

RETURN TO CAMBODIA

The Significance and Implications of Past, Present and Future Spontaneous Repatriations

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by

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PART ONE

THE REFUGEE CRISIS ALONG THE CAMBODIAN BORDER

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This report was only made possible through the cooperation of numerous people and agencies. I have attempted to name in the Appendix all those who gave generously of their time. In addition, many refugees were also interviewed in the camps - their names were never elicited. To all I am deeply indebted.

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The weight of this sad decade

for those Khmer, Thais, Vietnamese who have died by bullet, artillery shell or landmine; it is too late - they will never go home again

for those unfortunates who now roam this earth on one leg or two bamboo sticks; it is too late - they will never walk normally again

for those whose sadness of this decade has left them psychologically broken and spiritually spent; it is too late - they will never be whole again

for those young people who were born or lived their childhood in 'communities of confinement'; it is too late - who can ever give them back their youth?

for those 'fortunates' who walked through the gates of Khao I Dang into the 'promised land' of third countries; it is too late - home will never be home again...

for those Khmer families now divided by civil war; it is too late - the scars of these days will never disappear

and for the United Nations, the donor countries, and the humanitarian organizations who have unconsciously or willingly played a role in this drama; it is too late - this decade's history cannot be rewritten.

Bob Maat Ta Phaya, Thailand 1989

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to Study

1.1.1

It is widely recognized that of the three durable solutions to any refugee dilemma, repatriation is by far the most desirable. Over the past twenty to thirty years, many repatriations have indeed taken place, especially in Africa (Rogge and Akol, 1989), and there is a good probability that many more will occur worldwide. Given this unequivocal acceptance of repatriation being the 'optimum solution', and perhaps because of this acceptance, it is surprising that so little substantive academic research on the subject has materialized to date. At the time of the San Remo Round Table on Voluntary Repatriation in 1985, Coles (1985: 5) drew attention to the fact that there was an almost complete paucity of scholarly contributions in this area; in the years since, there has been some addition to the literature, such as the works by Crisp (1986, 1987), Akol (1987), Cuny and Stein (1988), and more recently by Wood (1989) and Stepputat (1989), but the volume pales in comparison with research on the other durable solutions of local settlement and integration and third country resettlement.

While many refugee repatriations have run their course without problems and have resulted in a total return of all refugees and their subsequent effective re-integration into their home regions, in other cases, repatriations have turned out to be most difficult and problematic durable solution to implement. There have been instances where not all refugees have been willing to return; where a home government has been less than welcoming; where a host government has been too forceful in encouraging return; where there has been limited assistance to returnees creating difficulties in reintegration; and there have been cases where, after long periods in exile, returnees have encountered many and complex problems in re-establishing themselves in their traditional societies. For second-generation refugees, such as now exist in many parts of Africa, return to their country of 'origin' does not always necessarily mean 'going home'. Indeed, the United

Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) has conceded th repatriation is a most difficult durable solution to implement and that successful and relatively problem-free return is more often the exception rather than the rule (UNHCR, 1985).

- 1.1.3 There is clearly much scope for research on repatriation so as to create better understanding of potential problems and to facilitate bett preparedness in the planning and implementation of return movements wh circumstances permit. The comprehensive and comparative internation study, of which this report is but a part, aims at addressing this paucity research on repatriation by focusing on one aspect that has been especial ignored by researchers, yet constitutes a very common and significant dimension of voluntary repatriation the spontaneous and unassisted return of refugees.
- In his background study to the San Remo Round Table on Volunts Repatriation, Coles (1985) suggests that the scale of spontanec repatriations is substantially greater perhaps as much as ten times great than that which has taken place under UNHCR auspices. Because st return movements occur outside of any organizational frame, few data error on the motivations governing such movements, their routings and mean return, and their subsequent re-integration and rehabilitation in their hocountries.
- 1.1.5 While UNHCR has always recognized as part of its mandate its right ensure that refugees are not forced back to their countries of origin agastheir will, its responsibility for involvement in repatriation exercing especially in terms of assisting in the process of re-integration of reful within their country of origin, was less clearly defined until receive Moreover, for a variety of reasons, the agency has often been unable unwilling to participate in voluntary repatriations. For example, reful who do not register with UNHCR may not receive assistance simple because the agency is not aware of them. Elsewhere, the forces controwant area into which refugees are returning may not be recognized because the agency in the refore, cannot be dealt with by the agas Alternatively, where a country of origin identifies returnees as part insurgent movement and does not, therefore, sanction their return, UN

is clearly unable to be party to their return. And, there have been instances where refugees fear that by returning through 'official' channels they would be identified by their home government as returnees, and that such identification may place them at a disadvantage or even at risk.

Given these diverse conditions and constraints, it is clear that there are many cases where refugees believe it to be in their best interest not to wait for, or participate in, an organized return movement, and instead undertake their return independently and spontaneously at a time considered opportune, along a route regarded as safe, and to an area perceived as being secure. Such was the case with many refugees along the Thai-Cambodian border during the early 1980s and, on a much more limited scale, over the past year or so. Moreover, given the convoluted political climate of the region, it is realistic to speculate that no matter how comprehensive a settlement is eventually implemented and results in a viable repatriation solution, many returnees will likely opt to return independently of any UNHCR-organized exercise.

1.2 The Objectives

1.2.1 This study is part of a larger comprehensive international study on the nature and problems of spontaneous repatriation. It focuses upon the movement across the Thai-Cambodian border since 1979 and aims to provide a detailed historic narrative of the return movements and to identify their social, political, economic and organizational characteristics. Also, given the rapidly changing tone of the current political dialogue on a resolution to the Cambodian conflict and the consequent growing optimism that all Cambodians in Thailand may soon be able to return home, the study

¹ Throughout this report the term 'refugees' is used in its broadest sense, namely to refer to all Cambodians who have involuntarily crossed into Thailand since 1975. Current terminology in Thailand refers to Cambodian refugees as either 'illegal aliens' or 'displaced persons'; the former designation is for those who entered Thailand in 1979 and 1980 and who were accommodated in holding centres administered by UNHCR. The latter are displacees who crossing into Thailand from camps along the border and who have been settled in camps assisted by UNBRO and administered by the three fronts which make up the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea. Only the original refugees entering Thailand immediately following the overthrow of the Lon Nol government by the Khmer Rouge in 1975 were accorded official refugee status.

² Throughout this report the name *Cambodia* is used rather than Kampuchea except when referring specifically to Democratic Kampuchea or to the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea. Likewise, the population is referred to as *Cambodians* or as *Khmer* rather than as Kampucheans. In 1989, the Government of Cambodia reverted back to calling the country 'Cambodia'.

will address the potential role that spontaneous repatriation may play in ar such return movement and the associated problems that may be anticipated.

- 1.2.2 More specifically, in the context of the Thai-Cambodian border, this stud will:
 - define the role, past and present, of spontaneous repatriation vis-a-vorganized repatriation,
 - identify strategies that may have, or may, provide assistance is spontaneous returnees,
 - examine the past, and potential, role of international, government an non-government organizations in facilitating spontaneous repatriations,
 - determine the nature and appropriateness of assistance that was, or caprovide during and after refugees return independently,
 - evaluate how the diverse political dictates and priorities of the many parti involved in the Cambodian crisis have, or are likely to, impact up voluntary repatriation, and whether the existing protocols and policies have been, or are capable of being, able to ensure that truly volunta repatriations, whether organized or spontaneous, have or will take place,
 - explore whether support for, and encouragement of, spontaneo repatriation has, or can, contribute to a peace process and a lasti reconciliation between Cambodia's four political factions, and
 - to identify conditions under which future spontaneous repatriations can effectively and safely supported by the international community.
- 1.2.3 In the pursuit of these objectives, this report also aims at bringing togesome of the many sources of data and diverse opinions, relating to proper present and future Khmer repatriation, that exist in the many agencies among their personnel, and which, because of these agencies mimmediate priorities, are unlikely to be collated by them within the confin of a single document.

1.3 Methodology

1.3.1 Data for this report were collected between mid-November, 1989 and end of January, 1990. A period of six weeks was spent in Thailand for purpose, divided almost equally between Bangkok and the Thai-Cambor border.

- 1.3.2 Published and unpublished reports and other documentation were collected from relevant international, governmental, and non-governmental organizations in Bangkok and from Aranyaprathet and Surin where most of the regional offices of agencies involved with Cambodian refugees are located. In particular, the substantial documentation at the office of the Committee for Co-ordination of Services to Displaced Persons in Thailand (CCSDPT) in Bangkok was accessed. The recently established Refugee Documentation Centre at the Institute for Asian Studies at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok also proved valuable for this research.
- 1.3.3 Unstructured interviews were held with close to 100 personnel with international, governmental and non-governmental agencies, as well as with officials representing the three political factions that make up the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK). Most of the persons interviewed are identified in the Appendix. A predetermined set of basic questions was included in most of these interviews, but the overall structure of these interviews was always kept open-ended. Interviews ranged in length from less than quarter of an hour to over two hours most were between 20 to 40 minutes.
- 1.3.4 Special attention was given to identifying individuals who had been on the border for lengthy periods and especially who were at the border in 1979 or the early 1980s. Well over a dozen individuals present at the border during these early crisis years were eventually interviewed. Such individuals were of great value in helping to reconstruct the complex array of movements of Khmer into Thailand, between the camps, back across the border, and between the interior of Cambodia and the border.
- 1.3.5 Importance was also placed on identifying persons who were fluent in Khmer; it was hypothesized that such individuals were most likely to have gained the confidence of refugees and were thus in the best position to address issues relating to refugees' perceptions of eventual repatriation, of the problems they anticipated in re-integration and other related concerns. While personnel turnover among agencies is relatively high, a sizable number of Thai and expatriate workers have remained at the border for lengthy periods. Such people generally have a deep commitment to the

refugees' welfare and, as such, have also evolved close and trusting relations with many refugees. Their inputs to this study have been particularly valuable.

- 1.3.6 Within the camps, an effort was made to also interview the refugee. Employees with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were the easier to approach, and, given their regular interaction with foreigners, wer usually very candid in response to questions. It was more difficult to freely interact with other camp refugees, especially since such interview necessitated the use of an interpreter. Consequently such interviews tende to be brief, somewhat anecdotal, and more of a general than specific nature Nevertheless, the near unanimity in response to certain questions ('permit some generalizations to be drawn from these interviews.
- 1.3.7 With the exception of only one NGO worker, no refusals to requests finterviews were encountered during the entire research period. Indeed, almost all instances, a great deal of cooperation and encouragement we encountered.

1.4 Limitations of Study

- 1.4.1 The most glaring limitation of the study is that it has focussed upon on one side of the border. While the research plan included a visit Cambodia, it became apparent on arrival in Bangkok that such a visit w impractical. Although a visa may have been obtained, the logistics getting into and out of Phnom Penh proved to be too formidable within time available. Moreover, since the research was being undertaken over a Christmas period, many expatriate personnel in Phnom Penh were on lear (although some were, in fact, contacted and interviewed in Bangkok), also became clear that it would be very difficult if not impossible, and all very costly, to travel outside of Phnom Penh to visit areas resettled returnees.
- 1.4.2 Notwithstanding the inability to conduct interviews in Cambod considerable information on the situation inside Cambodia was obtain. This was possible through interviews in Bangkok with agency person currently working inside Cambodia and with representatives of Thai-bands.

NGOs who had recently undertaken official visits to Cambodia. A number of recent 'trip reports' filed at CCSDPT by other agency workers were also accessed. In the camps, it was also possible to identify and interview a number of Khmer who had returned to Cambodia - in some cases for periods of well over a year, in other cases on more than one occasion.

- 1.4.3 The brief time available for the research placed constraints on the time spent in each of the camps. This in turn limited the extent to which individual refugees could be interviewed in any depth. Khmer are slow in opening up to strangers; only with time can a level of confidence be established which will elicit respondents' true feelings and perceptions. Language constrained this further. Indeed, at Site B a guide/interpreter was assigned by the FUNCINPEC camp administration³ which may well have inhibited the responses given by interviewees. For such reasons, emphasis was placed on identifying and interviewing Thai and expatriates who were seen as having acquired such levels of confidence among the Khmer.
- 1.4.4 Not all camps were visited. Permits were not obtained for the three small Khmer Rouge camps at O'Trao, Borai and Site K, nor for the KPNLF camp of Sok Sann.⁴ Thus, details of these camps' population are only inferred.
- 1.4.5 While a substantial quantity of data were gathered from archival sources in Bangkok, numerical and narrative data pertaining to the crisis years of 1979 to 1981 are limited and tend to be located in diverse places. Also, data taken from one source do not necessarily correspond with ones taken from another source. This is not surprising; at a time of crisis it is seldom possible to find time to write detailed reports of what is happening nor can any priority be placed on discerning exact numbers. At the relief and emergency phase of operation, one works with educated guesses and agencies and individuals usually make their own 'educated' guesses. Consequently, it is not possible to accurately reconstruct numbers; this is

³ In the other camps, interpreters were 'loaned' from agencies working in the camps and were not associated with any of the Khmer political factions.

⁴ The Supreme Command of the Royal Thai Army, through its Displaced Persons Protection Unit (DPPU), controls access to all camps on the Cambodian border. Lack of security was given as the reason for not issuing passes to these camps.

especially the case when examining developments across the border i Cambodia. Even current camp numbers are subject to much conjecture.

1.5 Organization of the Study

- 1.5.1 The study is organized into two parts. Part One is entitled 'The Refug Crisis along the Cambodian Border' and Part Two is entitled 'Spontaneou Repatriation'.
- Part One is intended primarily for those readers who have a limit background to the Cambodian refugee situation. It consists of the sections. First, a brief historic and political background to popularidisplacement within and out-of Cambodia is provided. Also included a summation of recent events which may result in a repatriation in the forseeable future. Second, the refugee exodus since 1975 is described some detail, differentiating especially between refugees in UNHCR-assist holding centres' and the border-camp population sustained by UNBRO a referred to by Thai authorities as 'displaced persons'. Third, a brief revision of Thailand's policy towards refugees is provided and the implications recent changes in policy are examined. Readers familiar with Cambodia recent history and with the refugee situation along the border may wish proceed directly to Part Two.
- 1.5.3 Part Two is a detailed examination of the role of spontaneous repatriation the context of an overall repatriation to Cambodia. This part addrespecifically the central research objectives of the larger internation comparative study of spontaneous repatriation. There are four section First, an historical narrative of the movements back and forth across border in the late 1970s and early 1980s is presented. Second, the limit spontaneous repatriations during the period 1985 1988 are examined Third, the recent increase in spontaneous repatriation is described, a fourth, an evaluation is made of the potential role spontaneous repatriation will play in any future return, as well as the problems that can be anticipated with such a return movement. These four sections are followed with second usions and recommendations.

2 A BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Many of Cambodia's misfortunes have their roots in colonial history and the decolonizing process. To understand the contemporary situation it is necessary to have at least a generalized overview of the past half-century. Therefore, in an attempt to provide such a background, Cambodia's recent history will be divided into five discrete phases, 1 namely:
 - the colonial period culminating in the first Indochina War (1946-1954),
 - the post-colonial period under the control of Prince Norodom Sihanouk (1954-1970),
 - the republic under General Lon Nol (1970-1975),
 - the Khmer Rouge years (1975-1978), and
 - the People's Republic of Kampuchea, established in 1979 following the Vietnamese invasion and the overthrow of the Khmer Rouge.

2.2 The Colonial Period

Although Cambodia's historic antecedents include the great empire of the Ankor Dynasty with its legacy of temples and palaces at Ankor Wat, by the time the French took control of the region, Cambodia had been reduced to little more than a vassal state of Thailand and Vietnam. In 1864, France declared Cambodia a protectorate and for the next sixty years it remained very much at the periphery of French involvement in Indochina. Exploitation of its resources began in earnest during the inter-war years, dominated by Chinese and Vietnamese entrepreneurs. Vietnamese also came to dominate Cambodia's colonial administration. Ethnic tensions between Vietnamese and Cambodians followed.

¹ Much has been written on the history and politics of Cambodia. Among the many valuable sources are Becker (1986), Kiernan and Boua (1982), Kiljunen (1984), Osborne (1979), Ponchaud (1976), Shawcross (1976), and Vickery (1984 and 1986).

- During the Japanese occupation of World War II, Cambodia was declated independent and Norodom Sihanouk became king. However, in 19 France re-established colonial authority but encountered growing resistate from the Khmer Issarak, a loose grouping of anti-French guerrillas who evolved during the Japanese occupation. By the early 1950s, increasing operation between them and the Vietminh (the Vietnamese community blossomed into a full-scale anti-colonial war in Indochina. Many in Khmer resistance movement also began to adopt socialist and community ideologies at this time and close relations between Vietnamese Cambodian communists developed.
- A year before France's final Indochinese defeat in 1954 at Dien Bien Ph had acceded to Cambodia's demand for independence. The Gen Conference on Indochina in 1954 confirmed the independent status of Kingdom of Cambodia, recognized Sihanouk's leadership, and entrenc the country's neutral status by requiring all foreign troops to withdraw prohibiting any future foreign bases. An International Control Commis was established to supervise Cambodia's neutrality.

2.3 The Kingdom of Cambodia

- 2.3.1 While the leftist forces of Vietnam had been represented at the Ge Conference, Cambodia's leftists were excluded, and, as Cambodia us Sihanouk² moved increasingly towards a one-party state with opportunities subjected to growing repression, the far left retreated into hinterland of the north and northeast to begin its long resistance struggl
- 2.3.2 Sihanouk resisted pressure to join the South-East Asia Treaty Organiza (SEATO), emphasizing his country's commitment to neutrality. How when he established diplomatic and economic relations with China and Soviet Union, the United States saw its interests being threatened. It to provide covert support to right-wing opposition groups, especially loose amalgam of guerrillas collectively referred to as the Khmer Ser (Free Khmer). They operated from bases in South Vietnam and alon

² In 1955, Sihanouk abdicated the throne in favour of his father and became the executive his government.

Thai border, the latter of which were to assume significant roles during the post-1979 refugee exodus.

- 2.3.3 By the late 1950s, Cambodia's relations with both South Vietnam and Thailand had deteriorated; several border clashes had taken place. Diplomatic relations with Thailand were cut in 1961, and, in 1965, following a number of years of escalating tension between Cambodia and the US, as well as the latter's withdrawal of both development and military aid, Cambodia severed diplomatic relations with Washington. The economic repercussions of this were devastating and led to an increasing polarization between left- and right-wing factions within Sihanouk's government. The military and the elite, as well as the business community and traders, saw their privileges being eroded, and, coupled with growing American assistance to the rightist opposition, as well as its escalating military involvement in neighbouring Vietnam, created a climate where the forces of the right gained political ascendency.
- In 1966, Lon Nol was elected Prime Minister and immediately set about purging leftists from government and the civil service. Many of those purged were French educated intellectuals and included the former Minister of the Economy and current Khmer Rouge leader, Khieu Samphan. They fled to the countryside where they broadened the base of the still nascent communist resistance eventually to become known as the Khmer Rouge. Peasant uprisings in 1967 and 1968, and their brutal repression by Lon Nol's military, added further strength and momentum to this resistance; poor peasant farmers who had been forced to live at the very periphery of Khmer society were increasingly drawn into the vanguard of the resistance.
- 2.3.5 The resumption of diplomatic relations with the US in 1969 served to further weaken Sihanouk's position. Contrary to its espoused position of neutrality, Cambodia was being unequivocally drawn into the Vietnam War. The US began to secretly bomb the border areas of eastern Cambodia which drove the Khmer communists deeper into northern, northeastern and southwestern Cambodia. Sihanouk could do little to counter US strategic interests; the confrontation between his policy of neutrality and America's need to enlist Cambodia's participation in controlling North Vietnamese supply lines and sanctuaries along the border culminated, in March 1970, in

a military coup led by Lon Nol which overthrew Sihanouk and declared t Khmer Republic. Sihanouk went into exile in China from where he becan the nominal head of the Cambodian-based and Khmer Rouge-led resistance

2.4 The Khmer Republic

- 2.4.1 Within a month of Sihanouk's overthrow, the Vietnam war spilled-over i Cambodia with the incursion of over 20,000 American and So Vietnamese troops who sought to cut the North Vietnamese supply li along the eastern borderlands of Cambodia. By 1973, the ground war i been replaced by another massive bombing campaign, this time aimed both the North Vietnamese as well as the Khmer leftist resistance.
- 2.4.2 Economically, conditions in Cambodia deteriorated rapidly. R production fell by over 60 percent within two years, and was less than percent of the 1969-1970 harvest by the 1973-1974 crop year. Rubber, country's main export, was all but eliminated as a trade commod External dependency on the US became total, and widespread corrupt and abuses of power throughout government and the military intensif general disillusionment among the population with government. Sympa for the resistance grew,³ even among urban populations.
- 2.4.3 The brutal war against the resistance and the massive American bomb campaign further radicalized the resistance. It also resulted in mapopulation displacements, and especially migration of peasants into Phr Penh. By early 1975, up to three million people were in the cap representing around 40 percent of the nation's population. The econor social and infrastructural pressures they exerted on an increasingly despe government clearly hastened the surrender of Lon Nol in April, 1975, the ascendency to power of the Khmer Rouge.

³ A broadly based resistance, the National United Front of Kampuchea (FUNK), was founded and ma of an alliance of Sihanoukists, the Khmer Rouge, and other disenchanted leftists. By 1973, howeve Khmer Rouge had effective control of the resistance; Sihanouk was maintained as a figurehead becauthe widespread respect he commanded among the peasantry upon whom the Khmer Rouge were depend

2.5 Democratic Kampuchea

2.5.1 The Khmer Rouge took control of a country that was in a state of chaos. Much of the infrastructure was destroyed by fighting and bombing. Industry had been brought to a standstill. Well over half of the country's population was displaced, and, with the cessation of all American aid, including food, famine threatened the country. To this situation the Khmer Rouge added their concepts of a radically re-structured agrarian society. Like so many peasant revolutions, this was soon to become a very violent and bloody one.

All land was collectivised and personal property was prohibited. Money was eliminated. So was the slightest hint of opposition. Monks and intellectuals were deemed expendable. Minorities such as the Sino-Khmer and the Muslim Cham were purged. The cities were emptied within weeks of the Khmer Rouge coming to power - three million Phnom Penh residents were dispersed. The handicapped, the sickly and the elderly became a burden to the new society. Those who could not keep-up were abandoned. The traditional Khmer family was all but eliminated. Parents were separated from their children and from each other. Within a few months, up to sixty percent of the national population was yet again displaced. A total subservience to the 'Angkar' was demanded and attained.

2.5.3 The excesses of 'Brother Duch', of the Tuol Sleng prison and of the 'Killing Fields' have all been extensively documented.⁴ Within three and a half years, Cambodia was transformed with a violence never before experienced by any other modern revolution. The population was divided into those who controlled - the Khmer Rouge cadres - and those who worked. Food was kept to a barest minimum; modern medicine was all but abandoned. Thousands succumbed to starvation and disease. By early 1978, the forces of violence that the revolution had unleashed even turned upon itself. The factional purges instigated by the Pol Pot, Ta Mok and Duch coalition throughout the ranks of the Khmer Rouge exceeded even their earlier excesses. Finally, it was Vietnam's invasion at the end of

⁴ See for example the extensive collection of essays edited by Jackson (1989).

December, 1978, that ended, at least momentarily, the nightmare that he befallen Cambodia.

While a few Khmer, from both the left and right of the political spectrur had exiled themselves to North Vietnam or to remote border areas during t Sihanouk era and during the five years of the Republic, it was with t coming to power of the Khmer Rouge that the contemporary Cambodi refugee dilemma began. Before the Khmer Rouge sealed Cambodia borders in 1975, the first wave of refugees were able to find refuge Thailand. However, it was following the defeat of the Khmer Rouge the outflow to neighbouring states and to the Thai-Cambodian border reached catastrophic proportions; the subsequent spontaneous returns some of these migrants is the subject of Part Two of this report.

2.6 People's Republic of Kampuchea

- 2.6.1 From the earliest days of the Khmer communist resistance, there had been division between the pro-Vietnamese (the Khmer Vietminh), many of who lived in exile in North Vietnam, and the those that remained based Cambodia and which evolved into the Khmer Rouge. The commitment to struggle against their common enemy US imperialism tended to over their differences after 1970. However, once in power in 1975, the distinctive philosophies re-emerged and resulted in factional pogror. Some Cambodian communists remained in Vietnam throughout the Khmer Rouge years, others escaped to Vietnam as successive purges again. Pot's real or perceived opponents intensified. Hun Sen and Heng Sam were among Khmer Rouge defectors who fled to Vietnam during this time. The current stand-off between Phnom Penh and the Khmer Rough therefore, has antecedents that date back to the earliest days of communist resistance.
- 2.6.2 The new People's Republic of Kampuchea government that emerged 1979 was made up of various groups that had fled to Vietnam, includ many Khmer Rouge defectors, as well as some former officials of the

⁵ For a detailed account of the factional struggles, see Heder (1983).

Nol and Sihanouk regimes.⁶ While the Vietnamese initially controlled much of the administration, Cambodians gradually replaced the Vietnamese, although many remain as 'advisers'. Throughout most of the 1980s, however, the Cambodian government remained wholly dependent upon the Vietnamese military. It was a Vietnamese, not Cambodian, army offensive that pushed the resistance into Thailand during the dry season of 1984 - 1985. The last Vietnamese troops were allegedly withdrawn from Cambodia in September, 1989.⁷

- The Phnom Penh government inherited an even more devastated infrastructure and economy than that inherited by the Khmer Rouge. For example, of the 450 medical doctors in Cambodia before 1975, only 45 remained in 1979, of which 20 subsequently left for resettlement (Mysliwiek, 1988: 42). Disease was rampant and exacerbated by malnutrition, yet most clinics and hospitals were destroyed; there were virtually no nurses and most medicines were unavailable. The same can be said for education. For four years all schooling had ceased and most schools had been destroyed or converted to other uses. There were no books; Cambodia's complete literary resource had been annihilated by Khmer Rouge zealots. Religion and the legal system had also been dismantled.
- 2.6.4 The most pressing immediate concern faced by the government was that of impending famine. The response to the needs created by the famine, as well as the political and infrastructural constraints to that response, have been documented in detail by Shawcross (1984) and will also be further discussed later in this report in connection with the 'landbridge' across the Thai border. The rapid return to an almost self-reliant agricultural economy within the space of five years is testimony to the effectiveness of the initial relief effort, to the land-tenure reforms and *Krom Samaki* production

⁶ By 1985, the government was made up of ten persons who had been in Vietnam during the Khmer Rouge era, nine former Khmer Rouge who had defected during the Khmer Rouge era, and twenty with no prior political affiliation (Vickery, 1986: 79).

Recent press reports provide substantive evidence that at least some Vietnamese military assistance is being given the Cambodian army in their offensives against the CGDK forces.

⁸ The term 'landbridge' was adopted in reference to the relief operation across the Thai-Cambodian border that paralleled the international relief program into Cambodia through Phnom Penh.

groups implemented by the Phnom Penh government, and, above all, to the tenacity and resilience of the Cambodian people.

2.6.5 Given the scale of reconstruction facing Cambodia ten years ago and give its near total political isolation, the extent of reconstruction can only be see as remarkable. All reconstruction has had to occur without assistance from international organizations and World Bank funding because of its politic isolation; only some limited East Block funding has been available. NGC have attempted to meet the shortfall in development aid, however, the resources are nowhere near sufficient to make but small scale impacts. S Robert Jackson⁹ has summarized Cambodia's dilemma as:

"Kampuchea remains in a unique position of being the only developing country in the world - and it is almost certainly the country in most need - that is prevented from receiving any of the normal development and other assistance provided by the UN system" (cited in Mysliwiek, 1988: 71).

Until this politically myopic and morally reprehensible situation is change the process of rehabilitation and reconstruction will continue to fall far sho of the needs and of Cambodia's potential.

A consequence of the isolation of Cambodia is that the NGOs have be responsible for most of the development assistance received Cambodia. 10 At least a dozen countries are represented; both churc based and sectarian organizations are present. All but four provinces ha at least some NGO presence. A number of the NGO's currently operation in Thailand are now considering expansion into Cambodia. A few, such Handicap International and Mennonite Central Committee, have be operating on both sides of the border for some time. Given the extension needs existing in Cambodia and the limited resources that most NGOs has it is unlikely that they will be in a position to develop extension programming to assist with the re-integration of any large scale organized spontaneous repatriation. Additional assistance will clearly be required.

⁹ Under-Secretary General and Senior Adviser to the United Nations.

 $^{^{10}}$ Twenty-five NGOs are operating in Cambodia; UNHCR, WFP and UNICEF are the only UN agenc present (Anonymous, 1988).

2.6.7 The period since 1980 has been characterized by further refugee movements, continuing internal relocations, as well the substantial spontaneous repatriations from Vietnam, Laos, and from the Thai-Cambodian border, which is the subject of the second part of this report. Up to 1984, movement across the Thai-Cambodian border was very fluid, but, following the Vietnamease dry-season offensive of 1984-1985, Cambodia's borders became relatively impermeable. Since 1989, however, movement across the border has once again increased, especially that associated with the activities of the resistance movements.

2.7 The Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea

- 2.7.1 From 1979 to 1982, the Khmer Rouge continued to receive international recognition as the legitimate government of Cambodia and retained the UN seat. The humanitarian aid provided to the border population permitted the Khmer Rouge to survive and to rebuild. Military aid was also provided, primarily by China; 11 from the outset, the Thai military establishment saw the Khmer Rouge as the only viable force along the border capable of confronting the Vietnamese. Even to the present day, the Khmer Rouge remain by far the strongest, best organized, and most disciplined of the three resistance movements.
- 2.7.2 During the same period, the non-communist resistance was also mobilizing. Several Khmer Sereiker groups overcame their differences and formed the Khmer Peoples National Liberation Front (KPNLF) under the leadership of Son Sann, a former minister in the Sihanouk government in the 1960s. Prince Sihanouk founded the National United Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful and Co-operative Cambodia (FUNCINPEC).
- As the full scale of the horrors of the Khmer Rouge era unfolded, it became increasingly untenable for many UN members to accord recognition to the Khmer Rouge. The ASEAN community therefore opted for a compromise by engineering the formation of the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK) a loose coalition of the three resistance groups. The

But also including \$73 million of military and economic assistance in 1980-1981 from the US (Reynell, 1989: 41).

UN seat was subsequently allocated to the coalition. Essentially, it is only 'government' in name. There is no headquarters or common constitution. The CGDK is wholly dependant upon the international community for foc and all other assistance. Its only 'resource' is the population along the That Cambodian border which each of the three factions control. Without the population, the CGDK looses all credibility. This latter point is critical in the understanding of current attitudes to the question of organized are spontaneous repatriation. For the CGDK, repatriation is only acceptable as long as the returning populations remain under their control.

2.7.4 For Thailand and the ASEAN states, the CGDK provides a convenie buffer against the Vietnamese. For the Chinese, support of the Konge and of Sihanouk is an instrument of its hostile foreign polic towards Vietnam. For the US, support of the KPNLF is part of its strate, of political and economic isolation of Vietnam. The Cambodian people, at especially the population of the border camps have become - as Reyno (1989) has so aptly described in her choice of the title for her book political pawns.

2.8 Demographic Dimensions

- 2.8.1 The demographic dimensions of Cambodia are significant to this stu because the refugees in Thailand constitute a significant component of t total Khmer population. There has not been a national census since 1962, which time the population was 5,728,771 (Watts, et. al., 1989:15). that population grown without interruption by war or revolution at average 1960s rate of around 2.8 percent, Cambodia would today hav population of about 10 million. Instead, it has been affected by the los during the Lon Nol period, deaths during the tragic years of Khmer Rot control, considerably lower fertility between 1975 and 1978, and by exodus of refugees since 1975.
- According to estimates made in 1981 by the Cambodian government, population was about 6.7 million (Kiljunen, 1984: 30); this v considerably higher than the 4 million announced by Heng Sam immediately after the Vietnamese invasion. It compares with a 1970 estimate of 7.1 million, which was based upon the previous census

estimated natural increase. Reduced fertility and increased mortality is believed to have depressed natural increase to under one percent during the Lon Nol period, and it is generally accepted that the population at the time of the Khmer Rouge takeover was 7.3 million (Kiljunen, ibid.). Such data point to the fact that the population loss during the Khmer Rouge were most likely considerably less than the numbers commonly cited in the early 1980s, which ranged between two to three million. With rising natural increase during the 1980s, perhaps as high as three percent (Watts, et. al., 1989: 15), the current population of the country is probably very close to eight million. That means that the Khmer population along the Thai border constitutes a little under 4.5 percent of the total Khmer population (excluding those permanently resettled to third countries).

2.8.3 The protracted wars and the events of the late 1970s have also created an imbalance in population structure. The current sex ratios is estimated to be around 85 males per 100 females, however, if only the over-15 population is considered, the sex ratio decreases to around 75. Such a surplus of women has serious developmental implications. It also contributes to social problems and breakdown of traditional family values. This imbalance between sexes in Cambodia compares with an average sex ratio of 96 males per 100 females in the three largest border camps (Lynch, 1989: 21). More will be said later about the significance of these demographics to any future repatriation.

2.9 Economic Dimensions

In 1983, the UN declared that the Cambodian emergency was over and a development aid embargo was imposed. Only limited food aid was continued. With an almost totally devastated infrastructure and a critical shortage of skilled and educated manpower, development initiatives have faced enormous odds. The quality of life has improved, however, albeit the needs remain critical in almost every sector of the economy and social services. On the plus side, basic food self sufficiency has almost been attained, rudimentary reconstruction of the infrastructure has been undertaken, basic education and health services have been re-established. The country has, essentially, moved from the 'survival' phase into the beginning of the 'reconstruction' phase. An understanding of current

economic conditions and constraints is, therefore, critical to any evaluation of the impacts and consequences which any large-scale repatriation we likely have.

- 2.9.2 Few nations have ever been subjected to a 'brain drain' to the extent the Cambodia has over the past twenty years. First, with the deterioration political and economic conditions during the Lon Nol years, many educat Khmer were already leaving the country, and in 1975, a large component the elite and professional class managed to escape. Second, the educat and urban-intellectual class that remained was systematically sought out the Khmer Rouge as real or imaginary opponents to the regime. Many not survive these purges. Third, much of the surviving educate intellectual elite was among the first to leave Cambodia in 1979 with specific aim of resettlement to the West. This draw-down of the natic intellectual capacity has clearly had severe implications at every level of reconstruction process. It will take at least another decade, if not longer replenish this lost reservoir of educated and intellectual manpower. 12 important question that arises, therefore, is whether the repatriation of border camp population, whether organized or spontaneous, is likely have any significant impact upon Cambodia's human resources.
- Agriculture remains the basis of the Cambodian economy and while s reliance has nearly been achieved, many factors continue to hinder recovery. The war years have depleted the agricultural labour force, this, coupled with the decimation in the draught animal population, have Cambodia with an acute shortage in its productive capacity. Mysliv (1988: 24) suggests that the productive capacity in 1979 was about the sas that in the 1950s, yet in 1979, some seven million had to be compared to only 4.7 million in the 1950s. All agricultural records, make climatic data were destroyed and agricultural research came to a total While there were 1,600 agricultural planners and technicians in 1975, 200 remained in 1980 and only 10 of these had degrees (ibid: 25). No waterworks and irrigation systems were destroyed, others constructed the Khmer Rouge were of poor design. Basic implements, irrigation productive capacity.

¹² It is perhaps a paradox that this depletion of intellectual capacity has been least felt within the ran'the Khmer Rouge - on a per capita basis they probably now have the largest reservoir in their midst.

and power-tillers remain in short supply. On the other hand, availability of land is not a serious problem. Large tracts remain underutilized or abandoned. Levelling is needed to eliminate the bomb craters and the risk of unexploded bombs and mines is widespread in border areas and elsewhere. These constraints and needs in the agricultural sector must be considered when planning for the eventual repatriation of the 4.5 percent of Cambodia's population currently in border camps. Most are expected to reintegrate into the rural sector.

- 2.9.4 The corner stone of rural reconstruction and agricultural development has been the *Krom Samaki* solidarity groups. These groups, consisting of 10 to 15 families, work either their own land or communal land, pooling their labour, tools and animals. It is a system that is akin to traditional Khmer tenure systems, and, because of the shortage of tools, animals and adult males, it permits many to become productive who might otherwise not survive. A key question that needs to be addressed is how the potential returnee population can best be prepared to adapt and integrate into this system.
- 2.9.5 Historically, Cambodia never experienced any protein deficiency; Tonle Sap, its large inland sea, has endowed Cambodia with an abundant resource of fish. However, much of the fishing was traditional carried out by Muslim Cham or ethnic Vietnamese whose numbers were decimated during 1975-1978. Reconstruction of this industry has only just begun. There is considerable potential here, but careful management will be needed to avoid ecological problems. Some returnees might be steered into the fisheries on their return.
- 2.9.6 Others sectors of the economy have been even slower in their recovery. A monetary system was re-introduced in 1980 and commerce, petty trading and 'cottage industry' has grown significantly. The government has condoned a laissez-faire approach to commerce if only because there appeared no other way to stimulate the supply of just about every single

¹³ Three levels of *krom samaki* have been introduced. At level 1, there exists a pure cooperative system with no private production, while at level 3, there is complete private control and marketing. Whereas in 1981, only 21 percent of *krom samaki* were at level 3, by 1989, over 90 percent had transformed themselves to level 3 (Watts, et. al., 1989: 32).

observers at the time about the extent of coercion involved in the relocations.

In all, some 32,500 were officially relocated voluntarily from UNHCR administered camps to the border, 18,500 of which were moved during 1981 (Table 3.2). To this must be added an unknown number who were covertly moved before the relocation program was formalized. There are no data on whether the relocated population remained at the border or moved deeper into Thailand. Anecdotal information suggests that some did indeed return to the border specifically to return to Cambodia, having become impatient or disillusioned with camp life. Others relocated to the border specifically to seek out lost relatives. Such searches also led to some returning into Cambodia. Some officials within UNHCR believed that successful relocation would reduce demand for resettlement; at the 1982 CCSDPT annual meeting a UNHCR official stated that ". . for every one refugee who returns home (from the border), there may be ten who will think twice about leaving (being resettled)" (CCSDPT, 1982:2).

Most of the relocated population remained at the border and were eventually displaced back into Thailand in 1984-1985.

1985 - Present

In the fall of 1984, as the dry season began, Vietnamese forces launched a major offensive aimed at driving the resistance permanently out of Cambodia. Their campaign was a success; by early 1985 most of the resistance camps had been forced to retreat into Thailand. Thus began a new chapter in the history of displaced persons along the Thai-Cambodian border. By July, 1985 some 220,000 persons had been established in evacuation sites inside Thailand, the majority in the area south and north of Aranyaprathet (Figure 3.5). After some initial relocations, the border camp population stabilized by late 1985 in three principal camps - Site 2, Site B, and Site 8 - as well as few smaller ones (Table 3.6), some of which have

ig in the private sector ar imploy. This has resulte onsiderable corruption it to be addressed is how to oriented camps such a into Cambodia's 'urbal

have been re-establishe but growth in produl Heavy industry, such nowhere near the level capital inflow, technic y. Therefore, training lls in the border camp hance the re-integration

tempts to break down t d, and to bring the fo the negotiation table began the dialogue a they have led to sor ne of the factions. T actions are also comi ared particularly anxi at negotiation by invit ril 1990, must be seer

989 was anticipated ig obstacles to a politicitations among the ca

population. Its subsequent failure, due primarily to the inability of the factions to agree on how to contain within a future reconciliation government the militarily powerful Khmer Rouge, thus had a very depressing and demoralizing effect on many refugees. One of the positive achievements of the Paris meeting, however, was the agreements reached on repatriation and rehabilitation. It was recognized that a return can only take place following a comprehensive political settlement; that the choice of destinations within Cambodia should be that of the returnee; and that family unity must be preserved. Various operational factors were also agreed upon, including the UNHCR's role as the lead agency. It was also recognized that many of the refugees will wish to, and be able to, return to Cambodia spontaneously (Co-ordinating Committee, 1989).

- 2.10.3 Negotiations, at various levels, have continued since the Paris Conference. A most significant development has been the so-called "Australian Initiative" which proposes that an interim UN administration will run the country until free and internationally supervised elections take place. 14 The Phnom Penh government has agreed in principle to the plan but the level of participation of the Khmer Rouge is still very much in dispute. In the interim, international pressures upon the Cambodian factions to resolve their differences increase. Thailand has even begun to question whether the arms conduit to the resistance, and especially to the Khmer Rouge, will be permitted to to pass through its territory in the future. Moreover, the diplomatic isolation of Phnom Penh is weakening; several governmental delegations from countries such as Britain, Italy and Canada have recently visited Cambodia.
- 2.10.4 Since the Fall of 1989, the move towards a settlement has been further complicated by increased military activity. All three fronts have taken advantage of the Vietnamese troop withdrawal¹⁵ to advance into Cambodia. The Khmer Rouge have made the most substantive gains, controlling much of the Southwest and the Cardamon Mountains, and extending their control almost to the outskirts of Battambang in January, 1990. They have also

The proposal also calls for the CGDK to vacate the UN seat, leaving it unfilled until after an election. This part of the proposal is also a divisive in reaching an agreement.

¹⁵ Although all three deny that the Vietnamese have in fact withdrawn.

made gains in the north, in the central area, and in the area south of Phno Penh. The KPNLF have made some gains along the western bords almost reaching the regional town of Sisophon. The ANS has had the leasuccess, but has made sufficient gains to allow Sihanouk to establish a bajust inside the country south of Site B. The initial lack of any effecti opposition by the Cambodian army to these advances caused considera' concern to observers on the Thai side of the border and reinforced Khrr Rouge claims of having the most potent military machine. Coun offensives in February and March by the Cambodians (and possit assisted by some Vietnamese) have reduced the areas 'occupied' by the CGDK. However, it is once more abundantly clear that none of the forcombatants have the strength to secure a military victory without extensistance. This realization will hopefully lead to a further and maconclusive search for a political solution.

2.10.5 A tentative peace agreement between the four factions was reached Jakarta in early September, 1990. This will hopefully clear the way for implementation of the UN's interim administration during the final mor of 1990.

3 THE REFUGEES PROBLEM

3.1 Pre-1975

3.1.1 Refugees have been flowing across the Thai border from Cambodia long before the current crisis. Prior to World War II several waves of refugees were generated by anti-colonial insurgencies, some of which date back to the turn of the century. Most refugees were Vietnamese. As the Indochina War intensified after 1945, further waves of refugees arrived in Thailand; 45,000 are believed to have arrived between 1946-49 alone (Varophas, 1966). Some Khmer were included in these post war movements, as were some ethnic Thai who had earlier settled in Cambodia. By 1960, over 80,000 refugees had been registered by the Thai Red Cross (Poole, 1970). With the exception of about 35,000 who were voluntarily repatriated to North Vietnam in the early 1960s, all others remained in Thailand and most subsequently acquired permanent resident status in Thailand. Poole (1967) suggests that the 'old Vietnamese' (i.e., those arriving before World War II and especially those arriving in the early part of the century) have since become economically and socially integrated into Thai society; a few have even moved into the higher ranks of the military or civil service. For most of the the post-World War II arrivals, however, restrictions on where they can reside remain in effect and their status continues to be tenuous.

3.1.2 Thailand also received refugees across its other border; from China (via Laos) following the defeat of the Kuomingtang in 1949, from Burma after the Ne Win's coup in 1959, and Malaysian communists who sought refuge in the mountains of southern Thailand in the early 1960s. Thailand did not receive assistance from the international community for any of these earlier influxes (Nakavachara and Rogge, 1987). On the other hand, it had good reason to be concerned about the threats posed to its own security by some of these movements; insurgencies in the north and northeast Thailand were perceived to be interacting with the North Vietnamese, the insurgency in the extreme south was tied to Malaya's communists, and several Kuomintang

generals became opium warlords along the northern border with Burma ar. Laos.

- An understanding of these earlier movements into Thailand, and Thailand response to them, is significant because of their subsequent impact on the formulation of Thai policies in reaction to post-1975 Indochinese refugee The evolution of this policy is discussed in section 4.
- Displacements of population within Cambodia were also widespread before 1975. Government oppression of opposition forces in the 1960s had se many intellectuals into exile, both to remote rural areas where to communist resistance was developing, as well as into North Vietnam. To forceful repression in 1967 and 1968 of peasants who revolted against government's rice-marketing policies resulted in further population movements as many fled to join the ranks of the growing communinsurgency.
- By far the single greatest cause of internal displacement was the Americ bombing of eastern Cambodia. Between 50,000 tons (Reynell, 1989:2 and 250,000 tons (Chanda, 1986: 68) of bombs were dropped, leading to flood of refugees to the towns. Phnom Penh is estimated to have grofrom about 600,000 in 1970 to over two million in the space of five yet (Kiljunen, 1984: 6). Other towns, such as Battambang, also grodramatically. The bombings drove many to join the ranks of the Khna Rouge, especially after Sihanouk, who still commanded loyalty and regramong the peasantry, called from his exile in China upon the peasant, rise in opposition to the Lon Nol administration. By 1973, the guerr army, by then dominated by the Khmer Rouge, was fielding a hig disciplined and radicalized force of over 70,000 (Kiljunen, 1984: 8).
- 3.1.6 The rapid deterioration of the economy further added to the exodus fr country to the town. By 1974, rice production was less than 20 percents 1970 level (Reynell, 1989: 24). Corruption in government and am the ill-disciplined military exacerbated the conditions of the peasantry. the time the Lon Nol government was finally overthrown in 1975,

¹ Some estimates place the number at 2.5 million (Osborne, 1981: 35) or even as high as 3 million.

internal displacement of much of the Khmer population, estimated at over one-third of the rural population (Kiljunen, 1984: 6), and which the Khmer Rouge were subsequently to take to new levels, was clearly well underway.

- Out-migration from Cambodia was also well underway before the Lon Nol government fell. Many of the wealthy and the educated saw their prospects diminishing as the spectre of a communist victory became increasingly likely. Those able to leave, did so. France was the principal destination. The 'brain-drain' had begun.
- 3.1.8 The Lon Nol government fell on April 17th, 1975. The speed with which the final victory was achieved prevented many potential refugees from leaving. However, many high ranking officials and military personnel did succeed in escaping, as did many professionals and businessmen. In all, some 320,000² entered Vietnam (Osborne, 1981b: 36) and over 33,000 reached Thailand (Hamilton, 1982: 2). Of those entering Thailand, about half escaped immediately following the defeat of Lon Nol (Table 3.1). The Khmer Rouge effectively sealed Cambodia's borders and in the ensuing years only a few refugees were able to reach Thailand.

3.2 1975 - 1978

3.2.1 The Khmer Rouge era lasted only 45 months, yet during that time, as many as one million may have died; almost all the urban population was forcibly displaced to the countryside; and as much as 75 percent of the rural population was also displaced by a series of forced migrations beginning in late 1975 and again in early 1978. Indeed, the policy of emptying cities had been in effect in Khmer Rouge controlled areas since 1973. The abrupt and violent evacuation of the city's populations was for both ideological and security reasons. The Khmer Rouge revolution was a peasant revolution; its leadership considered inhabitants of cities as parasites. Worse, rural refugees that had fled to the cities during the previous five years were considered traitors. The cities were also seen as centres of possible resistance and thus, by dispersing their population to rural areas, it was

² Osborne suggests that of the 320,000 entering Vietnam between 1975 and 1978, 170,000 were ethnic Vietnamese and 24,000 were ethnic Chinese.

believed that absolute control was possible. The need to use their labour agriculture was a secondary consideration.

TABLE 3.1

ARRIVALS IN THAILAND AND RESETTLEMENT 1975-78

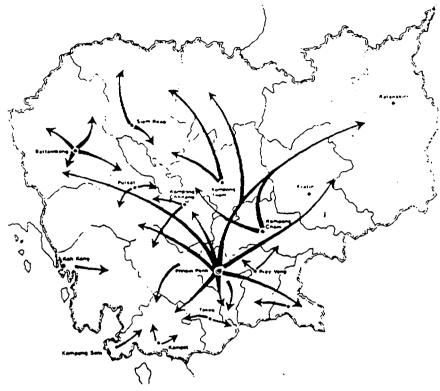
Year	Arrivals	Resettled	Residuals
1975 1976 1977 1978	17,038 6,428 7,045 3,528	7,261 5,251 2,970 3,384	9,777 10,954 15,029 15,173
Total	34,039	18,866	

Source: UNHCR, Bangkok.

3.2.2 After the initial dispersion from the cities, other forced transfers v carried out to open-up new agricultural areas. During late 1975 and 1976, people were moved from the more densely settled areas in the sc and southeast to northwestern and northeastern Cambodia. Fur relocations took place in 1978 following power struggles between Kh Rouge factions which resulted in especially bloody purges in Cambodia. Large numbers were moved from the east to the northeast. purges also led to many dissident Khmer Rouge fleeing to Vietr including leaders of the current Cambodian Government such as F Samrin and Hun Sen. Figure 3.1 summarizes the directions of the inte movements (Kiljunen, 1984: 12-13), although precise numbers do appear to be available.

³ Norondom Sihanouk (1980) suggests that as many as 150,000 Khmer entered Vietnam where many recruited for the resistance which joined the Vietnamese in the invasion later that year.





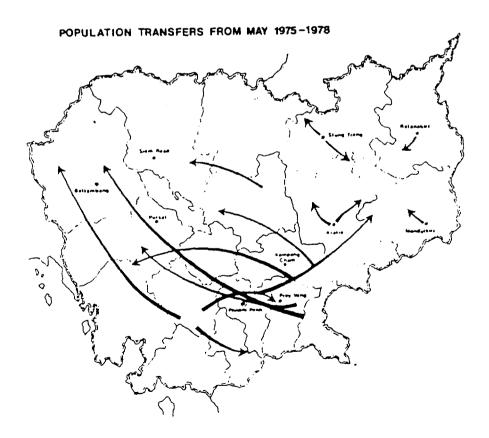


Figure 3.1 INTERNAL POPULATION DISPLACEMENTS 1975 - 78 Source: Kiljunen, 1984

- 3.2.3 While the Khmer Rouge succeeded in eradicate all resistance to it withit Cambodia, some limited resistance was mounted along the border by th Khmer Sereiker. The extent to which some of the resistance leaders had political agendas is debatable; smuggling and banditry was widespread Nevertheless, in 1979, many of the Khmer Sereiker camps became the nucleus for the new resistance.
- 3.2.4 It will be suggested later that this protracted period of internal and externious dislocation of the population, beginning even before Lon Nol took power intensifying throughout the first half of the 1970s, and reaching new heigh during the Khmer Rouge years, had, by the end of the 1970s, created Cambodia a population where the need to survive had become intiminate intertwined with a necessity to migrate.

3.3 1979-1984

- 3.3.1 With the invasion in late December, 1978 by Vietnam and the defeat of t Khmer Rouge in early 1979, a new era of displacement, both acrc Cambodia's borders and within the country, was set in motion. It will divided here into two phases, namely:
 - the period from 1979 to 1984, during which a large number of refuge entered Thailand, and an even larger concentration of displacees located the border, and,
 - the period since 1984, when a series of Vietnamese offensives agai Khmer resistance along the border succeeded in forcing almost suborder-camp population to relocate inside Thailand.
- 3.3.2 A major difficulty encountered in research for this report was that interpreting data on actual numbers at the border during this first peri Most data relating to the border population during 1979-1981, drawn fr UNICEF and WFP records, are little more than estimates based on rati distributed. Reliable headcounts at border camps occurred only later w the population had become more stabilized.
- 3.3.3 The problem was compounded during 1980 and 1981 by the arrival at border of large numbers of people from the interior to collect relief support from the 'landbridge' (which will be discussed in Section 5). Hence, a

available for 1979-1981 differentiate between 'residents' (at the border) and 'non-residents' (temporary sojourners who were at the border only for supplies). It is important to understand this distinction when attempting to reconstruct the extent of voluntary and spontaneous repatriation that took place in the early 1980s.

TABLE 3.2
UNHCR ASSISTED CAMBODIANS IN THAILAND SINCE 1979

Year	Arrivals	Resettled	Repatriated	Relocated	Natural Increase	Residual Pop.	
1979	137,984 1)	17,323	-	-	NA	135,7441)	
1980	43,608	27,200	9,022	4,010	6,098	147,059	
1981	16	49,731	· -	18,528	7,086	97,805	
1982	14	20,411	-	8,863	4,080	83,951	
1983	-	29,138	-	853	1,975	56,299	
1984	4,343 ²⁾	21,706	1	116	2,651	41,619	
1985	7,989 ²⁾	19,550	-	89	1,697	31,761	
1986	197 ³⁾	6,266	-	14	1,317	26,949	
1987	39 ²⁾	4,977	-	-	840	22,974	
1988	-	7,250	-	-	802	17,152	
1989 ⁴⁾	4,586 ⁵⁾	3,902	8	-	661	18,343	
Totals	198,776	207,454	9,031	32,473	27,207		

Source: UNHCR, Bangkok.

Data for persons in the UNHCR protected camps appear somewhat more accurate and easier to understand, although, even in these camps, there was considerable unauthorized in- and out-movement, as well as undocumented transfers out of camps to the border by the Royal Thai Army. Table 3.2 summarizes arrivals, departures, natural increase and the residual camp

¹⁾ Includes 15,173 residual camp population from 1978.

²⁾ Represents additions to camp population identified by Censuses and registration of 'illegal' arrivals from border camps.

³⁾ Transferred from the TRC camp at Khao Larn.

⁴⁾ Data as of November 30, 1989.

⁵⁾ Represents 'illegal' arrivals transferred to Ban That camp.

population of the UNHCR administered Khmer refugees from 1979 to lat 1989.

In addition to the UNHCR camps and the border camps supported by th international community,⁴ it must be remembered that there have also bee established the so-called 'hidden camps' to which all access by th international community has been barred, and where all supplies have bee delivered directly by the Royal Thai Army. These are the military camps the resistance, primarily controlled by the Khmer Rouge, and no data content their populations or general conditions are available.

TABLE 3.3

KHMER REFUGEES 1975-81 BASED ON THE FINNISH INQUIRY COMMISSION (Kiljunen, 1984)

Total Refugees (1975-81)	850,0
of whom fled to:- Vietnam	•
Thailand (1975-78)	150,0t 50,0t
Thailand (1979-81)	630,C
Laos	20,0
Returned to Cambodia from:	
Vietnam	130,C
Thailand	234,0
Laos	20,0
Total	384,0
Moved to third countries 1975-79	7 -
Moved to third countries 1980-81	44,0
Total	116,0
Remaining refugees (January 1982) in:	
Vietnam (Ethnic Chinese)	20,C
Thailand	330,0
Total	350,0

Sources: UNHCR, Bangkok; UNHCR, Phnom Penh; Royal Thai Army, Aranyaprathet.

⁴ UNICEF and ICRC initially undertook responsibility for servicing the border camps with food supp by World Food Program. In 1982, the United Nations Border Relief Operation (UNBRO) was establist to fulfil this role.

3.3.6 As a general overview of the problem of determining numbers of refugees and displacees along the border, it may be appropriate to commence with a consideration of the summary statistics for 1975-1981 arrived at by the Finnish Inquiry Commission (Kiljunen, 1984) which are shown in Table 3.3. The Commission suggests that of the 680,000 Khmer arrivals in Thailand, 116,000 were resettled by 1981, 234,000 had repatriated, and the balance were still in Thailand in 1981. No attempt was made to distinguish between the population in UNHCR camps and those at the border. Nor was natural increase factored into the totals. The only truly reliable numbers contained in these estimates is that for departures for third countries; all other numbers are crude estimates. For example, UNHCR suggests that the number of Khmer arriving between 1975 and 1978 was 34,000 rather than the 50,000 proposed by the Commission. The WFP places the number of border camp population at the end of 1981 at about 199,000 residents, which, together with those in UNHCR camps (97,800) gives a total remaining in Thailand of about 293,000, not the 330,000 suggested by the Commission. This example illustrates the dilemma faced in attempting to reconstruct population totals and their movement with any degree of accuracy.

3.3.7 Because of the size and make-up of the movements across the border during the crisis years of 1979-1980, it is useful to provide here a detailed review of the various flows into UNHCR camps, to the border, between the camps and the border, as well as the non-spontaneous repatriations back to Cambodia.

3.3.8 The UNHCR Camps 1979-1984

3.3.8.1 As the 1979 refugee crisis began, there already existed three camps for Khmer refugees who had escaped between 1975 and 1978 (Table 3.1). Most of the refugees in these camps were resettled in third countries by 1981. The camps were administered by the Ministry of the Interior (as were all the camps for Vietnamese and Lao) unlike the new generation of camps established for Khmer arriving in late 1979. These came under the administration of a special unit of the Royal Thai Army called Task Force

80.5 They were referred to as 'holding centres'; their inhabitants as 'illectaliens'. Unlike the earlier camps for old Khmer, where there exist considerable freedom of in- and out-movement, the holding centres we 'closed' camps with all access restricted. Figure 3.2 shows the location all UNHCR-assisted camps for Khmer.



104°

Thai Red Cross Administered Camp

(for 1979 arrivals)

FIGURE 3.2 LOCATION OF UNHCR ASSISTED CAMPS 1979 - 80

3.3.8.2 The camps at Aranyaprathet (the oldest Khmer camp) and Lumpuk, and original Kamput camp, declined in size during 1979-1981 as the inhabitants were accepted for resettlement. The Khmer in these camparrived in Thailand before 1979 and were relatively easily absorbed resettlement countries since most had some education, skills or language.

for Pre-1979 Arrivals

for Post-1979 Arrivals

⁵ Task Force 80 was replaced in 1988 by a Royal Thai Army volunteer force referred to as the Displ Persons Protection Unit (DPPU).

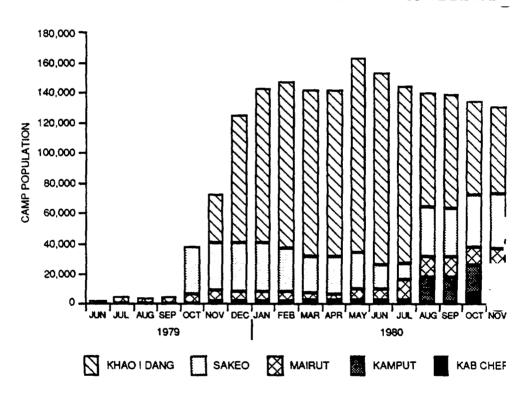
capability. A few were also spontaneously absorbed among the Khmer speaking Thai population along the border. Lumpuk also housed some 1,500 ethnic Thais who had fled Cambodia; these were eventually settled in Thailand. Aranyaprathet was closed in early 1981 and Lumpuk closed a year later. The old Kamput camp closed in late-1979. There is no evidence that any of the inhabitants of these camps spontaneously repatriated to Cambodia or relocated to the border camps.

- 3.3.8.3 In June 1979, newly arriving refugees were settled at Mairut where there had earlier been a camp for 1975 arrivals. It was subsequently to grow to over 12,000 as people were transferred from Sa Kaeo and Khao I Dang, including many ethnic Chinese. It closed in late-1981. In November 1979, a new camp was also established for new arrivals (mostly Khmer Rouge) next to the old Kamput camp. Its numbers peaked at over 18,000 a year later with transfers from Khao I Dang and from the small Thai Red Cross administered camp at Khao Larn. Kamput closed in early-1983. Most of the refugees in these two camps were resettled to third countries, the balance were moved to Khao I Dang. There is no evidence that any returned spontaneously to Cambodia but some may have been included in covert relocations to the border by the Royal Thai Army.
- 3.3.8.4 Two 'special purpose' holding centres were established. At Buriram, a small camp housed Khmer with close relatives in third countries and for whom relevant embassies had guarantied resettlement; it closed within one year when its population was resettled. Kab Cherng was opened in October 1980 to absorb some of the overspill from Khao I Dang. It closed a year later following the resettlement of some of its population, the transfer of others eligible for resettlement to Phanat Nikom processing centre, and the relocation of the balance to the border by the Royal Thai Army. It reopened in October 1983 to house refugees claiming Thai citizenship; most were subsequently settled in Thailand. There appear to be no data on how many of the Kab Cherng refugees that were relocated to the border remained there (and probably re-entered Thailand after 1984) and how many spontaneously repatriated themselves from the border into the interior of Cambodia.

⁶ The Khao Larn camp was established by the Thai Red Cross (TRC), under the patronage of Her Majesty, Queen Sirikit, to service about 2,000 unaccompanied minors.

3.3.8.5 Sa Kaeo and Khao I Dang were the two largest holding centres establishe for the late-1979/early-1980 influx. This was a time when, for a brief for month period, Thailand had an 'open door' policy, and which over 160,00 Khmer took advantage of to entered Thailand (Figure 3.3). Sa Kaeo we established specifically for the Khmer Rouge and the civilians under the control; the policy was to keep the Khmer Rouge separate from the other refugees. Each of the two camps will be discussed in some detail because of their significance to past and, in the case of Khao I Dang, to future return movements to Cambodia.

FIGURE 3.3
UNHCR CONTROLLED CAMPS FOR 1979-80 ARRIVAL



3.3.8.6 Sa Kaeo I (also referred to as Ban Kaeng) was established in October 19 to accommodate a massive influx of Khmer along the central borc Within two days of its establishment it had received a population of c 30,000. However, the camp was poorly situated, liable to flooding without access to clean drinking water. A better location was found so five kilometres away and in June, 1980, Sa Kaeo II was opened.

population peaked at over 36,000 later that year. When the camp was closed in late 1982, the residual population was transferred to Khao I Dang.

3.3.8.7 A major Vietnamese offensive in western Cambodia in the Fall of 1979 was responsible for the influx of refugees along the central and southern border. Those that were transferred to Sa Kaeo came from south of Aranyaprathet and were either Khmer Rouge soldiers and their families or civilians who had been forced several months earlier to retreat with the Khmer Rouge into the Cardamon Mountains. Their desperate physical conditions on arrival in Thailand was described by Shawcross (1984: 170) as follows:

"Daily, awful spindly creatures, with no flesh and wide vacant eyes stumbled out of the forests and the mountains into which the Khmer Rouge had coralled them. They had malaria, they had tuberculosis, they had dysentery, they were dehydrated, they were famished, they were dying"

Shawcross (1984: 177) went on to cite that some 30 were dying per day during the first month at Sa Kaeo.

- 3.3.8.8 Because of their desperate conditions, no differentiation was made between Khmer Rouge soldiers and civilians. Also, the granting of humanitarian assistance to military personnel and allowing them to recover inside Thailand was a strategic move by Thailand since it considered the Khmer Rouge as the only force capable of mounting any meaningful resistance to the Vietnamese. Thus, refugees quickly became a convenient buffer between Thailand and the Vietnamese; this buffer function was reinforced over the next decade.
- 3.3.8.9 Although located in a UNHCR-assisted camp in Thailand, it was clear that the Khmer Rouge maintained an almost total control over the Sa Kaeo population. Thus, when the possibility of an organized repatriation arose in the summer of 1980, some 7,500 were returned to Khmer Rouge controlled areas inside Cambodia. Moreover, in the months leading up to this organized repatriation, the Royal Thai Army had been forcibly relocating people, usually at night, from the camp to border areas controlled by the Khmer Rouge. These covert relocations are not included in UNHCR data on relocation (as shown in Table 3.2). There was, moreover, much debate at that time among the international community about the 'voluntariness' of

the organized repatriation from Sa Kaeo, since intimidation by Khmer Rouge cadres was widespread and attempts by UNHCR and ICRC to monitor returnees, to ensure that their return was truly voluntary, were frustrated by both the Khmer Rouge leadership in the camp and by the Royal Thai Army.

- 3.3.8.10 Khao I Dang was established in November, 1979, a month after Sa Kaec It grew even more rapidly, reaching 130,000 by May, 1980, at which time it was undoubtedly the second largest Khmer 'city' in the world. Most conthe refugees at Khao I Dang came from the Khmer Sereiker controlled border area north of Aranyaprathet and around Ta Phaya. Many were driven to Khao I Dang by insecurity and lawlessness in some of the boundaries, such as Mak Moun and Nong Samet; they came to the camp in the first instance for safety rather than for resettlement to third countries.
- 3.3.8.11 Khao I Dang soon became the principal camp from which resettlemer occurred. Officially, changes to Khao I Dang's population after Februar 1980, were only through resettlement, natural increase, voluntary relocatic to the border, and transfers from other camps as they were closed down However, as will be shown below, people have entered the camp illegal right up to the present day.
- In contrast to Sa Kaeo, there was little visible presence of Khmer Rouge Khao I Dang. However, that when residuals from Sa Kaeo and Kamp were later transferred to Khao I Dang there were many former Kt Rouge cadres among them, and, despite resettlement countries' efforts screen former Khmer Rouge out, it is generally accepted that many of the were subsequently resettled to the US and elsewhere.
- 3.3.8.13 Khao I Dang also became the most serviced camp; indeed, it probat became the most elaborately serviced refugee camp in the world. By ear 1980, thirty-seven voluntary agencies were working in the car (Shawcross, 1984: 242). These two factors, resettlement opportunit

⁷ Considerable concern was expressed about the scale of assistance, and the type of assistance, available refugees and the disparities that existed between them at Khao I Dang and the local Thai. A medi coordinator for the NGOs urged that 'Khao I Dang not be turned into another Mayo Clinic' but instead fc on public health programs (Shawcross, 1984: 243). ICRC was also very concerned about the disparity. early 1980, a total of 95 NGOs were at the border.

and extensive services, made it an increasingly attractive destination for others at the border, especially for those living in areas where security was lacking or where basic services were deficient. Consequently, the camp has always been a magnet for illegal residents; persons who gained access to the camp through the fence by night, often at considerable cost. The problem of illegals was accentuated after 1985 when most of the border population was forced into Thailand.

3.3.8.14

Throughout 1980, Thai policy was strongly in favour of repatriation across the border. Moreover, in the early months of 1980, UNHCR's policy was to facilitate any demand for voluntary repatriation to the border from any of the holding centres. It is estimated by some observers that on some nights in February and early March, 1980, as many as 200 families were trucked from Khao I Dang to the border by the Royal Thai Army with UNHCRs blessing. The Vietnamese interpreted these voluntary repatriations, and particularly the one in mid-1980, as a provocation by Thailand in that it was assisting the resistance, and especially the Khmer Rouge, to re-establish themselves inside Cambodia. In retaliation, the Vietnamese launched a brief invasion into Thailand in June, 1980 which brought the repatriation abruptly to a halt. Had this incursion not occurred, it is very likely that the repatriation would have increased in scale. Thereafter, voluntary repatriation was replaced by voluntary 'relocation' to the border camps.

3.3.8.15

Some 1,500 at Khao I Dang also participated in the voluntary repatriation of mid-1980. They were settled in Khmer Sereiker controlled areas and some of them may have returned to the interior. There are also indications that some forced relocations to the border were undertaken by the Royal Thai Army. Others chose to relocate to the border voluntarily after the relocation program was formalized in mid-1980. There is considerable anecdotal evidence of people leaving Khao I Dang, returning to Cambodia to seek out relatives, and subsequently returning to the camp. Some even undertook such journeys after they had entered the resettlement stream. However, as with all these movements, no specific record of numbers involved appear to have ever been kept.

3.3.8.16

Since mid-1982, Khao I Dang has the only UNHCR-assisted camp for Khmer (other than the 'special purpose' camps at Kab Cherg and Phanat

Nikom) until the recent establishment of Ban That. Officially, no mc Khmer refugees were admitted to Thailand, as Table 3.2 illustrates; t additions since 1984 have all been 'illegals' entering Khao I Dang a periodically given various degrees of legitimacy or recognition.

- 3.3.9 The Border Camps 1979-1984
- Various resistance factions, on both the political left and right, have utilithe remote border regions for their operations since the early 1960s. The include the right-wing Khmer Sereiker which has had bases along the T border since the mid-1960s. It remains debatable whether their prima raison d'etre was political or economic (i.e., smuggling). During the Pot era, however, their number increased, albeit their effectivenes, mounting any meaningful opposition to the Khmer Rouge was negligit. It has been suggested that these bases became increasingly signific following the Vietnamese invasion in late-1978 because they provide gathering points for refugees coming to the border (Mason and Bro 1983: 43).
- 3.3.9.2 Paralleling the flight of refugees to border areas controlled by Khr Sereiker, the Khmer Rouge, together with civilian populations tha controlled, also gravitated to the border as Vietnamese forces rapidly gai control of Cambodia. Thailand, fearing that it would be inundated people fleeing Cambodia, had closed its border in March 1979, resulting most of the displaced population establishing itself along the Cambodia of the border. Thus, two sets of border concentrations evolved during 1979 and 1980, those controlled by the Khmer Rouge and those controlled by the non-communist groups which eventually evolved into the KP1 and FUNCINPEC.
- 3.3.9.3 The scale of this movement to the border was a product of several fac (Reynell, 1988: 31). Firstly, people were fleeing the military confronta between the Vietnamese and the retreating Khmer Rouge. Second, m were simply fleeing Communist control, unable or unwilling to different between the 'communism' of the Vietnamese and that of the Khmer Ro

⁸ The precise demarcation of the border was often unclear, so many of the camps were actually in Thair

Thirdly, traditional Khmer animosity towards Vietnamese also contributed to their flight. Fourthly, Greve (cited in Reynell, ibid.) has suggested that during the Khmer Rouge period, many Khmer had become totally pre-occupied with need to escape. The events of 1979 made such escape possible. Lastly, as 1979 progressed, dwindling food supplies forced many to seek relief at the Thai border.

3.3.9.4

A comment should also be made about the timing of Khmer refugee movements to the border. Although the Vietnamese invaded Cambodia at the end of 1978, the main thrust of refugee movements to the border and into Thailand did not begin until several months later. It has been suggested by Osborne (1981b) that this delay in leaving was due the prevalence of considerable optimism, if not outright euphoria, in the early months following the invasion. Many Khmer were hopeful that a return to at least some semblance of pre-1970 Cambodia might be possible. For example, the ethnic Chinese and Sino-Khmer were optimistic that the Vietnamese would permit the revival of private trading. It took several months for disillusionment to set in. For those of Chinese ancestry, the border war between Vietnam and China in February, 1979, added to their plight as hostility towards them intensified. Also, by spring, 1979, a growing fear developed that the Vietnamese were about to begin a forced resettlement to the countryside similar to that perpetrated by the Khmer Rouge. Thus many 'urban' Khmer began to flock to the border from mid-1979. At that point, hunger was not a factor. It was, however, to become a major factor in the fall of 1979.9

⁹ There had been virtually no early-season rice planting in February, 1979, and only a small area had been planted in the main season beginning in May.



FIGURE 3.4 LOCATION OF BORDER CAMPS 1979 - 84

- KHMER ROUGE CONTROL
- KPNLF CONTROL
- ▲ SIHANOUK (FUNCINPEC) CONTROL

3.3.9.5 Figure 3.4 shows the location of the various border camps between 1 and 1984. Their sizes varied greatly, as did their permane Enumerations were rare, especially in the early 'emergency' period. officials generally accepted the numbers supplied by camp 'authorities' by the Royal Thai Army and it is widely accepted that such figures inflated. Moreover, since many of the camps, especially those controlle the Khmer Rouge, were a mix of civilian and military resistance international organizations faced a dilemma because their mandates lir them to servicing civilians (Shawcross, 1984). Access to many c camps by international organizations and NGOs was completely banne such cases food was simply handed over by WFP for delivery by the F

Thai Army. No direct monitoring of food distribution or of camp population was possible in such cases.¹⁰

TABLE: 3.4
BORDER POPULATION 1980

	Resident	Non-resident
February	245,500	744,500
April	165,000	938,000
August	236,156	715,924
September	196,336	182,464
December	195,886	332,464

Source: WFP/UNICEF/ICRC, Bangkok.

3.3.9.6 The juxtaposition of 'resident' and 'non-resident' populations being assisted at the border is illustrated in Table 3.4 for 1980, the year in which the largest population was congregated along the border. Non-residents were those deemed to be at the border only to obtain supplies. However, it was never established how many 'non-residents' chose to remain at the border nor how many 'residents' chose to repatriate into the interior.

3.3.9.7 Following the crisis year of 1980, numbers at the border recorded by UNICEF/WFP declined dramatically in 1981, as Table 3.5 shows. However, in these agencies' data, only a small proportion were listed as non-residents, 11 yet, Thai sources suggest that much larger concentrations continued to remain at the border. For example, a Thai policy document states that some 470,000 remained at the border in May 1981 (Royal Thai Government, 1981), and at the 1981 Annual Conference on Indochinese Displaced Persons in Thailand, the Royal Thai Government maintained that some 320,000 non-residents remaining at the border (CCSDPT, 1981: 74).

¹⁰ This is illustrated by the fact that for some camps population numbers remained at the same rounded-off numbers for periods of up to two years.

In the Northern Sector, between 4,500 and 6,200 were listed as non-residents in 1981 compared to between 33,000 and 26,000 residents. No non-residents were recorded in either the Northwestern (where the majority of refugees were located) or in the Southern sector in that year.

TABLE 3.5

BORDER CAMP POPULATION 1981 - 1984

		Northern Sector	Northwestern Sector	Southern Sector	То
1981	January	33,100	92,601	38,500	164,
	March	32,800	90,474	43,117	166,
	June	26,300	108,027	45,000	179,
	September	26,300	128,317	45,000	199,
	December	26,300	127,495	44,160	197,
1982	March	26,300	131,426	44,160	2(
	June	31,500	141,729	42,178	215,
	September	27,690	143,349	42,178	213,
	November	34,150	154,840	42,178	231,
1983	February	32,324	164,764	19,548	216
	July	47,495	153,956	20,722	222
1984	January	49,900	156,512	21,490	227
	July	53,982	171,563	21,490	247
	December	49,751	173,822	21,490	245

Source: UNICEF/WFP, Bangkok

- 3.3.9.8 It is clear from the above that it will never be possible to arrive at any functions on numbers at the border in the crisis years of 1979. What is clear, however, is that the camp population at the border will fluid; that camp numbers changed regularly as security conditions border fluctuated, both due to Vietnamese military activity as well as conflicts between factions at the border. Fighting broke out between con several occasions; Mak Moun camp and Nong Samet camp were particularly ruthless leadership in these early years. Many people moved between camps in search of long-lost relatives while others π between the camps and the interior with similar purpose.
- 3.3.9.9 Smuggling was rife; several of the camps became notorious for the a they took to protect their influence in the cross-border traffic. The su availability of western goods in Phnom Penh during late-1980 throughout 1981, bears testimony to the success of traffic across the b

'Taxation' of goods by all parties (RTA, the Khmer resistance, and the Vietnamese) was a further inducement for this trade. Such taxes became the major source of revenue for the developing KPNLF and FUNCINPEC resistance forces (Heder, 1981). This economic flow back and forth across the border, and the concomitant human flow that it obviously generated, adds further difficulties to attempts to identify and isolate spontaneous repatriation during these years.

3.3.9.10 Throughout the crisis years of 1979 and 1980, UNHCR maintained no presence in the border camps. ICRC managed to provide some protection functions, but it is clear that many genuine refugees had no choice but to remain in the camps. From mid-1980 onwards, and continuing right up to the Vietnamese dry-season offensive in late-1984, many thousands in the camps, including some who had been either forcibly or voluntarily relocated to the border, gradually began to drift back into Cambodia. Few of these spontaneous repatriants ever received any significant assistance.

3.3.10 Forced Repatriation in 1979

- 3.3.10.1 One of the darkest chapters in the history of Thailand's response to refugees, and the one which often overshadows the hospitality that the Royal Thai Government has otherwise shown to refugees as well as the costs to both government and to the thousands of affected Thai villagers in the border areas, is that of the forced repatriation of some 43,000 to 45,000 in June 1979. This forced repatriation followed an earlier, and less publicized forced return of about 1,500 persons. The repatriation was undertaken by the Royal Thai Army and reflected the growing concern in Thai government circles that its borders were about to be inundated by masses of Cambodian refugees. Food shortages in Cambodia, as well as Vietnamese offensives against remaining pockets of Khmer Rouge resistance were concentrating more and more Khmer along the border.
- 3.3.10.2 The repatriated population was rounded-up from a number of border encampments north Aranyaprathet as well as from the Wat Ko camp in Aranyaprathet. All were from non-Khmer Rouge controlled border concentrations. They were taken by bus some 300 kilometres to Preah Vihear (see Figure 3.4) at the summit of the Dangrek escarpment. From

there they were forced to walk back into Cambodia down the mountaine and thickly forested escarpment. They were given little or no food, water, and no directions how to traverse the extensive minefield that latthe foot of the escarpment. Mortality from mines, as well as fredehydration and diarrhoea was very high (Greve, 1987: 69). It has be suggested that a death toll among the repatriants of 10,000 is a conservate estimate (Mysliwiek, 1988: 98).

- Only limited protests came from the international community; UNHC response was seen by many as especially muted (Shawcross, 1984: ICRC, some embassies, and the press, however, did succeed in focus, international attention on the repatriation which had the effect of previous further repatriations. One of the most significant consequences of repatriation was that it succeeded in directing international attentio. Thailand's needs vis-a-vis Cambodian refugees at a time when w attention was otherwise focussed upon the plight of the Vietnamese 't people'.
- 3.3.11.4 Many of the survivors of this repatriation subsequently made their way to the border camps, and, after 1985, into Thailand.
- 3.3.11 Voluntary Organized Repatriation in 1980
- Thailand's policy towards refugees arriving after 1979 has always stre repatriation as the principal solution. When establishing the Kampu Kaeo and Khao I Dang camps, the Royal Thai Government insisted these camps were only temporary until their inhabitants could be repatring Resettlement to third countries was only reluctantly accepted a alternative when it became clear that repatriation was not an imme option. Thailand has also always been concerned with the magnet of that resettlement has had; the more resettlement occurred, the more refused on negotiating a repatriation agreement. However, because The has never recognized the Phnom Penh government, bilateral negotic have not been possible. Cambodia was equally intransigent; universelved political endorsement from the ASEAN community, it will willing to discuss repatriation.

- 3.3.11.2 Throughout the early 1980s, Thai authorities repeatedly referred to a Voluntary Repatriation Plan that UNHCR was supposedly negotiating with Cambodia. At the 1981 CCSDPT Annual Meeting, Squadron Leader Prasong Soonsiri, Secretary General of the National Security Council. called for the international community to support efforts to implement a comprehensive repatriation program (CCSDPT, 1981:17). The following year, John Kelly of the Office of the UN Coordinator for Humanitarian Assistance to Kampuchea also emphasized the importance of pursuing a Repatriation Plan (CCSDPT, 1982:53). At the same meeting, a representative of the Royal Thai Government clearly laid the blame for lack of progress on Cambodia when he stated that "... little or no progress in voluntary repatriation . . . countries of origin have not agreed to the principle that they accept the return of all those who wish to go back" (CCSDPT, 1982: 15). At the 1983 CCSDPT annual conference, Prasong again stressed Thailand's intent to implement a Repatriation Plan; lack of progress was due to Cambodia not cooperating. He stated ".. the Heng Samrin regime makes it difficult for the plan to be realized" (CCSDPT, 1983: 11). At the same time he was optimistic that most of the border Khmer wanted to return, stating "... if a first group can reach and live at home safely, another 200,000 will follow" (ibid: 11). A repatriation agreement between Thailand and Cambodia was finally concluded in 1989.
- 3.3.11.3 By 1983, there was growing concern about whether refugees were still willing to return. While earlier studies had shown that many refugees were at the border for safety rather than to join the resettlement stream (Osborne, 1980a and 1981a), UNHCR suggested in 1983 that the number wanting to go back was very small (CCSDPT, 1983: 71). Indeed, it was suggested that the heavy NGO concentration had made life in the camps too comfortable; services such as health and education were so superior to those available in Cambodia that NGO programming was actually working against repatriation (ibid: 71). Table 3.2 shows that virtually no organized voluntary repatriation occurred after 1980.
- 3.3.11.4 The only large-scale organized voluntary repatriation that did occur was that of June, 1980, already referred to earlier in this section. It was organized by the Royal Thai Government and endorsed by UNHCR, but not

negotiated with the Cambodian or Vietnamese authorities. Indeed, t Vietnamese and Cambodian authorities were strongly opposed to the return The refugees were to be returned to Khmer Sereiker and Khmer Rou controlled border areas. Thai authorities had planned for some 100,0 refugees to be involved in this movement (Shawcross, 1984: 315). Of 9,022 who actually returned before a Vietnamese retaliatory incursion¹² i Thailand abruptly brought the exercise to a halt, about 7,500 were from Kaeo and were hard-core Khmer Rouge or were Khmer Rouge-control. persons who had probably been coerced into returning. The balance w from Khao I Dang. All were repatriated into the border areas; none w returned directly into the interior of Cambodia. Essentially they returned to a war zone, and, because their movements were controlled resistance forces whose credibility and strength depended upon a la population base, it is very likely that the majority had little option bu remain at the border from where they eventually returned to Thailand w the resistance bases were displaced into Thailand by the Vietnam offensive of 1984-1985.

3.3.11.5 Following the Vietnamese incursion, UNHCR became unwilling cooperate with further voluntary repatriation without an indication from Phnom Penh authorities that it was a willing recipient of the refugees. 7 authorities, however, continued to press for the need to return more per from the holding centres to the border.

3.3.12 Relocation 1980 - 1986

3.3.12.1 There was really very little difference, other than in name, between organized voluntary repatriation of mid-1980 and the voluntary relocat to the border that followed over the next five years. Essentially, in order maintain at least some level of control over the Royal Thai Arr continuing forcible movement of people to the border, UNHCR agree program of 'relocation' where people would be voluntarily relocated in the holding centres to border camps. These movements were the monitored by the agency to ensure that they were truly voluntarily relocated to be considerable concern among no

Which resulted in as many as 50,000 new refugees spilling across the border into Thailand.

observers at the time about the extent of coercion involved in the relocations.

- In all, some 32,500 were officially relocated voluntarily from UNHCR administered camps to the border, 18,500 of which were moved during 1981 (Table 3.2). To this must be added an unknown number who were covertly moved before the relocation program was formalized. There are no data on whether the relocated population remained at the border or moved deeper into Thailand. Anecdotal information suggests that some did indeed return to the border specifically to return to Cambodia, having become impatient or disillusioned with camp life. Others relocated to the border specifically to seek out lost relatives. Such searches also led to some returning into Cambodia. Some officials within UNHCR believed that successful relocation would reduce demand for resettlement; at the 1982 CCSDPT annual meeting a UNHCR official stated that ". . for every one refugee who returns home (from the border), there may be ten who will think twice about leaving (being resettled)" (CCSDPT, 1982:2).
- 3.3.12.3 Most of the relocated population remained at the border and were eventually displaced back into Thailand in 1984-1985.

3.4 1985 - Present

In the fall of 1984, as the dry season began, Vietnamese forces launched a major offensive aimed at driving the resistance permanently out of Cambodia. Their campaign was a success; by early 1985 most of the resistance camps had been forced to retreat into Thailand. Thus began a new chapter in the history of displaced persons along the Thai-Cambodian border. By July, 1985 some 220,000 persons had been established in evacuation sites inside Thailand, the majority in the area south and north of Aranyaprathet (Figure 3.5). After some initial relocations, the border camp population stabilized by late 1985 in three principal camps - Site 2, Site B, and Site 8 - as well as few smaller ones (Table 3.6), some of which have



FIGURE 3.5

LOCATION OF UNBRO ASSISTED BORDER CAMPS
1985 - PRESENT

since closed or been consolidated. All have been assisted by UNL although access to the Khmer Rouge controlled camps was very restricted the international community until relatively recently. In addition UNHCR protected camp at Khao I Dang remained with a resist population continuing to be considered for resettlement until early 1989.

3.4.2 A brief synopsis of the current camp situation is provided below. information is useful in setting a background to current repatri prospects and for a discussion of problems that can be expected who organized repatriation, and any concomitant spontaneous repatriation place in the future.

5

Refugee Problem

TABLE 3.6
BORDER CAMP POPULATION 1985 - PRESENT

		Nor	them Sector		Central	Sector	Sout	nem Secto	r			Total
1985	JULY	46,291		155,	779	1	9,895				221,965	
1986	JAN JULY	٠	52,902 53,825		164, 167,		14,657 15,090				232,543 236,560	
		H	luay Chan	Natrao	Site B	Site 2	Site 8	Borai	Sok Sann	Ta Luan		
1987	JAN JULY		8,375 5,550	12,309 11,888	42,078 44,484	144,202 154,074	30,957 30,148	3,438 4,276	7,557 7,670	4,238 6,509		253,154 264,599
1988	JAN JULY	O'Trao 9,570 9,570	8,880 8,880	6,940 6,940	49,547 53,490	157,953 167,391	31,452 33,519	4,416 4,416	8,261 8,261	9,680 9,680		286,699 302,147
1989	JAN JULY DEC	no data 10,688 20,642	closed	closed	57,529 62,636 53,206	174,877 139,462 147,614	35,507 39,822 32,526	4,350 4,443 4,443	8,903 10,254 8,732	6,168 closed	Site K 11,000 8,062	287,334 278,305 275,225

Source: UNBRO, Bangkok

3.4.3 UNHCR camps

- 3.4.3.1 Khao I Dang's population has steadily declined as its population we resettled. Increasingly, it became a camp made up of persons who had bee rejected for resettlement; many had been rejected by more than one countr. With the prospects of further resettlement diminishing, Thailand declare the camp closed at the end of December, 1986. In response to the pressure, selection for resettlement of the residual population was steppe up one more time in 1988 after which Thai authorities officially decreed the all remaining population would be transferred to the border for eventure repatriation. Relocations to border camps of the first group of 'ill' camp residents began in March, 1987. While the camp is still physically place with a population of about 11,600 in December, 1989, it is not closed to further resettlement processing except for family reunion case. However, it is unlikely that any remaining in the camp would be like candidates for resettlement.
- The magnet effect of resettlement from Khao I Dang, which has alw-3.4.3.2 tended to draw people to it, albeit illegally and therefore often at great cc has continued to have this impact even though Thai authorities have I reacted kindly to 'illegals' in the camp. The Khmer refugee 'arrivals' sir. 1984, shown in Table 3.2, are in reality people who entered Khao I De illegally and who were periodically given amnesty.¹³ Thus a distinct was made among population depending upon date of arrival. arriving up to late-1982 were designated as 'KD card holders' (i.e., the arrivals); those arriving in 1983 became known as 'Family Card holde and arrivals up to August 1984 were designated 'Ration Card holde Officially, only the former were eligible for resettlement, however, dur the later waves of resettlement selection, and especially during the fi wave in 1988 and early-1989, all residents were considered. The US, example, re-interviewed all 11,319 it had previously rejected; it overture its earlier denials in about 24 percent of the cases (US Committee Refugees, 1989: 8). More recent illegal arrivals have been registered

¹³ In mid-1985, for example, estimates of the illegal population in the camp ran from as low as 2,000 (UNHCR) to as high as 6,000 (some NGOs). The registered population at that time was about 29,000

'KT Card holders' and are all destined for relocation to the Ban That camp which is an adjunct of Site 2, albeit under UNHCR control rather than under UNBRO. Their relocation to Ban That, and their implicit location adjacent to the border camp population destined for eventual repatriation, is to deter further illegal arrivals at Khao I Dang and squash any illusions about possible resettlement.

3.4.3.3 The single most important issue that now needs addressing at Khao I Dang is that of its changed status from being a camp for resettlement to one where the population is destined for repatriation. This means that the nature of its services need to be re-orientated, and its population, which for the past decade has believed that it would be resettled must now be prepared for repatriation. While the former can be readily achieved by NGOs in the camp, the latter is clearly a much more difficult prospect. This issue will be dealt with further when potential for future repatriation is discussed later in this report.

3.4.4 Border camps

- 3.4.4.1 Although the border camps are assisted by UNBRO and its associated NGOs, each camp is administered by its own Khmer administration. Unlike the UNHCR camps, where the refugees' welfare is the direct responsibility of UNHCR while the Thai DPPU administers the camp, ensures its security, and otherwise controls access to the camps, at the border camps, UNBRO is simply a service agency providing food and an array of social, educational and health services. The three political fronts of the CGDK are the recognized government-in-exile of Cambodia, and as such, are given full responsibility for 'governance' of their population within the camps by Thai authorities. Essentially, they are states within a state. All three fronts maintain political offices and quasi-diplomatic status in Bangkok.
- 3.4.4.2 The location of current UNBRO assisted border camps is shown in Figure 3.5 and their populations are summarized in Table 3.6. Population numbers continue to be subject to much conjecture and considerable discrepancies exist between numbers submitted to UNBRO by camp administrators and those established by UNBRO at periodic headcounts. Consequently, it is

inadvisable to draw inference about out-migration from the camps, a possible spontaneous repatriation, when numbers periodically sh substantial decreases following an enumeration. For example, Table shows a very significant decline in Site 2's population between January and July 1989. This difference results from a census taken at mid-year who demonstrated that the camp administration had been inflating its statistics must be remembered that population numbers determine ration allocatic and, while UNBRO attempts to monitor its allocations closely, it is in camp administrations' interest to acquire excess rations since their milit also need to be fed. There also appears to be considerable trade in rat books; a quite common practice is for people to sell their ration books¹⁴ subsequently register as new arrivals, thereby obtaining new book simultaneously inflating camp populations.

TABLE 3.7

SITE 2: HEADCOUNT POPULATION, NATURAL INCREASE, AND POPULATION CHANGE

	PROJECTED	UNBRO ESTIMATE	HEADC
UNBRO headcount, January 1987 Projection to December 1987 @ 4.5%	150,691		144,2
UNBRO estimate, December 1987	100,071	157,953	
Projection to December 1988 @ 4.5%	157,492	·	
UNBRO estimate December 1988		174,877	
Projects to July 1989 @ 4.5% UNBRO headcount, July 1989	164,613		139

Source: UNBRO, Bangkok

3.4.4.3 Real changes to camp population are from new arrivals from Cambodic occasional transfers from other camps, spontaneous return to Cambodic rare resettlement cases through family reunion provisions, and na increase. New arrivals (with the qualifications made in 3.4.4.2) transfers between camps are monitored by UNBRO and all resettles

¹⁴ Many women from Thai villages near Site 2 can regularly be seen at the camp collecting range Recent changes to the distribution procedure, which includes pictures of the recipient in the ration box aimed at reducing this practice.

cases are recorded, however, when natural increase is factored into population change equations, further discrepancies and irregularities result.

3.4.4.4 For example, in Table 3.7 an attempt is made to factor in natural increase at Site 2 between a headcount in January 1987 and one in July, 1989. UNBRO's medical unit suggests that natural increase is as high as 4.5 percent per annum (UNBRO, 1989: 10). Applying this to a population of 144,202 determined by headcount in January 1987, the population in July 1989 should have grown to 164,613 without any adjustments for in- or outmigration. However, in December 1988 the population was reported by UNBRO to be 174,877, which, after a headcount in mid-1989, was adjusted downwards to 139,462. Where did the balance of the natural increase go? What about the relatively large numbers of new arrivals that were recorded between 1987 and 1989? Does the lower number of the mid-1989 headcount suggest that there has been a sizable net out-migration? If so, have these missing people repatriated spontaneously? None of these questions can be answered definitively. They do, however, provide a further illustration of the problem of vagaries in numbers that has existed along the border ever since the 1979 exodus began.

3.4.4.5 Site 2 is by far the largest of the border camps. It is a bamboo city of around 150,000 under the control of the KPNLF. It is administered as five separate entities, each with its own administration reflecting the pre-1985 border areas from which the camp populations were drawn (Figure 3.6). Because of the current political rift within the KPNLF between Sonn San and General Sak, the camp is also split along political lines. The KPNLF's military base is located at some distance west of the camp, but soldiers regularly visit the camp since most have families there. A military hospital lies adjacent to the camp and several of the Khmer-administered vocational programs clearly also service the military wing of the KPNLF.

During a visit to Site 2 in January, 1990, a group of about 25 soldiers were encountered in one of the camp restaurants where they were openly celebrating the 'bounty' they had received for capturing a Cambodian army tank.

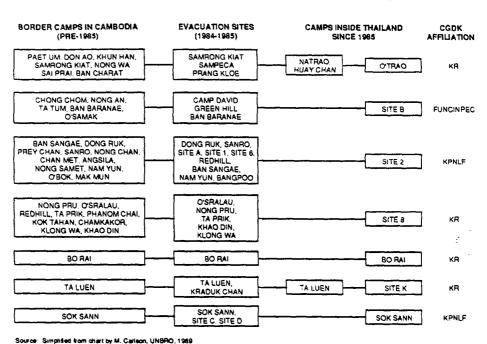


FIGURE 3.6 EVOLUTION OF CURRENT BORDER CAMPS SINCE 1979

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- 3.4.4.6 The camp is located only one kilometre from the border. It is frequer shelled by Cambodian forces; during the summer of 1989 heavy shell was experienced on several occasions, albeit not as heavy as experienced at Site 8. The demoralizing and psychological impact on civilian population of such shelling cannot be over-emphasized. Adde this, there are serious problems of internal insecurity; crime and vice is arms are plentiful, and domestic violence is widespread (La Committee, 1987). The recent establishment of a Khmer Police Force as Khmer Judicial System by UNBRO, in cooperation with the DPPU and Khmer Administration, is expected to reduce some of the security problem the long run.
- 3.4.4.7 Population densities in the camp are very high, especially in the c northern sector of the camp. There is an acute shortage of water drinking water is trucked into the camp. The expansion of veget gardens which would allow some supplementation of income as we improve overall nutrition is also limited by water scarcity. Health ser are good, and education facilities are available at elementary le Vocational training has only recently been introduced, but are now t

actively pursued. Khmer Self Management (KSM) is being promoted when possible, and a growing number of Khmer are replacing expatriate volunteers and Thai staff. Most programs are being implemented on behalf of UNBRO by the Catholic Office for Emergency Relief and Refugees (COERR).

- 3.4.4.8 Although the camp is administered by the KPNLF, there is by no means universal support for the front. Many observers have identified a strong desire among many of the camp's population to be relocated to 'neutral camps'; perhaps as many as 60 percent of adults are apolitical and many of these would opt for residence in a neutral environment if given the choice. The KPNLF clearly disputes such suggestions and is strongly opposed to any discussion of a neutral camp.
- 3.4.4.9 Sok Sann is a smaller KPNLF civilian camp along the southern border. It is predominantly a support-base for its military satellite and is under a strong and well run central administration. It operates with a high degree of autonomy from its Site 2 counterpart.
- 3.4.4.10 Site B, also known as Green Hill, is a camp of over 50,000 located in a wooded area near the summit of the Dangrek escarpment. It is the base of FUNCINPEC and its military wing, the AFS. Its satellite military base was moved into occupied/liberated areas inside Cambodia in early 1990. In February 1990, Sihanouk announced that he had returned from exile in Paris and Beijing to reside in the 'liberated area'; this is his first visit to Cambodia for 11 years.
- 3.4.4.11 The camp is well-administered with the administration operating as a cohesive unit; some would argue that it is even more authoritarian governed than the Khmer Rouge administered Site 8. It is a relatively open camp and many plant gardens in adjoining areas. The security situation is superior to Site 2 or Site 8; there has never been any shelling at this camp. Internal security is also good and few of the social problems existing in Site 2 are manifest here. It has grown steadily over the years from people transferring from other camps. A very pronounced female population exists due to the very high involvement of males in the military. Overall, there appears to be

a strong commitment to FUNCINPEC and to the Sihanouk cause among t majority of the population.

- 3.4.4.12 Site 8 is the largest of the Khmer Rouge run camps located at the foot c mountain and very near the border. Like Site 2, it has also been subject frequent shelling and had to be evacuated more than once during summer of 1989 because of the intensity of shelling. It currently happopulation of around 33,000. Until relatively recently, the camp v restricted to visitors, but over the past two years it has been opened up a 'showcase' by its Khmer Rouge administration. This is not the ca however, for its three satellite camps nearby.
- 3.4.4.13 Basic health and education services are available and a vocational trair facility opened recently. The camp has had more of a problem of attract expatriate volunteer staff than have other camps since many poten volunteers are reluctant to service what they perceive to be a Khmer Rc population. Also, there was initial resistance by the administration to introduction of some of the social and educational programs, but rec desire of the Khmer Rouge to present a more 'reformist' face has tempe such opposition. More gardening is carried out here than in any ot camp.
- 3.4.4.14 The camp population remains firmly under the control of the Khmer Rou although the majority are not committed Khmer Rouge supporters. Hur rights violations were widespread (Lawyers Committee, 1987) and eveneer of moderation that has been superimposed does not hide the fact people still fear retribution from the Khmer Rouge should they step on line. Consequently, there is no open talk among residents of a desir move to neutral camps. However, estimates by informed observer, numbers who would move to such camps range from 30 percent to as as 80 percent. In early-1990, there was widespread fear in the camp a immanent forced relocation of the entire population to Khmer Rougestand reas inside Cambodia.
- 3.4.4.15 The remaining camps at O'Trao, Borai, and Site K are all Khmer Ro controlled and much less accessible to the international commutunity UNBRO, ICRC and their NGO partners do have access, however. O'

was established in 1988 at a more easily reached location and received population from the other Khmer Rouge camps in the northern sector. Site K was also established at a more accessible and secure location. Borai remains the most remote of these camps, and was in process of being abandoned in early-1990 as its population was relocated inside Cambodia, or alternatively transferred to Site K. Compared to Sites 2, 8 and B, these camps remain minimally serviced and have virtually no contact with the outside world.

3.4.5 The 'Hidden' Camps

- 3.4.5.1 The term 'hidden camps' has been used to refer to an array of military and mixed military and civilian camps that are beyond the protection and monitoring of the international community. They are closed to all but Royal Thai Army personnel who take responsibility for the delivery of food and other supplies, including arms. Because of their closed nature, there are no reliable data on numbers in these camps nor the proportion that is civilian. Estimates of population generally range between 50-60,000, however, with the military successes of the resistance movements since the Fall of 1989, there is much recent evidence of populations being relocated from these camps into the 'occupied/liberated' areas inside Cambodia.
- 3.4.5.2 The Khmer Rouge maintains the largest number of such camps. Three satellite camps are located near Site 8, of which at least one has a substantial civilian population. Two others are along the central sector of the border in the vicinity of Ta Phaya, and there are at least two others along the northern border east of the more open O'Trao camp. The self-imposed isolation of these camps has meant that community health services, such as basic vaccinations against common child diseases, ¹⁶ are denied their inhabitants. During the Summer of 1989, a polio epidemic broke out in the Site 8 satellites where it was estimated some 10,000 children under 15 years reside. Vaccinations were subsequently provided, but only to those children brought from the camps to a neutral site some kilometres from the

About 95 percent of all children in UNBRO administered camps receive a full slate of preventative vaccines by their third birthday (Pugh, 1989: 2). No similar coverage exists in the hidden camps. The resultant health risks the hidden camps therefore pose to neighbouring Thai villagers cannot be over-emphasized.

camps, and not before several children had died and others become severel paralysed. The continuing denial by Khmer Rouge cadres of such basi community health services to their populations has serious implications for any eventual repatriation.

3.4.5.3 Both the KPNLF and ANS (the military wing of FUNCNIPEC) also had hidden camps associated with Site 2 and Sok Sann, and with Site respectively. However, these tend to be more exclusively military in natural with populations of about 14,000 in the case of the KPNLF and 11,000 the case of the ANS.

3.4.6 Demand for Neutral Camps

- One of the most common questions asked of me during interviews wi people in Site 2 was whether 'neutral camps' were going to be establishe A number of NGO personnel are promoting the concept that a camp established for those who do not wish to be located in any of the cam controlled by the CGDK fronts. As the possibility of repatriation become increasingly likely, many camp residents fear that they will be forced relocate inside Cambodia by the political fronts and thereby be forced continue to remain under their control. The poor security situation in Site is a further reason for a desire to relocate; a neutral camp is perceived at less likely target for shelling. Khao I Dang is generally cited as the mappropriate site for such a neutral camp.
- 3.4.6.2 The KPNLF leadership, as well as that of the other two fronts, are clear opposed to such a concept. The CGDK's credibility is contingent on control of a population. Any reduction of that population, especially substantial one that might occur if a neutral camp concept gair momentum, is therefore unacceptable to the CGDK authoriti Representatives of all three fronts publicly deny that there exists a significant desire among their respective populations to relocate to neu sites, and this may indeed be the case for all camps other than Site 2. Site 8. The Thai military is also likely to remain unsympathetic to concept as long as the fronts continue to play their buffer-zone functioning the border. On the other hand, the current Thai government may using the neutral camp concept as a political strategy in pressuring

resistance to move more forcefully to achieving a political solution to the Cambodian dilemma.

3.4.6.3 UNHCR also talks of a neutral camp. However, their concept is fundamentally different. A neutral camp for UNHCR is one associated with an organized repatriation exercise to which refugees are taken prior to their dispersion inside Cambodia.

4 THAILAND'S REFUGEE POLICY

- 4.1 This section will examine Thailand's eclectic refuge policy. Specifically, it will show how responses to Khmer refugees have been shaped by national economic, social and security concerns, as well as by regional and global politics. Some understanding of the evolution of Thai policy is required to explain why the commitment to repatriation has featured so strongly in the formulation of responses to Khmer refugees over the past decade and a half. While the focus here is primarily on policies towards Cambodian refugees, the review also needs to be placed within the broader context of Thailand's reaction to the Indochinese refugee crisis.
- 4.2 In the development of Thailand's policy on the Indochinese refugees, Muntarbhorn (1989) has identified three past phases, and tentatively suggests that a fourth phase is currently beginning; these phases are:
 - the preventive and retaliatory phase of 1975-1979,
 - the 'open door' phase of late-1979 and early-1980,
 - the humane deterrence phase from 1980 to 1989, and,
 - a 'swinging door' phase that appears to have begun in the past year. To this should be added the pre-1975 phase during which many of the fears and concerns that manifested themselves after 1975 have their antecedents. Each of these phases will be described below.

4.3 The Pre-1975 Policy

4.3.1 It was shown in Section 2 that Thailand has frequently been a recipient of refugees from all of its neighbouring countries as well as from China and Vietnam. The Vietnamese have been especially prominent and their arrivals in large numbers since the early part of this century, and particularly following World War II, has always succeeded in raising fear among Thai about Vietnamese hegemony in the region. Notwithstanding this concern, however, Thailand has generally extended its hospitality by allowing refugees to settle and integrate into local communities. Many 'Old

Vietnamese' refugees (i.e., pre- World War Π) have succeeded in moving into relatively high ranks in Thai society.

- 4.3.2 The military government that came to power in 1949, changed Thailanc attitude towards Vietnamese refugees. The new military leaders' foreign policy became characterized by anti-communist, anti-Chinese, and an Vietnamese sentiments. Vietnamese were restricted to residing in twel provinces in the Northeast, and in 1950, further restrictions limited the settlement to eight, and then to only five provinces.
- During the 1950s, the number of Indochinese in Thailand continued to great as a result of both natural increase and further influxes from Vietnam, a lesser extent from both Laos and Cambodia in the final years of Franco-Indochina war. The fact that many refugees were active support of the Vietminh intensified Thailand's fear of a communist 'fifth colun being established within its borders. Following the French defeat at D Bien Phu in 1954, Thailand decided to repatriate all Vietnamese and, 1960, signed an agreement with North Vietnam whereby the ent Vietnamese community was to be returned to that country. A total 80,000 Vietnamese were registered for repatriation and, until the Gulf Tonkin incidence brought repatriation to a standstill four years later, so 35,000 refugees were returned.
- 4.3.4 Fears that the Indochinese constituted a subversive element within Thails continued throughout the 1960s and up to the end of the Vietnam Wal. _
 Thailand's own insurgency in northeastern Thailand intensified during 1960s, Indochinese communists were implicated on several occasions. I of no surprise, therefore, that Thailand's fear of the security risk t refugees from neighbouring communist countries create has continued feature significantly in its refugee policy ever since.
- 4.3.5 These earlier influxes into Thailand never received any internatic recognition as refugee movements and consequently no aid was e received by Thailand to assist with their local settlement and integrat. The lack of recognition by the international community of the refu burden created in Thailand in the wake of the post-war European pullb from the region was not forgotten in 1975 when, yet again, masse.

refugees were poised on Thailand's border in the aftermath of the Vietnam War. Thailand's past experience with refugees has probably also contributed to it never having become a signatory of either the UN Convention on Refugees nor the UN Protocol on Refugees. This latter point is cogent to any critical evaluation of Thai policy.

4.4 The Preventive and Retaliatory Phase of 1975-1979.

- 4.4.1 In June 1975, shortly after the first post-Vietnam War influx into Thailand had begun, the Royal Thai Government adopted the following policy guidelines (Muntarbhorn, 1989: 28):
 - should displaced persons attempt to enter the Kingdom, measures will be taken to send them out of the kingdom as fast as possible. If it is not possible to repel them, they will be detained in camps;
 - displaced persons entering the country must report to the relevant authorities and be detained in camps. If they fail to do so they will be treated as illegal immigrants and legal proceedings will be instituted against them accordingly;
 - displaced persons will be disarmed on entering Thai territory;
 - the Ministry of the Interior will be responsible for establishing temporary camps to accommodate displaced persons in accordance with humanitarian principles; and
 - the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will act as coordinator with international organizations and contact the Governments of Laos, Kampuchea and Vietnam so as to ask them to repatriate their own nationals.
- 4.4.2 Response to the initial wave of Khmer and Lao that entered Thailand in 1975 was to emphasize that their options were limited to either returning to their country of origin or to being resettled to a third country of permanent asylum. Simultaneously, both the newly installed governments in Laos and Cambodia were anxious to avoid concentrations of their nationals installed in camps along their respective borders and from which they could engage in guerrilla activities (Songprasert and Chongwatana, 1989). They each declared that it would be safe for the refugees to repatriate, however, not a single refugee opted to return to either country between 1975-1979.

- Initial response to Thailand's overtures to potential resettlement countri was limited. Also, it became clear that, initially at least, resettleme countries were only interested in refugees from urban and educat backgrounds. This reinforced Thailand's position to prevent more arriva Moreover, Vietnamese 'boat people' began arriving in increasing numbe and added to the existing problem of Khmer and Lao 'land people'. T concept of refoulement began to receive serious consideration. Boat peop were pushed back to sea, and a forced repatriation of land people w repeatedly threatened.
- The Khmer Rouge government succeeded in sealing its border. Thailand, so that following the initial post-revolution exodus, only a tric' arrived over the next four years. Moreover, the Royal Thai Government attention was increasingly taken up by the accelerating arrivals of 'box people'. Thus, the refugee situation along the Cambodian border stabilized during 1976 to 1978 and considerable progress was made with the resettlement.
- 4.4.5 Following the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia in late December, 197, the refugee situation along the border changed dramatically. A renew influx was threatening as both civilians and retreating Khmer Rouge cad began massing at the border. Moreover, this was happening at the tile when the 'boat people' crisis was also reaching its peak and rene pressure of further Lao refugees was gaining momentum. Thailand adop an intransigent stand aimed at keeping Khmer refugees at the border at costs. Throughout 1979, international relief agencies were required service a growing mass of often severely malnourished displacees local along the southern, central and northern sectors of the Thai-Cambod border.
- A crisis situation prevailed by mid-summer, 1979, as food shortage: Cambodia drove even more to the border. But the border remained firr closed. To underscore its policy of non-admittance, Thailand forci repatriated between 43,000 and 45,000 across the border at Preah Vihe The international outcry that followed in the wake of this refoulement including an appeal by the UN Secretary-General, caused Thailance

reconsider further forced repatriation. In October, 1979, the Thai Prime Minister, General Kriangsak, visited the border and was ".. visibly shocked by the suffering" (Shawcross, 1984: 172). Within days of his visit, Thailand declared an 'open door' policy for Khmer refugees.

It should be emphasized, however, that this change of heart was not exclusively for humanitarian reasons. The threat of Vietnamese hegemony in the region caused Thailand, and indeed the ASEAN community in general, to see the Khmer Rouge as the only military force capable of mounting any meaningful resistance to Vietnamese expansion in the region. Thus, by allowing the Khmer Rouge cadres and their associated civilian populations into Thailand, an opportunity was afforded them to recover and regroup, which in turn permitted them be in a stronger position to mount an effective opposition to the Vietnamese. Both the US and China strongly supported this strategy. However, the ultimate raison d'etre of the strategy must not be forgotten; Cambodians were given shelter in Thailand on the understanding that all would eventually be repatriated.

4.5 The 'Open Door' Phase of late-1979 to early-1980

- 4.5.1 The International Conference on Indochinese Refugees held in Geneva in mid-1979, at which a much stronger commitment was made by western industrialized countries to assist with the resettlement of Indochinese, clearly had an impact upon the 'liberalization' of Thai policy. The strategic considerations along the Cambodian border, together with an effective lobbying campaign by a number of governments and by the UN on the diplomatic front, provided the additional motivations. Thus, on October 19th, 1979, the Royal Thai Government announced its 'open door' policy which consisting of the following provisions (Muntarbhorn, 1989: 30):
 - however large the influx of displaced persons, no one will be turned back;
 - entry into Thailand for Khmer distressed civilians will be unimpeded;
 - temporary asylum will be granted to displaced persons until they can return to their homeland after fighting has ceased, or they are resettled in third countries; and
 - if displaced persons choose to be repatriated, they will be repatriated voluntarily, with the knowledge of the UNHCR.

- Within days of the policy declaration, the first refuges began arriving at the Sa Kaeo camp and over the next three month, some 160,000 Khme refugees were accommodated in holding centres in Thailand.
- 4.5.3 Meanwhile, further concentrations of displacees were building along the border as food shortages and fighting between Vietnamese and residua pockets of Khmer Rouge resistance continued. Because of an array political impediments and frustrations in trying to mount a relief campai into Cambodia through Phnom Penh to help offset a perceived impendin famine, a 'landbridge' had been established by the international commu at several points along the Thai border to channel food and rice seed in Cambodia. The enormous concentration of Khmer displacees along the border that followed caused renewed concerns among Thai officials that new and massive influx of refugees was immanent. It was perceived th the large numbers arriving at the 'landbridge' all wanted to enter Thailar rather than return into the interior of Cambodia and this belief promp many in government and the military to put pressure on the Prime Minis to reverse his 'open door' policy. However, before the policy could reconsidered by General Kriangsak, his government fell from power.

4.6 The 'Humane Deterrence' Phase of 1980-1989

- 4.6.1 An underlying fear among Thai authorities during the 'open door' powas that its acceptance of refugees, together with the prospects for the country resettlement, created a magnet effect that drew ever-increasing numbers from all three Indochinese countries into Thailand. The policy 'humane deterrence' was therefore conceived; it was intended to se negative signals to prospective refugees and discourage them from choosing Thailand as a possible destination.
- 4.6.2 The essence of humane deterrence consisted of four eleme (Muntarbhorn, 1989: 31), namely:
 - that the Thai border is closed to new arrivals:
 - that those illegally entering Thailand as from the implementation of policy will be kept under close detention in 'austere camps';

¹ For a detailed and critical review of the many dimensions of this crisis, see Shawcross (1984).

- that there will be no third-country resettlement of such new arrivals; and.
- that the treatment of displaced persons in such a category will be of a minimum standard not higher than strictly necessary for their subsistence.
- The policy was not, however, applied consistently to each of the refugee groups arriving in Thailand. Temporary asylum was readily granted to all arriving Lao until 1985. Thereafter, an individual screening program was introduced aimed at differentiating between bonafide refugees and economic migrants. The latter were denied temporary asylum and have since been relocated to closed-camps from which they are destined for repatriation.² In the case of the Vietnamese, new arrivals in 1981 were confined to the humane deterrent camp at Sikhiu from where some were periodically released for resettlement. In 1986, all remaining Vietnamese, as well as new arrivals, became eligible for resettlement and Sikhiu camp was closed. However, following the upsurge of new arrivals in 1988, there has been a reversion to a humane deterrence policy for all new arrivals from Vietnam. Repatriation has never been an issue for Vietnamese; only four have ever voluntarily repatriated from Thailand.
- For Khmer, the policy of humane deterrence has taken a different direction. Since early 1980, the border has been officially closed to all new arrivals. However, the border camps were able to absorb all new arrivals. This situation has continued to prevail since 1985, when all the border camps were relocated inside Thailand. No third country resettlement of border camp population has been permitted, although a few have been periodically granted permission to emigrate under 'family reunion' provisions. Thailand has repeatedly emphasized its position on the border camp populations, namely, that repatriation voluntary or otherwise is the only acceptable solution. Following the official closure of Khao I Dang, and with the completion of a final resettlement selection by potential resettlement countries, its population is also now destined to the repatriation stream.

² Many have subsequently opted to participate voluntarily in the UNHCR organized repatriation program. Unlike the Khmer and Vietnamese, the Lao repatriation program has been moderately successful, especially in the past two years.

- 4.7 The 'Swinging Door' Policy Commencing 1989.
- The term 'swinging door' was coined by Muntarbhorn (1989: 34) to refer the oscillating nature of Thai policy, a policy that also tends to differential between refugee groups with "... the door being more open for some the for others" (ibid.). It is clear that what is stated as official policy does not always correspond to what is actually happening. Khao I Dang is a good example of this; officially closed now for two years, the camp continues house refugees and, aside from the fact that resettlement is now no long an option, the camp appears no different than it was before its 'closur The continuing arrival of refugees, and the growing acceptance of the that most new arrivals have economic rather than political motives, togeth with declining responses to resettlement by western countries, I reinforced Thailand's position on keeping refugees out. On the other har new arrivals are being admitted. Moreover, repatriation appears now to once again becoming the dominant panacea to the refugee problem.
- Vietnamese arriving before March, 1989, were recently reclassified 'longstayers' and became eligible for resettlement. Those arriving since being subject to individual screening, similar to that introduced for Lowland Lao in mid-1985, to determine their refugee status. Individual screened-out are being kept in detention centres, ostensibly destined eventual repatriation. For the Lao, the growing success of the office repatriation program appears to also be resulting in increased spontal repatriation. Rigid screening of all new arrivals is continuing.
- 4.7.3 Since no Khmer in any of the camps are any longer eligible for resettleme and given that Thailand's unequivocal policy on local settlement will change, the significance of repatriation becomes especially critical to refugee problem along the Cambodian border. The fact that there is n also some limited optimism that a political solution will be reached, all perhaps not as imminently as some hope or predict, adds to the empha being placed upon preparations for repatriation. Thailand strongly support repatriation; the critical question is how any such repatriation exercised should be mobilized. Four possibilities exist.

- 4.7.4 At the official level, an organized repatriation to Cambodia is preferred and contingency planning has been underway for some time on both sides of the border. UNHCR has been designated as the lead agency for organizing a repatriation despite the fact that it currently has no responsibility for any of the Khmer refugees other than the few in Khao I Dang and Ban That. It is clear that any organized repatriation by UNHCR can count on the cooperation of the Royal Thai Government. Details of current contingency planning for such an exercise will be given later in this report.
- 4.7.5 It can realistically be hypothesized that should an organized repatriation be mobilized, a parallel stream of spontaneous repatriants will also develop. Reasons for this will be discussed in the later section dealing with current potentials for repatriation. While such return movements will also serve the basic Thai objective of having people return to Cambodia, it may encounter resistance, if not outright opposition, from a policy perspective. None of the three CGDK fronts will favour such return movements since they would result in their loosing control of where repatriants return to. Given the political links that exist between the Royal Thai Government and the CGDK, it remains to be seen to what extent the fronts will influence Thailand's reaction to any potential large-scale spontaneous repatriation. Thai resistance to a spontaneous return may also be encountered because of concern about their being able to effectively monitor such movements. Indeed, both UNHCR and ICRC also have concerns about monitoring a spontaneous repatriation, however, their concerns focus upon what happens to the returnees on the other side of the border.
- 4.7.6 Of major concern to both the international organizations and the NGOs is the fear that a repatriation may be mobilized by each of the three front of the CGDK into the territories each controls on the other side of the border. The fear here is whether such return movements will be truly voluntary. To some extent, such return movements have already begun since late-1989, and appear to be ongoing currently, especially into areas controlled by the Khmer Rouge. From Thailand's strategic perspective, the buffer function which the border camps and their respective resistance forces represent is equal, if not more effective, if located on the other side of the border. Thus

there is some apprehension that Thailand may not oppose such retumovements.

The fourth possibility is for Thailand itself to implement a return movem across the border if it interprets political conditions favouring such a return technically, none of the Khmer in Thailand are 'refugees' in internationally accepted sense. Moreover, Thailand is not bound international statutes on the treatment of refugees, and especially on question of non-refoulement. As illegal aliens and displaced person forced return of Khmer by Thailand would technically constit 'deportation' rather than refoulement. While there currently exists indication that Thailand is contemplating such an option, it is neverth necessary to keep it in mind, especially when considering the issue voluntary repatriation and addressing the possibility of resistance to UNHCR organized voluntary repatriation, or how to respond to Khwho might refuse to participate in any such organized return.

PART TWO

SPONTANEOUS REPATRIATION

5 SPONTANEOUS REPATRIATION

- In this second part of the report, the scale, directions, nature, needs, problems and consequences of spontaneous repatriation will be examined. The discussion will be divided into four parts, namely, an examination of the very fluid border situation of the early 1980s and up to the Vietnamese offensive in 1984-1985, which culminated in driving the border camps into Thailand; the period 1985-1988, during which only limited cross-border traffic occurred; the past two years, during which there has been a significant increase in cross-border movements and spontaneous returns; and the anticipated problems and needs of a potential major repatriation following a peace settlement, and where it is hypothesized that a sizable spontaneous return movement will parallel any organized repatriation. Table 5.1 summarizes the major return movements to Cambodia and some associated variables.
- It is widely accepted that spontaneous repatriations play a significant role, and often the dominant role, in most major repatriation exercises; there is ample empirical evidence in support of this assertion (Coles, 1985). The objectives of the International Study of Spontaneous Repatriation, of which this report is a part, are to systematically document a number of known spontaneous repatriations and to analyse the characteristics and processes associated with such return movements.
- There are many reasons why refugees choose to return spontaneously rather than through an organized process. In many cases, it is simply a question of convenience and/or pragmatism; after refugees perceive that it is safe to return, they decide to do so immediately rather than await for an organized return to be arranged by governments or UNHCR. This is especially the case where refugees are spontaneously settled near the border of their country of origin. Such refugees are seldom registered with either the government of their asylum state or with UNHCR. Another common reason for refugees preferring to return spontaneously is that they perceive

TABLE 5.1 SUMMARY OF REPATRIATIONS TO CAMBODIA

	1975 - 1978	1979 - 1984	1985 - 1988	1989 - 1990
Policy of Cambodia government	border tightly closed by Khmer Rouge	initial openess to retur- nees after 1981 increasingly hostile	border closed hostile to returnees	increased openess to retur- nees policy to attract people away from fronts
Situation along border	a few small resistance camps	heavy population concen- tration in border camps, much fluid movement across border	border camps relocate into Thailand seen as buffer zone by Thailand	fronts gain control of border, increasing movement across border risk of mines
Thai policy	border closed to refugees, repatriation not seen as option for those already in Thailand	border briefly open, repatriation seen as main solution relocation to border as alternative	few new arrivals, repatriation desired but not seen as viable	repatriation treaty signed, strong pressure to repatriate
Organized repatriation	none	about 9,000 in 1980 into Khmer Rouge/KPNLF controlled areas	none	the first few individuals repatriated under new treaty
Forced repatriation	none	about 45,000 in 1979, many others forcibly relocated to border camps	none	none
Spontaneous repatriation	поле	some 400,000 primarily from border camps	very little	movement across border in- creasing much is tempo- rary; 5,000 in early 1989
Coerced repatriation by resistance factions	none	from Thai camps to Khmer Rouge controlled border areas	none	large relocations by Khmer Rouge into occupied areas other factions also relocating civilians a bas border
Other solutions adopted	1975 arrivals al	third country resettle- ment becomes dominant	resettlememnt of residual refugees border	resettlement terminated all remaining retugees and all border camp people to

less of a risk for themselves in such a return. In such cases, refugees simply wish to meld into their home areas without necessarily being identified as returning refugees. They may be fearful that their home government remains hostile towards them or that local people may be suspicious of them. Distrust of agencies responsible for mobilizing an 'official' return movement, whether local or international, may also be a factor for them deciding to return independently, especially when such organized returns requires protracted processing times and/or movement through a series of 'transit' and 'reception' centres.

5.4

In the case of the Cambodian border, all of these factors are present. In addition, there is the added factor of the role and objectives of the three political fronts vis-a-vis any major repatriation. Their credibility and strength is based upon the population base they draw upon, and, while a sizable proportion of the refugee population is supportive of them, it is widely accepted that the majority of refugees are apolitical and would much prefer to be in 'neutral' camps. It can therefore be hypothesized that many would likely repatriate spontaneously in order to escape the control of the fronts. On the other hand, it is clear that the leadership of the fronts would strongly oppose such a trend, either forcibly or through political pressure on Thai or international authorities.

5.5

This second part of the report will, therefore, address a number of issues arising from past return movements and from the current preparations for a wholesale return if the process of establishing a realistic and comprehensive political settlement is ever successful. Such issues will include the basis and character of spontaneous repatriation in the past -- there has never been any organized repatriation into government-controlled areas of Cambodia; the roles in the past and the future of the international and non-governmental organizations in facilitating spontaneous returns; the nature and appropriateness of assistance rendered in the past or currently under review for possible implementation in any future return; the pre-conditions that need to exist in terms of both perceived security and an economic climate in which returnees can fulfil their basic needs; the nature and validity of existing information flows -- always subject to much manipulation in conflict situations -- and upon which refugees will base first their decisions

to return and second, whether to go back spontaneously; the lill destinations to rural or urban Cambodia of spontaneous returnees who lexisted in a state of near total dependency in 'urban' camp environment over a decade; and the possible conflicts that may arise between poter spontaneous returnees and the political fronts on the one hand, and between and Thai and/or Cambodian authorities, and possible even international organizations, on the other hand.

6 SPONTANEOUS REPATRIATION 1979-1984

- This section will focus upon the period 1979-1984, during which the Thai-Cambodian border was characterized by much transient movement, described by two observers as follows:
 - ".. movement was a way of life. A camp had no fixed or enforced boundaries, and refugees made trips back to the interior of Kampuchea. The population of a camp could double in anticipation of a distribution, or be cut in half by an attack" (Mason and Brown, 1983: 4).
- The problem of accurate data on numbers of refugees at the border during the crisis years of 1979-1980 has already been alluded to in Sections 1 and 3. Quite early during the research for this report, it became evident that it would not be possible to compile any precise statistical data on numbers returning to Cambodia. Such data simply do not exist. Moreover, in any consideration of spontaneous movements back to Cambodia, it is necessary to examine the migratory experiences of three distinct populations. These are:
 - the Khmer who fled into Thailand and were concentrated in UNHCR holding centres;
 - the Khmer who fled to the border and remained in camps controlled by the emergent non-communist political resistance, by local (Khmer Sereiker) warlords, or by surviving Khmer Rouge cadres; and
 - the Khmer who gravitated to the border in late 1979, throughout 1980, and to a declining extent in 1981, to obtain material assistance such as food, agricultural kits, and rice seed from distribution centres set up by the international community.
- To these three principal groups one may add a fourth, albeit smaller population, namely, the traders and smugglers who, following the fall of the Khmer Rouge, essentially became the only conduit through which consumer goods passed into Cambodia (and on to Vietnam, as well), and through which any valuables that had survived the ravages of the Khmer

Rouge era were syphoned out of the country. This population was certaining the most mobile, moving freely and with regularity between the border and the interior of the country. Some were based at the border, others in the interior. As such, they played a critical role in providing an informatic flow on changing conditions in the interior of the country to the people the border, and to people in the interior on conditions prevailing at the border. They also became very active in 'guiding' people across the fronting regions and through military lines and minefields.

- This highly fluid demographic situation at the border was various controlled by policies and practices of the Royal Thai Government, *
 Royal Thai Army, the emergent Khmer political factions, the local warlow the Vietnamese military, and the Heng Samrin government in Phnom Per Not surprisingly, therefore, the nature and scale of movements across the border, their permanence, their motives, and the needs that they created, all extremely complex to unravel.
- 6.5 The growing concentration of Khmer at the border, and the resultant for that more would enter Thailand, led the Royal Thai Government to rever its 'open door' policy and once more close the border to Khmer refuge At the same time, however, it facilitated the internationally sponsor famine relief operation across the border, the so-called 'landbridge', who quickly became a magnet drawing even larger numbers into the borregion. The Royal Thai Army had its own agenda at the border, it savthe border population as a strategic buffer between it and the Vietname Its control of the movement of people and goods into and out of this but zone also proved to be a very profitable proposition. The mobilizing n communist political fronts, as well as the recovering Khmer Rouge, str only to gain stature by concentrating as many civilians as possible into ar under their respective control. Prince Sihanouk even visited Khao I Dan an attempt to persuade people to relocate to his camps rather than op resettlement to the West. The warlords controlling the camps a benefitted; they gained their wealth and power from 'taxes' of persons commodities transiting through their territories. The more people and gc that passed through their areas, the wealthier they became and the gre their power. As for the Vietnamese military, their primary concern with

prevent the Khmer Rouge from re-entering liberated areas; any 'taxes' that they could collect from transient populations passing through their lines provided them with a welcome sideline. Phnom Penh's policy was to strongly oppose migration to the 'landbridge'; it wanted all humanitarian assistance to flow to Cambodia through Phnom Penh and thereby be in under its complete control. On the other hand, it encouraged civilian refugees on the Thai border to return to Cambodia, if only to weaken any future resistance to it that might develop along the border, rather than for any altruistic reasons.

In Section 3 it was suggested that there is no evidence that any of the refugees who left Cambodia in 1975, or who were able to escape during the subsequent Khmer Rouge era, were among those who voluntarily or forcibly relocated to the border from 1980 onwards. All appear to have been resettled to the West. The spontaneous repatriations of the early-1980s were, therefore, primarily of people who came to the border after 1979. Thus, in analysing these return movements, it is expedient to do so in the

context of the four groups of border/refugee populations identified above.

6.7 Spontaneous Repatriations from the Holding Centres

Once Cambodians were permitted to enter Thailand in late-1979, UNHCR 6.7.1 was requested to established holding centres for the refugees, of which Khao I Dang and Sa Kaeo became the two major ones. The distinction between the Khmer Rouge dominated population at Sa Kaeo and the essentially non-communist character of Khao I Dang's population was made earlier in Section 3.3.8. Of the former, almost all eventually returned to the border, either as part of the short-lived organized repatriation of mid-1980, or as a consequence of the relocation program carried out by the Royal Thai Army. Osborne (1980a: 8) suggests that about half of the Sa Kaeo population were there by choice (i.e., were Khmer Rouge supporters). These willingly relocated to Khmer Rouge controlled areas at the border. However, it is generally accepted that much coercion was needed in getting the remaining civilian population which did not identify with the Khmer Rouge to participate in the 'voluntary' relocations. Shawcross (1984: 316) cites a Khmer Rouge chant sung to encouraging people to relocate back across the border:

Those who go back first will sleep on cots.

Those who go back second will sleep on mats.

Those who go back third will sleep in the mud.

Those who go back last will sleep under the ground.

- Given the strict control the Khmer Rouge exercised over its population while in a UNHCR assisted camp, it is highly unlikely that o relocated to the border the population was any less free to go wher pleased. Anyone caught attempting to leave a Khmer Rouge controcamp was branded a traitor for whom only one punishment existed. He it must be assumed that few, if any, of those under their consubsequently became part of any spontaneous repatriation into the interior Cambodia. Almost all are likely to have remained in Khmer Rouge controllar and the same camps at or near the border, and, after the 1984-1 Vietnamese offensive, were once more relocated into Thailand, mostly Site 8 or to one of its satellites. Much the same can be said about residents of the Kamput camp.
- 6.7.3 For the populations in the other holding centres, and especially those Khao I Dang, the question of voluntary repatriation was more completed 1,500 at Khao I Dang volunteered for the organized repatriation mid-1980 and many others later agreed to be relocated to the border volunteered for the relocation program was formalized. However, no specific data exist who, or how many, subsequently repatriated themselves from the border in 1980, that it was highly improbable that more than five perces the population in UNHCR camps ever returned spontaneously into interior of Cambodia, either directly from the UNHCR camps or indirectly form th
- one of two reasons. People either went there to search out lost relatithey went specifically to join the emergent resistance movements. Moreover, the seeking to reunite their families subsequently moved from the to the interior as part of their search. It must be remembered that contents to the interior as part of their search.

1979 and 1980, perhaps as much as a third of the population of Cambodia was in the process of migrating between rural areas, between the rural areas and the towns, and between the borders and the interior. In many cases, those who returned to the interior in search of relatives eventually came back to the border, either because of their failure to locate relatives or because they were unwilling to remain in the country for political or economic reasons. There were also many cases of refugees who, once accepted for resettlement, returned to Cambodia to get additional family members out of the country to join them in resettlement.

- 6.7.5 The recruitment campaigns by the resistance movements also contributed to concentrating people in the border camps. For example, for several months following Prince Sihanouk's visits to Khao I Dang and Kab Cherng in mid-1982 to promote the aims and objectives of FUNCINPEC, hundreds left the camps to join the resistance at the border. However, it is very unlikely that any of these relocatees to the border became part of the spontaneous repatriation. Like the Khmer Rouge, the emergent leadership of the KPNLF and FUNCINPEC took steps to ensure that there was no loss to the population needed by them to gain credibility as a resistance force and as a legitimate partner of the Coalition Government. They were especially anxious to ensure young males remained at the border.
- Throughout the crisis years, both the Royal Thai Government and the UNHCR saw repatriation as the obvious and desirable solution to the Cambodian refugee problem. Their policies and programs were geared to keeping the idea of repatriation foremost in the minds of the refugees (Barber, 1986: 303). Relocations between UNHCR camps, as well as from the camps to the border, were intended in part to reinforce the notion of repatriation. It is also clear that for many refugees, their initial aspirations were also to return home (Osborne, 1981a). This was especially the case among those of rural peasant origin or of pre-1975 urban worker class origin.
- 6.7.7 Osborne's study (1981a) of refugees in four camps¹ found that 5 percent of his sample were willing to return immediately and without qualification. A

¹ Khao I Dang, Sa Kaeo, Kamput and Mairut.

further 46 percent were willing to return immediately providing it was saf to do so and that they received UNHCR assistance. (This may suggest the they had already placed themselves into a state of dependency on UNHCR' Some 24 percent were willing to return, but only with qualifications. The wanted to return only if there were no Vietnamese in the country; require that a monitoring procedure be in place to ensure their safety; and wanted t return only as a group. About 18 percent were unwilling to return unde any condition; they were committed to resettlement because they already ha family in third countries or because they had lost too many of their famil during the Khmer Rouge era. Regrettably, Osborne's sample was too sma to be sufficiently statistically reliable to permit us drawing inference at all the refugee population.² It does, however, provide good anecdot evidence that those originating from the pre-1975 urban and educated eli and from the Lon Nol military establishment, saw repatriation as a unacceptable option, while those from rural Cambodia were, initially least, much more prepared to return. Osborne also suggested that Sir Khmer showed particular reluctance to return (1981a: 6).

Osborne (1980b: 26) estimated that only about one-third of Khao I Dang population in April, 1980, was likely to qualify for resettlement and to balance (some 100,000) were probably destined for repatriation. Man simply wanted to remain in the UNHCR camp because of the insecurity the border or because of the corruption among the border car administrations (ibid.: 39). Only after resettlement became institutional in the UNHCR camps, did many of the 'non-elite' begin to adopt resettlement option. It is argued by some observers present in the camps the time that well-meaning NGO personnel needlessly promoresettlement as the only option among Khmer who might otherwise has been content to wait-out the possibility of repatriation. Certainly, by 196 the greater majority in the UNHCR camps had become firmly committed resettlement and it is highly unlikely that there was much desire spontaneously repatriate thereafter.

Only 204 persons were surveyed in the four camps, 88 percent of which were farmers or fishermen. I however, the only study of its kind undertaken at the time.

6.8 Spontaneous Repatriation from the Border

In Section 3 it was shown that far more Khmer refugees were concentrated along the border than were ever located inside Thailand. Several of the border camps had been in existence for several years as bases for the Khmer Sereiker; a few even dated from before the overthrow of Sihanouk in 1970. Many of these camps straddled the border, and would periodically shift into Thailand for reasons of security. In many places, the border was ill-defined; this lack of definition actually suited Thailand's border camp policy. It was from this border camp population that most of the people who spontaneously repatriated were drawn.

6.8.2 The motivations for coming to the border were many. Some sought to escape the fighting between the Vietnamese and the Khmer Rouge. Others simply wanted to flee from another communist government; many of the survivors of Khmer Rouge atrocities were unable or unwilling to distinguish between one communism and another. To them, 'communism' was a concept that embraced all the horror of the Pol Pot era. Historic distrust and fear of Vietnam added to their desire to escape. On the other hand, many other migrants were essentially apolitical. They came to the border because there was food. They came to seek out relatives.³ And, after more than four years of almost total lack of access to health care, many came simply to obtain medical treatment. Some were en route to the holding centres, with the hope of resettlement, but became stranded at the border after Thailand closed it again in early-1980, while others deliberately remained at the border fearing that to enter Thailand would make it difficult or even dangerous for them to repatriate. Others came specifically to join the emergent resistance, and some came for pure economic reasons - to take advantage of the rapidly expanding smuggling industry.⁴ The border camps

While tracing centres were established by ICRC in the holding centres and at the border, ICRC was unsuccessful in its attempts to negotiate an agreement with the Cambodian Government to permit it to undertake tracing activities inside Cambodia. Only since 1989 has ICRC been permitted to extend its tracing service inside Cambodia. By early-1990, some 180-190 letters per month were flowing between family members in the camps and inside Cambodia. ICRC's service currently constitutes the only "neutral" exchange of information between camp dwellers and resident Cambodians.

⁴ It was suggested by some respondents that it was possible to estimate fluctuations in cross border movement by the extent to which commodities such as Cambodian silk or dried fish appeared in the market at Aranyaprathet.

contained a very heterogeneous population and consequently, it. commitment to repatriate varied tremendously.

- Once at the border, many became trapped by it. The leadership in the camp needed to control populations to entrench their power. They did not wan people to leave. One way to achieve this was to control information. Once in the camps, the poorer, uneducated people of peasant and lower urbat class backgrounds were cut off from the outside world almost to the same extent that they had been during the Khmer Rouge period. The information they had about what was happening in Cambodia during 1980-1981 we inaccurate, inadequate and out of date. The 'upper' and 'middle' classes well as the traders, were not in the habit of sharing information or the organizational networks with the masses. In the Khmer Rouge controlle border camps, the control of information was even more complete.
- Throughout 1980-1981, much of the border population continued to belie that fighting was continuing throughout the country and not just along the border. They feared that the Vietnamese might punish them for not having sided with them. Many did not understand that it was only the presence the Vietnamese in Cambodia that was preventing the Khmer Rouge from returning. Above all, information on the prospects for spontaneor repatriation was limited or nonexistent. Osborne (1981a: 9) found that a percent of his sample in the UNHCR camps had no knowledge of the fathat some Khmer had returned to Cambodia. Among those that were away that some repatriation was occurring, none had any details of how well to returnees had fared (ibid.). It is highly unlikely that that the majority of the border camp population was any better informed.
- 6.8.5 From informal discussions with camp residents in Site 2 and Site B, it we evident that not a single respondent who had been at the border in 198 1981 was able to recall any information or publicity on the scallability agricultural and household kits from the international community for pec who repatriated. Few had recollections of people returning to the interfor any reason other than to seek-out relatives; indeed, several responde forcefully disputed suggestions that a spontaneous repatriation had in foccurred. They conceded that many people moved between camps, in page 1981 to escape the insecurity and corruption that was widespread in some care

(e.g., at Mak Mun and Nong Samet) and in part to seek out missing relatives. Camps were also periodically evacuated because of shelling or direct attacks by the Vietnamese or even Thai forces. Such inter-camp movements contributed to the continually fluctuating camp populations⁵ and to the uncertainty about who was a 'permanent' resident at the border and who was only a temporary sojourner.

- There is also much anecdotal evidence of a seasonal migration between the border and the interior. During 1981, some border camp population took advantage of the provision of free seed and tools by the 'landbridge' (see following section) and temporarily migrated into the interior to plant a monsoon rice crop (CCSDPT, 1983; 8). Thereafter, up to 1984, a number of border residents regularly migrated into the interior during the monsoon growing season to cultivate rice, returning to the border after the harvest. They retained their family books during the migration and were thus able to procure rations immediately on their return. Alternatively, some registered as 'new' arrivals.
- 6.8.7 Given these diverse conditions, and the total lack of any reliable data on movements into and out of the border camps, it is impossible to determine with even a modest degree of precision how many of the border camp population spontaneously returned into the interior. The only estimates on numbers spontaneously repatriating to Cambodia are those of UNHCR, and these appear to be based entirely upon the number of resettlement kits distributed by the agency within Cambodia (see below).

6.9 The Landbridge

The so-called 'landbridge' was responsible for the majority of Khmer who came to the border from late-1979 to early-1981. Food stocks in Cambodia became critically short from mid-1979 as a result of the complete disruptions to agriculture caused by the Vietnamese invasion. Only a small acreage of the dry-season rice crop was harvested in the spring of 1979. Following the invasion, thousands of people abandoned the Khmer Rouge

⁵ Osborne (1980b:17) points to the differences between the 'official' populations of Mak Mun (50,000) and Nong Samet (160,000) as given by their Khmer administrators, and the numbers estimated by the NGOs working in the camps (35,000 and 60,000) respectively.

instituted cooperatives (and their rice-fields) to return to their home area to search for lost relatives. Elsewhere, crops were not harvested beca areas were still being militarily contested, or alternatively, the Khmer Ro had destroyed all crops and livestock they could not carry with them dur their retreat. For somewhat similar reasons, only limited progress made with the main monsoon rice crop sown in mid-1979. An ac shortage of rice-seed also existed. By mid-1979, the spectre of famine widespread, and for much of the rest of the year a joint UNICEF/IC mission negotiated with the Cambodian Government to implement a far relief program.⁶ The British NGO, Oxfam, undertook a parallel re operation.

TABLE 6.1

DISTRIBUTION OF HUMANITARIAN AID TO THE THAI-CAMBOD BORDER 1979-1981

AREA	PERCENT OF HUMANITARIAN AID ICRC UNICEF					WFP
	1979-80	1981	1979-80	1981	1979-80	
Cambodia	34	44	82	83	65	
Border	46	55	16	12	27	
Holding Centres	19	-	-	-	-	
Affected Thai	1	1	1	5	8	:
Total	100	100	100	100	100	

Source: Tuomi (1983: 171)

6.9.2 Thus, during the latter half of 1979, food shortage became a major r for migration to the border and the growth of the border camps. F production for the 1979-1980 season was only 538,000 tons compare requirement of 1,692,000 tons (Mysliwiek, 1988: 25), Logistics

⁶ For a detailed and highly critical discussion of these protracted and convoluted negotiations see Sha (1984).

principal problem in mobilizing the relief effort. The transportation infrastructure inside Cambodia was virtually non-existent and required a major investment of over US\$ 60 million (Tuomi, 1983: 178) before any food aid could be delivered. Moreover, major constraints were placed upon the international community's efforts to monitor its relief delivery and to ensure that the food was reaching the interior of the country. This led to the proposition that a parallel relief initiative be mounted across the Thai border. While Phnom Penh protested such a strategy, it was powerless to prevent it. Thus the concept of a 'landbridge' across the Thai border was born in late-1979.

- 6.9.3 The first emergency food deliveries to the border encampments took place in October, 1979, at the Nong Pru, Nong Samet, Phnom Chat, Tap Prik and Mak Mun camps (Tuomi, 1983: 162). From these first deliveries, which were targeted at those already at the border, grew the massive program of food relief, provision of agricultural kits, and the supply of rice seed, which, during the following year was to attract upwards of a million Khmer to the border. The distinction between the 'resident' and 'non-resident' population in the border camps made in Table 3.4 summarizes the scale of movement to the border during the peak year of 1980. The qualifications made elsewhere in this report about the reliability of population numbers apply especially to any estimates of persons serviced by the 'landbridge'. Table 6.1 summarizes the relative significance of humanitarian aid delivered by the three principal line agencies at the border vis-a-vis the aid they delivered directly to Cambodia.
- 6.9.4 The objectives of the 'landbridge', therefore, were to:
 - provide the border provinces with humanitarian assistance in the event that insufficient aid reached them via Phnom Penh:
 - to reduce a potentially larger permanent flow to the border by providing basic needs to the nearby provinces; and
 - to take advantage of the excellent logistics available in Thailand in provisioning Cambodia.

⁷ The first distribution through the 'landbridge' to people who returned to the interior occurred in December, 1979 (CCSDPT, 1980: 31).

Its immediate goal was to supply the needs of up to two million Kh (CCSDPT, 1980: 31), although the final number of recipients turned or be well below this number. In addition to milled rice, the 'landbridge' supplied high protein food supplements as well as fishing nets, to vegetable seed, rice seed and even some draught animals. Nong (became the principal distribution point because of its level terrain and accessibility from both sides of the border. San Ro was also used. WFP began to wind down its 'landbridge' activities in early-1981 as per relocated to the interior following an improved monsoon crop (CCSI 1981: 52); it terminated later that year after it became apparent that the rice harvest, while still nowhere near a normal year's need nevertheless sufficient to sustain the population (Charny and Short, 1 257).

6.9.5

The significance of the 'landbridge' to our discussion of spontar repatriation during 1980 and 1981 is that, because of the sheer sci movement that it generated, it camouflaged much of the perma movement between the border and the interior and adds to the difficu defining who, and how many, actually repairated from the border. many observers at the border at the time any distinction between 'resid and 'non-residents' was purely one of semantics. Many who came i border for supplies remained to take advantage of the superior me services available. TB patients, for example, had to remain at the t for at least six months. Some 'non-residents' were at the border days, some remained for much more protracted periods, and some T permanently (Mason and Brown, 1983: 27). Many came to the border than once, and, as conditions in Cambodia improved in the latter p 1980, some came less out of desperation but rather because c availability of free food and other services. Again, this illustrates the fluid nature of the border population during these crisis years.

⁸ During 1980, 103,000 metric tons of rice seed were distributed across the 'landbridge', 25,000 sub agricultural kits (each intended to provide tools and supplies for five to six families), and 144,000 m and 300,000 cool season vegetable seed kits were distributed through the 'landbridge' (CCSDPT, 19 On one occasion in October, 1980, over 12,000 oxcarts and 34,000 'walkers' arrived from the intreceive supplies at Nong Chan.

Medical services were virtually non-existent outside Phnom Penh in the early 1980s. People are the border were suffering from a variety of diseases, including TB, malaria, leprosy, pneumonia, di and an array of intestinal parasites (Steketee, 1986: 293).

6.10 The Traders

By late-1979, the border had become a large market place and a haven for 6.10.1 black marketeers and smugglers. Denied any imports of 'consumer' goods since 1975, and because most 'luxury' goods were destroyed during the Khmer Rouge years, Cambodia was an almost unlimited market for consumer goods smuggled from Thailand. Indeed, both Vietnam and Laos were also supplied with consumer goods via the trade across the Thai-Cambodian border. In the late-1970s, the Khmer Sereiker border camps were at best little more than loose groupings of mutually suspicious warlords engaged in black market trade across the border (Heder, 1980: 3). As such, they made a significant contribution to the scale of movement between the border and the interior. They also controlled the information flow between the interior and the border. Heder (1981: 13) suggests that the numbers of Khmer traders operating out of the largest of the market sites at Kok Sung in 1980 (near the KPNLF controlled Nong Samet camp) approached 10,000.10 Even closed camps such as Khao I Dang had their share of smugglers who regularly went 'through the fence' to the border and into Cambodia - some estimates of their number are as high as 200.

Many of the border-based traders spent as much time in Cambodia as they did on the border, and it is therefore very likely that many were identified as returnees when inside Cambodia. Indeed, being identified as a 'returnee' provided a degree of cover for their illegal activities. The Thai and Vietnamese military, as well as the three resistance fronts, all 'taxed' the traders as they crossed their respective territories. As traders, they clearly took advantage of any assistance available to people at the 'landbridge'. As in most emergency situations, a proportion of the relief supplies ended up on the black market. Likewise, it is very conceivable that they also took advantage, by claiming to be returnees, of assistance such as resettlement kits, made available by UNHCR to returnees inside Cambodia. The traders also played a major role as a conduit for information about the interior;

Heder's (1981) paper provides a very detailed analysis of the political and economic dimensions of the border trade in 1979 and 1980. It also demonstrates how the traders were caught in the rivalries and internecine conflicts between the many factions at the border, and how these conflicts resulted in the markets opening and closing in response to changing political circumstances.

many spontaneous returnees based their decisions to return upon trader's news of the interior. In sum, the regular movements from border to the interior of the trader population added one further dimension complicate the understanding of spontaneous repatriations in the ear 1980s.

6.11 Response to Spontaneous Repatriation

- 6.11.1 No agencies at the border or inside Cambodia during 1979-84 have data file from which an accurate census of the returnee population can be m Indeed, few of the agencies' personnel present along the border in the ea 1980s are even willing to make educated guesses of numbers in because of the extremely fluid state of the border population during crisis years. The only numbers regularly cited are those produced UNHCR's Phnom Penh office following its establishment in Septen 1980 to assist with returnees. However, detailed records of the ager field operations and disbursements were destroyed in 1987.¹¹ Moreov is clear that no registration was ever undertaken by UNHCR of returfrom Thailand, Vietnam, or Laos, and that the numbers quoted by agency are based entirely upon levels of assistance provided rather the any concrete enumerations. It is also important to emphasize that by time UNHCR had become mobilized in Cambodia, the majority of retur had already arrived and disbursed to the countryside.
- Cambodians spontaneously repatriated from all three neighbouring those from Vietnam and Laos began to return almost as soon at Vietnamese invaded Cambodia, while those from the Thai border start return in early 1980. Over the next four years, UNHCR programs assistance to an estimated 520,000 returnees, sixty percent of varieturned during 1979-1980. The program of humanitarian assist introduced by UNHCR in September 1980 followed a request from Penh. It was aimed at facilitating returnees achieve self-reliance an initially only to extend to the end of that year. Like so many of UNF programs, however, it has continued ever since.

Records in the Bangkok Office of UNHCR, and out of which the Phnom Penh Office operated early-1980s, show that files on 'assistance to returnees' were destroyed in 1987 as part of regular cleaning' activities. It has not been possible to establish whether copies of the files are archived in G

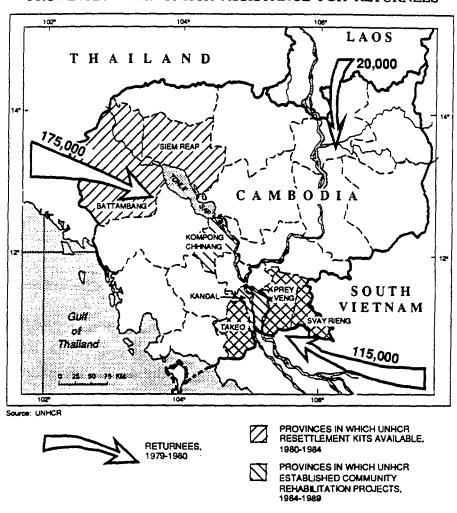


FIGURE 6.1
PROVINCES WITH UNHCR ASSISTANCE FOR RETURNEES

The initial program was geared at providing assistance to some 310,000 returnees, 115,000 of which came from Vietnam in the early months of 1979 and settled primarily in the three eastern provinces of Prey Veng, Svay Rieng and Takeo (Figure 6.1). The return of Khmer refugees from Vietnam pre-dated any UNHCR assistance programs for returnees. About 35,000 Khmer remained in Vietnam; most were Sino-Khmer who saw no future for themselves by returning to Cambodia and were hoping for resettlement under the Orderly Departure Program. Some 20,000 also returned from Laos in late Spring 1979 to settle in Siem Reap province. Beginning in early 1980, around 175,000 are believed to have returned from Thailand and the Thai-Cambodian border (UNHCR, 1980:12).

TABLE 6.2

SPONTANEOUS REPATRIATION TO CAMBODIA 1979-84

Year	Population Repatriated	Cumulative Families Repatriated	Cumulative Total Repatriate
1979	135,000	(27,000)	135,000 ¹)
1980	175,000	(62,000)	310,000
1981	90,000	(80,000)	400,000
1982	60,500	(92,100)	460,000
1983	(49,500)	102,000	510,000 ²
1984	(10,000)	104,000	(520,00°)

Source UNHCR, Annual Reports on UNHCR Assistance, 1980 to 1985.

- 1) Includes 115,000 from Vietnam and 20,000 from Laos
- 2) Includes 3,000 from Laos
- () denotes estimates extrapolated from other UNHCR data.
- The program of assistance to returnees became part of the Jc Kampuchean Relief Programme executed by FAO/WFP, ICRC: UNICEF, and was locally implemented by the Kampuchean Red Cr (UNHCR, 1981a: 203). In mid-1981, the number assisted returnees been revised upwards to 360,000 (UNHCR, 1981b: 6), and at the en 1981 it stood at 400,000 (UNHCR, 1982: 380). By 1984, UNH maintains that it had assisted a total of 104,000 families or approxima 520,000 people (UNHCR, 1985a: 394) (see Table 6.2). There are evidence that there was any further spontaneous repatriation of Khmer f. Vietnam after 1979, and only an additional 3,000 Khmer are known to be repatriated from Laos since 1979 (UNHCR, 1984; 350). These of therefore suggest that all other returnees (i.e., a total of 382,000) be originated from Thailand and the Thai-Cambodian border. This total n to be more critically evaluated.
- There is no question that many Khmer did return to the interior from Thai border. Once it became clear that the invading Vietnamese were persecuting Khmer, let alone killing them, many at the border chose to back. Moreover, periodic escalation in fighting at the border between

resistance forces and the Vietnamese, such as in June 1980 when the Phnom Penh government assisted in the evacuation of some 40,000 from the border to the interior (ICRNW, 1980) and again during the 1983 dry season offensives, resulted in people seeking the relative safety of the interior. Information reaching the border from previous returnees also assured many that they would not be punished if they returned. It is doubtful, however, whether the actual numbers were ever as high as the UNHCR data imply.

The returnee data in Table 6.2, drawn from UNHCR documentation, show 6.11.6 by their generalized and summary nature that they were purely estimates, based essentially on numbers given by the Phnom Penh government or on the levels of assistance provided through the Cambodian Red Cross. Given the high degree of mobility within Cambodia throughout 1979 and 1980, and which continued at a much reduced scale over the next years, it is evident that no agency, government or non-government, was in a position to verify who was a returnee from Thailand or the border and who was merely an internal displacee. Most Cambodians were in desperate need of assistance during these years and it is logical to assume that many took advantage of the availability of resettlement kits by claiming to be returnees. This opinion is shared by many observers present in Cambodia at the time. UNHCR's staff of two in Phnom Penh was too small to closely monitor the upcountry distribution; travel out of the city was difficult and restricted. Indeed, it is doubtful if there was any strong motivation among UNHCR personnel to authenticate claims that people were returnees viv-a-vis internal displacees. Displaced people were badly in need of humanitarian assistance, and, given the international isolation of Cambodia and the resultant minimal international assistance available too it, UNHCR was at least providing a measure of resettlement assistance.

Assistance provided returnees consisted of three resettlement kits; a 'clothing kit' containing cloth, waterproof material, mosquito nets, sarongs and a sowing kit, a 'utensil kit' containing basic cooking utensils, and a 'handtool kit' containing basic tools for construction and cultivation. Each family receiving a kit also received 50 kilos of rice. No other resettlement assistance, material or otherwise, was provided to individual returnees.

- By 1983, it had become apparent that individual assistance needed t complemented by measures that facilitate returnees' integration into I communities. Thus a number of small-scale projects were introduce some villages known to contain sizable returnee population to improverall village infrastructures. These programs included appurchas communal ploughs and paddy threshers, as well as means to diversing through the provision of carpentry and blacksmith tools weaving shuttles. Fishing nets and draught animals were provided. Talso assisted with the construction and stocking of schools dispensaries. The initial assistance program was in Prey Moul Districkhompong Chhnang province where it was estimated that som percent of the population were returnees (McNamara, 1985:34).
- It has already been suggested that the Phnom Penh government was initive receptive to the return of people from the border. Its position was base security; the fewer at the border, the weaker the resistance. There evidence that returnees in 1979 and 1980 were in any way persecut harassed; they were free to relocate to areas of their choice where they care-integrate into village economies. Certainly, this was the perception by the Royal Thai Government which stated at the 1981 CCSDPT Ar Meeting that "... the Royal Thai Government and other organizations tried to follow up (their return) and so far have no reports of deat starvation" (CCSDPT, 1981: 109).
- On the other hand, there is evidence that many returnees were reluctated declare themselves as returnees since they were afraid of being ident with the resistance. This was especially the case for returnees coming Khmer Rouge controlled areas. Instead, they identified themselved displacees from within Cambodia. There were, perhaps, good reason this. While accepting returnees for political reasons, the Phnom government was cautious about their political reliability. It was suggesty by some respondents that local villagers were encouraged to viet returnees with suspicion; the government instructed locals to prassistance to returnees, but at the same time to keep an eye on activities.

7 SPONTANEOUS REPATRIATION 1985-1988

7.1 As a consequence of the Vietnamese offensive against the three resistance movements that made up the CGDK, which began with the dry season in late-1984, the border camp population was forced to flee inside Thailand. From November, 1984, through to the spring of 1985, some 220,000 Khmer were relocated into 14 evacuation sites along the 700 kilometre border from Ubon in the north to Trat in the south. In some cases, sites of former refugee camps were used. At Khao I Dang, for example, some 50,000 from the Nong Samet camp were temporarily housed adjacent, but distinctly separate, from the UNHCR controlled camp population. Thai policy was to permit these refugees temporary asylum as 'displaced persons', but only until security conditions on the other side of the border permitted their return to Cambodia. Other than for the occasional family reunion case, no resettlement was permitted for any of this population. Some, however, did succeed in illegally entering Khao I Dang, and eventually were added to the resettlement stream.¹

Table 3.6 shows that the displaced population was eventually consolidated into a few camps, the largest of which was Site 2. In almost all cases, these camps were located very close to the border, partly to reinforce their temporary nature and partly to maintain their 'buffer' function. The eastern perimeter of Site 2, for example, is less than a kilometre from the border. The military appendages of the border camps also relocated inside Thailand at this time. With the resistance forces pushed out of the border area, the Vietnamese were able to consolidate their position and effectively seal the border. Both sides laid extensive minefields between their respective positions. Virtually all trans-border black market trade ended in late-1984.

The additional new population added to Khao I Dang in 1984 and 1985 (Table 3.2) represents the populations added to the camp from the border and subsequently legitimized as 'family card' or 'ration card' holders

Spontaneous repatriation was essentially brought to a halt. Moreonattempts to negotiate a repatriation agreement, which had been ongo since the early-1980s, had achieved little, although the Cambod authorities continued to indicate a willingness to receive repatriants from Khao I Dang (UNHCR, 1987 Part II: 35). However, attitudes towereturnees from the border changed in Phnom Penh. From the beginning 1985, any new returnees were treated with suspicion and as potential space A few are believed to have been sent to re-education camps. The ris returnees was also fanned by the Khmer camp administrations who wanxious to douse any potential aspirations among their population return.

7.4 Camp numbers grew steadily from 1985 and there is no evidence of significant return movements. The drop in numbers between July, 1 and January, 1989 (Table 3.6) was due to the closing of two of the rer Khmer Rouge camps; the population, however, remained in the border: re-establishing itself a few kilometres inside Cambodia. Relocatic civilians by Khmer Rouge cadres has caused much concern in international community since such populations are moved totally be the reach of humanitarian assistance. During 1985, more than 5 civilians were relocated from Site 8 to one of the hidden camps at Ph Dey and some 9,000 were relocated from Ta Luen closer to the bc (Erlanger, 1988). In 1986, 1,500 were forcibly moved from Huay Chi a camp inside Cambodia and another 1.683 civilians were relocated Site 8 to the remote Natrao camp (Jackson, 1987:16). The Khmer R claim that all such movements are 'voluntary' and 'spontaneous', but claims must be discounted. Some of the changes in other camp popula were also due to movement between camps; there were a numb voluntary relocations from Site 2 to Site B - about 600 in 1986 and

Anecdotal evidence does suggest that a few people continued to crominefields into Cambodia. However, the risk was great, as the civilian mine casualties testify. Those who did go back, generally wentemporary basis. Family reunion continued to be the major motive (ICRC had still not been able to begin tracing services inside Cambodian).

1,000 in 1987 (USCR, 1987: 6).

was also a costly undertaking. 'Guides' through the minefields charged up to Baht 200 (US\$ 8), an expensive proposition for camp residents. It is, therefore, very unlikely that more than a few hundred ventured back to Cambodia during the four years from 1985 to the end of 1988.

UNHCR has not published any data on 'new' returnees since 1985,² although it has continued with program activities for returnees. In 1985, a second community re-integration project was begun in Chek district, Svey Rieng province for 6,011 beneficiaries, modelled on the earlier project in Kompong Chhang which had assisted some 2,800 (UNHCR, 1987 Part II: 35). The following year, a third was started in Chum Rea Pen district in Takeo province, and in 1988, projects in Krala district in Kompong Chhang province (for 6,750 beneficiaries), in Psar Dek district in Kandal province (for 2,400 beneficiaries) and in Ba Phnom district in Prey Veng province (also for 2,400 beneficiaries). Also in 1988, new programs for vocational rehabilitation and for handicapped refugees were introduced (UNHCR, 1988 Part II: 37). All of these projects are area-based to serve both returnees and local populations in the respective districts.

The extent to which these community re-integration projects actually benefitted returnees or locals is unclear from the limited information about them. As with the resettlement kit distribution of the early-1980s, there are no available reports of any detailed monitoring of these activities. One group of NGO personnel visiting one of the sites in early-1989 reported that while they witnessed some weaving, sowing and carpentry, most of the facilities at the centre were either lying unused or minimally used. If a post-peace settlement Cambodia is to adopt the strategy of promoting similar area-based community re-integration centres, especially in areas to which spontaneous repatriants are known to have returned, much more needs to be understood of the experiences gained since 1985.

² In its annual Reports on Assistance and Proposed Programs, no reference is made to new returnees from 1985 onwards, other than to state "...smaller numbers have continued (to return) in subsequent (to 1983) years" (UNHCR, 1989 Part II; 39).

8 SPONTANEOUS REPATRIATION 1989

- In January 1989, an Aide Memoire was finally signed between the Phnom Penh government and UNHCR governing the voluntary repatriation of 'mandate' refugees. This cleared the way for UNHCR to begin developing contingency plans, in cooperation with the Cambodian government, for an eventual repatriation of refugees under its protection (i.e., those at Khao I Dang and Ban That). While this agreement did not specifically address the border camps, Phnom Penh's accession to an organized repatriation was also reflected in an increasingly more positive attitude during 1989 to a general repatriation of all Khmer.
- 8.2 A number of other major developments have taken place during the past year. The growing dialogue between all parties brought about by the Jakarta Informal Meetings, together with Phnom Penh's intensifying quest for recognition by the international community, have resulted in a much more receptive climate developing for the return of refugees. Although the failure of the Paris Peace Talks in August, 1989 created a temporary setback, the apparent departure of most Vietnamese troops a month later, together with Thailand's dramatic shift in policy manifest by its opening a direct dialogue with Hun Sen, (and which including Prime Minister Chatichai's declaration that he wants to " . . turn the battlefields of Cambodia into marketplaces"), auger well for the creation of political conditions conducive for a repatriation. Moreover, the successful military offensives by the CGDK in late 1989, followed by the effective counteroffensives by Phnom Penh's forces in early 1990, have reinforced the need for a political settlement, since these events have once more demonstrated that neither side has the strength to achieve a military solution.
- 8.3 The events of 1989, and early this year, have resulted in a significant growth in movement across the border compared to the previous four years. Spontaneous repatriation has once again increased, especially during March and April, 1989; more people are returning for temporary visits; traders

have resumed more active levels of trans-border trade; the CGDK milit have re-established several bases inside Cambodia; and there has bee dramatic rise in the number of civilians relocated by the Khmer Rouge, to a much lesser extent by the KPNLF, into areas controlled by the respective militias.

- 8.4 The desire to return to Cambodia was also manifesting itself more more, especially among the apolitical populations in Site 2, and increasir also in Site 8. It was suggested above (Section 3) that large component these camps' populations were not supporters of the KPNLF or the Kh Rouge respectively. Many wanted to leave the oppressive or environments and the control of the political fronts. They were fruand despondent about the hopelessness that pervaded the camps. T want to escape the shelling. And, in Site 2 especially, they also wishe break away from the insecurity, violence, corruption and other anti-sc forces that disrupted so much of their daily camp life and is responsible escalating domestic conflicts. One of their most widespread fears is they would be forcibly repatriated into 'liberated' areas inside Cambodi their respective CGDK administrations, and thereby, be de opportunities of resettling in areas of their choice and be cut off from little security and protection that the international agencies currently proat least during daylight hours, inside the existing camps.
- The desire to return was not, however, strongly manifest in either K Dang and Ban That, where resettlement remained the dominant object most camp residents. Few have yet been able to accept that there longer an option of resettlement and that the final resettlement sele occurred in mid-1989. One must assume that Thai policy will re committed to repatriating all residual population from these two camp the interim, progams need to be introduced which will help camp resimake the necessary mental adjustment to accept repatriation rather resettlement as a future solution.
- Despite the extensive minefields sown by both the CGDK an Vietnamese/Cambodian armies along all 700 kilometres of the bor

¹ As manifest by the growing volume of Khmer trade goods in the markets in Aranyaprathet.

growing number of people were returning to Cambodia throughout 1989, albeit many only returned for visits rather than permanently. The continuing search for family and renewed trade were the major motivations. Some of these returns were of only a few weeks duration, others of several month. Respondents who had returned during the past year indicated that they had found conditions in Cambodia much as expected or even better than expected. They chose not to remain because they had relatives in Site 2 or because they considered the risk of bringing their relatives through the minefields too high. Others returned to Site 2 because of the better availability of food and services. There is also anecdotal information of a few wealthier camp residents returning to Phnom Penh to purchase houses that the government had been placing on the market. Such movements did not come cheaply; guides were essential for traversing the minefields, and, judging by the large number of civilian mine casualties, the risk of such journeys remained very high.²

8.7 Between March and May, 1989, there was a significant rise in spontaneous repatriation from Site 2. The precise numbers are in dispute; estimates range from as low as 1,000 according to some Khmer administration officials who are willing to concede that some people did return, to as high as over 10,000 according to one of the resident journalists in Aranyaprathet. UNBRO, ICRC and some NGO personnel estimate the number at between 5,000 and 6,000. Other estimates suggest that, from a logistical point alone, it was unlikely that more than 100 ever left per night during the height of exodus in April. The significance of this movement is in a) the manner it was initiated, and b) the response it created within the camps.

Since the eastern perimeter of Site 2 is less than a kilometre from the border, agents of the Phnom Penh government set up loud-speaker systems along the border and broadcast invitations to Site 2 residents to repatriate. In these broadcasts, they guarantied safe passage through the minefields and that there would be no retributions for returnees. Resettlement assistance was also promised. The political motives of this strategy are obvious; a loss of population just prior to the Paris Peace Conference would certainly have

² In the first week of January, 1990, for example, four civilian mine casualties were brought to the Site 2 hospital. Three resulted in amputations, the fourth in blindness.

embarrassed the KPNLF. For several weeks, the strategy worke Departures were clandestine, however, since there was forceful opposition to such movements from the camp administrations. Hence also, the lack precise numbers.

- Returnees were met at the border and trucked into the interior. No reliat information on their subsequent experience was obtained. Some informat suggested that the returnees were taken to villages of their choice, oth informants suggest that they were taken to remote places. Suggestions they were taken to re-education camps is best discounted as KPNI propaganda, at least until corroborating evidence materializes.
- Reaction by Site 2's camp administration to this movement was firm. To camp's internal police was charged with patrolling the eastern perimeter a to turn back any returnees. Coercion was applied to any individuals knot be contemplating the move. False propaganda on the fate awaiting returnees was broadcast on the camp's PA-system and in the local ne sheet. Above all, the administration played on the populations' inherent for the Vietnamese. They also mined access points along their side of border.
- The administration's response illustrates the 'hostage' nature of the carpopulation. The camps are closed to the outside by Thai authorities, they are equally closed from the inside by their own administrations. It tell populations only what they consider necessary or what will reinforce the political agendas. Consequently, most camp residents are still first convinced that the Vietnamese continue to occupy Cambodia. Many a believe that the whole country is wracked by war, rather than just a narrostrip of borderland. People wanting to leave risk harassment or expersecution. This raises a fundamental question for the border capopulation, namely, where can the refugees in the camps go if they persecution from their own leaders inside the camps?
- There is little the international community can do to change this situatic long as the camp administrations remain recognized as components of legitimate government of Cambodia. UNBRO has no mandate to con

itself with issues related to repatriation. UNHCR has no access to the border camps. The camp administrations do not interact with UNHCR; indeed, they appear hostile to suggestions that UNHCR will be the lead agency in any organized repatriation that is negotiated. They are concern that they will lose control of their respective populations if UNHCR assumes responsibility for a repatriation.

8.13 The spectre of a 'spontaneous' return to 'liberated' areas inside Cambodia became a reality in late-1989 when all three factions established repatriation settlements in areas they had captured inside Cambodia. Each group claims that returnees to these settlements are voluntary migrants; for the numerically small KPNLF and FUNCINPEC cadres involved in setting up settlements inside Cambodia this may be the case.³ Sihanouk has himself returned to one such repatriation village south of Site B in February, 1990.⁴ There is much concern, however, about the large scale and the manner of the 'voluntary' repatriations organized by the Khmer Rouge. Unlike the KPNLF and FUNCINPEC, who are presently unwilling to move a large civilian population across the border given UNBRO's indication that it will not provide assistance to relocated populations, the Khmer Rouge does not have any such reservations and is currently moving civilian populations into its 'liberated' areas.

8.14 From mid-1988 to mid-1989, it has been estimated that some 23,000 of the 60,000 hidden camp population has been relocated to repatriation villages inside Cambodia. Most of populations of Huay Chan and Natrao were moved across the Dangrek escarpment into Cambodia. In addition, the decline in Site K's population from over 12,000 at the beginning of 1989 to 8,000 in September was also due to relocations (USCR, 1989: 2). In January of this year, the Borai settlement was emptied of all but about 300

³ In discussions with one of the senior KPNLF administrators in mid-December, 1989, it was suggested that up to 100,000 would be relocated to 'liberated' areas within the next month or so, and that volunteers were at that moment preparing sites for their relocation. On a return visit a month later, it was apparent that a some of 'volunteers' had indeed established themselves across the border, but there was no indication that any large relocation of the civilian population was immanent. It has also been reported that a number of key civilians in Site 2 have been assigned military ranks in anticipation of a relocation by the KPNLF of the camp's civilian population into the 'liberated' areas (USCR, 1989: 2).

⁴ Sihanouk's return to Cambodia is seen as symbolic and part of a need to re-establish credibility within Cambodia and among western powers following his long-time association with the Khmer Rouge (Hiebert, 1990: 11).

elderly and handicapped people; its population of 4,000 was moved to the 'hidden camps' - camps 69 and 70 - or to repatriation villages instruction campodianear the gem-rich town of Pailin. The Borai population villages in supposed to have been transferred by UNBRO to the better serviced camposite K. This move, however, was strongly opposed by the Khmer Roand the relocation into Cambodia was undertaken to presumpt a move to 1 K. By early-1990, the total relocated population into Khmer Roantrolled 'liberated' areas is estimated at over 30,000 (USCR, 1990: 6).

8.15

Khmer Rouge officials are increasing the pressure on residents in Site: 'volunteer' to return to Cambodia. High level military officers and ser 'ministers' visited the camp in late-1989 to recruit repatriants. Retulare needed by the Khmer Rouge to clear land, set up logistical bases, be roads, and clear the minefields. Many are also conscripted as porters for military. They risk malnutrition, malaria, military attacks and mine injur Resistance to a Khmer Rouge controlled repatriation is, theref widespread. On the other hand, between 60 to 80 percent of Site residents would readily repatriate under UNHCR sponsorship independently to neutral areas if security and safe passage were guaran Lack of a safe passage through the minefields, together with the ritertibution from Khmer Rouge cadres, prevented any spontant repatriation from Site 8 during 1989.

⁵ In late-1989, some five land mine injuries per week were being received by the hospital at Site 8. 700 amputees are resident in the camp (i.e., 1 in 46 residents is an amputee).

9 FUTURE SPONTANEOUS REPATRIATION

There has been growing optimism over the past twelve month that a comprehensive political settlement may soon materialize. While there continue to be setbacks in the political process, such as the failure of the Paris Peace Conference in August, 1989, and the lack of any substantial agreement at the Jarkarta Informal Meetings in February, 1990, regional pressures on all the parties concerned appear to be creating more 'focussed' discussions than hitherto, and greater international commitment to achieving a resolution, especially by the key countries of USA, USSR, and China, has helped the concept of UN involvement in a settlement gain general acceptance. Thus, despite the snail-pace progress, it is possible to maintain measured optimism that a settlement may be in place in the not too distant future.

9.2 Since March, 1990, considerable consensus was established on several of the points in the so-called Australian Proposal. These include UN involvement in the administration of Cambodia pending a UN-supervised elections. Disagreements still remained on the role which the three coalition members will play during the interim administration, on the level of UNcontrol of the administration during the interim period, on which party, if any, will hold the UN seat during the interim period, and on the level of participation by the Khmer Rouge. An important breakthrough has been Phnom Penh's acceptance of the UN's role (Field and Hiebert, 1990: 9). Even the Chinese have become supportive of the basic concept of the settlement, and all five permanent members of the UN Security Council the US, USSR, China, Britain And France - were openly venting their frustration with the inability of the four Cambodian factions to come to an agreement. The international pressure on the factions paid off in September when a tentative 'framework document' for a peace settlement was accepted by all four factions at a further meeting in Jakarta (Vatikiotis, 1990). The plan calls for the organization of a ceasefire, of elections, of a 12-member

representative Supreme National Council, and of an interim U administration. It remains to be seem whether the momentum will car through to the resumption of the Paris Peace Conference scheduled t November, 1990, and result in conditions that will permit an organized a or spontaneous repatriation to begin sometime in 1991.

- 9.3 In this penultimate section of the report, the assumption is being made there is now a reasonable probability of a peace settlement being reach and that there will, therefore, be a repatriation sometime in the not in distant future. Based on this assumption, the balance of this section veramine:
 - the intensity of the desire to return;
 - the likely destination of returnees;
 - · some of the problems that may be encountered when a return occurs;
 - the constraints that exist in the ability of Cambodia to absorb over 350, civilian and military returnees;
 - the current level of contingency planning for a return; and
 - the anticipated role that spontaneous repatriation will play whe repatriation eventually becomes possible.

9.4 The Desire to Return

9.4.1 Throughout the field research at the border, an almost ubiquitous desir return was encountered among Cambodians. The principal exception in Khao I Dang, where the majority of the residual population still of the hope of repatriation. While some in the other border camps also drof resettlement, the greater majority of the population is committed to g home. However, the conditions under which people would be willing return; the expectation they have for assistance when they do return; and manner in which they perceive returning, vary greatly within the campabetween the camps. Only a small percentage, estimated by one s UNBRO official at not more than ten percent, are basically satisfied camp life and the security in food and other basic services that it entails are thus ambivalent, if not opposed to repatriation.

¹ Although not visited, I presume a similar level of commitment to resettlement exists among reside Ban That.

- 9.4.2 The overiding concern about returning is safety. Given the effectiveness with which the political fronts are able to control and manipulate information flows into the camps, fear for their safety in Cambodia is widespread among residents of all camps. The majority of camp populations believe that the Vietnamese are still in control of the country and that the Vietnamese army is still present in large numbers. News of the Vietnamese withdrawal in September, 1989, is completely discounted by the political fronts in communications with their populations. Until convincing evidence is provided to the camp populations that the Vietnamese have indeed withdrawn, this issue will remain a major deterrent to people returning. Aside from the instilled fear that the Vietnamese will persecute returnees, camp populations are also told that Vietnamese have occupied large tracts of land by bringing in settlers.
- 9.4.3 A more immediate and commonly held fear is that of returning across the heavily mined border. Although the Geneva Convention requires all minefields to be mapped, this has clearly not been the case along the Thai-Cambodian border. Indiscriminate and widespread mining, by all parties, along all 700 kilometres of border, will remain a major problem for decades to come. The consequences of indiscriminate minelaying are vividly and daily on display; between 5,000 and 6,000 amputees are lingering in the border camps. Any repatriation, whether organized or spontaneous, will only be possible when populations are convinced that safe passages through the minefields have been cleared. Indeed, the eventual resettlement of border areas, where large tracts of usable land currently lie empty, will also require major efforts in mine clearing. Some observers suggest that mine injuries will be one of the greatest post-repatriation health hazards faced by the Cambodian authorities. A mine-clearing program, based upon the needs and experiences in Afghanistan, is currently under preparation for the Cambodian border (UN Secretary General, 1990).
- 9.4.4 Aside from the fear of Vietnamese, camp populations are also concerned about their reception by the existing authorities in Cambodia and even by

² In early-1990, there is mounting evidence that some Vietnamese military have returned to shore up the Cambodian forces following their defeat and retreat from strategic areas in the northwest and west.

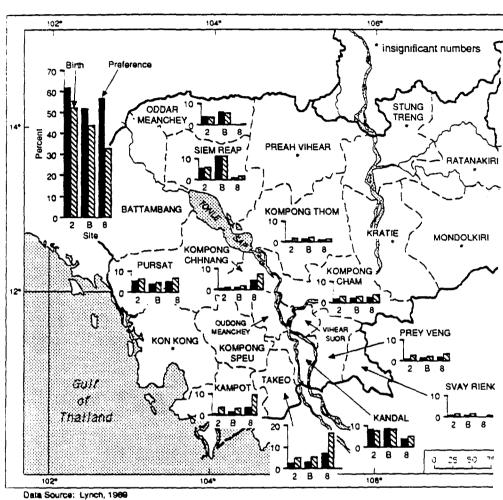
local residents. This is especially a concern among many Site 8 residents who fear that they will encounter the stigma of having lived in a Khmer Rouge controlled camp. They believe that local villagers will regard them as Khmer Rouge supporters, possibly even taking revenge for events of the past. Even if they were to attempt to hide their camp origin, some observers suggest that they will be readily identifiable as people from Khmer Rouge controlled areas by their idiomatic use of the language. Under the Khmer Rouge, the Khmer language has undergone considerable evolution; words relating to status and to many daily tasks and activities have become distinct from those used in traditional Khmer society or currently inside Cambodia.

- 9.4.5 The current Phnom Penh position on repatriation has once again shifted one of encouraging return from the border. This shift is essentially for political reasons to weaken the population base of the CGDK. In taking this position, the government states that it is willing to receive all Cambodians back, including the resistances' soldiers, but not the senior leadership of the Khmer Rouge. It states that returnees will be able to return to the villages of their choice and that every effort will be made to allocate land and other means of production to them. Camp populations still need much convincing that this is indeed the case, especially given the conflicting propaganda put out by the political fronts.
- 9.4.6 Freedom from the control of their own camp administration also remain. high among concerns that camp residents have. The issue of forcible repatriation by their administrations into specific areas in Cambodia: already been alluded to. A prerequisite to any major repatriation exercise will be the assurance that returnees can return to areas of their choice Indeed, any hint, real or perceived, that people will be restricted to certain areas under an organized repatriation, will almost certainly increase the leve of parallel spontaneous repatriation. KPNLF and Khmer Roug administrators appear committed to seeing their people return into areas the control. At Site B, a widely held belief is that the FUNCINPE administration will want the camp population to disperse throughout th country and thereby form local bases of support for Sihanouk in a futur national election.

- 9.4.7 Desire to return is also affected by levels of assistance offered or perceived to be available. Almost all camp residents expect material assistance when they return. Their expectations vary widely in terms of both levels and durations. Several respondents in Sites 2 and B suggested that they expect at least five years of assistance. The question of levels of assistance is discussed further below.
- 9.4.8 Few people in Khao I Dang (and presumably in Ban That) have any great desire to return. Resettlement remains the only option most are willing to accept, despite clear indication from both Thai authorities and UNHCR that this is no longer a possibility. A major question that must now be addressed, therefore, is how best to reorientate the Khao I Dang residual population's thinking to one of acceptance of repatriation. For the past decade, all activities and programming for refugees by NGOs has been geared to better preparing people for third country resettlement. These programs now need to be restructured and redirected. It is not at all certain that all of the NGOs at Khao I Dang have yet made the necessary adjustments to their activities.

9.5 Anticipated Destinations of Future Repatriants

- 9.5.1 During February and August 1989, a study, funded by the Ford Foundation's Bangkok office, examined the place of origin and likely area of repatriation of residents in Site 2, Site 8 and Site B (Lynch, 1989). A total of 15,525 respondents were interviewed, which, together with their family members, represents about 25 percent of the civilian population in the border camps. The survey covered the demography and occupational structure, past, present and planned, past migration history, and repatriation preferences. It provides a unique level of base-data for the three major camps.
- 9.5.2 Lynch's study confirms the widely held opinion that the majority of the camp populations are of peasant origin from areas fairly close to the border. Figure 9.1 summarizes Lynch's findings on the place of birth of the camp



PROVINCE OF BIRTH AND INTENDED PROVINCE OF RETURN, SITE 2, SITE 8, SITE B POPULATIONS

population. It shows that 53, 44, and 33 percent in Sites 2, B, a respectively originate from the western agricultural province of Battam A higher percentage, some 62, 53, and 57 percent from the same c respectively, indicate a preference for returning to Battambang. In como province other than Siem Reap was cited as a possible place of returning than 10 percent of any of the camp populations (Figure 9.1). high preference for Battambang is clearly because of familiarity; peither originate from there, or they became familiar with it as a rerelocation during the Khmer Rouge era or during their transit to the bo

TABLE 9.1
PERCENT FARMERS AT SITES 2, 8, B, OVER TIME

<u></u>	Percentage Farmers			
	Pre-1970	1970-75	1975-79	Future in Cambodia
Site 2	37.8	50.7	90.8	62.8
Site 8	27.6	60.9	77.2	70.4
Site B	42.1	50.1	87.8	60.6

Source: Lynch, 1989:52-54.

9.5.3

The high percentage of camp residents that indicated farming as their likely occupation on return to Cambodia (Table 9.1) tends to reinforce the general desire to return to Battambang province. It is one of Cambodia's best endowed agricultural areas and there is a perception that adequate agricultural land will be available. However, the return to a life as peasant farmers in Cambodia must be qualified given the age-sex structure of camp populations. Table 8.1 shows the proportions that were farmers during the Sihanouk years and the subsequent Lon Nol years. These are the people who are at least 35 to 40 years of age today. Approximately 35 percent³ of the current population is between 15 and 35. These have either never experienced agriculture or did so only during the Khmer Rouge era. Therefore, a major question that needs to be addressed is how many of these will be able to successfully establish themselves as peasant farmers on return to Cambodia. It is hypothesized here that while many may have indicated to the Lynch survey that they intend to return to Battambang province as farmers, a significant number of them will be unable or unwilling to resume life in Cambodia as peasant farmers and will instead undergo a secondary migration to the cities, and especially to Phnom Penh. This reasoning suggests that an upward adjustment needs to be made for return preference in the Lynch data for Kandal province.

³ Some 100,000 to 110,000 people.

9.6 Anticipated Problems for Future Repatriation

All refugee camps breed dependency. Because of their closed-camp national and a policy in which absolutely no provision was made for even the mominimal levels of self-help and self-reliance, the Thai camps have created especially serious level of dependency among their population. The tole this dependency is not easily measured and will not be fully understed until some time after the population returns. One long time observes uggestion that the refugees "... are in charge of nothing, not estimated the refugees because the context within which any fut repatriation will be required to operate. The protracted residency camps (Table 9.2) has only served to exacerbate the problem.

TABLE 9.2

LENGTH OF RESIDENCE IN CAMPS

	Site 2	Site B	Site	
1981 and before 1981-84 1985-1987	73.0% 20.3% 4.2%	74.0% 121.1% 9.4%	92.3% 5.2% 1.3%	
since 1988	1.5%	4.4%	1.2%	

Source: Lynch, 1989:26

9.6.2 The camp demographics differ considerably from those of Cambodia, pronounced lack of parity in the over 15 age group in Cambodia, who sex ratio of about 75 males per 100 females is estimated to exist, is not evident in the camps, as Table 9.3 illustrates. According to the Lynch (ibid: 21), the sex ratio for the over 20 age cohort is about 92 males per females. However, such data do not fully reflect the impact which the respect years of war have had on demography; like Cambodia, the camps had inordinately high percentage of women who are widowed. The averate the three camps according to the Lynch study is 19.8 percent of we (compared to only 1.9 percent of males). In Site 2 the figure rises to percent (ibid.:26). While comparable data are not on hand for Cambodia well known that the surplus of women in Cambodia has resulted

increase in polygamy as well as in marital conflicts arising from first wives being unwilling to accept additional wives. From a repatriation perspective, the high number of widows will clearly impact on programming needs for vulnerable groups. Many widows are able bodied and capable of reintegration into a rural peasant society; many others, however, will not.

TABLE 9.3

PROJECTED AGE AND SEX LEVELS FOR ENTIRE POPULATIONS
OF SITES 2, SITE B AND SITE 8

Yrs of A	Age Male	%	Female	%	All	%
0-9 10-19 20-29 30-39 40-49 50-59 60-69 70-79 80-89	47,770 22,022 21,240 19,762 6,854 4,558 2,363 567 71	19.5 9.0 8.7 8.1 2.8 1.9 1.0 0.2 0.0	42,198 17,789 24,413 19,760 7,801 4,825 2,615 614 28	17.2 7.3 10.0 8.1 3.2 2.0 1.1 0.3 0.0	89,968 39,811 45,653 39,522 14,655 9,383 4,978 1,181 99	36.7 16.2 18.6 16.1 6.0 3.8 2.0 0.5 0.0
Total	125,207	51.1	120,043	48.9	245,250	100.0

Source: Lynch, 1989:21

9.6.3 An additiona

An additional vulnerable group will be the large number of orphaned, abandoned and unaccompanied children. Dietstra (1988: 18) suggests that their number at Site 2 alone ranges upwards from 4,000. An UNBRO official places the number at much lower levels -- probably under 1,000. Two related problems are also of concern. The superior health care in the camps has resulted in many infants surviving who would not have survived with levels of health care available in Cambodia. Many of these require medication or regular monitoring, neither of which are likely to available in Cambodia following repatriation. Alternatively, social services in the camps ensure that some children currently survive despite their mothers' inability to look after them for reasons of health, psychological or social problems. Such services are unlikely to be available on return to Cambodia. It has also been suggested that the superior sanitary conditions of camp-life have reduced natural resistance to malaria or enteritic diseases; once back in rural

Cambodia, morbidity from such causes will likely increase until new l of resistance are obtained.

- 9.6.4 The relatively small 10-19 age cohort in the camps (Table 9.3) less half of the 0-9 cohort is mirrored in Cambodia's age arructure. It remuch reduced fertility during the disastrous 1970s. While this suggest there will be a pronounced deficit of people in the prime age group near future, from the repatriation standpoint, this may be a disg blessing. As will be suggested below, the re-integration into the economy of teenagers and those in their early-twenties may prove difficult, and many in this cohort can be expected to end up drifting cities. The fact that their numbers are substantially smaller than the have been does reduce the potential magnitude of the problem of urbat youths. It also means that even if the exceptionally high fertility rataprevail in the camps are maintained by the next age cohort, a som reduced net fertility will result.
- 9.6.5 The problem of the fronts' control of all information flow into the has already been discussed. The Lynch study shows that the profi compounded by the fact that only a small sector of the population h any direct recent contact with relatives in Cambodia. Some 90, 81, percent in Sites 2, B and 8 respectively have never had any contact friends or relatives in Cambodia (Lynch, 1989:28). In contrast, on 9.9 and 5.3 percent respectively have had contacts in the past two Consequently, perceptions of conditions in Cambodia may be. reality, especially in view of the propaganda that camp populatic exposed to by the political fronts. While some movement to Cambo back to the camps is occurring, and therefore information does sele become available, especially in Site 2, the 'grapevine' is probably mu extensive than many assume. The opening of ICRC's tracing service the border in 1988 is assisting the information flow since mail flowing into the camps from relatives in Cambo. L. An effect: credible⁴ information campaign is definitely neede however, to

⁴ Widespread resistance to information that contradicts popular perception about conditions in Ca illustrated by an attempt by one NGO in Khao I Dang to show an information video of cont Cambodia made by one of its members. Firstly, attendance at the video was relatively modest -

populations for repatriation. How this can be implemented without the cooperation of camp administrations is uncertain.

9.6.6

The major problem encountered in any repatriation following a prolonged period in exile in camps is that of dependency and how to break the cycle of being accustomed to having everything done for them. How does one teach people to again make decisions for themselves rather than wait for them to be made by others? How does one rebuild the self-esteem and self-confidence that years of camp life have eroded? Such questions are by no means unique to the Thai-Cambodian border. However, in the border camps, they have become exacerbated by the lack of security and subjugation to violence and corruption, by a breakdown of traditional family and social values, by the traumatization of the years under the Khmer Rouge, by guilt feelings about being a survivor when so many family and friends perished, and by a general sense of 'loss of face' in becoming a refugee and thereby loosing control of one's destiny.

9.6.7

Two recent reports provide a detailed analysis of the social and psychological problems that pervade much of the camp population (Dietstra, 1988 and Mollica and Jalbert, 1989). Both emphasize the breakdown of traditional society, the lack of community spirit, distrust of others, and the growth of anti-social activities and attitudes. They also point to many mental health problems which will likely create a sizable population of dysfunctioning adults on return to Cambodia. Children have also been affected; traditional parental role models have been replaced by the a need to survive where, for example, petty theft by children becomes a means of augmenting a family's resource - it is rewarded rather than admonished. The traditional respect accorded to the elderly and to teachers has also been eroded. Illiterate parents are viewed with contempt by children who acquire literacy in the camp schools. These problems are especially serious in Site 2; the more authoritarian control by the Khmer Rouge administration in Site 8 and by the Sihanoukist administration in Site B have somewhat lessened these problems.

the camp, any videos, usually draw large audiences - and secondly, many walked out during the show stating disbelief at what was shown.

- 9.6.8 Both Dietstra and Mollica and Jalbert identify as a major problem refugees' ability to re-assume making decisions for themselves once leave the camps. Their lack of self-confidence, helplessness powerlessness is attributed in part to the strategies many were fore adopt during the Khmer Rouge era; in order to survive, it was best deaf, dumb, foolish or stupid. Appearing 'smart', taking initial speaking their minds or showing their true feelings invited torture or a Molinica and Jalbert (1989:49) suggest that the 'dummy personality' many chose to adopt during those years remains deeply ingrained in of the adult population.⁵
- 9.6.9 Lack of economic opportunity, as well as boredom and indifferent fostered the growth of anti-social activities. Gambling, prostit alcoholism and illegal videos are vices that have become commonpl Site 2. Organized crime syndicates have become established. Shundred camp residents are believed to be involved in these activities highly unlikely that the individuals drawn into these activities will repto anywhere other Phnom Penh.
- 9.6.10 The levels of success in re-integration following a repatriation will c upon a number of factors such as education and skills acquired an recognition in Cambodia, ability and willingness to make adjustmen commitments to returning to agricultural pursuits. Special problems identified with regard to re-integration of the handicapped and dem soldiers. Many of the anticipated problems are already being addressed.

 UNBRO and many of the NGOs. Others still need to be more efferaddressed.
- 9.6.11 Primary education has been available in all the camps.⁶ Some children are currently being schooled in the camps (Niwa, 1989: addition adult literacy programs, such as those given by the Womens' Associations (KWA), have produced a level of basic in

⁵ The term 'dummy personality' is derived from the Khmer concept *tiing mooung* (meaning scar puppet).

⁶ In the smaller Khmer Rouge camps and in the 'hidden camps' education, like health services, received any priority.

considerable higher than that prevailing in pre-war Cambodia. However, secondary and post-secondary education has not been available in the camps. Vocational training, geared towards resettlement, has existed in Khao I Dang since the earliest times, however, in the border camps, vocational training geared towards repatriation has only recently been introduced. In Cambodia, education has received high priority since 1979 and by 1987, a functional adult literacy rate of 83 percent is now claimed by government (Mysliwiek, 10988: 41). There remains, however, a critical shortage of qualified teachers - of the 22,000 teachers in the country in 1970, only 5,000 returned to teaching in 1979 (ibid.: 40). Schools operate only on a half-day basis so that two shifts a day can be maintained. Since 1979, some 50,000 have been trained, albeit mostly for primary and preschool levels. Secondary, post-secondary and vocational teachers are still in desperately short supply. The teacher resource trained in the camps will be of value, therefore, providing Cambodian authorities are prepared to recognize their qualifications or permit them to enter the education system.

A caveat needs to be added, however. A sizable proportion of teachers, as

be able to take advantage of the likely increase in demand for English classes; in the early 1980s it was illegal to teach English, but now there is a

boom in private English classes in Phnom Penh (Clements, R., 1989: 2).

well as other 'extension' workers trained by camp NGOs, have acquires a fairly good proficiency in English. In a future Cambodia with ties to ASEAN countries and Japan, the demand for English competency will increase dramatically, and many will therefore move to opportunities in the private sector or 'foreigner-related' activities (such as taxi drivers, guides or other tourist services) rather than return to occupations in which they have been trained, especially when such occupations are at government wages or require posting into remote rural areas. English speaking returnees will also

9.6.12

9.6.13 The transferability and acceptance by Cambodia of education qualifications and vocational skills acquired in the camps is an issue being addressed by the NGOs. CCSDPT (1990) has recently established a Cambodian Liaison Unit whose mandate will include equating the requirements of certificates given to graduates of camp vocational and educational programs with similar programs in Cambodia. While this will not necessarily guarantee

their recognition on return, it will at least provide a basis for comparisc Both ILO and UNESCO can also play a role in this area following a pea settlement.

- 9.6.14 UNBRO has established a wide array of community support services whi are implemented in cooperation with NGOs. These programs provi support services and skills training. Human resource development and increase in decision making capacity are the principal aims of the program. The underlying theme of the programming is the survival and se sufficiency of the family unit upon re-integration into Cambodia.⁷
- 9.6.15 COERR has been responsible for most training in Site 2. Other NGOs an array of programs in Sites 8 and B and in Khao I Dang. In the latter, level of programming does not appear to have dropped commensurat with declining camp numbers. The camp is undoubtedly the most 'ov serviced' refugee camp in the world.⁸ In Site 2, the level of service provided by the various COERR programs is summarized in Table 9.4. recent addition to the COERR program has been the introduction of a I Bosco Vocational School. This will provide basic, intermediate : advanced training in its auto mechanic, welding and machine shops. Sc 96 students will enrol in the first two batches to be trained. Unlike so m camp programs which provide skill training but, once completed, do have facilities or programs for trainees to maintain and practise th acquired skills, this program will also address post-training s maintenance by working on camp projects. In return for their ser'. students will receive a basic inventory of tools and implements with w' to develop their own businesses. These mechanical skills will be especi of value to young, male returnees who are less likely to return to rural f occupations. The KPNLF also runs a vocational training school, fur by a German foundation, for about 250 students. Again, mechanical tra are given priority, but the school appears to be heavily geared tow military service needs.

⁷ For a detailed summary of the Community Support Services see Nylund (1988).

⁸ In January 1990, some 17 NGOs remained in the camp with 77 foreign and 95 Thai professional servicing some 11,000 refugees. Were this ratio to be applied to Site 2, a professional staff of nearly would be required.

TABLE 9.4
COERR TRAINING PROGRAMS IN SITE 2.

Project	Pa Workers	st Student	Curi Workers	rent Student	Subjects of training
Cultural	952	412	200	400	Dance, Drama, Music
Oral Health	17	47	-	21	Dental care
Nutrition	4	3	10	5	Nutrition
Health	64	6000	90	6000	Basic health care
X-Ray	10	6	10	8	Technician, Radiographer
Technical School for Disabled Per		154	177	535	Engine, Radio, Watch
Herbal Treatmer	nt -	•	62	•	Traditional healing
Khmer Women Association	-	-	-	621	Crocheting, Sewing, Knit
Youth	•	-	74	302	Music, English
Silk Farm	•	-	52	-	Silk farming
Teacher Training	-	-	-	50	Teaching handicapped
Vocational Educ	ation -	-	72	380	Mechanic, Welding, Electrical, Automotive

Source: COERR, Aranyaprathet, Jan. 1990

9.6.16 While there is much room in the larger border camps for additional programming to better prepare people for repatriation, at Khao I Dang it is more a question of either re-orientating programs to meet repatriation rather than resettlement needs or of withdrawing certain programs, especially those that fall into the 'make work' category. A number of NGOs in the

camp must more diligently address the question of whether their particular programs will be of any utility on return to either rural or urban Cambodia.

- 9.6.17 There are a number of areas where new or expanded programming can i directed. Much of the camp population has essentially existed outside monetary economy for the past ten years. Basic household budgeting at simple marketing programs would therefore be a useful addition. Mc advanced marketing and small business management courses would also valuable. Other useful skills returnees could acquire include constructic sanitation, nutrition and food preservation and storage. To meet anticipat social needs, training of para-social-workers and community welft workers should be expanded. Special emphasis needs to be placed identifying the population least likely to be satisfied with a return to ru areas and to better prepare it for re-integration into urban areas.
- 9.6.18 The Lynch study (1989) showed that the greater majority of adults in camps planned to return as farmers (Table 9.1). The political fronts and Phnom Penh government also believe that most will return to rural are Aside from the small minority who have acquired urban-applicable skill the camps, the option for the majority of population is essentially limited returning to the countryside. For those who were farmers before 197 return to farming may be achieved without too much difficulty. Howefor those who have never been involved in farming, or whose cexperience is limited to the forced labour conditions under the Kh Rouge, successful re-integration may be more problematic. The problem more than one of learning how to plant rice.
- 9.6.19 UNBRO has introduced agricultural programs to all the camps. Their ai to improve nutritional availability in the camps; to provide some additing income; and to train people in vegetable farming. Large tracts of land farmed within and around the three major camps. Khao I Dang lags be in this respect although ample land is available within the camp perimete was very noticeable during visits to the agricultural areas at Site 2 and E none of the 'farmers' were young. Only one of about thirty far interviewed in one section appeared to be under 30. Currently, agriculturaling programs do not include basic marketing skills in their currier. This needs to be remedied.

- 9.6.20 Most of the population under 30 years of age have no independent experience of farming. They have no knowledge of seeds, of irrigation, of soils and weeds, of 'reading' the weather, the upcoming monsoon and its associated floods. They have little or no appreciation of the many risk mitigating strategies that a farmer must regularly employ. Some of these needs can be taught, and are indeed being addressed by programming in the camps. Others are only acquired through years of experience on parents' or others' farms. Above all, rice farming requires a tenacity that is unlikely to be 'learned' by many youths who have lingered in idleness for several years in the camps. Moreover, most returnees are likely to have to occupy currently unused land; such land may need to be cleared and levelled, and it may take several seasons to establish a good crop. Therefore, it is hypothesized that many who have indicated in the Lynch survey a desire to return to Cambodia as farmers may, once back, change their minds and seek other forms of employment. Unless income diversification programs are introduced in rural areas, many are likely to undertake a secondary migration to the towns.
- A related factor which will cause some to opt for an urban destination, either directly or as a secondary migration, is the lack of amenities in rural Cambodia. People have become accustomed to accessing health services and other social programs. They have also acquired many urban attitudes Site 2 is, after all, the second largest Cambodian 'city'. It will be perceived by many that the services they have become accustomed to will be available in the cities. Again, it is the younger people that will be especially drawn to the cities by these perceived pull-factors. Only a minority, however, will have the skills to effectively integrate into the cities and it is therefore conceivable that 'ghettos' of young returnees may form in Phnom Penh. Even if the number undertaking a primary or secondary urban migration is kept to ten percent of the camp population, for Phnom Penh this could translate into as many as 30,000 migrants from the border.
- 9.6.22 Demobilized soldiers, especially from the KPNLF, constitute a further population where urbanization will be likely. Some of the soldiers in the resistance armies may be integrated into the Cambodian military following a political settlement, but for those that are demobilized, their prospects of

becoming successful farmers are limited. For the Khmer Rouge soldi there will be much initial resistance to moving to cities because of their ar urban indoctrination. However, some may eventually drift to towns a because of the limited skills training available in the Khmer Rouge cam as well as the social stigma of being identified as former Khmer Routhey will have an especially difficult time making a successful adjustment

Undoubtedly one of the most difficult problems of a repatriation exerc will be finding a solution for the large population of handicapped. I estimated by Handicap International that there are between 5,000 to 6,6 amputees at the border. A further 9,000 to 10,000 are believed to be Cambodia. Over 3,200 exist in Site 2 alone. Most are from mine in and many are civilians. Those currently in Cambodia have few optic government programs for them are non-existent. They are discrimina against for employment because of their handicaps. In desperation, m have formed gangs in Phnom Penh and in rural areas and extort 'ta from city merchants or charge motorists 'fees' at roadblocks. Theref handicapped returnees cannot expect to fare any better unless they acq urban-applicable skills in the camps prior to return.

9.7 Absorption Capacity in Cambodia

- 9.7.1 The Phnom Penh government has given clear indications that it is willing accept the border population back. The government establishe Repatriation Commission which includes several ministers. Also, Minister Hun Sen gave a televised press conference in September, 1986 which he declared that all, including those in Khmer Rouge administ camps, would be welcomed back. The official Cambodian News Ser regularly publishes counts of voluntary returnees (Clements, R., 1985 News of returnees' relatively easy re-integration into Cambodia gradually filter back to the border, and should stimulate more to return safe passage through the border minefields can be guarantied.
- 9.7.2 The lack of an accurate information flow into the camps about condi prevailing inside Cambodia has already been raised in this report. C populations clearly need more details about the absorption capacity prospects for re-integration. Two basic sets of questions need address

namely, a) what will repatriants face on their return, and b) what will trained and skilled workers face in terms of acceptance of their credentials. It was suggested by one NGO official working in Cambodia that returnees must be made to understand that an economic and social system has been reestablished inside Cambodia and that they will have to re-integrate into that system (Clements, J., 1989: 3). Camp populations need to be instructed about the nature of the system that has been established and preparatory programming for a return needs to emphasize means of re-integration which strengthens the existing systems rather than works against it. This means that NGOs currently providing programs in the camps should be fully aware of current circumstances prevailing inside Cambodia. Visits by representatives of border NGOs to Cambodia should, therefore, be encouraged and expanded.

9.7.3 UNHCR has recently completed a detailed study (UNHCR, 1990) of the absorption capacity of those areas to which returnees are expected to go. This study is not yet generally available. However, on the basis its findings, as well as on other diverse reports coming out of the country, several generalizations can be made. In terms of agriculture, Cambodia basically has an extensive form of agriculture - demographic pressures are relatively low by Asian standards. The international organizations, the NGOs, the CGDK administrators and the Phnom Penh government all seem to agree on one basic issue, namely, that there is an adequate land resource available in Cambodia to absorb those who wish to return as farmers. Prime land is, however, in short supply, and, if all who indicate their intent to return to Battambang province do indeed repatriate there, a serious problem of scarcity of good land will arise in the province. Moreover, land abandoned by refugees when they fled to the border is now farmed by others. It is very unlikely, therefore, that any returnees will get their former

9.7.4 Government has recently re-distributed land at 2.5 hectares per family. At that rate, the total national land resource is sufficient to meet current needs and those of returnees. However, much of the underutilized land resource is in areas other than those to which refugees have indicated a preference for return. There have been some suggestions in Phnom Penh that 'returnee

lands back.

villages' may be set up in remote or marginal areas where abundant, albe inferior land is available. Such suggestions, however, run counter to claim that the returnees will be free to return to areas of their choice.

- 9.7.5 The major constraints to absorption in agriculture are, however, of structural rather than a resource nature. There remain shortages of draug animals, implements, and agricultural extension officers. The agricultur marketing structure is still moribund and the transportation infrastructure needed for viable commercial agriculture remains weak and unreliable throughout much of the country.
- 9.7.6 Basic assistance to returnees who opt to return to rural areas should be part of a larger international aid effort to upgrade the economy a infrastructure in rural Cambodia. However, given the large number female headed households, together with many who lack any agriculture experience or have had long absences from agriculture, special supposervices will be needed in areas where heavy concentration of return develop. Such services will also need to be made available to le populations so as not to identify refugees as a special, or even privile group.
- 9.7.7 Keeping returnees 'on the farm' may turn out to be a major probles especially among the young. Rural areas in Cambodia lack most of services to which refugees have become accustomed in camps and this exacerbate the drift to urban areas. However, a more basic problem the current marketing and pricing structure that government has establic Food prices continue to be kept artificially low, especially rice. This has to a reduction in both incentive and dynamism in rural areas. Returnet attempting to wean themselves out of a dependency syndrome is economically depressed environment may therefore lose heart long bethey can fully re-establish themselves.
- 9.7.8 Reclaiming settlement land in Cambodia will also be a risky ver minefields and unexploded bombs will likely take a considerable to some years to come. Cambodian farmers, and especially returnees se abandoned lands in the border areas, must therefore become acutely of one risk-mitigation strategy that few farmers elsewhere in the world

ever concern themselves with. Also, paddy rice requires levelled land; much land remains pock-marked by bomb craters.

- 9.7.9 The absorption capacity of urban areas is a contentious issue. Phnom Penh has grown to between 700,000 to one million inhabitants, depending on the season. Government employment, which includes health and education, is still the dominant source of incomes. Private enterprise is, however, expanding and in the past 18 month there has been a concerted effort to reactivate commercial activity. Recent visitors to Phnom Penh all cite a vibrant market and restaurant economy. Much new and privately financed construction is also underway. The question therefore arises whether or not there exists scope in the cities for those returnees unlikely to want to return to rural areas.
- 9.7.10 People who have acquired professional skills in the camps will probably expect to move into equivalent positions on return to Phnom Penh. However, while their skills may be needed, authorities may wish to direct returnees to rural areas where needs also exist. Some observers suggest that the local urban professionals and officials will resent and resist attempts by returnees to compete for prime urban jobs. The recognition of returnees credentials may become conditional upon their willingness to work upcountry. There will also be a language problem, especially for those in the health field. The border population will be returning with English proficiency; in the Cambodian health service, French remains very much the dominant language.
- 9.7.11 For the young, unskilled and uneducated returnees, the problem of absorption in the urban area will, in the first instance, be much the same as those faced by similar rural-urban migrants throughout the Third World. They will lack the necessary education and skills to be readily absorbed into the mainstream and thus linger at the periphery of urban society and be dependent upon informal sector income generation. Alternatively, they will drift into anti-social activities. Their camp experience of inactivity, boredom and complete dependency, together with the de-socialization that many of the Site 2 youths have undergone, will add to the difficulties that will be encountered. Any NGO programming that can help to reduce the impacts of such urban migration or that can anticipate and address the problems

youthful returnees to urban area will encounter, should now be given hipriority.

9.7.12 The ability of Cambodia to absorb the large population of handicapped one of greatest concerns to the NGOs. Little effort has been made authorities to effectively deal with current handicapped populations in url or rural Cambodia; the addition of several thousand more amputees as v as many mentally handicapped and otherwise traumatized populations v place great strain on the limited social service infrastructure. The Minit for Social Action, which is responsible for the handicapped, is considered a high priority ministry and has a very limited budget. T NGOs will be needed to provide assistance in this area for many yellower. Any programming that can better prepare handicapped for a return productive manpower must be given high priority.

9.8 Repatriation Plans

- One of the products of the Paris Conference was the agreement repatriation strategies. The UN Secretary General has designated UNF as the agency responsible for drawing up a repatriation plan and, when time is ripe, to implement the program. Thus UNHCR is currently in process of making plans for a population to which it largely has no acc While initially UNHCR drew up a repatriation plan independent (UNHCR, 1989b), UNBRO, ICRC and the NGOs are now having distinguishing into the planning process. Given the probable scale of any experiment, it is clear that UNHCR will be highly dependent upor assistance of others. Interaction throughout the planning process therefore very desirable, if only because each agency will have a better time to prepare itself for any assistance that it would likely be rendering.
- 9.8.2 A framework of five stages in the repatriation process were identifie Paris (UN Secretary General, 1989:7), namely:
 - · the creation of a management structure,
 - · pre-departure preparations,
 - reception and transit operations,
 - · movement of returnees, and
 - · re-integration and rehabilitation.

To date, the management structure has been prepared by UNHCR (1990).

- 9.8.3 Thoughts have also been given to the pre-departure preparations; it is anticipated that refugees will move through one or more preparation sites inside Thailand where registration, tracing services, medicals and other preparatory activities will take place. Khao I Dang is being cited as a likely preparation centre. Sojourn in a preparation centre could be quite protracted. From the preparation centre(s) refugees will be transported to transit and reception centres inside Cambodia from which returnees are to be rapidly (within 10 days) dispersed to destinations of their choice.
- 9.8.4 There has also been debate about the means of transport. Air has been suggested as speedy and safe means, especially if the airstrip at Wattana Nakom were used. However, it is costly and would probably not have the capacity to move more than 5,000 to 8,000 per week⁹ (UN Secretary General, 1989: 9). Surface transport requires some preparation to ensure safety. The rail link from Battambang to Aranyaprathet can be rehabilitated and, together with the parallel road, would provide a return capacity in excess of 10,000 per week. However, a larger volume of return may place to great a strain on the preparation and reception centres. Sea transport has also been considered but is not considered very practical. Actual mode of return movement will depend to a large degree on the time frame in which repatriation occurs and the proportion of repatriates who choose organized over spontaneous return.
- 9.8.5 Repatriation assistance in the form of resettlement kits and rations to tide people over until their first harvest is being envisioned as the tertiary level of assistance. Longer term improvements to infrastructure in areas of heavy returnee concentrations will also be implemented. Such programs will also have to embrace resident populations in the areas. It is important that every attempt is made by any organized return to take the seasonal cultivation regime into consideration (i.e., that ideally refugees be returned in time for the May/June planting). The seasonal availability of building material for housing must also be considered; thatch and bamboo are not always readily

⁹ i.e. it would take from 37 to 60 weeks to repatriate all refugees if non returned spontaneously.

available. Also, at the height of the rainy season (July-September) an movement in rural Cambodia becomes very difficult.

9.8.6 A basic premises of the repatriation agreement are that returnees will be fre to return to areas of their choice, to do so in safety and with dignity, and t preserve their family unity. The extent to which a UNHCR repatriation wi coincide or parallel any CGDK organized repatriation remains a matter conjecture. Much will depend how anxious Thailand becomes to complete return after it perceives conditions to be favourable. The potential rowhich spontaneous repatriation will play, or its likely scale, has not bee debated in any detail.

9.9 Role of Spontaneous Repatriation

- 9.9.1 There does not appear to any great support for spontaneous repatriation among any of the authorities. The political fronts clearly do not want loose control of their populations. The Royal Thai Government se spontaneous return as risky since control is lost over who actually go back. The international agencies are fearful for the security of spontaneous returnees and feel a responsibility to monitor them both during the returned and after their arrival. The NGOs have similar concerns. In Cambodia, the government is also cautious about refugees returning outside the ambit of organized repatriation; they too want to monitor events closely. And is refugees themselves are fearful of going back alone, partly because the may loose-out on any assistance that will be available, and partly be they fear for their safety.
- Against these constraints to spontaneous return are the forces that cre strong desires to return 'home' as quickly as possible; to leave depressing and dangerous camp environs; to escape the control of CGDK administrations; and to re-integrate into Cambodia not as identific refugees, but rather to slip back in a discrete and almost unnoticed man. The fact that an organized repatriation could become a grawn-out af involving lengthy stays in preparation centres and protracted bureaucr processing, could well result in many opting to return on their own.

9.9.3

If a land route into Cambodia is prepared (such as the Aranyaprathet to Battambang road or the Prasat to Sam Rong road) and perceived to be safe from mines or military roadblocks, many spontaneous refugees may well choose such a route to return. Moreover, if it were apparent to them that they would be able to avail themselves of resettlement kits and other assistance once back in Cambodia, many more would likely choose this option. It has been suggested by some NGO personnel that returnees should be told to keep their camp ration books on return and that these should be used as identification and the basis for providing assistance to spontaneous returnees. It is worth reiterating a point made earlier in the report, namely, that most of the camp residents that were interviewed in December and January indicated that they would go back immediately if they were convinced that it was safe to return and that they would not be harassed. Their major concern was that they received some level of assistance when they got back.

9.9.4

It is not easy to predict what proportion of the border camp population would go back on their own. Some UNHCR officials believed that the number might be as high as 50,000. In Phnom Penh, two scenarios are being considered; in one all return under UNHCR sponsorship, in the other up to one third (i.e., as many as 100,000) repatriate spontaneously. The numbers will clearly depend on a number of variables such as the information base about conditions in Cambodia which prevailing in the camps; the perceived acceptability to the border population of any political settlement; the time frame in which repatriation takes place; the pressures exerted by the CGDK administrations on the one hand and by Thai authorities on the other, the perceived bureaucracy of the official channels of return; the anticipated advantages or disadvantages of being identified as a returnee; the safety of route back; and on the level of assistance available to spontaneous returnees once back in Cambodia.

repatriated (but remained in the border area) and a further 32,000 voluntarily relocated from the UNHCR holding-centres to border encampments. The balance eventually entered the resettlement stream to third countries of permanent asylum. By the beginning of 1982, only round 200,000 remained in border encampments, suggesting that the balance of the border population had returned to the interior. There are no precise numbers of the actual border population at any time during the emergency phase, nor are there accurate numbers of spontaneous repatriants into the interior of Cambodia from the border area. A few headcounts were taken in some camps, but because of the highly fluid nature of population flows at that time, such counts cannot be used to draw any inference about total numbers, and especially about the number of spontaneous repatriants. All estimates appear to be based primarily on levels of emergency assistance provided; this appears to be particularly the case with regard to the returnees to whom some limited UNHCR assistance was provided inside Cambodia.]

- 10.4 Following the Vienamese offensive during the 1984-1985 dry season and the resultant relocation of the border population inside Thailand, the transborder movements were largely brought to a halt. For the next four years only a very small, clandestine movement occurred the search for family being the principal motive for those risking a temporary or permanent return.
- Over the past eighteen months, the volume of returnees to Cambodia has once again increased. Both temporary and permanent spontaneous return movements are occurring. The Phnom Penh government is supportive of such movement, albeit for political rather than altruistic reasons. The major resistance to spontaneous repatriation is now coming from all three CGDK administrations; each is concerned about loosing political credibility if their populations leave. The camps have become closed-camps from within and a central question that now needs addressing is where resignees can flee to if they fear persecution within the camps from their respective administrations. Hence there is now a growing demand among refugees an among much of the international community for the establishment of 'neutral' camps to which refugees who do not support any of the three political factions can

10 CONCLUSIONS

- 10.1 Some twenty years have elapsed since the Vietnam War spilled into Cambodia and the internal political confrontations, which had already been simmering for many years, erupted into Cambodia's own war with itself. While the peace-process appears to have begun, a lasting and indisputable settlement acceptable to all four parties remains elusive, and some 350,000 Cambodians continue to linger in UNBRO-supported border camps, UNHCR-assisted holding centres, and in 'hidden camps' controlled by the CGDK. Most want to go home; their fundamental preconditions for returning are guarantees of safety from war and retribution and a secure passage through the heavily mined border zone. A secondary concern is that they receive some measure of assistance from the international community after returning to help their re-integration into either rural or urban Cambodia.
- The return to Cambodia will not be a completely new phenomenon. There have been several waves back across the border. It was shown in this report that between 1979 and 1984, the border was extremely permeable and that there was a great deal of movement back and forth between the interior of Cambodia and the Thai border. Some of these migrants were bonafide repatriants they had come to the border, and some even into Thailand, to escape perceived persecution and the impacts of the war between invading Vietnamese and retreating Khmer Rouge. Others saw the border as a temporary haven for relief and a source of supplies. They came to satisfy certain needs and then returned to their villages. There were also those who came to the border to join the emergent non-communist resistance, and, lastly, there were those who came to the border to make a profit as traders and black marketeers.
- 10.3 At the height of the 1979-1980 crisis years, there were close to, if not over one million migrants along the Thai-Cambodian border. About 200,000 of these entered Thailand of which some 9,000 subsequently voluntarily

live in safety, and, when the opportunity arises, from which they can return freely and unhindered to Cambodia.

10.6

As the peace process runs its course, plans for an eventual return of all refugees are in process of being made. From the Royal Thai Government's perspective, the return will be initiated immediately following a political settlement. It plans for a speedy process -- the principal objective will be to be rid of the refugees in as short a time-frame as is possible. From the Cambodian government's perspective, a repatriation is also now acceptable. if only for the perceived political advantage that may result as the CGDK looses its population base when returnees disperse throughout Cambodia. Its plans are for a measured return where it is able to carefully monitor who comes back -- leaders of the Khmer Rouge, for example, will not be welcome. The CGDK factions also plan for a return. Their's will be a controlled movement of their respective populations into areas they expect to have control over. The principal CGDK objective will be to maintain their respective population base. The international community is similarly planning for a return. UNHCR will be the lead agency, but assistance will clearly be needed from most of the other organizations at the border. Their plan is for a gradual return; the pace of which must be geared to the absorptive capacity of the areas into which the refugees plan to return. They too are intent on carefully monitoring the process. Thus, given these diverse aims and objectives, the refugees will once again be at the mercy of the convoluted politics of the Thai-Cambodian border. The very existence of the conflicting plans and objectives will provide the basis for many a returnees' decision to spontaneously return once they perceive conditions on the other side to be secure and a route across the border to be safe.

10.7

There have seldom been any major organized repatriations which have not been Paralleled by a significant spontaneous return movement. It is therefore only realistic to consider the eventuality of a large proportion of the border people also opting to return on their own. The actual proportion remains a matter of conjecture, however, a figure between 50,000 to 100,000 might be a basis for appropriate contingency planning by all parties concerned. To date, there has been little or no attention paid to the probability of such a sizable spontaneous return. By failing to realistically

anticipate such movement, and to make appropriate contingency plans such returnees' protection and assistance, the spectre of a new cr developing inside Cambodia is created.

10.8

Two profiles of persons likely to be spontaneous returnees can be readentified. One group consists of mature males with relatively so families; have some knowledge of conditions in Cambodia (i.e., are lile to be persons with at least a basic level of education/literacy); have had persons with at least a basic level of education/literacy); have had persons with at least a basic level of education/literacy); have had persons with at least a basic level of education/literacy); have had persons with at least a basic level of education/literacy); have had persons with at least a basic level of education/literacy); have had persons with at least a basic level of education/literacy); have had persons with at least a basic level of education/literacy); have had persons with at least a basic level of education/literacy); have had persons with at least a basic level of education/literacy); have had persons with at least a basic level of education/literacy); have had persons with at least a basic level of education/literacy); have had persons with at least a basic level of education/literacy); have had persons with at least a basic level of education/literacy); have had persons with at least a basic level of education/literacy); have had persons with at least a basic level of education/literacy); have had persons with at least a basic level of education/literacy); have had persons with at least a basic level of education/literacy); have had persons with at least a basic level of education/literacy); have had persons with at least a basic level of education/literacy); have had persons with at least a basic level of education/literacy); have had persons with at least a basic level of education/literacy); have had persons with at least a basic level of education/literacy); have had persons with at least a basic level of education/literacy); have had persons with at least a basic level of education/literacy); have had persons with at least a basic level of education/literacy); have had persons with at least a basic level of e

10.9

Persons least likely to be involved in spontaneous repatriation include elderly, the orphaned, women-headed households, and the handicar The long-term dependency of camp life. following in the wake of traumatization of the Khmer Rouge era, has created among many in camps a 'mindset' in which little independent thinking or decision matakes place and instead there is a fatalistic acceptance of the status. They have no expectations; they exude no initiative or ambition persons are found at all age groups — they will only return who organized repatriation. At Khao I Dang and Ban That, the continuing for resettlement among the majority of residents implies that most will rouly as a last resort or when forced to join an organized repatriation by authorities.

10.10

Initial indications are that the majority of returnees will opt to settle in western Cambodia. Consequently, the principal thrust plans for absorption of returnees are being focussed in the western twinces. Clearly a realistic strategy. However, it is also realistic to anticipal there will be a substantial primary and secondary migration to urban. While the greater majority of camp populations are expected to re-intras peasant farmers, it is highly probable that without prior experience.

farming, or after a decade's hiatus from farming, many will be unable to successfully cope with rural life and will, therefore, join the urbanization stream. The limited availability of most of the services to which returnees have become accustomed in the camps will likely create a further push factor from rural Cambodia. The under thirty male population can be identified as the most likely to urbanize.

Special attention will need to be paid to the large handicapped populations in the camps, the greater majority of which are young male amputees. While this group will undoubtedly return as part of an organized repatriation, many will subsequently undertake a spontaneous migration to urban areas because of the limited opportunities for them in rural areas. Unless they can be better prepared for an urban existence in a system which does not place much regard on integrating handicapped people into the economic mainstream, the majority will end up at the extreme peripheries of society.

10.12

There exists considerable debate about the levels and appropriateness of programs for preparing people to return. Two basic philosophies exist. On the one hand, there are the promoters of increased programming, especially those involving skill upgrading. On the other hand, there is a smaller group who believe the best preparation strategy is to phase services downwards to a level comparable to that prevailing in Cambodia. Clearly, an ideal approach will include both an emphasis on new programs that address special needs that should be met to facilitate re-integration, while at the same time phasing out any programs that are less than essential, such as some of the resettlement-oriented programs that are still being maintained at Khao I Dang. Whether refugees go back as part of an organized movement or spontaneously, the level of re-integration assistance that can be provided inside Cambodia will be limited, since any level of assistance there must also be available to local residents if a harmonious re-integration is to be effected. Preparatory assistance is possible, therefore, only in Thailand; once in Cambodia, only community-based development assistance will be possible. The time is thus highly opportune for a detailed study of programming needs for better preparation for both organized and spontaneous repatriation be immediately undertaken, and that such a study

simultaneously attempts to identify redundancies in existing programm: or programs which are maintaining an unnecessary level of dependency.

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APPENDIX

This list is of persons, and their affiliation, who were interviewed during December, 1989 and January, 1990. I have tried to make it as complete as possible; I apologize to anyone who I have omitted, or for any errors in their positions or affiliations. All gave generously of their time. I did not ask for the names of the dozens of camp residents I interviewed on a casual basis. The (*) indicates respondents who had experience at the border during the 1979-1984 period and were thus able to provide information for the historical narrative of repatriations. The (**) indicates respondents who have had recent experience inside Cambodia.

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Ceyrac, Pierre Fr. Project Director, Site 2, COERR, Aranyaprathet

Chia Leng Head of Administration, FUNCINPEC, Site B (*)

Cody, Pete Agricultural Officer, Khao I Dang, YWAM, Aranyaprathet

Crowley, John Liaison Officer, Joint Voluntary Agency, Bangkok (*)

Dara Than Editor of *Peace*, Site 2

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Dunkley, Glen Senior Training Officer, UNHCR, Geneva (*)

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Fordham, Roger Executive Secretary, CCSDPT, Bangkok

Grace, Dennis Director, Joint Voluntary Agency, Bangkok

Grunwald, François Groupe de Recheche et d'Echanges Technologiques, Phnom

Penh, Cambodia (**)

Harder, Sophie formerly with CRS (*)

Hath Wirasamrit Chief, DPPU, Aranyaprathet

Hege, Helen Medical Officer, MCC, Prey Veng, Cambodia (**)

Hegenauer, Joe Child Protection Officer, UNBRO, Aranyaprathet (*)

Henriksen, Erna Field Officer, Khao I Dang, UNHCR, Aranyaprathet (*)

Jambor, Pierre Representative, UNHCR, Bangkok (*)

Kasidis Rochnakorn Assistant Representative, UNHCR, Bangkok (*)

Keisuke Murata Durable Solutions Officer, UNHCR, Bangkok

Keo Lundi Education Administrator, KPNLF, Site 2

Kern, Bertrand Field Officer, ICRC, Phnom Penh, Cambodia (**)

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Maat, Bob formerly of COERR, Ta Phaya (*)

Mai Man former Khmer Rouge ideologue, Site 8

Medralla, Bob Director, ARC, Bangkok (*) (**)

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Nilund, Nora Community Support Coordinator, UNBRO, Aranyaprathe

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Pravit Ekcharoensook Social Worker, Khao I Dang, Redd Barna, Aranyaprathe

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Oe Ee Deputy Camp Administrator, Khmer Rouge, Site 8 (*)

O'Keefe, Garvin Director, Concern, Aranyaprathet (**)

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