

SPECIAL REPORT

Cambodia: end of Kissinger's

Collapse of Pol Pot regime shows dead end of China card

The establishment in Cambodia last week of the People's Republic of Kampuchea swept away far more than the genocidal regime of Chinese backed leader Pol Pot. High on the list of victims was the much-heralded "China card" policy of Henry Kissinger and Zbigniew Brzezinski.

China was the central issue in the latest conflict in Indochina, which saw an anti-Pol Pot organization, the Kampuchean United Front for National Salvation, seize control of the country with the aid of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. Peking's well-known desire to dominate Southeast Asia, using such instruments as the fanatical followers of Mao's Cultural Revolution who ruled Cambodia for the last four years, was formidably confronted by the combined forces of Cambodian patriots opposed to the destruction of their country, and the staunchly independent Vietnamese.

The end result was predictable: the anti-Pol Pot forces moved quickly through Cambodia, sending the defending troops fleeing as the government was unable to muster support from the population it had so incredibly abused during its reign. Instead, as one army official in Thailand reported, the Cambodia people who managed to survive the mass murder,

disease and overwork of the last four years greeted the anti-Pol Pot forces as liberators.

China, which dreams of confronting the Soviet Union, had continuously prompted the Pol Pot regime to launch border incursions and other harassment against Vietnam, but failed to come to the aid of its client state when the going got rough. In a fashion typical of the Chauvinist outlook of the long-dead Han Dynasty Empire, the Peking leaders looked to other countries to do their fighting for them.

Few countries came to the aid of Peking however, and most conspicuous in their absence were those supposedly most concerned about Vietnamese "expansion," the nations of Southeast Asia. Having a profound hatred for the racial chauvinism of the Chinese, the key countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Indonesia and Malaysia, have made clear through their "neutrality" that they view the setback suffered by Peking as an opportunity to bring stability to the Southeast Asian region.

Left holding Pol Pot's bags were the rulers of Peking, together with the promoters of the "China card" within the Carter Administration. During the last few months the Administration has consistently attacked Vietnam for "aggression" against Cambodia, and, while "distancing" itself from the Pol Pot regime, proclaimed support for the "territorial integrity" of Cambodia. Expounding such lofty principles has been insufficient to hide the true intentions of the Administration however.

The Administration has followed completely the policy first set forth by Henry Kissinger of granting to China a "sphere of influence" in Asia, as part of a "strategic second front" against the Soviet Union. This has been made the highest priority in the Asian policy of the Administration, and all other considerations are secondary. The United States officially allied with China to keep the Pol Pot regime and its Dark Ages economic and social policies in power, as part of the effort to achieve a "strategic" relationship with China. Not only was this policy dramatically set back by the events in Cambodia last week, but Mr. Brzezinski and Mr. Kissinger have more than ever shown themselves to be easy prey for the Chinese efforts to play the "American card."

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- The new Cambodian government's program for national reconstruction, and plans for development of the Mekong River basin.
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New Dark Age

policy

As China was unable to affect the Cambodian situation on the battlefield to its liking, it shifted the campaign against Vietnam to the United Nations, with the aid of Washington. Most press sources have interpreted the Security Council 13-2 vote in favor of a Chinese-inspired resolution calling for Vietnamese withdrawal from Cambodia as a victory for Peking, but seasoned observers of the UN affairs know otherwise. China has never before actively participated in the workings of the Security Council, despite its status as one of the five "permanent members" with veto power over resolutions. The fact that China, for the first time, was forced to take its case to the United Nations was in itself a deeply humiliating action for the rulers of Peking.

The main star in the Chinese-orchestrated United Nations proceedings last week was Cambodian playboy and former chief of state, Prince Norodom Sihanouk. Sihanouk was transported to New York by the Chinese, who managed to convince the Council to allow the prince to speak as the appointed representative of the Pol Pot regime. The "comic-opera" prince had a hard time arguing his case however, as he simultaneously denounced the Pol Pot regime, while claiming that he himself was a representative of that government. The stress apparently became too much for Sihanouk, who is now in Lenox Hill Hospital in New York, suffering from a nervous breakdown after a night-long, rambling discussion with U.S. Ambassador Andrew Young. Sihanouk is reported to have complained to Young that he did not want to go into exile in China, and could not reconcile the "contradictions" in his presentations to the Council. Such was the Chinese "victory."

Though the resolution of the Council mildly critical of Vietnam was not adopted, as a result of the veto by the Soviet Union, the United Nations showed itself to be more concerned about the "territorial integrity" of Cambodia than with the three million murdered citizens of the country, and continues to recognize the Pol Pot regime as the "sole legal" government of the country. It has been noted by experts of the UN that one reason for the apparent support for Pol Pot against Vietnam by the UN was the reluctance of the developing countries especially to set a legal precedent of backing armed intervention of one country against another.

Inside Pol Pot's Cambodia

"We were ordered to use bamboo sticks to club the prisoners to death by smashing their heads or necks.... The security personnel standing behind us warned us that anyone resisting the order would be killed on the spot himself..."

—Cambodian soldier

"A commander growled: 'You belong to the first category and your hospital is to be destroyed. It is advisable that you be killed'..."

—Cambodian hospital worker

"The slogans frequently cited by the (Pol Pot) government are that democratic Kampuchea does not need intellectuals and that the more education one receives, the more reactionary one becomes..."

—Radio Hanoi
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Stability in the region

The new reality in Southeast Asia is that the end of the Pol Pot regime has ushered in the greatest opportunity for stability and peace in the region since the withdrawal of American troops from Indochina. The countries of the area have unmistakably made this point. A foreign ministry spokesman for Indonesia stated two days ago that the new Cambodian government "could bring stability to Indochina" capable of "extending itself to the rest of Southeast Asia." And Indonesia does not stand alone. Thailand's Prime Minister Kriangsak Chamanad told a press conference in Bangkok earlier this week that his country "still believes in the assurances of (Vietnamese Prime Minister) Pham Van Dong that Vietnam will respect Thai sovereignty." Only Singapore, which rivals Hong Kong for extent of British influence in the country, has criticized the Vietnamese action in Cambodia.

The absence of anti-Vietnamese sentiment in the region should come as no surprise to anyone familiar with the events in Southeast Asia over the past two years. Vietnam has continually sought improved relations with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) member countries, and all border and other kinds of military tensions have been virtually removed. The recent tour of Pham Van Dong to the ASEAN countries led to widespread discussion of the great potential for regional cooperation on economic and other matters.

Perhaps most significant in the reluctance of the Southeast Asian countries to attack Vietnam was their intimate knowledge of Hanoi's two-year effort to resolve border and other disputes

with the Pol Pot regime in a peaceful manner. In the midst of the Carter Administration's duplicitous accusations of "aggression" against Vietnam, it is an easily forgotten fact that border claims against the whole of the Mekong delta region of Vietnam made by the Pol Pot regime were the source of the border conflict between the two countries. As the Vietnamese representatives at the United Nations often repeated, Hanoi tried on numerous occasions to have this border dispute discussed at the United Nations, but China and its Pol Pot puppets repeatedly refused.

Provided China can be kept on the diplomatic "defensive," and prevented from launching an invasion against Vietnam, the formation of a new government in Cambodia last week has opened the way for the achievement of great regional stability through economic cooperation. The Mekong River development plans, which have been under discussion for many years, provide the best potential for regional cooperation, and could easily be integrated into already existing plans among the ASEAN countries for industrial development.

The United States has by no means lost the possibility of participating in these regional development plans, provided the Carter Administration ends its policy of promoting a Chinese "sphere of influence" in Asia, and quickly normalizes relations with Vietnam. Hanoi has made every effort to accommodate the American demand that there be no preconditions to negotiations, a fact recognized by Assistant Secretary of State Richard Holbrooke on numerous occasions. In fact, it is now Washington which has placed preconditions on Vietnam: that Hanoi sacrifice its independence, and recognize Chinese hegemony in Asia. As long as the Carter Administration maintains this policy, it will continue to suffer such strategic setbacks in the region as the recent Cambodia events.

—Peter Ennis

The China menace: then and now

China's response to the Cambodia crisis is nothing new. In fact it is the second time in this decade that Peking has supported a brutal dictatorship in Asia and then tried to get the U.S. to save it for them. It is useful to compare the events of 1978-79 in Cambodia with the very similar events in South Asia in 1971 which resulted in the creation of a new government in the independent nation of Bangladesh.

In 1971, the military junta of Pakistan imposed a brutal military campaign on East Pakistan, ruthlessly suppressing the movement for the creation of an independent Bangladesh, led by Sheik Mujib. This movement had in the elections of a year earlier received the almost unanimous support of the people of East Pakistan. The junta of Gen. Yahya Khan, after refusing moderate demands for autonomy, carried out systematic butchery of intellectuals by the thousands, burning villages — an all out war on the people. An armed struggle of the Bangladesh liberation movement was created to fight this brutal dictatorship.

Just as in the case of Cambodia, the U.S. had almost nothing to say about the destruction of human rights in East Pakistan. Along with the Peking regime, whose ties to Pakistan were extensive, they instead proclaimed their only interest to be the preservation of the territorial integrity of Pakistan.

Kissinger and U.S. Policy

In 1971, as in 1978, the main visible interest of the U.S. administration under Henry Kissinger's direction, was to seek favors of China. This was the time of the Nixon visit, of American pursuit of the China alliance and normalization. Pakistan, like Cambodia, was a stepping stone to that alliance, considered only as it served in a geopolitical game.

In 1971 the government of India, under the leadership of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, was deeply concerned about the events in East Pakistan and expressed this concern repeatedly to the world. Similarly, if we examine the record of the past year, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam has repeatedly tried to seek normal relations with the U.S., to look for American economic assistance and trade, and to commit itself to the stability of Southeast Asia.

In 1971 the Indian government, after repeated efforts, moved to support the liberation struggle in Bangladesh. In the early part of that year, India signed a Peace and Friendship Treaty with the Soviet Union, a crucial strategic act which both reaffirmed the friendly ties of the two countries and provided Soviet support against the U.S.-China-Pakistan axis which threatened the security of the subcontinent. In 1978 Vietnam signed a similar treaty, and did so to affirm its friendship ties and to provide strategic support against a building campaign of threatened and actual Chinese aggression against Vietnam, carried out through its puppet Cambodian regime.

In 1971 and 1978, when all other routes were exhausted and brutality after brutality was perpetrated against the populations of Bangladesh and Cambodia, war erupted. The liberation forces of Bangladesh, with the strong support of India and its army, moved to overthrow the military regime and establish a free nation, just as the liberation forces of Cambodia with Vietnamese support did this past week.

The U.S. and Chinese response in 1971 foreshadowed 1978. With cries about "territorial integrity" being violated, the U.S. 7th Fleet, led by the carrier Enterprise, moved toward the Bay of Bengal. At the UN, China and the U.S. colluded to condemn 'Indian aggression.' The Chinese paper tigers, who Kissinger reportedly assured the Pakistan regime would intervene to help save their necks, moved troops to the Indian border. Again last week, when Chinese troops massed on the Vietnamese border, the Chinese were too scared to act by themselves.

China's "America Card"

Twice in the same decade the Chinese have chosen to play their "America card," to use American power and influence for their expansionist designs. Kissinger was only too ready to play this role in 1971, and would do the same now if given the full opportunity. Twice the U.S. has been led up the garden path by China and left holding the hands of brutal fascist dictatorships who serve Chinese aims and interests.

—Daniel Sneider