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TO : DEPARTMENT OF STATE

1964 MAR 31 11 06 41

INFO: BANGKOK SAIGON  
 LONDON VIENTIANE  
 PARIS GINCPAC POLAD

6 APR 1964  
 DISTRIBUTION  
*[Handwritten initials and signatures]*

FROM : Amembassy PHNOM PENH

DATE: March 27, 1964

SUBJECT : Résumé of RKG Research on Cambodian Frontiers

REF

*Cambodia - Political*  
*pol 32-2 Camb*

The official Sangkum weekly Neak Cheat Niyum published in its issue of March 14 a résumé by Cambodian diplomat SARIN CHHAK of a 100 page report (not yet published) on Cambodia's eastern frontier which he researched and wrote while temporarily assigned to the Cambodian Embassy in Paris for this purpose.

The essence of Sarin Chhak's report is that Cambodia lost a considerable amount of territory to Laos and Viet-Nam because of French intervention at a time when France had sovereignty in Cochin China and exercised a protectorate over the Kingdom of Cambodia.

For the moment it appears that the publication of this report may not serve a specific purpose other than showing how Cambodia has been wronged in the past. However, the history of border disputes being what it is, there is a possibility that Cambodia might seek to activate claims based on this research. It might be noted, in particular, that Prince SIHANOUK has proposed that, in the context of a Geneva Conference, France and the states of the former French Indochina meet to discuss and settle definitively their common boundaries.

Enclosure:

1. Informal translation of Résumé, in form of letter from Sarim Chhak to Prince Sihanouk dated 2/29/64

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In  Out

Drafted by: POL:AEBergesen:PMcC:jpc 3/25/64

Contents and Classification Approved by: *[Signature]*  
Chargé HDSpivack

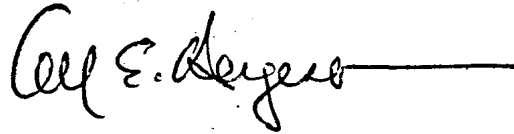
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The enclosure to this airgram is an informal translation of the résumé which is in the form of a letter from Sarin Chhak in Paris to Prince Sihanouk, dated February 29, 1964.

For the Chargé d'Affaires ad interim:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Alf E. Bergesen", followed by a horizontal line.

Alf E. Bergesen  
First Secretary of Embassy

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INFORMAL TRANSLATION OF SARIN CHHAK'S RESUME OF HIS  
RESEARCH ON CAMBODIA'S FRONTIERS

Paris, February 29, 1964.

Samdech Sahachivin (Note: Prince Sihanouk):

I have the honor to bring respectfully to the attention of Your Royal Highness the following:

In the first days of last January I sent to His Excellency Samdech Véang (Note: Penn Nouth, Prince Sihanouk's confidential advisor) for submission to Your Royal Highness a manuscript document containing the result of my research on the eastern frontier.

The text being rather long (more than a hundred pages), I have taken the liberty of setting forth below a résumé.

I. Result of Research:

A. The facts.

To facilitate examination of the question, it is presented in order from north to south, that is to say, from Laos to the sea.

1. Frontier with the Kingdom of Bassac.

Cambodian territory extended beyond the Tonlé Répou. The request for restitution of the whole, or, rather, the claim for its retrocession, was formulated in 1893 by France in the name of King Norodom. After the restitution by Siam of this Cambodian territory, the Governor General of Indochina, without consulting either His Majesty the King or the Résident Supérieur in Cambodia, arbitrarily fixed the Tonlé Répou as the frontier between Cambodia

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and the Kingdom of Bassac. This act cut off from Cambodia several "muongs" (Note: tribes) situated on the other side of the Tonlé Répou.

## 2. Frontier on the Stung-Trèng Side.

According to a number of written records, the region including Stung-Trèng, Khong and Attopeu was dependent on the sovereignty of the King of Cambodia. It was later stolen by the Bangkok Court.

In 1893 France presented the claim on this region in the name of King Norodom. After its restitution by Siam this territory was first administered by the Government of Cochin China, then by the Résident Supérieur of Lower Laos. The latter, in 1898, took from the Province of Stung-Trèng a portion of its territory to constitute the Commissariat of Darlac, which Commissariat was re-attached in 1904 to the Résidence Supérieure of Annam, and in 1929 to the Kingdom of Annam.

Therefore, the territory of Darlac, statutorily Cambodian because it was part of Stung-Trèng, was definitively annexed to Annam because of arbitrary and whimsical measures taken by French administrators, even though a member of the Council of State especially sent out from Paris to investigate this affair had concluded that neither France nor Annam had rights to this territory.

## 3. Frontier in the Region of Kratié, Kampong-Cham.

A decree of the Governor of Cochin China explicitly recognized that the Cambodian cantons of Cuu-Anh and Thanh-Anh (on the other side of Loc Ninh) and the Stieng (Note - a hill tribe) cantons of Loc Ninh and Phuoc-Lê were reattached to the huyen (Note - district) of "Can Lê (that is to say, Tonlé) in 1893 in order to facilitate the requisitioning of workers, who were scarce in this region, for the construction of the Bienhoa-Thudaumot-Kratié road.

Numerous official documents attest that the cantons of Loc-Ninh and Phuoc-Lê, presented as being inhabited by Stiengs, were peopled in large majority by Cambodians.

The arbitrary annexation by the Governor of Cochin China of these four Cambodian cantons gave rise to numerous insurrections on the part of the

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inhabitants and to brisk, severe and frequent protests by the Résident Supérieur in Cambodia.

Maps prior to 1909 show all of Loc-Ninh and Phuoc-Lê as being Cambodian territory.

It was not until 1914 that a decree of the Governor General was issued to include definitively these two cantons in Cochin China.

4. Frontier of Tay-Ninh.

This portion was delimited first, in 1869-70. Before the delimitation all of the region situated to the north of the post of Tay-Ninh was inhabited almost exclusively by Cambodians. Numerous reports on the revolt of Poucombo confirm this.

Much official correspondence confirms the amputation by the Governor of Cochin China, to the detriment of Cambodia, of numerous sroks (Note - districts): Chong Badèn, Beng-Chrum, Srok-Tranh and the territories included in the enclave formed by the two Valco (Note - two canals.).

5. Frontier Alongside Hatien

Two communes, those of Koh Chanloh and of Saky, which the delimitation of 1876 had included in Cambodian territory, were stolen from us, in fact, in 1893 by the Administrator of Hatien who, to justify his act, contrived an alleged shifting of the telegraph line serving the frontier during the insurrection of 1884. This maneuver was revealed by numerous letters of A. Leclerc, then French Resident at Kampot.

Even though the argument of the frontier's displacement was opposed by a verification made jointly by the authorities of Hatien and those of Kampot, the Governor General of Indochina in 1914 issued a decree annexing to Cochin China the two communes previously mentioned, after having made the most of the existence of the rights of the Annamites to these Khums (note - small territorial division, county) which were attested in Annamite documents.

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6. The Islands.

The ownership of these islands was claimed reciprocally by the French authorities of Cochin China and those of Cambodia.

The Cochin Chinese authorities based their claim on the existence of Annamite fishermen on these islands and on their exercise of administration (of the islands).

The French authorities in Cambodia replied that the Annamites were not the only inhabitants of these islands and that there were also many Chams and Chinese coming from Cambodia to work there in agriculture.

As to the argument based on the exercise of administration, we can respond that this administration consisted simply of the existence of a customs post at Samit. Since 1884 the Government of Cochin China, and later the Government General of Indochina, were charged with all powers in customs matters, not only over the islands of the Gulf of Siam, but over all the countries of the former French Indochina. If it were necessary to admit that wherever customs posts existed the territory ought to be considered as administered by Cochin China, the conclusion would be that all the countries of the former French Indochina were administered by Cochin China.

B. Juridical Points.

Two juridical arguments seem capable of being used to raise questions about the eastern frontier.

1. Administrative Frontier.

The delimitation was made, either unilaterally by the Government General of Indochina or between the protected and the protector who played the double role of judge and litigant.

The two parties were not placed on an equal level, a requisite condition in order that the accords could have the character of international agreements.

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Because this was a matter of an administrative frontier, it was important, for it to become an international frontier, that the two countries involved approve it after their achievement of independence.

## 2. Violation of the Rights of Peoples to Self-Determination.

The insurrections which took place after the annexation of the four cantons on the Loc Ninh side, the protests by the Snang Mě, who had administered Beng-Chrum (on the Tay-Ninh side), showed the refusal of the populations in question to accept the annexations which had been brought about. The Governor of Cochin China and, later, the Governor General of Indochina, therefore violated the principle of self-determination, a principle promoted by Napoleon III and which was universal in the second half of the 19th Century.

## II. Opinions of French Professors

I have the honor respectfully to report to Your Royal Highness the opinion of Professor Reuter:

Last February 5, at the time when I was defending my thesis for the Superior Studies diploma, Professor Reuter separated me from the group of candidates and asked me to come into a room where I talked privately with him. He said in particular these words: "Your work on the eastern frontier has impressed us profoundly. It must be admitted that one has the impression that if France sought to regain Cambodian territories on the west, in its own interests, naturally, on the other hand it nibbled Cambodia away by little bits on the eastern side for the benefit of Cochin China". I thanked him for his sincerity.

I had the impression that Professor Reuter communicated his opinion to several of his colleagues, in particular to Mr. Pinto and Mr. Imbert who are quite familiar with our problems, and even to certain personalities at the Quai d'Orsay for which he is the assistant legal consultant.

During a dinner given last February 10 by His Excellency Pho Proeung in honor of His Excellency M. Argold (Note - presumably misprint for M. Argod, new French Ambassador to Cambodia), speaking of our relations with South Viet-Nam, Mr. Manac'h said in front of Pho Proeung and Truong Cang

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that "the South Vietnamese will renounce (their claim to) the return of these islands."

I very respectfully ask Your Royal Highness to deign to excuse me for the length of this letter, which will cause Him to lose a little of His time, which is so precious for the country, but I would consider myself at fault if I did not render account to Your Royal Highness of the details of my mission, which constitutes for me a mark of the very high confidence which Your Royal Highness has condescended to accord to one of His humble comrades, and (is) the best recompense.

I have the honor to be, Your Royal Highness, the very humble and very devoted servant of Your Royal Highness.

Sarin Chhak "

Source: Neak Cheat Niyum  
Phnom Penh  
March 14, 1964.

INFORMAL TRANSLATION  
American Embassy  
Phnom Penh

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