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MEMOIR

Japan's Role in Peacemaking in Cambodia: Factors that Contributed to Its Success

Yamamoto Tadamichi*

Japan's role in the peace process in Cambodia is generally considered to have been a success. It was the first major post-World War II effort by Japan to participate in bringing about peace to an international conflict. There have been later efforts on the part of Japan to participate in peacemaking and peace building, but none have been as impressive—nor featuring Japan in such a leading role—as was the case in Cambodia.¹⁾

In this paper, the focus is on the period immediately after the Paris Conference on Cambodia of 1991. This was when the government of Japan took the initiative to resolve the deadlock brought about by the refusal of the Khmer Rouge to go into the second phase of the peace process as prescribed in the Paris Peace Agreements. This move on the part of the Khmer Rouge posed a severe threat to the holding of elections to establish the Constituent Assembly, which was designed to approve the new Cambodian Constitution and then turn itself into a legislative assembly. The efforts on the part of Japan, including dialogues with the Khmer Rouge conducted together with Thailand, paved the way for the elections to be implemented as envisaged in the Paris Peace Agreements. The government of Japan also played an important role in the UN Security Council in this process.

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1) In the period leading up to the Paris Conference on Cambodia of 1991, there were two significant contributions to the peace process by the government of Japan. One was its effort to persuade the Cambodian factions, particularly Prime Minister Hun Sen of the Phnom Penh regime (Cambodian People's Party, CPP), to join the international peace process. The other was its effort to apportion the ratio of representation of the Cambodian factions in the Supreme National Council (SNC), giving a ratio of three to the Phnom Penh regime and one each to the other three factions.

There are books and papers on the role and contribution of Japan during this period, including those written by officials in charge at the time (see, for example, Masaharu Kono 河野雅治, 1999, *Wahei Kosaku: Tai Kambojia Gaiko no Shogen* 和平工作——対カンボジア外交の証言 [Peace-making efforts], Iwanami Shoten).

The Constituent Assembly elections gave two major rival political factions in Cambodia an almost equal number of seats. The results could have led to a political stalemate or even a clash between the two factions. The government of Japan moved quickly to support Prince Sihanouk, who came up with the idea of a coalition government in order to avert a political crisis.

The author, as one of the participants in the process in the years 1992–94, would like to discuss the conditions that made it possible for Japan to take on such a political mediating role and why it was effective.

Let us first remind ourselves of the major events in the peace process, which is now a part of history.

I Course of Events²⁾

(1) *Paris Peace Agreements*

The Agreements on the Comprehensive Settlement of the Cambodian Conflict, otherwise known as the Paris Peace Agreements, were signed in Paris in October 1991. The Agreements chartered, step by step, the course for establishing a democratically elected government in Cambodia, a country that had been battered by conflict for 13 years. The Paris Peace Agreements were a crystallization into a concrete road map for peace of the efforts of all the major powers and neighboring countries seeking to bring peace to Cambodia, and which all the Cambodian parties to the conflict accepted. Because of the comprehensiveness of the content and because of the universality of acceptance, the Paris Peace Agreements were an unwavering solid guideline for actions throughout the peace process.

Peace settlements require opportune moments. In the case of Cambodia, the moment came in the late 1980s. The conflict in Cambodia reflected the hostility between China and Vietnam. These two countries even fought a war over Cambodia in February–March 1979. The Cambodian People’s Party (CPP), or the Phnom Penh regime, had the strong support of Vietnam; and the three other factions, particularly the Khmer Rouge, had the support of China. What made the two countries change their positions, which led to the normalization of their relationship in 1990?

For Vietnam, the decline of military and economic assistance from the Soviet Union was a serious blow, particularly in maintaining its support and presence in Cambodia. It

2) For the official UN account of events, see “Cambodia-UNTAC Background” (accessed September 2014, <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/past/untacbackgr.html>).

was also clear that without resolving the Cambodian conflict, assistance from the West to replace the assistance from the Soviet Union was just a dream. Vietnam's new policy of Doi Moi, which was adopted in 1986 and called for the introduction of a market economy and promotion of international cooperation (with the West), required a fundamental review of its external policy. (Japan resumed its economic assistance to Vietnam in November 1992, after the latter clearly showed its support for the international efforts to bring peace to Cambodia.) Vietnam had a reason to settle the Cambodian conflict and pave the way for development of the region as a whole.

For China, the Cambodian issue was becoming an unaffordable burden. The rapidly changing situation in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe was forcing China to review its place in the international arena, especially since the Tian'anmen incident of 1989 had isolated China from the mainstream international community. Propping up the Khmer Rouge, which occupied a small area near the Thai border with little future prospects and which had committed intolerable human rights violations and atrocities, would not help China, which was itself suffering from the aftermath of human rights issues of the Tian'anmen incident. Thus, the stumbling blocks, apart from the positions of the Cambodian parties themselves, were being dissolved away and the ground was being set for international efforts to be successful.

The Paris Conference of 1991 was held against such a background. Chaired jointly by France and Indonesia, the Conference saw the participation of all the major parties concerned, including the P-5, neighboring states, Japan, and Australia. All four factions of Cambodia were represented. The Paris Peace Agreements, concluded at the Conference, were the culmination of many international efforts, including those by France, Australia, Indonesia, and Japan, to try to bring settlement to the conflict. They stipulated, in detail, the steps to be taken to implement the elections to establish the Constituent Assembly. They tasked the United Nations with taking on the central role, including the overseeing of the administration of the country during the transitional period. They provided an unwavering core and foundation for all international efforts to bring peace to Cambodia.

(2) Road Map Set by the Paris Peace Agreements

The Paris Peace Agreements had three goals. The first was to establish, through a democratic election, a new Cambodian government with international legitimacy and the mandate of the Cambodian people. The second was to put an end to a long period of civil war and to start the process of national reconciliation. The third goal was to embark upon nation building under the new Cambodian government, with the international community assisting in the process.

In order for those goals to be attained, some key operations had to be implemented. Refugees and internally displaced persons were to be returned to Cambodia and resettled so that they could vote in the upcoming elections. A ceasefire had to be put in place: Cantonment of troops, and their disarmament and demobilization, were to take place so that there would be a stable environment for the elections to take place. The United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) was to be established to manage the election and to oversee the administration of Cambodia during the transitional period so that the neutrality of the political environment leading up to the elections could be ensured.

A successful holding of the Constituent Assembly elections was critical. The UN was tasked in Cambodia not simply with ensuring free and fair elections but with holding the elections under its auspices. The election law was drafted by the Supreme National Council (SNC), in which all the Cambodian factions were represented, with assistance from UNTAC.

(3) *Khmer Rouge Blocks the Implementation of the Road Map*

The return and resettlement of refugees and displaced persons began on March 30, 1992, according to schedule and with the strong commitment and leadership of Sadako Ogata, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; and the election law was being drafted. However, when it came to the ceasefire, the process came to a halt when the Khmer Rouge refused to go into its second phase, which was due to start on June 13, 1992.

The second phase of the ceasefire required the following three conditions: the cantonment of troops of all factions, a minimum 70 percent of demobilization, and verification of the withdrawal of foreign troops.

The Khmer Rouge refused to place its forces in cantonments and demobilize them, citing two reasons. It claimed that the SNC, which was supposed to play a more prominent role as the adviser to the UNTAC, was not functioning as it should and that the Phnom Penh regime de facto continued to rule Cambodia. It also claimed that Vietnamese troops continued to remain in Cambodia.

According to the Paris Peace Agreements, the UNTAC was to be responsible for the administration of the country, with oversight of the existing administrative structure. The SNC was to advise the UNTAC, and the latter was to follow the advice as long as the advice was in conformity with the objectives of the Paris Peace Agreements. The existing institutions and bureaucracy were to remain and be supervised by the UNTAC. This was a practical solution that enabled continuity in the administration and was accepted by all. The fairness of the administration was to be ensured by the supervision

and direction of the UNTAC, which received advice from the SNC.

The Khmer Rouge claim regarding the presence of Vietnamese troops was not well founded. The UNTAC could deal with it by taking some concrete measures to verify the departure of foreign troops. The issue of the role of the SNC in regard to the administration of the country was more subtle. It seemed obvious that the Khmer Rouge wanted to weaken the influence of the Phnom Penh regime by enabling the other Cambodian factions, particularly the Khmer Rouge, to intervene and if necessary to empower them with a de facto veto in the implementation of administration in the areas where the existing administration of the Phnom Penh regime was to be in charge, which was more than 80 percent of the territory of Cambodia. The Paris Peace Agreements did not empower the SNC with such a veto; they empowered the SNC only to provide advice to the UNTAC, which was to supervise the existing administration of Cambodia. However, it was possible to argue that the SNC was not performing this advisory function well enough to effectively reflect the views and positions of all the factions.

(4) *Japan Decides to Hold Dialogues with the Khmer Rouge*

The government of Japan became concerned over the situation in Cambodia. The Khmer Rouge was accusing the international community of not faithfully implementing the Paris Peace Agreements. Its intention might have been to jeopardize the whole process and blame the international community for the breakdown.

International efforts were made to call upon the Khmer Rouge to implement the second phase of the ceasefire. At the Tokyo Ministerial Conference on Cambodian Reconstruction in June 1992, so-called the "11 Point Proposal for Discussion," was issued. It offered a compromise with the Khmer Rouge as well as a more active role for the SNC. The Khmer Rouge, however, refused the 11 Point Proposal without making any concrete comment on its contents. Some members of the international community were getting impatient. There was a talk of imposing sanctions on the Khmer Rouge if it did not show a more compromising attitude in its implementation of the Paris Peace Agreements. Although this was one logical course of action, the government of Japan felt that before thinking of imposing sanctions, more international efforts should be made to persuade the Khmer Rouge to go into the second phase of the ceasefire. Without such efforts, it was feared that the international community may end up divided in its actions against the Khmer Rouge, particularly in regard to the imposition of sanctions. It seemed clear that China, for instance, was unlikely to accept the implementation of sanctions without the international community having paid due attention to the claims by the Khmer Rouge.

Although the Khmer Rouge expressed discontent over the functioning of the SNC,

it did not indicate what exactly it wanted done to improve the situation. It simply claimed that the Paris Peace Agreements had not been implemented faithfully. The Japanese government's position was that it should at least make an effort to understand what the Khmer Rouge wanted—in as concrete a term as possible—so that it may make a judgment as to whether their demand was within the framework of the Paris Peace Agreements. The Japanese government felt that the Khmer Rouge had the right to be listened to, to explain what it was trying to achieve through its non-cooperation. It felt that the international community should exhaust all means of accommodating legitimate claims of the Khmer Rouge so that any failures or difficulties with the process would become the responsibility of the Khmer Rouge and not that of the international community.

The government of Japan thus decided to attempt to talk to the Khmer Rouge. Given the intransigent position displayed by the Khmer Rouge thus far against any efforts by the international community, the government of Japan did not harbor any illusions regarding the prospect of the coming talks.

(5) *Japan Asks Thailand to Join the Efforts*

The first task was to get the Khmer Rouge to come to the table for talks. Thus far, the Khmer Rouge had refused to negotiate over the issues it had raised; it had just issued a statement by Khieu Samphan, the President of the Democratic Kampuchea party (Khmer Rouge), describing its position. The government of Japan alone would not have the leverage to force the Khmer Rouge to come to the table. The two countries that had influence over the Khmer Rouge were China and Thailand—China because of the support it had extended to the Khmer Rouge over the years, and Thailand because the Khmer Rouge obtained its financial resources by trading logs and jewelry across the Thai border. After the Paris Peace Agreements, China stopped military aid to the Khmer Rouge in accordance with the agreements, and the influence of Thailand was becoming more immediate.

The government of Japan contacted the governments of both countries and asked them to work together with Japan to talk to the Khmer Rouge. The government of China appreciated Japan's intentions and efforts but decided to work on the Khmer Rouge on its own. The Thai government agreed to work with the government of Japan.

(6) *Conditions for the Success of the Talks*

In order for Japan to have meaningful talks with the Khmer Rouge, it had to clear a number of hurdles. First of all, the Khmer Rouge had to trust in Japan's sincerity if there were to be any progress at all. Second, the other Cambodian factions, particularly Prince Sihanouk's and Prime Minister Hun Sen's, had to, at the very least, not object to the

Khmer Rouge-Japan talks, if not give their blessings which was unlikely. Third, the UNTAC and other key international players had to have no objections to Japan's efforts.

The Japanese government felt that the initiative had to be viewed by the Khmer Rouge as strictly Japan's own, not a result of consultations with the P-5. It had to be seen as a sympathetic helping hand to the Khmer Rouge in the face of the deadlock. This was not difficult, because it simply reflected the reality that the initiative came strictly from Japan and Thailand.

Japan's efforts would be futile, however, unless they were eventually accepted by the other Cambodian factions and the international community. This meant that the efforts had to be strictly an extension of the efforts made by the international community in the process of the implementation of the Paris Peace Agreements. Japan and Thailand, therefore, made it clear that any ideas to be discussed or any concessions they made to the Khmer Rouge had to be within the framework of the Paris Peace Agreements. In other words, if the Khmer Rouge made claims that fell within the agreements, it was entitled to have those claims considered.

(7) Reactions of Cambodian Factions and International Community

When Japan and Thailand notified Prince Sihanouk of their intention to go into dialogue with the Khmer Rouge, the Prince was skeptical about making any progress. But he understood the reasoning behind their efforts and let them try it out.

Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen, as expected, expressed strong displeasure. It was perhaps a surprise to him that such a proposal had come from the government of Japan. The Japanese government had held sincere and in-depth high-level dialogues with the Prime Minister since before the Paris Conference, and trust had been nurtured between him and Japan. Therefore, it must have been a surprise to him that Japan, which understood his difficulties and worries, should wish to extend a hand to the Khmer Rouge. Hun Sen wanted Japan to refrain from taking the initiative. In the end, however, he trusted Japan and—probably grudgingly—gave it a nod to go ahead with the initiative.

The response of the international community was no more favorable. The initial reaction of the P-5 was skepticism and displeasure at not having been consulted on the initiative. It was interesting that the displeasure was stronger in Phnom Penh than in the respective capitals. Japan's logic that it should exhaust all its efforts so that it may put the onus of responsibility on the Khmer Rouge should its goodwill efforts fail seemed to gain more understanding in the capitals.

The UNTAC was also skeptical of Japan's initiative at first, fearing that it might undermine the former's administrative authority. However, Yasushi Akashi, the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General in charge, appreciated Japan's intentions

and exhibited flexibility in accommodating its initiative.

(8) *Talks with Khmer Rouge*

The talks with the Khmer Rouge began on July 17, 1992. A total of four meetings were held the last one on October 31, 1992. The conclusion of the talks became apparent after the third talk on August 27.

In the first meeting, Thailand and Japan listened to the position and claims of the Khmer Rouge, trying to understand what the latter really wanted in concrete terms. The Khmer Rouge repeated its known claims regarding the functioning of the SNC and the alleged lingering presence of Vietnamese troops. It was during the coffee break, when Khieu Sanpang spoke to the Japanese delegates in English and in a more frank manner, that the Khmer Rouge gave specifics of its complaint regarding the functioning of the SNC. No breakthrough was made, but the Khmer Rouge agreed to continue with the talks.

Before the second round of talks, which was held on August 22, Japan came out with a proposal that tried to accommodate the claims of the Khmer Rouge. The proposal was carefully drafted to be strictly in conformity with the Paris Peace Agreements. The governments of Japan and Thailand consulted with the UNTAC and the P-5 before the meeting with the Khmer Rouge. When the proposal was presented to the Khmer Rouge in the second round of meetings, the Khmer Rouge seemed somewhat interested but not enthusiastic. Representatives of the Khmer Rouge seemed unhappy that the plan had been extensively discussed with the UNTAC and the P-5 before being presented to them for negotiation. The parties ended with an agreement to meet again soon to hear the response from the Khmer Rouge.

The third round of talks was held five days later, on August 27. The Khmer Rouge did not accept the Japanese-Thai proposal. To make matters worse, it came out with a new complaint as an additional reason for not going into the second phase of the ceasefire. The additional complaint was not well founded and placed the sincerity of the Khmer Rouge into serious doubt. The governments of both Japan and Thailand felt that the additional complaint was fabricated as a pretext to not comply with the Paris Peace Agreements and that the Khmer Rouge was not willing to cooperate with the smooth implementation of the Agreements. The two governments concluded that the claims of the Khmer Rouge were simply pretexts for not cooperating with the international process.

(9) *Significance of the Japanese-Thai Efforts*

To some who had been critical of the Thai-Japanese initiative, the above conclusion was a foregone issue and the governments of Japan and Thailand were simply wasting time

and energy. But in reality, the process, which was held in partnership with one of the two parties that held close ties to the Khmer Rouge—Thailand—and with full consultation with the other party that had supported the Khmer Rouge—China—meant that both Thailand and China had come to acknowledge, along with Japan, that the Khmer Rouge did not have a sound basis in the Paris Peace Agreements to make those claims. In other words, both Thailand and China understood that all feasible efforts had been exhausted and that it was time to move on to the next stage in the peace process.

(10) *International Reactions to Japanese-Thai Efforts*

Let us look at how some key countries viewed the Japanese-Thai initiative. When the first bout of skepticism had subsided, all the players were watching the unfolding of talks between the Khmer Rouge and the governments of Japan and Thailand.

The United States welcomed the fact that Japan was taking the initiative. The US government had been urging Japan to take on a more politically salient role commensurate with its economic power.

France, the United Kingdom, and China supported the initiative. France, in particular, endorsed the Japanese-Thai approach. Russia did not embrace the initiative, although it did not oppose it. Russia's position perhaps reflected the skepticism of the Phnom Penh regime with which it had maintained close ties.

(11) *UN Endorsement of the Japanese-Thai Efforts*

The next step necessary was to turn the Japanese-Thai initiative from a voluntary effort by the two countries into a legitimate link in the chain of international efforts to implement the Paris Peace Agreements.

Before the third meeting, Japan—anticipating a negative response from the Khmer Rouge—had asked the key countries (the “G-10,” including Australia, Indonesia, and Germany) to be ready to convene a meeting in the United Nations soon after the talks so that the Khmer Rouge would clearly be warned that there was not much time available for it to drag on the talks or stall the peace process by not implementing the Paris Peace Agreements.

The meeting of the G-10 was convened in New York on October 7 and 8, 1992. Japan and Thailand reported the outline and outcome of the talks. In the meeting the G-10 decided to ask Japan and Thailand to make one more attempt to talk to the Khmer Rouge. A United Nations Security Council resolution was drafted thanking Japan and Thailand for their efforts and urging the Khmer Rouge to come back to the peace process.

(12) *Final Talks with Khmer Rouge*

The fourth round of talks was held on October 29, 1992, in Phnom Penh. It was understood that if the Khmer Rouge did not accept Japan and Thailand's proposal, this would be the end of the international efforts to woo the Khmer Rouge back into the process. This time, Japan and Thailand were no longer voluntarily exploring a possible way out of the deadlock but were negotiating with the Khmer Rouge on behalf of the international community mandated by the Security Council resolution.

The Khmer Rouge did not accept the proposal. The international efforts initiated by Japan and Thailand ended. The Khmer Rouge did not come back to implement the Paris Peace Agreements. The process was ready to move on to the next stage with all the key members of the international community on board. After the talks with the Khmer Rouge terminated, Japan and Thailand wrote a report on the talks and submitted it to the UN Security Council for circulation.

The Japanese-Thai initiative was a win-win one. If the talks with the Khmer Rouge had been successful, the Khmer Rouge would have come back to the peace process. If, on the other hand, the talks had turned out to be unsuccessful, it would have become clear in the eyes of all—including China and Thailand, which had traditionally held close ties with the Khmer Rouge—that it was the Khmer Rouge that was at fault in obstructing the peace process.

(13) *UNSC Resolution to Implement the Constituent Assembly Elections*

The next stage in the peace process was an action by the United Nations Security Council. On November 30, 1992, the Security Council passed Resolution 792. This expressed the will of the international community to conduct Constituent Assembly elections in Cambodia even if the Khmer Rouge did not participate in them. Economic sanctions against the Khmer Rouge were also stipulated. The door for the Khmer Rouge to come back to the process was, however, carefully kept open.

In drafting this resolution, Japan played an important role. A meeting of the SNC at the ministerial level was held in Beijing on November 7 and 8, with the participation of all the Cambodian factions and representatives from the G-10 countries. The Khmer Rouge was still not prepared to cooperate in the further implementation of the Paris Peace Agreements. Furthermore, it had indicated its intention not to take part in the electoral process so long as, in its view, neutral political conditions were not ensured. At the side of the Beijing meeting, efforts began among the G-10 countries to work out some key elements for a UN Security Council resolution to allow for the elections to be held as scheduled even without the participation of the Khmer Rouge.

The Security Council met on November 15 to hear the report by the Secretary

General on developments in Cambodia. Work began on drafting a Security Council resolution, but the United States and France could not come to an agreement on the draft. Japan had dispatched to New York the Director in charge of Cambodia (the author of this paper), to help move along the process. He became the only official in New York who had personally attended all the key meetings and therefore had the most knowledge about the consultations and negotiations in the period leading up to the Security Council meeting. When the deadlock became apparent, the Japanese representative, under instructions from the home government, contacted both the French and the US capitals and suggested a way to resolve the deadlock. Both governments saw a possible compromise. France asked Japan to prepare a draft for France, the United States, and the United Kingdom to look at. After the draft was agreed to among the three countries, Japan undertook to contact China, which in the voting had decided not to object but to abstain. Furthermore, Japan, as one of the drafters, joined the US government representative in Washington, DC, at the latter's request, to explain the content and intent of the resolution to a group of friendly states to seek their support. The Japanese draft thus became the basis for Security Council Resolution 792.

(14) *Unwavering Support for Prince Sihanouk after the Elections*

The elections for the Constituent Assembly took place on May 23–28, 1993. The Khmer Rouge had announced earlier, on April 4, that it would not take part in the elections. As the second phase of the ceasefire had to be suspended due to the noncompliance of the Khmer Rouge, disarmament of the Cambodian factions' forces did not take place. Violence was feared, and there were some—but not enough to jeopardize the elections. Almost 90 percent of the registered voters (almost 4.3 million people) voted. The SRSG for UNTAC, Mr. Yasushi Akashi declared the elections to be free and fair.

The results showed the FUNCINPEC (Front Uni National pour un Cambodge Indépendant, Neutre, Pacifique, et Coopératif; National United Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful, and Cooperative Cambodia), the party of Prince Ranariddh—Prince Sihanouk's son—winning with 45.3 percent (58 seats) of the votes and the Cambodian People's Party (CPP) coming second with 38.2 percent (51 seats). The CPP under Hun Sen immediately protested, saying that there had been irregularities in the elections. More than 80 percent of the country was administered under the control of the CPP.

Prince Sihanouk immediately saw the difficulties and suggested the establishment of a coalition government with two prime ministers: one each from the FUNCINPEC and the CPP. The United States opposed this idea, citing the need to respect the democratic outcome and the fact that Prince Ranariddh and Hun Sen had not even met after the elections. On encountering the objection, Prince Sihanouk immediately retracted the

proposal. Japan felt that the idea proposed by Prince Sihanouk was a wise one taking into account the realities of the situation and with an eye to the effective functioning of the government after its establishment. Only Prince Sihanouk could have come up with such an idea and pulled it off. Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa understood the delicateness of the situation and supported the proposal. So did France and Thailand. Tokyo called Washington and argued that it would be best to let Prince Sihanouk take the lead in bringing about a national reconciliation. The US government understood the argument. Japan then asked France and Indonesia, the co-chairs of the Paris Conference, to convene a meeting of “core” countries in Phnom Penh. It should be noted here that Japan asked France and Indonesia to convene a meeting instead of holding the meeting on its own because those two countries had greater political legitimacy as the co-chairs of the Paris Conference, which had laid the foundation for the elections. The meeting, which was held on June 16–17, 1993, in effect gave support to Prince Sihanouk’s initiative and led to the establishment of the Joint Administration of the FUNCINPEC and the CPP.

II Factors that Enabled Japan to Play a Key Role in Peacemaking and Nation Building

(1) *Qualifications to Play a Key Role*

(a) Three Stages in Peacekeeping and Nation Building

The process of peacemaking and nation building may be looked at in stages. First, conflicts must be brought to an end. At this stage, in order to put an end to the destruction of order and institutions, the use of force or the ability to use force—that is to say, military capability—is often necessary. In order to bring civil wars or violent ethnic confrontations to an end, the ability and willingness to intervene militarily by a country or a group of countries may be required. Although such capability is not always necessary for a country to play a leading role at this stage, Japan, which had renounced the use of force to resolve conflicts in its constitution, was not a natural candidate to take on this role.

Needless to say, at this stage of peacemaking, in addition to the element of “force” there are other key qualifications of political nature—such as creativity, experience, and wisdom—which are needed to bring tenuous situations under control. In the next stage of peacemaking, and in the succeeding stages of nation building and reconstruction, the qualities required for playing key brokering or facilitating roles are of different nature. In the latter stages, political prowess carries more weight than military capability. In order for a party to play a significant peacemaking role, it must be trusted by the conflicting parties. If not, its suggestions and initiatives will fall on deaf ears. Confidence from

key members of the international community is also important in order to ensure cooperation from the parties concerned or any influential powers. The ability to exert pressure on the basis of such trust is also crucial for getting things done. Such trust and confidence cannot be won overnight.

(b) Issue of Legitimacy and Confidence

This may be expressed in a different way. In order for a country to play a leading role in peacemaking and nation building, it must have legitimacy as well as the ability to deliver—the former offers a basis for it to gain trust. The legitimacy is sometimes formally assigned or endorsed by the international community, a typical example being designation or acknowledgment of such a role in the form of a UN Security Council resolution. But very often, countries, through their active and constructive activities and roles, acquire such legitimacy.

Confidence in a country may be gained only with a manifest expression of the will of the country's leader to take on a key role. In order to gain the confidence of the parties in the conflict and the international community in its efforts toward peacemaking, it is critical for the political leader at the highest level to have a clear and public commitment. The peacemaking process is a serious and weighty political matter that determines the future of the country in question. Therefore, the leaders of the parties in the conflict must be able to feel that they can trust their future in the hands of the political leader undertaking the mediating role. Such trust can be gained only with an explicit commitment from the highest political level. Efforts to broker a peace place at stake the reputation and integrity of the country undertaking such efforts and hence require the commitment of a leader who can mobilize the necessary resources for the undertaking. No matter how capable the diplomats in charge or the negotiators may be, their commitment and dedication alone cannot suffice to build the credibility needed by the political leaders of conflicting parties who are staking their future in the process. The leaders of conflicting parties weigh the qualifications of the leader and the country willing to undertake the mediating role. They look at political prowess, influence, sincerity, ability to mobilize resources, impartiality, and ability to bring along the international community. Diplomats or negotiators chosen to take on the actual mediation and consultation are people of experience and integrity, but even so, they are very often designated as personal representatives of the leader (president or prime minister) or the foreign minister in order to make it clear that they have the trust of the leader.

International confidence in the leader and the country or its government is also critical. In order for any agreement to be reached or achievements to be implemented, international support and cooperation—or at least acquiescence—is necessary. Not

every country or leader can enjoy trust and confidence. Sometimes the country but not its leader may have a track record for being trustworthy, or vice versa. Confidence may exist for certain cases, but the same country and leader may not enjoy the same degree of confidence in a different situation, due, for instance, to historical reasons.

(c) Japan: Well Placed to Take on a Mediating Role

In the case of Cambodia, Japan enjoyed the confidence of the parties to the conflict and of the international community, and the Japanese political leaders made clear their commitment to the peace process. The commitment by then Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa was particularly important, and it proved to be unflinching and critically important when two Japanese lost their lives during their mission.

Prior to the commencement of intense efforts on the part of the international community to bring about peace in Cambodia, Japan had enjoyed the confidence of the three parties to the conflict other than the CPP, the regime in Phnom Penh. This was because of its standing support for the three parties since the establishment of the CPP regime in Phnom Penh in 1979, after Vietnam invaded Cambodia the same year. Japan's consistent support and assistance to them including for its representation in the United Nations have earned their confidence. In addition, Japan maintained particularly strong ties of support and cooperation with Prince Sihanouk through the years, including during his difficult times. Some of the main diplomats who played key roles in the later peace process, such as Director General Tadashi Ikeda and Ambassador Yukio Imagawa, had established personal sense of rapport with the Prince through this process. This rapport proved to be an important asset throughout the peace process.

In the late 1980s, when it was becoming clear that the time was arriving for a peace settlement in Cambodia, Japan decided to establish closer ties with the CPP. Japanese Foreign Ministers put in personal efforts and met with Prime Minister Hun Sen to bring home to him the importance of an international process to put an end to the years of conflict and give legitimacy to the government to be established through a democratic process. For instance, Michio Watanabe, the foreign minister during the critical period in the peace process, made a special effort. Even while hospitalized due to a terminal illness, he met with Hun Sen and talked to him in an effort to move the peace process forward. Hisashi Owada, the then Permanent Secretary of the Foreign Ministry, had extensive *tete-a-tetes* on a number of occasions with Hun Sen, which the latter, in a later meeting with the Permanent Secretary, recalled as having had an important influence in his decision to attend the Paris Conference. Through such efforts, the CPP, in addition to the three other factions (the FUNCINPEC, the Khmer Rouge [DK (Democratic Kampuchea)], and Son San [KPLNF]) came to have confidence in Japan.

Internationally, the environment was conducive for Japan to take on a role in Cambodia. Japan itself was ready to take on such a role. With its successful economic growth, Japan was beginning to become conscious of its international roles and responsibilities commensurate with its economic capabilities. The United States was encouraging Japan to be more active politically, and it welcomed the latter's efforts. After the Cold War, the idea of *pax consortis*, where key powers cooperated in managing the world order, was earnestly being discussed. Japan was ready to commit resources to important international issues even if there was no direct Japanese interest involved. It was ready to contribute to bringing about and maintaining stability and prosperity in the international community purely for that purpose.

Furthermore, Cambodia was more or less free from the burden of Japan's history. It did not have any reason for Japan not to play an active international role in the peace process. This contrasted starkly with the situation in the Far East, where the lingering memory of World War II made it much more difficult for Japan to be active in matters relating to security.

(d) Japan's Role: Welcomed by Key International Countries

Situations surrounding other countries also made it opportune for Japan to play an active mediating role. The United States did not enjoy the trust of the CPP, because of the persistently critical position that the US government took against the latter. The US government's position was naturally a consequence of its adverse relations with the Vietnamese government. Russia was not seen to be neutral, because of its long support for the CPP and Vietnam. Neither was China seen to be neutral, because of its long active support for the Khmer Rouge. Among the other P-5 members, the United Kingdom did not show a strong interest in taking on an active role in the region. This left France, which had been playing a critical role in the Cambodian peace process, including the hosting of the Paris Conference on Cambodia in 1991. France was happy to see Japan take on an active role in Cambodia. France and Japan had a pragmatic approach to the problem and saw almost eye to eye on many key issues. Australia and Indonesia were the other two countries that—due to their neutral position and political standing—would have played key roles; and they actually did play very substantive roles in the course of the peace process. They, too, welcomed Japan taking on an active role and maintained confidence in the general thinking with which Japan took the political initiative in the peace process. It may also be said that particularly during the years 1992–94, the political commitment and personal involvement by the Japanese leadership in their efforts to help the peace process were among the most serious on the part of the key players. Japan's efforts were welcomed by these key players.

During this period, the support and cooperation of three countries were of special importance: the United States, France, and Thailand. The United States encouraged Japan in its efforts in Cambodia, particularly after the Paris Conference. At first, when Japan began to have active contacts with the Phnom Penh (CPP) regime, there was some skepticism on the part of the United States. But close and timely consultations and communications by the Japanese government gradually won it over. Once confidence was established, the United States became a reliable and understanding supporter of the Japanese endeavors.

French policy was managed by the Director General for Asian affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Jean-David Levitte. He must have seen in Japan a pragmatic and balanced approach to addressing the peace process. France supported Japan's efforts at critical junctures in its capacity as one of the co-chairs of the Paris Conference. For instance, France immediately responded to Japan's request to organize a core group meeting in Phnom Penh after the Constituent Assembly elections. When the UN Security Council arrived at a deadlock in drafting a resolution in November 1992, France asked Japan to draft a compromise text. Such was the confidence that existed between the two countries.

Thailand was a most important partner in moving the peace process forward. It saw the need for a change on the peninsula and put forward a political slogan: "From a battlefield to a market place." This phrase symbolized graphically what was to come in the region and on the peninsula. Thailand saw in Japan an influential partner without any ulterior motive to compromise the future of the peninsula. Throughout the peace process, Thailand was a true working partner of Japan. The talks with the Khmer Rouge which are described in this paper were examples of such cooperation.

(e) Competent Officials and Negotiators

It should be pointed out here of the importance of establishing personal rapport among and between the policy makers and negotiators. When dealing with delicate issues such as peacemaking, it is important for the parties involved to have confidential exchanges to explore and discern each other's honest thinking. Often, such a process requires direct communications between the policy makers or negotiators responsible in addition to more formal channels of communication using embassies and offices in the respective ministries. This is because sensitive information has to be held closely among designated a few. These people must satisfy two conditions. First, they must be capable enough and mandated by the government to speak on the latter's behalf, and be able to make judgments—including compromises and new proposals, often on an *ad referendum* basis. But probably of more importance is that they must have the trust and confidence of the

political leadership of their own country, usually the prime minister, the foreign minister, or the permanent secretary.

In the case of Cambodia, Japanese policy makers and negotiators fulfilled these qualifications; more accurately, those who fulfilled those qualifications were chosen. They established good working relationships with their counterparts in the key countries and utilized them at times of emergency and when immediate efforts had to be made to formulate international policy consensus.

(f) Japan: A Major Donor

At the stage of nation building or rehabilitation and reconstruction, in addition to the qualifications above it is essential for a country to have the ability to extend substantive cooperation in either financial or human terms. Although the country does not need to be the top donor, if it has the ability to lead the development cooperation, underlined with development cooperation of its own, it will get the necessary authority to coordinate international efforts and manage the process.

During this period when Japan led the assistance efforts in Cambodia, Japan was the largest ODA donor in the world. It was not only expected to lead international assistance efforts, but the actual contribution it made qualified it to take on this role.

Already at the Paris Conference on Cambodia of 1991, Japan was designated to host the Tokyo Ministerial Conference on Cambodian Reconstruction in June 1992. As has been described above, Japan's having chaired the conference with a successful outcome made it possible for the country to take on further political roles. It is also worth noting that since Japan was expected to become one of the largest donors for the reconstruction of Cambodia, its claim that there should be "no taxation without representation" ensured it a key seat in the Paris Conference and the ensuing peace process.

(2) *Domestic Support*

In democratic societies, support from the public is critical for undertaking a key role in a peacemaking and nation-building process. Whatever the stage of the process may be, playing a key role in peacemaking and nation building requires a country to commit a substantial amount of resources, whether in the form of human contribution or financial contribution. Without solid domestic support, it may not be possible for a country to accomplish the task.

This is evident when a country contributes military support. Military involvement places human lives at risk and requires a huge budget, military capacity, and technology. Loss—or a lack—of domestic support would erode the political foundation of the government and could even lead to its downfall. Conversely, we should note that there are

cases where a decision not to intervene could erode the confidence of the people in their government's foreign policy. Such a situation could occur when people feel that the foreign policy interests of their country would be harmed without military involvement.

No leader can be free from concerns at home for the safety of "our boys." Even in the phase of peacekeeping, the concern is valid.

In the case of Cambodia, Japan was involved in peacekeeping operations and dispatched a contingent of Self-Defense Forces. Japan also sent police officers to participate in civilian police duties. There were also Japanese civilian volunteers working with NGOs. Incidents occurred in the period leading up to the elections, in which a police officer and a young volunteer worker were killed.

The decision to dispatch security personnel was based on the premise that there was a ceasefire and that lives were not threatened by actual combat. Danger was expected, but only under exceptional circumstances. However, the precariousness of the situation on the ground—with constant violence disrupting the electoral process and sometimes leading to loss of lives—could have put the whole premise of the dispatch in question. In 1992, when Japan was participating in the large-scale UN Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) for the first time, loss of lives of security personnel could have triggered a debate calling for the withdrawal of such personnel.

When the news of the death of the police officer first reached the Japanese government, Prime Minister Miyazawa was not in Tokyo but in Karuizawa, a highland resort about two hours' drive from Tokyo. The news hit the headlines, and the whole of Japan was shocked and grieved. The media naturally talked about whether Japan should continue with the PKO operations. The Prime Minister set out from Karuizawa the night he received the news, and by the time he reached Tokyo he had made up his mind. The decision was to continue with the PKO in Cambodia. The private secretary to the Prime Minister, Yukio Takeuchi, later recalled that there were tense moments and that the Prime Minister made the decision fully cognizant of the long-term implications of his decision beyond Cambodia. Such a decision would have been very difficult if there had not been widespread and strong support among the Japanese public for the PKO in Cambodia.

Almost every day there were TV reports on the Japanese peacekeeping operations as well as the dire social and economic conditions in Cambodia and the need to assist them in their social and economic development. Japanese volunteers went to establish schools for children. Reports on such activities appeared not only in the news but also in special programs explaining history and the current situation. Interviews with Japanese members of the PKO in Cambodia were also broadcast, as well as segments on life in villages and people from near the base of the Japanese contingent. People used to say,

“Cambodia came into living rooms of ordinary Japanese households.” The atrocities and tragedies in Cambodia were widely known.

The strong interest of the average Japanese public in Japan's efforts in Cambodia, particularly in the PKO, formed the basis of the support. There was a more profound understanding among the public of the government efforts than of most other foreign policy issues. Prime Minister Miyazawa's decision was supported by the majority of the public.

The incident in which two personnel died was perhaps one of the most tense moments when domestic support for the government's efforts was tested. The most visible expression of public support for the Japanese efforts in Cambodia was seen when the returning members of the PKO contingent received a hero's welcome from the public and the media. The status of the Japan Self-Defense Forces also transformed with the appreciation by the public of their efforts in Cambodia.

III Conclusion

In the case of Cambodia, many factors converged to enable Japan to play a leadership role in the peace process. Japan's willingness to play such a role, with the strong commitment of the prime minister, was the major reason that it could do so. Domestic interest and support from the general public were critical in mobilizing resources and weathering difficult moments. International encouragement and cooperation prepared the ground for Japan to be active and take the initiative. There were the right people in the right places: Yasushi Akashi, the UN SRSG for UNTAC; Director General Tadashi Ikeda and Ambassador Yukio Imagawa, who had personal ties and friendship with key players in Cambodia, including Prince Sihanouk and Prime Minister Hun Sen; young and capable officials able to draft proposals and resolutions with imagination and accuracy; capable officers and soldiers in the PKO who were able to establish warm relationships with the residents of Cambodia. This effort of Japan is generally regarded as a success.

Many lessons were also learned. The most severe came from the loss of two lives. Efforts to obtain prior knowledge of what is to be expected, including risks, should never be spared. Some incidents may be unavoidable, but efforts should be made to minimize the risk of encountering them.

Japan also learned the importance of political “legitimacy.” For instance, it saw that being a Permanent Member of the UN Security Council gave countries the political legitimacy to organize and host international meetings, and thus gave them more opportunities to take initiatives of their own.

Japan also realized the importance of working together with countries with the same objectives and aspirations. For instance, unless we were able to work with Thailand, Japan would not have achieved what it did. The leverage that Thailand had over the Khmer Rouge and its understanding of the whole Cambodian issue was critical.

Japan also realized its weight in its ability to provide development assistance for the rehabilitation and reconstruction process. International expectations of Japan in this respect, including from the conflicting countries themselves, opened the opportunity for Japan to take on a political role in the peace process.

Japan's involvement in the peace process in Cambodia had an icebreaking effect. Japan was to participate more actively in the peacemaking and nation building process with more experience and more confidence. Legacies and lessons learned from Cambodia helped Japan to be more prudent and, at the same time, more active in areas where it felt it could contribute. However, there were not many cases where political commitment at the highest level was as strong as was the case in Cambodia.

Japan now has capable personnel with regional knowledge and personal connections to leaders of countries in need of assistance. Officials are more experienced, and many are very capable. Japan's ability to garner international support for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of countries is as critical, in many cases, as it was in Cambodia. In other words, Japan's experience and capability to play a leading role in international peacemaking and nation-building efforts are greatly enhanced now compared to the time when Japan played a key role in Cambodia.

With the right international environment, strong political will, and domestic public support, Japan will be able to play an even greater role in peacemaking and nation-building processes in the future.

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