

China has put forward proposals for a peaceful settlement of the dispute, furnishes the Khmer Rouge with arms, protects Thailand, ensures that Vietnamese troops have to be kept mobilized along the Sino-Vietnamese border, and is pursuing a gradual rapprochement with the Soviet Union in a way which is likely to undermine the latter's support for Vietnam.

The counterpart to the Heng Samrin regime in this larger coalition is the CGDK, which is used by both China and members of ASEAN to further their own policies. In order to make this coalition government appear legitimate the Khmer Rouge has to collaborate with the two other, non-communist, groups, while they in turn have to accept partnership with the Khmer Rouge in order to give credibility to their own resistance movement in Cambodia.

The CGDK reflects all the various disasters which have befallen Cambodia since 1945; it is no more than an assembly of groups with inherently contradictory interests, lacking all credibility, which have been brought together only by the nature of the circumstances and by their common hatred of the Vietnamese. Each of the three factions has established a series of bases in Thailand and they direct resistance operations in Cambodia with varying degrees of success. The three groups do not coordinate their activities to any extent and it is hard to estimate their military effectiveness. According to a representative of the Vietnamese Army newspaper, the Khmer Rouge have approximately 28,000 men, the KPNLF of Son Sann about 18,000, and the army of Sihanouk about 9,000.²⁵

In addition to organizing an active resistance movement the coalition government also serves the interests of China and ASEAN, but cannot be considered a reasonable substitute for the current government in Phnom Penh. Indeed, a brief account of the factions which form this coalition shows that each of them has always been at loggerheads with the other two. Prince Sihanouk during his reign, for example, tried to win over the Kampuchean Communist Party by gaining the support of Khieu Samphan, persecuting other left wing movements all the while but

²⁵ Interview with a representative of *Quan Doi Nhan Dan*, Hanoi, 1987.