

First steps to Cambodia peace

THE FORMATION of the Supreme National Council (SNC) by the warring factions in Cambodia should only be regarded as a first tentative step to bring peace to a country which has suffered from 20 years of conflict and numerous failed peace proposals (Guardian, September 11).

The actions of the Khmer Rouge over the past 11 years does not seem to indicate that they are ready to give up the fight to acquire power. Until the final agreement is signed by all factions, the Khmer Rouge may find numerous excuses to undermine the plan.

However, if free and fair elections are held under the auspices of the UN, there is no indication as to how civilians will be protected from intimidation, especially from the Khmer Rouge who have already used such tactics to acquire forced conscripts and food supplies

during the past decade.

The peace plan of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council also fails to give a financial undertaking to ensure its success. With financial requirements on Western governments of the Gulf crisis and with the possibility of war not completely ruled out, where is the money for the peace keeping force coming from? The UN may not have adequate funds to implement any agreement reached if the richest countries have already donated millions of pounds to the Gulf.

As you said in your leader, the Five must take on the responsibility to ensure the plan is successfully implemented . . . Pressure to this end must be kept up on all sides involved, if we are to avoid dashing the newly founded hopes of the Cambodian people.

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