CHAPTER III
THE ROLE OF EXTRA-REGIONAL ACTORS IN
THE CAMBODIAN CONFLICT

In the previous chapter the study was focussed on the various issues which characterised the regional responses. What was significant, however, was that these responses were controlled, to an extent or completely, by the cold war politics between the western and eastern blocs which formed the superstructure in this conflict. Remaining outside the region, but having a key role to play, the United States and the Soviet Union emerged as the extra-regional actors and were mostly responsible for keeping the stalemate alive. As superpowers, they dominated the global political scenario and their role can be seen throughout the period of the conflict. Thus, Southeast Asia became another region where these two blocs competed for influence and status.

Another group of states which had a role to play and formed a constituent part of the extra-regional actors were Japan, Australia and India. Unlike the superpowers which were engaged in prolonging the crisis, these three utilised their efforts as peace-brokers. Their efforts, timed with the conclusion of the Cold War eventually paved the way for
the Cambodian settlement. In this chapter the first part will concentrate on the role of the superpowers and the second on that of Japan, Australia and India.

Role of the United States

American foreign policy perspectives on Indochina have oscillated between two extremes, obsession and oblivion.¹ Emerging as one of the superpowers, in the post-1945 period, United States foreign policy was dictated by the principles of 'containment of communism'. As such the developments which occurred in Vietnam were viewed with skepticism. As the American involvement in Vietnam increased, the war widened in Cambodia with increasing military and economic consequences.² It was widely assumed that the U.S. presence would continue in Cambodia as the protector of those subjected to aggression, which would allow the Lon Nol government to sustain itself.³ Thus, Cambodia emerged as the

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3. ibid., p.2.
'sideshow' in the American battle against communism in Vietnam. In the aftermath of the revolutionary victories in Indochina, the United States found itself without a policy not only for the three countries affected, but for the entire Southeast Asian region as well.4

At this point the United States had to clearly define its policy towards Southeast Asia. Immediately after its defeat in Vietnam, it was widely believed that the US would retreat into some kind of 'Fortress America' and would no longer defend its friends. In reality, the American policy did not become isolationist but more preferential in the sense that it had to be choosy about its commitment and clearly distinguish its priorities.5

What really saved the US 'face' in Southeast Asia was the emergence of ASEAN as a regional grouping. As the ASEAN was a grouping of non-communist states in a region divided over ideology, the US proved a fine suitor to woo the ASEAN interests. In terms of a strategic role, its presence in Southeast Asia was always maintained by its military bases in the Philippines. However, this larger grouping afforded

the United States the privilege of having stronger support in the region. Thus, U.S. policy was not to push its presence in the region but to let ASEAN grow from within as a local grouping, thereby averting suspicion of US dominance. In economic terms, ASEAN has been the fifth largest trading partner of the United States, with US direct investment in the region totalling $4.5 billion as early as 1981.

During the years of the Democratic Kampuchea regime, the US policy remained isolated and any efforts to normalise relations were rebuffed by the Khmer Rouge. The Khmer Rouge believed 'the US to be aggressive and imperialistic' and therefore unworthy of being an interlocutor. In truth, the Democratic Kampuchea regime had completely isolated itself from the rest of the world and there was little knowledge of the human rights atrocities, until after refugee accounts were received. Even after the Khmer Rouge excesses became evident, the US did not openly act against it despite the

6. ibid., p.83.
fact that Human Rights was one of the main pillars of its foreign policy.\footnote{9}

It seems apparent that the US policy, at that time, was influenced more by the Chinese stance. Realizing that 'the United States and China shared certain common interests and long-term strategic concerns', Brzezinski's visit in May 1978 stressed, among other things, the need to 'facilitate the emergence of an independent Cambodian Government that enjoys the support of its people'.\footnote{10} However this did not materialise and the US policy began to be guided by China's stand on the issue.

With the China card emerging as the cornerstone of American foreign policy, its efforts to normalize relations with Indochina did not take shape. Thus the US reaction to China's punitive war against Vietnam was decidedly cautious. The Chinese in their efforts 'to teach Vietnam a lesson', asked the US for its moral support in the international field. The US was apprehensive of the impact this would have on regional alignments and called for restraint on the part

\footnote{9. ibid., p.12}

of the Chinese. The defeat of China made it obvious that Vietnam intended to stay and would not be cowered down by any outside power.

This factor influenced the Reagan administration, which assumed that it was absolutely necessary to counter the aggressive ambition of Vietnam and the growing military presence and influence of the Soviets in Southeast Asia. Further, the question which dominated the minds of the US policy makers was whether Vietnam would be content with the status quo after the occupation of Cambodia or if it would try to implement Ho Chih Minh's dream of a communist Southeast Asia.

It was with these fears in mind that the United States began to support the ASEAN stance. ASEAN had taken a lead in opposing the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia and the US had the rare luxury of following ASEAN.

11. ibid, pp.408-414.
rift over the issue, the US ended up supporting the Thai stance.\textsuperscript{15}

In the first three years after the Vietnamese intervention, the US voted for the retention of Democratic Kampuchea's seat in the UN. The establishment of the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK), which occurred through the offices of ASEAN, was welcomed by the US. The CGDK became the legitimate representative of the Cambodian people, with the Khmer Rouge handling the foreign ministry portfolio and thus, retaining their seat in the UN.\textsuperscript{16}

The debate within the US centered around its policy of preventing the Khmer Rouge from returning to power. It was believed that the support or aid given to the non-communist resistance of the CGDK, i.e., the Sihanoukists and the Khmer People's National Liberation Front (KPNLF), ultimately found its way to the Khmer Rouge.\textsuperscript{17} Despite this, its aid policy

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{15} ibid., p.23.
  \item \textsuperscript{16} Haas, n.8, p.18.
\end{itemize}
continued. In fact, after the formation of the CGDK in 1982, the US started a programme of covert assistance worth $15 million a year which was channelled through the ASEAN to the NCR. Only in the case of Kampuchea has the overthrown government survived in exile. This situation has been and continues to be so, as a result of cooperation between the ASEAN countries, China and several western democracies. These countries came together in an effort to promote their political and strategic interests in Kampuchea as such, as well as in the Southeast Asian region as a whole. They have been serving their own interests in keeping the Khmer Rouge alive and building up the two non-communist

18. The issue of the United States support to the Non-Communist Resistance (NCR) is extremely ambiguous. The aid package to the NCR was to be handled by secret funds given by working groups which were earmarked for a specific kind of aid to one of the Southeast Asian countries. In reality there was no accountability to the U.S. on what this aid had actually been used for. As such any new routes of aid could have been used for this purpose. Infact after much debate, even as late as 1989, the Bush administration tried to develop a plan to supply the NCR of the CGDK some military assistance with assurances to prevent its diversion to the Khmer Rouge. ibid., pp.124-25.

groups in exile.\textsuperscript{20}

The year 1985 brought about certain changes in the US perceptions on Cambodia. The Reagan administration, at this point, began an open dialogue with the Soviet Union and openly gave assistance to the non-communist factions.\textsuperscript{21} Even though it continued to support the Chinese and ASEAN's position, subtle differences emerged. Though China remained an important regional player, a significant trading partner and a counterpart to the Soviet presence in Asia, it did not form the centre of US strategic thinking.\textsuperscript{22} Differences arose over the role of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia while ASEAN's unity and Thailand's position became important considerations.\textsuperscript{23}

With the announcement by Vietnam of its intentions to withdraw its troops from Cambodia by September 1989, the US had to restructure its policies towards Indochina, as a whole and Cambodia in particular. Various changes were

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{20} Ramses, Amer, "The United Nations and Cambodia: The Issue of Representation and its Implications", \textit{Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars} (Maryland), vol. 22, no.3, (July-September 1990), pp 52-60.
\item \textsuperscript{21} Ngoe, Hug, Doo., "The Struggle for Peace in Cambodia," in Macchiarola and Oxnam (ed.), n.17, p.135.
\item \textsuperscript{22} Chanda, n.19, p.401.
\item \textsuperscript{23} ibid., p.402.
\end{itemize}
recommended in the U.S. policy.\textsuperscript{24} The three key issues which were to determine these changes were,

i) The American abhorrence of the Khmer Rouge.

ii) The changed attitude towards the Chinese following the Tiananmen Square incident and,

iii) The belief that Prince Sihanouk and Son Sann could offer a third alternative to the situation in Cambodia, thus checking both the Khmer Rouge and the Hun Sen groups.\textsuperscript{25}

This shift in policy coupled with the change in the international atmosphere proved conducive for efforts toward a settlement. The detente between the superpowers was the actual catalyst which initiated policy changes. In July 1990, the US policy underwent considerable transformation when it derecognised the Khmer Rouge. Moreover the US stated its desire to involve itself in direct dialogue with Vietnam to ensure the non-return of the Khmer Rouge to power.\textsuperscript{26}

\textsuperscript{24} For details see, \textit{Recommendations for U.S. Policy towards Cambodia}, Indochina Policy Forum, (The Aspen Institute, Washington D.C., 1989)

\textsuperscript{25} Gordon, n.14, p.29.

\textsuperscript{26} \textit{The Hindu} (Madras), July 20, 1990.
Two significant changes had taken place by the time the Paris Peace Conference took place. The collapse of the socialist states of Eastern Europe and the disintegration of the Soviet Union meant that the ideological stalemate between the east and west had, for all purposes, ended. Using the idea mooted by Prince Sihanouk and the US Congressman Stephen Solarz, the Australians formulated a peace plan which was the basis of the October 1991 settlement. The subsequent UN role and the transition period to elections have been discussed in the next Chapter.

Role of the U.S.S.R.

Any attempt to analyse the Soviet role in the Cambodian question, will be incomplete without an understanding of the Soviet ties with Southeast Asia. Soviet policy for Asia in general and Indochina in particular, emerged in the post-Stalin era. Thus, unlike other great powers, the USSR had very little historical contact with Southeast Asia. Prior to 1975, the Soviet interaction with this region had been

categorised into three distinct phases-

i) from 1917-1954;

ii) from 1955 to 1964 and

iii) from 1965-75\textsuperscript{28}

The first phase was characterised by disinterest. Until the death of Stalin no concrete policy had emerged for the region. During the second phase the Soviet policy was rather cautious. Moreover, its concerns during this time, were nearer home, especially in Europe and the West. The question of supporting revolutionary movements in industrialised countries did not meet with much success. Only the growing rift with China made the USSR take a keener interest in the developments in Indochina.\textsuperscript{29}

Under Khrushchev, the only Southeast Asian countries which received attention were Burma and Indonesia. Following a traditional policy of isolation, the Rangoon government maintained a distance and kept the Soviet assistance at a low level. Its efforts to woo Indonesia were more successful. The Soviet assistance to Indonesia and its relations with it had been at its zenith between 1959 and

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\textsuperscript{28} Heinzing, Dieter, "The Role and Interests of the USSR in Indochina", in Theeravit and Brown (ed.), n.1, pp.137-52.
\textsuperscript{29} ibid., p.145.
\end{flushright}
1962. But the gains from this relationship could not be consolidated because of the attempted Partai Kommunist Indonesia (PKI) coup in 1965. Sukarno was overthrown; Suharto came to power. His anti-communist stance and pro-western leanings were quite evident and the Soviet Union had to reconcile itself to the loss of influence over Indonesia.30

In 1967, the formation of ASEAN was met with hostility. Due to its anti-communist stance, ASEAN was seen as an instrument of the Cold War. Moreover, because of its obvious pro-west leanings, Moscow realised that it would result in a viable military pact which would replace the ineffective Southeast Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO). Thus, despite its bilateral relations with Thailand and Indonesia, the Soviet Union reacted sharply to the formation of the ASEAN and condemned it as 'transparent efforts' by imperialism led by the United States to include more and more states in its anti-communist alliance'.31 The Soviet attitude towards ASEAN mellowed only after 1971, when the regional grouping

mooted the initiative for the declaration of ZOPFAN (Zone of Peace Freedom & Neutrality). 32

The Soviet Union at this time was supporting the North Vietnamese in its war against the Americans. The success of the revolutionary movements in Indochina in 1975 were in fact victories for the Soviet Union. With the collapse of the American presence, the power vacuum was sought to be filled by the Soviets who had three key interests in this region. These were (i) containing the expansion of China's power; (ii) limiting the influence of U.S. aid, and (iii) improving Soviet posture. 33 Moreover, Soviet interests also centred around the acquisition of base facilities at Cam Ranh Bay, Danang and Nha Trong, which were asked for shortly after Vietnam's victory in 1975. 34 But Vietnam did not concede these demands initially.

In the beginning, Vietnam maintained an equidistant relationship between the Soviet Union and China. However, growing Sino-American ties and the influence which the United States exercised over ASEAN, led to Vietnam

32. ibid., 1086.
34. ibid., p.8.
developing closer relations with Moscow. Another factor which pushed Vietnam into the fold of the Soviet influence, was the Chinese support to the Khmer Rouge. By May 1975, Chinese aid ended and in the following month Vietnam entered the Soviet led economic grouping—the COMECON. In November 1976, the Soviet Union and Vietnam, signed the Friendship Treaty. The exact nature of the Soviet-Vietnamese commitment through this treaty is not very clear, 'but it seemed to act as an assurance of support before Vietnam's intervention in Cambodia'.

As the rift between China and Vietnam widened, the Soviets backed Hanoi's moves against the Phnom Penh regime and urged 'a swift Czechoslovakia-type of operation' against the Pol Pot clique. As a result of these divisions in the period following the Vietnamese intervention, there was a clear cut polarisation of political forces. Furthermore, the presence of the Soviet bases was viewed as a potential threat and to counter this, the US presence in the region

35. Interview with Prof. Lau Tek Soon, 10 August, 1994, National University of Singapore, Singapore.

was also welcomed. However, the Soviet potentiality seems to have been overrated. It was believed that though 'they provided logistics for the Pacific Fleet, it could neither repair major battle damage nor provide air cover for Southeast Asian operations'.

The Soviet response to the Cambodian crisis could be seen in its functioning at the United Nations. It opposed and vetoed any move which was made in the Security Council on the ground 'that the Vietnamese forces were needed to protect Cambodia against possible imperialistic and hegemonistic interference in Cambodia's internal affairs'.

With regard to the question of recognition in the United Nations, the Soviet Union and Vietnam tirelessly reaffirmed that the Peoples Revolutionary Council was the only legal and legitimate government of Cambodia and had jointly

37. The actual acquisition of bases took place during the Sino-Vietnamese war in February/March 1979. Initially a cruiser shifted to the Cam Ranh Bay region, thus starting the right to port calls. By the end of the war a longer Soviet defence deployment was established here. n.33, pp.8-9.


condemned ASEAN's manoeuvring at the UN as gross interference in Kampuchea's domestic affairs.\footnote{40}{ibid., p.266.}

The perception that ASEAN's response resulted from its concern over the security interests of Thailand and the influence of the US and China, was evident to the USSR. For the USSR, ASEAN's future security lay in accepting the situation in Cambodia and Indochina. From Moscow's perspective, 'this development could move its long held collective security plan a giant step forward.'\footnote{41}{Sheldon, n.38, p.75.} Hence as far as the Kampuchean situation was concerned, both Vietnam and the Soviet Union wanted to create a fait accompli in the expectation that ASEAN and eventually the international community would recognise the Phnom Penh regime.\footnote{42}{Leszek Busznyski, The Concept of Political Regulation in Soviet Foreign Policy: The Case of the Kampuchean Issue, Working Paper 182, (SDSC, Dept. of Political Science, ANU, June 1989), p.6.}

In the immediate years following the Vietnamese intervention, three issues saw the Soviet Union take a strong opposing stance. First, during the Sino-Vietnamese war of February-March 1979, the Soviets extended massive support to the Vietnamese and also received accessibility...
to the bases in Vietnam. The second was with regard to the International Conference on Kampuchea which both Vietnam & the Soviet Union boycotted. They considered it to be a 'political farce staged by Peking and Washington.' Third, ASEAN's success in forming the CGDK was viewed as an attempt to set up a viable opposition to the People's Republic of Kampuchea. The so-called plan of a 'Third Force', namely a coalition to replace both Heng Samrin and Pol Pot, was viewed as ASEAN's meddling in the internal affairs of the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK).

From 1985 onwards, the Cambodian crisis changed with regard to its Soviet dimension. The political years of Gorbachev witnessed the concept of 'Perestroika'. The success of perestroika was dependent upon a foreign policy doctrine based on 'new political thinking.' The new concept was based on the principle that regional conflicts were more in the nature of 'local wars' rather than ideological struggles for national identity. With the possibility of the East-West detente, these were shifts in the issues which bound the Soviet Union and Vietnam together. Among these,

43. Trung, n.33, p.11.
44. Singh, n.39, p.268.
first was the change in Sino-Soviet relations and its implications for peace in Cambodia. Second, with relation to arms control, the Soviet Union tried to reach a compromise which would reduce the build up of the east-west forces. Third, the USSR under Gorbachev tried to establish economic linkages with the Asian giants-China, Japan and the Newly Industrialised Countries (NIC). 46

Thus, from 1985 onwards, three stages emerged with regard to Gorbachev's policy towards Cambodia. The first between 1985-1987, was characterised by the new political thinking and changed perceptions. This came soon after the 1984 Vietnamese decision to withdraw. Under pressure from the Soviet Union the date of withdrawal was set for the end of 1990. During the second stage between 1987-89, Soviet thinking exhibited an interest in bringing about political regulation of the issue. This improved the Soviet image among ASEAN countries which saw its efforts as genuine. Moreover, Vietnam yielded to the pressure to withdraw, not only because of the change in Soviet policy but also due to its own isolation from the international community. By 1988, Vietnam stated its intentions of withdrawing by the end of

46. ibid., pp.7-8.
1989. The third stage from May 1989 onwards, involved active participation to find a settlement to the Cambodia issue. By this time the question of the United Nations administering the country in the transition phase had been mooted. This was finally acceptable to both the Vietnam and the Phnom Penh regimes. Differences over certain issues such as the concept of 'free choice' did occur. Here the Soviets referred to the denial of recognition to the Heng Samrin government which had actually led to serious complications.

By September 1991, the Soviet system had completely collapsed. The breakup of the Soviet Union led to the emergence of a unipolar world and the Cold War seemed to have ended. The dramatic changes which occurred in the domestic setting did not allow much attention towards foreign policy issues which were not a major concern. However Russia did participate in the subsequent Paris Peace Conference of October 1989 and the UN Peace Plan for Cambodia. These details have been discussed in chapter IV of this work.

47. For details see, Buszynski, Leszek, "The Soviet Union and Vietnamese Withdrawal from Cambodia", in n.14, pp.32-47.
As far as the Cambodian question was concerned, the conflict at the global level was suspended by the unwillingness of the superpowers to reach a compromise. The regional actors were successfully used by the great powers in continuing the conflict. This had a dual advantage. Primarily, it allowed the superpowers to avoid direct military confrontation with each other. Further, they were able to secure their strategic interests in Southeast Asia by using the regional actors who were already antagonistic towards each other.

Until now, the above study has dealt mainly with the various participants involved in prolonging the conflict. In the following section, another group of players which remained behind the scenes and contributed towards the settlement of the issue will be studied. Though their roles are comparatively smaller than those that have been studied so far, the significance of their position cannot be undermined.

Role of the Secondary Extra-Regional Actors in the Conflict

In the following discussion, the roles of the various powers which acted behind the scenes will be analyzed. These actors have been responsible for trying to achieve
some measure of resolution to the conflict. Their role has been closest to that of being 'peace brokers' in the Cambodian conflict. In the aftermath of the east-west detente, a new role has emerged for certain countries which are considered to be 'middle' powers. There are several indicators for gauging their strength and these have been widely debated. It is probably most acceptable to state that the middle powers are those that believe their influence upon the international system depends on their ability to promote and sustain the norms for international stability. As such middle powers 'lend their support to international institutions like the United Nations, and influence multilateral activities such as international mediation, peacekeeping and the enforcement of collective security provisions of the UN charter'.

By virtue of the above description Japan, Australia and India, to an extent, have acted as middle powers.

Japan: Southeast Asia was important to Japanese foreign policy concerns for several reasons. First, it lay in the immediate neighbourhood of Japan. Second, it accounted for

a large percentage of Japan's foreign trade, was a source of raw materials and served as a market for Japanese goods. Third, the need for stronger relations with Southeast Asia also arose as a result of the Second World War, where Japan, as an invading axis power tried to establish a co-prosperity sphere. Thus, its objectives for improving relations with Southeast Asia centered around ASEAN.

In the case of Indochina, Japan's policy was greatly influenced by its relations with the US. During the Vietnam war, Japan extended its support to the US and also offered base facilities. In 1976, with the emergence of an unified Vietnam, Japan moved away from its policy of total reliance on the United States and began taking a more independent position in the search for stable relations with Indochina. With Cambodia it established relations under Prince Sihanouk and the Lon Nol government. In fact, in 1975 it recognised the Khmer Rouge government even though it had no direct diplomatic relations. The Japanese Ambassador to China was also accredited to Cambodia.

The cornerstone of Japanese policy towards Southeast

Asia can be understood by the doctrine which was initiated in August 1977. According to this, Japan was to act as an equal partner, to cooperate in strengthening the solidarity and resilience of ASEAN, deepen mutual understanding with nations of Indochina, and thus consolidate the building of peace and prosperity in the entire region of Southeast Asia. The policy also reflected Japanese intentions to act 'as a bridge between ASEAN and Indochinese nations'. In fact, the Fukuda doctrine sought to establish a political structure in the region that would allow both the ASEAN and the Indochinese countries to live peacefully and develop their economies.

Following the Vietnamese intervention in Cambodia, Japan's reaction was to condemn the Vietnamese action and it refused to recognise the Heng Samrin government. In fact, the Japanese decided to back the ASEAN viewpoint, especially because it believed that ASEAN was committed to peace in the area and had taken a concerned stance over the issue. The Japanese decision to back ASEAN really bolstered the

latter's image since each of the ASEAN states was trying to improve bilateral ties with Japan. At this time, the Japanese interests in the area were overwhelmingly economic and its priorities were as follows: (i) access to raw materials; (ii) market and investment opportunities; (iii) safe commercial maritime passage for oil supplies from the Middle East.51

In fact, ASEAN was one of Japan's main trading partners. By 1987, Japan's total investment in ASEAN countries had approximately reached $12 billion. In fact, the ASEAN countries accounted for fifty percent of Japan's external aid and thirty five percent of its total official development assistance.52 Japan was dependent upon ASEAN for 96.6% of its rubber imports, 99.6% of tin and tin alloy, 40.2% of tropical wood, 37.3% of copper ore concentrate, 30.7% of nickel, 28.8% of bauxite, 23.7% sugar and 15.8% of crude oil.53 In light of the above trade statistics, it is quite understandable that Japan decided to follow the ASEAN


53. ibid.
Further, Japan's policy was influenced by shifts in the regional strategic balance. The stance taken by China in favour of the overthrown Khmer Rouge and its support to ASEAN was significant. The growing Soviet military build up in and around Japan, coupled with Moscow's intervention in Afghanistan, caused it to discard its multi-directional approach to foreign policy. The hardening of Japan's foreign policy was 'reflected in its support to the ASEAN and the virtual termination of its relations with Vietnam'.

In reaction to the Chinese attempt 'to teach Vietnam a lesson', Japan called upon both China and Vietnam to stop fighting and withdraw their military forces from Vietnam and Cambodia respectively. Both the Soviet Union and Vietnam were critical of the Japanese line which failed to condemn the Chinese act. However, taking into consideration the newly emerging relationship with China, Japan remained cautious about getting too deeply involved in the Sino-Soviet recriminations.


55. ibid., p.1127.
The various issues over which Japan took a stance were congruent with its role as a member of the West. Significant among these were its support to the ASEAN resolution at the United Nations General Assembly in January 1979, which called for withdrawal of Vietnamese forces. Despite the failure of this, the Japanese called for the reconvention of the Security Council. The draft resolution was rejected twice by the Soviet veto. In retaliation, the Japanese representative criticised the functioning and power of the Security Council. Its presence was also important at the International Conference on Kampuchea in July 1981, where it was made an ad-hoc member of the Committee. It also supported the formation of the CGDK as a viable opposition to the Heng Samrin government.

In its attempts to coerce the Vietnamese into withdrawing from Cambodia, Japan tried to flex its muscles as the largest aid donor. As early as April/July 1976, Japan had made clear its intentions to loan to Vietnam four billion US dollars as grant aid and ten million US dollars as loan for the year 1975. However, following the Vietnamese

intervention, this loan was suspended. The Japanese government decided that the situation had to be handled cautiously and stated that 'it would be difficult to provide economic assistance if anxiety is caused to the ASEAN nations'.

By 1982, however, the worsening conditions within Vietnam made it imperative for Japan to reconsider its aid policy. When the conditions became apparent, there was a favourable approach towards the contribution of humanitarian aid which the Japanese Government unofficially proposed to Vietnam. An agreement was reached between Japan and Vietnam which provided for $30 million worth of medicines. Though the amount was small, it was a significant development after the aid freeze of 1978.

At the July 1984 ASEAN Foreign Ministers meeting, Japan was present in its capacity as a dialogue partner and it reiterated its proposal for a three phase peace plan for Cambodia which included (i) the phased withdrawal of the Vietnamese troops from the Thai-Cambodian border, (ii) complete withdrawal from the entire country and (iii) period

57. Cited in, Inada, n.50, p.198.
58. ibid., p.201.
of true peace in Cambodia. If this could be achieved, Japan offered financial and humanitarian assistance; observers and non-military technical assistance for reconstruction.\(^{59}\)

This policy of Japan remained largely unchanged till about 1990. From 1990 onwards, there was a shift in Japan's policy and it began to assume a more independent stance from that of the ASEAN since the latter were divided among themselves over the issue.

In June 1990, the four Cambodian factions were brought together for negotiations to discuss the setting up of the Supreme National Council. The meeting was partially successful since Hun Sen and Sihanouk agreed on a joint declaration calling for an SNC comprising of an equal number of representatives.\(^{60}\) The meeting broke down over the Khmer Rouge demand for equal status. From this meeting onwards, it was quite obvious that Japan, being an economic power, also intended to play the role of a military and political power. It succeeded in securing the position as the UN Special

\(^{59}\) ibid., p.204.

\(^{60}\) Japan Times Weekly (Tokyo), August 27 - September 2, 1990.
Representative.\textsuperscript{61} Emboldened by its success at this meeting, Japan expressed its desire to host a larger conference of the warring factions and Prime Ministers or Foreign Ministers of twenty nations, including the five permanent members of the Security Council.\textsuperscript{62}

Realising that the breakthrough to the political settlement was not too far ahead, Japan conducted extensive and detailed surveys, identifying key sectors for economic relations between the two.\textsuperscript{63} Relations with Cambodia also began to improve. The Japanese International Volunteer Committee (JIVC), a non-governmental organisation had donated $630,000 as relief aid to Cambodia. This group had been providing assistance from 1980 in the form of school equipments, building materials, medical equipment and medical grants.\textsuperscript{64} Japanese aid was also given to displaced Cambodians to the tune of $ 5.8 Million; 1200 tonnes of canned fish was distributed through the UN World Food

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{62} \textit{News From Cambodia}, No.13/90, August 15, 1990. (The Embassy of the SOC, New Delhi), p.5.
  \item \textsuperscript{63} \textit{The Times of India}, (New Delhi), June 12, 1990.
  \item \textsuperscript{64} \textit{News from Cambodia}, No. 01/91, January 15, 1991. (The Embassy of the SOC, New Delhi), p.8.
\end{itemize}
Programme. In March 1990, it contributed $300,000 to help finance the first phase of an U.N. project to restore the Angkor Wat. Thus in terms of economic assistance it has played a vital role in the reconstruction process.

By this time, the blueprint for the restoration of peace had already been worked out and the move towards a political settlement of the conflict was evident. Finalisation of the peace process took place with the signing of the Paris Peace Accord in October 1991. During the UNTAC administrative phase, Japan contributed towards the transition prior to the elections. In March 1992, it announced its contribution of $52 million for the initial costs of the UN plan. This decision was announced by Yasushi Akashi, who stated that Japan would assume responsibility for one third of the total cost of UN operations in Cambodia which was estimated at $2.8 billion.

Insofar as Japan was concerned, an interesting debate took place over its actual participation in the peacekeeping process. Cambodia was the only country since the Second World War, in which Japan deployed military and police

65. ibid., p.10.

personnel as part of the UN peacekeeping mission. After Japan's bitter defeat in the Second World War, a clause had been endorsed in the constitution which effectively prevented military participation. Accordingly Article 9 states that,

"Aspiring to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat of use of force as a means of settling international disputes. In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea and air forces, as well as other war potential will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognised". 67

As such, the question of sending troops for the peacekeeping operations met with stiff opposition from within Japan. The government of Kiichi Miyazawa of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) introduced a bill in the Japanese Diet for the right to contribute towards the peacekeeping operations. This fact was reiterated by Hun Sen during his visit to Tokyo in 1992 when he stated that soldiers from more than twenty countries were involved while the Japanese had no representation. Hun Sen asked for a Japanese 'personal contribution which would be comparable with their

By April 1992, there was a softening of the oppositions posture; both the Social Democratic Party and the Komeito or Clear government party began to support the LDP. The debate was strengthened in favour of the bill on the basis of helping to restore peace and maintaining it by way of arms. The government concluded that an immense economic power like Japan must contribute people and troops in addition to funding. Finally in June 1992, after months of debate, the Japanese Diet approved the legislation allowing self defence forces to be despatched to Cambodia as part of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force.

In view of the above details, it is evident that Japan's role has been a significant one. Though it had been primarily an economic power, its diplomatic initiatives and contributions to the Cambodian settlement have allowed it to create a niche for itself among the middle powers in the regional strategic balance.

68. News From Cambodia, No.02/92, April 1, 1992 (The Embassy of the SOC, New Delhi), p.2.

Australia: Another power whose contribution and role in the Cambodian conflict that has been worth considering is Australia. Australian foreign policy concerns in the aftermath of the Second World War, were tied to security links with the US through the ANZUS Treaty, thus causing it to have little association with its regional surroundings. However, in the seventies, Australia's foreign policy underwent a transition. Tensions in its relations with Indonesia and the emergence of ASEAN as a regional grouping, made it imperative for her to find a new identity within the region. The identification with Southeast Asia coupled with Australia's potential as a regional power, caused it to play a vital role in the Cambodian conflict.

At the request of the United States, Australia in the mid-sixties participated in the Vietnam war with a force totalling 8,000 personnel at its peak. Under the period of Whitlam's Labour Party (1972-1975), Australia's role as a regional actor was recognised and the initiative was taken to consolidate its ties with the newly emerged ASEAN and the Indochinese states after the Vietnam war, on the basis of

70. Kikuchi, Tsutomu, "Australia's Policy Towards Indochina", n.50, p.223.
peaceful co-existence. 71 The Australian response to the Communist take-over in Indochina was a calm one and recognition was immediately granted to both Vietnam and Cambodia. In fact, Australia claimed that the outcome had been 'anticipated and that defence and foreign policy planning had been based on such an assumption'. 72

The formation of the Fraser government towards the end of 1975 recognised the need to bring about a speedy normalisation of relations in the region. Realising the need to 'free Vietnam from isolation through increased diplomatic and economic contact, Australia supported Vietnam's membership to ESCAP and the United Nations. 73 It also urged the United States to place a higher priority on its relation with Vietnam and establish full diplomatic relations'. 74 Despite this, Australian aid to Vietnam after 1975 remained lower than its aid to the ASEAN states. 75

71. ibid., 216.


74. ibid.

75. Kikuchi, n.50, p.216.
By mid-1975, the Australian policy began to undergo changes. The exodus of a large number of Hoa refugees from Vietnam, placed Australian decision makers in a dilemma over their position. While there was pressure from ASEAN to accept the refugees, the compulsions of its domestic situation had to be kept at the forefront. The actual number of refugees who were accepted numbered around 10,000. Even this met with strong opposition within Australia and its policy subsequently hardened.76 By the end of 1978, three events caused a transformation in Australian policy towards Vietnam; Vietnam joining the Soviet led COMECON in August 1975; the Soviet Vietnam treaty of Friendship and Cooperation of November 1975 and the Vietnamese military action against Cambodia in December 1975, all led to the volte-face in Australia's policy.

The Australian government had allowed aid commitment to Vietnam between 1975 to 1978 which was abruptly suspended by a Prime Ministerial decree.77 This led to a debate over the suspension of aid as the domestic opposition was of the opinion that Vietnam would be pushed closer into the Soviet

76. ibid., p.217.
77. Gunn and Lee, n.72, p.147.
Union's fold if aid was stopped and its dependence on the USSR increased. Other issues which were to be taken into consideration included the provocation by the Cambodian side which led to border clashes; the record of the Pol Pot government atrocities; the parallel case of the Indonesian armed annexation of the East Timor and Australia's reaction.\(^{78}\)

Immediately after the Vietnamese intervention, the ideological polarisation which divided Southeast Asia, caused Australia to support ASEAN's stance. ASEAN's diplomatic initiatives at this time, backed by Australia, were focussed on mobilising international opinion against the Vietnamese. Even within the United Nations, its support to the ASEAN was evident when it co-sponsored the draft resolution on the Cambodian issue.\(^{79}\)

But public opinion within Australia did not accept the support given to the Democratic Kampuchea regime. Initially after the 1975 communist victory, the recognition to the Democratic Kampuchea regime had been granted on the basis of its control over the territory and population. This reason

79. ibid., p.219.
did not exist after the Vietnamese intervention. Moreover, the regime's appalling human rights records furthered their motives for derecognition which was done in February 1981.\textsuperscript{80} Despite this, Australia did not recognise the People's Republic of Kampuchea on the grounds that it was dependent upon Vietnam for its control. Australia hoped that a viable alternative to both the Heng Samrin and Pol Pot groups' power in Cambodia could be formed.\textsuperscript{81} Even after the formation of the CGDK in 1982, Australia 'appreciated the participation of the Sihanouk and Son Sann factions, but showed discontent with the Pol Pot faction and maintained its policy of not recognising the coalition government'.\textsuperscript{82}

Though Australia's non-recognition of the CGDK evoked strong responses from China and the ASEAN, it went a long way in furthering the confidence building measures with Vietnam.\textsuperscript{83} The achievement of such a policy was probably not immediately tangible but Australia's decision strengthened

\textsuperscript{80} Grant Evans and Kelvin Rowley, \textit{Red Brotherhood at War: Indochina Since the Fall of Saigon} (London, 1984), p.222.

\textsuperscript{81} ibid.

\textsuperscript{82} Kikuchi, n.50, p.221.

\textsuperscript{83} Ngaosynvathn, n.73, p.35.
its cause as a promoter of regional peace and an 'honest broker' that attempted to understand both views in the conflict.

In March 1983, the Labour Party came to power under the leadership of Hawke. This government firmly believed in the need to bring about some kind of reconciliation. Moreover, the importance of developing the Vietnamese economy was seen as the only definite method of weaning Vietnam away from the Soviet influence. Heyden's leadership in the foreign ministry tried to devise a policy whereby Australia-Vietnamese relations could be viewed in isolation from Canberra's response to the Vietnam-Cambodia war. 84 In March 1984, the Vietnamese Foreign Minister, Nguyen Co Thoch visited Canberra, and the question of the resumption of bilateral aid was raised. However, the Australian press opined that the resumption of aid must not be used to repay Vietnam's debt to the USSR. Thus, while the Australians expressed their willingness to give medical, technical and economic aid to Vietnam, it was not disposed towards any indirect links with the USSR. 85 The question was resolved

84. Gunn and Lee, n.72, p.160.
with the involvement of non-governmental organisations (NGO's), which were allowed to 'assume primary responsibility for Indochina aid programmes' in the nature of emergency aid and not developmental since the latter carried with it bilateral and multilateral implications. 86

The importance of developing contacts with the Phnom Penh government emerged as one of the primary requisites for a peaceful settlement. In February 1988, a delegation of Australian Senators visited Phnom Penh. This came about in the wake of the Sihanouk-Hun Sen meetings which Australia heralded as a positive development. The delegation discussed issues relating to (i) the aid for humanitarian concerns, (ii) the political solution to the conflict and (iii) the significance of the Hun Sen-Sihanouk meetings and its results. 87

In the following month, a delegation from the Australian International Development Assistance Bureau (AIDAB) visited Phnom Penh. The two vital issues which were discussed related to assistance for improving the Cambodian

86. Gunn and Lee, n.72, p.162.

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agricultural projects and the trial of the genocidal Pol Pot clique in the International Court of Justice. 88 During the visit of the Advisor to the Australian Foreign Ministry to Phnom Penh in July 1989, the initiatives of the JIM I and JIM II were applauded. Australia reiterated its intention to help achieve a peaceful settlement and expressed its desire to establish diplomatic relations with the State of Cambodia. 89

The United Nations resolution of that year demanded a place for the Khmer Rouge in the political future of Cambodia, which was openly criticised in the Australian press. While condemning the role sought for the Khmer Rouge, it reflected on the irony that several nations were eager to appease the Pol Pot faction, in the belief that a decade in exile could have somehow tempered the fanatical ideology but by the same token were unwilling to give the Hun Sen regime a chance to prove itself capable of coordinating free elections. 90


90. Canberra Times (Canberra), November 18, 1989.
In November 1989, the Australian Foreign Minister, endorsed a plan which included UN supervision of Cambodia during the interim period prior to the elections. Gareth Evans drew on the ideas which had been suggested by Prince Norodom Sihanouk and US Congressman Stephen Solarz. This plan was discussed at the February 1990 Jakarta meeting of the International Conference on Cambodia. Here, Hun Sen agreed to an UN interim government in Cambodia which would administer the country till the conclusion of free and fair elections.91

Despite this the meeting remained inconclusive on several issues because while the Five Permanent members of the Security Council endorsed in principle the Australian proposal for a dominant UN role, there was no agreement on how to go about this.92 Another point of disagreement was over the question of the recurrence of genocide. However, it was accepted that 'if the political will could be found the Australian plan offered a practicable way forward'.93

91. The Hindustan Times (New Delhi), March 1, 1990.
92. The Times of India (New Delhi), March 8, 1990.
The Australian proposal remained the foundation upon which the UN Peace Proposal for Cambodia was based, ultimately leading to the Paris Peace Treaty of October 1991. The Australian role has been commendable in relation to the settlement. At a point when the regional and global interaction and interstate relations were dominated by ideological considerations, Australia's ability to voice an independent view and stick to its position was welcomed by the conflicting groups. Having won the confidence and trust of various rival groups, Australia could assert its role in the move towards a resolution of the conflict. Issues concerning its participation in the UNTAC and the peacekeeping measures prior to the elections have found mention in the following chapter on the UN role in the Cambodian conflict.

India: India's linkages with Cambodia can be traced back as early as the period of the ancient civilisations of the two countries. Inspite of this, the role which India played during the years of the Cambodian conflict remained moderate, if not low in intensity. India's involvement can be categorised into two phases. The first phase prior to 1987, when the Indian government's approach was tempered with caution since it was unwilling to tread on the toes of its
committed friends-Vietnam and more significantly, the USSR. The second phase from 1989 onwards was more vital as it was a part of the diplomatic initiatives which were responsible for achieving a political settlement to the Cambodian issue.

A study of the first phase must automatically view the historical links. Vietnam and India shared a commonality of approach to their national struggles and this sympathy bound the two together. India's inclusion in the Geneva Conference was an advantage for Vietnam since the former strongly opposed imperial and colonial structures and in this regard her co-chairmanship of the International Commission for Supervision and Control was significant.

With Cambodia, bilateral relations existed during the Sihanouk period. Further, Cambodia's espousal of the Non-Aligned Principles of Co-existence brought about a closer association between the two countries.

The American involvement in the Vietnam war was opposed by India. In fact, by March 1970, the war had intensified and spread to different regions of Cambodia. The Indian Minister for External Affairs, Mr. Dinesh Singh stated in Parliament that,

"As Chairman of the ICSC in Cambodia constituted under the Geneva Agreements of 1954, India together with Canada and Poland has consistently
sought to ensure that the objectives of the Agreements, namely the neutrality, territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Cambodia are safeguarded".94

Even prior to the end of the Vietnam war, India had identified and established its links with the entire region particularly Vietnam. From India's point of view a strong and stable Vietnam was a prerequisite for peace in Indochina and a balance in Southeast Asia. Furthermore, India suffered from the 'China complex', which gave rise to the perception that Southeast Asia should not be dominated by an outside power. In this respect the 'vitality and vigour of Vietnam was essential for an adequate arrangement in that region'.95

Another important concern was the establishment of friendly relations between Indochina and ASEAN, which could provide the much needed balance in the region. All of India's efforts in the region focussed on 'the easing of tensions and the dissolution of suspicions between the two groups, that is, the Indochina states and the ASEAN'.96

Developments within Cambodia following the victory of the revolutionary forces caused anxiety to India. The exact-
erbation of tension along the Vietnam-Cambodia border and the consequent Vietnamese intervention saw India support Vietnam. India welcomed the overthrow of the genocidal Pol Pot faction. In the subsequent years, India expressed its opinion, both independently and as a member of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Independently, India gave recognition to the Heng Samrin government. The Janata Party which remained in power till 1979 had not recognised the Heng Samrin regime. But in 1980 when the Congress returned to power it granted recognition. At that time, it was construed by some critics to be an 'effort on Indira Gandhi's part to ingratiate herself with the Soviets, who had begun courting certain Janata leaders, thus abandoning the policy of a quarter century in favour of the Congress'.

Despite some truth in the above remark, India also called for the withdrawal of foreign troops from both Kampuchea and Afghanistan. It considered the Kampuchean case to be unique in the sense that the Vietnamese intervention had ended the brutal regime of the Pol Pot factions. By the same

token, 'the constant harassment of Vietnam by the forces of Pol Pot had, in India's perception, left little choice to Vietnam, except to help in its ouster'.\textsuperscript{98} In 1981, India opened an Embassy at Phnom Penh at the Charges d'Affairs level and Cambodia did likewise.

Recognition to the PRK caused severe criticism from ASEAN. Immediately afterwards the relations with ASEAN worsened when the then Indian Foreign Minister, P.V. Narasimha Rao, did not attend the ASEAN meeting at Kuala Lumpur on account of his mother's illness. India, which was to be included as a dialogue partner, seemed to have lost an opportune moment in furthering its ties with ASEAN. The economic growth of ASEAN had been enormous and India would have benefitted in terms of the investment potential in Southeast Asia. Thus while recognition led to direct economic links between India and Indochina, it strained ties with ASEAN. In terms of the actual economic assistance which India contributed, the amount was not very large but it took various forms, ranging from improvement in agricultural

\textsuperscript{98} Dutt, n.95, p.500.
techniques to the restoration of the Angkor monuments'.

The political implications were much more significant.

India acted in another capacity as a member of the Non-Aligned Movement. During the Ministerial meeting of the coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement, no consensus was reached on the participation of Cambodia, and as such no decisions were taken at the plenary or any other committee. The final communique did not refer to the situation at all.

At the Sixth Conference of Heads of State of NAM held at Havana in September 1979, no specific references were made to the issue of Cambodia. However three different opinions arose. One section of the members felt that the representative right should be given to the People's Republic of Kampuchea. A second group wanted the seat to be occupied by Democratic Kampuchea. A third opinion was that neither should be given representation and the seat should be kept vacant. The suggestion for a vacant seat was

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accepted also at the Seventh Summit at New Delhi in March 1983. This was followed in subsequent meetings. 101

During an earlier meeting of Foreign Ministers, the NAM adopted a political declaration which closely resembled that of the UN. The need to de-escalate tension around Cambodia was recognised and it called for a comprehensive political settlement inclusive of withdrawal of troops, right to self-determination, respect of sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of all states in the region including Cambodia. 102

This policy continued till 1986. In October 1986, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, visited three of the ASEAN countries. During his visit to Thailand, his Thai counterpart requested him to use his 'prestige and influence to find a solution to the Cambodian crisis'. 103 The January 1987 visit of Foreign Minister N.D. Tiwari to Hanoi was considered significant as the Vietnamese spoke of an advancement in the time frame for withdrawal of troops from Cambodia. Following this, Natwar Singh's visit to the ASEAN countries contributed towards convincing them of Vietnam's desire to withdraw from

102. Two Decades of Non-Alignment, n.100, p.503.
Cambodia and work towards a settlement of the issue.\textsuperscript{104}

The credit for arranging the first meeting between Hun Sen and Prince Sihanouk in December 1987 and January 1988, which set in motion the process that evolved in the JIM meetings and the Paris International Conference on Cambodia goes to India.\textsuperscript{105} India co-chaired the first Committee of the PICC, which discussed the establishment of an international control mechanism to monitor a ceasefire. Even in the Jakarta meeting in September 1990, India played a significant role in bringing the warring factions together to negotiate the setting up of the SNC. The diplomatic activities during the preliminary rounds of the Paris Peace Conference were entrusted to India.\textsuperscript{106}

With the signing of the Paris Peace Accords, a conclusion to the Cambodian conflict finally began. Criticism of India's role of doing 'too little, too late' has been voiced. However, its efforts at mediation, especially between the warring factions have been noteworthy. Though it was delayed in its attempts to bring

\textsuperscript{104} Sardesai, n.97, p.116.

\textsuperscript{105} Discussions with Prof. L.L. Mehrotra, SIS, JNU, New Delhi, March 12, 1994.

\textsuperscript{106} ibid.
about peace, India's contribution has been important.

It is apparent that this chapter has attempted to study the roles of the extra-regional actors. In the first part, the roles of the US and USSR have been given due consideration and the policies which determined their responses have been studied. The second part of the chapter has focussed upon the ideas of the secondary group of extra-regional actors such as Japan, Australia and India. As suggested earlier, these middle powers had a greater capacity as those who sought a resolution of the conflict than those who tried to maintain it. The obvious shifts in policies and responses were determined by the changes in the international atmosphere which finally paved the way for the role which the United Nations played. This will be discussed in the following chapter on the United Nations role in the Cambodian conflict.