouk have chosen the western bloc in the first place when they did not stand on the good side with Cambodia throughout her past experiences?

A Too-Late U-Turn?

As for Lon Nol, what most scholars have been describing this man were oftentimes through the lens of military aspects; the republic regime that he had led was embedded in the history as corrupted and was ineffective in allocating the financial assistance provided by the US. It was comprehensible for scholars to observe Lon Nol and his administration through such perspectives. After all, Lon Nol was indeed the last political

leader who fought alongside the US against the force of communism in the late Second Indochina War and was also the one to lead the country face-to-face against the revolutionary force. As a political figure who had fought shoulder-to-shoulder with the US in containing the communist forces and was the closest to the source of the quake, should not Lon Nol deserve to be in the spotlight when one studies the fall of the last domino in the region of Southeast Asia? Yet, despite that, his presence was time and again overlooked in the history of Cambodia's foreign policy. Did that mean his foreign policy set for the country at the time was not as noteworthy as the errs recorded in military history? Before giving in to prejudgments about this man as recounted in previous studies, one should at least get to know what kind of person Lon Nol was and what he had been through as he engaged in his political career.

Lon Nol, born into a civil servant family during the French administration. Developed his career from being in administrative posts to being in part of a military-related position in the early 1950s which continued throughout the rest of his years amid the Second Indochina War. He gained trust from the young king Sihanouk in their journey for the country's independence. It was in 1955 that Lon Nol had his title as a military Chief. It can be said that Lon Nol had his fair share in upholding the country's integrity and sovereignty; only he was not too keen on having Cambodia be too close to the communist bloc. As soon as the new republic official made its appearance, Lon Nol made it clear that Cambodia would be heading for democracy. In other words, the country would be walking alongside the US in combating the communist force. Such political belief was most likely inspired by his passionate belief in Buddhism; for in the book *Neo-Khmerisme* Lon Nol repeatedly stressed how communism would destroy the long-glorious tradition of the

Khmer Buddhist and cultures, had the country fallen into its claws; monks or any other related religious institutions or worst “the ancient Khmer Civilization” left behind by the Angkorian kings would for sure not survive.

In the aspect of leadership style, the observation on the existing historical evidence suggested the tendency that Lon Nol’s was the *respecting* type; particularly “focus on respecting constraints...building consensus and working towards a compromise.” While that could have been merely parts of characteristics possessed among military personnel who was trained to stick to orders and work in a team environment, Lon Nol might have unconsciously brought it along as he engaged in his political career. One of the most notable pieces of evidence recorded in the CIA reports pointed out how Lon Nol placed so much trust in his subordinates that he barely questioned details written inside of reports which later plagued him in the country’s history associated with rumors of corruption as well as nepotism.

Existing historical evidence did not prove any obvious motivation that Lon Nol set in mind as he led the country in that brief five years of administration. Yet, scholarly works that documented detailed information regarding his regime pointed out that Lon Nol was famous for his nationalism and had deep faith in Buddhism. Mirroring such descriptions with the psychological concepts provided by Hermann, it can equitably be interpreted that Lon Nol’s motivation is in *need for affiliation* which also justified the fact that he exercised so much trust in his subordinates; however, such interpretation is still not sufficient for one to comprehend to what extent Lon Nol’s dedication was for the country. While such motivation serves as the indicator to keep the nationalism level of politics in check, it cannot easily be measured quantitatively; at least not for the Lon Nol case. Notwithstanding

that, the motivation Lon Nol held in warding off communism from Cambodian soil scattered here and there indicated that he abided by his political belief in protecting the country from the communist; in this sense, highlights his nationalistic side in securing the country's precious culture to some extent.

There was not much evidence pointed directly as to how Lon Nol coped with stress considering him being recounted as an introvert who enjoyed private life away from the crowd. But there were records of him being modestly often welcoming Buddhist monks, sharing Buddhist wisdom and meditation. Another news article titled the president suffered from a stroke and had to be under rehabilitation program in 1971. This past medical history of Lon Nol could partially indicate that he was not too resilient to stressful situations, considering the fact that the stroke happened soon after the coup took place and while Cambodia had to undergo the entire process of nation-building with the new government.

The *Khmer republic* under Lon Nol too was categorized in the “Autocratic Regimes Codebook;” only with a different typology— military personal. Sharing similar traits of vulnerability with the *Sangkum*, one may ask why bother observing political regimes in this case, yet again? That is, the studies of autocratic regime typologies show the average life span of each type. Among them, the monarchy survived the longest up to 25.4 years while the military one on average lasted 11.1. Reflecting on Cambodia under Lon Nol's time, the span was reduced to barely half. Having been backed by the greater power of the US, the regime could have at least lasted longer than the below-average point. This indication helped put more weight on asking the question of what exactly went wrong in this regime as well as its foreign policy? Or to the very least leading the way to inspect

other dimensions to seek possible indicators. Though Lon Nol's initial intention was to lead the country with democratic ways, during that short five years, Cambodia found herself trapped in another autocratic spell before witnessing herself transform into a full democracy. Similar to Sihanouk, Lon Nol also had the power to make the final call in conducting the country's foreign affairs which resulting the country's drifting back closer to the US.

Nonetheless, eventually, neither administration could survive through the Second Indochina War. When the Khmer Republic met its demise, Lon Nol could barely make it out alive living the rest of his life refuging under US protection. Yet, Sihanouk was able to make his comeback not once but twice; even in the later years of his political career, Sihanouk was still welcomed by the kingdom.

Asking the research question— what went wrong might sound a bit ambiguous at this point. However, the question was meant to trigger the urge to unriddle deeper layers of the topic. Also, the question serves as a guideline while inspecting for the underlying indicators layer by layer in analyzing the conduction of foreign policy of Cambodia amidst the complicated wartime like the Second Indochina War. Although arguably, one might attest that even if we were to really travel back in time, all that we could do was witness each main character's actions. That is by no means one being able to really confirm nor acutely verify the motivations, beliefs, or how they really perceive things inside their head. The least and the closest we could do here is to observe and interpret their actions and wording through time. Yet, taking this research quantitatively would only risk out-weighting Sihanouk's leadership elements over Lon Nol's considering the different amount of existing historical evidence available; in such manner, also diverting the research from its

original objectives, that is, to understand and present both leaders' perspectives in conducting foreign policy towards the US instead of merely focusing on comparing the two.

Although the research did not pinpoint the direct answer to the 'what went wrong' research question, after a thorough assessment of each factor and by applying the political psychological concepts at the individual level, this research presents another dimension of perspectives for academia to decipher the errs recorded in the history of Cambodian's foreign policy towards the US. Most importantly, the research contributes to the academic by highlighting the elements of leadership as well as the attributions of both Sihanouk's and Lon Nol's perspectives as an individual perceiving the relations with the US through in the face of crisis times like the Second Indochina War and the Vietnam War context.

To be precise, having applied the political psychological concepts to the history of Cambodia's foreign policy amid the Second Indochina War, enable us to scrutinize various components beyond the surface of state-state relations and the ambiance of international relations. By the end of the inspections of Cambodia's top political leaders under the psychological facets, we have come to learn the detailed demeanors that build up the leadership characteristics of these two leaders. Therefore, to some extent grasp the sense of what kind of perspectives the two leaders could possibly have had in perceiving the relations with the US. On the contrary, without looking into such details, at most, both Sihanouk and Lon Nol would have been regarded as simply leaders of a small country, having no call in the relations with big power like the US. But yet again, how could Vietnam, a small country in the same region as Cambodia was able to turn the table

and mark her spot in history by winning the war against the world's great power like the US? Having considered this question, one would also want to reckon to meticulously examine the role of a small country like Cambodia and her political leaders.

Nevertheless, if one was to scrupulously seek for the answers to the 'what went wrong' question, the answer lies upon various underlying factors experienced distinctively by Lon Nol and Sihanouk throughout years of their political career that forbade them from taking the same course concerning the foreign policy towards the US in the Vietnam War. To be specific, for Sihanouk's regime, brooding over past experiences with the past colonial power had stained Sihanouk's trust with the Western world. The eminence errs would be due to his too high expectations placed upon the US to at the very least be able to help Cambodia as she faced tensions with her bigger neighbors. Such expectations time and again were not requited by the US, thus triggering Sihanouk to sever the relations of both countries despite the fact that the US was the kingdom's biggest donor. Relatively the fluctuations point in Sihanouk's regime would be first, when he speculated that it was the US special agent, CIA that acted behind the assassination plot on him; the accident in 1959 followed by a series of events showing the US reluctantly support or ease the tensions with her bigger neighbors in the early 1960s. It was also then that Sihanouk decided to cut diplomatic ties with the US in 1963.

As for assessing the errs in Lon Nol's administration, it can be considered due to his little time of exposure to various blocs of ideologies and actors of the world political affairs causing him to be unable to speculate the tides in the crisis in timely manners. When combined with his low popularity domestically, making Lon Nol even more difficult to assemble available resources both in terms of human and material senses to cope with

the ongoing crisis. In respect of fluctuation points within Lon Nol's administration, the most notable moment was when Lon Nol forcefully enforced the 'war of resistance domestically against the communism in the 1972-3. It was another bad-timing, for it was also when the Second Indochina War approached its end; the US already preparing necessary steps to gradually wrap up the last battle, yet the Lon Nol government remained earnestly waiting for the US sponsor to her country; proving to the US how ineffectively the regime had handled its affairs.

Analogue: Statecraft of Autocratic Regimes and its Captain

Metaphorically, if we were to take the term “Statecraft” literally then it could mean that the international states are equated to crafts floating on the surface of the ocean—the international community. In that event, political regimes are what differentiate one vessel from another; like the inner machines, political regimes serve as the integral part that keeps the craft running while passengers, as well as crews, are what domestic structure made off. Captain, in this scenario, is the state leader, the person who shoulders the fate of the entire ship and knows the exact destination where the ship is heading off to. When the weather is fine, the ship floats almost effortlessly without much work required; therefore, the role of the captain in those sunny days seems to be less obvious compared to that in the stormy days. The storms or waves in the ocean of the international community like the Second Indochina War or the Vietnam War for instance would create chaos among vessels on the surface and even induce fright from within the vessel. With past training experiences accumulated, the captain would be able to speculate the direction of the wind and able to divert any obstacle encountered with ease or at least timely. In other words, for an autocratic regime at the nation-building stage, especially

amid wartime the role of captain is one of the eminence elements for he/she is the only person that stirs the wheel. Thus, whether or not the vessel can safely sail through the crisis or dilemmas like in bad-weather days depends heavily on the captain's decision.

Concluding Remarks

It should be noted that despite what has been analyzed in this research, it is by no means to undermine the level of nationalism or to evaluate how good or bad leadership qualities of both top political leaders; nor does it mean to attack any leader of his way in leadership or any individual character in history. The inspections and analyses are meant for academic purposes only. And if by chance this research had sparked the interest of the audiences and scholars towards both leaders of Cambodia, particularly Lon Nol and his administration, then that had already satisfied the initial intention of the author as well as the original motives of this research; of not having this episode of the history of Cambodia's foreign policy forgotten by the next generations.

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Appendix I

ស្រណោះប្រទេសចិន

ឱ ប្រទេសចិនជាទីស្នេហ៍
ហឫទ័យខ្ញុំពុំប្រែ
រមែងតែនឹករលឹកអ្នក
ឱ ប្រិយមិត្តខ្ញុំអើយ
ទុក្ខកង្វល់ខ្មែរបានស្ងៀយ
ព្រោះតែអ្នកមិនព្រងើយ
មិនកន្តើយចំពោះយើង។
* អ្នកជាមហាអំណាច
ដែលអាចឆ្លើងដ៏ឧត្តម
ប៉ុន្តែអ្នកចេះគួរសម
មិនរើសអើងជំនួញយ៉ាង
ណា
អ្នក ចេះការពារសមភាព
ឯករាជ្យសេរីភាព
សន្តិភាពមនុស្សលោក។
Repeat (*) ឱ ចិនប្រជាមានិត
ជាមិត្តនិរន្តរ៍នៃខ្មែរ។

怀念中国

啊，敬爱的中国啊。
我的心没有变，
它永远把你怀念！
呵，亲爱的朋友！
我们高棉人哪，
有了你的支持，
就把忧愁驱散。
* 你是一个大国，
毫无私私傲慢，
待人谦逊有礼，
不论大小，平等相待。
你捍卫各国人民（的）
自由，独立，平等，
维护人类和平。
呵，柬埔寨人民
是你永恒（的）朋友！

[Nostalgia of China]

Ah, dear China.
My heart has not changed,
it will always miss you!
Oh, dear friend!
We Khmer people,
with your support,
and dispel the sorrows.
* You are a big country,
no selfishness or
arrogance,
treat people with humility
and courtesy,
treat each other as equals,
big or small.
You defend the peoples
freedom, independence,
equality,
maintaining peace for
mankind.
Oh, the Cambodian
people, be your eternal
friend!