RUMBLES IN THE JUNGLE: THE SITUATION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA (1979)

UNSC - BATHMUN 2024

Message from the Chairs

Dear delegates,

On behalf of the BathMUN 2024 Secretariat, we would like to extend a warm welcome to all of you to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC)! By sheer coincidence, both members of your dais were delegates in last year's BathMUN UNSC, and are honoured to be serving now as your chairs for what we hope will be an enjoyable, challenging, and memorable Council session.

In keeping with BathMUN's precedent of having historical committees and topics, this year's Security Council will turn the clock back to the tumultuous year of 1979, where we will be delving into the Situation in Southeast Asia. Here, the ideological clashes and tensions of the Cold War have ravaged livelihoods and occupied governments for decades, resulting in a complicated geopolitical picture which threatens to escalate into wider regional conflict. As such, the Council has been convened to discuss how best to prevent that scenario from becoming a reality, and whether intervention on the part of the United Nations is necessary. These interlocking questions will no doubt be influenced by the agendas and policies of Member States, and we urge delegates to remain diplomatic amidst the backdrop of the tense global atmosphere.

Given the nature of the topic at hand, this study guide is meant to serve as a starting point for your research and preparation for the discussions due to take place in the Council. It is not an exhaustive or comprehensive overview of the situation, and as such we highly encourage delegates to seek further information where possible in order to construct novel solutions that approach the problem in a holistic yet effective manner. On that note however, we also encourage flexibility and adaptability throughout the committee, as the situation on the ground remains highly fluid and subject to change throughout the three days of the conference.

On the matter of preparation, the chairs will also highlight that position papers are highly encouraged in order to provide all delegates with a clear picture of the various stances and official interpretations of the question. These may be submitted to the dais via the email below, and will be circulated to all Council members publicly in the week before the Conference.

As your chairs, we have full confidence in your ability to navigate the UNSC, and the wider international community, through the turbulent waters surrounding this topic. At a time of significant scepticism and vacillation on the UN's effectiveness, it is up to the Council to restore faith in its ability to act for the greater good of international security and peace.

Sincerely,
The UNSC Presidents

Chair Introduction

Avan Fata

Greetings delegates! My name is Avan, and along with Liam I'm honoured to be one of your dais members for the Security Council at BathMUN 2024. As a Master's Student in History at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), I'm thrilled to be able to carry on the trend of having historical UNSC topics at BathMUN from last year's edition. Being part of the UK MUN circuit for the past three years (and counting) has become a massive part of my social and academic life, and I look forward to helping many delegates on their own journeys through it! Outside of MUN, you can usually find me reading books, keeping track of geopolitical news, and gaming (all usually with a cup of tea nearby). See you all very soon at Bath and in the Security Council!

Liam Radford

Pleased to meet you, delegates! I'm Liam and the other dais member for the Security Council at BathMUN 2024. MUN has been a big part of my academic life for the last 5 years, all the way throughout highschool till University where I study Psychology in Exeter. This is, however, my first time chairing at an MUN conference which I am really excited about! Me and Avan have worked hard over the last few months to try and make this Historical Security Council fun and memorable experience for you all. If you ever see me outside of MUN you will probably find me reading, listening to music and drinking tea or coffee (and if I had the money travelling around the world). Some fun facts about me: I'm English-Irish-Kazakh-Tatar, grew up in Warsaw & Prague and hardly anyone can pin down my accent properly including me. I cannot wait to meet you all in the beautiful city of Bath!

Introduction to the Security Council

The first meeting of the United Nations Security Council at Church House (London), 17 January 1946 | UN Photo

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) was established on the 24th of October 1945 as one of the six principal organs of the UN holding its first meeting at Church House, Westminster (though soon after moved to New York). The Council was established after the end of the Second World War to address the failings of the League of Nations in maintaining world peace. Since being established the UNSC has been forced to navigate the Cold War and a period of ever increasing global tensions, over nuclear proliferation, between the western and eastern blocs of world powers.

Composition and Voting

The UNSC comprises 15 members. Of these 15 members five are permanent; these are the United States of America, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, French Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and People's Republic of China. The remaining 10 members are non-permanent, separated by geographic region and elected by the General Assembly to serve 2 year terms.

Every member of the Council gets one vote. Procedural matters require an affirmative vote of nine members (also known as two-thirds/supermajority). Substantive matters, on the other hand, require nine affirmative votes of members with a particular exception of the 'right to veto'. If any permanent member of the Council votes against a substantive matter it will result in the vote failing. If a permanent member does not agree with a proposed resolution but does not wish to cast a veto, they may choose to abstain allowing the resolution to pass if it achieves the appropriate number of votes.

Introduction to the Security Council

As per Article 31 of the Charter, the Security Council may invite representatives of UN Member States who are not members of the Council to sit as observers during relevant sessions. For the convenience of delegates, below is a list of all the Member States - in no particular order and including observers (*italicised*) - who have been invited to participate in BathMUN 2024.

- United States of America,
- United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland,
- People's Republic of China,
- French Republic,
- Union of Soviet Socialist Republics,
- People's Republic of Bangladesh,
- Plurinational State of Bolivia,
- Czechoslovakia,
- Gabonese Republic,
- Jamaica,
- Federal Republic of Nigeria,
- State of Kuwait,
- Kingdom of Norway,
- Portuguese Republic,
- Republic of Zambia,
- *Socialist Republic of Vietnam*
- *Democratic Kampuchea*
- *Lao People's Democratic Republic*
- *Kingdom of Thailand*
- *Republic of Cuba*

Powers and Mandate

The UNSC holds the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. This entails taking the lead on identifying the existence of threats to said peace and security, calling upon involved parties to a dispute to settle it by peaceful means and recommends methods of adjustment or terms of settlement. In some exceptional cases, the Security Council can resort to enforcing economic sanctions, establishing peacekeeping operations or authorising the use of force to maintain or restore international peace and security. Other responsibilities include recommending the admission of new members to the UN and approving changes to the UN Charter. Finally, the Security Council is the only UN body with the authority to issue resolutions that are legally binding.

Introduction to the Security Council

Key Terms, Locations, and Organisations

Alongside providing a useful guide to the various acronyms and terms used in this study guide, delegates may refer to this when building their understanding of the current situation as well as navigating the discussions in the Council:

Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN): The armed forces of South Vietnam from 1955 to the dissolution of the state in 1975, the ARVN was the main instrument in the prosecution of the Vietnam War for the South and its allies - most notably the United States of America.

Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN): A grouping of nations located in Southeast Asia, ASEAN represents the primary regional organisation with the most direct geographical connection to the current situation. Its members are Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand (which has been invited to sit at the Council meeting on behalf of the organisation).

Democratic Kampuchea: The official name of the Cambodian state under the leadership of the Communist Party of Kampuchea (CPK), colloquially and commonly referred to as the Khmer Rouge. The state succeeded the former Khmer Republic following the CPK's victory in the Cambodian Civil War in 1975.

Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV): Following the end of the Second World War in the Pacific, the DRV was declared by the Viet Minh as Japanese forces surrendered to the Allies in French Indochina. Its sovereignty was formally recognised following the 1954 Geneva Accords and the end of the First Indochina War, although it was more commonly known as North Vietnam owing to its territory being north of the 17th parallel. Following the end of the Vietnam War and its unification with the South, the DRV ceased to exist and was replaced with the current Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

Hanoi: The capital of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and its DRV predecessor.

Indochina: The colonial term for the grouping of French colonial territories in mainland Southeast Asia (see map right). The grouping included modern-day Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, and various sub-regions divided into their own administrative areas. Although the political organisation of the region underwent many changes in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the term lost its official recognition following the 1954 Geneva Accords, when France ceded control of the former colonial regions to their current nation-state successors.

Introduction to the Security Council

Kampuchean United Front for National Salvation (FUNSK): Often simply referred to as the Salvation Front, this political party was formed in 1978 from supposed dissidents of the Khmer Rouge, and has been observed to receive significant support from Vietnam. FUNSK has since been involved in the establishment of the People's Republic of Kampuchea and it is believed that their government stands diametrically opposed to any reconciliation with the Khmer Rouge government-in-exile.

Khmer Rouge: The popular name given to the Communist Party of Kampuchea (CPK), the regime which maintains de jure leadership of Cambodia since the end of the Cambodian Civil War in 1975 up until the present crisis. As of January 1979, its members have fled into neighbouring Thailand or are isolated in resistance camps on the edge of Cambodia's territories (Appendix 2.).

People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN): The armed forces of Vietnam the PAVN were also referred to during the First Indochina War as the Việt Minh, and during the Vietnam War they were known as the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) to distinguish themselves from the military personnel of South Vietnam. From 1975 onwards, the PAVN served as the primary armed body of the country. It is their troops which the Cambodian government have accused of leading the invasion as of December 25, 1978.

People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK): A partially recognised state which proclaimed its existence on January 8th, 1979 following the fall of Phnom Penh to PAVN forces. The PRK's main administrative body is the Kampuchean People's Revolutionary Council (KPRC), which issued the 8 January proclamation. At the time of the Council meeting, international recognition has been extended by Vietnam, the Soviet Union, and several other members of the Warsaw Pact.

Republic of Vietnam (RVN): First recognised in 1949 as the semi-independent State of Vietnam within the French Union - itself the successor entity to the colonial French Empire - the Republic of Vietnam formally came into being following the 1954 Geneva Accords and the deadlock in electoral processes with the DRV. To distinguish it from the state to the north, it was commonly known as South Vietnam during the years of conflict, and ceased to exist following the unification of South and North in 1975.

Saigon: The most populous city in Vietnam's southern regions and the capital of the former RVN. Saigon's fall in April 1975 to the PAVN and North Vietnamese forces marked the end of the Vietnam War and the eventual unification of the country.

Socialist Republic of Vietnam: The formal name for the unified state of Vietnam following the end of the Vietnam War in April 1975. The Socialist Republic of Vietnam has been accused in the present day of deliberately breaching the borders of Democratic Kampuchea and launching a full-scale invasion of its neighbour.

Topic: The Situation in South-East Asia (1979)

Soldiers of the People's Army of Vietnam deployed in Democratic Kampuchea, January 1979 | VN Express

Situation Briefing

On 25 December, 1978, troops of the People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN) crossed the border with Democratic Kampuchea in an apparent invasion of the country. Despite facing resistance from the Revolutionary Army of Kampuchea, Vietnamese forces quickly overran key urban centres and forced the Khmer Rouge government to flee westwards. On 7 January, 1979, just seventeen days after launching the offensive, Vietnamese forces captured the capital of Phnom Penh and the following day a government formed under the auspices of the Kampuchean People's Revolutionary Council (KPRC) declared a new state known as the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK).

In the week since the capture of Phnom Penh, the government-in-exile of Democratic Kampuchea has taken refuge in the far West of the country, with elements of the leadership also residing in Trat province, Thailand under the permission of the Thai government (see map in Appendix 2). On 3 January, just prior to the fall of Phnom Penh, the President of the Security Council received a telegram from the Kampuchean Foreign Ministry asking for an immediate convening of the Council in light of the events (Appendix 1.). Following the request, the Council has convened on **15 January 1979**.

Topic: The Situation in South-East Asia (1979)

Historical Background

Soldiers of the People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN) mingle with comrades from the Khmer Rouge in Eastern Cambodia, sometime during the Cambodian Civil War | VietNam News

The history of Vietnamese-Cambodian relations, and by extension the tensions between them, go back centuries. Predating the colonial period, both societies often vied for control of the precious economic resources and trade opportunities in the Mekong Delta, whilst at times also coming under the influence of neighbouring states such as Siam and, in the case of Vietnam, dynastic China. In the early 1800s, the Vietnamese Nguyen dynasty launched several invasions of Cambodia, known to modern chroniclers and local populations as the Vietnamese invasions of Cambodia. These wars, which raged from roughly 1811 - 1845, witnessed the subjugation of the Cambodian Khmer population under a policy known as Vietnamization, which involved the installation of a Vietnamese-controlled administration and the encouragement of emigration into Cambodian lands by Vietnamese settlers. This policy was met with resistance from local populations, and following wars with the Kingdom of Siam, Cambodia became a tributary state of both nations.

During the colonial era, the main party active in the imperial conquest of Southeast Asia was France, which later incorporated Vietnam and Cambodia into the wider territory known as the Indochinese Union (more commonly referred to as French Indochina). From roughly the end of the 1800s to the Second World War, the territories were administered as a French colonial holding, with harsh repression against any acts of nationalist bearing. At this point however, the trajectories of the two states diverged considerably, with significant repercussions on their bilateral ties and the wider regional situation.

Topic: The Situation in South-East Asia (1979)

Rising Sun, Falling Tricolour

Left: Troops of the Imperial Japanese Army (IJA) advance to occupy Lang Son in French Indochina as part of a deal brokered with the Vichy-allied French Indochinese administration, 1940.
Right: French colonial troops retreat to the border with China after a Japanese coup d'etat deposes the former colonial administration.

The Second World War brought with it even greater misfortune and tragedy for the people of Vietnam and Cambodia. Although spared the brutality of a direct invasion by the Empire of Japan, the Fall of France in June 1940 precipitated a deal between the French Indochinese government and Tokyo. As a result of negotiations, the Japanese were permitted to occupy key bases in Indochina, and moved in significant concentrations of forces to capitalise on their newfound territorial gains.

In 1941, Japan expanded its hold over Southeast Asia further by collaborating with the Thai government to allow the latter to invade and hold almost a third of the area of the former French protectorate of Cambodia. In order to secure a veil of legitimacy for their actions, the Japanese persuaded king Norodom Sihanouk (left) to declare independence and proclaim the Kingdom of Kampuchea as a new nation-

state, albeit under the auspices of Japanese control. At the same time, in Vietnam, a new nationalist bloc was formed under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh (right) known as the Viet Minh. Both figures and their respective political parties would play key roles in their states' struggle for independence, although for Vietnam that path proved significantly more bloody than it did for Cambodia initially.

Topic: The Situation in South-East Asia (1979)

In March 1945, the deteriorating war situation in the Pacific compelled Japan to launch a coup against the Indochinese authorities, which enabled both Kampuchean and Viet Minh forces to take control of key areas in their operational domains, whilst briefly stalling any return of French colonial rule. Even as the United Nations formally came into existence, Allied forces landed in Cochinchina to take the surrender of Japanese forces in the area. The stage was set for a dramatic post-war escalation of events in Southeast Asia.

The Road to Geneva

state, albeit under the auspices of Japanese control. At the same time, in Vietnam, a new nationalist bloc was formed under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh (right) known as the Viet Minh. Both figures and their respective political parties would play key roles in their states' struggle for independence, although for Vietnam that path proved significantly more bloody than it did for Cambodia initially.

Viet Minh forces watch as French paratroopers drop to reinforce the garrison at Dien Bien Phu, which captured the world's attention and marked the end of colonial rule in Indochina | Wikimedia

Topic: The Situation in South-East Asia (1979)

Following the return of French colonial forces and authority to Indochina, Cambodian and Vietnamese reactions shaped their treatment by the metropolitan government back in Paris. In the case of the former, Sihanouk's bargaining position enabled him to gain the upper hand in negotiations with French officials, and gradually Cambodia was granted greater autonomy within the newly-formed 'French Union,' the structure put in place by the Fourth French Republic as the successor to the colonial French Empire. In November 1953, Sihanouk's efforts culminated in Cambodian independence, albeit the nation faced considerable domestic difficulties in the face of armed resistance by anti-colonial Communist groups organised under the United Issarak Front.

In Vietnam however, the situation deteriorated into a state of all-out war between French Indochinese forces and the Viet Minh. Known as the First French-Indochina War, the conflict saw the gradual erosion of French authority and control across Vietnam, as guerilla forces proved effective against the more static campaigns of colonial troops. The war's climax came during the Battle of Dien Bien Phu (March - May 1954), which finally drove the French government to seek a negotiated outcome to the conflict. Under the chairmanship of the Soviet Union and United Kingdom, the cessation of hostilities in French Indochina became a key agenda item for the 1954 Geneva Conference.

Although Vietnam took centre stage at the Conference, Cambodia and Laos were also included in the proceedings, with the Final Declaration on Indochina containing several key clauses regarding the withdrawal of French forces from the region and a partition of Vietnam along the 17th parallel, which would be in place until elections in 1956 to decide the future of the nation.

It should be noted that the Geneva Conference also marked the entry of another key player in the region and the wider Cold War environment, the People's Republic of China. Represented at the Conference by Premier Zhou Enlai (right), the state assisted in negotiations between the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) and France. Following the end of the Conference, Cambodia agreed to a policy of neutrality in the ongoing Cold War, although the government in Phnom Penh immediately began to request military aid from the United States in an effort to quell Communist insurgencies in its northern provinces. Cambodia also became a member of the United Nations in 1955, thereby formalising its entry into the international community.

Topic: The Situation in South-East Asia (1979)

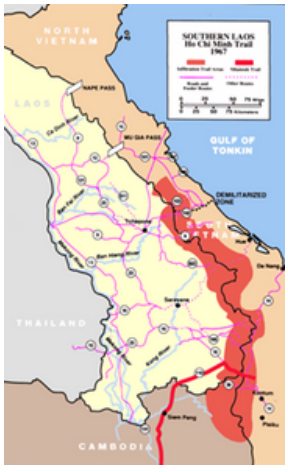
In Vietnam, the post-Geneva landscape prevented any such accession to the international community. The scheduled elections for 1956 were not held, and a de facto state of war existed between the Viet Minh's DRV and the US-backed State of Vietnam (see map right). After it became clear that elections would not go ahead to unite the country or determine its leadership, the two states became locked in what has since become known as the Vietnam War. During this period, the DRV applied for UN membership in 1948, whilst the State of Vietnam followed suit in 1951. Because neither north nor south commanded an overwhelming majority of international recognition, both applications failed to win the necessary number of votes in the Council to progress their status. The result was that whilst Cambodia could represent itself in discussions at the UN on the situation in Southeast Asia, for the time being neither Vietnamese state could weigh in on those debates.

Topic: The Situation in South-East Asia (1979)

The Eagle and the East

US Army helicopters cover the advance of troops from the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) during an attack on Vietcong positions near the Cambodian border, 1966 | Associated Press

Following the escalation of hostilities between the DRV and State of Vietnam (from 1955 to 1975 the Republic of Vietnam), Southeast Asia once again held the attention of the international community as the region was cast into the turmoil of conflict. At this point, South and North Vietnam were locked in an armed struggle which drew in the larger powers of the ongoing Cold War, with the former being financed and aided militarily by the United States, and the latter receiving both materiel as well as advisors from the PRC and the Soviet Union.



From the early days of the conflict until its conclusion, neighbouring Cambodia and Laos became important logistical theatres and later even battlegrounds. For much of the war, the PAVN and their southern counterpart the Viet Cong utilised the infamous Ho Chi Minh trail, a supply route which enabled them to shift manpower and weapons through Cambodia and Laos (see right). Although Sihanouk initially acquiesced to this usage of Cambodian soil in an adjacent war, it did prompt him to seek accommodation with China in exchange for guarantees that the territory would be returned to Cambodia following the reunification of Vietnam.

Topic: The Situation in South-East Asia (1979)

Unsurprisingly, Sihanouk's decision was met with domestic and foreign opposition, particularly from the United States. Under the administration of President Richard Nixon, the US Air Force launched sustained bombing campaigns of the Ho Chi Minh trail, targeting Cambodian Base Areas as well as VC-affiliated infrastructure in Laos.
Domestically, Sihanouk's reign came to an abrupt end on 18 March 1970 when a coup d'etat was launched by the National Assembly under the leadership of Lon Nol. The subsequent proclamation of the Khmer Republic was followed by a declaration to North Vietnam that its troops were now obligated to leave the country entirely, a clear sign of Nol's dissatisfaction at Vietnamese interference in Cambodia. This withdrawal did not occur, and in a scene that would become all too familiar between the two countries, Cambodian troops launched a pogrom against ethnic Vietnamese in the eastern provinces.

The third country in the region to be directly impacted by the Vietnam War was the Kingdom of Laos, where another civil war between the Royal Lao Government and the VC-backed Pathet Laos movement had been raging since 1959. During the 1960s and early 70s, the U.S. launched covert operations and a full-scale bombing campaign in an attempt to disrupt and dislodge the North Vietnamese presence in Laos' eastern provinces. Thus, although primarily focused in Vietnam, the Second Indochina War did eventually expand to Cambodia and Laos, as civil wars in each nation became intertwined with the larger American effort in Vietnam.

By the end of the 1960s however, it was becoming clear to observers that Washington's efforts in the region were not producing the desired results. With the cost of war spiralling out of all initial projections and massive anti-war demonstrations across the country, the United States opted for a policy of Vietnamisation, in which the ARVN were empowered to shoulder most of the fighting against the VC and PAVN. Negotiations began to discuss the possibility of U.S. withdrawal in exchange for promises that the North would not outright overrun the South in its reunification efforts. Although these discussions stalled as the fighting wore on, fatigue and diplomatic compromise from both sides caused the parties to return to the table. On January 27, 1973, the Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Viet Nam, known as the Paris Peace Accords, were signed. Amongst its many articles were the following crucial ones:

Topic: The Situation in South-East Asia (1979)

By the end of the 1960s however, it was becoming clear to observers that Washington's efforts in the region were not producing the desired results. With the cost of war spiralling out of all initial projections and massive anti-war demonstrations across the country, the United States opted for a policy of Vietnamisation, in which the ARVN were empowered to shoulder most of the fighting against the VC and PAVN. Negotiations began to discuss the possibility of U.S. withdrawal in exchange for promises that the North would not outright overrun the South in its reunification efforts. Although these discussions stalled as the fighting wore on, fatigue and diplomatic compromise from both sides caused the parties to return to the table. On January 27, 1973, the Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Viet Nam, known as the Paris Peace Accords, were signed. Amongst its many articles were the following crucial ones:

Article 4 *The United States will not continue its military involvement or intervene in the internal affairs of South Viet-Nam.*
Article 5 *Within sixty days of the signing of this Agreement, there will be a total withdrawal from South Viet-Nam of troops, military advisers, and military personnel, including technical military personnel and military personnel associated with the pacification program, armaments, munitions, and war material of the United States and those of the other foreign countries mentioned in Article 3 (a). Advisers from the above-mentioned countries to all paramilitary organisations and the police force will also be withdrawn within the same period of time.*
Article 10 *The two South Vietnamese parties undertake to respect the cease- fire and maintain peace in South Viet-Nam, settle all matters of contention through negotiations, and avoid all armed conflict.*

Almost immediately after the ceasefire came into effect, it was broken by both sides, with open conflict resuming in March 1973. Within two years, the North had effectively gained the upper hand in the conflict, and on 30 April 1975, Saigon fell to forces of the PAVN and VC. Just 13 days earlier, the Cambodian Civil War also came to an end with the fall of Phnom Penh to forces led by the Khmer Rouge. In both instances, final victory was preceded by en masse evacuations of US forces, officials, citizens, and local refugees.

Topic: The Situation in South-East Asia (1979)

In a symbolic and literal sense, by the middle of the 1970s any significant Western presence in the two states had become a recent memory rather than lived reality. The overall attitude of both nations' citizenry and leadership towards the long-running American intervention is best summarised through the words of South Vietnam's last president, Nguyễn Văn Thiệu:

> *At the time of the peace agreement the United States agreed to only replace equipment on a one-by-one basis. But the United States did not keep its word. Is an American's word reliable these days? The United States did not keep its promise to help us fight for freedom and it was in the same fight that the United States lost 50,000 of its young men.*

Yet although the two powers were now victorious in their respective struggles, and had been allies throughout the fighting, peace did not immediately lead to friendly relations. Instead, the newly created states of Democratic Kampuchea and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam turned on their former comrades, with border skirmishes and armed clashes taking place immediately after the events of April 1975. Even as Vietnam joined the ranks of the United Nations on 20 September 1977, it remained engaged in low-level border confrontations with troops of the Revolutionary Army of Kampuchea. To the dismay of civilians and international observers alike, it was becoming clear that the end of the Second Indochina War did not mean the end of hostilities, but merely the revival of a centuries-old feud between the two new nation-states. Instead of cooperation and peaceful co-existence, it seemed that the ghosts of the pre-colonial rivalry were back with a vengeance.

Left: Evacuees clamber onto an American helicopter atop a building in Saigon just as North Vietnamese troops storm the city; an ignominious end to Uncle Sam's intervention in the region. Right: Victorious troops of the Khmer Rouge parade through the streets of Phnom Penh on 17 April, 1975.

Recent Developments

Troops of the PAVN patrol the border with Cambodia amidst rising tensions and clashes between the two powers, 1977 | Associated Press

Despite apparent diplomatic efforts to rejuvenate friendly relations between Democratic Kampuchea and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, under the surface tensions continued to simmer as border skirmishes became a frequent occurrence between the two nations. Fuelling the animosity was mutual suspicion on both sides about the intentions of the other. Hanoi deplored that the new Kampuchean government, particularly under the leadership of Pol Pot, sanctioned the mass arrest and torture of ethnic Vietnamese residing in its eastern provinces, all part of the so-called 're-education' campaigns of the regime. Conversely, Phnom Penh harboured fears that Vietnam would use its newfound unity to form an Indochinese federation which would put Cambodia and Laos under Vietnamese leadership; in a situation not all too dissimilar to that which existed during the early 1800s in the tributary state era.

Another factor contributing to the frosty relations were both nations' links to other Communist powers, following the Sino-Soviet split in the 1960s. Despite both Moscow and Beijing lending support to Communist forces in Southeast Asia during the Second Indochina War, this did not extend universally in peacetime. Hanoi, growing weary of perceived Chinese intentions to replace the United States as the main foreign influence in the region, developed closer relations to the Soviet Union. In contrast, Cambodia embraced closer ties to the People's Republic, whilst simultaneously breaking those with the USSR.

Recent Developments

In June 1977, responding to KRA incursions in An Giang and Châu Đốc province, Vietnam proposed high-level talks to resolve outstanding issues between the two powers. The Kampuchean reply demanded that such negotiations would only occur after the withdrawal of Vietnamese forces from the disputed border regions, and the creation of a demilitarised zone between the two armies. Neither side agreed to the conditions of the other, and thus a diplomatic deadlock set in.

Throughout the latter half of 1977, as KRA incursions gave way to retaliatory operations by the PAVN, the situation became increasingly tense. On 31 December 1977, Phnom Penh announced the 'temporary' severing of diplomatic relations with Vietnam until it had withdrawn all troops from 'the sacred territory of Democratic Kampuchea.' Hanoi, judging that its political goal of forcing the Kampuchean government to the negotiating table had failed, withdrew from the country and evacuated thousands of political prisoners as well as civilian refugees.

In 1978, the conflict escalated considerably with mobilisations and call-ups of military personnel on both sides, enabled by their respective Sino-Soviet sponsor. In April, the massacre of over 3,000 Vietnamese civilians in Ba Chuc village prompted Hanoi to seek a decisive solution to Cambodia's apparent unwillingness to peacefully resolve bilateral tensions. Soviet support was secured in a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation, which was signed in November 1978, whilst in early December the Kampuchean United Front for National Salvation (KUFNS) was created from former Khmer Rouge party members who distanced themselves from the ruling government in Phnom Penh.

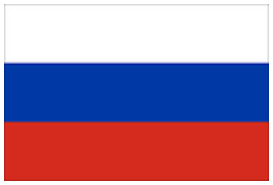
Most of this buildup - which took place in both nations - was concentrated along the Eastern Military Zone (see right), where most of the disputed territories between Cambodia and Vietnam lay. Although a limited offensive was launched first by the PAVN on 21 December, the KRA responded by opening fire along much of the southwestern border with Vietnam, prompting the full-scale invasion of Democratic Kampuchea on Christmas day. In quick succession, resistance by the KRA was overcome by the PAVN, whilst the government of Phnom Penh fled to neighbouring Thailand and the western provinces.

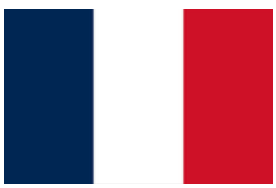
At the time of the Council's convening, the countries which recognise the newly-formed People's Republic of Kampuchea are the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Czechoslovakia, Cuba and various other states not currently represented in the Council. The representative for Democratic Kampuchea has formed a government-in-exile in Thailand, whilst the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has called for an emergency session to discuss the situation given its regional proximity to the group.

Relevant Stances

Vietnam's involvement in the Situation in Southeast Asia is one of considerable complexity. Although it instigated the invasion of Kampuchea, it should be noted that the Hanoi government was the one primarily responsible for initiating negotiations and at least attempting to invite its counterparts in Phnom Penh to partake in diplomatic talks over outstanding border issues - even if those invitations were occasionally issued with threat of force backing them up. Furthermore, Vietnam made clear its opposition to the harsh policies of the Pol Pot regime in Kampuchea, in particular the apparent neglect for human rights and arbitrary torture of ethnic minorities. Thus, it is unlikely that the government will agree to a cessation of hostilities unless its own sovereignty and security can be reassured by the return of the government-in-exile.

As the government-in-exile, the Kampuchean delegation faces a serious breach of its sovereign rights further complicated by its diplomatic isolation in the years prior to the events of December 1978. In particular, its regime did not come to power through democratic means, being the victorious party in the Cambodian Civil War which earned the sole right to govern through that status. In addition, the party has been accused by domestic and international commentators alike of perpetrating human rights violations, political purges, and low-level conflicts on the border with Vietnam. Although international support for the most part appears to be in favour of their sovereign rights as the *de jure* authority in Cambodia, it remains to be seen whether that translates into support for the return of a morally questionable and isolationist regime.





Owing to their possession of the veto power, any resolution to the Situation must earn the approval, or at the very least tacit acknowledgement, of the five permanent members. The **Soviet Union**, through its historical aid to Vietnam and ongoing support for the Hanoi regime, is unlikely to allow its beneficiary to be pressured into an unfavourable diplomatic outcome. On the other hand, the **People's Republic of China** plays a similar role for Kampuchea, and is equally likely to oppose any measures that do not ensure the return to power of the former ruling party.

On the part of the Western powers, the **United States** maintains a more ambivalent position, recognising its legacy of involvement in Indochina has tarnished its reputation on the international stage, and it possesses no diplomatic ties with Democratic Kampuchea. As the former colonial power, **France** also faces a chequered past that may influence its perception by others in the Council.

Questions to Address

Delegates should keep in mind that this list of points is neither exhaustive nor a required 'checklist' to go through when discussing the agenda topic. It is meant to serve instead as a guide to potential sub-topics that may go on to form the substance of clauses in a working paper and/or draft resolution. Likewise, the Presidents of the Council wholeheartedly encourage explorations of points that may not strictly fall under this list but nonetheless remain relevant and important to holistically addressing the topic and progressing the cause of the Council.

- On what grounds can the Council deem it appropriate to intervene in Cambodia? Can the Council credibly construct a case for direct intervention in the region?
- In the case that direct Council action is deemed necessary, how can local populaces and all relevant parties be involved to ensure maximum compliance?
- What objectives should the Council set itself with regards to resolving the overall situation in Southeast Asia?
- Given the presence of human rights concerns and regime brutality allegations, is the Council able to weigh in on such matters?
- How can other regional powers such as ASEAN be empowered to act on behalf of the Council? Should they be the main agents instead of more distant powers?
- How can the Council determine where blame lies for the current state of affairs? Should this decision influence the ultimate outcome of negotiations?
- Given the competing claims for representation of Cambodia, how can the Council (and the wider UN) decide which government should be given the right to hold its seat?
- Following a cessation of hostilities, how can regional stability and peace be safeguarded for the foreseeable future?

Relevant Documents

The following documents received by the President of the Security Council pertain to the historical development of the present situation in Southeast Asia and also contain relevant submissions by Council members on their respective views on the whole situation. Delegates should note that this is not meant to serve as a viable substitute for independent research, and are encouraged to instead reference these documents when preparing for the Conference as they see fit.

Document	Date	Description
S/12919	7/11/1978	Letter from Democratic Kampuchea detailing human rights allegations and Kampuchea-Vietnam tensions
S/12930	17/11/1978	Letter from Democratic Kampuchea regarding allegations of toxic gas bomb deployment by Vietnamese forces in recent engagements
S/12957	7/12/1978	Letter from Democratic Kampuchea detailing further incursions by Vietnamese forces and self-defence of provinces
S/12961	11/12/1978	Letter from Democratic Kampuchea regarding the apparent establishment of a 'Vietnamese organisation with a Khmer name'
S/13001	31/12/1978	Letter from Democratic Kampuchea detailing more hostilities with Vietnamese forces and popular sentiment against invasion
S/13006	4/01/1979	Letter from Vietnam forwarding a statement made by the Kampuchean United Front for National Salvation
S/13010	5/01/1979	Letter from Vietnam on behalf of the Kampuchean United Front for National Salvation addressing allegations made by Democratic Kampuchea
S/13011	6/01/1979	Letter from Vietnam rejecting accusations made by Democratic Kampuchea in recent months
S/13008	8/01/1979	Letter from Vietnam regarding recent developments in Southeast Asia and the overall geopolitical picture
S/13013	9/09/1979	Letter from Vietnam regarding the establishment of the Kampuchean People's Revolutionary Council
S/13025	12/01/1979	Letter from Indonesia detailing an ASEAN Joint Statement of Foreign Ministers on the matter
S/13030	14/01/1979	Letter from People's Republic of China circulating statement made by Beijing on the developing situation

Appendices

Appendix 1. Letter from Democratic Kampuchea Government requesting meeting of the Security Council

TELEGRAM DATED 3 JANUARY 1979 FROM THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER IN CHARGE OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF DEMOCRATIC KAMPUCHEA ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Further to my telegram of 31 December 1978 (S/13001) to the Security Council, I have the honour to inform you that Viet Nam is further intensifying its war of aggression against Democratic Kampuchea. The savage acts of aggression by Viet Nam violate the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Democratic Kampuchea and threaten peace, security, independence and stability in South-East Asia, in Asia and throughout the world.

In view of the fact that Viet Nam has thus violated, with an effrontery seldom seen, the Charter of the United Nations and international law, it is my duty, on behalf of the Government of Democratic Kampuchea, to request an urgent meeting of the United Nations Security to condemn the Vietnamese aggression and to take such measures as may be necessary to ensure that Viet Nam ceases its aggression and respects the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Democratic Kampuchea and the right of the people of [incomplete text].

A delegation from Democratic Kampuchea will arrive in New York during the next week to inform the Security Council and to participate in its work on this question.

Ieng Sary
Deputy Prime Minister
in Charge of Foreign Affairs
of Democratic Kampuchea

Appendices

Appendix 2. Map of Cambodia

Bibliography

An, Tai Sung. 'Turmoil in Indochina: The Vietnam-Cambodia Conflict.' Asian Affairs: An American Review 5, no. 4 (1978): 245-256. https://www.jstor.org/stable/30171645.

Buchan, Alastair. 'The Indochina War and World Politics.' Foreign Affairs 53, no. 4 (1975): 638-650. https://www.jstor.org/stable/20039537.

Crouch, Harold. 'Southeast Asia in 1977: A Political Overview.' Southeast Asian Affairs (1978): 3-14. https://www.jstor.org/stable/27908331.

Devillers, Phillipe. 'The New Indochina and its Implications for the Region.' Southeast Asian Affairs (1976): 80-91. https://www.jstor.org/stable/27908270.

Dommen, Arthur J. 'Laos in the Second Indochina War.' Current History 59, no. 352 (1970): 326-332. https://www.jstor.org/stable/45312402.

Fifield, Russell H. 'The Thirty Years War in Indochina: A Conceptual Framework.' Asian Survey 17, no. 9 (1977): 857-879. https://www.jstor.org/stable/2643594.

Horn, Robert C. 'Soviet-Vietnamese Relations and the Future of Southeast Asia.' Pacific Affairs 51, no. 4 (1978): 585-605. https://www.jstor.org/stable/2757238.

Jackson, Karl D. 'Cambodia 1978: War, Pillage, and Purge in Democratic Kampuchea.' Asian Survey 19, no. 1 (1979): 72-84. https://www.jstor.org/stable/2643657.

Lacouture, Jean. 'From the Vietnam War to an Indochina War.' Foreign Affairs 48, no. 4 (1970): 617-628. https://www.jstor.org/stable/20039471.

Leighton, Marian Kirsch. 'Perspectives on the Vietnam-Cambodia Border Conflict.' Asian Survey 18, no. 5 (1978): 448-457. https://www.jstor.org/stable/2643459.

Morris, Stephen J. Why Vietnam Invaded Cambodia: Political Culture and the Causes of War. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999.

Niehaus, Marjorie. 'Vietnam 1978: The Elusive Peace.' Asian Survey 19, no. 1 (1979): 85-94. https://www.jstor.org/stable/2643658.

Prados, John, Raymond Callahan, J. Garry Clifford, Jacob W. Kipp, Allan R. Millett, Carol Reardon, Dennis Showalter, and David R. Stone. Vietnam: The History of an Unwinnable War, 1945-1975. Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 2009.

Bibliography

Poole, Peter A. 'The Vietnamese in Cambodia and Thailand: Their Role in Interstate Relations.' Asian Survey 14, no. 4 (1974): 325-337. https://www.jstor.org/stable/2642787.

Porter, Gareth. 'The Sino-Vietnamese Conflict in Southeast Asia.' Current History 75, no. 442 (1978): 193-196, 226, 230. https://www.jstor.org/stable/45315908.

Qureshi, Khalida. 'The Cambodian Crisis, 1970.' Pakistan Horizon 23, no. 3 (1970): 319-331. https://www.jstor.org/stable/41393036.

Rashid, Abbas. 'The Indochinese Conflict: Vietnam, Kampuchea and the Great Powers'. Strategic Studies 3, no. 1 (1979): 75-96. https://www.jstor.org/stable/45181341.

Shaw, John M. The Cambodian Campaign: The 1970 Offensive and America's Vietnam War. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2005.

Simon, Sheldon W. 'Kampuchea: Vietnam's "Vietnam".' Current History 77, no. 452 (1979): 197-198, 221-223. https://www.jstor.org/stable/45314768.

Simon, Sheldown W. 'Peking and Indochina: The Perplexity of Victory.' Asian Survey 16, no. 5 (1976): 401-410. https://www.jstor.org/stable/2643190.

Yahuda, Michael B. 'Chinese Foreign Policy after the Victories in Indochina.' The World Today 31, no. 7 (1975): 291-298. https://www.jstor.org/stable/40394865.