

# Peking's Shadow Hangs Over Cambodia-Vietnam Rift

On New Year's Eve, Cambodia broke diplomatic relations with the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, charging that country with "ferocious and barbarous aggression" on Cambodia's eastern frontier. In fact, the real problem is not so much on the eastern border, as it is a good deal further to the north, where the Chinese Communists are feeding the border dispute between Cambodia and Vietnam to advance their own pursuit of regional hegemony.

Shortly following the official break in relations, Cambodia's Ambassador to Peking, Pich Cheang, rejected Vietnam's latest offer to negotiate and instead accused the Vietnamese of conducting military operations within 60 kilometers of the Cambodian capital, Phnom Penh. The Vietnamese have denied the charges and, in an official statement, have countered that the Cambodians are escalating military incursions on Vietnamese provinces, butchering women and children. Over 2,000 Vietnamese are reported dead.

China, Cambodia's patron and closest ally is feigning official neutrality, but this has not prevented it from

generating volumes of news releases and organizing press conferences at the Cambodian Embassy in Peking. On Jan. 1, the Cambodian Ambassador to Vietnam left Hanoi for Peking; he was escorted to the airport by the Chinese Ambassador and boarded a Chinese aircraft.

A secret foreign policy address by Chinese Foreign Minister Huang Hua released by Taiwan sources confirms that Chinese support and involvement go beyond gestures of mere comradely support. While not going so far as to offer military support, the speech nonetheless made clear that the Chinese distrust the "self-conceited" Vietnamese who refuse to toe an "anti-revisionist," (read "anti-Soviet") line. (See excerpts below.)

The Chinese attitude has not gone unnoticed in Hanoi where the top leadership of the Vietnamese Communist Party remains highly critical of post-Mao developments. Premier Pham Van Dong, Party Secretary General Le Duan, and top party theoretician and sometimes considered pro-Chinese, Truong Chinh strongly dislike the rise of Teng Hsiao-ping and his "Theory of the Three Worlds."

## Secret Chinese Foreign Policy Revealed

*Here are excerpts from Chinese Foreign Minister Huang Hua's secret foreign policy speech given July 30, 1977. The speech was smuggled out of China by intelligence agents of the Republic of China and released by the Chinese Information Service (Taiwan) on Dec. 26, 1977. Hua's statements clearly reveal Peking's intentions in the area.*

*The Chinese view of the situation as formulated by Huang Hua:*

There have been border conflicts between Vietnam and Cambodia, and between Laos and Cambodia recently. Cambodia has issued an order for national mobilization, while Vietnam and Laos have also taken emergency measures to prepare for war. At the same time, Cambodia has clashed with Thailand. Why is it that the three Indochina states, instead of being united themselves, have clashed on their borders? This was due to historical factors, and also to instigations by social imperialism.

Historically speaking, there has been a considerable period of dispute between the Vietnamese and the Cambodians on certain territorial and sovereignty problems. The root of trouble can be traced to the demarcation of borders when France occupied Indochina...

*Huang Hua had these comments on the Vietnamese role with Cambodia despite the fact that Vietnamese troops gave direct aid to their Cambodian comrades:*

Self-conceited, Vietnam deemed that without its help Cambodia could not have been liberated. Consequently it

assumed the airs of a big brother, demanding obeisance from Cambodia in everything...

After liberation of Cambodia, simultaneous with the revamping of the state organs, the Cambodians also revamped their army. They resolutely disbanded those military organs and units that had been infiltrated by Soviet Revisionism, and arrested some impure elements, sending them to the military tribunals for trial...

We have discussed the problems that have arisen in these two countries since the end of the Indochina war. There is another difference concerning anti-imperialism and antirevisionism. It has been our conviction that in order to oppose imperialism, we must also oppose revisionism, and it is only by opposing revisionism that we can gain thorough victory in the anti-imperialist struggle. The Vietnamese view is that they oppose imperialism, but not revisionism...

*Though Huang Hua says China will remain neutral and not aggravate the dispute he made clear where China's loyalties lie:*

We support the stand of Cambodia and her people against Soviet Revisionism and social imperialism, and will not watch indifferently any intervention in Cambodian sovereignty or coveting of Cambodian territory by social imperialism. We will support Cambodia and her people in their struggle and in their actions to protect Cambodia's territorial integrity and national sovereignty by giving all possible assistance.

This bit of Maoist geopolitics is in the tradition of great Han Chauvinism and holds that the world is divisible into three spheres. The First World comprises the two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union with the latter presented as posing the greater danger. China's self-defined task is to manipulate the Second World, Europe and Japan, and the Third World developing sector to defeat and isolate the Soviet "social-imperialists."

The solidarity of Vietnam and Laos with the Soviet Union and their commitment to establishing a durable detente with non-communist countries in the region conflicts sharply with Teng Hsiao-ping's design for Chinese hegemony in Asia. Therefore, the Chinese now hope to undermine their regional peace initiatives by setting up a shooting war between the Chinese xenophobic client state, Cambodia and Vietnam.

The new Thai government of General Kriangsak, which came to power with a policy aimed at normalization of relations with Communist Indochina has enabled Vietnam to make diplomatic gains in the area and has served to reduce tensions. Vietnamese Foreign Minister Nguyen Duy Trinh has been touring Laos, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand to promote economic cooperation. While in Thailand, which has also been the target of Cambodian border raids, Trinh hopes to hold talks on reviving the long-dormant Mekong River project to rehabilitate the war-devastated region.

Cambodia's break with Vietnam will endanger this project because the Mekong River runs through Cambodian territory. Ironically, the river would provide an overdue shot-in-the-arm to Cambodia's beleaguered economy.

#### *Intransigent Diplomacy*

Since May 1975, when the first Cambodian incursions took place, the Vietnamese have sought a peaceful solution to the border dispute. Cambodia has persisted in initiating hostilities, and the Chinese are capitalizing on

the situation to suit their own ends. The latest Vietnamese efforts and Chinese countermoves are as follows:

\*Vietnamese Communist Party Secretary General Le Duan visited China late in November for the first time since Mao's death, hoping to secure Chinese help in the border dispute. He no doubt discussed his misgivings with "the Theory of the Three Worlds," as it was then being implemented.

\*Cambodian Premier Pol Pot arrived in China right after Le Duan's departure. Following his return to Cambodia, China's Vice Premier Chen Yung Kuei arrived in Cambodia and toured the disputed regions.

\*Hsu Huang arrived in Laos in the middle of December as Chinese Ambassador. He is considered Teng Hsiao-ping's top advisor on Southeast Asian affairs.

\*Laotian President Souphanouphong led a high-powered delegation to Cambodia in the second half of December. A strong ally of Vietnam, the Laotians failed to convince the Cambodians to negotiate.

Since May 1975 the Cambodian Communist Party, the Khmer Rouge, has carried out a number of purges, described in the Western press as bloody pogroms and mass genocide. First to be purged were those associated with the old Lon Nol regime. Last spring a new purge began of the "Old Khmer Rouge," that is, those elements associated with the Vietnamese and accused of plotting a coup. All those associated with the Vietnamese were executed or imprisoned despite the fact that two Vietnamese divisions enabled the "new" Khmer Rouge to take Phnom Penh in April 1970.

The Cambodians' reaction to a direct offer from the Vietnamese to negotiate last June was to launch fresh and stepped-up border raids. In September after Cambodia staged some of the most brutal attacks on densely populated areas in Vietnam's new economic zones in the disputed region, the Vietnamese were forced to take defensive action and secure its border. The Vietnamese have said they will "keep patient" and still want to settle the conflict "in the spirit of fraternal friendship."