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Supplements:

- 1) Harmonized document
- 2) The Hungarian speech

## **Report**

### **On the Consultation of the Deputy Foreign Ministers of the Socialist Countries in Connection with the Recognition of the Cambodian People's Republic**

On Vietnamese initiative, the socialist countries recognizing the Cambodian People's Republic held a consultative work meeting on 18-19 December 1981 in Vientiane. According to an earlier proposal by the three Indochinese countries, the meeting was scheduled to take place in June, but this date was not suitable for the Soviet side. The Soviet partner suggested the present date. In addition to the three Indochinese countries, the following countries were represented at the level of deputy foreign minister: the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Cuba, Mongolia and Hungary. The GDR was represented by the regional head of department, while Poland sent its Vientiane ambassador. (Romania and the Korean People's Republic, along with Albania's ambassador in Vientiane, had also been notified about the meeting.)

The delegates issued a harmonized document about the meeting for the press (it is enclosed in the supplement); furthermore, they collectively sent their greetings to Comrade L.I. Brezhnev on his 75th birthday. Comrade Kaysone Phomvihane, General Secretary of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party (LPRP) and Prime Minister of the Lao People's Democratic Republic (LPDR) threw a reception for the heads of delegation.

In his speech underlining the importance of the meeting, Comrade Kaysone Phomvihane expressed his warmest gratitude to the deputy ministers for their moral and political backing. He pointed out that it was not possible to achieve peace and security in the region without the support, unity and cooperation of the socialist countries on the one hand, and the consequent and flexible foreign politics of the Indochinese countries on the other. In his assessment, right now the

countries of Indochina were encircled and under the conditions of a special kind of war. The enemy launched attacks on all fronts (military, economic, ideological, political, etc.), in an attempt to turn the Indochinese countries on each other by whipping up nationalist fervor. At the end of the discussion, Comrade Kaysone Phomvihane specifically asked me to pass on his warm greetings to Comrade János Kádár.

## I.

The meeting was opened, and later closed, by Deputy Prime Minister Phoumi Vongvichit, Politburo member of the LPRP's Central Committee. The three Indochinese deputy foreign ministers and the Soviet deputy foreign minister gave the introductory reports. (The Vietnamese colleague spoke about the situation in South-East Asia, the Cambodian about his country's internal affairs, and the Laotian about the cooperation between the three Indochinese countries).

In their speeches, all heads of delegation gave a general assessment of the international situation. In harmony with the document issued by the meeting of Warsaw Treaty foreign ministers, they emphasized the growing aggression of American imperialism and the dangers implied by the recent improvements in relations between the US and China. They all gave unequivocal support to the political line laid down by the 26th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Comrade Brezhnev's visit to Bonn and the Bucharest meeting of Warsaw Treaty foreign ministers, while also endorsing the proposals made in connection with the preservation of the thaw in relations and the limitation of the arms race.

Although the meeting began with presentations by the Indochinese representatives, the atmosphere, the content, the direction and the resolutions were fundamentally set by the two-and-a-half-hour long exposition given by Comrade Firiubin, who, after analyzing the general international situation with a special emphasis on the situation in South-East Asia, underlined the need for unity and close cooperation among the socialist countries.

Especially important in Comrade Firiubin's speech was the part dedicated to recent proposals by the Reagan administration (the question of "zero variant, etc.), in which he demonstrated that these proposals contained essentially no new, positive elements: only the tone changed, not the content. In connection with this, Comrade Firiubin strongly underlined the need for growing unity and cooperation among the socialist countries, in view of the deteriorating general atmosphere and the increasing aggression of the Chinese leaders, of their readiness to embark on an adventurist and irresponsible course of action.

Comrade Firiubin's specific assessment of the situation in South-East Asia started out from the observation that all three Indochinese countries were in a very difficult situation at the moment. By putting pressure on them, the imperialist powers and China aimed at aggravating their internal problems on the one hand and undermining their unity on the other; also, in the hope of facilitating the restoration of either capitalism or Chinese influence, they tried to separate them from the community of the socialist countries. In response to this challenge, the Indochinese countries chose the only correct reaction: they countered this provocation with peaceful political offensive and the exploitation of the enemies' conflicts.

The United States of America considerably increased its activities in South East Asia by making renewed efforts to infiltrate the Asian continent. In addition to putting political pressure on the leaders of ASEAN, they aimed at restoring their military presence and creating military alliances here, among others by trying to transform the ASEAN into a military alliance. This led to the worsening of Chino-American conflicts – especially in Thailand –, to which Peking reacted vehemently by implementing diplomatic and (through the insurgent activities of Thailand's

Maoist Communist Party) military countermeasures.

The relations towards certain groups of the counter-revolutionary forces of the Khmer reveal the existence of similar conflicts: while the USA and certain ASEAN countries supported Sihanouk, most notably Son Sann, Peking gave its sole support to Pol Pot. While constantly worrying about the possible consequences of Chino-American cooperation, the internally divided ASEAN is hostile towards Indochina on ideological and class considerations. Their shared goal “to separate Indochina from the socialist camp by offering economical assistance to the Indochinese countries in return for their denouncement of principles” should be taken seriously. “It is important that we exploit the conflicts between the opposing groups, but it is even more important that we strengthen both the positions of socialism and the relations between Indochina and the socialist countries.” The Soviet Union is willing to provide all possible help to achieve this goal. Especially important is the consolidation of friendly relations between the three Indochinese countries.

The way forward in bringing about a settlement in South East Asia lies in the direction of keeping up the initiative seized by the three Indochinese countries’ proposals. For the ASEAN countries, it will become increasingly difficult not to react to these initiatives, which on the one hand have been founded on ASEAN’s own earlier ideas about setting up a peace zone in South East Asia and, on the other hand, quite naturally contain socialist ideas. What is needed now is not only the unity of the three Indochinese countries, but also a concerted and coordinated effort from all the socialist countries to rally support for the Indochinese initiatives.

There still exist some unexplored ways of influencing the ASEAN countries. The concrete forms may differ according to the inherent nature of the various countries, including the possibility of high-level visits, for example.

In his speech, the Vietnamese deputy foreign minister Comrade Vo Dong Giang pointed out that the victories of 1975 and 1979 seriously hampered US and Chinese foreign policy, respectively. The socialist positions broadened and consolidated in Indochina; the unity and military alliance of the three Indochinese countries had been restored; and US imperialism and Chinese hegemonism had been driven out of Indochina, with the result that the coexistence of countries with different political system became a reality here. China’s aggression against Vietnam in 1979 ended in defeat, the implications of which have still not been completely fathomed; nevertheless, this defeat eventually came to constitute the basis of the increasingly rapid and profound cooperation between China and the imperialist powers.

In the emerging new situation, the United States, China and the ASEAN countries, while making a united front against the strengthening positions of socialism, all try to play politics with one another vis-à-vis the Indochinese countries. Since each acts according to its selfish interests, the gap between their statements is growing, and the conflicts between their goals are increasing. Therefore, for the next few years in South East Asia, the following scenarios are likely to emerge:

- The existing state of affairs remains: the reactionary circles of China, the United States and the ASEAN countries sustain the tension as well as the dialogue, switching back and forth between these two modes.
- Relations between Indochina and China continue to be tense, but it will be possible to turn the ASEAN against China, with the result that the latter becomes isolated and the way towards peaceful coexistence in South East Asia will be cleared.
- Supported by the United States and the ASEAN countries, China starts a new military adventure against Indochina.

Every country in South East Asia, including the ASEAN states, and even the United States, has a vested interest in peaceful development: the USA has relatively weak positions,

which it wishes to protect, especially in Thailand but also in the other countries. From the viewpoint of clearing the way towards positive development, it is vitally important “to strengthen the alliance between the three Indochinese countries in every area.” This alliance is not directed against the ASEAN countries; on the contrary, it provides them with safeguards against Chinese hegemonism.

The Socialist Republic of Vietnam welcomes and values the efforts the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries have been making in order to make the ASEAN countries fall out with China and start a dialogue with Indochina about the building of good relations with their neighbors.

This process must be treated separately from the issue of the relations between the Indochinese countries and China: the two issues must be handled and resolved separately. The question of the relations between China and Indochina should be addressed separately in the form of bilateral or multilateral talks.

The countries of South East Asia must settle the question of cooperation in the region for themselves, without any outside interference. In connection with this, /Comrade Vo Dong Giang/ reiterated his government’s earlier position on the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Cambodia and the guaranteeing of Thailand’s safety: this contained neither any new elements nor any concrete new proposals.

### III.

The Cuban speaker directed the attention at one of the most important aspects of the problem: despite all the efforts so far, the voting figures both in the United Nations and on the platforms of the non-aligned nations had revealed an unfavorable tendency; unless the situation dramatically improves, there is a specific danger that by 1982 the representation of the Pol-Potist “Democratic Cambodia” will have been restored within the non-aligned movement.

The Mongolian delegate officially requested that the deputy ministers have meetings similar as this on a regular basis in the future. He proposed that the next meeting be held in Ulaanbaator. He did not appoint a specific date.

The Mongolian delegate reported on the reception of the Mongolian proposals addressed to the countries in Asia and Oceania. He asked the participants to pass on any available information on this subject through the Mongolian embassies.

Finally, he motioned that an independent Asian-based magazine be founded in order to carry out propaganda about the socialist countries’ activities in Asia.

All the speakers, including the Hungarian delegate, offered their continuing support to all the initiatives launched by the Indochinese countries so far. However, these initiatives seem to have contained essentially no new elements: they only repeated the socialist countries’ earlier proposals for bringing a solution to the region’s problems. The joint communiqué about the present conference was worded and approved on the basis, and in the spirit, of the proposal submitted at the 26th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union; the Mongolian proposal about signing a multilateral non-aggression treaty in this region; and the three Indochinese foreign ministers’ proposal made in Ho Chi Minh City and Phnom Penh. The Hungarian speech (it is enclosed in the supplement) contained our assessment of the developments in the region, along with the assurance of continuing Hungarian support to the Indochinese initiatives and a recount of my personal experiences in connection with my visit to the ASEAN countries. I added the latter in response to several inquiries (including the request of the Soviet comrade). Comrade Firiubin described our experiences as important and “gap-filling,” warmly approving our decision to share them – which was incidentally confirmed by the friendly,

positive reception of our speech.

#### IV.

1) Numerous uncertainties surrounded the preparation of the conference. Although the meeting was actually proposed by the Vietnamese comrades, they tried to pass the responsibility for it on to the Soviet comrades. There were apparent problems regarding setting the aims and the tasks of the meeting, as well as concerning the content of the communiqué and the manner of its publication. The uncertainties were caused by the Indochinese countries' growing internal and external problems. Their economic difficulties have been increasing. There has been an apparent setback in the consolidation of the Cambodian situation. The frictions and the communicational problems between the Indochinese countries are clearly evident. The latter was connected to Comrade Firiubin's decision to travel (in the company of the Cuban deputy foreign minister) to Vietnam first and Cambodia next immediately after the Vientiane meeting for further consultation. All this can explain why there were no new proposals or initiatives put forward at the meeting for settling the problems of the region and only the summary of the known positions and proposals and the need for continuing support were reiterated in the speeches.

2) After the end of the meeting, the Vietnamese side mentioned that they would like to circulate the communiqué of the meeting at the UN as an official document. There was no agreement on this idea, because this possibility was not considered when the communiqué was worded; it was meant purely for informing the public. (The delegations may reconsider this proposal.)

3) The consultation clearly demonstrated the correctness of our foreign policies and measures implemented in this region so far; it also helped us in gaining a more detailed picture of the other socialist countries' position and ideas.

Our tasks are to continue the foreign political line we have followed so far; to preserve the system of consultations in connection with the region; and to increase our activity in the countries of the region (the three Indochinese countries and the ASEAN states).

4) A few days before the Vientiane conference, the foreign ministers of the ASEAN countries met in Thailand. A communiqué of rather restrained tone was issued about the meeting. Many people – especially in the ASEAN countries – tend to link the Vientiane conference with the meeting of the ASEAN foreign ministers. This partly explains the high expectations and the positive tone of the news materials and commentaries (i.e. Thailand).

Budapest, 28 December 1981

*[Translated by Ervin Dunay, Central European University, Budapest]*

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