

Cambodians rise up against Viet invaders

Vietnam is finding that occupying Kampuchea (Cambodia) is no easy task. The Kampuchean people are waging a massive guerrilla war against the Vietnamese invasion, described by Kampuchea's former Prime Minister Norodom Sihanouk as a "German-style blitzkrieg."

The map of the current fighting is a checkerboard, with Kampuchean guerrilla units engaging the Vietnamese in almost all parts of the country. To the north, Angkor Wat, a national shrine, has been recaptured. In the northwest, near Thailand, heavy fighting was reported. Predictions by some reporters that Kampuchean troops would be fleeing across the Thai border have proved unfounded.

In the southwest, latest reports say the vital resupply port of Kompong Som, which Vietnam initially claimed, is back in Kampuchean hands. The rugged Elephant and Cardomon mountains north are developing into major areas of resistance. Vietnamese communication and transport lines are frequently cut.

One month into its invasion the Vietnamese are beginning to experience the same headaches that the US found during its Indochina war. Kampuchean guerrilla units, under direct attack by a numerically superior enemy with overwhelming aircraft and artillery support, have dispersed among the people in the countryside. Then they regroup and concentrate their strength in lightning counterattacks against the less mobile Vietnamese enemy.

PHONY FRONT

The Vietnamese government has set up a puppet government in Kampuchea to provide a candy coating for its brutal invasion and to make permanent occupation easier. They announced the formation of the Kampuchean National United Front for National Salvation just a month before the invasion began. This fictitious outfit is headed for the same fate as the United States "Vietnamization Plan" of a decade ago.

"Who are the leaders of this so-called front?" asked Sihanouk. "They are perfectly unknown to the Kampuchean people."

The lack of support among Kampucheans for the Vietnamese invasion is shown clearly by Sihanouk himself. Ruler of Cambodia until his overthrow by a US-sponsored coup in 1970, Sihanouk had political differences with the socialist government headed by Pol Pot, which came to power when the US was defeated in 1975. Nonetheless, he agreed to act as an international representative for Democratic Kampuchea after Vietnam's invasion. Even former Kampucheans living in the US who had actively organized against Pol Pot and socialism have denounced the invasion as "Vietnamese annexation and imperialism."

Americans can easily recall how costly the US government's war against the Indochinese people was. So how can Vietnam, a poor country, pay for an invading army of 100,000?

Without a doubt, the Soviet Union is the paymaster. Last June 29, the Soviets pushed hard for the admission of Vietnam into its economic group, COMECON, to shore up Hanoi economically for war. In mid-August, it sent large quantities of arms to Vietnam, and began sending military advisors who now number over 4,000.

In early November, Moscow concluded a "Friendship Treaty" with Hanoi, which established a guarantee of Soviet aid against any attack on Vietnam.

As brutal as the US war of yesteryear, the current aggression poses a new danger to the world. It fits right into the strides the Soviets have taken in the past year in their drive for global domination. In Ethiopia, Cuban and Soviet troops helped the savage military junta, the Derg, stomp on the Eritrean

liberation struggle. Coups in South Yemen and Afghanistan brought pro-Soviet governments to power.

When the USSR helped foment civil war in Angola in 1975, world opinion was divided. Those who warned strenuously of the USSR's aggressive aims, like Peoples' China, were often regarded as paranoid or accused of acting out of narrow self-interest. But the events of the last few years have highlighted the correctness of these warnings.

INTERNATIONAL OUTCRY

Now the invasion of socialist Kampuchea and the establishment of a counter-revolutionary government there has stirred up a powerful sentiment of opposition to Vietnam and the USSR.

At the UN Security Council only a veto by the Soviet delegate stopped a resolution demanding an immediate pull out of foreign forces from Kampuchea. Neutral and independence-minded countries like India and Jamaica supported the resolution. The UN still recognizes the Democratic Kampuchean delegation.

Fearing they might be next, neighboring Asian countries like Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and the Philippines have called for the immediate and total withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Cambodia. Only Vietnam, the USSR, and a handful of Soviet dominated governments, mostly in Eastern Europe, have recognized the new puppet government.



Demonstrations in San Francisco (above) and several other cities lambasted the invasion of Kampuchea. Cambodians in this country and Americans who had been active against US aggression in Vietnam organized the actions.