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REMARKS OF NORODOM SIHANOUK ON CAMBODIAN
FOREIGN RELATIONS AND HIS OWN
SITUATION AND PLANS

10/75

2. DURING A 9-11 OCTOBER 1975 STOPOVER IN PARIS, CAMBODIAN ROYAL GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNION (RGNU) CHIEF OF STATE NORODOM S I H A N O U K TOLD AN RGNU DIPLOMAT THAT HE HAD VIRTUALLY ABANDONED HOPE OF ANY SOVIET ACTION WHICH WOULD IMPROVE HIS OWN POSITION. SOME MONTHS OF CORDIAL CONTACTS WITH THE SOVIET AMBASSADORS IN PEKING AND PYONGYANG WERE FOLLOWED BY AN EQUALLY WARM RECEPTION IN SEPTEMBER ON THE PART OF A SOVIET DELEGATION IN HANOI, BUT THESE CONTACTS HAD PRODUCED NO PRACTICAL RESULTS. SIHANOUK SAID THAT HE HAD TAKEN THREE STEPS TOWARD THE SOVIET UNION, DESPITE THE RISK OF CHINESE DISAPPROVAL, BUT IT NOW APPEARED THAT THE SOVIETS WOULD BE SATISFIED WITH NOTHING LESS THAN THIRTY STEPS. ALTHOUGH HE HAD BEEN INTERESTED IN THE POSSIBILITY OF SOVIET BACKING, SIHANOUK WAS IN NO POSITION TO RISK AN OPEN BREAK WITH THE CHINESE IN PURSUIT OF AN UNCERTAIN GAIN. IN ANY CASE, SAID SIHANOUK, THE SOVIETS APPEARED INTERESTED IN CAMBODIA AND HIMSELF ONLY INSOFAR AS THEY OFFERED POSSIBILITIES FOR COUNTERING PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA (PRC) PLANS AND POLICIES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA.

3. IN AN 11 OCTOBER CONVERSATION WITH SEVERAL RGNU AND NATIONAL UNITED FRONT OF KAMPUCHEA (FUNK) OFFICIALS, SIHANOUK EXPRESSED RESERVATIONS CONCERNING THE FUTURE OF CAMBODIAN RELATIONS WITH VIETNAM, WHILE THE OPEN CONFRONTATION

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OF THE EARLY SUMMER OF 1975, APPEARED TO HAVE BEEN SETTLED
BY DIPLOMATIC MEANS, SIHANOUK WARNED THAT VIETNAMESE AMBITIONS
AND EXPANSIONISM MADE VIETNAM A POTENTIALLY THREATENING
NEIGHBOR. IN THIS CONTEXT, SIHANOUK SAID THAT CAMBODIA
MUST REMAIN ON GUARD AGAINST FALSE FRIENDS AS WELL AS ENEMIES,
SINCE IT WAS THE FALSE FRIEND WHO POSED THE THREAT OF A
STAB IN THE BACK. TURNING TO THE PRC, SIHANOUK PRAISED
IT AS USUAL AS CAMBODIA'S MOST FAITHFUL AND VALUABLE FRIEND
AND ALLY. HOWEVER, SIHANOUK WENT ON TO SAY THAT CAMBODIA
SHOULD NOT LIMIT ITS FOREIGN POLICY BY ADHERING STRICTLY
TO EXISTING ALIGNMENTS AND RELATIONSHIPS. FOR EXAMPLE,
HE THOUGHT THAT IT WOULD BE BOTH POSSIBLE AND USEFUL AT SOME
FUTURE DATE TO REOPEN CONTACTS WITH THE UNITED STATES.
WHILE THE AMERICANS WERE GUILTY OF MANY CRIMES AGAINST
CAMBODIA, SIHANOUK BELIEVED THAT THEY HAD LEARNED THE LESSONS
OF THEIR DEFEAT AND WOULD IN FUTURE BE PREPARED TO DEAL
CORRECTLY ON A BASIS OF MUTUAL RESPECT. THE PRO-COMMUNIST
OFFICIALS WHO WERE PRESENT LISTENED TO SIHANOUK'S COMMENTS
ON THE UNITED STATES IN EXPRESSIONLESS SILENCE.

4. IN A PRIVATE CONVERSATION ON 10 OCTOBER, SIHANOUK
SAID THAT HE WAS COMPLETELY SATISFIED WITH HIS RECEPTION
ON 9 OCTOBER BY PRESIDENT VALERY G I S C A R D D'ESTAING.

WITHOUT GOING INTO DETAIL, SIHANOUK SAID THAT HE HAD NOT
NOTED ANY AREAS OF SERIOUS DISAGREEMENT OR HOSTILITY BETWEEN

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CAMBODIA AND FRANCE, ALTHOUGH THE FINAL DECISION RESTED WITH RGNU LEADERS IN PHNOM PENH, SIHANOUK PLANNED UPON HIS RETURN TO CAMBODIA TO RECOMMEND STRONGLY THAT NORMAL RELATIONS WITH FRANCE, INCLUDING AN EXCHANGE OF AMBASSADORS, BE REESTABLISHED AT AN EARLY DATE.

5. IN THE COURSE OF THE SAME CONVERSATION, SIHANOUK COMMENTED THAT THE FORMER L O N NOL REGIME AND THE KHMER COMMUNISTS WERE IDENTICAL IN AT LEAST ONE RESPECT, THEIR DESIRE TO DESTROY THE CAMBODIAN MONARCHY. LON NOL HAD TRIED TO END THE MONARCHY IN ONE STROKE, IN DEFIANCE OF CAMBODIAN HISTORY AND TRADITION, AND HE HAD THEREBY ONLY WEAKENED HIS OWN GOVERNMENT, THE MORE SUBTLE COMMUNISTS WERE KILLING THE MONARCHY BY DEGREES, BUT THE END RESULT WAS NOT IN DOUBT, SIHANOUK DID NOT PREDICT HOW MUCH LONGER THE MONARCHY MIGHT LAST; HE SIMPLY SAW ITS ULTIMATE DISAPPEARANCE AS CERTAIN.

7. IN PRIVATE CONVERSATION IN MID-OCTOBER, P U N G PENG CHENG, SIHANOUK'S CHEF DE CABINET, SAID THAT SIHANOUK HAD CONFIDED ON 10 OCTOBER THAT HE WAS AGAIN CONSIDERING RESIGNING AS RGNU CHIEF OF STATE. SIHANOUK SAID THAT HIS RECENT VISIT TO PHNOM PENH HAD CONFIRMED HIS EARLIER BELIEF THAT THE KHMER COMMUNISTS INTENDED ONLY TO EXPLOIT HIS USEFULNESS IN FOREIGN RELATIONS, AND HE WAS NOT CERTAIN THAT HE COULD ENDURE A ROLE OF THIS KIND OVER THE LONG TERM. HOWEVER, SIHANOUK HAD NOT YET REACHED A FINAL DECISION. HIS WIFE, PRINCESS M O N I O U E, WAS DETERMINED THAT HE SHOULD REMAIN CHIEF OF STATE AT ALL COSTS, AND SIHANOUK ADMITTED THAT HE WOULD FIND IT DIFFICULT TO OVERRIDE HER WISHES IN A MATTER TO WHICH SHE ATTACHED SUCH GREAT IMPORTANCE.