

the invasion. This failure left a sufficient number of Khmer Rouge free to conduct guerilla warfare.<sup>16</sup> After they had regrouped at the Thai border, these resistance troops, which were mainly Khmer Rouge, resumed the fight against the Vietnamese, and although they suffered a series of defeats they were nonetheless able to retain a certain credibility. They settled down in camps inside Thailand, and succeeded in attracting new recruits from among the vast number of refugees, all the while receiving aid from China with the agreement of Bangkok.

This new situation had a profound effect on the stability of Thailand as well as on the fate of thousands of Khmer refugees who now found themselves dependent on the outcome of a political gamble in a far-reaching regional dispute. When questioned about the Khmers and the unstable situation on the Thai border, during the course of an ASEAN foreign ministers' meeting in Kuala Lumpur in June 1980, the Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs replied: "These [skirmishes] are not really as bad as having a lack of fighting as a result of a Vietnamese conquest of Kampuchea."<sup>17</sup>

Thus realism won out and the need to support the resistance forces was the favoured form of opposition used by states opposed to Vietnam. On 22 June 1982 the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK) was set up under the auspices of ASEAN. This coalition consisted of three groups, the *Armée Nationale Sihanoukiste* (ANS), the nationalists in the Khmer People's National Liberation Front (KPNLF) and the Khmer Rouge of Democratic Kampuchea (DK). Prince Sihanouk became president of Democratic Kampuchea, Kieu Samphan was the vice-president and Son Sann the Prime Minister.<sup>18</sup>

The third error which Vietnam made, though at the time it must have seemed less significant as far as the Vietnamese leaders were concerned,

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, page 347.

<sup>17</sup> *Asia Yearbook 1981*, Hong Kong: F.E.E.R., 1982, page 14.

<sup>18</sup> One must note that the Khmer Rouge insist that they have retained the right to break this agreement and return to the previous situation in which they were the only legitimate representatives of Democratic Kampuchea. See "East Asia" in *Strategic Survey*, London: IISS, 1982-1983, page 96.