

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background

Cambodia has become a member of ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asia Nations) since 1999. From political and economic standpoints, Cambodia is considered as one of least developed countries in ASEAN. But ASEAN is committed to build promising future along with Cambodia. In several aspects, such as stability and security, Cambodia is able to give its contribution to ASEAN. Cambodia is the tenth member which can help strengthening the position of ASEAN in international forum based on its aims of preserving peace and overcoming the external political problems. Recently, however, the relations between Cambodia and other members of ASEAN have become less harmonious due to Cambodia's position as the recent Host of ASEAN Ministerial Meeting (AMM). The reason is clear that, as the ASEAN Chair, Cambodia refused to incorporate the positions of Philippines and Vietnam concerning their dispute with China (PRC) on the South China Sea. It asserts the failure to issue the customary joint communique at the last ministerial meeting (AMM). AMM is a meeting proposed for the first time in 1997 to discuss all problems of important issues in order to find the solutions.

If there was any organization that could have facilitated resolution from within Southeast Asia (without outside intervention), it was ASEAN. There was the opportunity for the states other than Cambodia to unite and assert to China that

their claims must also be respected. However, in the Summer of 2011, ASEAN was content with an agreement that did not resolve disputed territory in the South China Sea or the use of underwater resources in disputed areas.¹

Several months before the ASEAN meeting in July 2012 began, tensions over the South China Sea dispute were already high. This meeting, therefore, proved to be ineffective in resolving tensions for several reasons. There were disputes between ASEAN members related to the issues of ties to the US or to China for certain member (some countries, particularly in light of recent financial aid from China to Cambodia, have accused Cambodia of “stonewalling” the meetings in support of China). The failure in Phnom Penh not only undermines ASEAN’s ‘centrality’, but also questions the ASEAN’s ability to negotiate with other countries as a collective actor. In the next agenda of ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) it has been confirmed that there would be no discussion over the South China Sea dispute. Cambodia refused it for the second time in the Executive Meeting of AIPA before the main agenda was held.

Between Phnom Penh and Beijing, there have been intimate relations since long time ago. For the past 12 years, Cambodia and China have built up their bilateral ties and strengthened cooperation and friendship as never before. Cambodia mostly depends on Chinese aid and investment. Cambodia gives benefits to China as well. The most significant benefits for China are political. Hun Sen government has been very supportive of Beijing on issues related to

Chinese sovereignty. Both are committed to co-exist. China is strong enough to urge Cambodia to secure its position, especially if it is related to territorial issues involving other countries in ASEAN. Of ASEAN's three poorer members besides Myanmar, Cambodia appears more inclined with China.

B. Statement of Problem

In reviewing the background of the study, what follows is the main problem of the topic:

- Why did Cambodia become a proxy state of China in ASEAN in the context of the South China Sea dispute?

C. Objectives

This work has four objectives. First, to comprehend the dynamic relations between ASEAN members and China. Second, to describe the importance of China for Cambodia. Third, to describe Cambodia as the proxy state of China in ASEAN. Fourth, to explain determining reasons of Cambodia to be China's proxy in ASEAN.

D. Literature Review

D.1. The Concept of Proxy State

A proxy state is a state which is connected to another powerful state and contributes to represent its interests. The interests are various including sovereignty, territory, and domination. It is not just about one way relation but the powerful state usually has the bargaining power and pays a price to its proxy state which becomes a routine. The proxy state needs economic fulfilment while the more powerful state plays its political role within the proxy state. A proxy state is

used for balancing the power of other powerful state. It is because of the proxy state or dependent state subordinates economically, politically, and military to another state which is more powerful. Thus it does not only make Cambodia a proxy state but also has proximity of policy to China. The historical path of the relations between proxy state and the more powerful state highly affects the relations between them recently.

During the Cold War era, superpowers activated Proxy states and organizations to serve and represent their interests and to engage in conflict with one another. This form of Proxy avoided direct superpower confrontation and mitigated the threat of nuclear war.²

The implementation of the proxy state concept toward the case between Cambodia and China is obvious. Cambodia has emerged as China's proxy state since the turbulence of the third Indochina War until the prominence of the South China Sea dispute agenda. Cambodia is seen to be thinking in line with China in seeing the dispute settlement over South China Sea dispute. The ASEAN joint communiqué has failed for the first time as Cambodia became a host of several ASEAN meetings. It has been recognized that China considers the areas surrounding South China Sea as potential in natural gas and crude oil in large quantity. In this case China turns into an assertive state for the sake of territorial interest in South China Sea. China has played its political role in ASEAN indirectly through Cambodia's actions. As a claimant, Phillipines is also assertive and seek for the United States support. South China Sea has turned into conflict of divisions recently.

² D. N. L. & J. C. Stein, "Power and Deterrence", *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 43(4), 1987, p.

D.2. Dependency Theory

Dependency theory has many definitions emphasized by different scientists. This theory was first introduced by Raul Prebisch. Dependency can be defined as an explanation of the economic development of a state in terms of the external influences—political, economic, and cultural—on national development policies.³ Santos emphasizes the historical dimension of the dependency relationships in his definition:

[Dependency is]...an historical condition which shapes a certain structure of the world economy such that it favors some countries to the detriment of others and limits the development possibilities of the subordinate economics...a situation in which the economy of a certain group of countries is conditioned by the development and expansion of another economy, to which their own is subjected.⁴

The definition of Dependency Theory which is often and commonly used can be defined as the interactions between the dominant and dependent states or center and periphery or metropolitan and satellite integrated into the international system. The dominant states are the industrialized nations while the dependent states are the poorer parties mostly living in Latin America, Africa, and Asia. Dos Santos⁵ outlines three forms of dependence:

1. Colonial dependency

Colonization occurs by the center to the periphery. Colonial relationship - population tend to be exploitative. The colonial monopolies of land, mines, and

³ Osvaldo Sunkel. "National Development Policy and External Dependence in Latin America", *The Journal of Development Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 1, October 1969, p. 23.

⁴ Theotonio Dos Santos. "The Structure of Dependence," in K.T. Fann and Donald C. Hodges, eds., *Readings in U.S. Imperialism*. Boston: Porter Sargent, 1971, p. 226.

⁵ *Ibid.*,

labor in conquered colonies formed this kind of dependency. It was the characteristic of many dependency relations.

2. Financial-Industrial Dependence

Central state invested either directly or in partnership with local employers. The dependence came up during the latter part of twentieth century. It emerged when heavy financial investments were made by the advanced countries in the production of raw materials and agricultural products in the periphery.

3. Technological-Industrial Dependence

It is the new forms of dependence. Economic activity in periphery is no longer exporting the raw materials to the center. Multinational companies began to invest in the periphery and developed as a result of technological dependence.

Marxists argued that capitalism is a system which has shaped the interactions between the first world and the third world. This thought is reinforced by the statement of Andre Gunder Frank which clearly stated:

...historical research demonstrates that contemporary underdevelopment is in large part the historical product of past and continuing economic and other relations between the satellite underdeveloped and the now developed metropolitan countries. Furthermore, these relations are an essential part of the capitalist system on a world scale as a whole.⁶

The dependency theory is the critique toward the modernization and development theory. These theories explained that the effectiveness of dependency of the third

⁶ Andre Gunder Frank. "The Development of Underdevelopment," in James D. Cockcroft, Andre

world countries will lead to the development of the countries itself. In contrast, dependency theory asserts that the dependence of these countries on the periphery toward the center countries will lead to the decline and underdevelopment in the periphery. Additionally, the dependency causes the foreign penetration to force the dependent state to be powerless if their economic and political decisions are influenced by the dominant state without compromise. The implementation of the dependency theory in this case is Cambodia as a periphery state subordinate most on economic sector to China as center state. The foreign assistance and investment coming from China are very high in rate to keep Cambodia's economy safe. But there is a consequence that Cambodia should deal with.

The increasing Chinese influence in Cambodia, based on hundreds of millions of dollars in loans, investments and economic aid that flow without "strings" or lines of attached rules, only makes it more difficult to push for reform and development. When stronger country came with wads of money to pay, the Cambodian government will be more than happy to play.⁷ The bilateral trade between Cambodia and China was valued at \$2.5 million in 2011 while leaders of the two countries pledged to double the amount by 2017. China's exports to Cambodia are significant. Cambodia produces agricultural products such as rice and several industry products such as garments and textiles for export to China.⁸ This situation brings out the real purpose of Cambodian government seeking for

⁷ Sophal Ear. *Aid dependence in Cambodia: How Foreign Assistance Undermines Democracy*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2012, no page.

⁸ Xinhuanet (2012), "China, Cambodia agree to speed up implementation of comprehensive

more Chinese aid even though the high dependency remarkably hampers the development in Cambodia. This would make China much easier to play its political influence as compensation. This will not only make Cambodia as proxy state but also proximity of policy. There are several indicators of proxy state as follows: 1. Proximity of policy. 2. Proximity of culture. 3. The proximity of the leaders.

D.3. Theory of Ideology

Ideology itself represents the "production of ideas, of conceptions, of consciousness," all that "men say, imagine, conceive," and include such things as "politics, laws, morality, religion, metaphysics, etc." Ideology functions as the superstructure of a civilization: the conventions and culture that make up the dominant ideas of a society. The "ruling ideas" of a given epoch are, however, those of the ruling class: "The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships, the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas; hence of the relationships which make the one class the ruling one, therefore, the ideas of their dominance". Since one goal of ideology is to legitimize those forces in a position of hegemony, it tends to obfuscate the violence and exploitation that often keep a disempowered group in its place (from slaves in tribal society to the peasantry in feudal society to the proletariat in capitalist society). The obfuscation necessarily leads to logical

contradictions in the dominant ideology, which Marxism works to uncover by returning to the material conditions of a society: a society's mode of production.⁹

Hinich and Munger points that ideology is an internally consistent set of propositions that makes both proscriptive and prescriptive demands on human behaviour. All ideologies have implications for (a) what is ethically good, and (therefore) what is bad; (b) how society's resources should be distributed; and (c) where power appropriately resides.¹⁰

The ideology itself changes to adjust to the environment. Experience is believed to put aside the ideology because the countries prefer more beneficial choice. It is a pragmatism idea that in politics there is no way the ideology is exact. Ideology is dynamic and depends on the situation and how the environment affects it. Although every nation including Cambodia becomes pragmatist for its economic benefits, communism is seemingly strong foundation defining the relations between China and Cambodia. It appeared as ideological legacy since Khmer Rouge.

The communism of Cambodia based on Maoist and Marxist-Leninist which has dominantly embraced the people until recently. The communist movement emerged as Pol Pot searched for power of the Khmer Rouge. Cambodia was integrated into rural and agricultural activity until today. Cambodia and China have the same ideology of Communism. As Marx said, ideology is part of consciousness and can be dominant ideas of society covering the most aspects in life such as politics, law, morality, and religion.

⁹ Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. *The German Ideology*. New York: International Publishers, 1970, p. 47-64.

¹⁰ Melvin J. Hinich and Michael C. Munger. *Ideology and the Theory of Political Choice*. Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1994, p. 11.

For Cambodia, Communism has become an ideal ideology which was rooted from China's influence. Besides, in the Third Indochina War, China has been very supportive and helpful to Cambodia including in the time when this country was invaded by Vietnam. From the similarity of ideology between China and Cambodia, there has been emotional relationship. Moreover, historical part is a sacred thing to be remembered by Cambodia. These two countries are emotionally bound. Without any similarity in ideology, the relationship between them is only about veiled politics without openness of one to another. Cambodia would put China first with its interest rather than choosing other country with different ideology and historical connection.

E. Hypothesis

There is a hypothesis that the study wants to explain:

Cambodia is willing to act as a proxy state of China because of its pragmatism reflected in economic (in terms of aid, investment, and trade), cultural, and military dependency on China. The similarity of ideology between them also causes significant policy penetration by this powerful country so that as a result Cambodia is influenced by China economically, politically, and culturally.

F. Methodology

The method applied in this study is qualitative research method because it will try to find qualitative data to analyze the relationship of one variable through qualitative elements in research and verify the concept of proxy state in practice.

The qualitative research helps the researcher to get the data by collecting them from the articles, political books and journals, and other references as the primary

sources. The method used in this research is descriptive and explanatory in which I want to describe and explain about Cambodia as the proxy state of China in ASEAN.

G. Organization of Chapters

The writer divides this paper into chapters and each chapter is related to the others. In Chapter I, Introduction, I want have described: purpose of research, background, research questions, theoretical framework, hypothesis, method of research, and organization of chapters.

In Chapter II, I will describe about the supports of Cambodia toward China in South China Sea dispute.

In Chapter III, I will to explain about the dependency of Cambodia to China in investment and foreign assistance and China's influence in Cambodia in the context of economy and politics as the consequences of the dependency.

In Chapter IV, I will to describe more detail about the ideological influence toward China and Cambodia relations.

In Chapter V, I will draw conclusions from the content of the thesis.