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Abstract

Gedanken über Ursachen und Lösungsmöglichkeiten des Konfliktes in und um Kambodscha

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The author stresses his reservations about "solutions" in this complex conflict. He prefers to deal mainly with the underlying causes - historical and geopolitical - of the Cambodian situation, without attaching much importance to the apparent ideological confrontation which in his view serves only as a cover for the confrontation between the Vietnamese and Khmer.

The problem is analyzed in its three levels: (1) the national Khmer (2) the regional, Southeast Asian and Indochina (3) and the global superpower aspect. The influence of the Khmer people upon its own destiny is practically non-existent and no change can be expected. On the regional level, however, the Vietnamese play an important role, both militarily and politically; the impact of their invasion and occupation of Cambodia determines to a large extent their relations with the Khmer, with the ASEAN states, especially Thailand and also with China and the Soviet Union. However, the regional developments, though important, are not as decisive as the China-Soviet Union relations, the U.S.A. playing a more passive role within the superpower triangle.

In theory, if the policies of China and the Soviet Union would become decisively motivated by overriding global considerations, the resulting detente could lead, inter alia, to a retreat of the Vietnamese from Cambodia.

The dialogue between China and the Soviet Union started in 1981 on a relatively high level which could, on the face of it, be seen as a move in the direction of a solution in Cambodia, if these ongoing negotiations were not intended, from both sides, as tactical moves, mainly to gain leverage in their dealings with the United States: China in the Taiwan conflict, the Soviet Union in the deployment of nuclear weapons in Europe. The recent renewal of high level Chinese-U.S.A. contacts seems to confirm that the Chinese-Soviet negotiations are basically tactical manoeuvring and do not herald a solution or even detente in Cambodia in the foreseeable future.