Vietnam and the Cambodian Tragedy

Up to these present days, Cambodians still have been suffering from an indescribable tragedy in their contemporary history. For this reason, we wish to share our collection of articles, thanks to which our readers can revisit this tragic history.

On behalf of information and knowledge spreading, we wish to ask the authorization from the authors and editors to include their articles in our collection, which is for free release.

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Vietnam and the Cambodian communism

By Stephen J. Morris Friday, April 20, 2007


INTRODUCTION

In the official mythology of the Khmers Rouges, their military victory in 1975, and the maintenance of their rule over Cambodia from 1975 until 1978 (the rule of Angka Padevat in
the state of Democratic Kampuchea), was portrayed as a result of the efforts of Cambodians alone. This is the most ridiculous fantasy. Without the support of the Vietnamese and Chinese communists the regime known as Democratic Kampuchea would never have existed. Moreover, the leading Cambodian communists were deeply enmeshed in the activities of the communist world for most of their lives.

I will show how Vietnam played a vital role in the rise of the Khmers Rouges to power, and how the Vietnamese communist leaders were happy to let the Khmers Rouges do as they wished in power, so long as the regime created - Democratic Kampuchea - did not threaten or embarrass Vietnam. However the irrational belligerence of Pol Pot and his entourage in foreign policy soon became a source of concern for Hanoi, and Democratic Kampuchea's violent behaviour towards its more powerful neighbour pushed Vietnam towards a policy of armed retaliation, invasion and occupation.

VIETNAM AND THE RISE OF CAMBODIAN COMMUNISM

The Vietnamese communists were deeply involved in the inception and formation of the Cambodian communist movement. In 1930 the agent of the Communist International (Comintem) known as Nguyen Ai Quoc -- who in 1943 changed his alias to Ho Chi Minh -- founded the Vietnamese Communist Party at a meeting held in the British colony of Hong Kong. But after filing the founding documents with his employers in Moscow, Quoc was instructed by the Comintem to change the name of the party to the Indochinese Communist Party (ICP). The Comintem argued that "Not only does Indochina have a geographic, economic and political unity, but above all we have a need for unity of struggle, for a unique direction of all of the Indochinese proletariat opposed to all the forces of reaction in Indochina, to the policy of division of French imperialism." The Comintern's intention was clear: Emancipation of the three different nations of French Indochina was to be carried out not by the independent efforts of each of the three peoples, but rather under Vietnamese Communist tutelage.

As it happened there were no revolutionary movements in Cambodia at this time. And of the 211 founding members of the Indochinese Communist Party, not a single one was from Cambodia or Laos. One finds in the Comintem archives in Moscow, Quoc's actual correspondence about this with his leaders. In September 1930 Nguyen Ai Quoc claimed to have an ICP party membership of 124, of which 120 were Chinese and 4 were Annamites [Vietnamese]. The Party controlled labor union consisted of 300 ethnic Chinese. The French suppressed the communist structures throughout Indochina in 1935, and by March 1935 there were only 9 communists in all of Cambodia. But the ethnic situation in Cambodia remained much the same throughout the 1930s. In 1938 the Cambodian branch of the ICP had a mere 16 members, all of them ethnic Chinese.

After World War II the Vietnamese communists, operating through their front organization popularly known as the Viet Minh, began their offensive against the French colonialists. However they sought to rely heavily upon ethnic Vietnamese for their efforts. Two of the most important Viet Minh leaders during the 1940s were Sieu Heng and Son Ngoc Minh, both
of mixed Vietnamese and Khmer ancestry. Armed units of the Viet Minh were stationed in Battambang, where all the units were ethnic Vietnamese, and in southeast Cambodia, where again ethnic Vietnamese were predominant in the revolutionary committees.

In March 1950, at a meeting of Viet Minh and Khmer Issarak leaders held in Ha Tien, Vietnam, Nguyen Than Son, head of the Viet Minh’s committee for foreign affairs in southern Vietnam, spoke of the Vietnamese emigre population in Cambodia as a "driving force destined to set off the Revolutionary Movement in Cambodia." Later he seemed to be complaining when he stated that the ICP, which controlled the Cambodian Movement, was composed of mostly Vietnamese and "did not have deep roots among the Khmer people."

In 1951 the underground ICP resurfaced as the Vietnam Workers Party, and simultaneously announced the emergence of two "fraternal" parties for Laos and Cambodia. The latter was called the Revolutionary Cambodian People's Party. According to Bernard Fall the statutes of the Cambodian party had to be translated from Vietnamese into Cambodian, and ethnic Vietnamese dominated the leadership of the party. Over the next three years the Vietnamese tried to recruit ethnic Cambodians into the political and military structures of the party, but with limited success. For example, according to a French intelligence document of 1952, the Phnom Penh cell secretariat had a membership of 34, of whom 27 were Vietnamese, 3 were Chinese, and only four were Cambodians.

In November 1953 Cambodia under the royal government of Sihanouk was given complete independence by the French. After the signing of the Geneva Agreements in 1954, the Viet Minh Sees retreated from Cambodia, taking with them half of the cadres of the Revolutionary Cambodian Party. These cadres were to be given further training in Hanoi, and kept in reserve until history provided an opportune moment for their return.

During this period of the mid 1950s there was influx of younger communists back to Cambodia from a period of study France. Most notable of this group was Pol Pot (then known as Saloth Sar, Jeng Sary, Khieu Samohan, Hou Youn and Hu Nim. Some of these communists had come into contact with the ideas of Marx and Lenin before, they went to France. But they had all developed their communist ideology in France under the influence of the Stalinist French communist party. Some of them, like Pol Pot had fought in the last stages of the Viet Minh war against the French. But we should not make too much of the French experience of Pol Pot and long Sary. because other important members of the future Khmer Rouge inner circle -- notably Nuon Chea and Ta Mok -- never went to France. More important to note is that none of the younger communists exhibited any anti-Vietnamese sentiment at this time.

The returnees from France were able to seize control of the Cambodian communist movement by the era of the 1950s. Yet in 1960 the party's name was changed to Kampuchean Workers Party, to conform with the Vietnamese name, and in 1966 it was changed again to Kampuchean Communist Party. In 1963 Pol Pot became secretary general of the party. Throughout the 1960s the Kampuchean communists remained friendly and deferential towards the Vietnamese. In July 1965 Pol Pot traveled to Hanoi and discussed with the Vietnamese politburo the appropriate policy for Cambodia.
It is not exactly clear when the Cambodian communists developed their attachment to Maoism. The imbibing of Maoist ideology by the Khmer Rouge seems to have been quite gradual. And the Vietnamese communists themselves must have played some direct role in assisting that process since they themselves had been under Chinese communist influence during the years 1950-56 and 1963-64, years when Vietnamese communist influence over Cambodian communists was still significant. Pol Pot made his first trip to China in late 1965 and stayed into 1966. This was the beginning of the Maoist terror and ideological campaign known as the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. Pol Pot visited China again in 1970. Pol Pot's visits to China probably did not initiate, but most likely intensified, Maoist ideological influence upon the Khmer Rouge.

In January 1968 the Kampuchean Communist Party initiated an armed uprising against the royal government of Prince Sihanouk. This would seem to have been in contradiction with the Vietnamese communist policy of recognizing the royal Cambodian government, a government which had allowed the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong to use eastern Cambodia as a sanctuary and supply line in their war against the American-backed anticomunist government of South Vietnam. However this Khmers Rouges uprising was mostly confined to the hill dwellers (Khmer Loeu) of the mountainous of northeast Cambodia - Ratanakiri and Mondolkiri - and it did not pose any real threat to the survival of the government of Prince Sihanouk. Hence it did not really threaten the strategy of the North Vietnamese.

During the late 1960s many Cambodians, especially among the Cambodian political and military elites became unhappy with the Vietnamese communist occupation of Cambodian soil. They preferred Cambodia to have a closer relationship with the United States. Sihanouk slowly and reluctantly changed his policy in this regard, and in 1970 he traveled to China and the Soviet Union to try and persuade the big communist powers to pressure Hanoi to remove its forces from Cambodia, Sihanouk was not successful, and on March 18, 1970, while Sihanouk was still in Moscow, Lon Nol led a bloodless palace coup d'etat. This totally changed Cambodia's situation.

Many people think that the coup d'etat led by Lon Nol, was the work of the United States and its Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). At the time Hanoi, Beijing and Moscow, and their western friends with the help of Sihanouk, did everything to try to spread that myth. There is absolutely no evidence of that. No evidence has been found even by the most critical western writer, William Shawcross. Of course the Americans welcomed the coup.

Many people also think that it was the US and South Vietnamese invasion of eastern Cambodia on April 30, 1970, that brought Cambodia into the Vietnam war. That is also plainly false. It was me Vietnamese communists who spread the Vietnam war inside Cambodia. One of Lon Nol's first public proclamations was to demand that the Vietnamese communist forces leave Cambodia within 48 hours. They ignored his demand, and at the end of March 1970 North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces moved out of their border sanctuaries and began to attack the armed forces and towns of the newly proclaimed Khmer Republic. At the same time approximately one thousand of the Khmer Viet Minh, who had been trained in Hanoi, were reinfiltrated back into Cambodia. Their task was to help supervise the areas that would be captured by the Vietnamese communist armies.
On April 30, 1970, exactly six weeks after the Lon Nol coup, and four weeks after the North Vietnamese began their attacks on the Khmer Republic, troops of the United States and South Vietnam began a major attack on the communist sanctuaries inside Cambodia. The Vietnamese communists, anticipating the attack, fled in advance of the allied sweep. However, public protests and congressional opposition within the United States precluded the extended American military operations inside Cambodia that any successful pursuit of the communist armies would have required.

When American forces withdrew from the border areas after only two months inside Cambodia, they had successfully cleared most of the base areas that threatened the Mekong Delta region of South Vietnam. But they had hardly diminished the communist manpower available inside Cambodia as a whole. In the first four months of fighting the Vietnamese communists had seized control of half the territory of Cambodia. In spite of continued American bombing attacks upon them, North Vietnam's battle hardened veterans remained in a good position to deal with the highly motivated but poorly trained and equipped army of the Khmer Republic.

For the next two years of the struggle for Cambodia, it would be Hanoi that would determine the outcome of military events. By the end of 1970 there were four North Vietnamese combat divisions in Cambodia, with some ten thousand of these troops targeting the republican army, and others protecting the Ho Chi Minh Trail supply line to the South Vietnam battlefield.

At the beginning of the war it was obvious to both the Vietnamese communist leaders and Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge that the latter were not yet strong enough to seize Phnom Penh on their own. If Cambodia was to have a communist government, then the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong armies would have to play a role. The Hanoi leaders made explicit in their secret meetings that their party's policy was to "strengthen the revolutionary base in Cambodia and lead the country along the path to socialism." And despite their dismay with the general capabilities of the Cambodian insurgency the Vietnamese were optimistic about the prospects of a communist victory in Cambodia. As one captured communist document summarized the Hanoi view: "The Cambodian revolution is entering a new phase ... From a vacillating neutralist regime, Cambodia can now follow a steady policy. When the enemy is defeated, she will become a democratic and independent country and proceed toward socialism."

Between April 1970 and March 1972 it was the battle hardened Vietnamese army which crushed most of the best units of the army of the Khmer Republic. During this period Vietnamese and Cambodian communist forces, after seizing control of an area, set up a political administration controlled by the National United Front (FUNK) and nominally under the authority of Prince Sihanouk's Royal Government (GRUNK) which was based in exile in Beijing. There were three elements in the political coalition opposed to the Khmer Republic. First, the Khmer Viet Minh communists, trained in Hanoi since 1954, and backed by Vietnamese communist army units. Second, the Pol Pot led Khmers Rouges guerrillas. Third, the followers of Prince Sihanouk, who were militarily weak.

FUNK propaganda appeals emphasizing Sihanouk's leadership role in the insurgency were
important in the first year of the war, and reflected the influence of the North Vietnamese upon Cambodian insurgent propaganda. It undoubtedly helped the communists to recruit Cambodian peasant support. However sometime in the middle of 1971, as Pol Pot's Khmers Rouges leaders began to consolidate their control within FUNK, they began the process of removing the pro-Sihanouk elements from positions of power in insurgent-controlled areas. Two years later the Khmers Rouges began an intensive propaganda campaign to discredit the Prince in the eyes of the Cambodian peasants.

The Hanoi-trained communists never attained leadership positions within the Cambodian Revolutionary Organization itself. All the top military and political position within FUNK were held by the Pol Pot forces, who identified themselves as members of Angka Padevat (Revolutionary Organization). During 1970 and 1971, in some areas under Vietnamese military control Khmer Viet Minh political cadres held positions of local state power from the village to the tambon (sector) level. As for the Khmer Viet Minh military cadres, upon their return to Cambodia they were given low ranking positions within the insurgency. Eventually they, together with the political cadres, would be liquidated by Pol Pot's security forces.

By late 1971 the Pol Pot leadership of the KCP had become frustrated with Vietnamese attempts to control the insurgency. They decided to try to expel the Vietnamese communists from Cambodia, even though the Khmer Republic was at that time not yet defeated. Fighting broke out between the Pol Pot led guerillas and some Vietnamese units in late 1971 and especially in 1972.

However it was not the actions of Pol Pot's forces, but rather events pertaining to the struggle for South Vietnam, especially the launching of the Easter Offensive in March 1972, that led Hanoi to remove the bulk of its combat forces from Cambodia. The terrible losses suffered by Hanoi in that offensive, and the signing of the Paris Peace Agreements in January 1973, meant that Hanoi could no longer afford to be deeply involved in the struggle for control of Cambodia thereafter. Yet they did allow Chinese military supplies through to the Khmers Rouges until the war ended.

The Hanoi leaders had already laid the foundation for a Khmers Rouges victory. During the two years from March 1970 the North Vietnamese army had severely mauled the army of the Khmer Republic, and Hanoi sponsored cadres had recruited thousands of peasants under the deceptive banner of the politically impotent Sihanouk. Hanoi's actions by themselves did not determine the outcome of the war. But they greatly helped place Pol Pot's forces in a position to seize power in April 1975.

VIETNAM AND DEMOCRATIC KAMPUCHEA

When Phnom Penh surrendered to insurgent forces on April 30, 1975, the Khmers Rouges victors were enthusiastically congratulated by the Vietnamese communists. By the time the North Vietnamese army had marched into Saigon some two weeks later, Phnom Penh and most of the major towns of Cambodia had been emptied of their former inhabitants. Cambodia, now renamed Democratic Kampuchea, had begun its long march towards the
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hyper Maoist Utopia. But in spite of real differences between the Vietnamese and Cambodian approaches to revolution, there were few public signs of Vietnamese communist dissatisfaction with their neighbour's social experiment. However, concealed from international view, the tensions that had surfaced during the war years had been exacerbated. The ostensible issue of the dispute was the border between Vietnam and Cambodia.

Between 1870 and 1914 the French had redrawn the borders between Cambodia and Vietnam, by amputating large chunks of Cambodian territory and making them administratively part of their Vietnamese colonial entities. In June 1948, in the Along Bay Agreement, the French recognised their colony of Cochinchina -what had formerly been southern Cambodia (Kampuchea Krom to the Khmers Rouges) - as part of Vietnam. The resentment felt by most Cambodians at this humiliation, combined with the spirit of triumphalism that permeated the Khmers Rouges, fed into an ambition for forceful recovery of lost territories. Sihanouk reports that in 1975 the Khmers Rouge had told him "we are going to recover Kampuchea Krom." Yet such ambition of the Khmers Rouges should have been restrained by military realities. The Vietnamese army was ten times the size of the Khmers Rouges army. Vietnam also had a significant air force and navy, which the DK did not.

Nevertheless in early May 1975 the Khmers Rouges attacked Vietnamese islands in the Gulf of Thailand, claiming the islands that the French had assigned to their Vietnamese colony, and which had been inherited by South Vietnam. The Vietnamese, though surprised, responded decisively. By the end of May the Vietnamese had recaptured the islands by force, taking 300 prisoners. In early June the Vietnamese retaliated further by attacking and occupying the Cambodian island of Puolo Wai. These actions seemed to restrain for a time the Khmers Rouges enthusiasm for military challenges to Vietnam.

On June 2 Pol Pot received Nguyen Van Linh, who was representing the Vietnamese Workers Party (as the Vietnamese communist party was still called). Pol Pot told Linh that the fighting had been due to "ignorance of the local geography by Kampuchean troops." In June 1975 Pol Pot, leng Sary and Nuon Chea led a KCP delegation that secretly travelled to Hanoi for negotiations. In July 1975 a high powered delegation from Vietnam, headed by Communist Party first secretary Le Duan, undertook what was described as a "friendly visit" to Cambodia. In August the Cambodian island that Vietnam had occupied was returned.

Publicly the Vietnamese gave no hint of any problems. The September issue of the official Vietnamese monthly Vietnamese Courier spoke of the talks being held in a "cordial atmosphere full of brotherly spirit." The article went further when it praised Cambodia's new social order without qualification. "Liberated Cambodia is living in a new and healthy atmosphere."

The Vietnamese had retained some of their military forces on Cambodian soil after the joint communist victories of 1975. It took some political effort by the Chinese to convince the Hanoi leaders that the troops should be returned to Vietnam.

Throughout 1976 there were public greetings exchanged on special occasions. For example in April 1976 the first anniversary of the Khmers Rouges victory was hailed by Vietnamese party and government leaders. The Vietnamese media spoke glowingly of the "achievements" of the "Cambodian workers, peasants, and revolutionary army." Various official delegations from Vietnam visited Cambodia in 1976. In July an agreement was signed to open an air link.
between Hanoi and Phnom Penh. In September 1976 that air service was begun.

Thus by the end of 1976 the outward signs suggested close relations between the communist parties and governments of Vietnam and Cambodia. Yet these outward signs concealed the real feelings of both parties. The Vietnamese leaders hoped that some pro-Vietnamese elements would appear within the leadership of the Kampuchean Communist Party. At the same time, the leaders of Democratic Kampuchea were possessed by a seething hatred and fear of the rulers of Vietnam - a hatred and fear that threatened to boil over into armed confrontation.

The Vietnamese leaders had a poor grasp of the real political situation within the leadership of Democratic Kampuchea. They felt that Pol Pot and Leng Sary were pro-Chinese and therefore bad people, but that Nuon Chea was different. On November 6, 1976, Pham Van Dong told the Soviet ambassador to Vietnam that "with Nuon Chea we are able to work better. We know him better than the other leaders of Kampuchea." At a meeting with the Soviet Ambassador on November 16, 1976, the Vietnamese Communist Party first secretary Le Duan stated that he was glad that Pol Pot and Leng Sary had (apparently) been removed from the leadership, because they constituted "a pro-Chinese sect conducting a crude and severe policy." Le Duan also asserted that Nuon Chea, a member of the Standing Committee and Secretariat of the Kampuchean Communist Party, who had replaced Pol Pot as Prime Minister of Democratic Kampuchea in September, was a person of pro-Vietnamese orientation. Le Duan added that "he is our man and my personal friend." Le Duan was to repeat this opinion in private conversations with Soviet diplomats over the next two years.

The Cambodian communists had good reason to fear the ambitions of the Vietnamese communists in the long term. But the question arises as to how imminent a threat to the power of the Khmers Rouges the Vietnamese posed. The Vietnamese had devised a strategy for controlling the communist movements of Laos and Cambodia. A key element had been infiltrating the communist parties of these countries with people that Hanoi had trained and indoctrinated. In the case of Cambodia, Hanoi had trained and supported the so-called Khmer Viet Minh, whom it assumed would act as its agents. So the Khmers Rouges leaders did have real enemies in Hanoi. But Pol Pot and his supporters had anticipated the Vietnamese strategy, and had preempted it by arresting all the Khmer Viet Minh soon after they returned from Hanoi with the Vietnamese army in the early 1970s, and again after the victory of 1975. Nevertheless, Pol Pot and his inner circle still feared that Soviet or Vietnamese agents might still be hidden within the party. Thus Pol Pot conducted a series of bloody purges of the party, guided in his choice of victims by paranoid fears rather than real evidence of disloyalty or conspiracy. Not only did Pol Pot carry out bloody internal purges to crush what he thought were enemies within. He also directed the regime's violence against its neighbours.

In April 1977, on the second anniversary of the "liberation" of Phnom Penh, the government and government-controlled media in Hanoi offered their congratulations and praise for the Democratic Kampuchea regime. But this goodwill gesture reaped no beneficial consequences for Vietnam. The Khmers Rouges chose the second anniversary of the communist conquest of South Vietnam to leave a bloody message to their former "elder brothers." On April 30, 1977, DK units attacked several villages and towns in An Giang and Chau Doc provinces of South Vietnam, burning houses and killing hundreds of civilians. The Vietnamese leaders were shocked by this unprovoked attack and could not understand any strategic rationale.
Nevertheless they decided upon military retaliation. Throughout 1977 armed clashes occurred between Vietnam and Democratic Kampuchea in the border area. Yet when in September 1977 Pol Pot publicly announced that what had previously been known as the Revolutionary Organisation (Angkar Padevat) was in fact the Kampuchean Communist Party, the Vietnamese Communist Party Central Committee sent a message of congratulations, publicly expressing its joy. Interestingly, this message was sent after hundreds of Vietnamese civilians had been killed in Khmers Rouges raids on September 24.

In a conversation with the Soviet ambassador in Hanoi in November 1977 Le Duan indicated that he thought that the anti-Vietnamese behaviour of the DK leaders was because of the outlooks of the “Troskyist” Pol Pot and the “fierce nationalist and pro-Chinese” Ieng Sary. But Le Duan thought that Nuon Chea and Son Sen “have a positive attitude towards Vietnam.” Apparently Le Duan and the other Vietnamese leaders were hoping that the foreign policies of Democratic Kampuchea could be changed by a coup within the Khmers Rouges leadership circles.

In December 1977 the fighting between Vietnam and Democratic Kampuchea escalated. Hanoi used warplanes, artillery and about 20,000 men in an attack inside the Parrot's Beak region of Svay Rieng. After inflicting a serious defeat on the army of Democratic Kampuchea, the Vietnamese withdrew, taking with them thousands of prisoners as well as civilian refugees. They might have been in a position to seize Phnom Penh at that point. But they were concerned about what China’s reaction might be, and hoped that their strong but limited military blows would force the leaders of Democratic Kampuchea to negotiate a settlement. Instead the leaders of DK hardened their attitudes. The DK broke diplomatic regions on December 31, 1977. And they declared the Vietnamese withdrawal a major victory for “the Kampuchean revolution.” Despite their losses, and despite the massive disparity between the Vietnamese and Cambodian armies, with the Vietnamese superiority in both numbers (more than eight one) and quality of military equipment, the army of Democratic Kampuchea persisted in launching attacks inside Vietnamese territory. Phnom Penh radio broadcasts exhorted Cambodians to fight and win total victory over Vietnam, with the deranged assertion that one Kampuchean soldier was equal to thirty Vietnamese. The DK leadership was living in a fantasy world.

Upon realising that the leadership of Democratic Kampuchea was utterly implacable, Hanoi decided upon a new strategy for changing the DK regime. After two and a half years of pretending that Democratic Kampuchea was a nice regime for Cambodians to live under, they began for the first time to denounce the domestic terror of the DK. Between January and June they slowly changed their description of the DK leadership from: the Kampuchean authorities” to the “Pol Pot-Ieng Sary clique.” Hanoi radio called for the need to save the Cambodian people from genocide at the hands of the “Pol Pot-Ieng Sary clique.”

Vietnam began building a “liberation army” from among the refugees and other civilians that they had brought back from Cambodia. Pol Pot also inadvertently helped the Vietnamese to build their army by conducting his internal terror and purges of the party and army. The brutal terror resulted in many cadres and even units of the DK army fleeing for their lives to Vietnam. These defectors, mostly from the Eastern Zone of Democratic Kampuchea, joined the forces being assembled by Vietnam. But The Vietnamese leaders realised that an insurgency based upon the "liberation army" of Cambodians would not be strong enough to prevail. Sometime in the middle of 1978 the Vietnamese leaders decided that they had to
launch a full scale invasion of Cambodia, and install a new regime that would not only not be hostile, but also one that would be friendly to Vietnam.

The Soviets were encouraged to increase their military aid to Vietnam, with the pretense that China was threatening Vietnam’s independence. Throughout the latter half of 1978 the Vietnamese prepared their military forces, and the psychological climate of revulsion for the DK regime. They hoped to achieve an easy victory over their former comrades and face few negative consequences.

On December 25 1978 Vietnam launched an all out invasion of Cambodia. As anticipated, resistance to the invasion collapsed quickly. But that invasion, and especially the Vietnamese refusal to withdraw, turned international public opinion and international political leaders strongly against Vietnam. China countered the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia by launching its own invasion of north Vietnam in February 1979. That attack was not in itself a military success for China. But it forced Vietnam to concentrate troops on its northern border and gave ASEAN confidence to be able to provide support for a coalition of Cambodian forces, including the Khmers Rouges, who were resisting Vietnam's occupation.

After more than a decade of Vietnamese military occupation of Cambodia, the pressures from United Nations Chinese American and Southeast Asian nations, and the cut off of Soviet and Eastern European aid, meant that by 1989 the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia had become untenable. The United Nations Secure Council Permanent Five agreed on a plan whereby the UN would undertake a temporary administration of Cambodia, with the purpose of bringing freedom and a just peace to the Cambodian people.

CONCLUSIONS

For approximately sixty years since the formation of the Indochinese Communist Party in 1930, the Vietnamese communists had always considered Cambodia part of an Indochinese Federation of socialist states, under the domination of the more numerous and powerful Vietnamese "elder brothers." The Vietnamese communist strategy was initially to infiltrate the communist movements of the neighbouring countries with ethnic Vietnamese. By the 1950s, the Vietnamese strategy was to infiltrate the Cambodian movement with ethnic Khmer whom Vietnam had trained and indoctrinated. It was certain that those Khmer whom Vietnam had trained would be loyal to Vietnam. This was the first of many misjudgments by the Vietnamese communist leaders. Many of those whom the Vietnamese communists had trained and indoctrinated turned into their enemies.

Nevertheless, based on their misperceptions of the situation, the Vietnamese communists supported the Khmers Rouges revolution. The reasons for the Khmers Rouges coming to power in 1975 were numerous and complex. However we can see from the history of Vietnamese and Cambodian communism that Vietnam played a vital role in laying the foundations for the establishment of Democratic Kampuchea.

After the establishment of Democratic Kampuchea by the Pol Pot led Khmers Rouges, the Vietnamese communists attempted to establish friendly relations with their weaker neighbour. They celebrated what they described as the "liberation" of Cambodia by the Khmers Rouges. However Pol Pot was driven by a self-destructive combination of paranoia and delusions of
grandeur. He provoked the Vietnamese into an unfriendly stance by his attacks upon Vietnamese territory and civilians. And Pol Pot also provided the Vietnamese with recruits for their imperial ambition by terrorising and massacring many of his own political and military cadres. Many Khmers Rouges fled for their lives to Vietnam in 1977 and 1978, and provided the personnel for the governments that Hanoi established in Cambodia from 1979 onwards.

Hanoi’s motives were never humanitarian but only self-interested. On the one hand we must not forget that the Vietnamese had a legitimate right to self defence, and the 1978 invasion was consistent with that. But the ten year military occupation, and Hanoi’s simultaneous refusal to recognise the noncommunist forces or the resolutions of the United Nations, showed that they were also motivated by an imperial ambition.

Forces beyond the control of Vietnam, especially the collapse of the Soviet Union and its communist bloc, as well as the pressures of China and ASEAN, eventually caused the Vietnamese to withdraw their forces from Cambodia. But some of Vietnam’s political influence upon Cambodia still remains.

Extracted from:

Vietnam’s Expansionism in Indochina
Strategies and Consequences on the Regional Security

By Kang Pol, May 2004

Summary:

The performance of Vietnam’s current expansionism in Indochina is a result of its Strategic Southward Move. In the space of a few hundreds years, Vietnam had managed to build its Empire through successive annexations and new forms of colonization.

Not only the Fundamental Rights of People annexed [Cham, Montagnards (Mien, Mpong, Koho, Jarai, Degar), Hmong and Khmer Krom] – representing in 1998-99 more than 13% of Vietnam’s total population * - or placed under Vietnam’s control (Cambodian and Laotian) are ignored and violated but South East Asia’s security order may also be threatened by Vietnam’s hegemonic ambitions. That is why this expansionism performed by this country constitutes a real danger for the regional and international security. Based on the Cambodian case, this paper tries to analyse the strategies implemented by Vietnam for its expansionist process and assesses its consequences on the regional and international security.


Vietnam is considered as one of the most expansionist countries in Asia. In the space of a few hundred years, this country has evolved from its small cradle located in the Delta of Tonkin to become a tentacular Empire. Its expansionist – annexionist process is often known under the following metaphor: “the Long March Towards the South”. Because of this March some countries were simply transformed into a province of Vietnam and other are becoming, like Cambodia, the victim of its expansionist policy. As mentioned above, Cambodia is not the only victim of this conquest policy. In the past, the Kingdom of Champa and Kampuchea Krom (currently South of Vietnam) were totally annexed. And Lao PDR is currently facing the same problems as Cambodia. But due to time constraint only the Cambodian case is analyzed in this communication. The aim of this paper is to analyze Vietnam’s strategies deployed in this southward expansion, and to assess the implications for the Regional Security and its international consequences.

I - Southward Expansion Policy and Strategies

After breaking away from China, the cradle of the Vietnamese nation in the 10th century was only the area encompassed by the Delta of Tonkin. As early in the 13th century, Vietnam began its southward expansion policy. Initially, it encroached and definitely annexed the Kingdom of Champa (currently central Vietnam) in 1693. Then in early 17th century, it began encroaching and occupying Khmer territory of Cochin-China or Kampuchea Krom (present-day South of Vietnam). Today, this invading process is accelerating in an unprecedented pace.
1) Factors behind Vietnam’s Southward Expansion

a- Historical Motivations

After being placed under Chinese domination until 939, Vietnam (then known as Nam Viet) was unceasingly attacked by Mongol and Chinese armies. In order to better resist the northern threats (from China), Vietnam have begun a long march toward the South, the “Nam Tiến” in Vietnamese expression.

In the past, this inexorable expansion gave Vietnam strategic advantages for the North to successfully resist the Chinese attacks and the South to open up wider frontiers. As one of the most densely populated country in Asia, Vietnam could also resolve, thanks to its March towards the South, the problems of its territory’s tininess and grant its population resources from countries newly annexed or placed under its control.
b- Contemporary Motivations

In the contemporary period, the southward move is motivated by the will of becoming an unmissing regional power, even more, an inevitable interlocutor in Asia. At the time of the competition for the geopolitical repositioning, the control over Laos and Cambodia will enable Vietnam to gain/reinforce its position in the international scene. Within ASEAN, Vietnam acts as one country with three potential voting rights (Vietnam+ Cambodia + Laos) and wants to do the same within the World Trade Organization. With the concept “One Country, Three Voting Rights”, a concept the author will develop in next chapter, Vietnam hopes to become a courted country. Thanks to this concept, Vietnam holds a potential power to negotiate with some countries in any domain and will be able to diplomatically make pressure on others.

Currently, Vietnam is trying to draft an institutional framework which will promote the free mobility of population within ASEAN zone. Once passed, this institutional framework will legalize Vietnam’s demographic conquests. The rate of Vietnamese settlement in South East Asia will be very high. With the redistribution of its population, Vietnam hopes to extend, regardless the other countries’ boundaries, the geographic and political space of its Nation. Clearly Vietnamese Leaders want to build a “Great Vietnam” through the following expression: “Chờ nào có Người Việt, Chờ ĐòSe Là Đất Nuóc Việt Nam” that means “Where there are Vietnamese, there will be Vietnam”. All these contemporary motivations can be resumed by the author’s expression “Vietnamspansionism”.

2) Strategies and Machiavellian Manoeuvres

The conquest of the south was backed by several types of strategies: mainly military attacks, demographic conquests, manipulations and strategic alliances with other Powers. These strategies were/are not exclusive at all. They were/are often combined in order to obtain a better efficiency.

a - Strategies implemented within the victim countries

Contrary to what happened in the Kingdom of Champa and Kampuchea Krom, the strategies applied by Vietnam in Cambodia are very subtle and very well camouflaged making them imperceptible on the surface. As we will see it in the figure 2, Vietnam acted and is still acting through an “invisible hand”.

Vietnam essentially used violence and massacre. This method was/is very costly both in human and material terms for Vietnam. Because the physical aggression did/does not only generate, in return, violence but increased/increases patriotism on the part of the victim country or the victim peoples.

b - The conquest of the Kampuchea Krom (Cochinchina)

Just to remember what happened in Kampuchea Krom. After presenting Princess Ngoc Van, in 1630, to young King Chey Chetha II, Vietnam asked the king the permission for
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Vietnamese to settle in Preah Suakea (Ba Ria) and Prey Nokor (Saigon). The king Chey Chetha II had to accept the pressures made by his newly wed wife, Ngoc Van. Thanks to this “sex and marital alliance” tactics, which was already applied in the Kingdom of Champa with Princess Ngoc Khao, Vietnam managed to corrupt the soul of the khmer king and to realize its demographic conquests. Once its bases strongly consolidated, Vietnam was to commit ultra atrocious violence to repress khmers’ opposition.

During the period 1813 - 1815, Vietnamese perpetrated the infamous massacre, known to every Khmer as “Prayat Kompup Te Ong”. It was the most barbarous torture style in which the Khmer were buried alive up to their neck. Their heads were used as the stands for a wood stove to boil water for the Vietnamese masters. As they were burned and suffered, the victims shook their heads. At that moment, the Vietnamese torturers jokingly said “Be careful, not to spill the master’s tea”. Other kinds of massacre were the beheading and human collective autodafé (keeping Khmers locked up in granaries and burning them alive). Thousands of Khmers were so massacred in such a human collective autodafé. In 1841, Oknha Son Kuy (Chauvay Kouy), one of Khmer Krom leaders and the ancestor of defunct Son Sann, was atrociously beheaded. In front of such barbary, Khmer people, under the command of Sena Sous, rose up, in 1859, against the Vietnamese first in the province of Srok Kleang (today Soc Trangin Vietnamese designation). After the murder of Sena Sous by a Vietnamese undercover agent, the revolt was pursued by two other Khmer Krom leaders Sena Mon and Sena Tea. In spite of the bravery of Khmer Krom leaders, Vietnam managed to control all Khmer Krom territory thanks to military and demographic conquests. And in June 1949, France, then colonizator of Indochina, transferred Kampuchea Krom, in spite of strong opposition from the Khmers, to Vietnam then under Bao Dai government.

c- Using stratagems and special secret operations instead of costly military confrontation

Having gone through this costly experience in the Kingdom of Champa and in Kampuchea Krom, Vietnam changed its strategies of conquest in Laos and Cambodia. These strategies became more subtle and far less costly in human and material terms. They became more effective and more destructive. A part of Cambodia is now infected from the inside. This is a result of a strategic manipulation and long term tactics. Vietnam had elaborated very meticulous plans to push its southward expansion in Cambodia. But the French presence in Cambodia was a problem for Vietnam. As a Khmer proverb says “there cannot be two lyon kings on one mountain”. That was the reason for which Ho Chi Minh, then known as Nguyên Ai Quốc (“Nguyen the Patriot”) had asked, but in vain, the representatives of the great powers, particularly France, at the Versailles Peace Conference in January 1919, for Independence and Freedom.

Dissappointed by France’s refusal, Ho Chi Minh, after becoming a member of the French Communist Party, founded in 1930 the Indochinese Communist Party (ICP) in Hanoi. At that time, Ho Chi Minh hoped to use Marxism-Leninism in Laos and Cambodia to rally these countries to its homeland claims. In fact, its ultimate goal was to become the sole master of Indochina. To reach that objective, perfidious and subtle strategies were implemented. Breaking social links and solidarity between the people of the victim country, manipulating leaders of influence, using divide and rule and “woman and sex” tactics were at the heart of Vietnam’s strategies. Late in 1931, Vietnam had set up ICP cells in Cambodia - first in Phnom Penh, with others following in Kandal, Kratie and Kompong Cham (vietnamese labors
in rubber plantations)- and in Laos (in Vientiane, Savannakhet and Thakhek). At that time, Vietnam had rapidly managed to make a great advance in Laos. Vietnamese communities in Laos were used as stepping stones to form a growing network of liaison bases throughout the country. The success realized in this latter country had encouraged Vietnam to set up its revolutionaries cells in northern part of Thailand (then known as Siam). The little success made in Cambodia was explained by the relatively low level of Vietnamese communities in Cambodia. Another reason was that Marxism-Leninism brought nothing new for Cambodians. These latter lived already in an environment of well-vowen social links and solidarity and in high belief in the monarchy/kingship.

d- Sowing the seeds of the killing fields

Despite this situation, Vietnam had never give up its ambitions over Cambodia. It continued to secretly develop its networks and had adopted a new strategic manoeuvre. This tactical manoeuvre was to be the roots of the “killing fields” in Cambodia. The starting point of Vietnam’s new strategic policy towards Cambodia was the context of decolonization. This time, Vietnam managed to federate Cambodians thanks to this new politic concept. Vietnam encouraged, in conjunction with the leftist government that ruled Thailand until 1947, the formation of “Khmer Issarak Front” in Cambodia. At the same time “Lao Itsala Front “ was created in Laos too. The Khmer Issarak Front, independent in appearance, was in fact under the command of its Vietnamese counterpart, “Viet Minh Front”. Its Executive Committee was essentially consisted of Vietnamese elements. In the country, Vietnam used this khmer organisation with its armed forces to fight the French in order to have a free field for its expansion in Cambodia. And in diplomatic realm, Ho Chi Minh suggested to the King Norodom Sihanouk to claim Independence from France. Ho Chi Minh, after asking in vain the Independence for his homeland from France in 1919 at the Versailles Peace Conferences, decided to act through the khmer king, who was to be the victim of strategic manipulation and “woman instrumentalized tactics”, for Vietnam’s interests. His Majesty the King had helped Vietnam not only to evict France from Indochina but to win the war against the United States too.

But in this story, His Majesty the King Norodom Sihanouk harvested, as it was planned by Ho Chi Minh, a tremendous popularity within Cambodia. That is why His Majesty the King is so grateful to Ho Chi Minh. As Cambodians could see, the King often went to Ho Chi Minh’s tomb in order to pay respect and express his gratitude to Uncle Ho.

Parallel to this royal manipulation, Vietnam had restructured the network of its undercover agents in Cambodia and in Laos, most of them were to be incorporated into the Lao Itsala and the Kampuchean People’s Revolutionary Party(KPRP), both were established after the reorganization of the ICP in 1951. The Lao and Khmer units were placed under the supervision of their Vietnamese counterpart, Vietnam Workers’ Party. In term of organization, the Executive Committee of the KPRP was essentially assumed by ethnic Vietnamese living in Cambodia.

After the World War II, Cambodia became one of the targets in the fight between the Great Powers. Vietnam obtained, with the support of URSS, strong foothold through Cambodia. In late 1950s, Vietnam attempted to propel KPRP into Cambodia political scene. Thus the
Pracheachon Party, the legal political party of KPRP, participated in the 1955 and 1958 National Assembly Elections. The Pracheachon party won a very weak ballot (± 4 percent) of the vote and did not secure a seat in the legislature. Members of the Pracheachon could not make any progress in the National Assembly because of Sihanouk’s Sangkum Reastr Niyum, which then monopolized all seats.

e- The rise of a communist party controlled by Vietnam: the Pracheachon Party

During 1950s, there was no alternative political party as well structured as the Pracheachon Party. When the Sangkum Reastr Niyum’s opposition members were subject to harassment and to arrests, they automatically rallied KPRP-Pracheachon Party without knowing exactly who lead this adverse party.

At that juncture, Vietnamese strategy apparently seems to pursue two contradictory goals. Because on one hand, Vietnam, after assisting the king Norodom Sihanouk in his “Royal Crusade”, got closer to him. And on the other hand, Vietnam attempted, through KPRP-Pracheachon Party, to push the king Norodom Sihanouk out of office.

The essence of this Vietnamese strategy is very deep. Vietnam’s goal in this tactics was to generate dissension and hate in Khmer community. This objective was to be reached with the “killing field”, which was then to be revealed to the world in 1978.

f- Great powers of the cold war provided the enormous means to destroy Cambodia: a sideshow of the URSS, China, USA and Vietnam

In 1960s and 1970s, Vietnam had benefitted a lot from the Cold War. This country gained support from the Soviet Union and China, its allies of the moment. One of the two Great Powers, China, was to be led by the nose by a “little player”, Vietnam, by making it be alone implied in the Cambodian killing field. The heavy secret bombings of Cambodia in 1973 by the US president Nixon and by Kissinger had over-destroyed Cambodia and had tremensdously weakened the popularity of the US ally Khmer Republic of Marshal Lon Nol and was reported to have heavy effects on the Khmer rouges. The US bombing syndrome was later used by Vietnamese troyans to convince Pol Pot to evacuate urban populations from their cities and implemented the mass elimination policy through successive scanning of target populations. This elimination policy was disrupted during the Vietnamese invasion in December 1978 and was continued afterwards by the Vietnamese military occupants through secret schemes. The results were amazing : 1.5 to 2 million of human lives eliminated and an almost national population size displacement of the Cambodian people (3 to 4 million people) and about 1.5 million of refugees. Because Vietnam, after introducing its “Troyan Horses “, like Nuon Chhea, Heng Samrin, Hun Sen, Pen Sovan, in basic posts of the Cambodian Communists Movement, helped the Khmer Rouges, as it can be read in François Bizot’s “Le Portail”, to take Power in 1975.

Thanks to Vietnam’s help and its special secret agents, Pol Pot could rule Cambodia with assisted terror. And when came the appropriate time, Vietnam decided to use its infiltrated elements (Heng Samrin, Hun Sen, Pen Sovan, etc), and ignited a few strategic tricks to oust Pol Pot. It was in that manner that Vietnam invaded Cambodia, then demographically weak
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and politically divided, and using its hyper powerful and well organized propaganda machinery designed itself as the “Liberator” in December 1978. In fact, Vietnam’s responsibility in this horrible Killing field is obvious, but the Vietnamese succeeded in destroying almost all proofs and witnesses during their occupation of Cambodia (1979-1989).

g- Empowering the Hun Sen regime to re-take control of Cambodia after the UN 1991-1993 intervention.

Since this date, Vietnam has taken control of Cambodia through the CPP/HUN SEN regime they have created. In July 1997, Vietnam helped Hun Sen make a bloody coup-d’état allowing Hun Sen to install himself as the Prime-Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia, putting an end to the system of two-prime ministers heading the government that King Norodom Sihanouk has put-up under Hun Sen’s threat of country secession after the FUNCINPEC’s victory at the first UN-supervised general elections in 1993. This coup d'état gave the opportunity to the CPP to annihilate the military capacity of the FUNCINPEC and to take the whole control of Cambodia. It allowed the CPP to take full control of the organization of the 1998 general elections which had, as expected, ensured the victory of the PPC. To camouflage such a comedy and show a façade of democracy and gain the international community complicity and benediction, Vietnam and the CPP organized a coalition government with FUNCINPEC to whom was given a few honorary ministry chairs. To keep the king under leash, the country is maintained as a kingdom with Norodom Sihanouk as a king and allocated with a fat budget. The system worked perfectly for the CPP and the same election stratagem was used in the July 2003 general elections to ensure the obtention of an election result as catered by the CPP strategists. What the CPP wants is to leave a little space to accommodate some FUNCINPEC elements in a coalition government under its full control. The good score of the Sam Rainsy party at this election allowed the democratic political wrangle comedy that “prevented” the formation of a “coalition government”. Vietnam and the CPP organized the circus show where the international community witnessed the “alliance of democrats” composed of FUNCINPEC and Sam Rainsy party as bad democratic players since they refused to play the rule of the July 2003 elections result. Vietnam and the CPP has succeeded to “discredit” the khmer “democrats”. By refusing to go to Pyongyang, North Korea, at the invitation made on 12 May 2004 by King Sihanouk, Ranaridh and Hun Sen succeeded to “ridiculize politically” the Khmer king. The khmer monarch was “destituted” of his sovereign role. The king used to have a notoriety power that can balance the power of Hun Sen. This power has now been neutralized by Hun Sen and Prince Ranaridh. This latter is one of King Sihanouk sons, but not the one the king would have wanted to crown as a next king of Cambodia. Would this be the reason why Prince Ranaridh associates himself to Hun Sen in complete submission in order to distance his father from Hun Sen, the king maker of Cambodia? If this hypothesis turns to be true, then it confirmed the thesis which said one of the reasons of the decline of Cambodia is the priority chosen by the royal family in competing for the Cambodian crown instead of defending the strategic interests of the country.

h- Towards changing the kingdom of Cambodia into a Socialist Republic of Cambodia?

The coalition government that Hun Sen and Ranaridh are catering will pave the road to new
amendments of the 1993 Cambodian constitution preparing to a one party state system
government under the total rule of the CPP as wished by Vietnam. 10 months after the July
2003 elections Vietnam has finally cleared all the political obstacles in Cambodia. This last
political success should now lead them to the total control of Cambodia after they have
removed the power of the monarch by altering the 1993 Cambodian constitution. The one
party-state system can then remove all the Cambodian sovereignty clauses. Cambodia will
lose the legal sovereignty clauses given by the 1991 international Paris peace agreement and
this will turn the Vietnamese dream to transform Cambodia into a province of the “Great
Vietnam” into reality.

i-An Indochina Empire has emerged in an ASEAN+2 economic bloc within a
geopolitically recomposed ASIA-PACIFIC zone

Vietnam has now completed the annexion of the former French Indochina and can now
contemplate the Siamese large E-San province. The destabilization of Thailand has started
since the 29th January 2003 with the burning of the Thai embassy and molesting of main thai
businesses in Phnom-Penh. Last week attack in Pattani (province south of Thailand) where
about one hundred young Muslims reported as Cham people coming from Cambodia raises
the troubling question: who apart Vietnam has the capacity to launch such operation? The
successfull stratagem used in Champa, Cambodia and Laos is now pursuing in Thailand. The
beginning of the next step has begun: the pursuit westward of Vietnam ambitious
expansionism.

Some signs show that Vietnam contemplates the desire to change the leadership in Cambodia
in order to take a new pace of development under the ASEAN+2 economic bloc. When will
they replace Hun Sen and his supporters? They did that with King Sihanouk, with the Khmer
Rouge Leaders and with Pen Sovann. After the amending of the UN drafted 1993 Cambodian
constitution? Vietnamese strategists may still need the Hun Sen team to consolidate their
foothold in Cambodia. Hun Sen has the required capacity to install a party-state system in
Cambodia and no other CPP leader seems more capable than him. So the Hun Sen
premiership employment contract may possibly continue until the celebration of the one
party-state system installation in Cambodia that has been scheduled. A Republic Socialist of
Cambodia after the 2008 general elections? The “Vietnamspansionism” towards the rest of
South East Asia has begun with the enlargement of ASEAN into an ASEAN +2 within a
geopolitically recomposed Asia-Pacific region.
Brief History of Vietnamese Expansionism vis-à-vis Cambodia

by Gaffar Peang-Meth, Professor of Political Science (retired), University of Guam

http://www.khmerinstitute.org/articles/art13vietnamization.html

On Christmas Eve 1978, more than 100,000 Vietnamese troops, backed by tanks and aircraft, crossed the border into Cambodia. In 14 days of fighting, Hanoi's army sent Pol Pot and his Khmer Rouge fleeing. The Vietnamese captured Phnom Penh Jan. 7, 1979, installed a puppet regime and stayed for the next 10 years.

For victims of Pol Pot's genocidal rule, which began April 17, 1975 and resulted in the deaths of upwards of two million people, Jan.7, 1979 was the day of deliverance by Vietnam. Surely, Vietnam was their "savior" and their "liberator" at a time when the world watched and did nothing about the horrors of the Killing Fields. However, for many Cambodians, Jan. 7th is also a day of infamy. Pol Pot was replaced by those referred to as Cambodians with Khmer bodies but Vietnamese heads, the Khmer Viet Minh. This cohort was created by the Vietnamese Communist Lao Dong, trained at the Son Tay Military Academy and the Nguyen Ai Quoc political school, and led by a disgruntled regional field commander, Hun Sen, who became indebted to Hanoi for his return to power. Many Cambodians felt that substituting the Khmer Viet Minh for the Khmer Rouge was like replacing cholera with the plague.

A host of foreign governments also worried. The world was still governed by the well-specified rule of law founded on the principle of absolute, comprehensive, permanent and inviolable sovereignty and independence. As Singapore argued before the international community at the United Nations, the world is no longer safe, and peace and security are no longer assured, if a more powerful state is allowed to invade a weaker one like Vietnam had done. The Association of South East Asian Nations spearheaded calls for Vietnam to withdraw its troops from Cambodia.

As a result, the United Nations and other international organizations became a political-diplomatic battleground for many years between proponents and opponents of Vietnam's invasion. And so it was that the anti-Vietnamese Khmer Resistance was born, first as separate armed bands with similar goals, and later as a loose coalition of Cambodians of the fallen Khmer Republic, Cambodians of the monarchy, and the leftovers of the Khmer Rouge. Despite their differences, they worked together toward pressuring Vietnam into withdrawal and to seek Cambodian self-determination.

Cambodian nationalists assert that Vietnam attacked Pol Pot in 1979 because he became too independent of Hanoi. The invasion was initiated to bring the insolent back into line. Since 1979, they have asked: If Vietnam's goal was to "save" and "liberate" the Cambodian people from Pol Pot, what prevented Vietnam from surrendering a freed Cambodia and her people to work with the world community to build a new government and social order? Would not Vietnam have received profound gratitude by ceding to the United Nations the role of assisting Cambodians' self-determination rather than imposing 10 years of foreign occupation?
HANOI'S GRAND DESIGN

Hanoi, like the rest of the world, knew that Pol Pot's agents had perpetrated brutalities against the Khmer people since April 17, 1975, when the Khmer Rouge forced the evacuation of the entire Cambodian population from homes, villages, towns and cities and took them to perform forced labor. Suffering, death and destruction were the order of the day.

The widely reported burning of homes and massacres of civilians in Vietnam's An Giang and Chau Doc provinces in 1977 by Pol Pot's guerrilla units offered an incitement to Vietnam, which was then busy strategizing and plotting Ho Chi Minh's grand design of a greater Vietnam. The Khmer Rouge’s belligerence gave the Vietnamese even more reason to put in play a takeover plan that would advance its goal of a federation of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos.

It is no coincidence that Vietnamese troops invaded Cambodia on the same day Brezhnev's Soviet 40th Army entered Afghanistan, Dec. 24, 1979. The Soviet Union was Vietnam's chief ally and financial supporter at the time. Following the regime change in Moscow in May 1988, the Soviets began to exit Afghanistan one month after Gorbachev announced they would. Meanwhile, Hanoi was working on an exit strategy of its own.

Vietnam observed the rapid changes under way around the world: in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, communism was in retreat; rival China was on the rise; and U.S.-China relations was warming and mutually supportive of the anti-Vietnamese Khmer Resistance. While Vietnam began to hint at its eventual withdrawal from Cambodia, it took offensive military action against the Cambodian resistance. Hanoi maneuvered to weaken the anti-Vietnam U.S.-China alliance by encouraging talks between the Vietnam-created regime in Cambodia and the resistance factions. The talks were also designed to improve the puppet government's legitimacy. By the time withdrawal of Vietnamese forces from Cambodia began in December 1989 (11 years after the initial invasion), Vietnam had ensured that its Cambodian subordinates, the Khmer Viet Minh, were entrenched in Cambodia's administrative and governmental organizations.

BACKGROUND

As French critic Jean-Baptiste Alphonse Karr said, "Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose," or, "The more things change, the more they remain the same." Look at the history of relations between Cambodia and Vietnam for affirmation.

The Vietnamese southward expansion after Nam Viet freed itself in 939 from a thousand-year Chinese bondage was described by Vietnamese scholar Nguyen The Anh in "Le Nam Tien dans les textes Vietnamiens," as a centuries-long phenomenon called "Nam Tien" (progression southwards), "one of Vietnam's history's constants." Anh described the "sparsely populated and accessible land available for [Vietnamese] rice growers" to the south as "favorable for encroachment." Vietnamese "Confucian persuasion" was abandoned in favor of "an action resolutely imperialistic" to grab land and impose Vietnamese "administrative and cultural practice ... to better integrate [the new area] into the Vietnamese space." The migration was ongoing, even as other kingdoms were encountered. In 1406, the ancient kingdom of Champa's capital, Vijaya, was seized and the kingdom was extinguished in 1471.
Then, in 1630, Vietnamese princess Ngoc Van, married to Khmer King Chey Chetha II, promoted Vietnamese settlements in the low delta Khmer territory of Preah Suakea (Ba Ria) and Prey Nokor (Saigon).

Historical records reveal that until the French protectorate was established in 1863, Cambodia was a battlefield for Thai and Vietnamese armies that fought on Khmer soil. Khmer dynastic quarrels led separate royal factions to seek support from Bangkok and Hue. Cambodia was known as a "two-headed bird" – a tributary state to both foreign capitals. In 1833, after Vietnam defeated the Thais in Cambodia, the bird head pointed toward Hue, and Vietnamization of Cambodia began in earnest: Vietnam installed teenager Ang Mey as queen, Cambodia's capital was renamed "Nam Viang," Cambodia's reorganization followed Vietnamese administrative lines, and authorities adopted Vietnamese names, customs and dress. In 1840, the Cambodian government was seated in Saigon, and Cambodia's name was changed to "Tran Tay" (western commandery).

REPEAT OF HISTORY

Opponents of Vietnam's 1978 invasion see Hun Sen and his ruling Cambodian People's Party as a force seeking integration of Cambodia into the late Ho Chin Minh's dream of a federation of former French Indochinese states of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. As has been the case many times in history, Cambodians have connived with the Vietnamese to accomplish Vietnam's goals: Khmer King Chey Chettha II in 1620, King Ang Chan II in the 1800s, Prince Sihanouk in the Vietnam War, Pol Pot and Paris-trained Khmer Marxists, Hun Sen and his ruling Cambodian People's Party, supported by the King Father Sihanouk and his son Sihamoni, the current king.

What started as Nam Viet's search for security and growth became a strategy for expansionism. The intention to expand its influence is illustrated even in the name of the political party founded in 1930 by Ho Chi Minh – the "Communist Party of Indochina." Ho did not just want to liberate Vietnam from the French; he defined the task of the CPI "to make Indochina completely independent."

In 1941, Ho created the Viet Minh, an abbreviation of "Vietnam Doc Lap Dong Minh Hoi," or "League for the Independence of Vietnam," and spread its anti-French activities to Laos and Cambodia, where the Viet Minh later fragmentized the anti-French local Khmer Issarak front into a Khmer Viet Minh front. In 1949, the Viet Minh instituted the "Ban Van Dong Thanh Lap Dang Nhan Cach Mang Cao Mien" ("Canvassing Committee for the Creation of the Revolutionary Kampuchean People's Party") and created the Kampuchean People's Liberation Army in 1950.

Although the CPI was dissolved to publicly demonstrate Vietnam did not harbor expansionist intentions toward its neighbors, it resurfaced in February 1951 as the Lao Dong (Vietnam Workers' Party) with the same agenda. The Lao Dong’s goal of integrating Cambodia into a Greater Vietnam may be read in its political report which stated: "We must strive to help our Cambodian and Laotian brothers ... and arrive at setting up a Vietnam-Cambodian-Laotian Front" against the French. A month later the "Joint National United Front for Indochina" was
formed. In November of that year, the Revolutionary Kampuchean People's Party was created with name and statute drafted in the Vietnamese language. It has been said the RKPP and the Cambodian local Communist Pracheachon Party were one and the same. As Prince Sihanouk wrote in February 1960, the Pracheachon Party was "working indefatigably ... and specifically to bring Cambodia under the heel of North Vietnam."

Brian Crozier, a former Reuters correspondent, quoted a captured November 1951 Viet Minh document exhibiting Vietnam's hegemonic attitude: "The Vietnamese Party reserves the right to supervise the activities of its brother parties in Cambodia and Laos." Crozier also quoted a Viet Minh radio broadcast of April 1953: "The Lao Dong Party and the people of Vietnam have the mission to make revolution in Cambodia and Laos. We, the Viet Minh elements, have been sent to serve this revolution and to build the union of Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos." Viet Minh administrations with their own armed forces and system of tax collection were established in Cambodia and Laos. A Hanoi-created "Kampuchean Resistance Government" emerged in 1952 to rival Sihanouk's Royal Government.

When the July 1954 Geneva Accords ordered Viet Minh forces to leave Cambodia, they took with them between 4,500 (a conservative figure) and 8,000 Cambodians (reportedly claimed by Vo Nguyen Giap in 1971), mostly young children, to be raised, cultured and given political and military training in Vietnam. These Cambodians with "Khmer bodies but Vietnamese heads" returned to Cambodia after 1970 to fight Lon Nol, and to unsuccessfully wrest control of the Communist Party of Kampuchea from Pol Pot. Some were arrested, others purged.

According to Khmer Rouge leader Pol Pot, the Marxist-Leninist Communist Party of Kampuchea was born on Sept. 30, 1960, after the first party congress of 21 people met for three days and three nights. Pol Pot asserted that a Cambodian revolutionary movement that "truly belonged to our people" existed prior to the Geneva Convention, but its dissolution after the 1954 agreement was acknowledged because "people lacked a correct and enlightened guideline." Pol Pot described 1968 as the year when armed struggle – civil war – began.

Undoubtedly, Hanoi was aware that its publicly proclaimed "fraternal brothers and sisters," the Khmer Rouge, were not so "fraternal" privately, and it knew its relationship with the Khmer Rouge was unsatisfactory. But Hanoi let the Khmer Rouge be while it looked to building its own Kampuchean puppets. Hanoi was biding its time. And as it was fighting a war against the Americans in Vietnam, Hanoi threw in its battle-tested troops to fight Lon Nol's republican army, enemies of Prince Sihanouk who had allied himself with Hanoi. It was Hanoi's troops that routed Lon Nol's army and put Pol Pot in power in Phnom Penh.

Neither Hanoi nor the world governments intervened to stop the genocide that followed. However, when the Khmer Rouge's fierce independence of Hanoi was more than the latter would tolerate, Hanoi concluded it was time to teach its insolent comrades a lesson. On Nov. 3, 1978, Hanoi signed a 25-year peace and cooperation treaty with Moscow. A month later, on Dec. 3, Hanoi Radio announced the birth of the "Kampuchean National United Front of National Salvation," led by a 14-member Central Committee under Heng Samrin, a former commander of the Khmer Rouge's 4th Division. Hun Sen was a former chief of staff and regimental deputy commander in Sector 21. By the end of the month, Vietnamese troops would lead 18,000 KNUFNS soldiers across the border into Cambodia. Phnom Penh was soon captured and a subservient regime installed. On Feb. 18, 1979, master and puppet
comrades signed a 25-year treaty of peace, friendship and cooperation, a treaty that effectively integrated Cambodia into a Greater Vietnam.

“FRIENDSHIP” TREATY

The 1979 friendship-cooperation treaty brings Hanoi's influence as far west as the border with Thailand. The treaty binds Cambodia and Vietnam in what it terms "militant solidarity and fraternal friendship." As people educated in the culture of Confucianism, Vietnamese leaders' actions are generally carefully thought-out and calculated to maximize Vietnam's interests. They know what they want, what their national interests are, and they move methodically to attain them. Unfortunately for Khmers and their country, King Sihamoni, son of King Father Sihanouk, signed the supplements to the treaty, giving Vietnamese full access to colonize and Vietnamize Cambodia. In the stroke of a pen, the signatories extol a symbiosis of interests between Cambodia and Vietnam. Retired Johns Hopkins professor Naranhkiri Tith observes on his Web site that the 1979 treaty between Hanoi and its puppet in Phnom Penh "became official in 2005" when Cambodia's King Sihamoni, "with the support of his father Sihanouk," put his royal signature on "supplements" to the treaty, thereby making Cambodians complicit in the Vietnamization of Cambodia.

In its preamble, the treaty cites the "closely interrelated" independence, freedom, peace and security of Vietnam and Cambodia – what affects one affects the other – and that both countries are "duty-bound to help each other wholeheartedly and with all their might" safeguard and consolidate the products of their "revolution." It cites both countries' "militant solidarity" and "long-term and all-round cooperation and friendship" as representing their "vital interests."

In the treaty's first three articles, the Cambodians hand Ho Chi Minh the goal of an Indochinese alliance he had dreamed about.

- In Article 1, the two countries pledge to "do all they can" to maintain their "traditions of militant solidarity" and to develop "mutual trust and assistance in all fields."
- In Article 2, they pledge to "wholeheartedly support and assist each other in all domains and in all necessary forms," as well as to take "effective measures to implement this commitment whenever one of them requires." Cambodian leader Hun Sen can "require" Vietnamese intervention and he will be assisted "in all domains and in all necessary forms," and vice versa.
- In Article 3, both countries pledge "mutual fraternal exchanges and cooperation" and mutual assistance in the economic, cultural, educational, public health, scientific, and technological fields, as well as the training of cadres and the exchange of "specialists and experience in all fields of national construction." This opens the door for Vietnam to operate in Cambodia. For example, Vietnam has always been short of food, and Cambodia is historically rich in fertile land and fish and natural resources.

Subsequent sections of the treaty further reinforce this dictate of Cambodian-Vietnamese interdependence.
• Article 4 stipulates a border agreement based on the "present border line."
• Article 5 pledges a "long-standing tradition of militant solidarity and fraternal friendship" to which both parties "attach great importance."
• Article 6 requires that the parties "frequently exchange views" on all questions concerning both countries' relationships and on "international matters of mutual interest."
• Articles 7, 8, 9, speak of the right and obligation of each party to any bilateral and multilateral agreements.

In 1962, Prince Sihanouk wrote: "Whether he is called Gia Long, Ho Chi Minh, or Ngo Dinh Diem, no [Vietnamese] will sleep soundly until he succeeds in pushing the Khmer toward annihilation, after having made them go through the stage of slavery." Pol Pot and his French-trained Marxists handed Cambodia to Vietnam. Then Heng Samrin and company agreed to a Vietnamized Cambodia. Important stipulations in the Paris Peace Accords on Cambodia signed in October 1991 were not implemented, allowing Vietnam's surrogate, Hun Sen, to elbow his way into becoming a co-prime minister despite losing the 1993 general elections. The co-premiership formula was devised by Sihanouk to benefit Hen Sen at the expense of Sihanouk's own son, Ranariddh. It gave Ranariddh, winner of the election, the title of 1st Prime Minister, and the loser of the election, Hun Sen, the title of 2nd Prime Minister. Dissatisfied with his subservient position in the dual premiership, Hun Sen unleashed a coup d'etat in 1997 in which hundreds were killed and seized power.

MARCHING ONWARD

The journey toward a greater Vietnam has not ended. What began in 939 when Nam Viet freed itself from Chinese bondage has in 2010 put the Vietnamese at Thailand's border and in a position to have an impact on Thailand's political stability. Cambodians are being manipulated by Hun Sen to respond to Thailand based on historical animosities not relevant to today's political realities. It would be preferable if lessons could be taken from history so that it is not repeated.

The current Cambodian-Thai conflict has been inflamed by Hun Sen's continuing provocations, intended to destabilize Thailand and provide opportunities for Vietnam to influence events there. Hun Sen's success at diverting his countrymen's attention from their own meager lots to the possibility of a conflict with their historical adversary has had the side benefit of increasing domestic support for his regime. The recently revealed "classified" contingency plan by Thailand for military action against Cambodia, should the Thai-Khmer dispute escalate, is seen by Professor Naranhkiri Tith as "exactly what Hun Sen wanted." Logically, the Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation between Hun Sen's Cambodia and Vietnam is an important instrument for him to invite Hanoi's troops – the "liberators" against Pol Pot – to help fight the Thais on Khmer soil, another repeat of history.

Hun Sen has successfully used governmental administrative machinery to keep Cambodians intimidated and ignorant of their civil rights and the principles of good governance. He dangles showy projects and physical improvements to infrastructure, while many scavenge the city's dumps and live on rodent meat. Of late, he has taken to publicly cursing the Thai leadership seemingly daily. His call to protect Cambodia's Preah Vihear Temple from the
Thais brings many Cambodians to his side, though they are mute over Vietnamese encroachment from the east. Those who dare speak out against Vietnamese expansionism are silenced through intimidation or imprisonment.

* * * * *

About the author:

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Vietnam and the Cambodian Tragedy

Vietnam’s Tay Tién expansion into Laos and Cambodia

By Michael Benge, paper presented at the National Conference 2007, Washington DC.

It is common belief that the Vietnam War was a civil war when in fact it wasn’t; it was a war of conquest of Southeast Asia, for Ho Chi Minh was not a Vietnamese nationalist rather he was an international communist. Ho Chi Minh, cofounder of the French communist party, held a position of leadership in the international communist movement – the Comintern. Ho was sent by the Comintern to Siam (Thailand), Malaya and Singapore to preside over the creation of communist parties in these countries. Moscow also put him in charge of creating communist parties in Cambodia and Laos. All were encouraged to contribute to the international proletarian revolution, and all of them reported to the Comintern’s Far Eastern Bureau headed by Ho[1].

As part of the Communist Internationale funded by the Soviet Union, Ho Chi Minh founded the Indochinese Communist Party in 1930. Aping his mentor — the butcher Joseph Stalin – Ho’s ultimate plan was to establish a greater Vietnam by gobbling up his neighbors, Laos, Vietnam, and later other S.E. Asian countries as Stalin and Russia did to it’s neighbors in establishing the Soviet Union.

After the Geneva Agreements in 1954, Ho Chi Minh saw to it that several hundred young Cambodians were taken north, indoctrinated in communism and given military training. They were later armed and sent back, where they became the basis of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia’s Eastern Zone. Knowing of Ho’s close ties to Moscow and his intent to emulate his hero, the butcher Joseph Stalin, by creating a Soviet-style Union of South East Asia, China began training and arming the Pol Pot faction of the Khmer Rouge as a counterbalance to Soviet influence. China believed that revolution should come from within. North Vietnam enabled the Khmer Rouge to take over Phnom Penh in 1975 by providing logistics, ammunition, artillery and backup by Vietnamese troops making them complicit in the genocide of at least one and one half million Cambodians.

Viewing the U.S. as a paper tiger after its abandonment of South Vietnam, the Vietnamese communist party sent its mighty military force into Cambodia, not to liberate it from Pol Pot’s Khmer Rouge, but to colonize that country to fulfill Ho Chi Minh’s dream of hegemony over Indochina. They never dreamed that the U.S. would ally with communist China to drive them out. Unfortunately, the Hanoi’s Khmer Rouge remained intact and now controls Cambodia. From the onset of the Indochina communist party, Ho Chi Minh began neo-colonizing Laos. He, as the majority of the Vietnamese, considered the Laotians, and even more so the Hmong, who had not been cultured by China as being Nha que qua [very backward], therefore they were not to be trusted. That attitude persists among the Vietnamese communists leaders today.

Since the Vietnamese had better access to French education, the French colonial government used Vietnamese as lower-echelon civil servants throughout the region, thus playing right into the hands of Ho Chi Minh. Ho began implementing his plan to dominate Indochina by infiltrating educated communist Vietnamese agents into Lao villages with money to set themselves up as scribes, and moneylenders. Acting as liaisons with the French colonial
government through the lower-echelon Vietnamese civil servants, they gained considerable influence throughout the countryside. To cement their stature and gain total trust of the villagers, the Vietnamese communist agents took Lao wives and raised families. Now the sons and a few daughters of these Vietnamese make up a fair portion of the Lao communist party leadership.

In Laos, the U.S. waged a “secret war” against Hanoi to interdict communist North Vietnamese troops infiltrating into South Vietnam. The backbone of this secret war was the Hmong ethnic minorities who lost over 40,000 killed while fighting for the United States. It has been over 30 years since the Vietnam War ended; yet a second ”secret war” continues in Laos. However, this secret war is being waged jointly by Vietnamese and Laotian communist forces, this time without American involvement. The war is against the Laotian people, especially the Hmong and other ethnic minorities, such as the Khmu, Mien and Chao Fa.

Hanoi maintains large numbers of troops in Laos to assist the communist Pathet Lao in hunting down and exterminating their joint enemy - the Hmong. In 1988, the Lao Communist Party proclaimed it would hunt down the “American collaborators” and their families, “to the last root.” They will be “butchered like wild animals. Those they are hunting are mostly the children, grand children and great-grandchildren of the fighters who sided with the U.S.

Although Ho Chi Minh is dead, the repressive and genocidal regime in Hanoi continues to implement Ho’s 1930 Indochinese Communist Party’s strategy by neo-colonizing Laos and Cambodia; a strategy reaffirmed in successive Vietnamese communist party congresses[2]. Today, the Vietnamese communists have extended their hegemony over Laos and Cambodia and have de facto annexed Laos, which in many ways is now a province of North Vietnam. The Lao party leaders are anointed by Hanoi and receive their marching orders in a Sub Rosa fashion through a Vietnamese shadow government.

In Cambodia, Hanoi maintains a contingent of 3,000 troops, a mixture of special-forces and intelligence agents, with tanks and helicopters, in a huge compound 2½ kilometers outside Phnom Penh right next to Hun Sen’s Tuol Krassaing fortress near Takhmav. They are there to ensure that Hanoi's puppet, Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen, doesn't stray far from Hanoi's policy of neo-colonization of Cambodia. The Vietnamese compound bristles with electronic surveillance equipment that would make any group’s electronic eavesdropping outstation proud. When Vietnamese troops were forced to withdraw from Vietnam, as a compromise, Vietnam installed its Hanoi trained Khmer Rouge marionette Hun Sen as Prime Minister.

Amoeba-like, communist Vietnam began neo-colonizing Laos and Cambodia by the traditional Vietnamese expansionism termed “Don Dien”, first by occupying territory with troops, then having their families come in to settle the new territory, then putting the troops into civilian clothes to become “ready reservists” and replacing them with new troops for further expansion. After their defeat in Cambodia, in order to quell a budding revolt within the Vietnamese army, Hanoi compelled their willing partner, Hun Sen, to grant land in Eastern Cambodia and citizenship to over 500,000 Vietnamese army personnel. Thus, the “Vietnamization” of Cambodia began, forcing the puppet regime in Phnom Penh to issue in 1982 Circular No. 240 SR/MC/HH and successive decree-laws appealing to all Cambodians to consider the expansion of solidarity with the fraternal Vietnamese peoples their duty by
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helping Vietnamese nationals to settle in Cambodia. By 1989, the number of Vietnamese “settlers” in Cambodia had reached 1,250,000. Simultaneously, Vietnam developed new maps depicting their new borders expanding up to 40 kilometers inside Laos and Cambodia. Hun Sen formally conceded these borders to Hanoi in violation of international law through a series of treaties, the latest in October 10, 2005. Reportedly, Vietnamese people form the majority in Cambodia eastern provinces, such as Svay Rieng and Prey Veng [3].

Today, the communist party of Vietnam is faced with a burgeoning population, a lack natural resources to fuel its economy and enough fertile land on which to grow food to adequately feed its people. In a desperate move to keep its grasp on power and in an attempt to pacify a restless young population, Hanoi is exporting “guest workers” and by further excursion into neighboring countries in order to expand its control over those territories. In 2005, the communist regime exported 500,000 Vietnamese workers overseas to countries such as Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, South Korea, and now they are being exported to Cambodia and Laos.

Vietnamese communists continue their policy of neocolonization, nibbling away at Cambodia by annexing sizable portions of its borders, coastlines and islands (e.g., Koh Tral and Krachak Ses) through illegitimate treaties with their puppet regime in Phnom Penh in violation of the1991 Paris Peace Agreement on Cambodia. Their latest scheme is involves flooding three northeastern provinces of Cambodia and the three southeastern provinces of Laos with Vietnamese settlers and exploiting the natural resources there.

Chapters of the Cambodian-Vietnam friendship organizations (United Front for National Construction and defense of Cambodia –UFCDK), a “front” for the Vietnam Fatherland Front, have now been established in all of Cambodia’s cities and provinces [4]. The UFCDK is comparable to Hanoi’s creation of the National Liberation Front (NLF) during the Vietnam War. The NLF was touted as being the political arm of South Vietnam’s Viet Cong, when in fact it was no more than a façade created for propaganda purposes and owned and operated by Hanoi. “The Vietnam fatherland front and its member organizations constitute the political base of people's power. The front promotes the tradition of national solidarity, strengthens the people's unity in political and spiritual matters…”[5].

In November 2004, Vietnam cajoled the puppet communist regimes of Laos and Cambodia into signing the “Development Triangle agreement”[6]. This agreement allows the Vietnamese to now formalize their expansion through what is historically termed Tay Tién (Westward movement) into the three North Eastern provinces of Stung Trèng, Ratanakiri and Mondolkiri in Cambodia, and into the three South Eastern provinces of Attapeu, Sékong and Saravan in Laos.

The “Development Triangle” is a vast area of high plateaus and virgin forests covering approximately 120,400 square kilometers. With the exception of the provinces in Vietnam where the communist regime have already confiscated the ancestral lands of the Montagnards in the Central Highlands, deforested the area, and relocated several million people there; those provinces in Laos and Cambodia are sparsely populated, mainly with ethnic minorities, but were occupied by the Vietnamese during the Vietnam War.

This “so called development” of these provinces starts with building a “security” road network with the intent to deprive Montagnards fleeing repression in the Central Highlands of
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Vietnam of sanctuary among their distant relatives in Laos and Cambodia and in the UNHCR camps in Phnom Penh. Although claiming that the roads would increase tourism and commerce in these areas, the real reason is to create easy access for the growing Vietnamese population to migrate to and neo-colonize these provinces in Laos and Cambodia. Already, Vietnamese settlers are flooding Mondulkiri and Ratanakiri provinces in Cambodia occupying lands belonging to the local populations.

The Triangle occupies “an eminently strategic position on the political, economical, social, environmental and ecological levels” for the control of Laos, Cambodia by Hanoi. Japan and China are leading supporters of Vietnam’s expansionism.

Already in Laos, the Vietnamese army’s Military Corps No. 15 has completed an irrigation complex in Sekong for plantation crops, established a coffee plantation in Salavan, and developed plans for setting up coffee, rubber and cashew plantations, and building a 10,000 tonne-per-year rubber processing plant in Attopeu. Attopeu’s new rubber plantation covers an area of over 7,000 hectares [7]. The ‘Triangle’ area is only one of many places that the Vietnamese expansionists have moved into in order to the natural resources of Laos; e.g., there are six hydroelectric dams that were constructed and are owned and operated by the Vietnamese to power Vietnam’s booming economy.

In Cambodia, China is competing with Vietnam and constructing roads in Stung Treng, exploiting forests in Mondulkiri, and developing mining exploration units in Ratanakiri. Vietnam views the Triangle area for its potential for growing cash crops and establishing vast plantations fast-growing trees, coffee, tea and rubber to earn export dollars. Both the Vietnamese and Laotian regimes have voiced policies of using ethnic minorities in these regions for cheap labor for plantations established on their ancestral lands.

Vietnam’s parastatal company EVN (Electricity of Viet Nam) is planning to build five hydroelectric dams on the Sesan River in Stung Treng Province. The dams will have a total production capacity of 818 megawatts. The estimated production capacities and costs of the five dams are: 1) 420 MW, costing $611 million; 2) 180 MW, costing $387 million; 3) 90 MW at $164 million; and 4&5) 64 MW each, costing $114 million each.

Construction on these dams is expected to begin in 2012 upon the completion of the Japanese-funded highway connecting the port of Da Nang in Vietnam with the northeastern provinces of Cambodia, and the southeastern provinces of Laos [8].

Corruption and a lack of progress in combating it remain a major blight on Asia's restructuring efforts following the 1997 crisis. Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam also lost ground in 2007, according to Transparency International. The strong correlation between corruption and poverty means that the benefits of growth are concentrated among the politically connected and bypass many who most need it [9].

Given the level of corruption among officials in Vietnam and Cambodia, it is expected that several Cambodian and Vietnamese officials will become very, very wealthy from these projects. The dams would be constructed, owned and operated by Vietnamese, and the electricity generated from these hydroelectric plants will be forwarded and sold to Vietnamese power plants. Purportedly, electricity would be resold to Cambodia at a “cheap price.” One has to be very naïve to believe that Vietnam will sell any electricity to Cambodia at a cheaper
price than in Vietnam, given that county’s level of corruption, rate of economic growth and the need for cheap energy to fuel its economy; its needs are increasing by 10-15% annually.

Another reason for its expansion in Laos and Cambodia is Vietnam’s conflict between food production, industrialization and building dams to power its economic growth. In the last five years, Vietnam has lost 300,000 hectares of irrigated rice due to industrial development, including a vast amount lost through the construction of dams. This is creating a looming shortage of rice needed to feed its burgeoning population.

The construction of dams results in the displacement of large numbers of indigenous populations that farm the fertile soils in the river basins. These people are then either relocated to marginally productive lands, or receive no land at all; thus they fall victim to abject poverty. Vietnam has a history of doing this as well as corrupt officials absconding with relocation funds, leaving the victims with little or nothing; e.g., the Muong Lay Dam in North Vietnam[10]. Those who choose to remain behind to farm the basins below the dams find that two or three times a year, uncontrolled spillage from the dams will flood their fields, destroy their crops and drown their livestock.

The Se San River originates in the Central Highlands of Vietnam and flows into Cambodia where it meets the Mekong River. In 1993, the Vietnamese government started construction on the first dam on the river -- Yali Falls Dam -- which was completed in 2000. While the dam was under construction from 1996-2000, erratic releases of water resulted in flash flooding downstream, causing deaths to people and livestock and destruction of rice fields and vegetable gardens. Since 2000, operation of the dam has resulted in rapid and daily fluctuations in the river’s flow downstream in Cambodia’s Ratanakiri and Stung Treng provinces. It is estimated that at least 36 people have drowned due to erratic releases of water from the dam, and at least 55,000 people have been adversely affected -- suffering millions of dollars in damages due to lost rice production, drowned livestock, lost fishing income, and damages to rice reserves, boats, fishing gear and houses. Over 3,500 people have relocated to other areas without compensation [11].

In addition, more than 6,700 people were resettled to make way for Yali Falls Dam (in Vietnam, ed.). According to a 2001 study by Vietnam’s Center for Natural Resources and Environmental Studies, people displaced by the dam have suffered from severe shortages of food and other hardships since the dam flooded their homes and land in 1999. Affected communities (in Vietnam, ed.) have not received compensation for their losses, and there are no plans to provide them with compensation for past or future impacts. In Cambodia, communities have formed the Se San Protection Network to press for compensation and changes to the dam’s operating regime to minimize downstream damages. Despite the unresolved issues, the government of Vietnam has embarked on an ambitious plan to build up to five more dams on the Sesan River. The International Rivers Network is working to support the Se San Protection Network in their request for reparations and a halt to future dam construction on the Se San River [12].

Although he’s dead, Hanoi is well on its way in the implementation of Ho Chi Minh’s 1930 aspirations of creating a Soviet-style Indochina.

Cambodia is presently ruled by Hanoi’s marionette Prime Minister Hun Sen and his Vietnamese communist-backed corrupt cabal. In terms of “real politick”, Hun Sen’s
Premiership -- albeit obtained illegally, first by a coup d'etat *d'etat in 1997 and then appointed by bought-and-paid-for National Assemblies in 1998 and 2003 -- continues to receive de facto international recognition as the “legitimate” representative government of Cambodia. Therefore, the Paris Peace Agreement of October 23rd, 1991, or any other accord/agreement, is at present moot. Thus, nothing can be done at this time about violations of Cambodia’s territorial integrity until a democratic or another form of government representing the true aspirations of the Cambodian people is elected. At that time, the new Cambodian government can take these matters to the international court for abrogation of these unfair and illegal treaties and agreements made by the illegitimate, corrupt and immoral regime of Hun Sen and the Cambodian People's Party (CPP).

Paper presented by Michael Benge at the National Conference 2007 to commemorate and assess “The Paris Peace Agreement” of October 23rd, 1991 (with attached “Final Act of the Paris Conference on Cambodia”). Mr. Benge is a retired Foreign Service Officer who spent over 16 years in South East Asia, 11 years in Viet Nam, and five years as a Prisoner of the North Vietnamese -- '68-'73 – in South Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, and North Vietnam. Mr. Benge is a student of South East Asian politics, is very active in advocating for human rights and religious freedom for the people there, and has written extensively on these subjects. He resides in Falls Church, VA, and can be contacted through email at: Bengemike@aol.com


Final Act of the Paris Conference on Cambodia

1. Concerned by the tragic conflict and continuing bloodshed in Cambodia, the Paris Conference on Cambodia was convened, at the invitation of the Government of the French Republic, in order to achieve an internationally guaranteed comprehensive settlement which would restore peace to that country. The Conference was held in two sessions, the first from 30 July to 30 August 1989, and the second from 21 to 23 October 1991.

2. The co-Presidents of the Conference were H. E. Mr. Roland Dumas, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the French Republic, and H. E. Mr. Ali Alatas, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia.

3. The following States participated in the Conference: Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Canada, the People's Republic of China, the French Republic, the Republic of India, the Republic of Indonesia, Japan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, the Republic of the Philippines, the Republic of Singapore, the Kingdom of Thailand, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom.of *Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam. In addition, the Non-Aligned Movement was represented at the Conference by its current Chairman at each session, namely Zimbabwe at the first session and Yugoslavia at the second session.

4. At the first session of the Conference, Cambodia was represented by the four Cambodian Parties. The Supreme National Council of Cambodia, under the leadership of its President, H.R.H. Prince Norodom Sihanouk, represented Cambodia at the second session of the Conference.
5. The Secretary-General of the United Nations, H.E. Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, and his Special Representative, Mr. Rafeeuddin Ahmed, also participated in the Conference.

6. The Conference organized itself into three working committees of the whole, which met throughout the first session of the Conference. The First Committee dealt with military matters, the Second Committee dealt with the question of international guarantees, and the Third Committee with the repatriation of refugees and displaced persons and the eventual reconstruction of Cambodia.

The officers of each committee were as follows:
First Committee
Co-Chairmen:
Mr. C.R. Gharekhan (India)
Mr. Allan Sullivan (Canada)
Rapporteur: Ms. Victoria Sisante-Bataclan (Philippines)
Second Committee
Co-Chairmen:
Mr. Soulivong Phrasithideth (Laos)
Dato' Zainal Abidin Ibrahim (Malaysia)
Rapporteur: Mr. Herve Dejean de la Batie (France)
Third Committee
Co-Chairmen:
Mr. Yukio Imagawa (Japan)
Mr. Robert Merrillees (Australia)

Rapporteur: Colonel Ronachuck Swasdikiat (Thailand)

The Conference also established an Ad Hoc Committee, composed of the representatives of the four Cambodian Parties and chaired by the representatives of the two co-Presidents of the Conference, whose mandate involved matters related to national reconciliation among the Cambodian Parties. The Ad Hoc Committee held several meetings during the first session of the Conference.

The Coordination Committee of the Conference, chaired by the representatives of the two co-Presidents, was established and given responsibility for general coordination of the work of the other four committees. The Coordination Committee met at both the first and second sessions of the Conference. An informal meeting of the Coordination Committee was also held in New York on 21 September 1991.

7. At the conclusion of the first session, the Conference had achieved progress in elaborating a wide variety of elements necessary for the achievement of a comprehensive settlement of the conflict in Cambodia. The Conference noted, however, that it was not yet possible to achieve a comprehensive settlement. It was therefore decided to suspend the Conference on 30 August 1989. However, in doing so, the Conference urged all parties concerned to intensify their efforts to achieve a comprehensive settlement, and asked the co-Presidents to lend their good offices to facilitate these efforts.

8. Following the suspension of the first session of the Conference, the co-Presidents and the Secretary-General of the United Nations undertook extensive consultations, in particular with the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, with the Supreme
National Council of Cambodia, and with other participants in the Paris Conference. The
object of these consultations was to forge agreement on all aspects of a settlement, to ensure
that all initiatives to this end were compatible and to enhance the prospects of ending the
bloodshed in Cambodia at the earliest possible date. The efforts of the co-Presidents and the
Secretary-General paved the way for the reconvening of the Paris Conference on Cambodia.

9. At the inaugural portion of the final meeting of the Paris Conference, on 23 October 1991,
the Conference was addressed by H.E. Mr. Francois Mitterrand, President of the French
Republic, H.R.H. Prince Norodom Sihanouk, President of the Supreme National Council of
Cambodia, and H.E. Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, Secretary-General of the United Nations.

10. At the second session, the Conference adopted the following instruments:

1. Agreement on a comprehensive political settlement of the Cambodia conflict, with annexes
on the mandate for UNTAC, military matters, elections, repatriation of Cambodian refugees
and displaced persons, and the principles for a new Cambodian constitution;

2. Agreement concerning the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and inviolability,
neutrality and national unity of Cambodia; and

3. Declaration on the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Cambodia

These instruments represent an elaboration of the "Framework for a Comprehensive Political
Settlement of the Cambodia Conflict" adopted by the five permanent members of the United
Nations Security Council on 28 August 1990, and of elements of the work accomplished at
the first session of the Conference. They entail a continuing process of national reconciliation
and an enhanced role for the United Nations, thus enabling the Cambodian people to
determine their own political future through free and fair elections organized and conducted
by the United Nations in a neutral political environment with full respect for the national
sovereignty of Cambodia.

11. These instruments, which together form the comprehensive settlement the achievement of
which was the objective of the Paris Conference, are being presented for signature to the
States participating in the Paris Conference. On behalf of Cambodia, the instruments will be
signed by the twelve members of the Supreme National Council of Cambodia, which is the
unique legitimate body and source of authority enshrining the sovereignty, independence and
unity of Cambodia.

12. The States participating in the Conference call upon the co-Presidents of the Conference
to transmit an authentic copy of the comprehensive political settlement instruments to the
Secretary-General of the United Nations. The States participating in the Conference request
the Secretary General to take the appropriate steps in order to enable consideration of the
comprehensive settlement by the United Nations Security Council at the earliest opportunity.
They pledge their full cooperation in the fulfilment of this comprehensive settlement and their assistance in its implementation.

Above all, in view of the recent tragic history of Cambodia, the States participating in the
Conference commit themselves to promote and encourage respect for and observance of
human rights and fundamental freedoms in Cambodia, as embodied in the relevant
international instruments to which they are party.
13. The States participating in the Conference request the International Committee of the Red Cross to facilitate, in accordance with its principles, the release of prisoners of war and civilian internees. They express their readiness to assist the ICRC in this task.

14. The States participating in the Conference invite other States to accede to the Agreement on a Comprehensive Political Settlement of the Cambodia Conflict and to the Agreement concerning the Sovereignty, Independence, *Independence, Territorial Integrity and Inviolability, Neutrality and National Unity of Cambodia.

15. Further recognizing the need for a concerted international effort to assist Cambodia in the tasks of rehabilitation and reconstruction, the States participating in the Conference urge the international community to provide generous economic and financial support for the measures set forth in the Declaration on the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of Cambodia.

In witness whereof the representatives have signed this Final Act.

Done at Paris this twenty-third day of October one thousand nine hundred and ninety-one, in two copies in the Chinese, English, French, Khmer and Russian languages, each text being equally authentic. The originals of this Final Act shall be deposited with the Governments of the French Republic and of the Republic of Indonesia.


[8] Agence Kampuchea Presse. 07/09/06.


Cambodia Threatened by New Forms of Colonialism

Kith Chamroeun, London, April 2012

After having been inflicted by very tragic events in its history, Cambodia is now threatened by a danger which is nibbling it from the inside in a subtle and insidious way. Some of Khmer observers call this danger a “serious pathology” which has been attacked the heart of Cambodia’s brain. And others compare it to an “AVC”[1] causing a “handicap” with ongoing “serious traumatic effects”, which requires heavy “immune treatments” to help it recover back its normal situation. Having an advantage in term of information over its victim, this pathology has quietly evolved and nibbled from the inside. It is now more than necessary to review the past tracks and the ways in which this disease could endogenously initiate a mutation.

Since the army of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam walked on the Cambodia territory in January 1979, Hanoi has been keeping to strengthen its grip on Cambodia. As we will see in hereafter – in spite of the so called withdrawal of its troops in 1989, imposed by the international community under the Peace Agreements signed in Paris in 1991 - Hanoi still continues its insidious invasion in many areas, turning Cambodia into a base of servitude in favor of Vietnamese expansionism. Not only Hanoi acts as an absolute master in Cambodia but also systematically plunders the resources of this country while the majority of Cambodians barely survives. In addition, Hanoi is also using strategies of dividing the clan that served as a ‘screen’ for its invasion of Cambodia in 1979 to better establish its domination over the country.

Enslavement under the guise of “cooperation agreements”

From the first days of its arrival in Cambodia, the Vietnamese army took the necessary measures to ensure until today its domination in almost all areas. One of an early agreement was signed on 18 February 1979 with the political arm of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in Phnom Penh, the People's Republic of Kampuchea, known today under the name of CPP. This major agreement - described as “Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation” valid for 25 years and automatically renewed every 10 years - allowed Hanoi to establish an outpost for the Vietnamese army heavily equipped by the former Soviet Union. Additionally to the Bo Doi, the Vietnamese army with 200,000 men, 40,000 Vietnamese composed
of party cadres, civil servants, people trained for a career or profession who were to occupy key positions within the Cambodian government pro-Hanoi[2]. Not only all the structures of Cambodian government were entirely controlled by the Vietnamese forces but many Cambodian provinces were also transformed into a base of vassalization from the very first days of the invasion. Each Khmer province had, in the context of twinning with its Vietnamese “sisters”, to provide food and essential products to their Vietnamese counterpart. For example, Battambang province, the rice bowl of Cambodia, was to supply rice to its Vietnamese “twin sister” Nang Quang. Siem Reap did the same and had to accept, in exchange of forced gift in rice, Vietnamese who came to settle down in the city. Officially they were ordinary workers of fish sauce[3]. Hanoi did not hesitate to put hands on any kind of property and wealth of the country. Since the 7th January 1979, the occupation of main cities was reserved to the Vietnamese and the Khmer people were banished from the place. All land and real estate in the country become the propriety of the winners of the day, that is to say, the Vietnamese forces and their Khmer executives of the People’s Republic of Kampuchea newly resurrected[4]. The “twinning system”, often called today “decentralized cooperation”, is still relevant. The meeting dated April 6, 2012 between the Governor of Battambang, Prach Chan, and his Vietnamese counterpart Phan Van Sau, party secretary of the Vietnamese province An Giang is always part of this logic[5]. Other provinces such as Banteay Meanchey[6], Pursat and Kampong Thom[7] are engaged respectively with Vietnamese provinces Vinh Long and Tien Giang bypassing the central government of Hun Sen. Is this latter already losing the control over the entire Cambodian territory in favor of Hanoi domination? Parallel to this surge of decentralized cooperation, a road of 1500 km linking Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam and having as main axis of convergence toward Thailand is under construction[8]. While the main roads inside Cambodia remain in a state of disrepair unable to allow Khmer peasants to transport their crops and other products of their land to the outlets located in urban centers. Even today, this stranglehold of Hanoi on Khmer assets and resources becomes stronger and stronger. Apparently, according to some witnesses, Hanoi would have ordered via the top leaders in Phnom Penh to Cambodians, who obviously are not aware of anything to gather in the day time goods and other assets in some places previously selected by Hanoi. At night times these goods and assets are then sent to Vietnam. A large number of heavily loaded and covered trucks run quietly towards Vietnam. Some Cambodians living in Cambodia say that these trucks carry rice that the government of Hun Sen buys from Khmer peasants at low prices below the market rate with money from the international aid given to Cambodia. These trucks carry even woody debris for domestic cooking purposes. Many things are sent to Vietnam while we can not even eat here, they said. Places in which goods and other assets must be collected systematically change accordingly to Hanoi orders. Many Cambodians, including the author himself had witnessed the unceasing traffic of goods and assets. Another fact that also deserves to be stressed is that the trucks or buses transporting goods
and assets extorted from Cambodians or Vitenamese people from Vietnam are equipped with a dedicated horn recognizable with a particular sound. As soon as the Cambodian police or customs hear this sound out from the horn, they must let the trucks or buses pass through immediately. During an inspection at a customs station, all buses carrying Cambodians undergo a long checking while those of the Vietnamese are not allowed to be controlled. One witness has asked a policeman why a number of buses pass through the checkpoint without even bothering to stop while others wait hours before they could cross the station. The policeman has said that these buses transport “Lok Yuons” Lok in the meaning of “Vietnamese Lords” and we are not allowed to control them. Such scenes demonstrates that the Vietnamese have all the freedom making them the absolute ruler of Cambodia. They go into the Cambodian territory freely and enjoy many privileges that Cambodians themselves can not even benefit in their own country.

Today many economic sectors of Cambodia are in the hands of Hanoi, thanks to the establishment by Hanoi a number of incentives and mechanisms of control over Khmer resources and wealth[9]. For instance, after having the whole monopoly on raw materials from rubber plantations through “political agreements” sealed between Phnom Penh and Hanoi for “services rendered” to the clan of the current Cambodian leaders, Vietnam put now hands on plantations, property of Cambodian people, representing several hundred thousand hectares, officially as a concession giving Hanoi operating rights for 99 years[10]. Another sector that has also been submitted to a very large scale and highly destructive operation for the environment is the massive deforestation of the Cambodian forest through corruption of the Cambodian elite based in Phnom Penh[11]. Those who dare to rise a voice against this vested groups become the target to be eliminated. The assassination of Chut Wutty, the Khmer environment activist, is obviously a clear evidence[12]. Thus several million of dollars escape annually from the hands of Cambodians, while the majority of them live in extreme poverty.

A process of economic subjugation of Cambodia to support hegemonic and industrial ambitions of Vietnam is clearly under way. Agreements have been signed to transform Cambodia into an “agricultural production base” with the aim of supplying the agricultural products to feed the Vietnamese mouths. 40 agricultural products have been declared as benefitting a total exemption of tax[13]. Through this agreement, the majority of the Khmer people will be condemned to work as a peasant from generation to generation like their Khmer countrymen in Kampuchea Krom, who have no ability to evolve to other sectors. Not only they will be trapped by this primary specialization but they also suffer from the moral hazard of the pricing policy imposed by Vietnam. Through this subjugation, Vietnam will give priority to accelerating industrial development while promoting the modernization of its own agriculture, not to depend totally on Cambodia for a strategic food safety reason. While Cambodia considered as the enslavement base of Hanoi, the majority of the Khmer people will never see any economic and social
progress. They will have to work all day long in their rice fields to pay for a Vietnamese industrial product manufactured in one hour for example.

In these conditions, Cambodia will not undergo, as asserted by Hun Sen, a real economic and industrial development and can evolve into developed country status by 2020[14]. The level of development of a country can not be appreciated with the number of private and official buildings, built with China’s aid, not either by the quantity of smartphones, flat screen televisions or new luxuries 4x4 cars. None of these goods are locally made but imported from overseas. No industrial added value has been created there. The few textile factory that appear here and there is no the fact of the local entrepreneurs. No know how nor vocational or technical training necessary to develop “absorption capacity” has been politically encouraged by the government that is in power for more than 30 years already. The female Cambodian workers who work in these textile factory have never increased their level of know how more than what they had if they would have remained working in the countryside. Althoug living in the urban areas, their standard of living is more than deplorable. For some of them, their monthly disposable income, after debt reimbursment, is sometimes negative. A situation that puts them into a spiral of absolute poverty.

The growth of the past 30 years has been driven by massive deforestation, the frenzy of land speculation based on the expropriation of peasants, and the abusive exploitation of other resources and wealth of the country. The Cambodian growth regime is not a wealth creating one or value generator but a destruction regime. It is based on an excessive marketization[15]. Everything can be sold or bought. It is true for justice, degrees and ministerial jobs[16]. The recent creation of the stock market in Phnom Penh looks like an illusion made in the daylight. Is it still an additional means to divert savings that poor Khmer households have hardly saved?

The so-called “cooperation agreements” between Phnom Penh and Hanoi only evict Khmer people from the path of economic and industrial development and lead them to further extreme impoverishment. Even today, as it can be read in media, all kind of agreements have been signed in a large number and which pave the way for Hanoi to put its hands under the guise of “cooperation” on a very large number of areas. Telecommunication, Defense, religion, parliament, tourism, oil and gas and education become the main targets of Hanoi.

In tourism, guesthouses run by Vietnamese, even hotel chains to divert revenues generated by this very dynamic sector. Even at a larger scale, a conglomerate, Sokimex, run by a Vietnamese descendants, is also active in the sector. The income generated by tourism is an extremely important financial package. In 2011, tourism revenues are estimated at 1.8 billion USD[17]. Oil and gas is another area targeted by Hanoi because of its potential ability to generate revenue to over $ 2 billion per
year[18].

Vassalization completed by an active demographic colonization

The Vietnamese communist leaders were able to advance their expansionist ambitions not only with the so-called “cooperation agreements” but also through a policy of demographic colonization carried out by a very active parallel structure to the government of Hun Sen, represented by PPC that they established in Phnom Penh at their arrival in 1979. It should be noted that the demographic colonization has always been the essential framework of the policy of annexation of the countries targeted by Vietnam. The successive annexation of countries like Champa and Kampuchea Krom, formerly Khmer territory - known as the “long march towards the South” – constitutes the main foundation of the Viet country[19]. At every step of colonization, a campaign of genocide has been perpetrated that no modern dictatorship could conceive or carry out with such a cruelty[20]. Viet people have not only committed unspeakable atrocities against the conquered people but they have also taken the necessary time to gradually eradicate them. For example, the kingdom of Champa has been erased by slow and insidious absorption during fives centuries[21]. The pattern of annexation has not changed even not one iota. The strategy starts very often with the exploitation even more the creation of internal divisions of a country and then the strategist comes to support one of the parties in conflict. The supported party will be put in power and has to rule his country on behalf of the Viets until these latters operate a gradual demographic colonization to become themselves masters of the colonized country. One of the last Cham kings who just became a “puppet” King whose palace just looked like a broken warehouse while his country was completely conquered and his people not better than miserable slaves were at the mercy of the new masters of the country[22].

The case of annexation of a part of the Khmer empire, now Kampuchea Krom, was operated through a marriage of a Vietnamese warlord daughter, Ngoc Van, to Khmer king Jayajetthâ II. After their wedding, 500 Vietnamese servants and 500 Vietnamese females followers have been offered to Khmer king and the Vietnamese queen as a weeding gift, that the senior dignitaries of the kingdom have called « Yuons chamnang dai » [23]. The Viets had managed to penetrate the heart of the Khmer kingdom to influence on Cambodian affairs directly from the inside of the kingdom. They have used this “marriage” to get authorizations from the Khmer king to tentatively settle down on the Khmer territory. Once firmly established, they began to massacre the Khmer people and causing bloody revolts [24]. Some of Khmer were burned alive and others had suffered from cruelties known as “Kampup Te Ong” [25]. Right after the death of King Jayajetthâ II, the Viet army has intervened in the Khmer kingdom several times to support one of the pretenders to the throne and has taken this opportunity to strip all treasure and assets of the kingdom [26]. Some of pretexts as violation of borders by Khmer
kings have been used to attack the Khmer empire while the Viet country had no borders with the Khmer kingdom. This Viet “push” was only temporarily halted by the arrival of France in 1863. During the period of protectorate, Vietnam has tried every means to put its hands again on Cambodia. Its return into Indochina was covered by the guise of struggle against French imperialism with the Khmer Issarak movement, Itsala Lao in Laos and the communist ideology through the creation of the Indochinese Communist Party with its Khmer Viet Minh

Branch [27]. After the Independence of Cambodia, they were forced in the context of the Geneva Accords of 1954 to go back to Hanoi. So they were left with about 3,000 Khmer Viet Minh, one of them was Pen Sovann, to reappear along with the Khmer Rouge in 1960-1970. These latters had benefited all kind of assistance from Hanoi, that brought them to power in April 1975. The Khmer Rouge were only the “smoke screen” that were used by the Vietnamese communist forces to move around into the Khmer territory [28]. It is in this context that we can say that the victory of April 17, 1975 was not the one of the Khmer Rouge but that of the Nord Vietnamese. Without these latter, the Khmer Rouges, estimated about 3,000 men at the early of 1970, would have never won the war against the Khmer Republic which was supported by Americans [29].

The objective of Hanoi was to put the whole Indochina under its direct rule. Some of men close Hanoi, as Nuon Chea, have been encapsulated into the team of Pol Pot [30]. But Pol Pot has tried to resist to the injunctions of Hanoi and moved closer to Beijing. Rumours of a coup against Pol Pot were circulated. The latter, by fear of being ousted from power, has undertaken an internal purge operation. It is in this context that the clan of former Khmer Rouge, who are currently in power, fled to Vietnam that received them with open arms. Heng Samrin, Chea Sim and Hun Sen had found Pen Sovann and other Khmer Viet Minh, who had returned to Hanoi after the fall of Phnom Penh in April 1975 and were waiting for them with impatience. Preparations to invade Cambodia were well on track. Hanoi has taken the necessary measures to get all kind of military assistance from Moscow before invading Cambodia of Pol Pot under the cover of former Khmer Viet Minh and Khmer Rouge. Knowing very well Cambodia, the North Vietnamese soldiers were able to easily oust Pol Pot without difficulties. Hanoi knew perfectly the strengths and weaknesses of Pol Pot and had invaded Cambodia without encountering significant resistance.

The Vietnamese army comes first to ensure safety. Then come political officers and other people with specific skill to occupy strategic posts. The Vietnamese population come by successive steps with a number 300 00 in 1983, an increase from 40 000 in 1979 [31]. The massive influx of Vietnamese is part of a comprehensive program of Vietnamization of Cambodia, which has a very profound impact on Cambodia’s demographic structure. In some of Cambodian provinces, the Vietnamese settlers represented up to 20% of the local population. The provinces
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targeted by Hanoi were Svay Rieng, Prey Veng, Takeo, Kompong Cham, Ratanakiri, Battambang and Koh Kong [32]. Today, the number of Vietnamese settlers living in Cambodia has reached a very critical scale. They now represent for more than 36% of the total population of Cambodia [33]. Now the Cambodian people, flooded by the human wave of Vietnamese, composed of soldiers, men, women, and children, cruelly feel the decline of their national identity [34]. Once arrived in Cambodia, they got help from their association called “Association of Vietnamese in Cambodia”, which is set up in all Cambodian provinces. Not so long, this structural body has turned into Association of Cambodians originally from Vietnam. This transformation represents a real change in the strategy of Hanoi. This change is observed both in Cambodia and Laos, a country where the Vietnamese colonization is much more advanced than in Cambodia. Instead of staying in the usual pattern in which the settlers keep their Vietnamese citizenship and act as outposts to annex the targeted countries, the Vietnamese settlers hold automatically at their arrival with the agreement of the senior leaders of the colonised country, the citizenship of the country. This change is part of a strategy aiming at blending into the mass of the local population not to be visible and act discreetly to take control of the country by “democratic” way due to the fact that these settlers represent now a considerable electoral weight. This strategy is even more pernicious in the way that there is - according to a number of Western observers and diplomats – a Vietnamese settler at every position of the Hun Sen government, who act officially as advisers behind the scenes to dictate all instructions. They are active at every level of the Cambodian administration [35]. Today nothing can be decided in Phnom Penh without the approval of Hanoi [36]. Some have even raised the issue of legitimacy of such a government. The situation is similar in Laos [37]. The domination over these countries has allowed Hanoi to have a significant institutional advantage inside the ASEAN organization. Today, Vietnam became what Pol Kang calls “a country with three voting rights” [38]. With this cap of master of the countries of Indochina, Hanoi became a major player having capability to impose a number of institutional arrangements governing the rules of ASEAN.

Today according to a number of witnesses, Hanoi would have undertaken an operation in all Cambodian provinces which consists of doing a kind of census, directly made by the settlers themselves or by Khmers who are paid for these purposes. During their visit in villages or cities, they are required to knock the doors of Khmer families houses and make them believe they are looking for seasonal work or they pretend to be begging. For each visited family, they have to note the family composition and approximately evaluate their financial situation. Two types of families are mainly targeted. Those whose members consist of elderly or whose children go to work elsewhere. The other type of target families are those in extreme poverty. This is the case with many Khmer families. Depending on the outcome of this operation, the settlers will come to rent a part of land of families
from the category 1 while waiting to get the rest of the land upon the death of family members. For the families from the category 2, they will come to buy the whole lands. The new owners of the lands sometimes keep the Khmer former owners as domestic servants and/or workers of lands that they just have sold.

This practice seems to be widespread in remote villages. It clearly opens the way for a beginning of slavery of the Khmer people who will be depend on the mercy of the new masters of the country.

Another fact that also clearly induces an eviction of the Khmer people from their rights by the ongoing demographic colonization of Cambodia. As one of the poorest countries in the world, Cambodia can benefit scholarship granted by some developed countries. More and more Vietnamese children living in Cambodia become beneficiaries of these scholarships and come to study overseas under the names of Khmer students. The author has came in France for his French language improvement at Sorbonne and has met some of them. Within a group of ten students, 9 were Vietnamese. This scenario is not an isolated case. With their graduation from Western universities, these Vietnamese children will certainly occupy government posts while Khmer students who can not come to study overseas become evicted from their own government jobs. This pattern of colonization clearly follows the model of the Afrikaners in South Africa. Being from Europe, these Afrikaner although representing a minority could colonize South Africa and hold political control and economic power of the country. Once in power, they have established a policy of segregation, known as Apartheid, against Africans who have been seen as “uncivilized”. These latters have been excluded from access to housing, education, jobs and medical care. They could not even vote or have representation in government [39]. This configuration is emerging very slowly in Cambodia. Major economic sectors such as tourism, trade, telecommunications and restaurants, just to name the main sectors, are controlled by the Vietnamese. While Cambodians due to a lack of information and support from the government, are condemned to vegetate in poverty in the countryside. The skyscrapers that grow in Phnom Penh will be just like a mirage for the Cambodian people who will have no way to dream as owners but rather surely as domestic servants of the new masters of the country.

Parallel to this strategy of conquest by systematic installation of Vietnamese settlers and control over state apparatuses, another maneuver to divide the clan that served as a screen to invade Cambodia is also under way. This maneuver is similar to the strategy called “divide and rule”. A senior military official close to Hun Sen was awarded by a bid from Vietnamese for one of the military barracks in Phnom Penh for an amount that the author does not remember accurately, but let’s say 1 million of dollars for example. This amount must be shared with other military officials. Besides the two parties (seller and buyer) nobody else has knowledge about the transaction and the amount. But curiously “rumors” circulated to the
other soldiers according to which the transaction amount was 1.5 million dollars. Having received only 1 million dollars, the top military officer can only operate the sharing on the basis of this amount. Upon the rumors, his other colleagues have accused him of having stole 0.5 million and have threatened to kill him. What will be the outcome of this situation? Let’s imagine the consequences of such a maneuver if it was spreaded to a much larger scale. For each provoked dissension, one of the opposing parties would benefit, as in the distant and recent past, assistance and protection. The receiving party shall remain forever indebted toward its so generous protector. Will the debt payment for services rendered be made again and again at the price of suffering of the people and its future disappearance in the decades to come?

This brief overview of history revisited and supplemented by recent facts should bring a new dynamics to Khmer society to refocus on the most critical issues such as survival of the Khmer people and the Nation. If one were to make a calculation, the costs generated by the danger that threatens the survival of the Khmer people and nation are immeasurably higher than the benefits accruing from power in exchange of a pernicious domination. Under these conditions, an examination of conscience is required to get back an “equilibrum point” for the Nation to recover its sovereignty and ensure its survival as long as the “return point” is still possible.

[1] It is an acronym meaning Accident Vasculaire Cérébral in French (Cerebral Vascular Accident). This acronym is used with reference to the Association of Vietnamese in Cambodia.


[7] AVI : Coopération entre la province de Tien Giang et celles de Pursat et Kampong Thom, 24/04/2012
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[8] Xinhua, New road to link Cambodia's west to other parts, 2011-02-15

[9] Prak Soeurn : op.cit


[14] Xinhua, Cambodia to move out of LDC status by 2020, February 17, 2006


[18] Shawn W Crispin : Cambodia's coming energy bonanza, Asia times, Jan 26, 2007


[21] Thanh H. Vuong, op. cit.


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1921, p. 15-16


[31] Justus M. Van Der Kroef , op. cit

[32] Justus M. Van Der Kroef , op. cit


[35] Mey Siphal : La Mainmise Politique et Administrative Vietnamiennne du Cambodge,


[38] Kang Pol, op.cit.


Source : http://geography.about.com/od/southafricamaps/a/Afrikaners.htm
Cambodia is becoming more and more Vietnamized

By Dy Kareth, Wednesday, October 24, 2007

In 2007, almost every week, the number of “friendship” visits between Hanoi and Phnom Penh by communist Vietnamese leaders has multiplied, along with the signing of “cooperation” agreements in all fields, such as political, judicial, parliamentarian, military, administrative, economic, technology, cultural religious, etc… with their Cambodian counterparts. For the Cambodian leaders, these are obviously a systematic cooperation-alignment of their parties, of the national institutions at all levels, and of all the activities in Cambodia with those in Vietnam. That is how a communist Vietnam came to teach to a liberal Cambodia, for example, on how to create laws, how to organize internal elections, how to manage its economy, how to broadcast information, how to develop its literature, how to supervise the youth, and how to rule religious practice of Cambodians. Any opposition to this domination by Hanoi is punishable by jail sentence, or by kidnapping “sentence” and deportation to Vietnam by the secret police, such as the case of the alleged crime against “the Cambodia-Vietnam” friendship accused on Venerable Tim Sakhorn.

At the same time, after some 5 million Vietnamese people are counted in Cambodia between 1979 and 2003, the wild colonization of Cambodia by Vietnamese “immigrants” is being pursued unabated throughout Cambodia, thanks to the illegal agreements dated from the 80s, and thanks to the protection of Associations of Vietnamese people already established in Cambodia. Currently, Vietnamese people form the majority in Cambodia eastern provinces, such as Svay Rieng and Prey Veng, and with the so-called “common economic zones,” the Vietnamese in fact control the economy and the administration in these two provinces. Higher north, our provinces of Kampong Cham, Kratie, Mondulkiri, Ratanakiri and Stung Treng are again under the domination of Vietnamese troops, militias, workers and their families, again thanks to the “economic cooperation,” with huge land concessions – and national sovereignty – lasting 70 years of more, granted by the Cambodian People’s Party (CPP) directly to the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV). Similar concessions were also granted in the provinces of Kampong Thom and Preah Vihear.

At the end, nobody talk or dare talk about the forced annexations by Hanoi of the Koh Tral and Krachak Ses Islands in 1982, as well as a large swath of Cambodia maritime territories. The so-called “historical waters and common waters between Vietnam and Cambodia” are totally under Vietnam’s law and boot. Furthermore, the Vietnamese forces arrogate itself the right to control the entire maritime space located in front of Cambodia’s costs in the province of Kampot: the weak vessels of Cambodian fishermen who are found there, risk being sunk by Vietnamese patrol boats, or they risk being arrested by the Vietnamese guns, and even last
month, Cambodian fishermen from Kampot who were protesting the incursions of Vietnamese fishermen in Cambodian waters, were taken and severely beaten by the Vietnamese maritime police from Koh Tral island, before they were later released.

Therefore, the Vietnamization of Cambodia inexorably moves forward in great strides. Those among the Cambodians and foreigners who concluded and promised to respect scrupulously, the October 23, 1991 Paris Peace Agreements on Cambodia, in order to restore the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and inviolability of Cambodia against all external aggressions and interference – from Vietnam, in particular, which occupied Cambodia militarily – shamefully remain silent. Some even found “normal” this unremitting invasion of the “weak” Cambodia by the “powerful” Vietnam.

In reality, the Paris Agreements were not elaborated or adopted by the governments uniquely, but they were adopted for the Right and the Action of the citizens who can find in them their landmarks and their inseparable guaranties.

Cambodian citizens must continue to protest, they must support the legitimate protests by the victims, they must demonstrate against the Cambodian Government and its accomplices. Cambodian citizens must protest against the Superpower and Powerful governments which maintain the corruption and the dictatorship of Mr. Hun Sen and his CPP. Cambodian citizens must, at the very least, write to these governments, even personally, to alert them and to ask them to honor their engagements for a fair application of the Paris Agreements which they also signed. Cambodian citizens must tell these governments that their support to this regime must come to an end, if they sincerely want peace for Cambodia and the wellbeing for its citizens.

The Cambodian citizens must react, and they should not expect anything from those who betrayed them and abandoned them, if they want their Nation to still survive.

Paris, October 23, 2007

The Cambodia’s Border Committee in France and Worldwide

(Signed) Dy Kareth,

Vice-President
Vietnam pursues its influences over Cambodia

By MEY SIPHAL, 2007

Last century, in 1841, Annam’s emperor Minh Mang whose military forces controlled Cambodia had decided its annexion which did not succeede because of his extremely brutal assimilation policy which provoked simultaneous and generalised revolts throughout the country. This popular uprising precipitated Siam’s intervention which culminated in the accession to the throne of Cambodia of His Majesty Ang Duong who will be crowned king in 1845 under the double suzerainety of Siam and Annam.

The advent of His Majesty Ang Duong (1845-1859) was an unpredictable but inescapable obstacle of the vietnamisation of Cambodia. Ang Duong, the sole survival of his three elders was a providential man which was there when the country was waiting for in order to avoid its total disappearance. Being convinced that the Siamese and the Annamites won’t give up their project to share Cambodia between themselves with the Mekong river as common border line, he “made every effort to give them no occasion to jump on their prey. Although he was less afraid of the Siamese whose he understood the mentality and the aims much more better than those of the Annamites whose he was not able to explain the combinations, the king managed his efforts to maintain the strict balance between his two suzerains and ruminated the idea of putting the destiny of Cambodia in the hands of a country much more powerful than both countries and capable of insuring its security and its survival. In 1853 he mad an approach towards France but that approach will only be successful until four years after his demise, in 1863, under the reign of his son, His Majesty, Norodom. France, the protectorate power of Cambodia, became at that time, her immediate neighbour after she had occupied the lower-Cambodia whose great part of the territory was still being revendicated by the sovereign.

The arrival of France in Indochina was the second obstacle to the vietnamisation of Cambodia. Because they were not able to do anything at their will under the French, the Vietnamese were obliged to hold on the brake of “their ogre’s appetite”. This interlude, very long, lasted almost one century and reported along with it the vietnamisation of Cambodia. But despite their subjection to France, the Vietnamese never gave up their ambition to sawallow up Cambodia. And it was a certain Nguyen Ai Quoc who, under the pseudonym of Ho Chi Minh who will resume the vietnamese expansionnist policy after 1930. He wrote at that time : “...The people of Vietnam is disposed to enter in long term cooperation with the peoples of Laos and Cambodia with the objective of forming an independent Federation, free, strong and prosperous of the States of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia”. The vietnamese information agency relayed : “The Vietminh league presently establishes a plan to unite the separated united national fronts of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia in an united indochinese front which will be then called League of Indochinese National Independence.” One month later, he declared : “We are going soon to realise the great union of Vietnam-Laos-Cambodia”. A vietminh document dated November first, 1951 and captured by the French authorities precised : “The vietnamese party reserves the right to supervise the activities of its brotherly parties of Cambodia and Laos (...). Later on, however, if the conditions would allow it, the
revolutionary parties of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos could merge themselves into a single party: the party of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos Federation 5”.

In Cambodia, the communist Nguyen Van Mieng who named himself Son Ngoc Minh led the Khmer communist branch 6. He became buddhist monk and gave himself the name of Achar Mien in order to deceive the vigilance of the Khmer people 7. In 1951, the Khmer Issarak Front regrouped under his command, according the french sources 8, only 150 members versus 1.800 vietnamese members. One year later, the Front had set up under his direction a national resistance government against the French power with the support of 5.000 to 8.000 men in majority vietnamese. After Geneva 1954, when they were compelled to leave Cambodia, the Vietminhs took with them their khmer-Vietminh auxiliaries of about 4.000 to 5.000 men strong to be educated in Hanoi 9. After the withdrawal of the French from Indochina, the Americans intervened in South Vietnam in the name of democracy and of their containment policy against communism. It was the beginning of the second Indochina war.

In Cambodia, the neutrality policy followed by prince Sihanouk since 1957 had afforded Cambodia to stay away from the war that ravaged Laos and Vietnam during a decade. After the coup d’Etat against prince Sihanouk on March 18, 1970 under the pretext that he allowed the vietnamese communists forces to implant their sanctuaries in the border regions, the US and South Vietnamese troops invaded Cambodia on April 30, 1970, pushing by the way the Vietcong forces more and more deeper in the countryside. The violent bombardments particularly murderous of the B52 which followed had for effect to throw the khmer population who felt disgusted and exasperated into the hands of the Khmers Rouges whose strength was then estimated to be around 2.000 men only. It was at that time that Hanoi decided to sent a great number of ancient Khmer-Vietminhs to Cambodia 10 to help the Khmer Rouge organise and develop their forces. But these Khmer-Vietminhs will soon be liquidated by the latters in the same way they decimated the pro-Sihanouk forces. Once they’d got rid of their enemies, the Khmers Rouges took not long to obtain the repatriation, between 1972 and 1973, of all minorities and vietnamese forces present so far on cambodian soil. The Vietnamese, by conjunctural necessities, accepted the challenge and abided by the Khmers Rouges’s will 11. But they did not leave the country without having organised and developed their espionage and subversion network in the eastern part of Cambodia 12.

Sooner after the reunification of their country, the Vietnamese took the unbelievable chance ever offered to them by the Khmers Rouges. The latters who had considerably weekened the country under their crushing steam roller and had tragically fragilised it because of their unending internal dissensions, purges and counter-purges, launched without any expectation a brutal offensive against their “brotherly country” in order seemingly to recapture the Kampuchea Krom. The overwhelming vietnamese counter-offensive that followed ended up rapidly in the occupation of Cambodia which lasted a decade, from January 1979 to September 1989. At the beginning of its occupation of Cambodia, the first gesture of Vietnam, the occupying power, was to institute a legal frame in view of thoroughly vietnamising this country. To begin with, it imposed on Cambodia on February 18, 1979 the “Treaty of Peace and Cooperation” of 25 years duration renewable 13. This treaty is the
reference base to further bilateral engagements between Vietnam and Cambodia in all fields. A complementary act to this treaty is the extorsion from the cambodian government of directives intended to “create useful conditions for the installation of the Vietnamese immigrants in Cambodia and the exercice of their profession” as well. Both acts speak very clearly about the scope of the Vietnamese immigration in Cambodia. It is interesting to note that the Vietnamese constitution of 1992 is written so as to cover further acquisitions resulting from the Vietnamese expansionist policy. In fact, its article 1 of its chapter 1 stipulates: “The socialist Republic of Vietnam is an independent state, sovereign, unified with an integral territory that includes its continental lands, its islands, its maritime zone and its aerial space”. No any particular specification has been made to explain the expression of “with an integral territory”. This territory is thus illimitated in time. It is also the same as for “its islands”, “its maritime zone” and “its aerial space” as well as its demographic expansion since for Vietnam, “the frontier limit was moving, lying on the ratio of forces of the moment with its neighbours or other regional powers” and it is question of “border movements” rather than border lines. An another fact equally important in the cadre of the Vietnamisation of Cambodia is the sending to Hanoi to be indoctrinated at the beginning of 1979 of about 40,000 khmer children, orphans of both their parents who would come back to Cambodia when Hanoi judged necessary.

During the occupation of Cambodia, the Vietnamese presence consists of “regular troops in uniform of the People Army of Vietnam, of Vietnamese officers and soldiers speaking khmer and disguised as officers and soldiers of the Army of the Phnom Penh regime, of Vietnamese officers and soldiers speaking khmer and disguised as civilians married to Cambodian women and living in the midst of the Cambodian population but in fact controlling the Cambodian administration of the Phnom Penh regime from the central echelon down to the village level, of armed forces dissimulated among the Vietnamese settlers and who played the role of militia and of the Vietnamese settlers systematically transferred to Cambodia by Vietnam the occupying power (...) These settlers (...) have been sent by the leaders of Hanoi in the cadre of the Vietnamisation of Cambodia in all fields. They belong to clandestine organisations which conduct political and military activities in Cambodia. Most of them have already received the Cambodian nationality granted to them by the illegal regime of Phnom Penh (...). The Cambodian officers were assisted at all echelons by the Vietnamese experts and the Vietnamese volunteers in the military field as well in the administration of the country. As for the experts, they were composed of those who were in charge of setting up the organisation of the Cambodian Communist Party, of those who were specialists in public security matter and in the organisation of the intelligence networks at all levels from the villages level up to that of the provinces as well as of those assigned in the formation of the armed forces of the “Popular Kampuchea”. Those soldiers and experts who constituted what Hanoi called “the volunteers” were the true holders of power in Cambodia which extended their grip from the higher level down to that of the district. As for the administration of Cambodia, Vietnam had at its disposal a “Central Office” whose structure reminds that of the famous “Doan 959” in Laos set up for the control of the Pathet Lao. Each ministry received the direct instructions from a group of Vietnamese experts which was permanently in liaison with Hanoi. It was the same concerning the strategic organisations and commissions of the
party or of the government which were all subjected to the direct control of the Vietnamese experts.

Soon after the occupation of Cambodia, Vietnam realised sooner that it could not afford itself to stay there for a long time. This awareness pushed it to actively transform the opened Vietnamisation of Cambodia into discrete and invisible Vietnamisation in order to be not obliged to submit “all categories of its occupying forces of Cambodia to the foreseeable verification and control of the UN and to continue, via its disguised elements present in all political, administrative, military and security forces structures, to control the country. It was after it had attested the efficiency of all its occult control networks of Cambodia that Vietnam could finally announce with drum and trumpet the “total withdrawal” on September 28, 1989 of its forces from Cambodia, a fake semblance of unilateral withdrawal aiming at masking at the eye of the international public its real intentions towards Cambodia. In fact, “there is no any serious international verification of the so-called total withdrawal of all the Vietnamese forces from Cambodia at the date of 26 to 27 September 1989 (...) Vietnam and the regime of Hun Sen rejected any serious international control of that withdrawal. This clearly indicates that they have “things” to hide. These “things” are in particular tens of thousands of Vietnamese militia hiding and disguising as “Khmers” in the army and the provincial militia of Hun Sen, to include in the artillery, armored units and in Air Force of the Phnom Penh regime. According to an American source, the important units of the Vietnamese army were not affected by that withdrawal, as well as a certain number of subordinated units which were left behind in important strategic locations. These units were given the mission of supervising the units of the Phnom Penh regime army whose hard core was composed of professional Vietnamese soldiers. The same source estimated at about 27,000 men the total of Vietnamese regular troops left in Cambodia when the “total withdrawal” was announced and at 64,000 to 66,000 men the number of the Vietnamese units which had come back to reinforce the army of the Phnom Penh regime in difficulties during the first quarter of 1990.

Besides, the Vietnamese general headquarters in Pursat controlled between 45,000 and 47,000 Vietnamese soldiers deployed South of the Tonle Sap whereas some 950,000 Vietnamese immigrants secured by about 100,000 militia had settled in the three border provinces of Mondulkiri, Ratanakiri and Stung Treng which were in fact annexed to Vietnam.

The rapid progress on the battlefield of the NRC forces particularly of the Khmer Rouge forces seriously worried the western countries which feared their return in power. On July 18, 1990, the USA abruptly changed the cape, ceased to recognise the National Government of Cambodia of the NRC in order, they said, to put an end to the current war and avoid the return in power of the Khmer Rouge. They were without delay followed by France, Canada, The European Community and Thailand. From that time on the course towards the ending of the war speeded up. The Representatives of the Five permanent members of the Security Council of the UN (the Five Perm) alternatively gathered in Paris and New York to find out a quick solution to the Khmer problem. On November 26, 1990, the detailed plan established with the approval of the Secretary General of the UN was ready but the Paris Accords will have to wait until October 23, 1991 to be finally signed by seventeen representatives of countries which had participated in the Conference of Paris on Cambodia. When, in 1992, the UNTAC arrived in Cambodia, it did not proceed as required by the Paris Accords to the verification and the control of foreign forces remaining in Cambodia. Under that pretext and that the conditions of neutrality had not been insured to organise the election, the Khmer Rouge
Vietnam and the Cambodian Tragedy

decided to exclude themselves from the process of peace and the election took place without their participation. It is interesting to note that during the election period, Vietnamese crossed massively the border in boats or in trucks to vote in favor of the CCP with their pre-established khmer identity cards (ID). Since 1997, following the military coup which made

M. Hun Sen the sole Prime Minister, Vietnam came back overtly in force in Cambodia and imposed a rhythm of increased comings and goings of its high level responsibilities. In their declarations, slogans like “integral cooperation”, “multidisciplinary cooperation”, “reinforce the cooperation in the border regions”, “intensify the bilateral cooperation”, diversify the forms of cooperation” etc. came back relentlessly. These slogans forcibly speak themselves about the degree of control and certainly of the Vietnamese grip over Cambodia. Frequent visits made by the responsible of both sides, much more often in Cambodia than in Vietnam, took place aiming at “implementing the Accords, Protocols, Memorandums, joint communiqués among others signed by both governments in the cadre of their bilateral and multilateral cooperations. Necessarily, these working instruments find their source and their reference in the mother-treaty of February 18, 1979 called “Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation” whom it was question above. In reference to these “legal” instruments, the scope of cooperation between the two countries had extended to practically all fields of national life and always proceeded under the motto of “good neighbourliness, traditional friendship, integral cooperation, long lasting stability». What worries the Cambodians, besides the creation of economic cooperation zones such as that famous “Triangle of Development” for example which is not other than an experimental minor indochinese Federation, is the concession of mostly strategic importance to the Vietnamese regional ambition of about 100,000 hectares of land concessions granted to the Vietnamese soldiers for rubber plantations. As what is happening presently in Laos where in 1,000 hectares of concession, 1,000 laotian workers work with 3,000 Vietnamese soldiers-workers, the 100,000 hectares of khmer concessions will necessarily necessitate the use of 10,000 khmer civilian workers and 30,000 Vietnamese soldiers-workers. It is easy to imagine what that means to Cambodia. Another salient point which retains right away anyone’s attention is the very tight cooperation between the Father Front of Vietnam (VFF) and the Solidarity Front for Development of the Cambodian Motherland (SFDCM). The latter front initially formed in 2006 under the name of “United Front for National Construction and for Defence of Kampuchea (UFCDK) has been rebaptised “Solidarity Front for the Development of the Cambodian Motherland (SFDCM) so as to sound in accordance with the Father Front of Vietnam. Immediately after its creation, the khmer front received the visit of its Vietnamese counterpart. In their joint communiqué they declare: “the inhabitants living in the provinces sharing the common border will cooperate and will mutually assist each other and facilitate the cooperation between both organisations of mass and both peoples” 24. According to a high level responsible of the khmer front “one year after its foundation, the SFDCM has extended the structure of its organisation network in the 24 provinces and municipalities of Cambodia (...) and envisages to reanimate the ancient organisation of Cambodia-Vietnam Friendship…Recently, the branches of the UFCDK in the localities sharing the border with Vietnam such as the provinces of Kratié, Mondulkiri, Kompong Cham have established close relationships with the Vietnamese corresponding branches of the neighbouring Vietnamese provinces 25. The rapid extension at territorial level of the SFDCM cells and the reactivation of this organisation finds their impetus in the functioning of the Association of Vietnamesees in Cambodia which controls the subordinated Vietnamese associations set up in 19 khmer
provinces and municipalities following the official authorisation delivered on April 24, 2003 to M. Soum Chi, President of the Association of the Vietnamese in Cambodia. It would be interesting to connect this authorisation with the governamental directives mentioned above which favoured massive immigration of the Vietnamese in Cambodia. These immigrants had come on the order of their organisations based in Vietnam and whose leaders were paid for their services by the vietnamese government. They collaborated with the above mentioned vietnamese associations in vue of their implantation in Cambodia. Before coming in each immigrant possessed already the annual authorisation to stay in the khmer country. In 2004, the number of the vietnamese settlers in Cambodia is estimated to be between 4 to 4 millions and half representing 30% to 35% of the total population of Cambodia. In 2007, their number would turn around 5 millions. They are protected by the khmer militia of vietnamese origin and by all the vietnamese associations which operate under the command of the Association of Vietnamese in Cambodia which works in close cooperation with the Association of Cambodia-Vietnam friendship and with the two powerful organisations of mass, respectively the VVF and the SFDCM. The opening of 64 border posts of which 4 international border posts and the announcement of an agreement in principle reached by both sides to exempt the entrance visa to each country for citizens titular of ordinary passports would risk to favourise and legalise evenmore the vietnamese immigration in Cambodia since the border is totally permeable and practically uncontrolled and the immigration not being regulated. More than 100.000 vietnamese soldiers are estimated to be still in Cambodia, well armed and dissimulated in strategic areas of the country inaccessible even to khmer nationals. A contingent of vietnamese mercenaries of 3.000 men strong and composed partly of « vietnamese special forces» and partly of vietnamese intelligence agents are based in a barracks not far from the fortress of Taing Krasaing nearby Takhmau. These people have to be certain that the royal government will not go away from the policy prescribed by Hanoi. In the same time they help the royal government to consolidate its power in the country.

By its “invisible hand”, omnipresent and omnipotent, very hardly perceptible from outside that constitute its agents disguised as khmers and having positions of responsibility within the institutions of the country, at all levels of the national administration, in the defence and in the national security structures, Vietnam actively pursues the vietnamisation of Cambodia in flagrant and deliberated violation of the neutrality and the non alignement of this country guaranteed by its Constitution of September 21, 1993 and of the Paris Accords of October 23, 1991 on Cambodia.

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Signed by MM. Pham Van Dtiong and Heng Samrin

Circular of the Council of Ministers N° 38 SR signed by Chan Si on octobre p, 1983

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Message of prince Sihanouk adressed to the 44asesion of the General Assembly ofthe UN and read by M . Son Sann, Chief of the government of Ddemocratic Kampuchea

International Conference on Cambodia « Les nouvelles donnes »on June 12,1988 at the French Senate

Note of prince Sihanouk of 27-11-1989

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Declaration of M. Son Chhay,member of the National Assembly on Rafio Free Asia, emission of September 25, 2007

Nhan Dan, 03-08-2006

VNA, 08-08-2007

Letter N° 392 S.C.3 dated Avril 24, 2003 adressed to M. Soum Chi, President of the Association of the Vietnamese in Cambodia

declaration of M. Thach Sétha, President Kampuchea Krom Community on Radio Free Asia of 07-10-2007

Banteay Mean Chey, Battambang, Pursat, Kompong Chhnang, Kompong Cham, , Kompong Thom, Kompong Speu, Siemreap, Kratié, Svay Rieng, Prey Vêng, Kandal, Kampot, Koh Kong, Takéo, Stung Trèng, Rattanakiri, Sihanoukville et Phnom Penh

Dy Karéth, Le nombre des Vietnamiens au Cambodge (de 1951 à 2003)

VNS, 18-03-2008, Cambodia wants more border gates

VNA, Joint communiqué on VN-Cambodia border provinces’ development, 29-02-2008

Michael Benge, Vietminh’s Tay Tiên expansion into Laos and Cambodia

Kang Pol 2004, Vietnam’s expansion in Indochina

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Vietnamization of Cambodia

K. L. BINDRA

Grand Officier de l'
ORDRE ROYAL DU SAHAMETREI
(Cambodge)

15 Elmstead Avenue,
Wembley
Middlesex HA9 8NS
Tel: (020) 8908 4309
14th Sep., 2005

His Majesty
His Excellency President Norodom Sihanouk, 
King Father of Cambodia,
15 Dong Jiao Min Xiang,
Beijing 100006,
P.R. of China.

Your Majesty,

I am enclosing herewith an article on "Vietnamization of Cambodia", for Your Majesty's kind perusal, which I have sent to the Cambodian Daily for publishing it.

There was not a single Vietnamese in January 1979 in Cambodia, when Vietnam attacked and occupied it. Now there are 4.2 million Vietnamese settled in Cambodia, with a population of 13.5 million. One, in every three persons in Cambodia, is a Vietnamese. This has to be stopped, otherwise with the increase of Vietnamese, it will soon become Vietnamese Kampuchea. As such I thought of bringing this to the public notice.

In the last paragraph of this article, I have drawn the attention of President Bush, to see as to how Communism is being introduced into Cambodia by the back door, under his nose, and he should do something. Keeping this in mind, I have written a letter to the American Ambassador in London, to bring this to the notice of President Bush, enclosing a copy of this article, and also my last article on restoring the present frontiers to that of the Cambodian frontiers, as they existed in the sixties. I hope, the USA may take some action.

With deepest respects, warmest regards, and my best wishes for a speedy recovery, long and healthy life, from myself and my wife, to Your Majesty and Her Majesty Queen Mother Fresh Reach Akka Monisay.

Please accept Your Majesty, the renewed assurances of our personal esteem and most respectful consideration.

(K.L. Bindra)
Vietnam and the Cambodian Tragedy

For publishing in your esteemed paper, in two parts.

The Editor,
The Cambodian Daily,
No. 50-B2, Street 240,
PHNOM-PENH.
(Kingdom of Cambodia).

VIETNAMIZATION OF CAMBODIA

Sir,

The following report of a retired Ambassador, who was posted in Cambodia in 1990, is an eye opener:

"There is unhampered migration from Vietnam, to the point almost half of the population will be Vietnamese soon. Entire villages were no longer able to participate in the elections 2003, due to the uncontrolled advance of the Vietnamese border, these villages have become part of Vietnam. This was also documented by the EU Election Observers, who knew these Khmer Villages, from previous elections."

The population of Cambodia in 1970 was 6.5 millions, out of which, it had approximately 2-300,000 Vietnamese Refugees, over spill of the Vietnam Wars, majority settled in the border districts with South Vietnam, but small majority of fishermen in Tonle Sap Lake. They were not given the right to participate in the National Elections, but were issued Identity Cards as "Vietnamese Refugees"; the intention being that when the Vietnam War is over, they will be sent back to the Republic of Vietnam (then South Vietnam). After the Coup and overthrow of Prince (now King Father) Norodom Sihanouk in March 1970, when the killing of Vietnamese refugees started under Lon Nol, they were repatriated under Thieu-Lon Nol Agreement on Repatriation of Vietnamese Refugees in 1971 to the Republic of Vietnam (then South Vietnam). Once a refugee is repatriated to its country of origin, he looses his refugee status under the International Law. Latter on any left over Vietnamese Refugees were killed by the Democratic Kampuchea (Khmer Rouge) during their reign of terror (1975-78). As such when the Vietnamese troops attacked and occupied Phnom-Penh on 7th Jan. 1979, there was not a single Vietnamese left in Cambodia – Khmer Rouge had even killed those Cambodians, who could speak Vietnamese language ever.

The SUDOSTASIEN AKTUELL of Nov. 1989 had reported:

"Run Sen told Peter Schier of the Asian Affairs (Hamburg FRG) in an interview of 6 Jan 1988, that the population of Cambodia at the end of 1987, was 7,995,000 people. According to Run Sen, ethnic Khmers amounted to between 74% and 80% of the population."

This means that between 1.6 and 2.0 million inhabitants of Cambodia are not ethnic Khmers. If we assume that the number of Hill Tribe people is now about 200,000, the number of Cham no more than 300,000, and the ethnic Chinese about 100,000, then there are between 1 million and 1.4 million ethnic left, who cannot but be Vietnamese.

Run Sen however, pretended that there are only about 60,000 Vietnamese living in Cambodia at present – a number which is obviously not true.

No such census giving the number of ethnic Khmers and the minorities, appear to have been conducted in Cambodia again, during the last 18 years. It is high time that it should be done now.

The VIETNAM INSIGHT (A forum sponsored by the National United Front for the Liberation of Vietnam of Nov. 1992, issued from USA), had stated in its Editorial:

"The two million Vietnamese settlers in Cambodia, confirmed by the U.N., Peace-Keeping Task Force, pose a genuine threat to the natives in the upcoming election. This is also the reason that the Khmer Rouge refuses to participate in the peace process. This fear and opposition to Vietnamese participation in the polls are legitimate. ....... These two million Vietnamese voters represent one-fourth of the Cambodian population.

From the perspective of the Cambodian Government, there is a deep
concern that the nation's sovereignty is at stake, as one-fourth of the electorate is Vietnamese, a people whose government invaded and occupied Cambodia for years, until being forced out by international pressure.

There are Vietnamese Communist Party Members, who have been planted in Cambodia, to continue the Party's interest on this foreign soil. ..... Its withdrawal of troops, even as accurate as it claims, is not enough. It can recall its party members and cadres, planted in Cambodia under civilian clothes."

According to Son Sann, a former Prime Minister: "Out of every four persons in Cambodia, one is a Vietnamese." He could easily distinguish, as he came from Kampuchea Krom (now in South Vietnam).

According to William Shawcross (Cambodia Deal 1994, page 69): "There are at least 500,000 to one million illegal Vietnamese crossing to Cambodia."

According to KPLM (under Son Sann): "A programme of mixed marriages was introduced between Vietnamese settlers and Cambodians on the pretext of national integration. All senior Cambodian officials were required to have Vietnamese wives, while Cambodian women were encouraged to have sexual relations with and bear fatherless children by Vietnamese soldiers, so that Cambodians of tomorrow, have Vietnamese blood."

II

Vietnam had done its home work properly, before withdrawing its troops from Cambodia in 1988, by issuing more than a million Vietnamese settlers with "Cambodian National Identity Cards", exactly the same type issued to the Cambodians; so that they could have a permanent say in the future elected Government. It looks Communism is being infiltrated by the back door, in to Cambodia.

During a T.V. programme on the Immigration Law, arranged by Khmer Institute of Democracy in Phnom-Penh on 10th Sept. 1994, Kan Morn M.P. stated that S.O.C. (State of Cambodia) or former People of Kampuchea, they issued I.D. Cards to foreigners (obviously Vietnamese Immigrants), which were like the same I.D. Cards issued to Cambodians, and that the ID Cards that S.O.C. issued were for only governing and identifying the holder—it meant they did not grant them nationality status even the I.D. Card had been issued by UNTAG." Chen Seng-oum added: "When we have the Nationality Law, we will then know the "Cambodian Nationality Status".

The above clearly show that the National Identity Cards issued by the SOC to the Vietnamese Immigrants (mentioned as foreigners) were the same as those of Cambodians. In such there was no distinction between the Vietnamese and Cambodian Identity Cards, and therefore for all purposes the Vietnamese were treated as Cambodians. On the bases of these I.D. Cards, all the Vietnamese Immigrants living in Cambodia, most probably were eligible to register themselves as voters in May 1993 Elections.

After the Vietnamese troops withdraw, the present CPP is the successor to erstwhile Khmer Peoples Revolutionary Party (subservient to Vietnamese Communist Party), revived in 1978. The CPP has only changed its name, but the Party structure, the judiciary, and other working systems are still the same as that of People Republic of Kampuchea, which William Shawcross, while writing on the Guardian on 20th Nov. 1991, described:—

"When Vietnam installed its client regime, mostly Ex-Khmer Rouges, in Phnom-Penh, at the end of 1978, it declared that the situation in Cambodia, is now "irreversible". ..... The Vietnamese were determined to impose a Communist Regime in Cambodia. That was much less brutal than the Khmer Rouges but it suppressed dissent, and its human rights record has been criticised by Amnesty and the Asia Watch. "Vietnamese Liberation" of Kampuchea in early 1979, became an illegal Occupation, rejected by the majority of the U.N.".

This is further echoed in the SUDSTAIREN ACTUEEL of Jan. 1989, page 89, where it is stated:—
"...... Don't forget that Hun Sen and Heng Samrin were Khmer Rouges up till 1977, and up to now they continue to violate human rights. If you read carefully the annual reports of Amnesty International, you know then their violation of human rights in so called "Peoples Republic of Kampuchea" are terrible, too. There are all kinds of torture in the prisons, people are being liquidated, people disappear etc. They are not much different from the Khmer Rouges, but they are much more intelligent. In one respect this new generation of Khmer Vietminh is even worse than the Khmer Rouges, because they do not have a sense of National Independence. Heng Samrin and Khieu Samphan are both killers, but Khieu Samphan is not a traitor."

As is well known in Germany, where 3 to 5 million Turks, are living there for the last three generations, but they have not yet been given the right to vote in their national elections. Then why in Cambodia?

The UNTAC had completely forgotten that there were not normal elections, but only the Khmers to select the type or form of Government of their choice, as they were twice forcibly placed under the Communism, which they had refused to accept. King Norodom Sihanouk had rightly observed that "the U.N. wasted 3 billions in Cambodia, by allowing Vietnamese immigrants (planted to tilt the balance) to participate in the elections - the object of the Election was defeated."

From 0 % Vietnamese in 1979, their number went up to 17.5 % of the population in end 1987 (1.4 million). It went up 23% of the total population in 1995 (2.4 million), and now it has gone up to 33% in 2005 (approximately 4.4 out of the population of 136 million) - once the Nationality Law is passed, it is hoped the majority of Vietnamese voters will not be able to participate in the National Elections.

By the increase of Vietnamese immigrants, who will soon be voters in the future elections, the CPP will be able to get the 3rd majority to change the Constitution, and may vote for making an alliance with the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, so as to have an Indo-Chinese Federation, in which Vietnam will be dominant (the dying wish of Ho Chi Minh).

It is high time that all the Cambodians (inside and outside Cambodia) unite, and thwart the Vietnamese onslaught on democratic and peaceful Cambodia, and defeat the Vietnamese age old dream of "Indo-Chinese Federation, dominated by Vietnam".

President George H. Bush is trying to bring in democracy and transparency in the Middle East. Here in Cambodia, a member of ASEAN, under his nose, Communism is being infiltrated into it by the back door, and a democratic Kingdom, which was once an oasis of peace and tranquility, is now being swallowed by its Communist neighbour. It is high time he should look into it.

Yours Faithfully,

(K.L. Binda)

12th Sept., 2005   Formerly Chairman and Secretary General (1964-67),
15 Elmshead Avenue, International Commission for Supervision and Control
Wembley, Middx. U.K. in Cambodia, set up under the Geneva Agreement on
Tel: (020) 8908 4309 Indochina (1954).
Vietnam and the Cambodian Tragedy

K. L. BINDRA
Grand Officier de l'ORDRE ROYAL DU SAHAMETREI (Cambodge)

H.E. Ambassador Robert Tuttle,
U.S. Ambassador in the Court of St. James's,
Embassy of the United States,
24 Grosvenor Square,
London W1A 1AE.

Dear Mr. Ambassador,

I have written at the end of the attached article dated 12th instant on "Vietnamization of Cambodia," to be published in Cambodian Daily, as follows:

"President George W. Bush is trying to bring democracy and transparency in the Middle East. Here in Cambodia, a member of the ASEAN, under a new name, Communism is being infiltrated into it by the back door, and a democratic Kingdom, which was once an oasis of peace and tranquility, is now being swallowed by its Communist neighbour. It is high time, he said, look into it."

I have given the full details of Vietnamese infiltrating 4½ million Vietnamese into Cambodia, with its population of 13½ million, in this article.

In the 2nd article dated 26th July on restoration of Cambodian borders as they existed in the sixties, I have given full details, as to how Vietnamese altered its frontiers with Cambodia, after its attack on Phnom-Penh on 7th Jan. 1979; and based on these newly created frontiers, signed agreements in 1982, 1983 and 1985 with its protege Republic of Kampuchea, installed by its troops of occupation, to consolidate its grab.

I would feel grateful if you could very kindly send this letter with its full background (enclosed in two articles), to President Bush through his Secretary of State H.E. Condoleezza Rice, for taking necessary action.

Please accept Your Excellency the assurances of my highest consideration.

(K.L. Bindra)
Formerly Chairman and Secretary General (1964-67), Internation Commission for Supervision and Control in Cambodia. (Set up under the Geneva Agreement on Indochina in 1954).

N.B. My heartiest congratulations, on Your Excellency, blasting away the British media criticism on handling of the situation on New Orleans (Hurricane Katrina) by President Bush, during an interview with Edmdd Mars, on BBC Sunday AM. (yesterday morning).
December 2, 1978, Hanoi Approved a Plan for Full Scale Invasion

By Khmer Wathanakam 2013

http://ki-media.blogspot.fr/2013/12/december-2-1978-hanoi-approved-plan-for.html#more

December 2, 1978 is a day that Khmer history repeated itself when Hanoi created a Khmer polity to serve its own interest in the third time—the Unified Khmer Issarak 1946, the Khmer Revolutionary Communist Party 1951, and the Khmer National United Front for National Salvation (KNUFNS) December, 02 1978. A creating of the KNUFUS based on two factors: a historical fulfilment and an urgent need of Hanoi. Historically, Vietnam at least failed three times to conquer Cambodia—a failure of Vietnamization in Cambodia by Emperor Minh Mang and his successor Thiev Tree in 1848, a failure to create an autonomous zone for the Khmer Vietminh after Geneva Conference 1954, and a forceful withdrawal of Vietcong troops from Khmer Rouge liberated zones in 1973. Urgently, Pol Pot's troop's reckless and anarchic behaviors along Cambodia-Vietnam borders, created a serious security threat to Vietnamese civilians along the borders. Pol Pot's purge against his own party members created exodus of Khmer Rouge defectors and refugee into Vietnam. After series meetings of the Vietnamese Politburo members chaired by Le Duan, Vietnam solemnly declared that it
could no longer coexist with a hostile regime of Democratic Kampuchea (DK), and it officially set up the KNUFNS on December 2, 1978 to overthrow Pol Pot's regime by fomenting uprising from inside or launching a full scale invasion.

Hun Sen, a Khmer Rouge Defector has become a dictator

In Summer 1978, Vietnam set up training camps for the former Khmer Vietminh: Pensovann, Chan Chi, Bou Thang, Chea Soth... along with the Khmer Rouge defectors: Heng Samrin, Chea Sim, Hun Sen, Pol Saroeun, Sar Kheng and so on. An intensive program of military training and indoctrination was introduced to make sure they have enough skill to fight alongside "brother-in-arms" with the Vietnamese troops and still faithful to Hanoi and the Communist camp led by the Soviet Union. By late 1978, a new strong Khmer Rouge defector battalion was commissioned and capable to engage in a tough battle abreast with their Vietnamese comrades. As everything set ready to go, Le Duc Tho told them that Vietnam would launch a full scale invasion on Cambodia in the upcoming dry season.

When Vietnam was well prepared for invasion, Pol Pot was so busy to fight his own internal enemies. A totalitarian despotism's purge can strengthen or weaken its own regime easily; Stalin and Mao's purges on their internal enemies were more successful as they did not fight the two battles at the same time. In contrast, Pol Pot was facing two battles at once--to face imminent threat from Hanoi and suspected internal uprisings fomented by the
Vietnam and the Cambodian Tragedy

Vietnamese. However, what Pol Pot had handled with his own party members bled his regime to death. According to Philip Short, a famous author of Anatomy of a Nightmare, the DK’s armed forces spent 60 percent of their energies to extirpate their internal enemies. And those people whom Pol Pot had suspected as his internal enemies were not all true, but most of them were faithful members and brave soldiers and commanders on the battlefield against the Vietnamese incursions along the border. By the time of the Vietnamese invasion, Pol Pot left only 30,000 reliable troops under the three zone commanders—Son Sen, Ta Mok, and Keo Pauk, facing the much larger and well-armed Vietnamese troops.

A purge started in full scale from early 1977 with Chan Chackrey, a young military commander in Eastern Zone, a long with Ney Sarann, a Northeast party secretary, Koy Thoun, a Northern secretary, Chou Chet, a Western secretary, Rous Nhim, a Northwest secretary, and So Phim a powerful Eastern secretary. All these top leaders were brought to S-21 for interrogating and torturing before killing, except So Phim was ambushed when he was summoned to see Pol Pot in Phnom Penh, and he committed suicide after wounding with an ambush by Pol Pot's security forces, according to Philip Short, but there were some different accounts surrounding So Phim’s death. Albeit in late 1978, only a few weeks away from the Vietnamese invasion, Vorn Vet, a Senior Politburo member and Kong Sophal, a Northwest military commander, were brought to S-21. A wipe out of military structures in Eastern, Northwest, West, and Northeast Zones completely brought the regime into a state of limbo. By the end of 1978, over 6,000 of party members were exterminated through S-21, and over 100,000 Eastern Zone civilians and troops were massacred by the central command. This is a grave mistake that never committed by any leader against his or her own people while the nation is facing the foreign onslaughts.

Although in such vulnerable situation, Pol Pot felt no sense of defeat; since 1978 he adopted an aggressive stand toward Hanoi. Pol Pot said, ”We must attack them first, or they will attack us.” Meanwhile, Hanoi accused Beijing of using Cambodia to put pressure on Vietnam to return to the Chinese camp. Vietnam also feared of a Khmer Rouge new air base built by China in Kampong Chnang, which is just 30 minutes fly from Ho-Chi Ming City. Now the border skirmishes between Cambodia and Vietnam and China and Vietnam increased frequently. the DK interpreted all Hanoi actions through a prism of Khmer ancestral struggle against their traditional enemies the same as the Vietnamese's view of China is distorted by atavistic memories of Chinese suzerainty and repression. Nonetheless, the Vietnamese totally ignored or forgot about their view toward China the same as Khmer view toward them.

As the nation in a state of limbo, on September 1978, Pol Pot secretly flew to Beijing to meet Deng Xiaoping to beg China for military and economic helps. Pol Pot's ferocious behaviors toward Hanoi forced China to face its dilemma. Deng privately rebuked the Khmer Rouge troops’ anarchic and brutal behaviors along the Cambodia-Vietnam border. Deng repeatedly told Pol Pot that China would only support him with weapons whereas a conduct of war was ultimately on Pol Pot's responsibility. Pol Pot might fail to comprehend Deng's
warning. While Pol Pot was in Beijing, a diplomatic front was heating up around the region.

Vietnamese Prime Minister Phan Van Dong visited ASEAN member-nations to garner supports from those non-Communist nations, but in Malaysia, Dong's request for support was politely rejected by most members, for it was too much, too sudden, and too late. Furthermore, Dong's request for normalized relation with the US also failed, for President Carter regarded relationship with China as his priority while normalization with Hanoi would be put on hold. As diplomatic mission failed in the non-Communist countries, now Vietnam saw its old friend, the Soviet as its final resort for support of the upcoming war. Three weeks later in Moscow, Le Duan and Leonid Breznez signed a friendship treaty to safeguard their security from any reckless attack by China.

A new friendship treaty between Moscow and Hanoi made China a bid nervous, but it felt confident that the Soviet would not risk a World War to defense Hanoi. Now it was a turn for China to solicit its war support from the region. Den Xiaoping visited Thailand and Malaysia, and he claimed that Vietnam was a parcel of the Soviet Bloc, and it posed a potential security threat in the region. Thailand and Malaysia saw an opportunity to bargain with China; they agreed to support China's war effort in exchange with China to cease support the Communist insurgencies in their homelands. Now as the Soviet supported Vietnam and China supported Cambodia, the US called the Cambodia-Vietnam conflict "a proxy war" between the Soviet and China. Washington saw Vietnam as "a Cuba of the East" --a stalking horse for the Soviet ambitions undertaking Asia the same role as Castro played in Latin America and Africa. Seeing this danger, The US agreed to begin the US-China military contact--a de facto alliance against the Soviet's hegemony in the region.

Now both sides had wrapped up their diplomatic efforts and troop mobilizations along the borders. As previous pledge by Hanoi, on Christmas Eve of 1978, the Vietnamese advanced columns set out from multiple directions toward Phnom Penh under a command of General Le Duc Anh. By December 30, Northeast and Eastern zones fell under the Vietnamese control, and on January 7, 1979, the DK's Leadership completely abandoned Phnom Penh in disarray without a fight that surprised the foreign diplomats as well as the whole people. A quick fall of Phnom Penh without a resistance proved that Pol Pot's regime had severely suffered a big blow from its own internal purge and persecution on its own people during the war time. Since then, a historical fulfillment of Hanoi has been put in place in Cambodia through its proxy regime until today.
INVASION OF CAMBODIA BY VIETNAM

TASK FORCE ON TERRORISM & UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE
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DIRECTOR

TASK FORCE ON TERRORISM & UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE HOUSE REPUBLICAN
RESEARCH COMMITTEE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES WASHINGTON D.C.,
20516 - April 26, 1990

MEMO

To : Task Force Members
From : Vaughn Forrest, Chief of Staff
Re : Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos

The attached paper outline disturbing trends in South East Asia:

1. Contrary to press reports, Vietnam has re-invaded Cambodia with approximately 64,000 - 66,000 (PAVN) troops.

2. Contrary to press reports, Laos is occupied with approximately 23,000 - 32,000 vietnamiens (PAVN) forces.

3. There are increasing reports of the use by PAVN directed Pathat Lao units of chemical weapons against the Lao Non-Communist Resistance and civilian Lao population.

4. Vietnam has annexed significant parts of Cambodia.

This reports outline the trends in this region and identifies by unit the Vietnamese (PAVN) forces in both countries. A restricted access list as to the exact location of these forces is available to Members in a verbal briefing by calling this office.
It has become increasingly apparent that Vietnam is moving to consolidate its control over Laos and Cambodia despite the intensification of national liberation struggles against the Vietnamese sponsored puppet regimes in those countries. Hanoi is committed to a long term solution in Southeast Asia based on an effectively unified region under Vietnam's control, despite that country's highly publicized, albeit phony, withdrawal. At the present stage, the existence of local communist puppet regimes in Phnom Penh and Vientiane serves Hanoi's interests. Therefore, the Vietnamese Armed Forces, and the local forces they control, facilitate the bolstering of their allies' regimes in key sectors of Cambodia and Laos.

Indeed, there are indications that Vietnam is moving toward the furthering of regional arrangement, with the PAVN near completion of an integrated regional command structure controlled from Hanoi. In the forward areas of Laos and Cambodia, this trend has been manifested in the establishment of combined units dominated by the Vietnamese, while several PAVN command structures disregard national boundaries. Taken together, these developments reflects Hanoi's commitment and determination to dominate Southeast Asia.

Furthermore, there is every indication that the USSR is in full support of the steps taken by Hanoi. Key military-organizational steps were accomplished with several Soviet military advisers and experts on site and largely on the basis of their knowledge. Further, there has been a corresponding increase in supplies of weapons from the USSR. Moreover, virtually all deliveries of such weapons have been conducted through Vietnam and under close Soviet-Vietnamese supervision, thus giving Hanoi effective control over the local Laotian and Cambodian regime and armed forces. The Soviets have further enhanced this situation by redeploying combat aircraft from Cam Ranh Bay to interior bases from which they can provide direct support to the PAVN-dominated units in combat actions in Laos and Cambodia.

Currently, after the brief period of constant movement brought about by the ostensible withdrawal of Vietnamese forces from Cambodia, the deployment of Vietnamese forces has stabilized. At present, the Vietnamese continue to deploy forces in key strategic position and persistently expand their zones of control. Adopting Soviet-Cuban doctrine, these PAVN forces conduct Quality Edge measures operations. They bolster local units, that operate at times in their skirmishes and confrontations with a seeming PAVN quality, against national liberation forces. Further, invariably, the Vietnamese exercise a decisive impact on any given battle by holding key strategic positions and by delivering suppressive firepower, that is, artillery and airpower (including the use of chemical weapons), as well as by providing tactical mobility, largely by the landing of elite forces from helicopters at key points.

Thus, it is clear that the Vietnamese are committed to a long-term solution. In this context, their strategy is to confront and engage Laotian and Cambodian national liberation forces militarily only when necessary. Instead, the Vietnamese and their allies concentrate on controlling the regional strategic infrastructure and economic resources of key areas. By doing so, the Vietnamese are able to isolate the Resistance from its base of support in the civilian population. The isolation and alienation of the population is then further enhanced.
through the implementation of repressive measures, such as the use of suppression fire (including chemical weapons), that force the population into internal migration away from areas where the resistance could utilize its support and resources.

This Vietnamese strategy is virtually identical to that used by the USSR and Cuba in their local wars in the 1980s. The Soviet further refined this strategy in their 1980-1984 drive to consolidate their control over Afghanistan and to prevent the resistance from turning into an effective popular force. Indeed, since 1982, as result of this approach, the Afghan resistance has been rendered incapable of interfering with the USSR's consolidation and expansion of its strategic infrastructure of Afghanistan.

Similarly, by employing a derivative of the approach, the Cuban forces in Angola were able to seize the strategic initiative from UNITA. Indeed, since 1985, Cuban-MPLA forces have forced UNITA back into a succession of defensive battle around an ever shrinking bastion in south-eastern Angola.

Thus, Vietnamese dominated combat operation in Laos and Cambodia have seen the same principles and characteristics employed by the Soviet and the Cubans in other Third World locations. Below are outlined the specifics of Vietnamese operations in Laos and Cambodia:

CAMBODIA

Hanoi is implementing a comprehensive program to control and effectively annex Cambodia. To this end, the Vietnamese are conducting three distinct operations in Cambodia. These are:

1. In the Eastern provinces of Cambodia, the Vietnamese are moving to consolidate their direct control over the area to facilitate its evolution into an integral part of Vietnam's economy.

2. The Vietnamese Armed Forces are expanding their deployment in the periphery of Cambodia in order to block the penetration of liberation forces and to isolate them from the population.

3. The Vietnamese are securing the main population and national centers of Cambodia, as well as the lines of communication from Vietnam, thus making Phnom Penh completely dependent on Hanoi for its survival. The patterns of the Vietnamese deployment in Cambodia correspond to these objectives.

The current deployment of Vietnamese forces in Cambodia was accomplished in two phases. The first phase was accomplished during the "withdrawal" of late 1989. Major PAVN units, and a few subordinate subunits, were left behind in key strategic locations. Each of these subunits supervised a few RPKAP units with PAVN quality core elements and concealed caches of weapons and ammunition in the countryside. Moreover, the 4 Vietnamese concentrations of force withdrawn from Cambodia remained just behind the border in 4 district force groupings, (From south to north: Front 479, Front 979, Front 779 and
Vietnam and the Cambodian Tragedy

Front 579) with training facilities and munitions stockpiles, ready to return and intervene in Cambodia. The second phase involved the still continuing insertion of small units into Cambodia to consolidate positions and garrisons in key military installations. From there, the PAVN subunits, independently or with subordinate RPKAF subunits, deploy to small posts and garrison in the countryside, gradually expanding the area controlled by Hanoi and displacing the rural population.

In addition, Hanoi is expanding its strategic centers for regional intervention in the Laos - Cambodia - Thailand border area. For example, PAVN Naval infantry, subordinated to the F590 division on the Dao Phu Quoc Island (Vietnamese territory), deployed to control Cambodia's key harbors. (These regional activities are discussed in detail below.) The current deployment of PAVN forces and their RPKAF subordinates (excluding the annexed provinces and the regional intervention force) are control from a corps Headquarters in South-east Pursat province where 7,000 PAVN troops are deployed. In early March, 1990, the Corps Headquarters was in command of approximately 46,970 to 45,370 PAVN troops. (This total does NOT include the multiple small PAVN garrisons and caches spread all over rural Cambodia.) Further, Cambodian resistance source claimed in mid-April, 1990 that a total of some 30,000 PAVN troops have been inserted into Cambodia since the "withdrawal", that is, approximately 9,500 to 10,000 Vietnamese troops have been inserted since early March. Because independent verification of the whereabouts of some of these forces is still lacking, they are not included in the above count.

The part of Cambodia dominated by the Corps are divided into two strategic echelons (S.E.): The Western command is the 1st S.E., which is divided into two Fronts. The northern Front is devoted to dealing with the freedom fighters operating from Thailand. The southern Front is devoted to securing the main lines of communication from southern Vietnam and the Cambodian shore line. The 2nd S.E. is the Eastern command which is devoted to controlling the Cambodian interior and especially ground and river transportation.

This command structure remained intact even during the height of the Vietnamese "withdrawal". Indeed, the Corps Headquarters and its approximately 7,000 troops remained inside Cambodia well into late 1989, with control of the northern Front on the 1st S.E. accomplished by two "stay-behind" PAVN Regiments (1,200 and 3,000 troops respectively.) These regiments, in return, controlled 3 RPKAF divisions (286th, 5th and 81th) with PAVN core elements, as well as 2 RPKAF divisions (196th & 4 th) with only PAVN special forces elements, all deployed along the Thai border.

The control of the southern Front of the 1st S.E. was accomplished through a single security). This regiment also controlled 2 RPKAF division with PAVN core elements deployed along the Tonle River. During the "withdrawal", the control of the 2nd S.E. was accomplished through 2 PAVN Regiments (3,000 troops each) in the eastern Kompong Cham province near the Vietnamese border. A RPKAF division with a PAVN core unit in the center of the province was subordinated to this force. All together, approximately 27,060 troops remained in this deployment in Cambodia when the "withdrawal" was completed.

The expansion and bolstering of this deployment began in October, 1989 and is still in progress. At first, the PAVN deployment in the southern Front of the 1st S.E. was significantly reinforced. With the main lines of communication secured, forward forces of the
northern Front of the 1st S.E. were reinforced. Then, the Vietnamese gradually built their garrisons near Phnom Penh and in Kompong Thom where a 1,560 troops strong PAVN Regiment was established to secure traffic to the north. Further, several PAVN battalions and companies are still in Cambodia, bolstering and expanding the PAVN deployment. Naval Infantry Battalions of the F590 Division on Dao Phu Quoc Island were landed in Kampot (1000 troops) and Thmar Sar (450 troops). Ultimately, a total of approximately 18,310 to 18,610 PAVN troops were inserted into these parts of Cambodia between 1st October, 1989 and 2nd March, 1990.

These PAVN and PAVN-controlled RPKAF forces continue to expand the areas covered by their operations. The main direction of advance and build-up being aimed at disconnecting the axes of penetration and advance into the interior of the Cambodian liberation forces. Offensive sweeps continue to be conducted in the border area in order to weaken the freedom fighters and stall their advance into the interior. Simultaneously, the civilian population is being suppressed by Vietnamese artillery and air power and is thus being pushed away from the key lines of communication into the deep interior so that is cannot link-up with, and thus support, the freedom fighters. The cumulative impact of the stalling of the freedom fighters and the induced internal migration has been to hasten the collapse of the popular support mechanism so crucial for the establishment of an effective liberation movement. The effectiveness of these PAVN offensive sweep operations is significantly enhanced by the supply of Soviet weapons that is being provided through Vietnam. Most important is the supply of 4 Mi-17 assault helicopters that doubled the force of 4 older Mi-8s that had originally made up the RPKAF arsenal. In addition, the Soviets also supplied through Vietnam large quantities of artillery, rocket and small arms ammunition.

In the meantime, Soviet and Vietnamese advisers continue to supervise the build-up and organization of highly mobile PAVN-RPKAF subunits for the conduct of offensive sweeps against both the population and the liberation forces. Hun Sen stated in mid-April and the rejuvenated RPKAF forces were "moving into the offensive" in the Pailin area. An indication of the potential of these offensive sweeps was the limited. Yet well organized and planned, offensive against the KPNLF of February, 1990.

This offensive sweep resulted in the capture of the Svay Chek strategic town west of Battambang. The offensive relied on advance suppression by fire, mainly BM-14 and BM-21 MBRLs, followed by a swift attack by a motor-mechanized force in trucks and a few BTR-60s spearheaded by T-55 and T-54 tanks. This offensive sweep was organized and supervised by Soviet and Vietnamese advisers.

General Pan Thai of the KPNLAF attributed the success of the PAVN-RPKAF artillery forces in fighting in Svay Chek and Thmar Puok to a special PAVN Artillery unit identified as the 106th Regiment. A Captain Nguyen Van Tin of this regiment, who was captured by the KPNLAF, disclosed that his unit was 1,300 troops strong. They were deployed to Cambodia in December, 1989 "to supervise artillery units of the Phnom Penh army in Sisophon, Svay Chek and Phnum Srok."

Further, the tactics and force structure used during the Svay Chek offensive sweep closely resembled past Soviet-style operation in Afghanistan and Angola (see Below). The emphasis is on the suppression of the population an its isolation from popular forces. Swift
decisive assaults relying on suppressive fire power and shock engagements with the resistance forces are intended only to stall and compel a withdrawal, rather than hold vast territories.

By this strategy, Vietnam has managed to consolidate control over key Cambodian territory, effectively annexing 3 provinces and altering the border in the other zones. At the same time, in the southern provinces, the Vietnamese completed a 550 km long canal stretching from Kep - Ha Tien on the Gulf of Thailand to Chipou. The canal is 25 meters wide and runs some 4.5 kms into Cambodian territory. Vietnam has since annexed this stretch of land, while in the eastern provinces, a new border line was established from Chipou to the Bo Duc area along controlling heights and main roads, and was annexed by Vietnam as well.

Of even greater significance is the effective annexation of Cambodia's eastern provinces of Mondolikiri, Ratanakiri and Stung Treng (east of Mekong River). The annexation was accomplished through a massive resettlement of some 400,000 to 950,000 Vietnamese who have their own 100,000-man militia. The Vietnamese settlers exploited local gold mines, cleared age-old forests and forbade Cambodian authorities from entering into the area. The administration of the area is coordinated by the F7579 Corps Headquarters east of Lumphat, which three PAVN internal security regiments (the 5501st, 5502nd and 5503rd) in effective control of the area. Three additional PAVN subunits - battalion to regiment in size - are also garrisoned in these provinces. This entire Vietnamese deployment stayed behind during the "withdrawal" and is now backed by the forces of Front 579 deployed just across the Vietnamese border.

LAOS (...)

REGIONAL OPERATIONS

Most significant is the PAVN-dominated multi-national forces being organized near the Laos - Cambodia - Thailand border area. The core of this force is two PAVN Divisions. In Cambodia is the PAVN F315 Division in northern Preah Vihear Province, (The 7,000 PAVN troops left behind during the "withdrawal" were reinforced by 2,200 additional troops by the end of 1989.) and just north of Laotian border are 4,000 troops of the PAVN F2 Division, supported by an independent PAVN regiment slightly to the north. These Vietnamese units serve as a quality edge element for Cambodian and Laotian formations built and trained around them. These combined forces undergo extensive advance training and are supervised by Soviet advisers and experts. Reportedly, some of the locally based elite PAVN forces were sent in late-November, 1989 to reinforce the fighting on route 10 between Battambang and Pailin. These Vietnamese troops were dressed in RPKAF uniforms.

In the meantime, another multi-national elite "Independence Division" is being trained by the Vietnamese in southeastern Mondolikiri province in an area held by the 5501st and 5503rd PAVN regiments. These troops are dressed in unique "para" uniforms and use a special Khmer flag. Soviet advisers are also reported to be active in this training area. Once combat ready, the "Independence Division" is expected to deploy to the Laos - Cambodia - Thailand
The USSR is deeply involved in these operations beyond simply providing advisers among the PAVN-dominated fighting units and the on-going massive resupply of weapons and ammunition. Most important has been the use of Soviet combat aircraft, mainly MIG-23s, for bombing in Laos, including the use of chemical weapons. While claiming to be withdrawing from their most visible bases such as Cam Ranh Bay, the Soviet continue to intensify their presence through back-door relations. Since late-1989, the USSR has been consolidating a web of military ties that will hold all "local forces" together, as well as keep them dependent on each other and on the USSR, even after the Soviet's overt presence is somewhat reduced.

The reorganization of the PAVN-RPKAF forces in mobile and armored motor-mechanized units as well as the growing use of assault helicopters in Cambodia and Laos reflect the extent of the Soviet military involvement in local fighting. The PAVN-RPKAF motor-mechanized units are a direct evolution of Soviet-Cuban developments in counter-insurgency tactics proven throughout the Third World.

In 1975, the Soviet combined-arms forward detachment (OGPZ) was developed by the Cuban General Arnaldo Ochoa Sanchez into a highly mobile subunit optimized for operation in lesser developed countries. Central Ochoa, subsequently employed these units effectively in Angola. These basic Cuban-Angolan subunits, including the subsequent integration of helicopters, were further refined in the offensives against UNITA in Angola.

In the early 1980s, the Soviet-Cuban counterinsurgency subunits underwent additional tactical refinements on the basis of the Soviet experience in Afghanistan. Combat lessons were then integrated into the Cuban solution optimized for the Third World. In 1983, these refineded units were used by Gen. Ochoa as a basis for Nicaragua's Special Counter-Insurgency Battalions (BTL), trained and equipped to fight the Contras.

The accumulating combat experience and expertise in counterinsurgency operations in tropical and jungle-mountainous theaters were generalized in 1985 by Gen. Krivda of the Soviet General Staff into the concept of "Cluster Forces", the key to Soviet intervention forces. The modernization and optimization of counterinsurgency forces for lesser developed countries has since been based on the "Cluster Forces" principle. Such forces are currently used in Angola against Jonas Savimbi. The current PAVN-RPKAF tactics and the equipment recently delivered to both Lao and Cambodia fit closely with the requirements for such "Cluster Forces."

Thus, the dissemination of the USSR's latest tactical solutions for Counterinsurgency operations reflects Moscow's long-term commitment to the success of Hanoi's regional grand design.

- by Yossef Bodansky & Vaughn S. Forrest

April 25, 1990
OURS COMMENTS:

This report is object of an article in the New York City Tribune of May 8th, 1990.

To understand the revolution of the USA’s strategy in South-East Asia, here is a chronology of the events in 1989-1990.

' 9 November 1989 : Falling of the Berlin Wall.

' 26 April 1990 : Report of the House of Representatives of the USA which we have produced some extracts above.

' 18 July 1990 : Returning of Moscow, James Baker, the Secretary of State of the USA, declines to support the Coalition of Democratic Kampuchea government any more.

' 16 au 27 septembre 1990 : Mission of Frangois Ponchaud in Cambodia. In the report he writes: "When arriving in Cambodia, I did not try to meet the Vietnamese catholic communities of Cambodia, otherwise the small group of Moat Krasas. I however accompanied two American priests who went to Kompong Chhnang to celebrate the Vietnamese mass there. A small community of hundred persons gathered on the terrace of a market building, dressed in the colours of Vatican. The priests usually celebrate in American, with translation into vietnamese. I was invited in the meal which followed the mass: all the male participants of these feasts were members of the Association (politics) of the Vietnamese Residents of Cambodia, and no mystery they all links united together to the embassy (from Vietnam in Phnom Penh)."

About the presence of the Vietnamese in this city, Ponchaud writes: "At Kompong Chhnang, at the " bottom market ", it is necessary to have good glasses to describe Khmers ! ".

So the report of the House of the US Representatives describes exactly the real intentions of Hanoo in the region. But the geostrategic interests of the United States of America command the relation with Vietnam. Does the USA have the means of its policy ? It belongs to the Cambodian people in the city as well as in the countryside to demonstrate their will of fight against the Vietnamese dominion and oblige the USA to revise its policy in Cambodia.
Danger on the Mekong

By Michael Benge October 28, 2012, American Thinker

Like a toxic fungus spreading its roots throughout Cambodia, communist Vietnam is slowly and methodically colonizing and swallowing up its neighbor. Researchers estimate that over 40% of Cambodia's voting population is comprised of Vietnamese migrants who have been awarded citizenship and voting rights by Vietnam's puppet -- Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen. As part of its colonization process, Vietnam has established chapters of the United Front for National Construction and Defense of Cambodia -- a cover for Vietnam's Fatherland Front -- in all 23 provinces of the country. Thugs from this parastatal "Front," often supplemented by plainclothes police, are used to beat, disperse, and sometimes kill demonstrators protesting religious and human rights abuses, land grabbing, and other abuses by the government, which provides Vietnamese officials with plausible deniability of its repressive acts. The Hun Sen regime has also permitted Vietnam to place "advisors" throughout the Cambodian government and military, including those that oversee religious, cultural, and educational affairs.

After its failed and thinly-disguised attempt to colonize Cambodia during its December 25, 1978 invasion and the subsequent 10-year occupation, Vietnam was forced to withdraw its army with its dogmatic tail between its legs with 52,000 dead and over 200,000 wounded. Vietnam's army was in near-revolt, for Hanoi had promised that once it took over South Vietnam following the US withdrawal, there would be peace and soldiers would be given land to farm. In keeping with Vietnam's historical strategy of gaining territory, referred to as đồn điền (military colonization) and as a sop to the Army, Hanoi demobilized about 200,000 of its troops in Eastern Cambodia. These were given land titles and citizenship by the Vietnam's newly-anointed puppet, the former Khmer Rouge Prime Minister Hun Sen. The demobilized army units were kept as "ready reserve forces," and in keeping with another historical term tây tiến (westward movement), they soon brought their families, relatives, and friends, followed by waves of illegal immigrants. Hun Sen has also conceded several kilometers of land along the length of Cambodia's border with Vietnam; from the Laotian border south to Kampot, which had been part of the Ho Chi Minh trail during the Vietnam War.

At the recent Cambodian National Conference in Arlington, Virginia, Mu Sochua, a member of the Cambodian parliament and the general secretary of the newly formed opposition party - the Democratic Movement for National Rescue, spoke passionately about a number of topics including the recent murder of an environmental activist and a journalist; fears of rigged upcoming elections; the suppression of free speech; the imprisonment of an opposition radio owner; and land-grabbing protesters. She also spoke on a plethora of other human rights violations not only by the government but also by the army, including the "blood wood" forestry scandal and the rape of Cambodia's other natural resources.

Rong Chhun, president of the Cambodian Confederation of Unions, gave a powerful presentation speaking about the horrendous working conditions and near slave-labor wages of garment workers in Cambodia, the products of which are imported mainly by the U.S., with no regard to the suffering of the workers. Mr. Chhun and other human rights advocates
Chhun also spoke of his fears for this generation of students who are being ill prepared to move Cambodia forward because of the corrupt educational system with poorly paid teachers who lack proper training and/or are inept. Students have to pay teachers to attend class with what little money they might have to buy lunch goes to the teacher, and often grades not given based on skill or achievement, but rather on the amount of money a student can pay the teacher. Thus children from poor families are unable to get an education.

With a repressive and corrupt leadership and its government and army rife with Khmer Rouge commanders, Cambodia is a country for sale to the highest bidder, to Vietnam, China, or anyone else if the price is right. This includes the land of its farmers, its oil and mineral resources, and its timber. The proceeds are pocketed by Cambodia's nouveau riche billionaire kleptocrats, with little going to improve the lives of its citizenry.

Dams constructed by the Vietnamese through Cambodian shell companies are displacing thousands of farmers and fishermen and flooding tens of thousands of hectares of Cambodia's prime farmland, not to benefit Cambodia's economy or its people, but to provide power for Vietnam's growing economy.

Cambodia's corrupt and repressive army is for hire as enforcers to protect both private Cambodian and foreign interests while receiving military assistance from the American government. The military is used to evict Cambodia farmers from their lands without compensation, in order to create foreign-owned concession plantations of rubber, sugar cane, and other cash crops.

Elections in Cambodia are a charade, marred by intimidation based on Chairman Mao's philosophy that "political power comes from the barrel of a gun." Token opposition is allowed; however, a large percentage of the parliament belongs to the communist party or has been cowed and bought off by Hun Sen and his cronies.

Freedom of speech is limited, and those who dare speak out against the corrupt regime are often stripped of their parliamentary immunity, sued by Hun Sen in the rigged and inept legal system, exiled, or jailed. Such is the case of Beehive Radio owner Mam Sonando who was recently sentenced to 20 years in jail on trumped-up charges of conspiring to establish a separatist zone in Kratie province. Jail sentences were also handed out to 13 others supposedly involved in the alleged plot. Human-rights workers say the case stems from a protest over land-grabbing in Kratie last May that turned violent (shades of Vietnam's "Fatherland Front"). However, the real reason for the prosecution was that Prime Minister Hun Sen was angered by Mam Sonando's talks with a U.S.-based group that is highly critical of the government.

Last April, Cambodia's pre-eminent forestry and environment activist, Chut Wutty, who was investigating the "blood wood" scandal -- trees cut from the ecosystems in the southwestern Cardamom Mountains that are filled with unique and endangered species of plants and animals. Wutty was shot dead by one of three military policemen protecting an illegal logging concession. In September, Cambodian journalist Hang Serei Odom, who was investigating illegal logging, was hacked to death and stuffed in the trunk by a military officer and his wife. U.S.-donated camouflaged trucks full of first and second-grade timber operated by men
wearing military uniforms are not an uncommon sight.

A recent *Wall Street Journal* editorial pointed out that "the Obama administration has remained largely silent" on the persecution and state-sponsored murders of land defenders. Secretary of State Clinton kept mum on these matters during her recent visit with officials in Cambodia. In May 2009, U.S. Ambassador to Cambodia Carol Rodley admitted that approximately U.S. $500 million a year of foreign aid is lost through corruption. The Obama Administration has yet to utter a word about the far greater corruption and the human rights abuses in Cambodia by Hen Sen and his regime.

And the Band Plays On!

Michael Benge spent 11 years in Vietnam as a foreign service officer and is a student of South East Asian politics. He is very active in advocating for human rights, religious freedom, and democracy for the peoples of the region and has written extensively on these subjects.

Read more:
[http://www.americanthinker.com/2012/10/danger_on_the_mekong.html#ixzz2nLNmgioG](http://www.americanthinker.com/2012/10/danger_on_the_mekong.html#ixzz2nLNmgioG)
Hanoi's Role in the Cambodian Coup

Vietnam Democracy, Free Vietnam Alliance - August 1997

The recent coup d'état in Cambodia marks another sad twist for the long-suffering nation. As with much of Cambodia's unfortunate history, this crisis was in part caused by external forces. Just one day before grabbing power, second prime minister Hun Sen was said to be "vacationing" in Vietnam. In reality, he was there to consult with the Vietnamese communist leaders and be ready to do their bidding.

This coup was driven as much by the determination of Hun Sen and the Cambodian People's Party (CPP) from preventing democracy in their own country, as by the fear of the Vietnamese Communist Party (VCP) from seeing democracy take root next door. A frightful scenario for Vietnam's communists is the existence of a free society bordering Vietnam, providing both democratic influences and debunking completely the notion of human rights being foreign to "Asian" values.

Faced with the likelihood of losing elections planned for 1998, the Hun Sen forces had been escalating the violence against political opponents. One of the most striking incidents was the March 1997 grenade attack on a crowd of demonstrators with the intent of assassinating Sam Rainsy, a leading opposition figure. This violent trend culminated in the bloody coup on July 5, 1997, timed apparently by reports that first prime minister Norodom Ranariddh had reached tentative agreement with remnants of the Khmer Rouge to join his coalition. While the Khmer Rouge deal finally forced Hun Sen's hand, the coup and violence leading up to it were part of Hun Sen's ongoing effort to achieve the power he could not win at the ballot box. But Hun Sen could not have acted alone. His long time dependence on communist Vietnam points to the role of the VCP in instigating and supporting the CPP-led violence in Cambodia.

Indeed, the origins of the July 5, 1997 coup lie not in the visit by Hun Sen to Vietnam the day before, but in his stay twenty years prior. In 1977, Hun Sen, a commander in the Khmer Rouge, along with other high-ranking comrades, defected to Vietnam to avoid the worst of Pol Pot's purges. Under the tutelage and protection of Vietnamese communist leaders, the Khmer Rouge defectors were groomed to form a future pro-Hanoi leadership in Cambodia.

In January 1979, these erstwhile defectors rolled back into Phnom Penh—behind an invasion force from communist Vietnam. Hun Sen was made foreign minister of the puppet government. In 1985, he was promoted to prime minister. The dream of the Vietnamese communists was to form a "Federation of Indochina" from which to launch their expansionary ambitions across southeast Asia. Laos and Cambodia were made virtual colonies.

To cement its hold over Cambodia, Hanoi exercised total control over the Phnom Penh government. Cadres from Vietnam ran all the major ministries, including Health, Education, Banking, Commerce, and Security from behind the scenes. At the top of the chain of command were secret agencies within the VCP Central Committee to direct every aspect of Cambodian political life.
By the late 1980s, the costs of occupying Cambodia had become immense due to the cut off of aid from the Soviet Union and the crippling international embargo led by the U.S. To end its international isolation, Hanoi agreed in 1988 to pull its nearly 200,000 front-line troops home. The VCP did not give up, however, its desire to dominate Cambodia's internal affairs. Over a million Vietnamese “settlers” remained in the country. At the same time, the VCP continued to supply a steady stream of advisers to prop up the regime in Phnom Penh.

Ironically, it was the “Vietnamese menace” that provided any remaining appeal for the Khmer Rouge. While the Pol Pot-led organization lost all popular support during the notorious killing fields, its virulent anti-Vietnam position recovered for it a grudging audience. Hanoi’s backing of the puppet government in Phnom Penh presented the Khmer Rouge the ability to sell itself as the best means to achieve a truly independent Cambodia--regardless of what the Khmer Rouge had done to an independent Cambodia from 1975-78.

Hanoi’s backing of Hun Sen was manifested, most recently, in the 1,500 man heavily armed bodyguard unit Hun Sen had built up by the spring of 1997. According to knowledgeable sources, 600 soldiers came directly from Vietnam’s security forces operating undercover in Cambodia. Hun Sen's private army started the clash in June that left two of Ranariddh's bodyguards dead, spearheaded the bloody coup, and conducted the ensuing hunt down of political opponents.

Shortly after the coup, foreign ministers from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) convened an emergency session to discuss the turn of events and reassess Cambodia’s application for ASEAN membership. Noticeably absent from the meeting was the Vietnamese foreign minister, Nguyen Manh Cam. However, Hanoi made known its strong displeasure when the rest of ASEAN's government decided to suspend Cambodia's entry into the trade bloc. In fact, Hanoi has accompanied its covert support for Hun Sen's overthrow of the democratic coalition led by first prime minister Ranariddh with a vigorous diplomatic campaign stressing "non-interference."

According to Mr. Cam: “Vietnam regards these [developments] as Cambodian internal affairs which can be solved only by the Cambodia people. Vietnam's consistent policy is to strictly respect Cambodia's independence and sovereignty and not to interfere into its internal affairs”.

In reality, the consistent policy of the Vietnamese Communist Party has been the complete opposite. Consequently, it is improbable that Hun Sen would undertake such a blatant power grab given especially the dependency of Cambodia's official budget on international aid without strong assurances from his long-term benefactors in Hanoi.

The Vietnamese regime no longer poses the overt military threat to its neighbors that it once did, but the coup in Cambodia shows clearly its ability and willingness to be a force for instability in the region. The current political regime denies not only its own people the bounty of democracy, but makes it impossible for Cambodians to enjoy democracy as well. If a multi-party democracy were to finally flourish in Cambodia, how would the Vietnamese Communist Party justify its monopoly on power to the Vietnamese people?
Cambodian Minister Asks Vietnam 'To Assist' in Maintaining Security in Election

March 25, 2008 - VNA (Hanoi)

State President Nguyen Minh Triet pledged to maintain all-round relations with neighbour Cambodia while receiving Deputy Prime Minister General Tea Banh of Cambodia in Hanoi on March 25.

The State leader told Tea Banh, who doubles as Minister of Defence, that the Party, State and people of Vietnam have always prioritised the task of working together with Laos and Cambodia for a developed Indochinese peninsular.

General Tea Banh thanked Vietnam for its great assistance in the past struggle to overthrow the Pol Pot genocidal regime and the current national development.

“The mature of the Cambodian Defence Ministry today is partially thanks to experiences drawn from Vietnamese experts on voluntary missions,” the Cambodian Defence Minister said.

He also called on the Vietnamese Defence Ministry to assist and share experiences in maintaining security and public order in an effort to ensure Cambodia’s legislative elections, scheduled for July, are a success.

General Tea Banh began a four-day official visit to Vietnam on March 24 at the invitation of Defence Minister General Phung Quang Thanh.

The Cambodian high-level military delegation embarked on talks with a host delegation led by Defence Minister Gen. Phung Quang Thanh immediately after a welcoming ceremony.

The two sides agreed to continue joint patrols at sea and exchange information on search and rescue operations. Talks also focused on the work of locating and repatriating remains of Vietnamese volunteers who died on Cambodian soil.

The two sides agreed on further exchanges of visits and stronger co-operation in personnel training between military hospitals and institutes from the two countries in order to fulfil high-level commitments to “good neighbourliness, traditional friendship, comprehensive and long-term co-operation.”
Will the Cambodian Elections Be Open?

By LENG Sovady Thursday, April 10, 2008

http://editorials.cambodia.org/search/label/Vietnamese%20interference

Will the general elections on July 27, 2008, for the fourth term of office be fair? The study of the election legislation and recent events prove people’s choice will be under diverse pressures and intimidations as well as election frauds.

On the past 25th of March, the minister of Defence of the Royal government led by Mr Hun Sen, Mr Tea Banh visited the president of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Mr Nguyen Minh Triet. On this occasion, Mr Tea Banh warmly thanked Vietnam for its military support to drive Pol Pot out in 1979. And he asked for a Vietnamese military support to insure law and order during the elections.

The military support in 1979 turned into the occupation of Cambodia, which became
Vietnam’s slave as a compensation for the spending. The occupying army looted the rest of the national wealth after Pol Pot’s rule and notably, furniture, precious stones, factories, doors, windows, all things transportable and so on…

And Vietnam uselessly imposed on the Cambodian people the “K5” policy for its military strategy, which caused 200,000 casualties and family disorganizations. The treaty of Paris signed on October 23, 1991 and the election results in May 1993 under the aegis of UN were needed to get rid of this sturdy military support so praised by Mr Tea Banh.

He certainly knows all those ploys because he is a minister. His approach is disingenuous during the election period, and, moreover, the PPC, this minister’s party, is spreading the rumour that if the elections were lost for him, risks of civil war would be run. As the Cambodians are traumatized by the war, they could change their choice.

For the elections in 2003, Phnom Penh had threatened to use armed forces if protests were uttered like in 1998 against election fraud. This time, the authority is using other means like threatening with the occupation by Vietnamese forces, which reminds the Cambodians of the dark times from 1979 and 1991.

The general elections are organized by the National Election Committee (NEC) nominated by the council of ministers after the Home minister’s advice, according to the new article 13 of the election laws promulgated on December 26, 1997 and renewed on February 7, 2007 during the time when the PPC had absolute power after the collapse of FUNCIPEC following the coup on July 6, 1997. And then, this committee will nominate the local election commissions (new article 18). Eventually, after this commission’s proposition, the national election committee will nominate the election commission in the polling station, composed of a president, a vice-president, a secretary and two members (new article 22).

According to these laws, the election organisms should be neutral. But how could we believe in the neutrality of such organisms nominated by the authority?

This is a difference with the French practice. The political parties that participate in the elections, have only the right to send delegates as observers to the polling station (new article 26) and have not the right to take part in the election process. In France, the political parties may send assessors to participate in the election process from the opening time of the polling station onward and check the registers and electors’ identity.

If the Cambodian election legislation is applied, the election commission in the polling station could easily fraud if they were determined to do it because the party delegates have not the right to check the registers and the electors’ identity. On these reports, protests in 1998 and 2003 were justified by the gaps in the legislation.

So, the national election committee should amend the present laws by enabling the political parties to send assessors for the voting process, so that the general elections should be really democratic. Otherwise, suspicion towards the committee’s neutrality and voting process transparency will persist.
Cambodia thanks Vietnam for military assistance

Cambodian Deputy Prime Minister Tea Banh Tuesday thanked Vietnam for its past assistance in overthrowing the genocidal Pol Pot regime and its current help in developing Cambodia.

At a meeting with President Nguyen Minh Triet in Hanoi, General Tea Banh, who doubles as the country’s Defense Minister, said “the maturity of the Cambodian Defense Ministry today is partially thanks to ... Vietnamese experts on voluntary missions.”

Triet said Vietnam always held cooperation with Cambodia and Laos as a high priority in developing the Indochinese peninsula.

Tea Banh began a four-day official visit to Vietnam Monday at the invitation of Vietnamese Minister of Defense General, Phung Quang Thanh.

During their meeting Tuesday, Banh and Thanh agreed to cooperate on locating and repatriating the remains of Vietnamese volunteers who died on Cambodian soil.

Banh asked the Vietnamese Ministry of Defense to share its experiences in maintaining security and public order and help Cambodia ensure the success of the country’s legislative elections in July.

The leaders agreed they would meet again in the future to strengthen cooperation in personnel training between military hospitals and institutes.

The two sides also agreed to continue joint sea patrols and exchange information on search and rescue operations.

Source: VNA
Vietnam, for all its pretensions towards sovereignty and democracy, has yet to free itself from neighboring Vietnam's political and strategic grip 20 years after United Nations-organized elections ended its debilitating civil war. The international community has since invested over US$2 billion on peace initiatives to repair the damage done by Vietnam's 1979 invasion and seizure of power. Yet Hanoi continues to exercise covert power over the country through its proxy ruling Cambodia People's Party (CPP).

Most Khmer citizens fail to fathom the depths of the ongoing subterfuge. Many have conveniently chosen ignorance over truth, as is common among traumatized populations in post-conflict societies. Western audiences, including the international donor community that continues to bankroll the CPP's corrupt and compromised tenure, should be less easily forgiven for turning a blind eye to Vietnam's still strong command over the country.

Some in the West saw Vietnam as a magnanimous liberator in 1979, an occupying army that rescued Cambodia from the radical Khmer Rouge regime's massacre of its own people. But Hanoi's use of force turned a difficult situation to its geopolitical advantage, putting an end to the Khmer Rouge regime's nationalistic stance vis-a-vis Vietnam, including its combative insistence on resolutions to border disputes held over from the French colonial era.

Hanoi's invasion and occupation with over 200,000 troops under the direction of communist revolutionary, politician and diplomat Le Duc Tho further weakened a nation reeling from the anti-communist war and Khmer-on-Khmer death and destruction. A number of brave revolutionary leaders who fell from grace at Hanoi's behest, including ex-prime minister Pen Sovann, have claimed Vietnamese troops deliberately looted and plundered national treasures and wealth during the invasion. Those installed into power by Hanoi, including incumbent prime minister Hun Sen, subsequently brushed off the theft as a mere war casualty.

To some Khmers, including many opposition politicians attached to the aptly named Cambodian National Rescue Party (CNRP), Hanoi is able to maintain its grip on Cambodia through its historical ties to Hun Sen and the CPP. CNRP members have not spoken without substantiation, feeling it would be morally wrong to exchange denial of truth for peace and power-sharing. The late King Norodom Sihanouk, for instance, said pointedly at a Paris meeting with his compatriots in early 1990 that, "it's meaningless to accept peace without independence, sovereignty and dignity".

After occupying Cambodia for more than a decade from 1979-89, Hanoi developed an
elaborate, behind-the-scenes network of control that is in many ways still in place today. It first installed a proxy administration in 1979 known as the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) run by the Kampuchean People's Revolutionary Party (KPRP), which morphed into the CPP in the early 1990's after Vietnamese troops ostensibly withdrew from the country.

The KPRP was a direct offshoot of the Indochina communist Party formed in the 1930s with Vietnamese revolutionary leader Ho Chi Minh as its head. Following its unilateral and unmonitored symbolic withdrawal of troops in 1989, hundreds, if not thousands, of Vietnamese "experts" stayed behind, adopted Khmer names and continued to assist their comrades at every important government ministry and department. Nowadays, only locals can tell who is really Vietnamese and who is Khmer.

Hanoi created a perfect ally in the CPP to defend and protect its substantial interests in Cambodia, ranging from land border areas, to maritime concessions, to allowances for illegal Vietnamese immigrants to settle unperturbed throughout the country. Many CPP leaders and high-ranking officials would not have their prestigious positions and titles without Vietnamese backing: they know it, and Hanoi knows it.

Foreign academics have corroborated in detail the ongoing special relationship. Michael Benge, a former American prisoner of war in Vietnam who speaks fluent Vietnamese and many ethnic minority dialects, wrote in 2007 that "Hanoi maintains a contingent of 3,000 troops, a mixture of special forces and intelligence agents, with tanks and helicopters, in a huge compound about two kilometers outside Phnom Penh right next to Hun Sen's Tuol Krassaing fortress near Takhmau".

Extending that analysis, local intelligence sources have said when border clashes between Thai and Cambodian troops first erupted in 2008, at least one battalion of Vietnamese elite units was put on standby to assist their Cambodian comrades.

Dr Markus Karbaum, a German academic, revealed in an April Southeast Asia Globe article that Vietnamese officials shared dossiers kept on Cambodia's current ruling elite with the former East Germany's Stasi soon after their defection from the Khmer Rouge in 1977. A young Hun Sen, whose real name according to his dossier was "Hun Bonal", referred to himself as "Hai Phuc", a Vietnamese name, apparently to ingratiate himself with Hanoi. He had served as a Khmer Rouge battalion commander but downplayed his role in commanding over 2,000 soldiers along their shared border at a time the Khmer Rouge had launched many violent cross-border assaults into Vietnam.

The Stasi archive reveals that Hun Sen and other current CPP leaders were first placed in a detention camp and ordered by Vietnamese authorities to write their own biographies. Vietnam's own assessments of those who sought to shift their allegiance to Hanoi were
often unforgiving. Current CPP stalwart and president of the Cambodian Senate Chea Sim, for instance, was characterized as "conciliatory, craven and undecided". Heng Samrin, CPP honorary president and a National Assembly chairman, is referred to in the Stasi archive as of "a low education .. [He] does not talk a lot and sometimes he has an inferiority complex ... his political understanding is limited".

While Vietnamese-backed CPP politicians have unquestionably grown into their roles over the years, these intelligence assessments are noteworthy considering Cambodia has been ruled or co-ruled uninterrupted by the CPP ever since it was first installed into power after Vietnam's 1979 invasion. While younger CPP rank and file members are known to have grown weary of the same old names and faces of their party leaders, any generational transition is complicated by Vietnam's continued influence over the party and its historical ties to the old guard.

**Puppet masters**

The CNRP's repeated reference to CPP leaders as "puppets" of Vietnam is thus not without historical validity. The examples of kowtowing to Hanoi during Hun Sen's 28 consecutive years in power are multiple. On February 26, 1986, while Cambodia was still under direct Vietnamese occupation, Hun Sen signed a directive ordering local authorities to facilitate the settlement of hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese immigrants all over the county, particularly in and around the Tonle Sap Lake region.

Four previous treaties of friendship and cooperation between the two countries (1979, 1982, 1983, 1985), and a 2005 supplemental treaty resulted in territorial loss to Vietnam both on land and at sea. The most glaring recent loss was Koh Tral, an island larger than Singapore located directly opposite the Cambodian coastal town of Sihanoukville known as Phu Quoc in Vietnam. The CNRP has said it still considers the island Cambodian territory because its handover came while the country was under Vietnamese occupation.

In 2010, Hun Sen responded to Vietnamese prime minister Nguyen Tan Dung's concern over ongoing, politicized border disputes by having his controlled courts sentence opposition leader Sam Rainsy to 10 years in prison for uprooting a few contested wooden border posts in Svay Rieng province. Meanwhile, Hun Sen and his CPP party have relied every election cycle on at least three million Vietnamese immigrants who unfailingly vote for the CPP to guarantee victory.

In July 28 elections, however, the Hun Sen-led CPP failed to win its usual landslide. Politically conscious and emboldened voters challenged through exposes over social media the CPP's
use of illegal voters, vote-buying and voter intimidation to tilt the result in its favor. The CPP nonetheless rigged the result, officially winning 68 seats to the opposition's 55. Sam Rainsy has claimed his CNRP was robbed of a slim parliamentary majority and in protest has ordered his party members to boycott parliament and staged popular street demonstrations.

The result as it stands means Cambodia will still be subservient to Vietnam's interests for at least another five years. Under Hun Sen's CPP-led government, Vietnamese companies have secured large swaths of Cambodian land in concessions to develop rubber plantations in north and northeast Cambodia. These Vietnamese companies have engaged in massive logging of luxury timber across the country, an unsustainable process that has brought little or no benefit to local Khmer.

In the capital of Phnom Penh, more and more Vietnamese immigrants rent or own new residential buildings, including new luxury apartments and condominiums, with the financial help of Vietnamese government subsidized bank loans. With those state subsidies, part of Hanoi's policy to maintain grassroots control of the local economy, their community and businesses are growing briskly.

Tellingly, Hen Sen and his CPP party seldom use the word "Khmer" in their official addresses. Instead, they use "prajia jun Kampuchea", which means "the people of Kampuchea". Additionally Khmer citizens risk being penalized for referring to their eastern neighbor as "yuon", which merely means "Vietnamese" in the local language; the word "yuon" carries no negative racial overtone towards ethnic Vietnamese. For political correctness, Khmers have been officially encouraged to follow the pro-Hanoi line in referring to Vietnamese as "junjiat Vietnam", which in the Khmer language literally means "Vietnam ethnic or tribe."

During the People's Republic of Kampuchea (1979-1989) and the State of Cambodia (1989-1992) regimes, the majority Khmer used to refer to ethnic Vietnamese as "bang pa-aun Vietnam," which literally means "elder-younger (siblings) Vietnam." There are other words considered to be pejorative, offending, or racial slurs for ethnic Vietnamese, but "yuon" is not one of them. Yuon became a hypersensitive word only after 1979. In 1993, Westerners played into Vietnam's hands by regarding the term without foundation as a racial slur.

When the CNRP claims that Khmer citizens have been systematically victimized while Vietnamese have been protected, some Cambodian government officials and Western donors have raised concerns about the future security of Vietnamese immigrants. When the opposition called for a nationwide mass protest against election irregularities and fraud, many feared pro-CNRP demonstrators may exploit the situation to target ethnic Vietnamese
Vietnam and the Cambodian Tragedy

for revenge.

In apparent response, on August 15 Vietnamese troop convoys were reportedly ferried across the Bassac River near Cambodian territory and Vietnam's naval gunboats traveled up the Mekong River toward Phnom Penh in a show of force. Meanwhile, Khmer protesters, most of them disenfranchised and dispossessed members of the impoverished population, faced off with heavily armed security forces backed with high-caliber guns, tanks and armored personnel carriers. Many pro-CNRP protestors and even foreign journalists have been violently assaulted by CPP forces in recent weeks.

As grass roots people protest against the rigged election, many Western commentators have focused narrowly on the impact of the political impasse and rising political instability on economic growth rather than the CPP’s illegitimate claim to power. In the final analysis, the opposition CNRP will likely eventually join the CPP-led government because no country in the free world is willing to support its democratic claim to legitimacy in the same way that Vietnam backs Hun Sen and his CPP. The CNRP, meanwhile, risks losing the support of the millions of Cambodians who voted for political change and genuine sovereignty if it joins the CPP-led government.

What is happening now in Cambodia warrants international monitoring since the political impasse is not solely a Khmer versus Khmer issue. To achieve lasting peace and stability, the signatory states to the 1991 Paris Peace Agreement should, as stipulated in Article 5, "undertake to consult immediately with a view to adopting all appropriate steps to ensure respect for these commitments". The international community promised peace, independence, sovereignty and democracy for Cambodia in that agreement. Vietnam’s ongoing interventions in Cambodian politics is inconsistent with that vision and in violation of its core principles.

Speaking Freely is an Asia Times Online feature that allows guest writers to have their say. Please click here if you are interested in contributing. Articles submitted for this section allow our readers to express their opinions and do not necessarily meet the same editorial standards of Asia Times Online’s regular contributors.

Hassan A Kasem has lived in the United States for 33 years. He previously worked for Radio Free Asia for 14 years in Washington DC and is now the US representative for Khmer M'Chas Srak (KMS), a non-profit, non-partisan NGO advocating the legitimate rights of the Khmer people and preserving the 1991 Paris Peace Accords on Cambodia. Hassan served in the Cambodian air force as a helicopter pilot toward the end of the war. He survived a Khmer Rouge detention camp and challenged the Vietnamese occupation before leaving Cambodia in 1979.

(Copyright 2013 Hassan A Kasem)
Le CAMBODE, un pays qui évoque des souvenirs forts, où se mêlent les images des gracieuses apsaras* de grès qui décorent les temples et les clichés d’horreurs aux yeux exorbités des suppliciés khmers rouges*.

Mais l’histoire du Cambodge ne se réduit pas aux seuls souvenirs glorieux de l’Empire Khmer, pas plus qu’aux massacres des maoïstes des années 70.

Depuis la fin du régime khmer rouge en 1979, plus d’un quart de siècle a passé.

Un régime qui a été renversé par les troupes de la République Socialiste du VietNam (RSVN)*, non pas tant dans le but de sauver le peuple Cambodgien des massacres que pour mettre fin aux incursions des troupes de Phnom Penh * au Sud Vietnam (anciennement territoire du Cambodge appelé « Kampuchea Krom).”

Il faut dire que de tout temps, le Cambodge a réclamé avec insistance la restitution de ses provinces du sud, injustement rattachées au Vietnam par l’administration coloniale Française.

Mais sans succès.


Hanoi* met en place un régime « frère » d’anciens cadres khmers rouges, et fait signer par le nouveau gouvernement un « contrat reconductible de manière tacite » pour 25 ans, qui scelle l’avenir du Cambodge au sein d’une union indochinoise* dont le Vietnam rêve depuis longtemps devenir le leader (le même « contrat » sera imposé au Laos).

S’en suit une guerre de harcèlement, où au gré des saisons les troupes khmères des différentes factions (khmères rouges, républicaines, royalistes) multiplient les coups de main contre l’armée d’occupation, avec plus ou moins de succès.

Mais quand dans les années 80 l’URSS s’effondre, le Vietnam se retrouve isolé.

Seul face à une communauté internationale qui l’a mis au banc des nations, seul face à la puissance militaire chinoise, et enfin confronté au blocus économique occidental et allié.

De plus le Prince NORODOM SIHANOUK* mène activement campagne contre l’occupation
de son pays, et a fini par gagner l’appui des instances internationales.

Sous la pression économique et face aux nombreux dangers qui l’attendent (guerre latente avec la Chine, situation économique et démographique désastreuse), le Vietnam cède et autorise le régime communiste de Phnom Penh à ouvrir des négociations, lesquelles trouveront leur aboutissement lors de la signature des « Accords de Paris » en 1991.

Cet accord, signé par toutes les factions Khmères, prévoit notamment la tenue d’élections démocratiques, l’annulation pure et simple de tous les traités signés sous l’occupation vietnamienne, et le retrait total des forces de la République Socialiste du VietNam.

Mais si les élections ont bien eu lieu, aucune autre des conditions pré-citées n’ont été respectées.

Le Vietnam a bien procédé au rapatriement de ses forces les plus visibles, mais dans le même temps des milliers de paysans-soldats Vietnamiens (les mêmes qui ont défaits les armées Françaises et U.S) ont afflué au Cambodge pour renforcer une présence civile déjà très forte depuis 1979.

A tel point que dans certaines provinces, les Vietnamiens sont plus nombreux que les Cambodgiens (ex : province de Svay-rieng).

Déjà lors de l’occupation, les Cambodgiens qui disposaient d’une habitation avaient été obligés d’en céder une partie au profit des nouveaux arrivants, ainsi de même pour les terres cultivables.

Et des milliers de Vietnamiens traversaient la frontière en tous points sans aucun contrôle ni aucune restriction.

C’est d’ailleurs une politique semblable d’assimilation qui a permis au Vietnam d’occuper le Kampuchea Krom, où la population Vietnamiennne majoritaire a fini par remplacer la population d’origine Cambodgienne.

Cet expansionnisme insidieux a ainsi déjà privé le Cambodge d’une grande partie de ses terres et de ses ressources, et privé des millions de Cambodgiens d’origine de leurs droits les plus élémentaires (droit de nationalité, de propriété, de liberté religieuse et politique, d’association...).

A ce jour, l’annulation des traités frontaliers illégaux n’est toujours pas appliquée.

Cette situation prive le Cambodge d’une grande partie de son territoire national, de ses îles, ainsi que de sa surface maritime.

Pis encore, il est apparu récemment à la faveur d’interprétations inopportunes, l’existence de « zones blanches » aux frontières, qui seraient devenues des zones « tampons » de non-appartenance et de non-droit.

Et dont les pays frontaliers se servent pour interpréter leur propre vision du territoire Cambodgien, en violation des accords et des traités internationaux.
Les frontières du Cambodge ne sont pourtant pas fluctuantes comme on pourrait le croire, car elles sont reconnues par la communauté internationale et tracées depuis déjà fort longtemps.

Mais la totale dévolution du gouvernement actuel de Phnom Penh envers ses voisins ne permet pas de les faire respecter.

Les effets de cette politique se révèlent désastreux pour une population Cambodgienne déjà très pauvre, qui le long des frontières se voient souvent privée de ses terres cultivables quand ce ne sont pas des villages entiers !

La République Socialiste du VietNam continue de fait et en sous-main à diriger le Cambodge dont le gouvernement ne prend aucune décision sans consulter Hanoi au préalable.

Et l’impérialisme expansionniste du Vietnam continue encore de nos jours…

Philippe Taylor

*apsaras : danseuses célestes de la mythologie Khmère, souvent représentées sur les bas-reliefs des temples (ex : groupe d’Angkor Vat)

*khmers rouges : « khmer » est la dénomination d’origine de la population, les « khmers rouges » sont les khmers maoïstes supportés par la Chine et le Vietnam qui ont, entre autre, massacré des millions de leurs frères Cambodgiens.

*RSVN : République Socialiste du VietNam ; le Vietnam est un pays totalitaire dirigé par l’organe du Parti Communiste.

*Phnom Penh : capitale du Cambodge

*Hanoi : capitale du Vietnam

* union indochinoise : la vision vietnamienne du sud-est asiatique, où tous les pays seraient fédérés au sein d’une unité politique et économique : c’est le pendant socialiste de l’ASEAN.
* Norodom Sihanouk : Sa Majesté le Roi-père Norodom Sihanouk, qui obtint l’indépendance du Cambodge de manière pacifique.