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N.L.F. ASSESSMENT OF CAMBODIAN SITUATION AS OF
YEAR-END, 1969

III. THE SITUATION IN THE KHMER REPUBLIC.

In recent days, through the direct intervention of the CIA (US Central Intelligence Agency) Group, the US imperialists have incited their henchmen, **Lon Nol** and **Sirit Matak**, to stage a coup d'etat on 18 Mar 70 to overthrow the legal government of the **Khmer Kingdom** headed by **Norodom Sihanouk**.

1. Why did the US imperialists plan to stage a coup d'etat in the Khmer Republic (what are the US imperialists' schemes) ?
2. What was the evolution of the coup d'etat?
3. What are the errors of the US imperialists pertaining to their acts in the Khmer Republic ?
4. What is the progress of the revolution and war situation in the Khmer Republic?
5. What are the prospects of the Khmer Revolution?

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1. Why did the US imperialists stage a coup d'etat in the Khmer Republic?

(What are the US imperialists' plans and schemes?)

a. The Khmer Republic is an important strategic position. The US wants to occupy the Khmer Republic to set up an anticommunist defensive belt: SVN the Khmer Republic - Laos and Thailand.

However, in the face of Sihanouk's peace and neutrality policy, it (the US) has used bribery (stating that it would provide aid for the Khmer Republic to set up an irrigation system and exploit the Mekong River) and threats and has attempted to assassinate ((Sihanouk)). (It sent a gift containing a time bomb to Sihanouk. The bomb exploded, but Sihanouk survived while his bodyguard was killed).

The US still could not convince Prince Sihanouk ((to change his peace and neutrality policy)). Therefore, it was extremely discontent and considered the Khmer Republic as an obstacle.

Prince Sihanouk supported us but at the same time he caused us some difficulties. The US wanted to turn the Khmer Republic into a military base to exert pressure on us, attack us on the flanks and execute deep thrusts into our areas from behind in an attempt to attain a superiority to oppress the SVN Revolution.

b. Recently, the US has been defeated in the limited war in SVN. It has been forced to withdraw its troops but it carried out the Vietnamization plan.

However, the US feared that the Vietnamization plan would also fail and that was why it wanted to occupy the Khmer Republic in order to turn it into a foothold in the future. The US troops were afraid of being pursued by us ((VC/NVA troops)) while they were in the process of withdrawing.

In addition, the reactionary Khmers feared that the SVN Revolution would be successful and would affect the Khmer Revolutionary movement.

Recently, the Laotian Revolution has been developed. Due to the above mentioned reasons, the US instigated a coup d'etat in the Khmer Republic.

2. Development of the ((18 Mar 70)) coup d'etat in the Khmer Republic:

In the beginning, Lon Nol and Sirit Matak took advantage of Prince Sihanouk's absence to order ruffians to ransack the Democratic Republic of VN and the SVN Provisional Revolutionary Republican Government embassy buildings. Then they sent us an ultimatum letter (demanding a withdrawal of our ((VC/NVA)) troops from the Khmer Republic within three days).

The French retained Prince Sihanouk in France and the US staged a coup d'etat in the Khmer Republic. They intended to inform Sihanouk of this occurrence afterwards and then advise him to return to the Khmer Republic (after having coerced him). When Prince Sihanouk expressed his desire to return to his country, the French intentionally delayed his trip to Moscow under the pretext that airplanes could not fly safely due to fog.

The US imperialist scheme was to use Lon Nol and ((Sirit)) Matak to overthrow Sihanouk but also keep him as a label like Phouma in Laos. However, Lon Nol and Matak, who were greedy for power, feared that if Sihanouk returned to the Khmer Republic, he would reassume power. Therefore, they disrupted the US imperialists' cunning schemes and announced that Sihanouk and his family were forbidden to return to the Khmer Republic.

As soon as Prince Sihanouk arrived at the Moscow airport, he was welcomed by ((Prime Minister)) Kosygin, who informed him that on the morning of the same day the US henchmen in his country had overthrown him.

Lon Nol and Matak, who instigated the coup d'etat, declared that the Monarchy was overthrown and a republican regime was established (this regime was similar to the Diem Nhu and Thieu-Ky Regimes). They also changed the foreign and domestic policies of the Khmer Republic. For example, they did not follow the peace and neutrality policy of Sihanouk. Instead, they supported the US. Therefore, they repressed the revolutionary movement in the Khmer Republic. They terrorized and massacred a large number of Vietnamese residents in the Khmer Republic and broke the diplomatic relations between the Khmer Republic and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the SVN Provisional Revolutionary Republican Government.

3. Significant errors of the US imperialists:

a. The coup d'etat to overthrow Sihanouk was a great mistake by the US.

The US did not expect Sihanouk to side with the Communists so rapidly.

It failed to estimate the Khmer people's struggle spirit and strength, as well as

((Page 10 of O.T.))

the role of the Khmer people's patriotic forces, and Prince Sihanouk's prestige among the people.

It did not properly estimate the reactionaries of Lon Nol and Matak.

The coup d'etat took place on 18 Mar 70. When Sihanouk arrived in Peking from Moscow, he made very progressive statements which clearly indicated that he sided with the Revolution.

What is Sihanouk's personality?

Prince Sihanouk is of royal blood. As a king of the Khmer Republic, he is a nationalist and is anti-American.

He has sympathy for Vietnam (he knows that the Khmer people obtained independence because the French colonialists were defeated by the Vietnamese). Particularly, he admires Uncle HỒ.

He has foreseen the US imperialists' aggressive intentions.

If we defeat the US ((aggressors)), we would increase Sihanouk's confidence in our strength and capabilities and change his foreign and domestic policies.

Hence, Prince Sihanouk has supported the mission of fighting the US ((aggressors)) for the national salvation of our people. He has recognized the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the SVN Provisional Revolutionary Republican Government, accepted our diplomatic relations at the ambassador level, and has provided us with food provisions.

Prince Sihanouk to change his peace and neutrality policy. But it never expected Prince Sihanouk to side with the Revolution. The US imperialists are so mediocre that even a king opposes them. This fact once again proves that: "At the present time, persons who are truly nationalistic and patriotic will favor socialism." We are required to provide effective and clever leadership.

The US failed to estimate the Khmer people's struggle spirit and strength, and the role of the Khmer people's patriotic forces.

The Khmer people inherited an ancient civilization. They have traditions of heroic struggles against foreign aggressors to protect this civilization. During a half century under the French domination, the Khmer people along with the Vietnamese people opposed the French colonialists' yokes, and after nine years of anti-French resistance the Khmer people together with the Vietnamese and Laotian peoples gained the final victory. As a result, they have maintained their independence, peace, and neutrality for more than 15 years.

The US did not realize Prince Sihanouk's prestige among the Khmer people.

Prince Sihanouk was a nationalist and wanted to build his country according to his peace and neutrality policy.

For the past fifteen years Cambodia has been at peace and the peoples' living has improved. The Phnom Penh Capital was built, and a number of pagodas and water-power plants were constructed.

Therefore, Sihanouk won the confidence of people, especially the affection of Khmer monks and Buddhist followers (Buddhism is the national religion in the Khmer Republic).

((Page 11 of O.T.))

(Many Buddhist priests wept when Lon Nol and Matak assembled them to announce the overthrow of Sihanouk).

The US failed to estimate the Lon Nol and Matak Clique:

The US imperialists thought that by replacing feudalism with a republican government, the ((Khmer)) people would support Lon Nol and Matak's Government. They failed to realize that their henchmen were reckless, stupid, and tyrannical individuals. As evidence to this they have:

- Massacred those who protested against them.
- Barbarously massacred Vietnamese residents.
- Secretly assassinated many of Sihanouk's relatives in the royal palace (we know this although it has not been disclosed).

b. The US made a mistake when they sent their troops to the Khmer Republic.

In inciting its henchmen to wage a coup d'etat ((in the Khmer Republic)), the US made a mistake. Its mistakes can be explained as follows (only the military field is covered):

Due to the failure in the limited war in SVN, the US was forced to withdraw its troops ((from SVN)), 115,000 US soldiers, equivalent to one fifth of the US strength ((in SVN)). Its remaining strength is not adequate to hold its defensive positions.

Seriously defeated in the unconventional war in Laos, the US brought additional advisors and secretly sent US combat units, "the green beret troops", to Laos.

The US had to engage in another battlefield which was fairly important. The situation was not carefully studied and prepared by them. Dismayed and confused, it engaged in combat activities in the Khmer Republic in a critical situation.

This strategic error on the part of the US imperialists gave us an idea that the US was like a hare trapped in the Vietnam snare with one leg trapped in Laos and the other, in the Khmer Republic. In such a situation, the hare would soon die.

The history of the war proves that many generals have experienced failure because they have made the same mistakes. Example: During the aggressive war waged by the French colonialists against Indochina in 1952, when the lowland battlefield in NVN was endangered, De ((Lattre de)) Tassigny, a French General, adventurously brought his troops to our liberated area to occupy Hoa Binh City ((NVN)). This was a very passive act aimed at warding off our blow over the lowland battlefield of NVN. As a result, De Tassigny experienced bitter failures and was forced to withdraw his troops from Hoa Binh City.

c. But why did the US venturously intervene in the situation in the Khmer Republic:

The Khmer Revolution developed quickly and spread throughout all the provinces within forty days. In many areas, district and village revolutionary governments were established (over 50 districts or half of the number of districts in the country). Faced with the danger of a complete collapse, the Khmer reactionaries pleaded for help. In an attempt to send satellite troops to the Khmer Republic, the US convened an Asian conference to discuss the Khmer problem. However, this conference could not be held. In such a situation, Nixon decided to bring 70,000 US and Puppet ((RVNAF)) troops (from Saigon) to the Khmer Republic without consulting the US Congress.

((Page 12 of O.T.))

4. Progress of the revolution and war situation in the Khmer Republic.

a. First phase: From 18 Mar to 29 Apr 70.

On 18 Mar 70, when Sihanouk was ((visiting France)), the US CIA staged a coup d'etat and used the pro-American and reactionary Lon Nol-Matak Clique to seize the power. The results of the coup d'etat were not expected by the US, because the Khmer people everywhere strongly opposed it.

and conducted ((political)) struggles (meetings and demonstrations) in Prey Vieng, Ta Keo and Kompong Cham Provinces on 26, 27, 28, and 29 Mar 70. As of 31 Mar ((70)), the ((political)) movement developed in 17 of the 20 provinces.

In addition to political struggles, the military struggles were also promoted properly. Patriotic military forces were activated and quickly developed in various provinces such as: Ratanakiri, Mondul Kiri, Kandal, Takeo, Kampot, Siem Reap, and Battambang. (These provinces are located in the East, West, Central, South, and North ((of the Khmer Republic))).

The Phnom Penh Capital was under heavy ((military)) pressure, because the battles took place at 14 or 15 kilometers from Phnom Penh. Demonstrations were staged, and leaflets and grenades were thrown in the Phnom Penh Capital, etc ... ((sic)). Unable to cope with such a revolutionary "whirlwind", the Lon Nol-Matak Clique had to call for aid.

b. Second phase: (Since 30 Apr 70).

In order to save its henchmen for another sinister scheme on 28 Mar 70, the US ordered Saigon Puppet forces to conduct a search operation in the Khmer territory with one or two battalions. Examples: On 5 Apr 70, one Puppet battalion and one armored company from Long Thuan (Tay Ninh Province) crossed the Vietnam-Khmer Border and moved to the areas of Ta No, Ta Sach (Chot District, Soai Rieng Province). Five to six US/Puppet battalions were sent to the Khmer Republic on 17, 18, 20 and 23 Apr ((70)).

On 30 Apr 70, after deploying the US/Puppet forces ((President)) Nixon, in the name of the US Commander in Chief, directed US expeditionary troops in SVN and the Saigon Puppet Army to openly invade the Khmer Republic. He went to the Pentagon (US National Defense Department) to supervise the implementation of his plan of aggression (this act was contrary to the doctrine advocated by him).

Participating in this incursion were many "elite" US and Puppet units.

The US combat forces included the 25th Infantry Division, the 4th Infantry Division, the 1st Air Cavalry Division, and the 11th Armor Regiment.

The Puppet forces including the 5th, 9th, and 22nd ((Inf)) Divisions, and Marine and Airborne and Armor elements.

Their two main directions of attack were:

1. The "Parrot Beak" area in Xoai Rieng Province.
2. The "Fish Hook" area between Prey Veng and Kompong Cham Provinces.

The main front covered 400 kilometers (from the northeast to southeast) along the Khmer Republic border. The US and Puppet troops were divided into many spearheads making deep thrusts into the Khmer territory. There were eight spearheads (two primary and six supplementary ones).

1st Primary Spearhead: Three Puppet Task Forces composed of approximately 12,000 men began to attack the "Parrot Beak" area (Xoai Rieng) on 30 Apr ((70)) under the control of hundreds of US advisors and the support of artillery pieces, tanks and aircraft. In addition, three US battalions were brought close to the Khmer border to operate as a reserve force.

2nd Primary Spearhead: On 2 May, the US 1st Air Cavalry Division, the US 11th Armor Regiment, and elements of the 5th ((RVNAF)) Division, totalling approximately ten thousand men, conducted an attack against the Fish Hook area (Kong Pong Cham). In coordination with the first spearhead, it formed a two-pronged attack to encircle the VC Headquarters.

3rd Shearhead ((supplementary)): On 5 May, 6,000 troops from the 4th US Infantry Division and the 22nd ((RVNAF)) Infantry Division were brought from Pleiku to Ratakiri (in the Khmer Republic) by helicopters.

4th Spearhead: On 6 May, 4000 troops from the 25th US Infantry Division and a number of Puppet troops entered Prey Veng and Kompong Cham Provinces.

Four auxiliary spearheads launched a two-pronged attack against the northern "Fish Hook" area on 6 May. They also launched attacks on the western "Fish Hook" area and "Parrot Beak" area on 9 May.

On 9 May, the US and Puppet forces moved in three directions to the Phnom Penh Capital in an attempt to occupy it.

One element of the 9th RVNAF Regiment and 100 battleships of the US Navy Force moved up the Mekong River toward the Phnom Penh Capital. These units were supported by aircraft.

In addition, 30 helicopters landed Puppet soldiers in the Niet Luong ferry landing area (60 kilometers from Phnom Penh).

At the same time, thousands of Special Force soldiers, Vietnamese of Khmer Origin, who were trained and equipped by the Americans were airlifted to the Phnom Penh Capital to protect Lon Nol and ((Sirit)) Matak's final sanctuary.

c. Results:

With 70,000 troops (presently, almost 100,000 men) from the Navy, Army, and Air Forces, the US thought it could easily invade the Khmer Republic. However the US suffered bitter failures in all fields.

1. Military failure:

As published by the Americans, the major scheme of maneuver and operation was to annihilate the "VC General Headquarters." But their efforts were fruitless. European journalists joining the sweep operation reported that there were some abandoned houses. They ((VC)) might have left a long time ago.

contradicted this, saying that the US did not plan to destroy enemy troops but their rear service installations. However, the BBC Radio Broadcasting Station ironically informed us of the following: "The US Headquarters declared that eight individual rudimentary weapons were found while the Puppet Headquarters stated that more than 3,000 shovel blades were seized. This was funny information."

All US and RVNAF attacking elements were continuously intercepted.

((Page 14 of O.T.))

As of 31 May 70 (one month after their incursion ((into Khmer))), some enemy attacking elements were pinned down and suffered heavy losses.

More than 6,000 enemy troops (2,000 US troops and 4,000 Puppet troops) were killed.

An estimated 320 armored vehicles were destroyed (most of them were tanks).

More than 10,000 various types of weapons and ammunition were captured.

Lon Nol-Matak puppet forces were quickly disorganized. (According to a BBC News Report on 6 May ((70)), within three weeks, beginning 18 Mar ((70)), the date of the Coup d'etat, ten ((Khmer)) battalions were destroyed or disorganized, and ten others were encircled and oppressed. More than 10,000 troops out of 60,000 were killed. By the end of May ((70)), 28 ((Khmer)) battalions were destroyed or disorganized (including 24,000 troops), and a large number of weapons and ammunition, and tanks were left behind. "Phnom Penh Capital might be seized" (according to a "BBC" News Report on 7 May ((70))).

2. Political and diplomatic failures:

In the United States, Nixon was opposed by the US Congress. The US Foreign Affairs Committee of the Senate requested to speak to Nixon (this fact occurred for the first time in 51 years). Some departments also opposed him (including the Interior Department and the Department of Education, and "Fret Phot" ((possibly Clifford)), a former secretary of the US National Defense Department).

The US people, especially students and professors of universities, strongly opposed him. Nixon gave orders to oppress them.

As a result, ten students (including black and white youths of both sexes) were killed.

Allies of the US also opposed him or disagreed with him. Example: Being discontent, the French government permitted the French Communist Party to conduct a meeting of 250,000 people, and hold a conference for 18 Western Europe Communist Parties in Paris in order to protest the US incursion into the Khmer Republic and Vietnam. West Germany also opposed the US, whereas Japan dared not openly support it.

5. Prospect of the Khmer Revolution:

At present, the attacks conducted by the US imperialists against the Khmer Republic have caused us a number of temporary difficulties, however we have liberated the Attapeu Plateau (Lower Laos) which borders the Khmer base area (Strung Treng and Ra-Ta-Ki-Ri Provinces) and Pleiku Highland, transforming it into a common and large base area for the three countries in Indochina.

Regarding the general situation, the Khmer Revolution will have many advantages. It has attained remarkable achievements.

a. Military, political, and diplomatic achievements:

Military: As of the end of May ((70)), we killed and captured nearly 40,000 enemy soldiers (including more than 12,000 US/RVNAF soldiers), destroyed or disorganized two brigades, 56 battalions, and a number of command posts from sub-sector to military region level, seized more than 10,000 assorted weapons, destroyed nearly 1,000 military vehicles (half of them were tanks or armored vehicles), and shot down nearly 100 aircraft.

The ((Khmer)) people's armed forces have been rapidly developed. The guerrilla units have been quickly upgraded to main forces.

((Page 15 of O.T.))

The Khmer Liberation Army has not only been strengthened in its organization and members, but the combat capabilities and leadership have also been improved. It was capable of destroying ~~the~~ battalion-size units. We have provided support for it. Of course, only when the situation becomes favorable, can it successfully use our support to serve the revolutionary purposes.

The revolutionary movement has developed throughout various provinces (17 out of 20 provinces) within two months. The revolutionary machineries have been established in half of the districts and villages (3 province capitals, 53 districts, 11 towns, and hundreds of villages or hamlets were liberated). The Anti-American National United Front was established with the participation of the people from various social classes. Though the United Royal Khmer Government was just recently established (in a foreign country), it was recognized by nearly 20 countries. The three following Ministers were assigned the task of leading the in-country resistance.

Minister of National Defense: LT GEN Khién Xem Phan
((Khiêu Somphon)).

Minister for Internal Affairs, Rural Reform and
Cooperatives: Hu-y-un ((Hou Yun)).

Minister of Information and Propaganda: Hu Num (Hu-Niém)).

This proves that the previous Khmer Regime was "passively neutral," and that the current one is "positively neutral" (socialistic).

b. Causes of victories:

The Khmer people have an ancient civilization, the Angkor ((Angkor)) Civilization (the Angkor Vat and Angkor Thom Pagodas, which were called Khmer ruins, one of the wonders of the world, were built and sculptured here over 1,000 years ago with an excellent technique).

They have a brave tradition of fighting aggressors, especially during the nine-year Resistance against French aggressors (the Khmer revolutionary forces led by Comrade Son Ngoc Nin in coordination with volunteer troops of the National Guard Brigades fought bravely). ((The Khmer revolutionary forces)) organized armed units, and prepared for an uprising under the leadership of the ((Communist)) Party (while the Lon Nol and Matak Clique made no war preparations. A country must make preparations for more than six months before getting involved in a war).

The Khmer Republic is situated adjacent to Vietnam, therefore the victories gained in countering the US ((aggressors)) by the Vietnamese ((Communists)) favorably influenced the fighting spirit of the Khmer people.

The US imperialists and their henchmen are invading the Khmer Republic.

The revolutionary situation of the Khmer people has become favorable. This means the opportunity to seize power is coming.

Briefly, the revolutionary situation in the Khmer Republic, and throughout Indochina, has become more favorable.