

Kampucheans make steady progress in fighting Vietnamese invaders

Two months into the rainy season, the military and political position of the Vietnamese troops occupying Kampuchea is weakening in the face of continuing resistance by the Kampuchean Revolutionary Army (KRA). Vietnamese casualties are high and growing. A recent report from the KRA stated that 2,293 enemy soldiers have been killed in just the last eight weeks.

The rains, which started in May and will last until November, have bogged down the Vietnamese army, which relies heavily on armored tank columns. The rains have also spread typhoid and malaria among many of the Vietnamese troops, who have only recently left the urban areas in Viet Nam.

But for the Kampuchean guerrilla units who know the land well, the rains mean better cover and more possibilities for surprise attacks.

According to Radio Democratic Kampuchea, Vietnamese control has now been reduced from half of the country in April

1979, to only one-fourth at the present time. The report stated that the Democratic Kampuchean government now controls another fourth of the land area, with the remainder in the hands of the Kampuchean people's guerrilla units and bases. Many Vietnamese troops have been pulled back to defend Phnom Penh and other key cities along transportation and communication lines.

Revolts and acts of sabotage in the occupied areas are more and more frequent as the abuses of the troops become intolerable. In late June, a group of Vietnamese soldiers entered a field in Prey Chor district to steal food. The villagers attacked, killing nine, and gave the captured weapons to guerrilla forces.

When 15 Vietnamese soldiers raped and beat a young village girl in Chamkar Leou district this summer, the villagers killed 13 of them. In late June, the people of Sandan commune in Kratie province rebelled. Three villages were liberated and many

weapons confiscated.

Uprisings by Khmer forces who were forcibly "recruited" into the military forces of the puppet government in Phnom Penh are spreading. Vietnamese officers recently ordered Kampuchean "recruits" in the Bovel district of eastern Kampuchea to execute five villagers "guilty" of having relatives in the KRA. But the soldiers — the entire company — refused to carry out the order, turned their guns on the occupiers, and then joined a nearby guerrilla unit.

International support

Democratic Kampuchea continues to have the support of many countries as the sole legitimate representative of the Kampuchean people. Ieng Thirith, Minister of Social Affairs of Democratic Kampuchea, spoke last month in Egypt, Sudan and other countries at the invitation of their governments. Speaking in Italy, she appealed to the European Economic Community to pressure Viet Nam and

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their Soviet backers to withdraw.

While the resistance struggle in Kampuchea continues to deal setbacks to Viet Nam, the fight will be a protracted one. New battles over international recognition will take place this fall at

the Havana Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement and at the opening of the 34th UN General Assembly. And with the end of the rainy season approaching in November, fighting will undoubtedly heighten.