

In July there was yet another step in the right direction when ASEAN and Vietnam, thanks to efforts of the Indonesian Foreign Minister, Mokhtar Kusumaatmaja, agreed about the possibility of holding an informal meeting of the four Cambodian factions.<sup>114</sup> Finally, on 2 December 1987, Prince Sihanouk, whom the CGDK had released from his duties as president in May, met Hun Sen, the Prime Minister of the PRK, in Paris. At the close of their three-day meeting they announced that they would hold two further meetings, one in France in January 1988 and the other in North Korea at a later date. This announcement led to renewed hopes of progress. These were soon dashed, however, when Sihanouk let it be known that the meetings had been cancelled because the two other Khmer factions were unwilling to take part in any such negotiations. A few days later, Sihanouk changed his mind and announced that he would resume negotiations with Hun Sen.<sup>115</sup>

#### SCENARIOS FOR A POSSIBLE SETTLEMENT

Since Prince Sihanouk plays a key part in the present situation it is not surprising that he should try to retain an even more important role than the course of events would justify. It seems likely that disappointments, such as the one noted above, are the result of his impatience and his unjustified self-confidence. He obviously wants to force the Khmer Rouge and the KPNLF of Son Sann to follow the path he has blazed; it may be that he also hopes to provoke China to intervene and to persuade the United States to play a more significant role in the conflict. In addition, he would like the Vietnamese leaders to accord him a privileged position as an intermediary and negotiate with him directly.

In the present context it is well to remember the words spoken by the Vietnamese Foreign Minister in 1985 after the proposed Paris meeting between Sihanouk and Hun Sen had been cancelled. Nguyen Co Thach then declared:

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<sup>114</sup> *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 13 August 1987, page 34.

<sup>115</sup> *Globe and Mail*, 11 December 1987 and *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 24 December 1987, page 10.