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REF CIA

The People's Republic of Kampuchea: [redacted]

The People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK), the puppet regime installed by Vietnamese forces when they captured Kampuchea's major cities in January, has not been able to establish an effective political system with broad appeal to the Kampuchean people. Most towns and villages were evacuated before the Vietnamese forces reached them, and large numbers of civilians who were moved into the countryside remain under the control of Pol Pot's Democratic Kampuchean (DK) forces. Kampuchean who are in PRK-controlled areas appreciate the abandonment of Pol Pot's harsh policies, but are dissatisfied with the new regime's obvious dependence on Hanoi.

The Vietnamese invaded Kampuchea before they had completely organized their Khmer front organization. They had been recruiting from among Kampuchean refugees in Vietnam since at least early spring 1978, but did not officially establish the Kampuchean National United Front for National Salvation (KNUFNS) until early December. The pro-Vietnamese Khmer accompanying the Vietnamese invasion forces probably numbered fewer than 20,000 and they did little or no actual fighting. Some served as translators and others occupied the cities taken by the Vietnamese, but relatively few were trained or organized to carry out effective civic action or propaganda activities.

In a bid to win support among the Kampuchean, the Vietnamese and PRK cadre announced a number of popular reforms. Vietnamese troops, who were generally well-behaved, promised that no punitive action would be taken against those associated with the former regime. In outlying villages, they opened the granaries, allowing people to eat better than they had for years, and encouraged the Kampuchean to elect new village leaders. The Vietnamese and PRK cadre moved on after several days, however, and returning DK forces frequently executed the villagers who

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had collaborated with the Vietnamese. As the Vietnamese no doubt calculated, many of the Kampuchians in "contaminated" villages chose to move to areas under Vietnamese control. [REDACTED]

The most prominent leaders of the PRK regime are defectors from Pol Pot's government. Heng Samrin, who serves concurrently as President of the PRK and leader of the KNUFNS, had been the commander and political commissar of a DK division stationed on the eastern front until he apparently led an unsuccessful insurrection and fled to Vietnam in the spring of 1978. The Vice President in charge of National Defense, Pen Sovan, had served under Pol Pot in military and propaganda posts, but defected to the Vietnamese in the early 1970s. Hun Sen, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, had been a military officer, and Chea Sim, head of the Interior Ministry, had held a midlevel party position in the Pol Pot regime. [REDACTED]

Hanoi and Moscow have sponsored the PRK's diplomatic overtures and pressed other countries to recognize it as the legitimate representative of the Kampuchean people. The 17 nations that have recognized the PRK are all friendly to the Soviets and Vietnamese. Hanoi and Moscow have consistently supported the PRK's position at the United Nations and at the international conferences and have facilitated the foreign travel of PRK representatives. Recognizing that support for their new regime is very limited, however, they have not seriously challenged the Pol Pot regime's predominant position within the international community. [REDACTED]

Domestically, the PRK cadre are only beginning to establish administrative organs. Almost 100,000 Kampuchians reportedly had taken refuge in Battambang by the end of February, but aside from a hospital staffed by a single Vietnamese doctor, no public health, educational, or cultural services had been reestablished. In recent speeches, PRK leaders have candidly acknowledged many shortcomings in their administration, including lack of training, favoritism, elitism, corruption, and the "mistreatment" of Kampuchians. PRK leaders have also admitted that serious security problems are continuing to hamper their activities. [REDACTED]

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Refugees report that Vietnamese forces are stationed at almost every crossroad, bridge, and village along the major communications routes, and that the Vietnamese control everything. Village leaders in "liberated" areas always have a Vietnamese Army counterpart assigned to advise and work with them. Where "People's Self Management Committees" have been established, they are staffed by both Vietnamese and PRK cadre, but the Vietnamese make all the decisions. Many Kampuchians were delighted with the PRK reforms, but "once their bellies were full" they began to have second thoughts. Kampuchians who had moved to the cities because the new regime provided security are no doubt worried that an eventual Vietnamese withdrawal would leave them vulnerable to DK retribution. On the other hand, the new regime's dependence on the Vietnamese has rekindled historic Khmer-Vietnamese animosities and sparked concern among Kampuchians that Hanoi--just as the DK leaders had predicted--intends to "swallow up" their country. [REDACTED]

Hanoi is sensitive to these problems. Vietnamese forces reportedly have been ordered to maintain a low profile and allow the PRK to deal with Kampuchian civilians. The Vietnamese have stepped up conscription efforts inside Kampuchea and increased recruiting among Khmer who have been living for many years in southern Vietnam. Hanoi is attempting to deal with the suspicions and hostility of the Kampuchian people, but refugees report that dissatisfaction with the Vietnamese and PRK cadre is widespread and growing. [REDACTED]

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