

Current History

DECEMBER, 1978

VOL. 75, NO. 442

How are social, economic and political conditions changing in the nations of Southeast Asia since the withdrawal of the American military presence there? How are relations among these nations developing? What is China's role? Our introductory article points out that "The Sino-Vietnamese conflict, which reflects divergent geopolitical perspectives and historical animosity . . . is intertwined with the Sino-Soviet global conflict from which it sprang."

The Sino-Vietnamese Conflict in Southeast Asia

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THE most significant developments in postwar Southeast Asian politics have been the breakup of the alliance of Chinese, Vietnamese, Cambodian and Lao Communists against United States intervention and the emergence of a serious conflict in which China and Vietnam are the principal actors. The Sino-Vietnamese conflict, which reflects divergent geopolitical perspectives and historical animosity between the two peoples, is intertwined with the Sino-Soviet global conflict from which it sprang. Today, the Sino-Vietnamese conflict has begun to take on a life of its own. And the fighting between Vietnam and Kampuchea,¹ in which China is deeply involved, has been the single most important factor in raising Sino-Vietnamese tensions to the crisis point.

*The anti-hegemony clause, obviously directed at the Soviet Union, was first used in the United States-China Shanghai Communiqué of 1972, in which both countries pledged that neither would seek hegemony in the Asia-Pacific region, and that both would oppose efforts by any other country to do so.

¹The State of Democratic Kampuchea was proclaimed on January 3, 1976, replacing Cambodia in official usage. In referring to the country and people before that date, the more familiar "Cambodia" will be used, but "Kampuchea" will be used for the period after the new name was adopted.

²*Le Monde*, August 9, 1978.

³Chinese refugees from Vietnam, reflecting official Chinese views, told an interviewer that "pro-Soviet elements in Hanoi, influenced by Soviet intrigue, hastened the unification of north and south."

⁴See Gareth Porter, "China and Vietnam: Asia's New Cold War," *The Nation*, September 9, 1978, p. 210.

There were serious policy differences between China and Vietnam from the beginning of the Vietnam War. But the present conflict is directly related to China's decision in 1971 to improve relations with the United States. This fundamental shift in China's view of "the enemy" also implied a change in her view of Hanoi's close relations with Moscow. By 1975, China was trying to persuade Hanoi not to launch an offensive that would upset the power balance in South Vietnam.² The Chinese had hoped to see Vietnam remain divided for some years, believing that division would delay the development of a strong Vietnamese role in Cambodia and Laos.³

After the war, Vietnam still saw the United States as the primary threat to security and cooperation among Southeast Asian states, while China argued privately and hinted publicly that United States military power in the Pacific was necessary to prevent the Soviet Union from moving into the region to fill a power vacuum. As China normalized relations with Thailand and the Philippines in 1975, she warned each of them not to be hasty in requesting the withdrawal of United States military bases. At the same time, China sought to build a coalition of states which included the United States, Thailand, Kampuchea and China as a counterweight to Vietnamese influence on the Southeast Asian mainland.⁴

When Vietnamese Communist party secretary Le Duan visited Peking in October, 1975, the Chinese demanded Vietnam's agreement to the "anti-hegemony" clause,* to which the Philippines and Thailand had already adhered in joint communiqués

on the normalization of relations. Le Duan refused, and the visit ended prematurely on a note of extraordinary tension, with neither the usual Vietnamese return banquet nor a joint communiqué. Le Duan went on to Moscow, where he negotiated a major new economic aid agreement, on which the Chinese had been noncommittal.⁵

Chinese leaders then took two steps that indicated their extreme irritation with the Vietnamese. First, they informed the Vietnamese that they would not provide any further grant assistance, despite a pledge by China's Premier Chou En-lai in June, 1973, to continue the grant program for five more years.⁶ Second, they warned in menacing tones that they would not permit the Vietnamese to occupy any of the Spratly Islands, which had been claimed by both China and Vietnam and which the Vietnamese revolutionary forces had taken over from the South Vietnamese government in their final offensive.⁷

Peking apparently calculated that firmness toward Vietnam would help reverse what it regarded as Vietnam's pro-Soviet tilt. Instead, the Vietnamese turned more decisively to Moscow for support. In 1976, a Vietnamese party spokesman told a Swedish journalist that Vietnam was clearly leaning toward Moscow for the first time, in reaction to Chinese pressure.⁸

What brought the relationship to the crisis stage, however, was Vietnam's conflict with Kampuchea, which had become China's close ally and the focal point of Chinese opposition to any increase in Vietnamese influence in Southeast Asia. Kampuchean and Chinese perceptions of Vietnamese intentions

⁵See Sheldon Simon, "Peking and Indochina: the Perplexity of Victory," *Asian Survey*, May, 1976, p. 403.

⁶Note from the government of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam to the government of the People's Republic of China, May 18, 1978.

⁷Shih-Ti-tsu, "The South Sea Islands Have Been China's Territory since Ancient Times," *Kwangming Daily*, reprinted in New China News Agency, November 26, 1975.

⁸"Vietnam: Editor Outlines Relationship with PRC, USSR," *Defense and Foreign Affairs Daily*, July 13, 1976, p. 2.

⁹On the historical background of Vietnamese-Cambodian relations before the twentieth century, see Roger Smith, *Cambodia's Foreign Policy* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1965), pp. 10-15.

¹⁰This paragraph is based on *Dossier Kampuchea I* (Hanoi: Le Courrier du Vietnam, 1978), pp. 92-97, which quotes from the party resolutions. On early ICP discussions on the "national" question, including its application in Indochina, see George Modelski, "The Viet Minh Complex," in Cyril E. Black and Thomas P. Thornton, eds., *Communism and Revolution: The Strategic Uses of Political Violence* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1954), fn. 17, p. 191.

¹¹Interview with a high Vietnamese official by Cora Weiss, Hanoi, May 25, 1978.

¹²*Ibid.*

¹³Interview with Ieng Sary by a delegation from *The Call* (Chicago), the newspaper of the pro-Chinese Communist party (Marxist-Leninist) in April, 1978, August 28, 1978.

have undoubtedly been shaped by Vietnam's expansion into what had been Cambodian territory, i.e., Vietnam's occupation of Cambodia in the nineteenth century,⁹ and by the colonial-era Vietnamese Communist idea of an "Indochinese Federation."

From the time the Indochinese Communist party (ICP) was formed in 1930, it had officially supported the concept of a federation of the three Indochinese countries—Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos—after their liberation from the French.¹⁰ The Vietnamese would, of course, dominate any such federation, because of Vietnam's greater size and population as well as her more advanced economic and social development. Subsequent party resolutions in 1935 and 1941 had established the principle that each of the three nations would have the right to decide whether to join such a federation or to remain independent. After the Geneva Conference of 1954, the Vietnamese let the federation idea lapse and never revived it. Nevertheless, the current Kampuchean party leaders are convinced that the Vietnamese party has not fundamentally changed its desire for a federation of the three states.

Kampuchea's leaders also fear Hanoi's domination because of Vietnamese tutelage over the Cambodian Communist movement from its beginnings up to the 1960's and because of the enduring legacy of Vietnamese influence in the party. The Indochinese Communist party (ICP) had few Cambodian members until it became involved in Cambodia during the resistance against the French. By 1951, the ICP judged that the creation of separate parties in each of the three countries of Indochina was both feasible and necessary to mobilize the anti-French struggle in Laos and Cambodia. But even after 1954, the Vietnamese continued to dominate the strategy of the "Khmer People's Revolutionary party" through Cambodian leaders who were formerly members of the ICP. These Cambodian Communist leaders consulted with the Vietnamese party leadership regularly, and Vietnamese sources indicate that there was a single political line throughout the 1950's.¹¹

The strategy advocated by Vietnam and adopted by the Cambodian party was to support Cambodian Prince Sihanouk because of his anti-American policies. By 1960, that strategy had created great resentment in the Cambodian party. Sihanouk launched a determined campaign to repress Communists during that period, eliminating all but about 10 percent of the party's membership.¹² Among those who survived were younger Communists like Pol Pot, Ieng Sary and Son Sen, who had studied Marxism in France rather than in the ICP. According to Sary, now Deputy Premier of Kampuchea, he and others in this group rejected Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev's 1956 thesis on the "peaceful transition to socialism" and opposed as "revisionist" the Vietnamese policy of supporting Sihanouk.¹³

When Pol Pot became the party's First Secretary in 1963, the old pattern of relations between the Cambodian and Vietnamese parties was broken. Pol Pot's first trip to Hanoi as party secretary in 1965 revealed the gulf that separated Cambodian and Vietnamese Communist leaders. While the Vietnamese continued to urge the Cambodians to support Sihanouk on external policy and to struggle only against Sihanouk's internal policies, Pol Pot advocated armed struggle against Sihanouk's regime. The Cambodian delegation went on to Peking, where Pol Pot made his first contacts with Chinese leaders.¹⁴ Pol Pot must have found China's Chairman Mao Tse-tung and China's Premier Chou En-lai more sympathetic to his views, since Cambodian and Chinese leaders agreed on the importance of eliminating "revisionists" from their parties and were outspokenly critical of Vietnamese policies. In June, 1967, the Cambodian party began to make plans for armed struggle, still over Vietnamese objections.¹⁵

The military coup against Sihanouk began a five-year collaboration between Vietnamese and Cambodian Communists, which the Cambodians accepted with great reluctance. If Vietnamese troops operated in Cambodia, the Cambodian leaders knew that those elements in their party who had been in the ICP, and who opposed the Pol Pot line would be strengthened. At first, Pol Pot asked the Vietnamese troops, which had consolidated control over the entire eastern border area in March and early April, 1970, to leave Cambodia, except for some military advisers. But the Vietnamese convinced China that China had to support Vietnamese military participation in Cambodia behind a resistance government headed by Prince Sihanouk.¹⁶ The Cambodian party agreed to cooperate with the Vietnamese, but vowed to continue to "struggle" with them over major political issues.¹⁷

A major source of tension during the war was the

¹⁴Interview with a high Vietnamese official.

¹⁵Interview with Ieng Sary.

¹⁶Interview with a high Vietnamese official.

¹⁷Unpublished notes of the interview with Ieng Sary by Daniel Burstein, editor of *The Call*.

¹⁸Timothy Michael Carney, *Communist Party Power in Kampuchea (Cambodia)*, Documents and Discussion, Cornell University Southeast Asia Program, Data Paper no. 106, January, 1977, p. 7.

¹⁹*Dossier Kampuchea*, pp. 126-127. This official Vietnamese source quotes Pol Pot as explaining the Cambodian attack to Hanoi as the result of his troops' "ignorance of local geography."

²⁰This account is based on the interview with Ieng Sary in *Le Monde*, July 30-31, 1978; R.-P. Paringaux, *Le Monde*, March 31, 1978; *Dossier Kampuchea*, pp. 127-128.

²¹*Peking Review*, August 22, 1975, pp. 6-12.

²²*Dossier Kampuchea*, p. 128.

²³Hanoi Radio, February 21, 1978. Paringaux quotes Vietnamese sources as giving the figure of "nearly 200,000 men," compared with "a few regiments" in 1975. *Le Monde*, March 30, 1978.

return to Cambodia of some 4,000 "Khmer Viet Minh," who had fought against the French in the resistance and had fled to North Vietnam after the Geneva settlement of 1954. Cambodian Communist leaders needed these Vietnamese-trained Cambodian cadres to organize an effective Cambodian military force, but they feared that these cadres would tip the balance within the movement in favor of the Vietnamese-oriented faction. In 1973, the Pol Pot group began to carry out a selective purge in the military, removing and in some cases killing these "Khmer Viet Minh."¹⁸

Relations between Vietnam and Cambodia were relatively amicable during the first postwar months, despite the Cambodian occupation in early May of Phu Quoc and Tho Chu islands, which the Vietnamese repulsed at the end of that month.¹⁹ During visits by Pol Pot to Hanoi in June, and by Le Duan to Phnom Penh in August, 1975, the leadership of the two parties discussed the future relationship between their countries.²⁰ The Vietnamese asked for a "special relationship" with Cambodia, based on their history of common struggle. They sought Cambodian cooperation on foreign policy issues, including opposition to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which was considered a United States-sponsored military alliance, and proposed economic cooperation, offering Vietnamese technical assistance. The Cambodians rejected these proposals but suggested the conclusion of a treaty of friendship that would deal with trade, free movement across the border, and a boundary settlement. Contrary to Phnom Penh's subsequent propaganda charges, the Vietnamese did not raise the question of an "Indochinese Federation."

Cambodia's rejection of the Vietnamese plea for common foreign policy positions was followed by Cambodia's agreement in August, 1975, to a joint communiqué with China that accurately reflected the Chinese world view. Declaring that "The contention for world hegemony between the superpowers is becoming more and more intense," the communiqué followed the lines of previous Chinese pronouncements²¹ and put Cambodia squarely in the Chinese camp. This was apparently the conclusion of a debate in the Cambodian party over the question of overt alignment with China. The idea of a friendship treaty with Vietnam was never raised again by Cambodia, despite Vietnamese indications of interest in proceeding with negotiations.²²

The decision to side openly with China was probably related to the major buildup of Cambodia's armed forces that began in 1975. The buildup added 12 divisions to Cambodia's army, according to the Vietnamese, with the Chinese providing major military assistance in equipment and training.²³

Although Cambodian leadership's policy toward Vietnam had already become decidedly cooler and more distant, in 1976 the new State of Democratic

Kampuchea agreed to negotiate with Vietnam on the question of their common border. At the May, 1976, preliminary meetings between delegations of the two parties, both sides agreed that the land border would follow the last French map of Indochina and that the Brevie line, a 1939 decision by a French colonial administrator that divided administrative responsibility for five islands in the eastern gulf of Thailand between the colonial government in Cambodia and in Cochinchina, would be the basis for determining sovereignty over the islands. But the Vietnamese would not accept the Cambodian demand that the Brevie line also be accepted as the sea boundary between the two countries, arguing that it was never meant to settle that question.²⁴

This Vietnamese insistence on further negotiations to determine the sea boundary was regarded by the Cambodians as a confirmation of their fear that the Vietnamese were trying to take away part of their territorial waters. Taking the Brevie line as their final position, the Cambodian leaders shared Prince Sihanouk's view that even the least concession on territorial issues by Cambodia would lead to a "sense of impotence toward the expansionist aims of her neighbors."²⁵ While continuing to make obeisance to "solidarity" with Vietnam, Cambodian leaders never resumed discussions on the border and instead began to gird themselves for a future confrontation with their stronger neighbor.

What Cambodian leaders feared most in 1976 was not Vietnamese military aggression but opposition within their party and government to their domestic and foreign policies. Thus the Pol Pot leadership did little to discourage revenge against former Lon Nol personnel, refused foreign medical and other assistance except from China, and adopted a paranoiac attitude toward the presence of "spies and saboteurs" in their midst.²⁶ The result was widespread dis-

²⁴*Dossier Kampuchea*, pp. 128-132. For background on the Brevie line, see Victor Prescott, "Asia's Maritime Boundary Problems," *Dyson House Papers* (Melbourne), vol. 2, no. 4, March, 1976, p. 2.

²⁵*Kampuja* (Phnom Penh), June 15, 1969. I am indebted to Steve Heder, Cornell University, for this quotation, which he used in a private communication on Cambodian border policy.

²⁶While information on the Pol Pot regime's policies and on political, economic and social conditions in Kampuchea remains extremely fragmentary and leaves many questions unanswered, the most complete sources now available are Francois Ponchaud, *Cambodge: anee zero* (Paris: Juillard, 1977), and the collection of interviews with Cambodian refugees and extracts from reports by the United States Embassy in Bangkok, submitted to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, July 6, 1978, by the United States Department of State.

²⁷For information on the plotting gleaned from refugees, see Anthony Paul, "Plot Details Filter Through," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, May 19, 1978. For Kampuchea's charges, see Phnom Penh Radio, January 15, 1978, and January 24, 1978.

sension, particularly in the army where Vietnamese-trained cadres were still prominent. Opposition forces planned a coup d'état, which was discovered by the government in September, 1976. Cambodia said later that the plot had been staged by the Vietnamese through "agents whom they recruited long ago"—apparently meaning former ICP members and cadres trained in Vietnam.²⁷

The discovery of the plot spurred Pol Pot's group to carry out a new and more thoroughgoing purge of the party and army, to eliminate all those suspected of a pro-Vietnamese orientation. By early 1978, according to the Vietnamese, "almost all" the Kampuchean cadres who had returned from Vietnam beginning in 1970 had been executed, and five of the twenty members of the Kampuchean party central committee and a number of high-ranking military commanders had also been killed.

The purge coincided with the launching of strong attacks by Kampuchean armed forces on Vietnamese border settlements in January, 1977. At the same time, Kampuchea ended all contacts between liaison committees in the Kampuchean and Vietnamese border provinces. A Vietnamese proposal for immediate high-level negotiations to end the border attacks was turned aside by the Cambodian party with the argument that Vietnam had to end her "aggression" first, in order to create the necessary atmosphere of "mutual confidence."

After a major Kampuchean attack in late September along the 240 kilometer border of Vietnam's Tay Ninh province, which penetrated six miles into Vietnamese territory, Hanoi sent an envoy to Peking to try once more to reach an understanding with Kampuchean officials. When that mission failed, Vietnam launched a multi-divisional offensive into Kampuchea in October, 1977, to convince the Pol Pot government that it had to end the border attacks. After three months of fighting in Kampuchea, Vietnam withdrew her forces and proposed that both sides pull their forces back five kilometers from the border and agree to international supervision of a truce. Kampuchea rejected the proposal; in a diplomatic note in May, 1978, Kampuchean leaders demanded that Vietnam end all her actions against Kampuchea, including her "plan to integrate Kampuchea into an Indochinese Federation," for a period of seven months, as a precondition to any peace talks.

The Vietnamese held China responsible for Kam-
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puchea's belligerence, believing that Peking was trying to prevent Vietnam's economic development. In fact, Chinese support for Kampuchea against Vietnam, which had not yet been openly expressed, was increasingly evident in January, 1978, as China stepped up her shipments of military equipment to Kampuchea and sent Chou En-lai's widow and central committee member Teng Ying-chao to Phnom Penh to demonstrate her support.²⁸ As many as 10,000 Chinese military personnel were estimated by United States intelligence to be in Kampuchea, one-third attached to the Kampuchean army.

Hanoi did not dare use military force to threaten the Pol Pot government. Instead, in a second drive in Kampuchea that began in June, 1978, the Vietnamese concentrated on destroying the Kampuchean army, at the same time building up a force of Cambodians who had fled to Vietnam or who volunteered when Vietnamese forces drove Kampuchean troops from their districts. As the new drive began, Vietnam also launched a campaign to condemn Kampuchean authorities for "genocide" against their own people and broadcast an appeal to Cambodians from a defector to "topple the Pol Pot-Ieng Sary clique."

The war between Vietnam and Kampuchea inevitably colored all aspects of Sino-Vietnamese relations. A major problem between the two states was Vietnam's treatment of her approximately 1.1 million ethnic Chinese. As tension between China and Vietnam increased in 1975, Hanoi began to worry about the loyalty of these Chinese as well as the ethnically related Nung minority living in the region of the Chinese border. When Hanoi moved to tighten its control over these people early in 1977, China protested. And China was angered because Hanoi simply accepted the Saigon regime's forcible naturalization of

Chinese as a *fait accompli*, instead of consulting with China after the liberation of South Vietnam, as called for in a 1955 agreement between them.

But it was the Vietnamese decision to confiscate the stocks of Chinese merchants in Cholon in March, 1978, in the midst of rising Vietnamese resentment against China for her role in Kampuchea that triggered the Chinese decision to make a major public issue of Vietnamese policies.²⁹ Many Chinese in the south began to flee from the country, and rumors were soon spreading through the Chinese community in both North, and South Vietnam that the Chinese would be the target of Vietnamese reprisals because of Chinese support for Kampuchea. The Vietnamese later charged that the Chinese embassy was involved in spreading those rumors in April. As the Chinese exodus swelled to nearly 200,000, Peking published its first major attack on Vietnam for "ostracizing, persecuting and expelling Chinese residents," and unilaterally announced that China was sending ships to Vietnam to pick up "victimized Chinese residents." In the next three weeks, China systematically reduced her ties with Vietnam to a minimum, withdrew Chinese aid projects from Vietnam, closed Vietnamese consulates in China and finally closed the border points where Vietnam had been allowing Chinese who had requested permission to emigrate to cross into China.

In response to China's policy in Kampuchea, also, Vietnam began early in 1978 to celebrate the anniversaries of the victories against Chinese invaders by Tran Hung Dao in the thirteenth century and Le Loi in the fifteenth century.³⁰ Hanoi Radio is warning other Southeast Asian nations of the danger that China will attempt to use overseas Chinese as a means of interfering in their internal affairs. "Today China wants to press Vietnam to toe its line and tomorrow it will also put pressure on other countries," said one commentary.³¹

In response, China publicly accused Vietnam of pursuing "regional hegemonism" and serving as the "Cuba of the East," and "junior partner" in a Soviet plot to gain control of Southeast Asia.³² The primary aim of Soviet strategy in the region, according to the Chinese, is to obtain a naval base in Vietnam. In May, a pro-Peking newspaper in Hong Kong published the story—without any source—that Vietnam had already given the Soviet Union the use of her huge naval base at Cam Ranh Bay as well as Haiphong Harbor.³³ Using its own sophisticated means of checking the allegation, the United States found it to be untrue, according to authoritative United States sources. China has, in fact, refrained from making the charge in the Chinese press, and the Chinese have privately referred to a Soviet base at Cam Ranh as a future prospect rather than a present reality.

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²⁸Chanda, "Peking Escalates the War of Nerves," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, March 17, 1978, p. 10; for Teng Ying-chao's speech in Phnom Penh, see Phnom Penh Radio, January 18, 1978.

²⁹The timing of the move against Chinese merchants coincided with the high tide of anti-Chinese feeling. Chanda, "Comrades Curb the Capitalists," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, April 14, 1978, p. 12.

³⁰Chanda, "Exit the Wolf," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, May 19, 1978.

³¹Quoted by Chanda, "Danger of the War by Accident," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, July 14, 1978.

³²Hsu-Hsiang-chen, "Heighten Vigilance, Be Ready to Fight," *Red Flag*, no. 8, 1978; "Why Vietnamese Authorities Provoked Viet-Nam-Kampuchea Border Conflict," *Peking Review*, July 21, 1978, p. 8.

³³*The Japan Times*, June 1, 1978. The Cam Ranh Bay rumor first surfaced almost exactly three years earlier. See "Why China Leaked Rumors of Soviet Bases in Vietnam," *Christian Science Monitor*, May 30, 1975.

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Contrary to Peking's professed alarm over Soviet plans to dominate the region, however, the Soviet Union is the least capable of the major powers of exerting influence in Southeast Asia.³⁴ Non-Communist Southeast Asia tends to view the Soviet Union as an outsider and gives Soviet views far less weight than the views of China, the United States and Japan. The non-Communist Southeast Asians are all more concerned with China than with the Soviet Union, even if they do not have normal relations with Peking, because of China's links with the large overseas Chinese communities in Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia, her ties with Communist insurgencies in Burma, Thailand, the Philippines and Malaysia, and her support for the policies of Thailand and the Philippines.

Soviet influence on Communist parties in Southeast Asia, in contrast, is virtually nonexistent. The Communist parties of Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines and Burma are clearly oriented toward China. Historically, the Soviet Union has had no liaison with Communist parties in Thailand, Laos and Cambodia, because of Vietnamese insistence that they can handle relations with these parties without Soviet interference.

But while Soviet and Vietnamese interests coincide in opposing Chinese influence in Southeast Asia, they diverge on other matters of importance to the Soviet Union. Soviet leaders want Vietnam to integrate her economy with the Soviet bloc, and the Vietnamese finally joined the Soviet-oriented economic organization, COMECON,** in June, having been an observer for several years. But Vietnam is determined to establish diplomatic relations with the United States in order to lessen her dependence on the Soviet Union as well as to head off United States-Chinese collaboration against Hanoi. The Vietnamese already have extensive economic relations with France and Japan as well as with the World Bank, despite Soviet opposition to ties with capitalist states and institu-

**The Council on Mutual Economic Assistance.

³⁴On Soviet relations with Southeast Asia, see Geoffrey Jukes, "The Soviets and Southeast Asia," *Southeast Asian Affairs*, 1977 (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1977), pp. 64-72; Robert C. Horn, "Soviet Influence in Southeast Asia: Opportunities and Obstacles," *Asian Survey*, August, 1975, pp. 656-671.

³⁵See Porter, *op. cit.*, p. 212.

³⁶This paragraph is based on Linda and Murray Hiebert, "Laos Recovers from America's War," *Southeast Asia Chronicle* (Berkeley), no. 61, March/April, 1968, pp. 2-4; Chanda, "Laos Caught in the Crossfire," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, June 16, 1978, pp. 11-12; *Bangkok Post*, July 3, 1977; and conversations with foreign observers recently returned from Vientiane.

tions that reduce Vietnamese reliance on Moscow.³⁵ In the future, Vietnam's economy will probably be increasingly oriented toward capitalist, particularly American, sources of money, technology and spare parts, which will substantially weaken the Soviet relationship with Vietnam. And Vietnam, which never supported the Soviet proposal for an "Asian Collective Security System," can be expected to soften her objections to the United States military presence in Southeast Asia as her relations with the United States improve.

The Sino-Vietnamese conflict is also affecting the other states of Southeast Asia. Laos is in the uncomfortable position of having a "special relationship" with Vietnam (because of the long history of cooperation between the two states), while at the same time she tries to remain neutral in the conflicts among her neighbors.³⁶ Laos has asked for some 25,000 Vietnamese troops to help her maintain security in the face of remnants of the formerly United States-sponsored tribal army and the Royal Laotian Army. The Soviet Union is believed to have the largest aid program in Laos, with about 400 technicians stationed there. Last April, 18,000 Chinese troops and workers completed work on the roads linking Yunnan with Northern Laos, and Vientiane turned down Chinese offers for other work projects in central and southern Laos. But Laos appears determined to avoid taking sides in the regional conflicts.

China and Vietnam are now also vying for influence in non-Communist Southeast Asia. From an early postwar attitude of hostility toward ASEAN, in mid-1976, Vietnamese policy began to shift toward an acceptance of ASEAN as an independent non-military organization. After the deterioration of her relations with China, Vietnam took a major new initiative with regard to her relations with ASEAN, proposing to negotiate an agreement on a "zone of peace and neutrality" similar to the idea adopted by ASEAN itself in 1971.

Should it be achieved, such an agreement would underline Vietnam's contention that Southeast Asian states should resolve their problems without interference from any outside power. The agreement would increase Vietnam's political role in regional politics at China's expense. China is now interested in maintaining a clear line in the region on the basis of opposition to the Soviet Union. China responded to the Vietnamese proposal by accusing Hanoi of playing the "dirty Trojan horse trick," arguing that Vietnam's change of heart toward ASEAN was not genuine. Kampuchea's Ieng Sary called the move another effort to "encircle Kampuchea" and said his government would not join ASEAN or any collective security grouping. Vietnam's proposal promises to be the subject of intensive political maneuvering in the region for some time to come. ■