

THAILAND

A

*A very
good review
of the negotiation
and Thailand's
strategy*

From the Office of the
Prime Minister
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**A report of the
ASEAN-SRV-PRC-USSR
Conference on
Cambodia and ZOPFAN**

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The following is a summary of the proceedings that occurred during the negotiations of Sunday November 15, 1987 on the proposed Memorandum of Agreement between ASEAN and the SRV dealing with the settlement of the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia and the proposed creation of a Zone of Peace, Freedom, and Neutrality (ZOPFAN) and is not meant to be a transcript of the proceedings. The conference was attended by the leadership of the SRV and the Prime, Foreign, and Defense Ministers of the ASEAN nations: Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, and the Philippines; with the exception of the Sultanate of Brunei which was not participating in the negotiations. The other countries with representatives in attendance were The People's Republic of China, and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

OK The Memorandum was discussed and argued over in numeric order of articles I - V. This was rather frustrating and disappointing to the ASEAN states and for us in particular since we had hoped to sway the SRV into a more liberal position with the discussions of the economic considerations that were raised in article IV.

We were willing to offer these economic "carrots" on the condition that the SRV be more forthcoming and less intransigent in their position during the negotiations concerning their occupation of Cambodia and the establishment of a post-occupation government - both the interim and freely elected governments. Since this was not to be the order of things we had to hammer out a treaty that at first would most likely not

have Soviet bloc approval, but that at the end when the whole revised document was brought up for a final vote of approval we hoped it would receive a favorable vote from the SRV either because they liked the economic package we were offering or they would be too tired and worn down from facing a basically united ASEAN front. The ability to force issues to a vote was a fairly easy thing to do since only a simple majority was needed to pass any article or amendment, and given the fact that ASEAN had five of the eight votes at this conference.

We were and are of the opinion that if the SRV is offered a deal that would assure them of the possibility of economic growth then we could force a wedge between them and the Soviet Union since we see the SRV as being more nationalist in its ideology than Communist and that if the possibility of leaving the SRV free of having to rely on the Soviets for economic assistance is offered then we can be in a position to force the issue to a close by isolating the Soviet Union and the Vietnamese from each other.

Article I of the proposed memorandum states:

I. The purpose of this Memorandum is to promote a Zone of Peace, Freedom, and Neutrality (ZOPFAN) in Southeast Asia through resolution of the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia and the abolition of foreign bases in the region.

The debate on this article set the tone for most of the conference. With ASEAN and China (generally) on one side and the Soviet Union and the SRV (SovNam) on the other. Before the debate began on this topic our defense minister requested of the chairman clarification on the status of the Soviet facilities in Vietnam - particularly those at Camranh Bay. The chairman stated that these facilities were indeed bases and

True

Yes, but only the Soviets will support VN in Cambodia.

would therefore be affected by this article. The Philippines stated that they were not in a position to discuss the issue of the leases on their bases with the United States due to the impending referendum in their country concerning this very issue and that since their country is a democracy they must wait for the people to speak on this matter. The Philippines felt that they could not agree with this article even if they were able to discuss the issue since they felt they would be giving up substantially more than any other country in the region on this issue. Thailand put forth the movement to exclude the Philippines from this article. The ASEAN states agreed with this proposal and the SovNam bloc did not. The PRC moved to close debate on this article with the amendment that the Philippines would be excluded; this movement was seconded and approved.

At this point an intelligence bulletin was received that specified that the U.S. would be making general up-grades at its facilities in the Philippines including F-16's at Clark Field and nuclear powered and armed vessels at Subic Bay.

We then called for the line dealing with foreign bases to be struck from the article. The Soviets seconded this proposal. At this point we felt that we needed a recess so that Thailand could confer with its ASEAN allies to reach consensus on this point. After the short caucus the issue of striking the line was voted on and passed unanimously. The issue to amend Article I was voted on and passed unanimously. The newly amended Article I was then voted on and passed with a vote of 6 for and 2 (SovNam) against. The newly amended Article I reads:

I. The purpose of this Memorandum is to promote a Zone of Peace, Freedom, and Neutrality

(ZOPFAN) in Southeast Asia through the resolution of the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia.

With the conclusion of debate on Article I the conference proceeded to discussion on Article II.

Article II is in two parts and reads as follows:

II. a. The Socialist Republic of Vietnam (hereafter Vietnam) agrees to withdraw all its armed forces from Cambodia six months after this Agreement is ratified. United Nations officials will verify their departure. U.N. forces will maintain order in Cambodia for up to one year while free elections are arranged for a Republic of Cambodia. After these elections, U.N. forces will be withdrawn.

b. While Vietnam's forces are being withdrawn, the Cambodian Resistance will also lay down its arms under U.N. supervision. Military supplies to the Resistance will cease.

Since we (Thailand) viewed this article as being unwieldy, inherently unstable, and far too general we proposed an alternative Article II. This alternative listed:

I. An immediate ceasefire and the cessation of lethal arms supplies to the Cambodian resistance forces with a simultaneous pullback of Vietnamese forces to 50 miles behind their current operational fronts.

II. U.N. forces with the exclusion of both U.S. and U.S.S.R. armed forces would then be moved into this buffer zone between the combatants.

III. This would be followed by a gradual withdrawal of Vietnamese forces and the simultaneous disarmament of the Cambodian resistance spaced over three six (6) month periods. With the withdrawal and disarmament divided into groups of 50%/40%/10% reduction in size. The purpose for this method of reduction is to minimize the possible adverse affects that might occur if there is a vacuum created by an immediate withdrawal of Viet forces in the country of Cambodia.

IV. The U.N. will maintain a peacekeeping force in Cambodia for a total of 36 months - 18 months during the proposed reduction in forces and an additional 18 months during a period in which a coalition government will be in power prior to a foreign observed free election.

With the conclusion of the Thai resolution the conference received a news bulletin that stated that Vietnamese forces had

moved into Thai territory and appeared to be digging in for an indefinite occupation.

We immediately informed Vietnam of our objections to this disturbing information and called upon our ASEAN allies, China, and the United States to lend us assistance if needed. China announced that they were mobilizing their troops and conducting exercises on their southern borders. Vietnam stated that this was an unauthorized military exercise and that they would be ordering an immediate withdrawal within 24 hours.

When discussion resumed upon our resolution Vietnam countered with a proposal that an "International Control Commission" made up of Bulgaria, Romania, France, Belgium, and India be given the task of supervising the Vietnamese withdrawal. Singapore voiced their displeasure with this idea by pointing out that all of these countries have either Socialist governments or have leanings in that direction. During the discussion on this issue raised by Vietnam the conference received another news bulletin - this one from Moscow. The Soviets stated that they were changing their stance towards the United Nations and that they would welcome U.N. supervision of Cambodia and called for the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. both be brought in to set up "Zones of Control" in Cambodia; with the U.S. placing its forces on the Thai side of Cambodia and the U.S.S.R. placing its forces on the Vietnamese side. This idea was unanimously denounced by the ASEAN states and China. We came out in strong opposition to it since we had previously stated that we specifically did not want the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. involved in this issue since we wanted to make sure to lessen the superpowers chances of coming in contact with each

other to an absolute minimum.

The issue of letting the U.N. supervise the ceasefire was called for and seconded. This vote was passed unanimously.

Vietnam then called for:

1. ASEAN economic aid; 2. The U.S. supervise the Thai-Cambodian border and the the U.S.S.R. supervise the Viet-Cambodian Border; 3. China and Thailand immediately stop lethal aid to the Cambodian resistance forces. Vietnam than stated that it supported the Soviet "Zones of Control" concept.

Following heated discussion on the Viet proposal the Vietnamese modified their stance by calling for:

I. Vietnam will request that the U.N. allow Vietnam to chose two of the peacekeeping forces - India and Cuba. ASEAN will be allowed to chose two countries of it's choice. And that the U.N. will select a neutral third country.

II. They agree to keep the 50%/40%/10% breakdown as proposed by Thailand.

III. Call for an immediate cessation of lethal aid.

Immediately after this two Intelligence bulletins came in. The first was substantiated and the second was listed as a rumor. They are in order: 1. The Khymer Rouge state that they will lay down their arms only after the Vietnamese leave Cambodia. and 2. Vietnam has been secretly stockpiling arms in Cambodia for Heng Samrin's forces to ensure that Cambodia will not move away from Vietnam after a new government takes over.

Following this shocking revelation which was soundly denied by Vietnam the ASEAN states moved into caucus to try and reach a consensus on this new information. It was decided that given the amount of time that U.N. forces would be in Cambodia there should be no problem to discovering these alleged arms supplies should they prove to be true and that therefore the

But that would not be the task of any UN forces.

ASEAN states would vote to approve the Vietnamese proposal as long as it did not compromise the Thai proposal that had already been voted on and approved by ASEAN over SovNam dissent.

At the conclusion of the caucus the ASEAN states returned and voted to approve the Vietnamese proposal with an amendment that the Cambodian refugees in Thailand remain in our country for six months following ratification and that at the end of this six months they would be allowed to return to their native land - without weapons. Upon the conclusion of this vote the Thai and Viet proposals were merged and approved to read:

I. Immediate ceasefire and the cessation of lethal aid to the Cambodian resistance.

II. Vietnam to pull back 50 miles from their operational fronts.

III. U.N. troops to supervise the buffer zone with Vietnam having two countries of their choice (India and Cuba) and ASEAN choosing two countries of our choice and the U.N. designating a neutral third country.

IV. Maintaining the Thai proposed 50%/40%/10% reduction plan.

V. That Cambodian refugees remain in Thai territory for a period of six months following ratification.

The next issue that was discussed was on the formation of an interim government. This section could be construed as being either part of Article III or as Article II plus. Article III stated:

III. The new government of the Republic of Cambodia agrees to remain nonaligned in perpetuity. It agrees to station no foreign forces on its territory or enter into defense arrangements with any other state. It pledges to establish normal political relations with its neighbors and to engage in mutually beneficial economic intercourse.

We called for Prince Sihanouk to be the Prime Minister, Heng Samrin to take the position of Foreign Minister and that

Sonn~~san~~ be given a cabinet level position. Vietnam countered by calling for Sihanouk to be Head of State and that Heng Samrin should be Prime Minister, they said that they could not and would not tolerate Sonn~~san~~ having nay position in a coalition government. After this issue was discussed at length it was agreed upon that Prince Sihanouk would fill the position of Prime Minister, Heng Samrin that of Foreign Minister and that Sonn~~san~~ would have no status in the coalition government.

Following the conclusion of discussion on this section the conference then turned its attention to Article IV, which reads:

IV. ASEAN pledges to assist Vietnam's economic reconstruction after its forces have left Cambodia and a new Cambodian Republic is in place. ASEAN will favorably consider the prospect of a Vietnamese special relationship with the six-nation group.

Since Vietnam would not even discuss the use of Camranh Bay as a free port the ASEAN nations felt that we would have nothing to gain by continuing to discuss Article IV so Thailand moved that this discussion be tabled for further review based upon the success of the Vietnamese withdrawal from Cambodia. This movement was seconded and approved over SovNam objections.

At this point Article V. Was brought forth for review and discussion. Article V reads:

V. Because ASEAN's original declaration in 1967 viewed foreign bases as temporary in nature, the Association and Vietnam agree to negotiate a specific time limit after which these bases will be closed to extraregional forces.

At the opening of this discussion we called upon the Philippines to change the nature of the bases that have been used as U.S. bases into more of a regional training center that ASEAN would use - the training to be provided by the U.S. who would still remain on the bases. The Philippines replied by saying that the

issue of the bases would be decided by the referendum that was being placed before the people, and that the issue was not up for discussion.

At this point another news bulletin was received from Moscow. This bulletin stated that the Soviets were willing to withdraw their forces from Camranh Bay if the U.S. would withdraw its own forces from the Philippines.

The Philippines again stated that they were against this because they saw themselves losing more by this action than Vietnam would lose, and that it was out of their hands since they had stated that the issue would be voted on by the population of the Philippines in a referendum.

China announces that they have contracted out to have four frigates built for coastal defense.

Thailand moved that Article V be tabled since the issue of the Philippine bases had been ruled off limits during the discussions on Article I and that given the lateness of the hour we move for adjournment. Both of these movements were seconded and approved.

Overall I feel that we have to be very pleased with the outcome of the articles that were approved since nothing was passed without our approval. I feel that this can be credited to Thailand moving into the position of spokesman for the ASEAN delegations. I feel that we "won" the issue of Article I by keeping the Philippine bases out of the discussion since these bases contain what we consider to be our safeguard against outright aggression against us. Even though we were not able to convince Vietnam to see our position due to economic incentives we were able to wear them down and got them to approve of our

Article II resolution with only slight modifications by them. I am disappointed that we did not really deal with Article III at all, since this was the section that will determine the outcome of our efforts in Cambodia. Article IV can also be seen as a victory for us because by removing this article from discussion we have saved ourselves from being put in the situation of losing much needed economic resources that we ourselves are in need of. Basically I see it as having gotten the concessions that we wanted from Vietnam without having to weaken our own economic position. Article V was in essence null and void after the line in Article I was stricken from the document at the beginning of the conference. I feel that the issue of ZOPFAN will be something that we can work for after it is clearly evident that we can expect a degree of peace in our region of the world, something that has not been an abundance of in the last half century.