

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP IN INDOCHINA, 1964-74

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I. POLITICS IN INDOCHINA, 1964-72

THE VIETNAM WAR began in the late 1950s as a civil war in South Vietnam between the Ngo Dinh Diem regime and the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam, an anti-government force that included former Viet Minh, peasants, workers, and the general public. The war gradually escalated as the Diem regime collapsed (late 1963), political instability in South Vietnam grew and the weakening position of government troops in the struggle with the National Liberation Front became increasingly weak (1964). Then the Tonkin Gulf Incident broke out in the summer of 1964. The character of the war thereby changed considerably from early 1965 by reinforced American military intervention based on a continuation of U.S. support to the South Vietnamese government, and the war became a Second Indochina War.

With the beginning of the U.S. bombing of North Vietnam (February 7, 1965), its subsequent expansion, the stepping up of the bombing in South Vietnam as well and the mass introduction of U.S. ground troops into South Vietnam (the number of soldiers increased from 23,500 in February 1965 to 181,000 in December of the same year and to 371,000 in December 1966). The United States played more important role than South Vietnamese government's forces in fighting with the National Liberation Front and the troops from the North [7] [13]. In addition to the American troops, there were allied forces from the Republic of Korea, Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, and Thailand totalling over 50,000.

Supported by the United States, the Saigon regime changed hands at a dizzy pace since late 1963, principally by military coup, with the military junta of General Nguyen Van Thieu as head of the state and General Nguyen Cao Ky as premier taking over in June 1965 [3]. This new regime survived the next year's anti-government campaigns by Buddhists and overcame the threat of a civil war within a civil war posed by differences with the First South Vietnamese Division, at Danang. Thieu and Ky were elected president and vice president again in September 1967. Thieu remains in power since then (see [5]).

The National Liberation Front of South Vietnam was undaunted by continuous U.S. military intervention, gradually changed tactics from guerilla to conventional with both U.S. and government forces. In this fighting it more than held its own, and at the same time expanded liberated territory in the countryside and carried out socialist construction [14] [11].

As mentioned above, North Vietnam, which gave its all-out support to this

war for liberation, had been bombed by U.S. aircrafts, as had Laos, since 1965. This was because the United States regarded North Vietnam as the real enemy, the behind-the-lines base of support for the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam. Laos and Cambodia were considered as the NLF's supply route from the North (the Ho Chi Minh Trail) and a sanctuary for performing the war in the South. The bombing of the North represented a breach of the peace that had been continued in North Vietnam for over ten years since the conclusion of the Geneva Accords in July 1954. It meant a renewal of foreign military aggression against North Vietnam and a major blow against the results achieved during peacetime for socialist national construction (see [20, pp. 168-77]).

After the bombing of the North began, however, North Vietnam assumed a consistent posture of continuing resistance until victory based on military and economic assistance from the Soviet Union, China, and other socialist countries, and on a strengthening of its own home-front wartime footing. President Ho Chi Minh declared a resistance to the end and an all-out national mobilization, in which he said, "The War may drag on for five, ten, twenty years or more. Hanoi, Haiphong and a number of cities and factories may be destroyed, but the Vietnamese people will never be intimidated! Nothing is more precious than independence and freedom" [2]. Both the Soviet Union and China strongly supported this declaration and stepped up their aid to Hanoi. This support was not, however, always carried out with full cooperation. At that time, there was considerable friction between China and the Soviet Union stemming from ideological differences and opposition of national interest. In 1965-66 they had harsh words over the subject of this assistance, the Soviet Union blasted the Chinese for allegedly hampering shipments of Soviet materials to North Vietnam, and China retorted that the real saboteurs of aid to North Vietnam were the Soviets [16, pp. 50, 108].

As the Ho Chi Minh Trail ran along the Annamitic Cordillera on the eastern edge of Laos not far from its boundaries with North and South Vietnam, Laos was already deeply involved in the Vietnam War. In July 1962, the Second Geneva Accords put an end to the "proxy war" in Laos between the East and the West blocs, and the second coalition government was formed by leftist, neutral, and rightist, headed by Prince Souvanna Phouma as premier. But the peacetime was short-lived. Fighting soon broke out between the military forces of the left, on the one hand, and the right and neutral, on the other, and in 1964 the whole country was involved in all-out warfare. All that remained of the peace was the three factions coalition government, a coalition in name only. The country was divided into two areas controlled by the royal government of Vientiane (neutral and right factions) and the other controlled by the Patriotic Front, Neo Lao Hak Sat or NLHS (the left faction), which was administered by NLHS's socialist line [1].

While China, the Soviet Union, and North Vietnam continued to give military and economic assistance to the Patriotic Front [9], on the other hand, the United States and other Western countries assisted the Vientiane government [22] [23]. As the war in Vietnam got more intensified tens of thousands of North Vietna-

mese troops are reported to have continually operated in Laos in order to secure the Ho Chi Minh Trail. The U.S. forces have bombed this route and other areas under the control of the Patriotic Front since summer of 1964. In Laos national unification and lasting peace seemed impossible for Laos as long as the war in Vietnam continued.

The Kingdom of Cambodia was the only country of formerly French Indochina that managed to consistently maintain national unity and peace throughout the years after the conclusion of the First Geneva Accords in 1954—at least until the end of the sixties. The strict neutral policy of Prince Norodom Sihanouk, chief of state, succeeded in keeping the war in Vietnam from spreading onto Cambodian territory. Cambodia's relations with the United States worsened because of border conflicts with its pro-American neighbors, as South Vietnam and Thailand, the refusal of U.S. aid to Cambodia in 1963, and the rupture of diplomatic relations with Washington in May 1965. The situation continued through the worst years of the Vietnam War up to 1969. At the same time the government of Cambodia attempted to maintain its independence, territorial integrity, and royal regime by improving relations with China, North Vietnam, and the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam with its deteriorated relations with the United States.

The year of 1968 was an important turning point in the history of the Vietnam War. The Tet offensive, an attack on cities and bases throughout South Vietnam launched before dawn on January 30, was a massive and brilliant operation. From the viewpoint of the National Liberation Front, it meant the shift from a defensive-equilibrium stage of war to the stage of counterattack.

The Tet offensive made great gains and disclosed simultaneously the paralysis of the military and administrative substructure of the Saigon government, particularly in rural communities. It was extremely significant in awakening the United States to the fact that victory in Vietnam was almost impossible.

As a result of the Tet offensive, the U.S. military and Saigon government troops were forced to revise their offensive search and destroy operations and rural pacification program and to switch to the policy of maintaining defensive strongholds, principally in cities and bases. On the political and diplomatic front, the bombing of the North was suspended and the negotiations for peace was attempted. Since in the United States the feeling of the U.S. overcommitment to the war and the frustration at the elusiveness of victory had deeply shaken the national will to pursue the war, this major offensive in effect set the stage for the withdrawal of the U.S. troops in South Vietnam, which had reached about 550,000.

Thus, the Tet offensive proved not only the limits of the U.S.'s power policy, but also those of the National Liberation Front. Because the latter could not cause the general uprising of urban populations, which had been expected.

The first step toward the deescalation of the war was the announcement by President Lyndon B. Johnson on March 31, 1968, of a partial suspension of the bombing of the North, a move which set the stage for peace talks between the United States and North Vietnam in Paris. At the end of October the

bombing of the North was completely halted, and in January of 1969 the Paris peace talks were widened to include representatives of both the Saigon government and the National Liberation Front.

The task of achieving peace in Vietnam thus narrowed down to two basic problems: the withdrawal of foreign troops and the unification of South Vietnam. The former got underway by the announcement at the Midway Conference of U.S. Plans for a voluntary withdrawal of troops between the new U.S. President Richard M. Nixon and South Vietnamese President Thieu in June 1969. This withdrawal was to take place on the basis of strengthening military capability of the Saigon government, which could take over the U.S.'s role of the fighting ("Vietnamization" of the war). However, the latter, the unification of South Vietnam, was more complicated. The Saigon government advocated the establishment of a unified government by elections which would be held under its control. The National Liberation Front, though, organized a "Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam" in June 1969 and made active preparations to form a unified government through general elections under the control of a provisional coalition government, in which it would play an important role [11]. At the same time, representatives of the National Liberation Front at the Paris peace talks became representatives of the Provisional Revolutionary Government.

The peace talks took two forms: the official talks in Paris and secret negotiations began in August 1969. Progress was slow, however, because of the differences on basic positions of two sides. In the meantime, in March 1970, General Lon Nol and other members of the Cambodian military's right-wing pro-U.S. faction staged a coup removing Sihanouk from the position of chief of state and driving him into exile. Then at the end of April, U.S. and South Vietnamese government troops thrust into Cambodia to strike a hard blow against the National Liberation Front's sanctuaries. In February 1971, Saigon troops intruded into Laos to cut the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

When, in May 1971, the United States retracted its long-standing insistence that all North Vietnamese troops as well as U.S. troops should withdraw from South Vietnam, the peace talks began to make some progress, and in June and July North Vietnam and the Provisional Revolutionary Government made peace proposals. Both proposals included the demand that the United States should stop to give support to the Thieu regime. The Communist hoped that Thieu would be defeated in the South Vietnamese presidential elections of June 1971, but as it turned out, he was elected again [5].

Rapprochement between the United States and China and that between the United States and the Soviet Union took definite shape in July 1971. This was a great shock to North Vietnam, which emphasized the need to resolve the Vietnam problem on the basis of its own independent line. It bitterly assailed the idea that problems could be resolved by negotiations among the big powers. Words, moreover, were not the only form in which North Vietnam expressed its opposition to any such development, for at the end of March 1972, just one month after President Nixon's visit to China, it launched a major offensive in

South Vietnam. Progress on the battlefield, however, was not as great as North Vietnam and the Provisional Revolutionary Government had expected. North Vietnam eventually reexamined its war policy in the face of such developments as an all-out U.S. rebombing of the North (March 1972), and the blockading of North Vietnamese ports and harbors with mines (May 1972) and persuasion on the part of both China and the Soviet Union to take a more flexible stand.

At the same time, the United States, stepped up its bombing of the North, and stood by its contention that the sovereignty of South Vietnam resided in the South Vietnamese government. It also put pressure on the Thieu regime by threatening to halt aid, and thereby created a propitious atmosphere for peace. On January 27, 1973, the Vietnam Peace Agreement, i.e., the "Agreement for the Cessation of War and the Re-establishment of Peace in Vietnam," was officially signed in Paris by representatives of the United States, the Republic of Vietnam, North Vietnam, and the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam.

By the peace agreement, North Vietnam had the U.S. troops withdraw from Vietnam and the United States and other countries recognized the indivisibility of Vietnam and the existence of two governments in the South, one of them the Provisional Revolutionary Government. U.S. prisoners of war were released in exchange for the troop withdrawal and it managed to keep the Saigon regime in power. In other words, both sides were able to achieve their basic goals in a fashion, the North Vietnamese and the Provisional Revolutionary Government hailed the agreement as "victory," and the United States claimed that it represented "peace with honor."

With the achievement of peace in Vietnam, the civil war in Laos, closely tied to the war in Vietnam, also saw rapid concrete moves toward peace, and a peace agreement between the Vientiane (royal) government and the Patriotic Front was formally signed on February 21.

In spite of the establishment of peace in Vietnam and Laos, however, peace has not yet come to Cambodia, the last to be involved in fighting in Indochina. In fact, the battle between the Phnom Penh government (the Khmer Republic) and the Royal Government of National Unity established in May 1970, has continued to rage without interruption.

II. POLITICAL LEADERSHIP OF NON-COMMUNIST REGIMES IN INDOCHINA

Non-Communist national regimes in Indochina from the mid-sixties through the early seventies, i.e., the Thieu regime in South Vietnam, the Lon Nol regime in Cambodia, and the Souvanna Phouma regime in Laos, were not the result of political movements but were rather based on undefined coalitions between the military and political elite. Accordingly, their political bases have been weak, and constantly plagued by splits among the political elite and estrangement of different social and political elements. The period of the Second Indochina War was not only the struggle between Communist and non-Communist forces,

but also the one among non-Communist forces. Let us see the forms of struggle in each country.

In the case of South Vietnam, the Ngo Dinh Diem regime was overthrown by military coup at the end of 1963. The several governments formed in the period 1964-65 were unable to maintain national unity with strong political leadership, because they failed to get along with Buddhists and students in the cities and various ethnic and indigenous religious groups in the countryside. This includes ethnic groups in the mountain regions and religious groups such as the Cao Dai and the Hoa Hao [18] [19] [3] [26].

During this period power changed hands at a dizzy pace, mainly through coup d'états in the background of demands by Buddhists and students for democratization and of the struggle for power in the military. In fact, there were ten or so changes of government among nine different factions including two civilian ones. First of all, General Duong Van Minh, who had overthrown the Diem regime, was driven from power as a "neutralist" by General Nguyen Khanh. It was followed by four more changes of government in the same year. Then strongman Khanh himself was kicked out by subordinates in February 1965 and the junta led by General Nguyen Van Thieu as head of state and General Nguyen Cao Ky as premier was formed in June of the same year. As we have already mentioned, the Thieu regime managed to tide over the crisis of a threatened "civil war within a civil war" in 1966 and still remained in power since then. None of the governments formed in South Vietnam in this period, however, directed full energy toward such paramount matters as military measures against the National Liberation Front's attacks coping with problems of deteriorating inflation, growing numbers of war refugees, and other problems relating to national welfare and economic stability. Instead, they were absorbed in feathering their own nests and in internal power struggles over kinship, regional ties, and religious affiliation [3]. The kaleidoscope of government was mostly due to the legacy of the informers' system from the French colonial period and of the brutal secret police from the Diem regime, extreme individualism and mutual distrust were manifested in an incessant regrouping among politicians and the military.

It was only natural, therefore, under such circumstances that morale of government troops would flag and popular support to the government would decrease. Although enjoying overwhelming superiority in numbers and equipment, government troops were unable to get superior in actual combat. This military inferiority of the Saigon government was compensated by the U.S. intervention in 1965.

It is no mistake that reinforcement of intervention would be effective in helping the government recover or at least keep its position from breakdown. Besides such military efforts, the United States, making sure that its aid went all the way down the line to even the farthest outlying areas, sent USOM (later USAID) employees to the provinces to act as internal affairs' advisors of governors and district chiefs who were military men because of war footing, and they came to exercise real control over local politics in South Vietnam.

The Constitution on which the present regime in South Vietnam is based was promulgated on April 1, 1967. It clearly sets forth the anti-Communist nature of the regime and states that the sovereignty of the Republic covers the entire territory of Vietnam. In the presidential election held in September 1967 for transition from military to civilian rule, Nguyen Van Thieu scored an overwhelming victory. The Republic has a bicameral parliamentary system, and the Constitution provides for a separation of powers into legislative, executive, and judiciary. Presidential powers are very strong, however. Because of the continuation of the war, the majority of members of Parliament are military men, and the president frequently makes decrees giving himself emergency powers, which in actuality makes the South Vietnamese regime very much a military dictatorship under President Thieu.

As mentioned above, after the election in 1967, President Thieu extended his influence and was reelected in 1971 on the basis of the strong military and U.S. support and his superb administrative ability as a bureaucratic politician. In the period immediately prior to the conclusion of the Vietnam Peace Agreement he pulled way ahead of all rivals and solidified his position [32, pp. 1-24] [5]. His former rival General Nguyen Cao Ky rapidly lost support after withdrawing from the 1971 presidential elections. Although General Duong Van Minh, who led the coup that toppled the Diem regime in November 1963, attempted to unite anti-Thieu forces and to stand up against Thieu, the chances of his success looked dim indeed at the end of 1972. Furthermore, there were no particularly conspicuous moves on the part of the An Quang Buddhists, the so-called third force lying between the Saigon government and the Provisional Revolutionary Government. When its leader Thich Thien Hoa died at about the same time as the conclusion of the Paris Peace Agreement, the An Quang began to fall apart and became a much weaker anti-government force [25]. Other political parties, both old and new, continued to lack unity because of regional and religious differences already noted. Thus, prospects for a strong anti-government movement were all the weaker in view of the government's heavy-handed measures.

Besides anti-inflation and other fiscal and economic measures, one stabilization plan on which the Thieu regime placed emphasis, with direction and assistance from the United States, was the Rural Resettlement Program. The success of this program was very important to the Saigon government since ultimately the struggle with the National Liberation Front was a struggle for the people's support, particularly of the rural population. Previously such rural stabilization measures as the "agrovillage" and "strategic hamlet" programs were carried out under the Diem regime, but neither was successful, because they ignored the traditional Vietnamese rural practices [20, pp. 139-94]. Beginning in 1966, the Thieu regime replaced these programs with the Revolutionary Development Program. This program, involving the driving out of the National Liberation Front forces from certain areas, the establishment of a civil government, and finally, the rebuilding of villages through the efforts of a "revolutionary development work team" of about sixty Vietnamese youths, was a program to reshuffle village

society in an effort to eradicate the National Liberation Front activity [20; pp.200–202]. In spite of the tremendous efforts of the Saigon government and the United States to make this program a success, however, they were not able to drive away the National Liberation Front forces from rural villages, and the Tet offensive of 1968 dealt the program such a blow that it collapsed. Although the Thieu regime and the United States switched to a strategy of defense of city and base strongholds after the Tet offensive, they could not give up the rural communities entirely and therefore implemented a new "Accelerated Pacification Program" in the vicinity of cities, which was a rural stabilization program very much similar to its predecessor, the Revolutionary Development Program. In addition, the Thieu regime succeeded to some extent with its efforts since 1970 in gaining the support of the peasants by pressing for land reform. Also to the regime's credit were a marked improvement and expansion of roads, airports, harbors, and other infrastructural facilities, and the promotion of a forceful urbanization policy.

In the meantime steady progress was made in shifting the responsibility for combat operations from U.S. troops to their South Vietnamese counterparts. By November 1972, when the Paris peace talks were entering the final stage, the number of U.S. troops stationed in South Vietnam was reduced to 27,000, and South Vietnamese government troop strength reached 1,100,000. The success of Vietnamization was shown by the fact that in spite of a series of defeats in the initial fighting in the Communist Tet offensive of March 1972, the South Vietnamese government troops were eventually able to hold their own without assistance from U.S. ground forces. This went a long way to restore the government's confidence and strengthen President Thieu's position. Furthermore, reports of large-scale massacres of Hue citizens by Communists in the 1968 Tet offensive stirred anti-Communist feelings in the people of South Vietnam, which in turn helped to compensate for the anti-Thieu posture of the population. In other words, these conditions had the unexpected effect of strengthening the political footing of the Thieu regime in South Vietnam which had been beset with many problems in the political, military, economic, social, and other spheres. The result was that, at the end of 1972, at least 75–80 per cent of the population was estimated to be under the control of the Thieu regime.

However, on the other side of the coin, this unexpected stability of the Thieu regime did not stand in the way of the infiltration efforts of the Communists. Far from it, they were expected instead to continue their patient struggle with solidarity, strong will, and organization.

The Vientiane government in Laos has been burdened with the same or even more serious problems than the Saigon government. It seems that the fact that Prince Souvanna Phouma consistently remained at the head of the three-faction coalition government since 1962 is an indication of that government's stability, but the political leadership of this elderly man has been conducted in an extremely unstable situation of struggle among the civilian and military elite.

In spite of the fact that the independence, neutrality, and unity of Laos were again recognized and guaranteed internationally by the Second Geneva Accords

in July 1962 after the establishment in June of the second three-faction coalition government (headed by Phouma) since independence, the power struggle among the three factions continued unabated. Fighting again broke out between the leftist Neo Lao Hak Sat (the Pathet Lao) and the neutral and rightist forces in April 1963. Furthermore, after incidents such as the assassination of Quinim Pholsena, the neutral-left foreign minister, the leftist faction, headed by Prince Souphanouvong, withdrew all of its adherents from the cabinet by June 1964 and holed up in the liberated area of the country, from which it commenced fighting with government troops (neutral and rightist). The civil war thus once again bursting into flames [30] [1] [22].

In the meantime, besides the fighting there were continuing efforts on several occasions, including talks among the three factions to bring about a solution, with the main theater of activity being the Plain of Jars, but all such efforts had broken down in April 1964. Taking advantage of the situation, rightist Generals Kouprasith Abhay (commander of the Vientiane District) and Siho Lamponthacoul (head of the national police) stage a coup. Although it did not succeed because the two generals did not get the support of the United States and other foreign powers, these foreign countries' basic policy was the neutralization of Laos, as in the case of the Soviet Union. Premier Phouma did lean further to the right, reshuffled his cabinet and integrated the military forces of the neutralist and rightist factions. The leftist faction refused to recognize the Vientiane government since then, branding it a "puppet of U.S. imperialism."

Premier Phouma's position became comparatively stable, when Vice Premier Phoumi Nosavan and National Police Chief Siho fled to Thailand after staging an unsuccessful coup in late January of 1965 which was in fact a power struggle within the rightist faction. In the very next month, February 1965, the war in Vietnam became an international affair with the U.S. bombing of North Vietnam and the sending of large numbers of U.S. troops into South Vietnam. As already pointed out, this marked the beginning of an even closer connection between Laos and the Vietnam War due to the position of the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

In July of the same year elections were held, and in August a new cabinet was formed, with Prince Phouma of the neutralist faction continuing as premier. As the dimensions of the Vietnam War grew, Phouma's position became even more stable. In September 1966, however, Phouma had to dissolve Parliament because of the National Assembly's rejection of the budget submitted by the government. In October the units of Air Force Commander Thao Ma staged a rebellion, and bombed the army general headquarters near Vientiane. This rebellion was a result of differences within the military. The coup was unsuccessful and General Thao Ma had to seek refuge in Bangkok. Then again, Phouma garnered victory with the help of the rightist Phoui Sananikone faction in the general elections of January 1967. But neutralist military commander Kong Le, who had consistently supported Phouma since the coup d'état of August 1960, was driven into exile as a result of his opposition at that time to integration with the rightist military forces. This is evidence that the stabilization of Phouma's position as premier was accomplished through compromise

with the rightists. Thus, the rightists from the south increased their influence in Vientiane government circles, and Premier Phouma, while continuing to espouse a policy of neutrality, leaned increasingly to the right in the course of coping with the Patriotic Front.

The main factor of instability in the domestic political situation in Laos is the difference among the three factions. In the early 1970s the lines of division among these three factions were as follows. On the left were the Patriotic Front and the left wing of the neutralists, in the center was Phouma's group, and on the right were the southern rightists, led by Prince Boun Oum and Vice Premier Leuam Insisiengmay. There were also the Vientiane rightists headed by Phoui Sananikone, chairman of the National Assembly.

While the chief key to stabilization of the political situation is the position of the Communists, i.e., the Patriotic Front, it should also be noted that there is another factor of instability: the repeated internal power struggles between different elements within both the neutralist and rightist factions. Also the fact that each grouping has its own military forces makes compromise and unity even more difficult. For instance, even within the Vientiane regime, the rightists, particularly the southern rightists group which succeeded the former Nosavan group as well as Sisouk Na Champassak and some of the other young rightists, were dissatisfied with Phouma's neutrality policy and demanded instead that there be a clean sweep of the leftists from the government. Phouma, the "symbol of Laos' neutrality," supported by the United States, the Soviet Union, and other powers, succeeded after a fashion in stabilizing his position as premier while continuing to compromise with these political and military rightists within the royal government.

The non-Communist regime in Cambodia as well has been plagued in recent years by the same kinds of weaknesses as the Vientiane regime in Laos. Up to the early 1970s, however, the political situation was stable under the leadership of Chief of State Prince Norodom Sihanouk. This was largely due to the people's trust in Prince Sihanouk as the Father of Independence, and the success of the policy of "royal socialism," consisting of socialistic economic and social policies and maintaining a democratized system of royalty under the country's Buddhist traditions. The goal of this policy was the effective realization of national integration and economic development. Also important was the country's neutralist foreign policy, in which large amounts of aid were obtained from both East and West bloc countries. Most important of all was that involvement in the Vietnam War was averted, making it possible to maintain domestic peace [4, Part 4] [24, Chap. 2].

On March 18, 1970, however, the Parliament adopted a unanimous resolution to remove Sihanouk, who was out of the country at the time, as chief of state. This was, in effect, a coup d'état. At the same time it meant the end of peace in Cambodia and the beginning of the country's complete involvement in the "Second Indochina War." Reasons for the coup were differences within the government and the ruling party, the Sangkum (People's Socialist Community), over economic development and the future maintenance of Cambodia's independ-

ence at a stage that the war in Vietnam was drawing to an end. Specifically, it was due to differences within the Sangkum over what to do about the government's deteriorating financial position, caused by the withdrawal of U.S. assistance since the end of 1963, and secondly how to cope with the approximately 50,000 North Vietnamese and the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam troops that had for years been occupying the strip of land on the eastern end of the country bordering on South Vietnam, using it as a "sanctuary" for combat operations within that country. The pro-American rightists, led by Premier Lon Nol and Vice Premier Sirik Matak, espoused liberalization of the economy and the adoption of firm measures against Vietnamese Communist troops. Sihanouk wanted to continue the policy of economic nationalization and solve the problem of Vietnamese Communist troops in Cambodia by long-run diplomatic means. The result was that the rightists gradually increased their influence and, gained an overwhelming majority in the Parliament, taking advantage of the long-standing dissatisfaction of intellectuals and students with Sihanouk's dictatorial politics. They called for Sihanouk to account for his policies and finally decided to oust and banish him from the country, when he was abroad. This coup succeeded with a background of heightened Khmer nationalism among the people of Cambodia, of which a major element was the historical antipathy towards the Vietnamese [15] [24, Chap. 3].

This coup produced a new regime of General Lon Nol in Phnom Penh. At the same time, however, Prince Sihanouk, who had taken up residence in Peking, on March 23 declared the formation of the National United Front of Kampuchéa and assumed thereby a posture of confrontation with the Lon Nol regime. Furthermore, a "Summit Conference of the Indochinese Peoples," composed of representatives from Vietnam (North Vietnam and the South Vietnamese Provisional Revolutionary Government), Cambodia (the National United Front of Kampuchéa), and Laos (the Patriotic Front), was held on April 24 and 25 by Sihanouk with the support of China. At the end of that month, the Lon Nol regime was on the verge of collapse after failing to drive away the North Vietnamese troops and South Vietnamese National Liberation Front troops from Cambodian territory. This situation brought on the incursion of U.S. troops and South Vietnamese government troops into Cambodia to rescue the Lon Nol regime and turn the war situation in Vietnam to the advantage of the Saigon regime by hitting Communist sanctuaries. Thus, the flames of war spread throughout Cambodian territory, and, with the establishment in Peking in early May of the Royal Government of National Unity under Prince Sihanouk, Cambodia was split into two spheres of control, that of the Royal government and that of the pro-American Lon Nol regime in Phnom Penh. The head of state of the latter was Cheng Heng. Ever since then the fighting in Cambodia has continued as a part of the Second Indochina War.

As of October 9, 1970, the Lon Nol regime made the transition from monarchy to republic, the Khmer Republic. The political support for the Lon Nol regime came from rightist politicians belonging to the Sangkum, centering on the military which consistently supported General Lon Nol, and from intellec-

tuals, students, and others who opposed the Sihanouk regime because of its corruption, nepotism, and other outdated practices [24, Chap. 5]. Subsequently, however, lack of harmony among these sources of political support became rather conspicuous, and the political situation under the Lon Nol regime by no means stabilized. First of all, in February 1971 Lon Nol suffered from a stroke, which caused him in April to announce that he would resign. But since Sirik Matak, his ally who had great administrative acumen, was not very popular with the people. There was no one else who could fill Lon Nol's shoes. Lon Nol had no choice but to return to the premiership in spite of his poor health in order to overcome political instability. Thereafter, in addition to Sirik Matak, acting premier during Lon Nol's illness, another man rapidly came to the forefront of the political scene—Lon Nol's youngest brother, Brigadier General Lon Non. All the power of the Phnom Penh regime was gradually concentrated in the hands of these two brothers, who enjoyed backing from the main military faction. Developments of this direction resulted in the successive expulsion of the parliamentary politicians centered on In Tam who wanted to put a stop to the military intervention into politics and Sirik Matak and his supporters, who tried to maintain a balance among the military, the administrative branch, and Parliament [22, Chaps. 6–7]. If the dissolution of the Constitutional Assembly in March 1972 and Lon Nol's inauguration as temporary president of the republic were the final touches to military dictatorship and the Lon Nol order of rule, the presidential elections held on June 6 on the basis of the new self-serving Constitution that was promulgated on May 12 can be said to have been aimed at legitimizing such rule. These elections were followed in September by an election of the upper house of the National Assembly, through which Lon Nol's power was boosted still further by his faction winning all seats in both houses. Nevertheless, this sharpened the opposition between Lon Nol's Social Republican party and In Tam's Democratic party and led the Sirik Matak faction to form a new party, the Republican party, thereby jeopardizing its cooperative relationship with the Lon Nol faction.

Amidst such a sharpened power struggle among the top political leadership, there was increasing disappointment and distrust of the Lon Nol regime on the part of the intellectuals and students. They had cooperated with the new regime in the fervent hope that the 1970 coup d'état would bring some sort of social reform, but their hopes were betrayed by the fact that nothing changed in comparison with the old regime with respect to the dictatorial nature of politics, favoritism in personnel matters, corruption, and so forth. And yet they had no prospect for future democratization. There was also a visible increase in the dissatisfaction with the government by the general public, who were suffering severely from rampant inflation and various control measures adopted in the name of the "sacred war" against the Vietnamese Communist troops in Cambodia. A manifestation of this dissatisfaction was the narrow margin by which Lon Nol won the presidential election. In the meantime the military situation worsened.

Amid such a situation, it appeared that the Lon Nol regime barely managed

to hold on to Phnom Penh and major provincial capitals and to stave off catastrophe of the economy with assistance from the United States and other Western bloc countries. According to the Kampuchéa Front of National Unity, by the end of 1972, it controlled 80 per cent of national territory and over 70 per cent of the population.

III. POLITICAL LEADERSHIP OF COMMUNIST REGIMES IN INDOCHINA

North Vietnam (the Democratic Republic of Vietnam), of all Communist forces in Indochina (North Vietnam, National Liberation Front of South Vietnam, the Laos Patriotic Front, the Kampuchéa Front of National Unity), has the longest history and is the greatest in strength.

The majority of present leaders of North Vietnam have been in the struggle for the liberation of the Vietnamese people, under the flag of anti-colonialism and anti-feudalism, since the formation of the Indochinese Communist party in 1930. This party was the forerunner of the present Vietnamese Workers' party, established in March 1951, which finally succeeded in driving the French out of Indochina. In addition, these leaders have exercised influence over the development of nationalistic movements in which Communists have been dominant not only in Vietnam but also in Laos and Cambodia.

Since the establishment of a stable regime in Vietnam north of the 17th parallel in 1954, the leaders of North Vietnam have had two goals: socialist development of their own country and liberation of the South. In pursuit of these goals, North Vietnam has evinced extraordinary strength. Furthermore, it would appear that the outstanding political leadership of the regime has been carried over by the successors of the great leader Ho Chi Minh without any major splitting of ranks or change in policy.

In considering the structure of political leadership of North Vietnam it is necessary to place emphasis on the Vietnam Workers' party (or Dang Lao Dong), which is based on Marxism-Leninism and prides itself on being the organized vanguard of the working class [12]. The strong leadership of the Workers' party is apparent in the preamble of North Vietnam's Constitution, adopted in 1960, which states, "Our country is a people's democratic state led by the working class on the basis of a federation of workers and peasants." In regard to leaders of the country, one has to conclude that, even if they hold high positions, they do not enjoy anything more than nominal power unless they are also powerful in the party. The leadership of the Vietnamese Workers' party has remained unshaken throughout the national salvation struggle against the United States. No party congress on the national level has been held since the third congress in September 1960, at which a total of seventy-one members of the party Central Committee (forty-three regular members and twenty-eight candidate members) were elected (some have since died). All are considered to have participated in the forefront of national leadership, and seventeen of whom are considered to hold top power in North Vietnam, eight of them are

members of the politburo, six members of the secretariat, and three members of both organizations.

Furthermore, the order of rank in the politburo has remained unchanged since 1960, with the exception of President Ho Chi Minh, who headed the list, and one other member who passed away by 1969, Le Duan and Truong Chinh are now first and second in rank. Most politburo members participated in the Indochina Communist party from its inception in 1930 and shared trials and tribulations with Ho Chi Minh. Moreover, a good many Central Committee regular and candidate members played active roles in the struggle against the French for national independence, i.e., the "First Indochina War" of 1946-54. In other words, the top leadership of North Vietnam consists of a core of dyed-in-the-wool party members from the early days of the Indochina Communist party, and an outer layer of party members who participated in the struggle against the French for independence. Hence the fact that they are rather advanced in age.

The most prominent feature of North Vietnamese leadership is its extraordinary stability, evidenced by the fact that it has not been marked by the large-scale purges or successive changes in leadership that one often sees in other Communist countries. The main reason was no doubt the outstanding leadership ability of President Ho Chi Minh. Since the formation of the Indochina Communist party in 1930 he constantly remained at the center of party leadership, directing the Viet Minh as a broad-based national front during World War II and eventually declaring the independence of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam on September 2, 1945. Thereafter, Ho took control of all power in North Vietnam, there being no one else in the party who could compare with him in terms of experience gained in the long struggle against the French and in terms of international perspective [8] [2] [20, pp. 212-26]. Almost all powerful leaders of North Vietnam today were groomed as revolutionary activists under his direction. It is thanks to Ho's outstanding leadership that heads of North Vietnam have to this day maintained their stability and been unmarred by any large-scale interparty power struggles. Another major factor that prevented the occurrence of any such power struggles is of course the constant pressure from the outside that has continued since the formation of the party, first from the French and then from the United States.

Since Ho Chi Minh's death North Vietnam has been ruled by group leadership, which was already determined before his death. At the head of this group leadership at present time is a triumvirate of First Party Secretary Le Duan, in charge of party affairs; National Assembly Standing Committee Chairman Truong Chinh, also head of the Patriotic Front; and Premier Pham Van Dong, top man in the government. The basis for this triumvirate was laid in 1960. In January the new Constitution went into effect, providing for a vice president of the Republic. The vice president was considered to be the most likely successor to Ho Chi Minh. The man that Ho nominated for the vice presidency was Ton Duc Thang, a revolutionary veteran two years his senior, and Thang did indeed assume the presidency upon Ho's death in 1969, with Nguyen Luong

Bang moving into the vice presidential slot. Although both men are members of the Central Committee of the Workers' party neither are politburo members, which means that they have only nominal power. Through such a cautious personnel arrangement Ho Chi Minh succeeded in preventing an interparty power struggle after his death.

Although the leadership of the Vietnamese Workers' party appears to be marked by monolithic solidarity, it would not be correct to assume that there is no sign of the existence of factions [17, pp. 151-84]. The following are some factors related to the occurrence of factions within the party. First of all, there is the effect that the Sino-Soviet rift has had on the leadership of North Vietnam, and in this connection it is possible to surmise a difference in stand between the pro-Soviet faction led by Le Duan and the pro-Chinese faction led by Truong Chinh in view of the two men's backgrounds and the policies they have supported in the past. A second factor has been a difference in view over the policy for the liberation of South Vietnam. There are purported to be two lines of thinking in this respect, one, espoused by First Secretary Le Duan, contending that priority should be given to the liberation of the South, and the other, by Truong Chinh and others, maintaining that socialist construction in the North should take precedence. Furthermore, this difference is also supposed to extend to the strategy for liberation of the South. After Le Duan became first secretary, the third party congress in September 1960 set forth the policy of liberation of the South, and at the Ninth Central Committee Meeting in December 1963, the strategy of developing the liberation effort for all-out attack and general uprising was adopted. This led to the introduction of regular North Vietnamese troops into the South. The same position was taken by Minister of Defense Vo Nguyen Giap. On the other hand, Truong Chinh, accepting the "people's war" doctrine of the Chinese, espoused a long-drawn-out struggle.

Nevertheless, even if one accepts the fact that there has been such a difference on strategy, one should not attach too much importance to factionalism within North Vietnamese leadership, for they are first and foremost Vietnamese patriots. As witnessed by past performance, they will make the maximum effort to avoid any risk of a split within party ranks.

Without a doubt, North Vietnam will continue to maintain its system of stable group leadership, step up its socialist construction at home, and provide leadership for the liberation forces in the South and in other countries in Indochina.

One might add here that considerable progress is being made in the agricultural cooperative movement, which will determine North Vietnam's basic political and social system, particularly with the issuance in April 1969 of the High-level Cooperative Ordinance [20, pp. 178-79]. It is no exaggeration to say that this has made it possible to transfigure rural North Vietnam into a completely new socialist society.

It is probably well known that in recent years the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam has played a central part in the liberation forces in South Vietnam. The front was formed in December 1960, and together with North Vietnam has since fought its way through a fierce war "against the U.S. and

for national salvation," being pitted against more than five hundred thousand U.S. troops [14]. In June 1969 it established the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam, which, by the Vietnam Peace Agreement of January 1973, gained international recognition on equal levels with the Saigon government.

There are two views on the nature of this Liberation Front. One, places emphasis on the political situation in South Vietnam under the U.S. support, dictator, Ngo Dinh Diem, preceding the formation of the Liberation Front. This view considers formation to have been an anti-government, anti-U.S. movement on the part of the people of South Vietnam that developed and grew spontaneously. It stresses the independent character of the South Vietnamese people. The other view places emphasis on developments in North Vietnam during the same period such as the adoption at the fifteenth session of the Central Committee of the Workers' party in January 1959 of the goal of "completion of the national democratic revolution in the South," the resolution adopted at the party's third congress in September 1960 on strategy for liberation of the South, the proposal for the establishment of a national united front in South Vietnam based on a federation of the workers and the peasants. It considers the Liberation Front to be revolutionary in the guise of an anti-government, anti-U.S. movement organized under the direction and planning of the Vietnam Workers' party in Hanoi. These two views have continued at odds with one another, the U.S. government, of course, accepting the latter.

As stated in its inaugural declaration, the Liberation Front is a united front which brings together a broad range of national, democratic, and peace forces. The number of organizations which belong to it are supposed to total over thirty [11, Appendix 1]. They include political parties such as the People's Revolutionary party, the Radical Socialist party, and the Democratic party and liberation organizations such as the Association of Peasants for Liberation, the Women's Union for Liberation, and the Federation of Trade Unions for Liberation. A special feature in organizing the Liberation Front, however, is the fact that it started first, with member organizations being organized afterwards. This differs from the normal case, in which organization member to the united front are in existence prior to formation. For instance, the People's Revolutionary party was formed in January 1962, a year after the front was organized. In view of this, it is clear that at that time there was strong enough dissatisfaction on the part of the people of South Vietnam to allow the formation and development of a liberation front. One may assume that this background dissatisfaction was instrumental in the rapid organization of various anti-government forces with strong support and direction from Hanoi. The United States is particularly interested in the Central Office for South Vietnam (COSVN), the top organization of the Vietnam Workers' party in the South. This office is thought to have been reestablished around 1961, and the People's Revolutionary party is considered to be a sort of branch in the South of the Workers' party.

The Liberation Front made smooth progress in development. The Provisional Revolutionary Government, established in June 1969, was organized on the basis

of the front and the Vietnam Alliance of National, Democratic and Peace Forces (VNANDPF) [11, Appendix 2], formed at the time of the 1968 Tet offensive. Intellectuals in Saigon, Hue, and elsewhere played principal roles.

The Provisional Revolutionary Government consists of a Cabinet Conference and Advisory Council, its administrative organization being one of democratic centralism, with elected people's revolutionary councils and people's revolutionary committees appointed at the city, provincial, county, and village level [11, Appendix 3].

What warrants particular attention regarding the Provisional Revolutionary Government is the fact that it seeks a dual leadership structure, with a national democratic alliance on the central and urban level encompassing various revolutionary classes and patriots for the sake of unifying and mobilizing the people against U.S. imperialism. It also has a proletarian dictatorship on the regional level based on an alliance of workers and peasants. This is considered to be a reflection of the actual political situation in South Vietnam today, in which the Saigon regime strongly controls the cities and the Provisional Revolutionary Government is supreme in rural areas.

With respect to the relationship between North Vietnam and the liberation forces in South Vietnam, it was probably the case that the liberation forces in South Vietnam had no choice but to increase their dependency on North Vietnam because of increased pressure from the enemy. Thus, the Liberation Front, depended primarily on the people of South Vietnam when it was formed, but had to gradually yield supremacy in both political leadership and military capability to North Vietnam.

The backgrounds of those that left Hanoi to direct the revolutionary movement in the South, show that most are of worker or poor peasant origin and were either party members from the time of the Indochina Communist party or had experience in the Viet Minh. This contrasts with the leaders of the Liberation Front and the Provisional Revolutionary government who came from the upper and middle classes and had little experience in the revolutionary movement. It would appear that it has been the intention of North Vietnam to give the leadership of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam and the Provisional Revolutionary Government a "proletarian dictatorship" backbone by sending these leaders.

In Laos the equivalent of the National Liberation Front in South Vietnam is the Laos Patriotic Front (Neo Lao Hak Sat or NLHS), known better as the Pathet Lao. It acquired this name in January 1956, being formed from the former Anti-French Resistance government—which later changed its name to Pathet Lao, which means "the country of Laos" by Prince Souphanouvong in August 1950 with the cooperation of the Viet Minh, for the struggle against the French Liberation and the Anti-French Force Laos Front (Neo Lao Issara), which was formed in November of the same years [17, p. 192].

Not long after the three-faction (left, right, and neutral) coalition government was established in 1962, it split up. The leftist faction, the Patriotic Front,

declared its resolve to fight against the "puppet regime" in Vientiane under U.S. imperialism and against Souvanna Phouma with the cooperation of the left wing of the neutralist faction. It could do this after gathering its central forces in Sam Neua, its old base in the north by 1964. This was subsequent to its departure from the Royal government in Vientiane. Later, the civil war in Laos between the government (the right and neutralist faction) and the coalition forces of the Patriotic Front continued to increase in intensity. The situation gradually turned in favor of the patriotic forces as the territory they controlled steadily expanded.

As with Communist movements in other developing countries, the Laos Patriotic Front is broadly united and includes a very small number of core groups of all classes and age groups. Supreme leadership is provided by the Central Committee [31], consisting of sixty-three members who were elected in April 1964. They work under Chairman Souphanouvong, and include Vice Chairmen Sithon Kammadam, Kayson Phoumviharn, and Phaydang Lobliayao and Chief Secretary Phoumi Vongvichit. As in the Workers' party of North Vietnam, the leadership of the Patriotic Front has remained firm since the early 1950s without any major internal rifts. A good number of the leaders of the Patriotic Front come from so-called good families. For instance, Chairman Souphanouvong comes from the Luang Prabang royal family and is a half-brother of Prince Souvanna Phouma. Chief Secretary Vongvichit's father is the governor of Vientiane Province, Vice Chairman Kammadam is a son of a Kha mountain tribe leader, and Central Committee Member Sinkapo Chounramany is supposedly from one of the most influential families in Khammouane Province. On the other hand, Central Committee Regular Member Nouhak Phomsaran, from Savannakhet Province never received any formal education beyond elementary school, and others like him are exceptional. This indicates a special feature of the political and social structure of the country—until now there is a superiority of those from royalty and other traditionally dominant social strata. Since 1970 in peace negotiations with the Vientiane government the Patriotic Front has made the establishment of a new coalition government under the present monarchy one of its basic premises. This fact should be understood in the Laotian context.

However, it is no mistake that since formation, the Patriotic Front has received assistance from and developed its revolutionary activities under strong North Vietnamese influence. Hence the view of some that recently the real leaders of the Patriotic Front have been Vice Chairman Kayson Phoumviharn, a communist theorist with close ties to North Vietnam, and Central Committee Regular Member Nouhak Phoumsavan, and Chairman Souphanouvong, Vice Chairman Kammadam, and Vice Chairman Lobliayao are merely "revolutionary symbols" for the Laotian people, the Kha, and the Meo mountain tribes respectively. Vice Chairman Kayson Phoumviharn and Central Committee Regular Member Nouhak Phoumsavan are chairman and vice chairman of the Marxist-Leninist People's party of Laos, which, similar to the People's Revolutionary party in South Vietnam, is a sort of branch in Laos of the North Vietnamese

Workers' party. They are considered to rank ahead of Prince Souphanouvong and Chief Secretary Vongvichit in the party [31, p. 33], few details are known though since it is a semi-secret political party. In any case, it is clear that this People's party, a Communist party, occupies a central position in the Laos Patriotic Front and that the latter has developed its activities while receiving considerable material and personnel support from North Vietnam [9] [31].

When the Patriotic Front announced that at the end of 1972 it had liberated four-fifths of the national territory of Laos and one-half of the total population of 3 million, the Vientiane government estimated that the real figure were 65 per cent of the national territory and 33 per cent of the population. The control of the Patriotic Front extends over nine mountainous provinces, from Sam Neua and Phong Saly in the north to provinces in the southern part of the country. Unlike the Vientiane government, the front has a system of regional administration consisting of committees from the Central Committee at the top to provincial, district, county, and village levels in the territory under its control.

Last to be considered is the Communist challenge and its political leadership in Cambodia. The indigenous Communist movement there has of course been much weaker than in North Vietnam and even considerably weaker than in South Vietnam and Laos. Having grown up in a long monarchical tradition, the people of Cambodia have an essentially anti-Communist political bent. As a result the North Vietnamese (Viet Minh) were not very successful in attempting to establish a nationalist movement there centered on communism during the First Indochina War. Moreover, even after independence Communists and other forces opposed to Prince Sihanouk's rule were not able to make much headway since Sihanouk, a symbol of both traditional power and nationalism, provided stable and popular political leadership [24] [28].

The dismissal from office of the chief of state and the banishment of Sihanouk in March 1970, however, led to a division of the country confrontation and ever more serious fighting between the Phnom Penh regime of Lon Nol, consisting of anti-Communist rightists and supported by the United States, the Saigon government, and other foreign governments, and the anti-American leftist National United Front of Kampuchéa and the Royal Government of National Unity of Prince Sihanouk. In this situation the Communists gained wider grounds for their activities and a greater role in the nationalist movement.

The Cambodian liberation forces, joined together in March 1970 under the National United Front of Kampuchéa of Chairman Sihanouk for the common purpose of liberating Phnom Penh, have been making steady progress toward that goal.

There are two major divisions within this National United Front of Kampuchéa—the Khmer Rouge (Red Khmer) and the Khmer Rumdo (Liberation Khmer). The contradictions between the two are thought to be considerable [24, Chap. 5].

The Khmer Rouge forms the core of the National United Front of Kampuchéa and it consists of many elements. First, the original Khmer Rouge (the Sangkum leftists, including both pure Communists and Communist sympathizers), forced

underground by the Sihanouk government suppression in 1967. It includes such figures in the Royal Government of National Unity as Vice Premier and Defense Minister Khieu Samphan; Internal Affairs, Rural Reform, and Cooperative Unions Minister Hou Yuon; and Information and Propaganda Minister Hu Nim. There are groups like Ieng Sary, which went underground in 1963; the group of Chief Secretary Non Suon of the People's party (or Pracheachon), Cambodia's equivalent of the Communist party, which fell into a state of ruin in 1962 as the result of suppression on the part of the Sihanouk government; and the so-called Khmer Viet Minh, which fought in the First Indochina War and received training in Hanoi after the conclusion of the Geneva Accords.

Distinctly different from the Khmer Rouge are the Khmer Rumdo, a pro-Sihanouk faction. According to a military spokesman of the Lon Nol regime, this group is the most numerous of the liberation forces. Whereas the Khmer Rouge were revolutionary activists prior to the coup of March 1970, this faction is made up of people who joined the liberation forces after civil war broke out in Cambodia. They are primarily Royalists ranging from those who oppose Lon Nol to simple peasants who support Prince Sihanouk for emotional reasons. While the Khmer Rouge could be called a collection of leftist groups that stand for communism and socialism, this faction consists of nationalists belonging to the center and even the right. Furthermore, the Khmer Rouge is considerably influenced by North Vietnam, the latter leans toward China.

It is obvious that the National United Front of Kampuchéa and Sihanouk's backing are a complex mixture of different forces, including former foes. This is a reason that the Phnom Penh government concerned itself only with the Khmer Rouge actually fighting in Cambodia, and ignored Sihanouk, who had taken up residence in Peking, and also for the fact that Western bloc countries half-internally spread rumors about discord within the liberation forces.

It is true that immediately after the commencement of the struggle for liberation there were already some signs of a rather fragile relationship between Prince Sihanouk and the Khmer Rouge in regard to the political leadership of the liberation forces. Although one cannot go so far to say that the two were clearly at odds with one another, these and later signs were read as an indication that Sihanouk's standing in the National United Front of Kampuchéa had become symbolic by the end of 1972, with real power accumulating in the hands of the Khmer Rouge. Even Sihanouk himself considered that the only solution to the Cambodian problem at that stage was the establishment of true socialism and that his own role would therefore be very limited as a non-socialist nationalist [21, pp. 261-62]. Nevertheless, not even the Khmer Rouge, whose ultimate goal is socialist revolution, can afford to make light of Sihanouk if they want to achieve victory in the immediate liberation struggle, since he not only has a reputation as a skillful diplomatic tactician but also has many supporters among the peasants and the general public of Cambodia [27] [28]. For this reason it is expected that his position and role within the National United Front of Kampuchéa will be maintained at least for the time being.

IV. CHANGE IN THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION AND THE SITUATION IN INDOCHINA: 1973-74

In 1973, the Vietnam War, i.e., the Second Indochina War, which had engulfed all of Indochina, reached a new stage, one of localization from above by the three superpowers, the United States, the Soviet Union, and China. This started with the Sino-U.S. dialogue. As a result, the Vietnam Peace Agreement was concluded in Paris on January 27 of the same year, and in February a peace agreement was signed for Laos as well.

However, a year later Indochina was still a long way from achieving the real peace. Fighting was raging in both South Vietnam and Cambodia. Let us now consider the present situation in Indochina, reviewing the problems involved in the future prospects for each country.

Examining South Vietnam first, we see that the fighting between the Saigon government and the Provisional Revolutionary Government continues without interruption. There is hardly any chance at all that a National Council of National Reconciliation and Concord composed of these two political forces and a third will be established in the near future. Moreover, no progress is being made either at the two-party joint military commission set up by the peace agreement or at the talks in Paris between the government of the Republic of Vietnam and the Provisional Revolutionary Government.

Although the Vietnam Peace Agreement was concluded by recognizing the existence of "two government" and "two areas of control," the Saigon government controlled the capital and forty-four provincial capitals as well as three-quarters of the total population of 19 million due to the vigorous urbanization promoted since the late sixties. This is in sharp contrast to the situation of the Provisional Revolutionary Government, whose liberated areas devastated by war had a population of only about 4 million, or considerably less than in previous times. Comparing the two at that time gave rise to the view that the Provisional Revolutionary Government would gradually be hard pressed by the Saigon government, which had the material advantage.

Although U.S. troops had completely withdrawn by the end of March 1973, only two months after the conclusion of the peace agreement, the Thieu regime in Saigon has continued to be powerful, confident in its own ability to control the country, denying the existence of any "third force," and indicating its adamant resolve to continue fighting the Liberation Front and the Provisional Revolutionary Government until they are destroyed. Government troop strength has been maintained at 1.1 million, and there are no signs of wavering in the system of domestic surveillance. At the same time, however, there is the undeniable fact that the increasingly serious economic crisis brought on by rampant inflation, and the floundering of recovery plans owing to cutbacks in economic assistance from the United States and others is gradually increasing the dissatisfaction of city residents who are the basic support of the Saigon regime. Even "third force" people, who were not very active after the conclusion of the peace agreement,

have stepped up their activities since the fall of 1974 [29].

On the other hand, the Liberation Front and the Provisional Revolutionary Government appear to be concentrating mainly on rural communities as a base for expansion of liberation areas and raising their prestige abroad. These are assumed on the basis of the firm establishment of control by peace agreement. At its inception, the Liberation Front was a collection of many different groups each with its own ideas and principles, but its course of development has since been one of homogenization, of change from a national democratic force to a revolutionary force.

In such a situation strengthening the leadership of the Liberation Front is a central task. As mentioned, from the very beginning the Liberation Front has been closely related with the leadership in Hanoi. This relationship has become even closer since the peace settlement, with approximately fifty thousand workers originally from the South returning from North Vietnam before the end of 1973. There is also an apparent major increase in both material and technical North Vietnamese influence in the liberated areas in the first year after the conclusion of the peace agreement. Furthermore, in the military picture as well, the Provisional Revolutionary Government has received a great deal of assistance from North Vietnam, with a purported two to three hundred thousand regular North Vietnamese troops backing up the Liberation Front in the South as of spring of 1974, supposedly greater in number and better equipped than the troops in the South either before the Tet offensive of 1968 or the spring offensive of 1972. This military reinforcement may be working as a brake on Thieu's ambitions to recover liberated areas and make possible Provisional Revolutionary Government construction in those areas.

With the withdrawal of U.S. troops, the war in South Vietnam is again a struggle between the Provisional Revolutionary Government in the rural areas and the Saigon government in the urban areas. Furthermore, the battle to win the support of the peasants in the contested areas continue, and there is little prospect that it will terminate in the near future.

Let us now turn our attention to recent conditions in North Vietnam.

The year of 1973, the end of the Vietnam War, was an epoch-making year for North Vietnam. It appreciated the Paris Peace Agreement as a great victory marking a new turning point if not the end of the Vietnamese revolution. The North Vietnamese government announced that it would continue the struggle for the liberation of South Vietnam and national unification. Accordingly, it continued to support, assist, and defend the Provisional Revolutionary Government and to make strong demands on the United States and the Saigon government to abide by the provisions of the Paris Peace Agreement. In fact, it stepped up its support and assistance to the Liberation Front and the Provisional Revolutionary Government.

At the same time, on the domestic politico-economic front, Premier Pham Van Dong stated at a special session of Parliament on February 20, 1973, the policy emphasis for the time being would be placed on rapid recovery from the ravages of war, including the damage caused by U.S. bombing of the North.

This would bring stability to the lives of the people and prepare for the long-term development plan to begin in 1976 as well as simultaneous strengthening of national defense [10, pp.5-6]. It would appear that in 1973 North Vietnam achieved this basic goal of economic recovery, except perhaps in agricultural production, plagued by bad weather in October.

One might also add that the leaders of North Vietnam consider it very important in the long run view to raise the level of education and improve the cadre quality. This will determine the success of future national construction. Manifestations of concern on this point were the resolution on "Cadre Training in the New Stage," adopted by the politburo of the Central Committee of the Vietnam Workers' party on February 20, 1973 [6, pp.2-6] and the paper published by First Secretary Le Duan on the same subject on March 14 [6, pp. 11-39]. Both called on party cadres new and old to make an effort to adequately adapt to the age of new socialist construction. The politburo resolution says that in the present stage of revolution the party must give constant attention to finding correct solutions in relations among the party, the state, and mass organizations, and create a strong network of direction and management from the central state to basic level. It must create and train groups of party cadres to follow the party political line and guarantee party construction. The education and training of cadres is to be based on five criteria: (a) loyalty to the fatherland, socialism, and Marxism; (b) sincere service to the fatherland and the people without fear of difficulty or sacrifice; (c) agreement with party policies and making the effort to carry them out; (d) execution of one's duties, acquisition of the knowledge needed in the department and duties one has been charged with, and active study for the purpose of improving one's cultural knowledge and work ability; and (e) closeness to the masses, respect of the people's right of ownership, collective work, respect for discipline, fairness, justice, honesty, and modesty. It is only natural that the Workers' party of North Vietnam should attach considerable importance to the problem of cadres training since top leadership is advanced in age and it needs new cadres capable of providing the leadership required to develop national construction under party direction.

In Laos, a final political solution is far from being reached a full year and a half after the conclusion of the peace agreement in February 1973, one month after the South Vietnam agreement. The peace agreement provided the organization of a Provisional Government of National Union and a National Coalition Political Council by the two parties concerned within thirty days after the signing of the agreement and completion of the withdrawal of all foreign troops within sixty days after the establishment of the government and the council. In reality, however, developments fell far behind schedule, the protocol to the peace agreement not being signed until September 1973. The Provisional Government of National Union, with Prince Souvanna Phouma as premier and two vice premiers, one from the Vientiane side and the other from the Patriotic Front side, and the National Coalition Political Council, with Prince Souphanouvong as chairman, did not get started until April 1974.

Moreover, even after the establishment of the new coalition government, the administration of the new regime has not progressed smoothly because of strong distrust by both the former Vientiane government faction and the Patriotic Front faction and because of differences over domestic and foreign policies. In the meantime the Patriotic Front faction of the new coalition government, which since the peace negotiations has had the situation develop at its own pace due to its superior political and military situation. This faction has continued further improvement of its position at the expense of the other side even after establishment of the new government. It has had the activities of the National Assembly, stronghold of the rightists, suspended. Vice Premier Phoumi Vongvichit was appointed acting premier after the outbreak of Premier Phouma's illness in July 1974 and his going abroad for treatment. Furthermore, by the fall of 1974, those in the former Vientiane government, particularly the rightists, were rapidly losing ground because, in addition to the withdrawal of U.S. assistance, they were also being checked by cabinet members of the new coalition government belonging to the Patriotic Front. Also because of the activation of the democratization movement from below, they were being since summer pushed by lower level government officials, workers, with the backing of the Patriotic Front [29].

The new coalition government still has several financial and economic problems to be resolved. Furthermore, in practical terms, the problems of the Ho Chi Minh Trail and the withdrawal of foreign troops remain unsolved. It would therefore seem that the ultimate solution to Laos's problems will not be forthcoming until the problems in South Vietnam and Cambodia are resolved.

Even after the conclusion of peace agreements for Vietnam and Laos, the tragic conflict in Cambodia, tearing this small country apart, has continued. However, the tide is with the National United Front of Kampuchéa and the Royal Government of National Unity (the Sihanouk regime), almost overwhelming the Khmer Republic (the Lon Nol regime).

Prince Sihanouk visited the liberated area of the fatherland from late February through early April 1973. This was the first time there since his banishment and he managed to achieve the unity of the Khmer liberation forces in talks with the local forces, of which the Khmer Rouge was the nucleus. Furthermore, he raised the international standing of the Royal Government of National Unity by getting the recognition of a number of countries in a globe-trotting tour in late May and June of the same year. Then again, the bombing support given the Lon Nol regime by the U.S. military was halted as of August 15.

Amidst such an advantageous situation, Prince Sihanouk has refused to enter into peace negotiations with either the United States or the Phnom Penh government, and the civil war has gone on without having the chance for such talks. Furthermore, the Phnom Penh government has continued to be supplied with war material even after the halting of bombing by U.S. aircrafts. On the other hand, the Sihanouk regime has had assistance from China and North Vietnam reduced since the conclusion of the Vietnam Peace Agreement, all of which means that the civil war has been markedly "Khmerized," but neither side has

been able to make a decisive breakthrough. Meanwhile, both the Lon Nol regime and the Sihanouk regime experienced internal power struggles in 1973-74, but in neither case did these power struggles lead to any major change [29]. In any case, since, in an overall view of the matter, the war in Cambodia began in connection with the situation in South Vietnam, it is not likely that a real cease-fire will be achieved before the internal political problems of South Vietnam are solved.

The problems of Indochina countries without a final solution of the internal political problems of South Vietnam, the crux of the entire situation, peace and political stability would be unable to be achieved in the other countries of Indochina. Besides, the deep-rooted ethnical and regional antipathies characterize this part of Southeast Asia [25]. One is able to appreciate how difficult it will be to find a final solution to the Indochina problem.

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