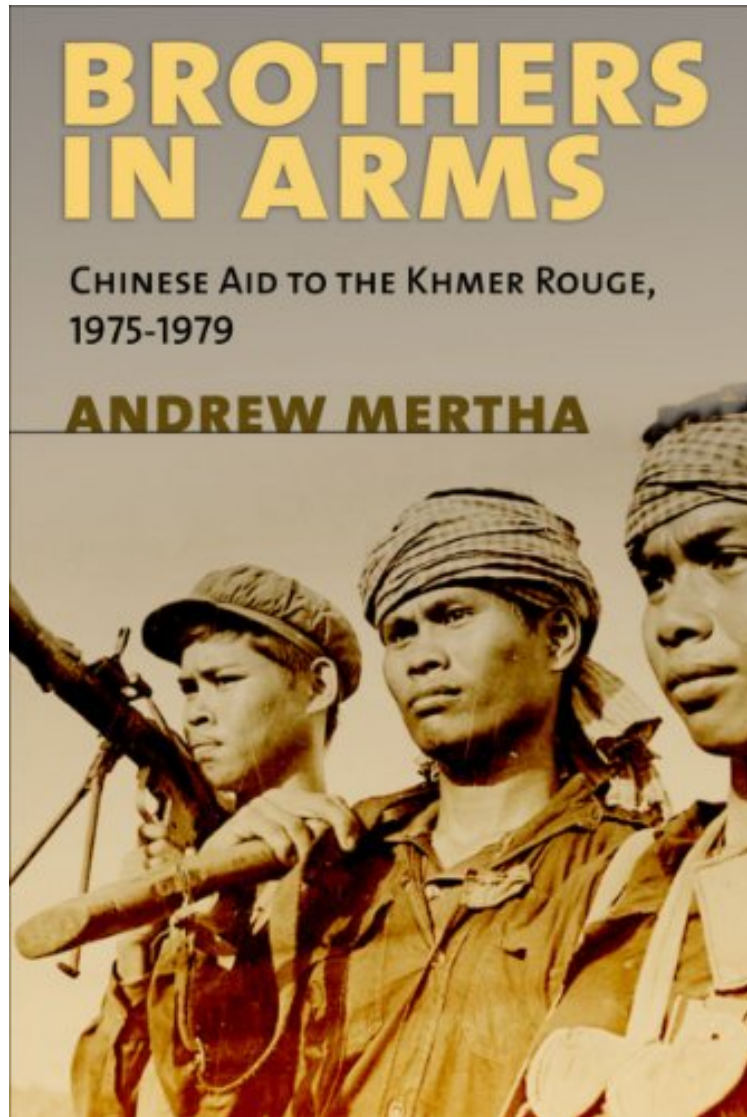


(Library ebook) Brothers in Arms: Chinese Aid to the Khmer Rouge, 1975ndash;1979

## Brothers in Arms: Chinese Aid to the Khmer Rouge, 1975ndash;1979

*Andrew Mertha*

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**Andrew Mertha : Brothers in Arms: Chinese Aid to the Khmer Rouge, 1975ndash;1979** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Brothers in Arms: Chinese Aid to the Khmer Rouge, 1975ndash;1979:

8 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Without substantive cooperation from either China or Vietnam, an almost impossible topic.By Richard ArantA valiant attempt at an almost unapproachable subject, given lack of substantive cooperation by either China or Vietnam. Shortly after Vietnam brought down the Khmer Rouge regime

(and when it was clearly in Vietnam's interest to expose the depth of Chinese support to the Khmer Rouge killing machine) Wilfred G. Burchett in his "China, Cambodia, Vietnam Triangle" had access to Chinese technical assistance documents and DK Office 870 archives captured by the Peoples Army of Vietnam near the Thai border during January-March 1979. Professor Mertha did locate some Chinese documents in the current holdings of Cambodia's National Archives, and he produces some very interesting bits from the diaries of unnamed Chinese technicians. No surprise that China chooses not to be of help in clarifying their long involvement with the Communist Party of Kampuchea. Vietnam would seem to have the most to gain by shedding light on the issue were it not for the preconditions placed on Vietnam by China during the China-Vietnam renormalization process -- namely that Vietnam cease and desist mentioning genocide against Vietnamese civilians committed by the Chinese-backed Khmer Rouge regime. See the recent memoirs of two former Vietnamese diplomats, Tran Quang Co and Huynh Anh Dung, for first-hand details of Chinese maneuvering to protect their Khmer Rouge allies. "On the morning of 4 August 1991 at the Office of the Party Center (4 Nguyen Caacute;nh Chacirc;n), Comrade Lecirc; ETH;?c Anh and Comrade H?ng Hgrave; worked with Comrade Ministers Tr?n Quang C? and Nguy?n Dy Niecirc;n on the program for the meeting of the Vietnamese and Chinese Foreign Ministers ... Lecirc; ETH;?c Anh: "Truthfully speaking, we were also the victims of Pol Pot's genocide. When they came across into An Giang, our fellow countrymen were horribly massacred. But for our own sake, for the greater duty, because of major issues, we must let it go." "The final paragraph of Huynh Anh Dung's "Notes on Cambodia 1975-79" -- Another deep impression of mine is on the attitude of China - through ten years of monitoring the Chinese attitudes both on Cambodia and on relations with us - I feel most strongly that regarding Vietnam, Chinese views on bilateral relations are heavily burdened with "mandarinism." The preconditions China laid out on relations with us, they were determined to maintain from beginning to end: they never changed; they just pressured us to implement every precondition they had put in place without even the tiniest compromise. When they had to compromise, China could do so with other large countries; however, they could never compromise with us. With this type of relationship, I see the Truong Sa dispute as a tough problem to crack, because I do not think that China can compromise, even slightly, with us on this issue. "One of these preconditions was dropping the genocide issue. Gaming genocide -- Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach is quoted earlier in this paper as saying in a meeting on 4 October 1991 chaired by General Secretary Do Muoi to discuss stances on signing the Paris Agreements, "No one throws away their cards in a negotiation, but we have thrown away our two biggest cards: genocide and reducing troop strength." Continuing this gaming analogy, Hun Sen is quoted as saying to the Vietnamese in August 1991, "Strategically we must win the Chinese over to our side, but how do we play the Khmer Rouge card in the political and foreign affairs struggle?" History has much to say about what to expect when attempting to negotiate anything with the Chinese, and their accounts make me suspect that somehow China got and gets pretty much what it wants out of its relationships with its pauper client states, be they Cambodian or North Korean, all the while somehow maintaining flimsy plausible denial and convincing self deceit.) All this reminds me that at least the current Syrian regime has learned its lessons well -- should you choose to commit widespread and systematic butchery, first find yourself a superpower backer. Russia, like China, will be saying that there was nothing they could have done to stop the killing, so they just continued supplying arms and aid. In the heading to Chapter One, a quote straight to the point from Ding Gang, September 2012: "When people mention the Khmer Rouge, many might be reminded of the support China once gave it. This is a problem that cannot be avoided. No matter whether China wants it or not ... people will allude to that history." If there is a case to be made, it remains up to the Chinese themselves to make it. Their approach in shutting down Vietnam's case of KR genocide against Vietnamese civilians is not the way to do it. We are stuck with a Southeast Asia that is afraid to confront, even to discuss, its history. To me, that means more of the same to come. Add from the news on 17 February 2014: "The U.N. investigators said they had also told Kim's main ally China that it might be "aiding and abetting crimes against humanity" by sending migrants and defectors back to North Korea, where they faced torture and execution - a charge that Chinese officials had rebutted. As referral to the ICC is seen as a dim hope, given China's likely veto of any such move by Western powers in the U.N. Security Council, thoughts are also turning to setting up some form of special tribunal on North Korea, diplomatic and U.N. sources told Reuters." In terms of joining the modern world, China still has its headquarters where its hindquarters should be. Congratulations to Andrew Mertha for trying to penetrate this still politically untouchable subject.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A must read  
By RHD3 This book provided me with a more information about the relationship between China and Cambodia than any class I have taken that has discussed the Khmer Rouge reign in Cambodia. Highly recommend this book for anyone that has even the slightest curiosity in this topic.  
0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Technical book for specialists on the Democratic Kampuchea period of Pol Pot  
By kalad levy This is a specialists books and not for the uninitiated in an understanding of Cambodia's last fifty years of history. It specifically outlines many intricate aspects of the Khmer Rouge machine and its offices in Phnom Penh and else where. It also looks at some of the work of the approximately 10,000 Chinese advisers that were put into Democratic Kampuchea during the 1975 to 1979 period. The book seems to be part of an academic dissertation and is not a fluid read as more so concentrates on conveying technical information. It seems to be of the opinion that the Chinese had little influence on Democratic Kampuchea though its premise, interviewing, methods etc seems to be weak and lack a thorough big

picture approach. This is possible done to allow the book to be published within political restrictions so can be forgiven. What is very interesting and well worth reading for those specializing, is its look at the large airport the Chinese built with Cambodian slave labor and the rebuilding of the Oil refinery on the coast near Sihanoukville. Interviews with Chinese advisers are also very interesting. It would pay to look further into Chinese influence in Cambodia through the Pol Pot period as a balance to this book.

When the Khmer Rouge came to power in Cambodia in 1975, they inherited a war-ravaged and internationally isolated country. Pol Pot's government espoused the rhetoric of self-reliance, but Democratic Kampuchea was utterly dependent on Chinese foreign aid and technical assistance to survive. Yet in a markedly asymmetrical relationship between a modernizing, nuclear power and a virtually premodern state, China was largely unable to use its power to influence Cambodian politics or policy. In *Brothers in Arms*, Andrew Mertha traces this surprising lack of influence to variations between the Chinese and Cambodian institutions that administered military aid, technology transfer, and international trade. Today, China's extensive engagement with the developing world suggests an inexorably rising China in the process of securing a degree of economic and political dominance that was unthinkable even a decade ago. Yet, China's experience with its first-ever client state suggests that the effectiveness of Chinese foreign aid, and influence that comes with it, is only as good as the institutions that manage the relationship. By focusing on the links between China and Democratic Kampuchea, Mertha peers into the "black box" of Chinese foreign aid to illustrate how domestic institutional fragmentation limits Beijing's ability to influence the countries that accept its assistance.

"The story that Mertha tells is fascinating in its detail and surprising in much of what that detail reveals. Perhaps most importantly is the extent to which China's lack of leverage over the CPK regime was a persistent theme of the relationship . . . This is an important book, full of important factual information and thoughtful judgments."?Milton Osborne, *Contemporary Southeast Asia* (August 2014) "Andrew Mertha's superb book is 35 years overdue. While it has long been appreciated that it was support from China that enabled the Communist Party of Kampuchea, aka the Khmer Rouge, to seize power in 1975 and to brutalize Cambodia until it was ousted by Vietnam in 1979, this is the first detailed study of how Beijing disbursed its aid and of the clash of bureaucratic cultures which ensued. . . . *Brothers in Arms* is a masterful account of China's failed policy of support for Democratic Kampuchea, required reading for anyone who wishes to understand either Beijing's role in Southeast Asia during the 1970s or the decisive influence of bureaucratic politics."?Ian Storey, *New Mandala* (October 13, 2014) "Andrew Mertha has shed some very much needed light on the relationship between the People's Republic of China (PRC) and Democratic Kampuchea (DK) between 1975 and 1979 in *Brothers in Arms*. Remarkably, that light might extend to our understanding of current-day behaviour with client states as China scrambles for resources in Africa, Latin America, and beyond."?Sophal Ear, *Asian Affairs* (2014) "[*Brothers in Arms*] not only provides historical insight into the bureaucratic structure of China's aid to its client state, i.e. Democratic Kampuchea (DK) between 1975 and 1979, but also explicates the casual effect of the fragmented Chinese and DK bureaucratic institutions, the variation of which determines the degree of China's ability to assert influence over DK. . . . This book is the first to provide such insightful detail on China's aid to the DK between 1979 and 1978. . . [and] is certainly a major breakthrough in the history of China's aid to the DK. . . . This book is a useful resource for students of China's foreign aid policy."?Kosal Path, *Southeast Asian Studies* (April 2015) "In essence, *Brothers in Arms* is a study of Leninist systems and how a larger, nuclear power like China failed to keep its client state in a position of inferiority. Historians studying diplomacy, Cold War, and Southeast Asia history will appreciate Mertha's attention to detail and evidence base. The author's writing style means even readers unfamiliar with the topic will understand Mertha's discussions of the DK's political apparatus. Undoubtedly the author has produced a foundational book on the relationship between China and Democratic Kampuchea."?Robert Thompson, *H-Net* (March 2015) "As Andrew Mertha demonstrates in *Brothers in Arms*. . . bureaucratic interactions are crucial to the success or failure of individual projects and the overall influence that China derives from its [foreign] aid. He does so through a skillful analysis of China's relations with one of its key Cold War 'client states' Pol Pot's Democratic Kampuchea. . . . This excellent book merits careful reading."?John D. Ciorciari, *The China Journal* (July 2015) "A marvelous book. *Brothers in Arms* explores the vexed relationship between China and the Khmer Rouge regime between 1975 and 1979, when China, for better or worse, was Cambodia's most generous friend. Andrew Mertha talked to dozens of Cambodians and Chinese who worked together in the Khmer Rouge era. He has buttressed this research with forays into unexploited archival collections. The outcome? a judicious, vividly written analysis of the Sino-Khmer encounter? is deft, path-breaking, and persuasive."?David Chandler, Monash University, author of *A History of Cambodia* "Nobody gets into the plumbing of policy implementation like Andrew Mertha. Here, he probes the bureaucracies of China and Democratic Kampuchea to understand their aid relationship and how the DK was sometimes able to parry Chinese pressures but got pulled into the Chinese orbit at other times. Bureaucratic politics has long been understood to be critical in domestic policy; now Mertha extends this approach into foreign policy. All those examining China's burgeoning

relations with Latin America, Africa, and other places will want to absorb the lessons of this book." Joseph Fewsmith, Boston University  
About the Author Andrew Mertha is Associate Professor of Government at Cornell University. He is the author of *Brothers in Arms: Chinese Aid to the Khmer Rouge, 1975–1979*, *China's Water Warriors: Citizen Action and Policy Change*, and *The Politics of Piracy: Intellectual Property in Contemporary China*, all from Cornell.