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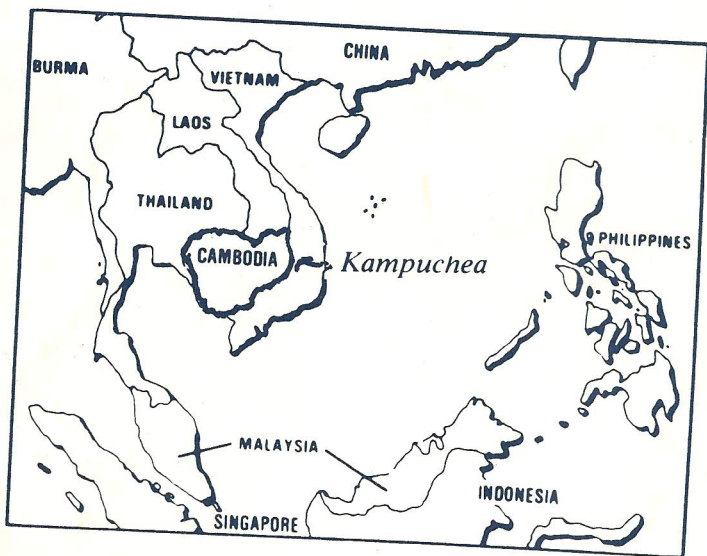
*Reporter*

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**THE KAMPUCHEAN STRUGGLE  
FOR NATIONAL SURVIVAL**

By  
**Thiounn Mumm**

*Pertinent Historical and Current Facts  
About Vietnam's Presence in Kampuchea*



The Kampuchean Struggle  
For National Survival

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Far East Reporter Introduction

There are conflicting analyses of the situation in Kampuchea. It may be some time before unchallenged facts are established and accepted. But meanwhile there are both historical and current facts that must be taken into account if the issue is to be correctly analyzed.

The essay by Thiounn Mumm, writing as Chairman of the National Committee for Science and Technology of Democratic Kampuchea, helps place Kampuchea in its historical setting.

The Kampuchean people are a people with an ancient civilization dating back at least twelve centuries before the year One AD, a people with great political, economic and technological achievements. Their Angkor Kingdom had once been the most powerful state on the Southeast Asian mainland.

The Kampuchean people are also a people and nation who have centuries-long been engaged in tortuous struggles against alien encroachments -- struggles to retrieve and maintain their identity as a people and nation.

Encroachment by Vietnam is not something new. A century and a half ago the Kampuchean people were conquered by a Vietnamese army "supervised by Europeans." This was in 1840, but sounds like 1978. This Vietnamese intrusion and the subsequent success of the Kampuchean people, in 1845, in chasing the invaders out is, even to today, graven in the consciousness of patriotic Kampuchean people.

The current Vietnam plan against Kampuchea has a history that predates its December 1978 invasion. That plan was early evidenced in 1930 when the Vietnamese founded a so-called "Indochinese Federation" and at the same time founded the "Indochinese Communist Party" (composed solely of Vietnamese)-- the very name "Indochinese" indicating the expansionist plan of Vietnam.

Vietnam has never accepted the efforts and, at times, the successful attempts, of the Kampuchean people to maintain their identity as a people and a nation. In 1975 the leaders of Kampuchea went to Hanoi, attempting to negotiate a treaty of friendship and non-aggression. This was rejected by Hanoi. Vietnam was not interested in an independent, neutral and non-aligned Kampuchean neighbor.

There can be no question whatsoever about the sufferings inflicted on the Kampuchean people in the fifties, sixties and seventies. There were massive American bombings: "The hardship conditions created by United States provided the context in which Pol Pot's ultra-'left' errors and crimes occurred; many of the accounts of the period of the Kampuchean Communist Party's (Pol Pot's) rule, from Western as well as pro-Vietnam sources, have undoubtedly been greatly exaggerated. Certain gains were made in rebuilding the country's devastated agriculture between 1975 and 1979."\* Thiounn Mumm's account of the progress made during the Pol Pot period can be taken at face value.

Vietnam propaganda has made repeated statements about "the piles of skulls" as evidence of Pol Pot's cruelties. Today questions are being asked about these "skull exhibits:" first, as to the sources of the skulls, and second, as to the "estimated number" of the skulls in the exhibited piles. There are skulls -- witness to man's cruelties; but the sources are several: the massive American bombings in the Kampuchean countryside, the fighting between the Vietnamese and the Lon Nol forces (in 1970 soldiers of the Lon Nol regime massacred ethnic Vietnamese) and current Vietnamese attacks on Kampuchean insurgent groups.

The current presence of Vietnamese forces -- military and administrative personnel -- in Kampuchea intensifies

\*Guardian 1.5.'83

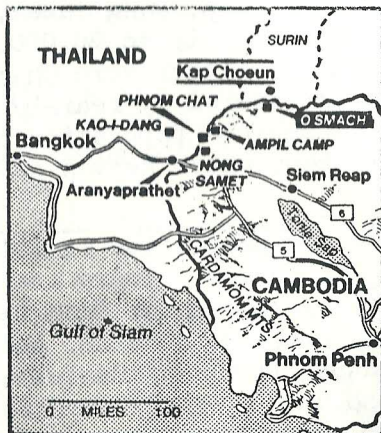
the deep-seated nationalism of Kampuchean individuals\* and finds organized expression and active resistance in three insurgent groups. These are: Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge, Son Sann's Khmer People's National Liberation Front (KPNLF), and Sihanouk's "National Liberation Front For An Independent, Neutral, Peaceful and Cooperative Cambodia (FUNCINPEC). These three groups have formed an uneasy Coalition, the Democratic Kampuchea Government. While their liberation tactics and their long-term objectives may differ (including the kind of future Kampuchea they envision) they are currently united, as patriotic Kampucheans, in the struggle for the independence and national identity of their long-suffering country.

Far from being an amorphous concept, the Coalition, Democratic Kampuchea, is a functioning structure, with civil and military administration. It is not "a government in exile"; it exists on the soil of Kampuchea. While their "camps" at times serve as headquarters for guerrillas, they are in fact insurgent communities the vast majority of whose inhabitants are civilians. The population of these insurgent communities far exceeds the military forces of the Coalition, whose military forces total something less than 50,000. For example, Camp Non Cham, attacked by Vietnamese troops on January 1st 1983 and burned down, had a population of 25,000; these fled to another camp, Nong Samet, increasing the population of that community to 70,000. Two other camps that later came under attack were Chamcar and Kokhan -- market centers administered by near-by Pol Pot's forces -- have an estimated combined population of up to 15,000. "The camp at Rithisen, which serves as headquarters for

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\*Intensive Kampuchean patriotism is not confined to the organized insurgent groups. There are Kampucheans living under the auspices of the Phnom Penh regime who have risked expressing their patriotism, and then becoming a part of "the unknown number of Cambodians whose loyalty is suspect and who have entered camps for political 're-education'." Unquestionably there are thousands, if not millions, who are "unwilling to take risks which would jeopardize what little security they now have." (New York Times 4.4.'83)

Son Sann, is home for 75,000 displaced Kampuchean. It is a bush city with shops, light industries, schools, hospitals and facilities for sports. The people appear to be reasonably healthy but life is Spartan. Son Sann has 150,000 people living under his control along the Thai-Kampuchean border and claims to have many more "silent" supporters inside Kampuchea, including some in the ranks of administration controlled by Hanoi. Sihanouk's headquarters at O Smach housed around 30,000 peasants and perhaps 1500 guerrillas." C S Monitor 3.8.'83) "Ampil camp is made up of a military base and six contiguous villages. The whole settlement resembles an unusually tidy and even prosperous provincial town, with tall trees along the dirt roads, children playing, and new wooden construction going on. Gates with signs reading "National Cadres Training Council," "Art Center," and "Special Forces Training Field" lead to courtyards, neat bungalows and buildings that look like ranch houses in American suburbs. It was begun in 1979 and has grown from a place of hammocks strung between trees." (New York Times 4.8.'83)

The severe military attacks by Vietnamese troops on the camps near the Thai border are Vietnam's attempt to drive the Coalition government (Democratic Kampuchea) off Kampuchean soil, trying to deprive them of territorial legitimacy. On February first 1983 more than 4000 Vietnamese troops, with intensive artillery, mortar and



The New York Times / April 11, 1983

**Cambodian civilians at hospital near Kap Choeun said they had been wounded by Vietnamese grenade attacks at O Smach.**

rocket bombardment, overran and burned an armed anti-Communist camp a mile inside Kampuchea; International Aid workers said that 20,000 to 25,000 of the camp's residents, most of them civilians, fled to the Thai side of the border. Further attacks were made during the week of March 31st-April 5th by 6000 (some reports say 2000) Vietnamese troops; this attack was backed by Soviet-built tanks and American-built personnel carriers and artillery.

Following these attacks - which included Vietnamese troops crossing the border into Thailand to attack fleeing kampuchean -- the Thailand Foreign Ministry on April 5th 1983 called together the ambassadors of the Soviet Union, Western and pro-Western countries and charged that "the Vietnamese troops had carried on cruel and barbarous liquidation of the Cambodian people along the border" -- forcing some 45,000 to 50,000 civilian Cambodians to flee across the border into Thailand. This April 4th denouncement of the Vietnamese military action was followed the next day by the presentation to the General Secretary of the United Nations of a letter from the Thai representative in which he denounced "the unprovoked and blatant acts of aggression by Vietnamese forces, as crimes against unarmed and innocent Cambodian civilians."

For five years, since 1978, tens of thousands of Vietnamese troops -- currently estimated to number 180,000 -- along with thousands of Vietnamese non-military administrative and political personnel have been stationed in Cambodia.

But; the presence and actions of the invading Vietnamese have been unable to quench Kampuchean patriotism and resistance. As an editorial in the New York Times expressed it: "Vietnam having done so much to reduce Cambodian nationhood, is striking at Cambodian camps along the Thai border only days after its client regime in Phnom Penh boasted 'We control the whole country.' The truth is otherwise. The country is not pacified... Liberation will come when Vietnam withdraws, restoring to Cambodia an inclusive government at peace with its people and neutral toward outsiders." (4.7.'83)

The timing of that withdrawal and liberation is of course conditioned by international factors. Kampuchea lies in an area of great international contention: the competition of the superpowers (the United States and the Soviet Union) in Southeast Asia, Vietnam-China enmity, the apprehension of the ASEAN countries (Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Philippines) over what they conceive to be Vietnamese expansionism (already evidenced in Vietnam's occupation of Cambodia, its military intrusion into Thailand and its control of Laos), China's concern over the Soviet Union's military pressure on her northern and southern borders (where the Soviet Union now has access to former US bases in Vietnam) and the United States military alliance with Thailand.

"Fear of the return of Pol Pot"-- so assiduously asserted by the Vietnamese and their client regime in Phnom Penh -- is becoming an anachronism. Much has happened to Kampuchean society during the Vietnamese presence. The experience and learning gained during the occupation is -- contrary to Vietnam's plan -- serving to give the Kampucheans the potential economic and political clout with which to deal with the problems of a liberated country and people.

"It is true that the Government of Democratic Kampuchea has committed some mistakes, but by the middle of 1978, it was perfectly aware of them and measures were being taken to correct them. But it is because the results as a whole have been positive that the present resistance is possible, and that after nearly two years, the Hanoi authorities have failed to 'Khmerize' either the war or the administration in the areas under their temporary control. Without the 200,000 Vietnamese soldiers, the Khmer varnish of the Phnom Penh administration will disappear by itself."

(Thiounn Mumm)

## **The struggle of the Kampuchean people for national survival**

**THIOUNN MUMM**

*Chairman of the National Committee  
for Sciences and Technology of  
Democratic Kampuchea*

### **Brief historical background on Kampuchea**

Kampuchea is a land having an ancient civilization. The human occupation of the Northern region of the Great Lake of Tonle Sap dated since longtime ago, several millenaries before our era. In 1,200 B.C., there was a bronze civilization whose most remarkable vestiges are located in Samrong Sen (Kampong Thom province). By a development essentially from within, this civilization has led to the construction of a system of irrigation including immense artificial lakes, canals of communication between the rivers flowing down from the Koulen mountains to the making of agricultural instruments and tools in steel, to an abundant and steady agricultural production despite the irregularities of rains, and then to the construction of immense and marvellous monuments, including those of well-known Angkor. At the same epoch, a monumental bronze-age civilization had also developed, which was among the most beautiful and most original in the world. This art is still very vivacious in our time.

The present Kampuchean people are the direct descendants of those who had built this civilization. But starting from the 13th-century, the soil had become exhausted due to over-exploitation and production started to decline. The King Jayavarman VII had built many roads in order to supply the capital. But at that time, transportation by roads was not economical and our ancestors were forced to abandon Angkor in the first half of the 15th century to come and settle at the outskirts of the present capital Phnom Penh, center of waterways which were much more economical. That was for the Khmer society a very great challenge, but it succeeded in overcoming it successfully.

In 1511, the Europeans arrived in Malacca and in 1520, Magellan made his trip around the world. Starting from this date, it is necessary to take into

