***Peace, Power and Resistance in Cambodia: Global Governance and the Failure of Conflict Resolution*. By Pierre P. Lizée**. London: Macmillan, 1999. 203pp.

Pierre Lizée's *Peace, Power and Resistance in Cambodia* is one of the most innovative and thought-provoking books among the many published on United Nations peacekeeping in Cambodia. Indeed, Lizée excoriates the entire genre of publications on the United Nations and Cambodia which argue that the United Nations' failure could have been averted if only it had improved the implementation of the 1991 comprehensive peace agreement in Cambodia.

Lizée bases his analysis on the theoretical foundations laid down in the writings of Antonio Gramsci, Robert Cox (*Social Forces, States and World Order*) and Anthony Giddens (*The Nation-State and Violence*). He moves beyond these texts to develop his own critical theory of violence. This marks the major intellectual innovation in this work and its analysis of the failure of the 1991 Cambodian peace agreement. Lizée argues that the United Nations failed because its conceptualization of violent conflict in peripheral societies was inadequate. Because of this, it was unable to attain its principal objective: the replacement of violent factional infighting with non-violent democratic processes.

Lizée's work is based on four major premises:

- Non-violent forms of politics are predicated upon the emergence of very specific configurations of state, economic and social forces.
- Current international efforts to resolve long-standing conflicts in peripheral regions essentially revolve around attempts to impose on the élites in these regions, through concerted diplomatic pressures, a reconstruction of society duplicating these structures. It is at this level that the reason for the failure of such international initiatives can be found.
- The literature on conflict resolution has yet to explain fully the lack of success of these operations, or to offer an alternative, because it has so far failed to integrate an analysis of the nature of the social changes which these operations require.
- Emerging mechanisms of globalization and global government rest on a specific organization of violence at the domestic and international level which in fact prevents a reformulation of the current literature on conflict resolution.

Lizée concludes by offering insights on how current approaches to conflict resolution and global governance can be modified to take

into account insights derived from his critical theory of violence and case study of U.N. operations in Cambodia.

*Peace, Power and Resistance in Cambodia* is divided into four parts. The first provides the theoretical basis for the argument that non-violent politics are co-extensive with particular social developments and that the attempt to impose these developments in peripheral regions, such as Cambodia, will fail to foster a movement towards peace. According to Lizée, "what constitutes violence and conflict are socially constructed in processes coextensive with the constitution of society itself" and that the process of globalization results in a similarly constructed "global understanding" of conflict and conflict resolution (p. 1).

The 1991 Cambodian peace plan was aimed at moving Cambodia from violent to non-violent politics by creating a strengthened state structure, a cohesive administrative apparatus, and a capitalist economy. Nothing less than the three-tiered reorganization of Cambodian society was contemplated. It was assumed that new groups which emerged in this process would support the non-violent political order linked to this transformation. The U.N. plan ran counter to the realities of Cambodian society where peace was assumed to arise either from the balance of power achieved by violent factional politics, or from Buddhist cosmology. Lizée argues that the dominant groups in Cambodian society supported these concepts of peace "because they justify and legitimize the social order from which [the dominant groups] draw their power" (p. 3).

Lizée juxtaposes Western conceptualization of "peace as democracy" with Cambodian realities. Relying on Giddens, he traces the evolution of the modern Western state and the impact of capitalism. The latter, Lizée argues, created three institutional clusters: industrialism, surveillance and centralized control of the means of violence (p. 19). The modern state internally pacified itself and turned to the rule of law as the basis of authority. In such a context, peace was conceived as the absence of violence in society, or "peace as democracy".

In contrast, Cambodia is a pre-capitalist state where the administration is weak and the bourgeoisie underdeveloped and lacking in political influence. Social interactions are highly personalized and based on localized relationships and patronage. Despite a period of colonization by France, Cambodia did not evolve along Western lines where the state assumed a monopoly over organized violence. In Lizée's view, "violence constituted the means of exercising power" and the weak Cambodian state became "one pole of power among many, prone to violence" (p. 36). Lizée concludes:

> All these different patterns of development have therefore created in Cambodia a polity where organized violence is not, so to speak,

> concentrated at the outer edge and where the exercise of organized violence is not restricted by an array of social and political rights. What concept of peace can be plausible in this context?... Rather, violence is seen, in these circumstances, as contextual, in that it is defined as an autonomous part of the social order, standing outside of all agency and determining by its presence the very nature of that social order... [S]ince political factions constitute the only mode of affiliation able to provide some measure of protection from violence and to control to a degree the means of organized violence. Peace, then, would involve a situation where violence is diminished temporarily (p. 39).

The impact of the United Nations' approach upon Cambodian reality produced four reactions, according to Lizée. First, the very weakness of the Cambodian state and society served to undermine the United Nations' attempt to reorganize Cambodian society, creating in the process a strong state, democratic institutions, bureaucratic processes and capitalist development. Secondly, a conceptual vacuum of what constituted peace emerged. The United Nations supported peace as democracy, while the political factions supported peace as a factional balance of power. Thirdly, international attempts to remould Cambodian society (by creating a strong state, representative institutions, capable bureaucracy, a capitalist class and non-violent political processes) will be perceived by the leadership of the dominant factions as threatening to their positions in society. They will resist by all means possible, including violence, this remoulding. Fourthly, all factions, including pro-monarchy forces, will refuse to endorse the concept of peace as democracy because they know they will be unable to preserve their positions in society by manipulating the democratic process in a transformed Cambodia.

Part two provides empirical support for Lizée's theoretical proposition about the socially constructed meaning of violence, conflict, and peace. He examines the diplomatic process in which the Cambodian factions sought to undermine the framework put forward by the Permanent 5 members of the United Nations and the manner in which the Paris peace accords were subverted in their implementation.

Part three examines the implications of Lizée's findings on the main literature on conflict resolution. He examines critically two schools of thought. One argues that conflict can be resolved through mechanisms, such as negotiations, which reduce the incompatibility of the protagonists' goals and strategies. The other school argues that it is the character of the social environment in which the protagonists evolve which generates conflict between them. Here, conflict resolution aims at engineering broad socio-economic and institutional reforms designed to

modify the nature of the structural constraints imposed on the protagonists so that relations become less prone to conflict.

Lizée argues that the literature on conflict resolution needs to be rewritten to incorporate a new political vocabulary so that the socially constructed nature of conflict in peripheral societies can be addressed and transformed into non-violent politics.

Part four examines the role of the international community in the 1998 Cambodian elections and asks why the same patterns of thought and ways of conceptualizing conflict resolution were reapplied with similar results. One of Lizée's suggestions is that this problematic can only be addressed by opening up the practice and discourse of global governance to the concepts and insights developed in this work.

In sum, this is a powerfully written critique of the United Nations' orthodox and misguided approach to peace-building in the post-Cold War era. It challenges the conceptual premises on which U.N. intervention has been based and provides a devastating account of why the United Nations failed to achieve its main objective of creating a democratic Cambodian state based on non-violence and the rule of law. This book is highly recommended to conflict resolution specialists, diplomatic practitioners, military officers engaged in U.N. missions, and scholars with an interest in Cambodia.

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***A Special Relationship: The United States and Military Government in Thailand, 1947-1958*. By Daniel Fineman.** Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997. 357pp.

"Intrigue" and "tragedy" best epitomize this absorbing analysis of how the United States, in an evolutionary manner, developed a symbiotic patron–client relationship with a repressive military dictatorship in Thailand, a country of low priority in America's foreign policy concerns within Southeast Asia. This relationship baffled alike allies, critics, and enemies of the United States. Ironically, U.S. State Department officials were aware of what the Thai military leaders were doing, for their actions were nourished and sustained by large amounts of military aid.