

**April 1970**

**Information from Krum Bosev, Charge d’Affairs of  
the Bulgarian Embassy in Beijing, 'The Chinese  
Position on the Cambodian Events'**

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**Summary:**

Bosey reports on Chinese policy regarding Cambodia following the March 1970 coup and removal of Prince Norodom Sihanouk.

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## I N F O R M A T I O N

From Krum Bosev, Charge d'affaires of the Embassy of the People's Republic of Bulgaria in Beijing

Concerning: the Chinese position on the Cambodian events.

The Chinese position on the Cambodian events taken against the regime of Lon Nol-Matack and in favor of Sihanouk is known to be very cautious and has been developed gradually and continuously in favor of [Prince Norodom] Sihanouk, probably under the pressure of the Vietnamese leadership.

In a talk with comrade Elizavetin, the deputy chief of the department for the East European countries, Li LianXi, has emphasized that the Chinese position had been clearly expressed in the announcement of "Xinhua" on 16 March [1970] about the meeting between [Chinese Premier] Zhou Enlai and the Cambodian ambassador Valentine.

[...]

Another announcement on "Sihanouk" on 30 March is underlined that "the Chinese Government and the Chinese people constantly respect and support the policy of peace, independence and preservation of the territorial unity which is carried out by the state leader of Cambodia, Sihanouk. The Chinese Government has always accepted Sihanouk as a head of the state..."

[...]

In response to a query of a leader of a fraternal embassy (21 March) about the position of China on the Cambodian events, the personal counselor of Sihanouk, Prince Pen Hut had replied quite curtly: "China gives full support to Sihanouk" but in the same time added that more details concerning the Chinese position on that question would be presented by Sihanouk himself during his forthcoming visit in Moscow. Two days later (23 March) the other personal counselor of Sihanouk, General Ngo Hu, in a conversation with Elizavetin underlined a statement of Chinese official person who said: "China can be a larger model for Cambodia."

On the same day (23 March) comrade Elizavetin had a second meeting with General Ngo, requested by the latter, concerning the future intentions of Sihanouk. After the conversation, comrade Elizavetin has gathered the impression that the Chinese leadership showed great caution in connection with the Cambodian events and did not hurry without lining its position. It became clear that China didn't want the outbreak of new war near its boundaries. At the same time he felt, based on the talk with Gen. Ngo Hu, that the Vietnamese leadership put serious pressure on the Chinese leaders for a more clear and determined position.

At the same time following the personal instructions of Pham Van Dong, the Vietnamese ambassador in Beijing has had an extended conversation with comrade Elizavetin and informed the latter about the Chinese position on the Cambodian events which had been presented in the trilateral meeting of Sihanouk, Zhou Enlai and Pham Van Dong in Beijing (2223 March). According to the ambassador of Vietnam, Zhou Enlai had promised total political support to Sihanouk and a large propaganda backup i.e. committing to Chinese press, radio and television all materials - Chinese or foreign - in support of Sihanouk. In the trilateral meeting Zhou Enlai had promised also weapons. Nothing more, however had been promised

including direct military interference with the explanation that China is not neighboring country with Cambodia.

In a conversation of mine with the SouthVietnamese

[NLF] ambassador, comrade Nguyen emphasized: "The Chinese leadership completely and definitely supports Sihanouk." During a conversation between Sihanouk and comrade Elizavetin, which took place on 5 April at Sihanouk's request, the Prince has underlined that he had received assurance from the Chinese leadership that in his speech in Pyongyang, Zhou Enlai would stigmatize strongly the new regime of Lon Nol and would proclaim clear and decisive support to Sihanouk. Zhou Enlai's visit to the Korean People's Democratic Republic confirmed that promise.

[...]

By the way, in his conversation with comrade Elizavetin, Sihanouk has emphasized that in the near future China would probably after the meeting of the four countries of Indochina, which will take place in Guangzhou [Canton] on 12 - 13 April/ announce an official declaration.<sup>1</sup>

Here appears the question, why China's position on the events in Indochina and Cambodia has been developed so carefully and gradually? May be it is still early to give a response to that question but what can be said at the moment is that China made it by its own way - waiting and not directly involving... More specifically that means:

1. The Chinese leadership - in theory and in practice - has been and remains the upholder of the armed resistance, of the people's war, of lighting up wars. But they have always stood aside from these wars, they want them far from their boundaries and if it is possible in other regions and continents and without their direct participation.
2. There is a reason to think that (such opinions have been expressed by some Arab and other ambassadors) the complicating of tightening of the events in Indochina and the larger engagement of the USA in the region give to China new opportunities in their negotiations with the USA in War saw.
3. The events in Cambodia [and] the new situation in the region create conditions for organizing a large anti-American and anti-imperialist front, which in the minds of some Chinese leaders can be under Chinese control.

The events in Cambodia and Indochina, after the evil action of the Vietnamese leaders and probably and of the Chinese leadership, create conditions for the boosting of the revolution in this part of the world.

Beijing, 24 April 1970

Charge d'affaires:

/Kr. Bosev/