Deathwatch in Cambodia

A Letter from the Publisher

Cambodia is a haunted land full of wrenching memories for Marsh Clark, chief of TIME's Hong Kong bureau. As Saigon bureau chief from 1968 to 1970, and on numerous later as-

signments, Clark watched the inexorable advance of Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge army as it seized power in 1975 and began systematically to erase Cambodian civilization. Painfully he remembers when Sean Flynn, son of Movie Star Errol Flynn, headed for the front on a photographic assignment for TIME in 1970, where he was captured by Khmer forces and, like 21 other missing colleagues, never heard from again. It was thus with mixed feelings that Clark set out for his latest visit to the Thai-Cambodian border to report this week's cover story.

"There is no serious question," says Clark, "that the Khmer Rouge in attempting to establish a new Cambodia—without family ties, without mail, telephones or even money—committed Clark at Cambodian border a form of genocide unknown to mankind since

the Holocaust. Yet, one cannot look at the condition of these people today without a sense of anguish. A starving baby minutes away from death has no responsibility or knowledge of Cambodian politics. What human cruelties and failings, one wonders, have reduced tens of thousands of people to the state of dumb, brute animals?"



With assistance from Thai officials anxious to bring world attention to the tragedy on their border, Clark found his way to the rude camps where Cambodian refugees have huddled. He watched as the tattered forces of the once mighty Khmer Rouge staggered across the border. Together with TIME Stringer John Burgess, he managed to cross into Cambodia itself.

ROBIN MOYER Says Clark: "On the other side, the small, mostly teen-aged force of Khmers wore stoic, hating expressions and fingered their AK-47 assault rifles nervously. Americans are no friends of theirs, having bombed Cambodia mercilessly in the early 1970s. Only after I gave them some cigarettes did they loosen up and pose for pictures. Meanwhile, the thump of Vietnamese artillery could be heard in the distance." One bright spot in the week's tragic tableau was the harried efforts of international relief organizations in Thailand. "Their valiant work impressed me greatly," says Clark. "In two days, they miraculously transformed an open field into a camp with hospitals and kitchens." But what they can achieve seems small compared with the dimensions of the disaster. Sums up Clark, who has spent a total of twelve years in six foreign bu-

reaus: "Never have I seen people in such despair and deprivation. Not in India, Viet Nam, the Middle East or Northern Ireland. Not even in Bangladesh."

John a. Meyers

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Cover: Photograph by Arnaud De Wildenberg—Gamma/Liaison.



Cover: The haunted faces of refugees fleeing to Thailand tell the grim story: Cambodia, a land tortured by war and genocide, now faces mass starvation. Unless aid comes soon, 2.25 million Khmers may die. See WORLD.



Economy & Business: After three months of asking, Chrysler Corp. at last gets an Administration promise of a billion-dollar bailout, double the previous offer. But Congress still must approve the deal, and the terms are tough.



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Deathwatch: Cambodia

The world reaches out in a frustrating effort to succor a stricken people

t is a country soaked in blood, devastated by war, and its people are starving to death. Every day numbed witnesses to the appalling tragedy that has consumed Cambodia trek across the border into Thailand. Stumbling on reed-thin legs through the high elephant grass that grows along the frontier, they form a grisly cavalcade of specters, wrapped in black rags. Many are in the last stages of malnutrition, or are ravaged by such diseases as dysentery, tuberculosis and malaria. Perhaps the most pathetic images of all are those of tearful, exhausted mothers cradling hollow-eyed children with death's-head faces, their as thin and fragile as dried

twigs. Since early October, an estimated 80,000 Cambodians have made it safely across the border, and perhaps 250,000 others are clustered in the western provinces of the country, waiting for their chance to escape. They are the lucky ones. Relief agencies believe that as many as 2.25 million Cambodians could die of starvation in the next few months unless a vast amount of aid is pro-

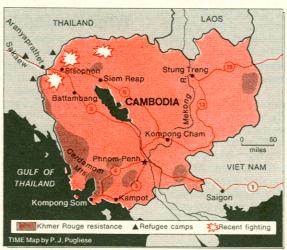
With food and proper care, most of the adults in the refugee camps have a chance for full recovery. Many of the children, however, have already suffered permanent brain damage and bone deformation as a result of malnutrition. The riveting photographs of these innocent victims of regional avarice and ethnic ha-

treds have helped arouse universal horror at the ordeal of Cambodia. In 1975 the country had a population of approximately 8 million; as many as 4 million Cambodians have died since then.

No nation on earth has seen more suffering in the past decade than this once tranquil and fertile land. Though neutral in the early years of the Viet Nam War, Cambodia unwittingly became a base for the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese, and the target of savage U.S. bombings. Its popular Chief of State, Prince Norodom Sihanouk, was overthrown by Premier



bellies swollen, their limbs Skulls from a mass grave that are believed to be relics of genocide



Lon Nol in 1970. Lon Nol was in turn deposed by Pol Pot when the Khmer Rouge, as the Cambodian Communist forces are called, took over the country in 1975. After four years of mass terror and murder under the Khmer Rouge the Vietramese invaded Cambodia last December and installed a puppet regime headed by President Heng Samrin.

Cambodia's agony continues. Hanoi, with 180,000 soldiers operating in the country, has now embarked on an intensive effort to wipe out the remaining Khmer Rouge forces loyal to Pol Pot. Unless the fighting is halted somehow, Cambodia itself could be the ultimate casualty of war.

Efforts to mount a vast international relief campaign gathered force last week as visitors to refugee camps in Thailand and to the interior of Cambodia returned with searing evewitness accounts of mass starvation. Three U.S. Senators, the first American officials to visit the Cambodian capital of Phnom-Penh since the fall of Lon Nol, testified before Edward Kennedy's Senate Judiciary Committee that famine and disease threatened to extinguish the entire Cambodian people. Republican John Danforth of Missouri said he and his colleagues had visited camps in Thailand that were simply "ground with people strewn

over it." Danforth argued that "hundreds of thousands of people [are] at death's door. We saw people who couldn't walk 100 yards." Said Democrat James Sasser of Tennessee: "The human suffering we found was so deep and pervasive that I don't have the words to adequately de-

scribe it.'

In Phnom-Penh, officials of the Heng Samrin regime reluctantly conceded to the Senators that at least 2.25 million Cambodians faced extreme "hunger" and that 165,000 tons of rice were needed in the next six months. Nonetheless, the government turned down the Senators' proposal to open a truck route from Thailand that would greatly increase deliveries of famine relief supplies by

the International Red Cross, UNICEF and other agencies. Phnom-Penh officials were obviously more concerned about preventing food from falling into the hands of the Khmer Rouge insurgents than they were with saving hundreds of thousands of Cambodians from starvation and death. Condemning the obstructionist tactics that have thus far limited relief supplies to a fraction of the need, Danforth observed: "If a government is determined to murder its own people, I don't know how to stop it.

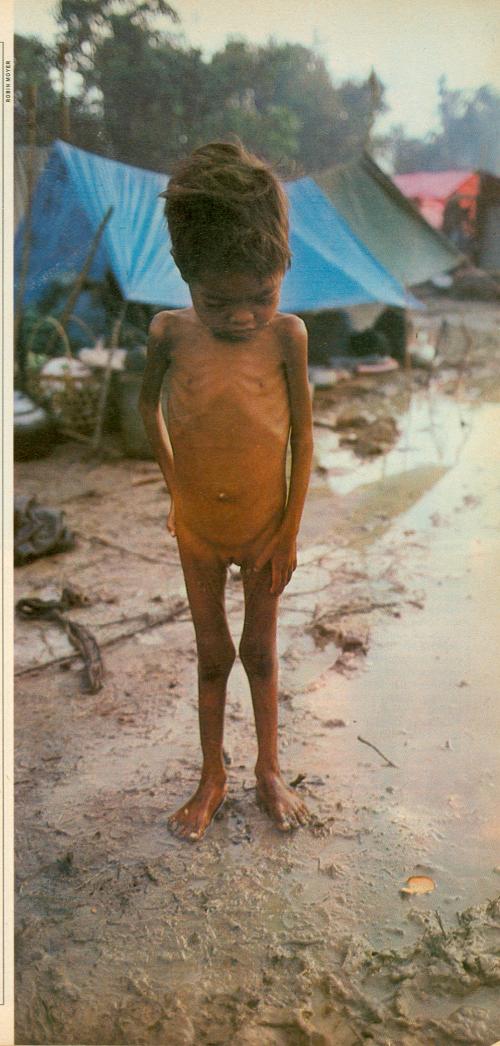
At a press conference, Secretary of State Cyrus Vance pleaded with "those who control the territory and the population" of Cambodia to put "humanitarian concerns ahead of political or military advantage" and allow food and medical supplies to be brought into the starving country by land, sea and air. Vance said that he would represent the U.S. this week at a special U.N. conference on the Cambodian catastrophe; he also reaffirmed President Carter's pledge of \$69 million to the international relief effort. Said Vance: "I can think of no issue now before the world community and before every single nation that can lay greater claim to our concern and to our action."

n the Senate floor, Republican Jacob Javits of New York and Democrat Claiborne Pell of Rhode Island urged that the U.S. and other countries establish a huge airlift of food and medicine into Cambodia if Phnom-Penh persists in refusing to allow a "land bridge" for trucks to enter Cambodia from Thailand with supplies. A bipartisan group of 68 House members urged Carter to set up a joint airlift with the Soviet Union. The plan was first suggested by the Rev. Theodore Hesburgh of the University of Notre Dame. Said he: "I'm perfectly willing to ride in the lead truck and get shot in the process rather than sit back and have it on my conscience that I did nothing to stop a second holocaust." Hesburgh also suggested that the U.S. withhold grain sales to the Soviet Union unless the Kremlin collaborates in making 150,000 tons available to the Cambodians immediately. Robert Byrd of West Virginia, the Senate majority leader, contacted Soviet Ambassador Anatoli Dobrynin in an appeal to Moscow to persuade Phnom-Penh to allow food to be trucked in. At the same time, Kennedy is supporting a move to increase the amount of aid pledged by President Carter from \$69 million to \$99 million.

In Western Europe, the plight of the Cambodians also sparked wide-scale efforts. For the French, who had ruled Cambodia for 90 years, until 1953, compassion ran high for their former colonial subjects. This week's U.N. conference is the result of an initiative by French Foreign Minister Jean François-Poncet. His earlier appeal for more aid to Cambodia spurred a nationwide "S O S Cambodia" campaign that has raised \$2 million from French citizens. Three French medical teams are working in refugee camps in Thailand, while the hospital ship Île de la Lumière, which is now headed for Thailand, has cared for thousands of Cambodian and other Indochinese refugees. Even the French Communist Party has offered to help the starving Cambodians through a "Sanitary and Medical Aid Committee for the Cambodian people.'

From Britain, a Hercules plane has been flying 15 tons of supplies a day into Phnom-Penh's airport. The Australians have provided three charter flights and 80 tons of food and medicine. The Jap-

Refugee child at a camp in Thailand









Clockwise from top: corpses in a common grave; family arrives at Thailand refugee camp; hungry children stare past barbed wire at Sakaew

anese government has approved a \$4.5 million emergency grant for Cambodian refugees and has recruited a team of medical volunteers to work in the camps. The scores of countries participating in this week's U.N. conference on Cambodia are expected to pledge considerably more assistance. Among them will be the U.S.S.R. Although the Soviets have done nothing to assist Western aid efforts, they are expected to boast of their food shipments to Cambodia, though it is unclear how much of this food is channeled to the occupying Vietnamese forces.

Responding angrily to the worldwide clamor, the Heng Samrin government has condemned the international aid offers as a "maneuver by the imperialists and international reactionaries" to assist the Khmer Rouge insurgents. Justifying its refusal to allow relief supplies to be brought in by truck, the government claimed that the port of Kompong Som and the airport of Phnom-Penh were "perfectly adequate" for the purpose. But according to on-the-scene investigations by the three U.S. Senators, only 12,000 tons of food and medicine can be brought in by air and ship each month, whereas 30,000 tons can be delivered by trucks alone. Docks at Kompong Som have been destroyed. One particularly poignant obstacle to deliveries by ship was discovered by Oxfam officials. They found that dock workers at Kompong Som are so enfeebled by malnutrition that they cannot unload heavy shipments of food from deep-draught freighters. According to UNICEF Executive Director Henry Labouisse, Phnom-Penh officials have instructed the U.N. agency not to send anything that weighs more than 50 kilos (110 lbs.) "because people are too weak to carry anything heavier."

espite the best efforts of the Thais and international relief agencies, the aid being provided to the 80,000 Cambodian refugees who have reached Thailand is makeshift and inadequate. TIME Hong Kong Bureau Chief Marsh Clark last week visited a camp that had been hastily set up to care for 30,000 refugees at Sakaew, 40 miles west of the Cambodian frontier. Most of the refugees had taken shelter from blinding rainstorms in huts constructed of poles and plastic sheets; small blue tents had been set up for dozens of orphans. Field kitchens were preparing high-protein rice gruel for the starving, while field hospitals tended to the sick, some of whom were laid out on mats on the muddy ground. Women were bathing their babies in mud puddles. Though latrines had been dug, most of the refugees were too ill or too

weary to use them. "They defecate where they stand or where they sleep," said one UNICEF official.

Reported Clark: "In a single one-hour period. I saw four dead bodies in the Sakaew camp. One was lying in the muddy track that runs down the middle of the camp, covered by a blanket. Nobody paid any attention to it. Another was that of a woman who was already in rigor mortis, her feet sticking stiffly out from the end of a yellow cloth her husband had thrown over her. The husband sat in a daze while people in the adjoining makeshift shelters not more than four feet away were going about their business of cooking, eating and sleeping as if the dead woman were not there. 'I've got a body here,' I heard one young volunteer shout to an official. 'What do I do with it?' The official shrugged. 'Throw it out back with the others.' he said. The bodies collected in the rear of the camp are then gathered up, placed on ox carts, and taken to a nearby Buddhist temple for burial.

"Besides the sick and hungry refugees, the camp also contained a contingent of Khmer Rouge soldiers who had been beaten back into Thailand over the past three weeks by a Vietnamese offensive in the border areas. Though far better fed than the other refugees, toughened to hardship and accustomed to living by



Relief for the lucky ones: Cambodians arriving at Ban Kaeng, after bus ride from smaller camps near Thai border

BERGES-SYGMA

their wits in the jungle, the Khmer Rouge and their entourage had clearly reached the limit of their endurance. They did not look like human beings in the accepted sense of the term but rather like wild animals, completely brutalized. They slept huddled side by side like beasts in a cage. They seldom spoke and kept their eyes cast downward. They seemed so pathetic that it was almost possible to forget the abominable cruelties they had committed in trying to establish a new Communist civilization at a cost of millions of Cambodian lives."

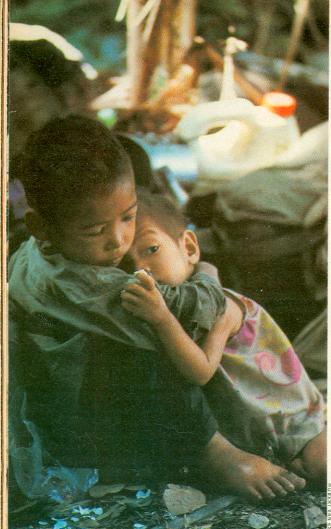
In essence, it was Cambodia's unwilling role as a pawn in the Indochinese wars that led to what U.N. Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim calls "a national tragedy that may have no parallel in history." In the mid-1960s the country's peaceful mode of life, under the benevolently authoritarian rule of Prince Sihanouk, was suddenly imperiled by the Viet Nam conflict. At the time, Cambodia was an overwhelmingly agricultural country that exported rice. Though it could hardly have been termed prosperous—per capita income was only \$110 a year-its people lived relatively well by Asian standards. Unfortunately, the Cambodian army was weak and poorly equipped; Sihanouk was unable to prevent the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese from using parts of the

country as sanctuaries and resupply routes for their forces in South Viet Nam. The existence of these sanctuaries led the U.S. to launch what would become highly controversial secret bombing raids over Cambodia in 1969 and to invade the country the next year. In March 1970, while Sihanouk was in Moscow, he was ousted in a coup organized by Premier Lon Nol. an army marshal with mystical tendencies. Even with an infusion of U.S. supplies, Lon Nol proved unable to cope with the Vietnamese and the growing guerrilla army of the Khmer Rouge. The five years of fighting that followed put Cambodia well on its way to the cruel hunger of today. By 1974 the U.N.'s World Health Organization and the U.S. Senate Refugees Subcommittee reported that malnutrition was already a severe problem.

In his angry book Sideshow: Kissinger, Nixon and the Destruction of Cambodia, British Journalist William Shawcross has charged that the bombing and invasion of the country set the stage for the Khmer Rouge conquest of Cambodia. U.S. policy, Shawcross argued, "was creating an enemy [the Khmer Rouge] where none had previously existed." In his memoirs, Henry Kissinger answered that the North Vietnamese were the first to violate Cambodia's neutrality, and that it is outrageous

to blame American policy for the horrors that the Khmer Rouge unleashed on its own people after the collapse of the Lon Nol government in 1975.

he ideological guru of the Khmer Rouge was Cambodia's former head of state, Khieu Samphan. While a graduate student in France during the 1950s, he argued in a doctoral dissertation that a Communistrun Cambodia should "withdraw from the world economy and restructure the local economy on a self-centered basis" in order to purge the country of "decadent colonial influences." With unspeakable brutality, this deceptively bland program was imposed on "Democratic Kampuchea" (as that country was renamed) by the government of Premier Pol Pot after the Khmer Rouge took power. Phnom-Penh, once a placid, luxury-loving city of broad avenues and towering hibiscus trees, became a ghost town as the Khmer Rouge force-marched the city's refugee-swollen population to resettlement on rural communes that were no better than slavelabor camps. Even the wounded were prodded at gunpoint from hospital beds -and left to die along the roadside if they were too weak to walk. At the camps, Cambodians of all ages were forced to work from dawn until after dusk plant-







A refugee boy comforts his brother; a Red Cross worker washes emaciated Cambodian; a U.S. volunteer hands out emergency rations

ing rice. Families were separated, Buddhism abolished as the state religion and virtually every trapping of civilization disappeared: postal services, telephones, currency, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly.

A major goal of the Khmer Rouge was to destroy the intelligentsia. People who wore glasses were killed, on the suspicion that they knew how to read or write. Of the 500 physicians in Cambodia in 1975, only 57 survived the Khmer Rouge purge. People suspected of lagging on the job were punished by death, rendered by a hatchet blow on the back of the neck, or, as many refugees have reported, by evisceration. Groups of children who were found guilty of being the offspring of "undesirables" were reportedly chained together, then buried alive in bomb craters under dirt that was shoved on top of them by bulldozers. Between 1975 and 1978, from 2 million to 3 million Cambodians died at the hands of the Khmer Rouge.

The Khmer Rouge excesses were condemned almost everywhere except in China, which had long favored an independent Cambodia, one that would be outside North Viet Nam's sphere of influence. Peking propped up the Pol Pot regime with vast amounts of military and economic aid. The North Vietnamese, meanwhile, never gave up their dream of taking all of Indochina. In early 1978 Hanoi used the excuse of some Khmer Rouge raids on Vietnamese border villages to invade Cambodia. Ostensibly, the Vietnamese soldiers involved were "volunteers" assisting a "National Salvation Front" headed by Heng Samrin and other obscure Khmer Rouge defectors. Last Christmas the Vietnamese and Heng Samrin's Cambodians launched a major assault on provincial capitals. On Jan. 7, Pol Pot and his surviving cadres abandoned the capital and fled to a Khmer Rouge mountain hideout.

ambodia's years of genocide were over, but the hunger problem was made worse, if possible, by the Vietnamese conquest. Hanoi's forces, numbering about 180,000, found themselves locked in a war with 20,000 to 30,000 dogged Khmer Rouge guerrillas, who still control much of the countryside. As a result of the continuing war, food has become a weapon on both sides. The Khmer Rouge routinely ravage the new paddyfields planted under the Vietnamese occupation. Not only are the Cambodians starving, but even the Vietnamese troops are said to be on short rations. Many of the Khmer Rouge have been pressed back into hilly, thickly jungled areas where rice

cannot be grown. Still, the Khmer Rouge eat almost as well as they always have; it is the civilian slave laborers they force to accompany them who are starving.

Systematic pillaging by Vietnamese troops has compounded the country's plight. Cambodian shops, homes and Buddhist temples have been stripped by Hanoi's invaders. Machines, household appliances, furniture and Buddha heads have been loaded aboard planes and trucks and shipped to Viet Nam. There are even reports that the Vietnamese are loading rice intended for refugees aboard carriers headed for Hanoi.

Hanoi's disregard of the plight of the Cambodians has been reinforced by the enmity between the two peoples. The Vietnamese have long regarded the Cambodians as treacherous barbarians who had the impudence to revolt against their domination in 1840. Observed Minh Mang, the Vietnamese emperor at the time: "We helped the Cambodians when they were suffering and lifted them out of the mud. Now they are rebellious. I am so angry that my hair stands upright. Hundreds of knives should be used against them, to chop them up, to dismember them."

Partly as a result of this historic hostility, Viet Nam has been unable to colonize or pacify Cambodia effectively. No

World

one, least of all the Cambodians, believes that the present regime in Phnom-Penh is anything other than a Hanoi puppet government. Many analysts think that Cambodia is being run by a high council in Hanoi, headed by Vietnamese Politburo Member Le Duc Tho, who was cowinner (with Henry Kissinger) of the 1973 Nobel Peace Prize for having brought peace to Indochina. Tho refused to accept the honor.

The Cambodians hate their Vietnamese conquerors, but they live in deathly fear of the Khmer Rouge, who have not abandoned their politics of terror. Though it is not known for sure whether Pol Pot survived his ouster by the Vietnamese last January, he is widely believed to command his guerrilla forces from hideouts in the Cardamom Mountains of southwest Cambodia. Other known areas of Khmer Rouge strength are in the heavily forested northeast and the mountainous west. From these strongholds the guerrillas fan out across the country for swift strikes against Vietnamese army outposts and supply routes. One broadcast by a clandestine Khmer Rouge radio station -probably located in China's Yunnan province-claimed that several Cuban and Soviet advisers had been killed in a Phnom-Penh airport ambush.

nnocent Cambodians are, as ever, caught in the crossfire. According to refugees, Vietnamese troops "liberating" a hamlet from the Khmer Rouge will customarily abolish the communal kitchens and other vestiges of Pol Pot's extremist brand of Communism and allow the citizens to elect their own leaders. The Vietnamese then move on to other villages, leaving the inhabitants defenseless against the revenge of Khmer Rouge who swoop down at night, reinstitute the communal kitchens, seize what food is available, and kill the elected leaders.

Although the Vietnamese troops in Cambodia outnumber the Khmer Rouge 7 to 1, it is by no means certain that Hanoi can defeat the Khmer Rouge. The Cardamom Mountains are densely forested and remote. The Vietnamese supply lines are long and vulnerable to harassment, and the Khmer Rouge know the country. Continuing Vietnamese efforts to root out the guerrillas may merely add to the chaos in Cambodia.

One advantage enjoyed by the Khmer Rouge is their ability to make tactical retreats into Thailand, where they rest and regroup—much to the discomfiture of the neutral Thais. Some 30,000 Khmer Rouge and their supporters crossed into Thailand last month during a Vietnamese offensive, and reportedly have since returned to Cambodia, presumably having hidden their arms there. One obvious danger is that Hanoi might risk a direct attack into Thailand. Said a top Western diplomatic observer in Bangkok last week: "The war can easily spill over into Thailand. Hanoi wants very badly to get

rid of the Khmer Rouge and may use hot pursuit to accomplish its purpose."

To blunt that possibility, Washington has sold Bangkok \$400 million worth of sophisticated weapons in the past fiscal year, including 150 M48 tanks. A spokesman for the Defense Department said last week that shipments of arms to Thailand had been speeded up during the past several months because the U.S. has been concerned that the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia might spread to other countries.

The U.S. can help arm the Thais against a Vietnamese incursion, but Washington seems virtually helpless to influence the apparently inexorable course of events that is engulfing the Cambodian people. One reason is that the war being waged inside the country is ultimately a reflection of the deep-rooted Sino-Soviet conflict. Another is that Hanoi perceives all humanitarian efforts by the world to feed the starving Cambodians as "interference" in the affairs of the Phnom-Penh government. In spite of growing Western pressure, many diplomatic observers believe that Phnom-Penh, under Hanoi's direction, will continue to obstruct any large-scale relief efforts. Said one Western diplomat in Bangkok: "The Vietnamese might not want supply trucks rolling down the Cambodian highways because they are engaged in military operations on those roads. They also may not want outsiders to see that it is Hanoi that is fighting the war against the Khmer Rouge and not Phnom-Penh. They fear that even if the food is distributed to Cambodian civilians, some of those civilians may pass it on to the Khmer Rouge, or have it seized. Finally, the Vietnamese simply don't give a damn about what happens to the Cambodians."

If that chilling assessment is correct. what does the future hold for Cambodians who may survive the present famine? No viable alternative to Vietnamese rule exists at present. Some Cambodian émigrés have placed their hopes in the Khmer Serei, or Free Khmers. These survivors of the Lon Nol forces are bitter enemies of both the Vietnamese and the Khmer Rouge. But with only 3,000 able-bodied soldiers, concentrated in western Battambang province, the Khmer Serei are a very remote threat to Hanoi. TIME's Clark visited a camp on the Cambodian-Thai border north of Aranyaprathet where there are Khmer Serei forces. Though dashingly outfitted in U.S. Marine Corps and Army jungle suits, the Khmer Serei looked anything but warlike. Resting on hammocks, with their transistor radios tuned to American pop music, they seemed to have been reduced to a state of permanent indolence.

Some hopes for creating a future independent government in Cambodia center on the irrepressible Prince Sihanouk, who wanders in exile between Peking and the North Korean capital of Pyongyang. Sihanouk had been put un-



Wily neutral: Prince Sihanouk



Peking puppet: Pol Pot



Mystic marshal: Lon Nol



Hanoi henchman: Heng Samrin

World



Soldier of the new pro-Sihanouk army Scattered around in coffee houses.

der house arrest by the Pol Pot regime when the former Chief of State had boldly returned to Cambodia at the height of the Khmer Rouge terror. He reemerged just as Phnom-Penh fell to the Vietnamese invaders last January. He appeared at the U.N. to make an impassioned speech in favor of Cambodian independence in which he compared Viet Nam to a "starving boa constrictor leaping on an innocent animal."

hough erratic and sometimes clownish, the wily Sihanouk is still popular in his country, particularly among the peasants. Because of his longtime residence in Peking he would probably not be acceptable to the Soviet Union as a compromise leader of the country, in the unlikely event that Hanoi could be persuaded to withdraw its forces from Cambodia. Last month Sihanouk announced the formation of a Confederation of Khmer Nationalists in exile, which was building its own armed forces. The Prince also said that he would attempt to establish a provisional government in Cambodia that would exclude backers of both the Peking-supported Khmer Rouge and Hanoi-sponsored Heng Samrin. Sihanouk declared that his organization was supported by 100,000 exiled Cambodians around the world. But, as one U.S. State Department official put it last week, "Sihanouk's fatal flaw is that his so-called troops are actually scattered around the coffee houses of the U.S., Australia and Western Europe.'

In reply to questions submitted by



Guerrilla from remnants of the Khmer Rouge

Hidden in remote, rugged mountains.

The Body Eats Itself

There is nothing ennobling about death by starvation. It is neither quick nor painless. A starving person wastes away, literally consuming himself in the process. In a desperate quest for sustenance, many of the Cambodian refugees report, they were reduced to eating leaves or gnawing on the bark of trees. Neither contains remotely enough of the three major fuels that provide a body with energy: carbohydrates, proteins and fats.

Soon after food is cut off, the body switches to burning fuel reserves stored in the liver and fatty tissues. After fat is exhausted, the body accelerates the breakdown of proteins in muscles, including the heart, which saps strength. At the same time, the body attempts to husband its resources by cutting energy requirements to the minimum. Pulse rate and blood pressure fall and body temperature drops. Men become impotent; women stop menstruating, and nursing mothers fail to produce milk; children stop growing. Mental and physical lassitude set in, and individuals become obsessed with finding food. Some malnourished people develop edema, a swelling, especially in the joints and abdomen.

Though adaptive responses keep the body running for a while, even for months if some food and water are available, prolonged starvation eventually disrupts vital processes. Says Dr. Buford Nichols Jr. of Houston's Baylor College of Medicine: "You keep falling back, like a military withdrawal, but finally the body just collapses." Adds Dr. Myron

Winick of New York City's Columbia University Institute of Nutrition: "Victims of starvation have to adapt. But once they do, they have a very small margin for error." Death comes in many ways. The intestinal walls become damaged; severe and constant diarrhea may develop. The loss of body fluids containing electrolytes (particularly potassium) that help control heart rhythm can lead to circulatory collapse. Lack of food weakens the body's natural defense system against infection; crowded together with inadequate sanitation and nonexistent medical care, the starving—as the refugee experience proves—become prey to typhoid, cholera, tuberculosis and malaria. The absence of essential vitamins or minerals can also bring on the so-called deficiency diseases: rickets, beriberi and pellagra. Sometimes, the hungry simply lose the will to live.

Even if they survive, children under two will be permanently scarred by prolonged starvation. Most brain growth occurs in the uterus and before the age of two; adequate nutrition after that cannot remedy an earlier deficiency. For older survivors, recovery can be complete. Doctors warn, however, that a patient must be reintroduced carefully and gradually to food. The heart and digestive system are so weak that a sudden gorging can induce shock and death. Well-meaning G.I.s at the end of World War II inadvertently killed many concentration camp inmates by giving them big meals. It may take a month or more to return to normal feeding. There is a telltale sign, says Nichols, that lets you know when victims of starvation are going to survive: they finally smile.

Racing to Save the Hungry

Joan Baez sang at benefit concerts in Paris and Washington. Abie Nathan, known for his efforts on behalf of Arab-Jewish amity, sent food packages from Thailand. While governments debated how to cope with Cambodia's crisis, official agencies, religious and private organizations, and concerned individuals were at work to aid the catastrophe's victims.

The largest and most active of the relief organizations involved are the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF). Working jointly, along with such related U.N. agencies as the Food and Agriculture Organization and World Food Program, the two groups have so far sent 2,500 tons of food and supplies into Cambodia and undisclosed amounts of aid to refugee camps that they operate in Thailand. As the principal agencies through which governmental contributions are funneled into Cambodia, ICRC and UNICEF have already received pledges totaling \$137 million, well above the \$111.3 million they estimate is necessary to prevent mass starvation over the next six months. These groups hope to send at least 165,000 tons of food into the region during that period—if they can get the cooperation of the Heng Samrin government in Phnom-Penh.

Cambodian officials have been more cooperative in their dealings with the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief (OXFAM), an Englandbased organization that is coordinating a relief effort by more than 20 private agencies. An OXFAM barge laden with 1,500 tons of food arrived in the Cambodian port of Kompong Som last month, and two more are on the way. OXFAM has been permitted to station eight full-time staff members inside Cambodia. Robert Hohler, at OXFAM's Boston-based U.S. branch, attributes the organization's success to its apolitical status. Says he: "While governments squabble about what to do, we are walking through the legs of the giants and doing the job." The California-based World Vision International, a conservative Protestant organization noted for its missionary efforts, has also been well received by Cambotacts made there before the 1975 tri-



dian officials, largely because of con- A Cambodian carries aid into a refugee camp

umph of the Khmer Rouge. So far WVI has flown in about 15 tons of food.

In the refugee camps along the Thai border, a host of smaller agencies—including Christian Outreach, CARE, Catholic Relief Services, Church World Service and the International Rescue Committee—are working alongside UNICEF and ICRC staffers. These groups are supported largely by private contributions from the U.S., where special church collections, newspaper ads, mail-in campaigns and benefits have reaped millions for Cambodian relief. Says Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee: "This isn't just a matter of dollars and cents and cans of tuna fish. This is a crisis of staggering magnitude." Interagency cooperation is the official policy in the camps. Nonetheless there is competition among agencies to be the first on the scene where refugees cross at a new point along the border.

Another problem has been created by the dozens of untrained volunteers that the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) bused daily to the Sakaew camp from Bangkok. The volunteers, who included students, nurses, businessmen, and diplomats' wives, filled a manpower gap at the crucial time when the camp first opened; many full-time workers now dismiss some of the volunteers as "refugee tourists" who only got in the way. Last week UNHCR halted the indiscriminate acceptance of volunteers. But most of the volunteers were moved to help the refugees from a sense of pity, not publicity, and their help was important. One U.S. executive spent six hours of a hot day at Sakaew bathing orphans. After watching three volunteers struggling to put up a tent, an exhausted but grateful Cambodian observed: "I have never seen that before."

TIME to Sihanouk, the Prince cabled that "the majority of the Cambodian people, and me, myself, consider that the No. 1 danger and menace threatening the innocent Cambodian people is the genocidal regime of Pol Pot, and that Vietnamese colonialism is enemy No. 2. It is my opinion that it is necessary that the regime of Pol Pot must first be eliminated by the Vietnamese army." After that, the Prince would hope to eliminate the Vietnamese presence from Cambodia.

Sihanouk may regard Vietnamese colonialism as evil No. 2, but the non-Communist nations of Southeast Asia are as hostile to Hanoi's puppet regime in Phnom-Penh as they are to Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge. Viet Nam has been repeatedly rebuffed in its efforts to have the legitimacy of the Heng Samrin regime endorsed by the world's major powers. Indeed, only the Soviet Union, its satellites and a few other smaller countries have recognized the present Phnom-Penh government. Hanoi suffered a particularly humiliating defeat in September when the U.N. General Assembly, by a 2-to-1 margin, voted to seat a representative of the Pol Pot regime as Cambodia's delegate. Despite the ghastly record of the Khmer Rouge, the majority—which included the U.S.—could not stomach legitimatizing a regime that had been installed at the point of Vietnamese guns.

Last week Hanoi was cannily maneuvering to use the U.N. special conference on aid to Cambodia as a stepping stone for recognition of the Heng Samrin regime. Vietnamese Ambassador Ha Van Lau reportedly raised the issue of Samrin representation with Secretary-General Waldheim. Phnom-Penh's Foreign Minister Hun Sen sent a message to Waldheim saying that his government viewed "with sympathy" all well-intentioned humanitarian assistance and was "prepared in consequence to send its representatives to assist the proposed conference."

hough clearly motivated by political opportunism, the Hun Sen statement was the first indication that Phnom-Penh—if properly rewarded—might ease somewhat its restrictions on relief supplies to Cambodia. Unless Cambodia's borders are opened to life-giving aid, the situation will remain what it has been for five years: the war in Cambodia will be fought to the last starving Cambodian.

The Cambodian plight has stirred civilized men and women around the globe. Many Americans have a particularly keen sense of compassion about the world's latest tragedy. In part, that feeling is inspired by lingering memories of the long, unhappy involvement of the U.S. in Indochina. Beyond that there is the frustration of knowing that the catastrophe of Cambodia could be averted; that the food, the medical supplies and the will to help do exist. Only the cruel, baffling politics of Southeast Asia stand in the way.