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SUMMARY

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Since the deposition of Sihanouk in March 1970, the National United Front of Kampuchea (FUNK) has gained control of about 80 percent of the area of the Khmer Republic and about 45 percent of its population. FUNK consists of communists who before 1970 were anti-Sihanouk, pro-Sihanouk elements, and to an increasing extent Khmers conscripted from areas under FUNK control. The only areas not effectively under FUNK control are Phnom Penh, (which has a population of about 2,000,000), 21 of the 28 provincial capitals, and an area of between 10,000 and 15,000 square kilometres in north-western Battambang Province. The Khmer Republic's total area is 181,000 square kilometres.

Administration of the FUNK-held areas of the Khmer Republic is controlled by the Khmer Communist Party (KCP). Little is known about the leadership of the KCP, but the most prominent member of the party is Khieu Samphan; other top-ranking officials are Saloth Sar, Ieng Sary, Hu Nim and Hou Youn. The KCP also dominates the Royal Government of National Union of Cambodia (GRUNK), which is normally headed by Sihanouk as Head of State and by Penn Nouth as Prime Minister.

The FUNK's administrative infrastructure does not seem to be evenly developed throughout the Khmer Republic; nevertheless, FUNK is able to exercise a high degree of control over political and economic developments in the areas that it regulates. The infrastructure has been effective in mobilizing human and financial resources for the war effort, and has enabled FUNK to carry out some non-military functions of government (particularly the provision of health and education services, and the implementation of development projects).

FUNK's social and economic policies have generally been disliked by the population in the areas under its control. A campaign against Buddhism has created much resentment, and several economic measures (particularly stringent taxation, the collectivization of property, and the establishment of trading cooperatives) have also caused dissatisfaction. As a result of the implementation of these measures, most of the population in FUNK-held areas probably prefer to be outside rather than under FUNK control.

The political position of FUNK should, however, strengthen in time. It is able to effectively exploit certain propaganda opportunities open to it, and is not faced with such serious economic and political problems as beset the Khmer Government.

KHMER REPUBLIC : NATIONAL UNITED FRONT OF KAMPUCHEA

Background

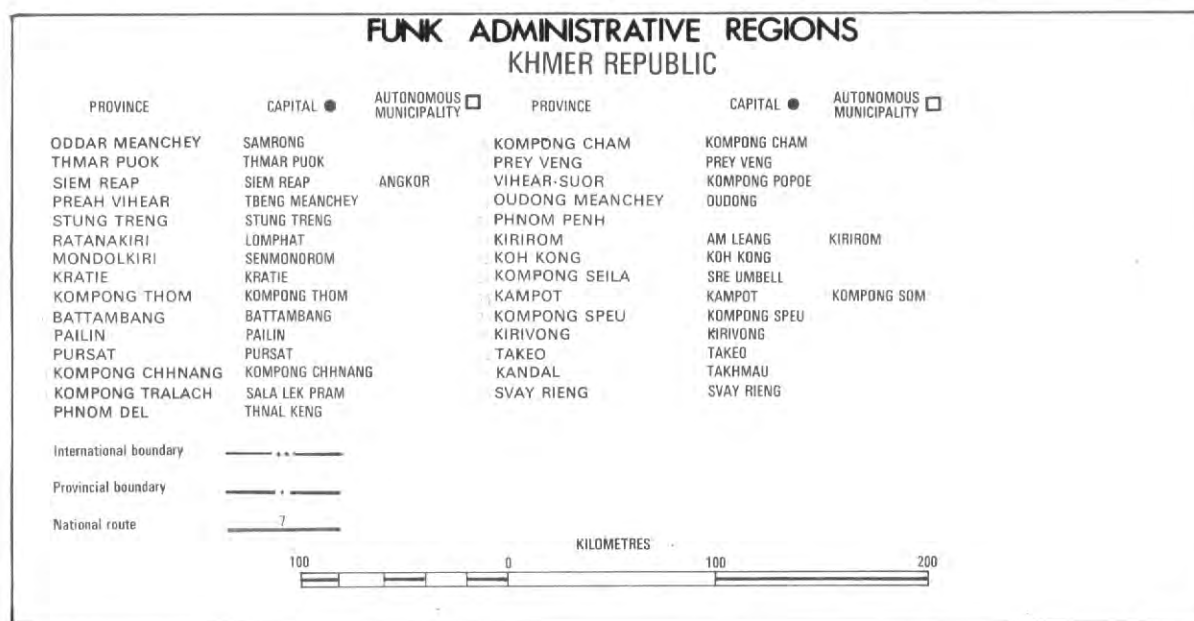
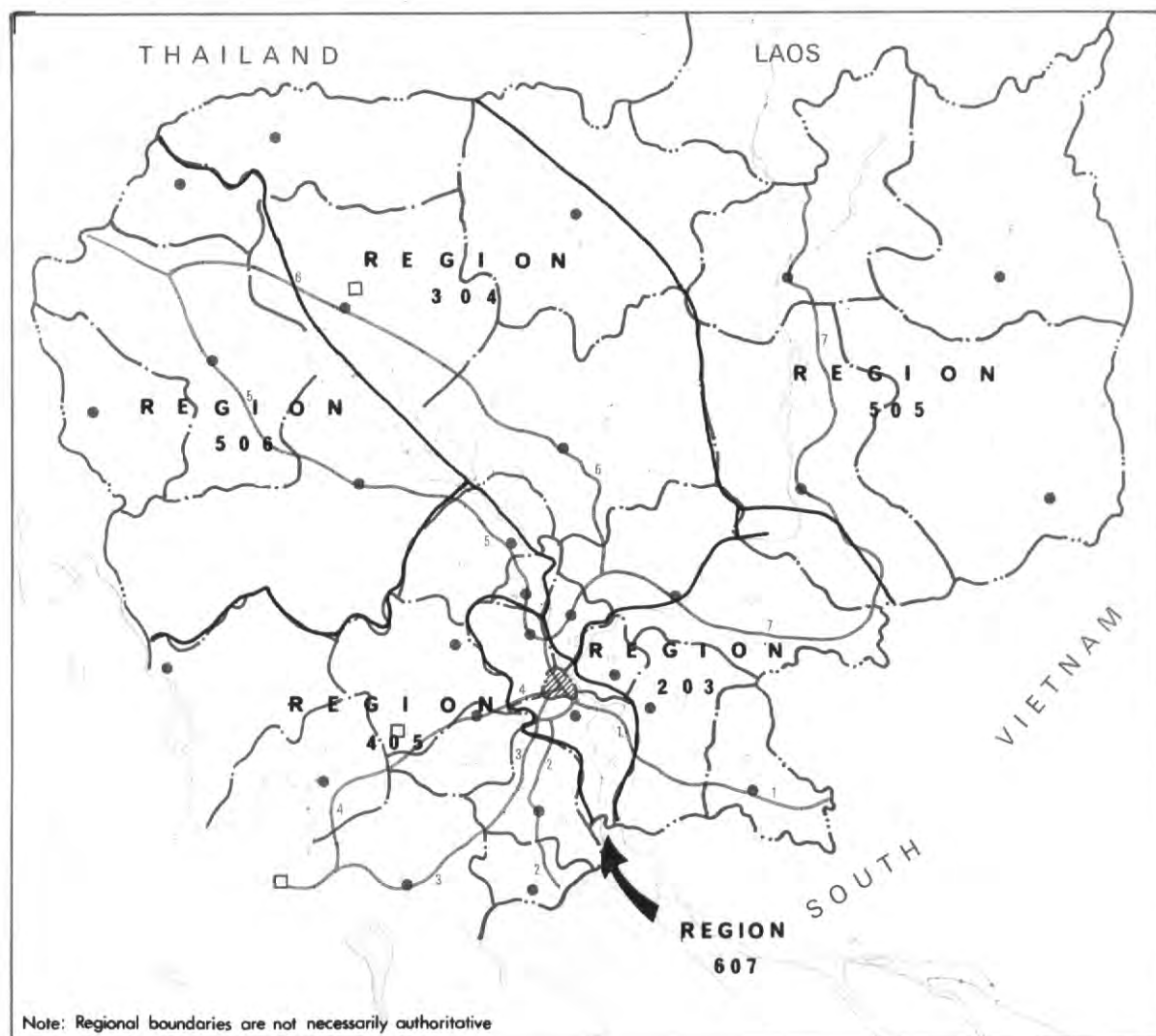
Before Sihanouk was deposed in March 1970, three Khmer dissident groups were operating in the Khmer Republic, and North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces were in the eastern part of the Khmer Republic maintaining supply routes in South Vietnam. The Khmer insurgent groups were not a serious threat to the security of the Khmer Government.

In 1970 and 1971 the insurgents took control of much of the northern and central regions of the Khmer Republic. The major military activity against the Khmer government forces was undertaken mainly by North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces, and such activity was financed by North Vietnam. The National United Front of Kampuchea (FUNK), which had been formed in mid-1970 to unite opposition to the Khmer Government, gradually expanded its infrastructure and its military arm — the Cambodian People's National Liberation Armed Forces (CPNLAF) — and began to assume a progressively more important and autonomous role in the conduct of the insurgency. We believe that several hundred North Vietnamese advisers are still attached to the CPNLAF, but control of the CPNLAF remains firmly with FUNK.

Leadership and Composition of GRUNK/FUNK

The nominal leader of the anti-government forces operating in Cambodia is Norodom Sihanouk, the Head of the Royal Government of National Union of Kampuchea (GRUNK). Sihanouk and GRUNK's Prime Minister, Penn Nouth, are both resident in China, and neither is able to exercise much control over the anti-government forces; this control lies mainly in the hands of FUNK, which in turn is controlled by the Khmer Communist Party (KCP)*. Sihanouk, in press interviews, has more or less conceded that he has only limited influence over FUNK, and has complained of his bad relations with it. Nevertheless, Sihanouk is useful to FUNK, and much of the support that non-aligned and certain other

* In this Note, we use the title Khmer Communist Party (KCP) to describe the communist element in Cambodia, as it is the term the communists themselves use. The term Khmer Rouge is also sometimes used, although it lacks precision and is believed to cover other anti-government elements besides the communists.



countries has given the anti-government side has been support for Sihanouk personally, rather than for the largely unknown FUNK leadership in the Khmer Republic.

The most prominent member of FUNK is Khieu Samphan, who is also GRUNK's deputy Premier, Minister of Defence, and Commander of the CPNLAF. Little publicity is given to other top officials in the FUNK hierarchy, but secret reports indicate that the leadership is probably collective. Apart from Khieu Samphan, the leading personalities seem to be Saloth Sar, Ieng Sary, Hu Nim and Hou Youn. If the war in the Khmer Republic is resolved in favour of FUNK, these people would probably be the dominant figures in a new government.

The rank and file of FUNK comprises communists who before 1970 were anti-Sihanouk, pro-Sihanouk elements, and to an increasing extent Khmers conscripted from areas under FUNK control. The latter group are probably reluctant participants in the conflict, but we believe that they are generally more strongly motivated and better led than their counterparts in the Khmer government forces (FANK). Some conscripts no doubt regard GRUNK as the legitimate government of Cambodia, while others seem prepared to acquiesce to GRUNK/FUNK authority even when it involves rigorous service with the anti-government forces.

Organization

FUNK's administrative apparatus is organized on a territorial basis corresponding to the six military regions established by FUNK (see map). The central committee of the KCP is at the centre of decision-making; it prefers, however, to operate under the cover of FUNK. The KCP's central committees issues directives to regional party committees, which in turn relay instructions and policy decisions to sectoral, district, subdistrict and village committees for implementation. Many villages are divided for administrative purposes into "family groups", which may be as few as 10 or as many as 40 families; each of these groups has an appointed chief, or spokesman, who is responsible for ensuring that taxation commitments and production targets of the group are met, and that its trade is conducted in accordance with sectoral regulations.

There are about 40 sectors in the six military regions, but we are less certain about the number of lower-level administrative divisions; there are probably between 200 and 300 administrative districts and between 1000 and 2000 subdistricts. Reliable sources estimate that the population in the FUNK-held areas is about 3,500,000 — about 45 percent of the Khmer Republic's population of 7,500,000.

Administration

FUNK's administrative organization enables it to exercise a high degree of central control over political and economic developments. The committees that supervise regional, sectoral and district affairs number between 250 and 350, and each committee usually comprises five or six people — all of whom are KCP cadres. The subdistrict and village-level committees are often smaller in size and members are frequently not affiliated with the KCP. District-level cadres hold regular meetings with the non-KCP members and this enables FUNK's administrative apparatus to remain in close touch with development at the grass-roots level.

Close FUNK control over the rural population is further assisted by the activities of several covert organizations established by the KCP. Members of these organizations (the Communist Youth League, the Farmers' League, the Womens' League, and probably a Workers' League) report on the political attitudes and behaviour of people belonging to overt associations such as the Khmer Youth Association and the Khmer Farmers' Association. The members of the covert leagues are not identifiable by the members of the overt associations; this enables the KCP to isolate people who are in opposition to its policies and to take action against them if considered appropriate.

Role of Committee Members

Committee members in FUNK's administrative organization have carefully prescribed functions. At the regional level, the committee chairman — who may also be a member of the KCP central committee — usually has overall responsibility for all political, military and administrative affairs in the region. The deputy chairman acts as military commander, and the third person in the chain of command is the chief political officer. Other committee members are in turn responsible for economic affairs, cultural affairs and propaganda, and health and social welfare. A similar division exists at sectoral and district level, except that the various committee members sometimes have more than one responsibility — the cultural-affairs officer, for example, may also have responsibility for health and social welfare. The committees are often assisted by subcommittees, which have a functional purpose; in the south-eastern region, for example, an economic subcommittee has been established to improve and regulate trading, taxation and production arrangements within the region.

Impact of FUNK Policies

The social and economic policies pursued by FUNK have created much resentment among the Khmer Republic's rural population. This is reflected in the influx of refugees into government-held areas during 1974, and in the need for FUNK to continue to restrict the movement of villagers in areas under its control. The Government estimates that 347,000 refugees arrived in Phnom Pehn in the first 10 months of 1974.

One of the central features of FUNK's social and cultural policies has been a campaign against religion — particularly Buddhism, which is practised by most Khmers. The KCP has frequently closed pagodas, discouraged private worship, and condemned other religious customs. The campaign against Buddhism is a key element in FUNK's programme to eradicate what it regards as undesirable aspects of Khmer culture; the campaign has aroused much antagonism, however, presumably because of the traditional conservatism of the Khmer Republic's peasant population and the depth to which Buddhism is entrenched in Khmer culture. In the areas of the Khmer Republic where Islam is practised (that is, among the Cham people, near Kompong Cham) similar measures have been taken.

Economic Measures

In addition to the campaign against religion, FUNK's most active measures have been in the economic arena. The main objectives of FUNK's economic policies have been twofold: to obtain the finance, foodstuff and equipment required to support the war effort and to restructure the economic basis of Khmer society so that class distinctions based on wealth, status or privilege no longer exist. The measures so far taken to achieve these objectives, however, have not been popular. Before the war most of the Khmer Republic's rural dwellers farmed their own land and were little affected by decisions of government; under the KCP however, land and property has often been communalized, and taxation, trading and travel regulations have borne more heavily on the villagers than previously.

The scope and severity of FUNK's economic measures have not been uniform throughout the Khmer Republic, but have depended largely on the prevailing security situation. In areas contested by FUNK and the Khmer Government, the anti-government forces have not imposed austere economic measures in order to avoid alienating local populations. In areas where FUNK's control is more secure, however, the economic demands made on the inhabitants have often been severe.

FUNK's economic policies have also changed. In 1970 and 1971, when the insurgency was mainly fought and financed by North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces, little taxation or collectivization was initiated. Subsequently, however, a progressively heavier burden has been placed on the rural population as FUNK moved towards self-sufficiency economically and militarily. FUNK remains dependent on North Vietnam and China for supplies of military equipment and medical supplies but not to the extent that the Khmer Government relies on external aid.

The most unpopular of FUNK's economic measures have probably been those directed at the ownership of land. Although private property has not been completely abolished, FUNK has often transferred land, animals and other property to village or communal ownership. Villagers have also been required to conduct their trade through State-owned cooperatives and not, as in the past, in the open market place. Capital for the cooperatives has usually been raised by a levy on the local villagers, but profits from the cooperatives' operations have seldom if ever been distributed to the shareholders; the funds have instead been passed on to the sectoral and regional committees to help finance the war.

Taxation in the FUNK-held areas has been onerous. Farmers who have been allowed to retain their land are usually permitted to keep only one-third of their output for private use; another third is used to supply troops in the area; and the remainder is traded by FUNK authorities with Vietnamese or Thai and Khmer agents for items such as cloth, medicine, petroleum and munitions. In areas where fishing is an important economic activity -- such as along the lower Tonle Sap (lake), south of Kompong Chhnang city -- FUNK officials levy taxes on the fish catches and on the sales made by the fishermen they have authorized to operate in the area.

FUNK, in order to enforce restrictions on trade between FUNK-held and government-held areas, has forbidden unauthorized travel from district to district. It has also compulsorily relocated several thousand villagers from their homes in contested areas to areas more firmly under FUNK control, in order to enlarge the labour force in these areas and to deny more of the population to the Khmer Government. This has caused much discontent.

Not all of FUNK's economic policies have been unpopular. It has at least tried to minimize the effects of food shortages, where these have occurred in the areas under its control, and has also promoted economic development at the village level more vigorously than had been usual for other administering authorities in the Khmer Republic. Medical

care and educational facilities provided by FUNK, though rudimentary, are probably an improvement on those previously available.

Because of the economic hardships involved in living in FUNK-held areas, and the social and military obligations imposed on the villagers by FUNK, most of the population in FUNK-held areas probably prefer to be outside rather than under FUNK control. In time, however, opposition to FUNK is likely to weaken. FUNK has established numerous village schools which, in addition to providing a basic education, are used to disseminate FUNK propaganda. According to reports from refugees from FUNK-held areas, the schools teach revolutionary songs, discuss the collective system, and generally promote communist ideology. The FUNK sponsored mass associations also assist propaganda efforts, as does political training given to members of the CPNLAF. Moreover, some of the social-welfare measures initiated by FUNK — such as the establishment of mobile medical units to improve health care in the villages — may in the longer term offset much of the antagonism towards it.