

Vietnam: a case of Chinese expansionism

At the end of December, shortly before the victory of the Kampuchean National United Front over the outlaw government of Cambodia, the Vice Premier and Foreign Minister of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Nguen Duy Trinh, granted an exclusive interview to the Indian weekly New Wave. As opponents of the U.S. China card had warned, the Indochinese leader focused on the threat posed by Chinese hegemonism. In the interview conducted by New Wave editor Ganesh Shukla, Trinh attacked the Chinese aspirations for dominance in Southeast Asia and predicted the recent victory of the people of Kampuchea. Since the interview the new Kampuchean government has announced a citybuilding plan to create a modern country. The abridged interview which follows was made available to New Solidarity International Press Service for publication:

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

New Wave: *The Peking authorities are reported to be not only inciting but also providing large-scale material support to Phnom Penh rulers. How do you view the prospects of the Kampuchean National United Front for National Salvation in meeting the Peking authorities' challenge, liberating their country and establishing normal relations with the Socialist Republic of Vietnam?*

Mr. Trinh: It is true that the Peking authorities are using their agents in Phnom Penh to carry out their big-power expansionist policy and to oppose the Kampuchean and the Vietnamese peoples with Chinese weapons massively sent to Kampuchea and the help of many Chinese military advisors. The Pol Pot-Ieng Sary clique are barbarously repressing the Kampuchean people in the Middle Ages fascist style, and are unleashing a border war or causing provocations and conflicts against all three neighboring countries. The Pol Pot-Ieng Sary clique constitutes an obstacle to the independence, freedom, and normal life of the Kampuchean people, and is also a factor against peace and stability in Southeast Asia.

Unable to live in this hell on earth, all strata of the Kampuchean people, regardless of different political orientations, are rising up to seize back their rights to live like human beings as all other nations. With its Political Programme and correct foreign policy, *the Kampuchean National United Front, the genuine representative of the Kampuchean people*, is mobilizing the entire Kampuchean people to carry out their struggle under various forms, to overthrow the Pol Pot-Ieng Sary clique, to build a new peaceful, independent, democratic and non-aligned Kampuchea which maintains the bonds of friendship and cooperation with the neighboring countries, namely Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, and other Southeast Asian countries. The Front is the quintessence of the Kampuchean people's earnest aspirations and constitutes a factor of peace and stability in Southeast Asia and in the world. That is why, all

men of conscience and those who look to the future have extended their sympathy and support to the Front. Though it has to go through difficulties, the just struggle of the Kampuchean people, like the struggles of the Vietnamese, the Indian and other Asian, African and Latin American peoples against imperialist domination, will certainly win total victory. *The future of Kampuchea will certainly belong to the Kampuchean people under the glorious Banner of the KNVFN.*

New Wave: *You have been meeting leaders of non-aligned countries. How far have the Chinese leaders succeeded in dividing the movement by making the Cuban assistance to some African countries an issue?*

Mr. Trinh: Taking fright at the solidarity and the growth in strength of the Non-Aligned Movement, the international reactionaries in collusion with the imperialists, are leaving no stone unturned to divide, sabotage and divert the movement. They are trying by all means to slander the roles of Vietnam and Cuba in the Non-Aligned Movement. However, by supporting and assisting the struggle of the peoples in a number of countries against imperialism and colonialism, for attaining and defending national independence, building up a new economy and improving the people's living conditions, Cuba has precisely fulfilled its duties as a worthy member of the Non-Aligned Movement. That is why Cuba is enjoying the admiration of the world people.

Acting upon the resolutions of the Colombo Summit Conference and the Belgrade Conference of the Foreign Ministers of the non-aligned countries, Vietnam, India, Cuba and other non-aligned countries are actively preparing for the 1979 Summit Conference to be held in Havana. All designs and acts aimed at dividing, sabotaging the Non-Aligned Movement and causing obstacles to the convening of the Summit Conference in Cuba, will certainly be foiled.

New Wave: *During his recent visit to some ASEAN capitals, Chinese Vice-Premier Teng Hsiao-ping made accusations against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam concerning the Vietnam-USSR Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation with a view to impeding the process of good neighboring relations between Vietnam and ASEAN countries. How do you assess the Chinese influence in this respect?*

Mr. Trinh: The recent signing of the treaty of friendship and cooperation between Vietnam and the Soviet Union is a normal practice in international relations. It is well-known that treaties of this type have been concluded among many countries at the requests of the countries concerned with a view to serving the peace, stability, development and prosperity of each country, without harming the independence and sovereignty of others.

Vietnam has, till now, always strengthened its relations with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, and at the same time, expanded its relations of friendship and cooperation with all other countries, regardless of different political systems, on

the basis of respect for each other's independence and freedom, equality and mutual benefit. The treaty of friendship and cooperation signed between Vietnam and the Soviet Union is a necessary and fine development in the relations of mutual assistance among the socialist countries. This treaty has created favorable conditions for the Vietnamese people to step up their national construction and defense. This is not a military alliance and not intended to oppose any third country. It meets the basic interests of the people of Vietnam and the Soviet Union and also contributes to the cause of world peace and cooperation among nations.

Vietnam pursues a consistent and principled policy toward the Southeast Asian region. During his recent visit to other Southeast Asian countries, Prime Minister Pham Van Dong has, together with the ASEAN leaders, affirmed the principles governing the relations between Vietnam and other Southeast Asian countries, which are reflected in the historic bilateral joint statements.

The Peking authorities' stand and distortions aimed at dividing Vietnam and other Southeast Asian countries and covering up their speeded-up expansionist policy pursued in Southeast Asia will certainly be exposed and rejected by realities.

New Wave: Of late, there has been intensified propaganda concerning the so-called refugees. What are your comments?

Mr. Trinh: The cause of socialist revolution has brought about a great change in the South Vietnamese people's political life. A number of people who used to live a luxurious life in the past and lived on the outside forces, cannot overcome the initial difficulties in the postwar period, caused by the long, fiercely destructive war of the imperialists and colonialists. These are the consequences of neocolonialism. We do not hinder anybody who wants to go abroad provided he goes through necessary procedures under the regulations and laws of the State. But those who fled abroad in an illegal manner, have caused difficulties to us. They have taken away with them many boats and other state property.

It is necessary to point out that in their lies, the criminal hands of the imperialists and international reactionaries, have designed not only to cause instability in Vietnam which needs internal stability and peace in international relations so as to heal the war wounds, to rehabilitate and develop the economy and culture, and gradually improve the living conditions of her people, but also nurtured a long-term scheme to undermine the socialist Vietnam.

Inside Pol Pot's Cambodia

The Vietnamese delegation to the UN this week called Pol Pot's Cambodia a "living hell." Although the U.S., Britain, and other nations have criticized Vietnam for supporting the overthrow of the Pol Pot government, no nation has refuted that characterization. In the testimony by Pol Pot's victims, the citizens of Cambodia, what emerges is a pattern of systematic mass killings — often indiscriminate, but sometimes singling out Cambodia's literate citizens — of the elimination of medical care, and the disbanding of public education down through the elementary levels — an attempt to turn a society backward in time to an early stone age culture.

Reproduced below are accounts by Cambodians of the barbarity of the Pol Pot regime, presented by the Vietnamese media late last year.

Mass Murder

Testimony of a captured Cambodian soldier, Mao Chan, broadcast over Radio Hanoi, Nov. 19:

I was captured by the Vietnamese forces on October 16, 1978 while leading my unit into Vietnamese territory in Dong Thap Province to prepare the way for the division's invasion of Vietnam... While I was in the Pol Pot army, at the orders of the commanders, I took part in massacring many Kampuchean people. At the beginning of June 1978, our commander summoned all the company cadres to a meeting in which we were told that the higher authorities had assigned us to kill some

rebels. He asked whether we dared carry out this order. He warned us, however, that any of us who refused to kill would be in great danger.

At the end of the meeting, four other men and I led about 50 people to the execution ground. Among these people were 20 children and 5 elderly men. The rest were women. They were inhabitants of Prey Veng Province. We were each given a bamboo stick as long as a pickax handle. We were followed by a group of well armed security personnel.

When we reached a spot in the village we were ordered to use the bamboo sticks to club the prisoners to death by smashing their heads or necks. Some of us hesitated. The security personnel standing behind us warned us that anyone resisting the order would be killed on the spot himself. I personally killed 20 people with a pickax handle. The bodies of the dead were thrown into a huge grave and covered with dirt.

Besides my group there were many other groups assigned to execute people in the same manner. I know that many people have been killed in this way.

The destruction of religion

(Radio Hanoi, broadcast Nov. 17):

In an interview with foreign correspondents on August 5, 1978, Pol Pot revealed that in recent years the number of Buddhists in Kampuchea had dropped steadily. He said that now only pseudo-Buddhists remain. This comment from the head of the