

including Thailand, are in no hurry to see the war end and would like to have all the Communist participants in the war, including the Khmer Rouge, worn out by the continuing conflict so that communism as a general phenomenon would pose a smaller and at least less immediate threat to other parts of Southeast Asia."²⁷

One can also understand the bitterness of Prince Sihanouk when he drew the same conclusions and said "Thailand has no reason to cease to encourage us to go on fighting; for it that is 'one less war' . . . As for China, it does not really want us to reach a settlement: there has to be an abscess in Asia and it is Cambodia. The Chinese are well aware that I will have enormous difficulty in reaching any settlement and they are tacitly in agreement with the Soviet Union in trying to maintain the deadlock."²⁸

Thus the two large coalitions which oppose each other in Indochina use the Khmers as intermediaries to fight their battle for them in Cambodia. Each side is the prisoner of an almost identical strategy which aims at carrying on a war of attrition. Each believes time is on its side and that it will be able to outlast its opponent, and profit politically from the other's exhaustion. The fact that both coalitions are motivated by the same logic dictated by similar interests has produced a deadlock which has now lasted for nine years.

²⁷ Chang Pao-min, "Kampuchean Conflict. The Continuing Stalemate," *Asian Survey*, vol. XXVII, no. 7, July 1987, page 757.

²⁸ Interview with Norodom Sihanouk, "Libérer le Cambodge," *Politique internationale*, *op.cit.*, page 263.