



Q&A:
"I would argue that we are really in quite good shape in Asia."
Winston Lord,
U.S. diplomat.
PAGE 5

Insight

Immigration and
an unwise boycott.

EDITORIAL: PAGE 2

Islamic regime
failing in Iran.

PAGE 4

THE SAN DIEGO UNION-TRIBUNE • SUNDAY, JULY 14, 1996

SECTION 6

Genocide unpunished

By Ben Kiernan

One of the crimes of the century was committed from 1975 to 1979. Pol Pot and his Communist Khmer Rouge regime murdered, worked to death, or killed by enforced starvation close to 1.7 million Cambodians. The victims comprised over one-fifth of their country's population.

Two decades later, the perpetrators of this genocide are still at large, based along both sides of the border that separates Thailand and Cambodia. From 1991 to 1993 the United Nations, backed by the United States, mounted a massive peacekeeping operation in Cambodia. But three years later the Khmer Rouge, still led by Pol Pot, is continuing its attacks on the country and the killings of its citizens.

So, what should be done now?

Criminals need to know that serious consequences flow from their actions. Justice must be done, first for justice's sake. But a fair trial of Pol Pot and his colleagues would not merely force them to answer charges of genocide. An international tribunal would serve three other purposes. It would help prevent future Khmer Rouge massacres, persuade Thailand to stop sheltering international outlaws, and deter other crimes against humanity being plotted in other parts of the world.

"Who are you, comrade Pol Pot?," asked the first jour-

nalist allowed into Cambodia under Khmer Rouge rule in 1978. The reply was evasive.

Recently, Pol Pot was reported to have died of malaria. It seems to have been a false report. And not for the first time. In a 40-year political career, Pol Pot has specialized in leading from the shadows, "retiring to study," and fostering rumors of his demise. This keeps opponents in the dark, and takes pressure off his allies. Pol Pot's name, after all, is that of one of the century's most brutal mass murderers.

Pol Pot was born Saloth Sar in 1928, in Kompong Thom province. His parents owned 12 hectares of land. Under their son's regime, they would have been "class enemies." But few villagers thought so then. Rich or poor, everyone grew rice, cooked tasty soups, propitiated local spirits and French colonial officials, or thronged to Buddhist festivities. A French official described Kompong Thom people as "the most deeply Cambodian

See GENOCIDE on page G-6

KIERNAN, a professor of history and director of the Cambodian Genocide Program at Yale University, is author of "The Pol Pot Regime: Race, Power and Genocide in Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge, 1975-1979."