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# The American Bombardment of Kampuchea, 1969-1973

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# THE AMERICAN BOMBARDMENT OF KAMPUCHEA, 1969-1973

**BEN KIERNAN**

On March 18, 1969, the United States Air Force began its secret B-52 bombardment of rural Cambodia<sup>1</sup>. Exactly one year later, that country's ruler, Prince Norodom Sihanouk, was overthrown and the Vietnam War, combined with a new civil war, to tear the nation apart for the next five years. The United States bombing of the countryside continued (now publicly) and increased from 1970 to August 1973, when Congress imposed a halt. Nearly half of the US bombing tonnage was dropped in the last six months. The total was 540,000 tons. Rural Cambodia was destroyed, and 'Democratic Kampuchea' rose in its ashes. The emergent Communist Party of Kampuchea (CPK) regime, led by Pol Pot, had profited greatly from the U.S. bombing. It used the widespread devastation and massacre of civilians as propaganda for recruitment purposes, and as an excuse for its brutal, radical policies and its purge of moderate Khmer communists. This is evident not only from contemporary press accounts, but also from post-1978 interviews with dozens of peasant survivors of the bombing who were unable to testify to their experiences during the Pol Pot period, and from U.S. Government documents newly declassified under the Freedom of Information Act.

By October 1972 the US and Hanoi had reached agreement on terms for a ceasefire and American withdrawal from Vietnam. Washington had dropped its demand for a North Vietnamese withdrawal from the south, and Hanoi had dropped its demand for Nguyen Van Thieu's removal. Both demands had previously been preconditions for a settlement.

Henry Kissinger, of course, still insisted on Hanoi securing, from Pol Pot's CPK 'Center', agreement to a settlement in Kampuchea as well. But it would have been clear to him that this would be impossible, despite his own stated threat to achieve it by concentrating US air power in Kampuchea<sup>2</sup>. The antagonism of the CPK Center (the Party's national leadership — Pol Pot, Nuon Chea, and Ieng Sary) to Hanoi made it very unlikely that the CPK would coordinate its strategy with that of Vietnam. Further, a ceasefire in Kampuchea would have prevented the Center consolidating what it called its "mastery over the revolutionary group(s) in every way", which was far from complete.

Sihanoukists, moderates, and pro-Vietnamese communists still predominated in the rural areas. As CPK Southwest Zone documents had explained in 1971, "We want to and must get a tight grasp, filter into every corner"<sup>3</sup> of the diverse revolutionary movement in the Kampuchean countryside. A negotiated peace, *or even an early victory*, would not serve this aim.

In Vietnam, Thieu was also proving recalcitrant. It was apparently to appease him that Nixon ordered the "Christmas Bombing" of Hanoi and Haiphong in December 1972. Within a month, the Paris Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam had been signed by all parties to the conflict there. It was to apply from January 27, 1973 (and its terms were little different from those agreed in October)<sup>4</sup>. The USA began withdrawing its troops from Vietnam. However, it saw Kampuchea as an integral part of the conflict, and as fighting continued the US soon switched the rest of its air arm there.

Washington portrayed this bombardment as an attempt to force the Khmer insurgents, now on the threshold of complete military victory, to negotiate with Lon Nol's pro-American government in Phnom Penh. The then CIA Chief Strategy Analyst in Saigon, Frank Snapp, has described the 1973 bombing of the Kampuchean countryside as "the centerpiece of the Administration ceasefire strategy"<sup>5</sup>. Whatever its aim, the political effect was twofold: to prevent a complete revolutionary victory at a time when the CPK Center's grasp over the revolution was still relatively weak, and to strengthen that grasp, which held the country on a course of continuing violence and warfare that lasted for the next decade and more.

In the words of William Shawcross, "within a few months an enormous new aerial campaign had destroyed the old Cambodia forever."<sup>6</sup> The campaign was certainly new in scale. During all of 1972, American B-52s and fighter bombers had dropped *53,000 tons of bombs* on targets in Kampuchea, nearly all in the Eastern Zone of the country<sup>7</sup>. In the six months from February to August 15, 1973 (when the US Congress imposed a halt), the figure was *257,000 tons*, and they fell on all populated rural areas of the country (shown on Shawcross's map)<sup>8</sup>.

Whatever the reasons for the 1973 bombardment, the Nixon Administration was absolutely committed to it. The Secretary of the Air Force, Robert Seamans, later said:

The President wanted to send a hundred more B-52s. This was appalling. You couldn't even figure out where you were going to put them all, you know..... I think it was at the same time the President was going over to Moscow.... so, anyway,

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a message was sent to the airplane - this was that timely - as to why we couldn't send those B-52s over there. As I understand it, the response when he touched down really burned the wires, and he said he wanted them over there... The total never did quite reach one hundred, but it was a pretty large number<sup>10</sup>.

In his book *Sideshow: Kissinger, Nixon and the Destruction of Cambodia*, Shawcross takes up the story: "The bombing of Cambodia was now so intense that the Seventh Air Force was faced with serious logistical problems. At one stage B-52 sortie rates were as high as eighty-one per day. In Vietnam the maximum had been sixty per day." Air-traffic congestion made it impossible to warn other aircraft of impending strikes. The confusion was such that in one case a bombing strike took place sixty miles from the target area, according to the Seventh Air Force history, which "does not record its results"<sup>11</sup>.

**Table 1. KAMPUCHEA  
US Bombing and CPK Armed Forces Growth, 1969-1973**

YEAR	BOMBING SORTIES	BOMBING TONNAGE	CPK ARMED STRENGTH
1969	3,600 <sup>a</sup>	108,000 <sup>b</sup>	1,000
1970	8,000 <sup>c</sup>	c.121,000	75,000
1971	61,000 <sup>d</sup>	in both years	150,000
1972	25,000 <sup>d</sup>	53,000	200,000
1973	c.130,000(?)	257,000	(June) c.220,000 <sup>e</sup>
	<u>c.227,000(?)</u>	<u>539,129</u>	

a) to March 1970 b) to May 1970 (B-52s only) c) July 1970 to Feb. 1971 d)US and Saigon sorties

The impact of the bombardment had been severe enough from 1970 to 1972. As early as April 1970, a combined aerial and tank attack on the village of Chithou in Kompong Cham province took the lives of 200 people and killed all of the village's herd. Soon afterwards, in nearby Kandal Chrum, American bombs destroyed six houses and killed seven people. A local peasant recalls: "As a result of this, some people ran away to live far from the village. Others joined the revolution."<sup>12</sup> The pattern of recruitment of bombing victims to the CPK was to increase over time, as we shall see. In some cases, too, the Vietnamese communists were blamed, as the nearest possible culprit

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for deaths from bombing by the remote aircraft. The CPK Center encouraged such popular reactions as well.

This was ironic, in that much of the bombardment was the work of anti-communist Vietnamese. Shawcross wrote:

Cambodia was open house for the South Vietnamese Air Force... They behaved as if they were conquering a hostile nation, rather than helping a new ally; every Cambodian was a VC and a target. Perhaps the most chilling evidence of the pleasure the pilots took in it all was contained in a cable sent by (the Commander of US Forces in Vietnam, Creighton) Abrams to the Pentagon. He reported that until now it had been virtually impossible to induce the Vietnamese to fly on Sundays. Now they were paying bribes of 1,000 piasters each to be allowed to go out seven days a week — over Cambodia.

...According to a CIA report from Phnom Penh, the ARVN commander, Captain Le Van Vien, frequently called in air strikes "to drive the people from the villages"; he and his men would seize the villagers' animals and force them to buy them back<sup>13</sup>.

Communist troops were not always the targets of the US bombing either. According to Shawcross again: "By the end of the summer much of the country was a free-fire zone for United States aircraft, and since their postoperational reports were almost all deliberately inaccurate, there was little follow-up to see what targets were actually being attacked. Pilots had far more liberty than in Vietnam to bomb any target they wanted."<sup>14</sup> The pro-US Lon Nol regime in Phnom Penh was also to blame in this respect. In September 1970, US intelligence reported: "It was recently discovered that many of the 66 'training camps' on which (the Lon Nol army) had requested air strikes by early September were in fact merely political indoctrination sessions held in village halls and pagodas." The report went on to quote a 'recent' Lon Nol regime intelligence assessment, to the effect that "the population has been largely taken in hand by the enemy and could become in a relatively short time a trump for him". The communists had won this popular support not only because they "are well-behaved and respectful of the needs and cares of the population", but also because "aerial bombardments against the villagers have caused civilian loss on a large scale". Unsurprisingly, the peasant survivors of the bombing were turning to the CPK for support<sup>15</sup>.

One casualty was Pol Pot's family home in Kompong Thom, which burnt to the ground after a US bombing strike there in July 1970.

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In November, an F-105 napalm raid on Kompong Svay village in the same province left ten villagers dead. According to a local man, Kun Chhay, however, the "cruellest of all" were the Cluster Bomb Units, which US planes began to scatter through the nearby forest and countryside in 1971. These bombs would detonate when people unwittingly stepped on them<sup>16</sup>.

The bombings also led to large population movements. The two-month US ground invasion of Kampuchea in 1970 created 130,000 Khmer refugees<sup>17</sup>. In 1971, sixty percent of refugees surveyed in the towns of Lon Nol's Khmer Republic gave the continued bombing as the main reason for their displacement<sup>18</sup>. A contemporary report on how bombing turned villagers into refugees also quoted a young Khmer peasant who said he had joined the revolutionary army a few days after an aerial attack on Kompong Cham province took the lives of 50 people in his village of Thmar Pich<sup>19</sup>. This youth defected a year later, but another such victim of a 1971 bombing raid, who by the age of twenty had become a CPK company commander, told journalists on the Thai border in 1979 how his village in Pursat had been bombed eight years before, killing 200 of its 350 inhabitants and propelling him into a career of violence and absolute loyalty to the CPK<sup>20</sup>.

Not all the bombing was the work of American or ARVN pilots. The T-28 fleet of the Lon Nol air force, strafing and dropping napalm as well as explosives, took a toll in villages behind communist lines throughout the war. In 1971, T-28s destroyed the rice mill and houses in Prey Chhor village of Prey Veng province, and 200 houses were burnt down in nearby Dong village. In Kompong Speu, Kbar Chen village near Oudong lost six of its civilian inhabitants in a 1971 attack and two more in a second bombardment the next year<sup>21</sup>. Such T-28 raids probably struck the greatest number of Kampuchean villages. A peasant from Samrong in Svay Rieng recalls what he witnessed: "One day in 1971, a T-28 arrived on reconnaissance and before leaving it fired on people growing rice — they were considered 'VC'. Three planes then returned and dropped napalm. All the trees and many houses were destroyed, and more than ten people killed."

However, the most dramatic incidents involved direct hits by US B-52s. The same peasant recalls:

Then in 1972 B-52s bombed three times per day, fifteen minutes apart, three planes at a time. They hit houses in Samrong and thirty people were killed. There were no troops in these villages. At that time there were some Vietnamese (communist) troops on the border (nearby), but they didn't bomb the border; they bombed inside it, people's houses.

The town of Chantrea was destroyed by US bombs... The people were angry with the US, and that is why so many of them joined the Khmer communists.

When troops did approach villages, the planes came again. Another peasant from Svay Rieng recalls: "In 1972, during a fierce battle between North Vietnamese and Thieu troops right in my village, six houses and all the trees were destroyed by napalm. There were no deaths though, because the people had all run away."<sup>22</sup>

Attempts by communist troops to escape bombing by lodging in villages often proved fruitless. A CIA report describes the destruction by bombing of three-quarters of the houses in a Kompong Cham village in 1972; the surviving inhabitants in this case expelled the North Vietnamese troops<sup>23</sup>. Not far away in the same province, bombs fell on O Reang Au market for the first time in 1972, killing twenty people<sup>24</sup>.

All but one of these 1972 incidents occurred in the Eastern Zone of Kampuchea, where US strategic (B-52) bombardment was concentrated almost exclusively at the time. But the bombing there did not let up the next year (even though it spread equally intensively to the rest of the countryside, over all Zones but the Northwest)<sup>25</sup>.

O Reang Au was bombed twice more in 1973. The first time, the rice mill was hit, killing another twenty people, and then it was hit again and completely destroyed along with a number of houses nearby. Five more people died, including two Buddhist monks<sup>26</sup>.

Bombs also hit Boeng village in the same vicinity. It was burnt to the ground, and according to peasants from the area, many people were caught in their houses and there were "thousands of deaths", undoubtedly an exaggeration of the more accurate "many". Again in the same district, Chalong village lost over twenty dead when the village and its pagoda were hit by T-28s during a battle. In this case, all the monks escaped unhurt, but an inhabitant notes:

On the river many monasteries were destroyed by bombs. People in our village were furious with the Americans; they did not know why the Americans had bombed them. Seventy people from Chalong joined the fight against Lon Nol after the bombing<sup>27</sup>.

In a direct hit on Trey Chap village in Prey Veng, a raid by four F-111s killed over twenty people. The village was destroyed and subsequently abandoned. Meanwhile, Lon Nol's T-28s kept up their campaigns. Two kilometers away, Anlong Trea village was napalmed and bombed, killing three people and destroying four houses. "Over sixty people from this village then joined the Khmer Communist army

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out of anger at the bombing', locals recall."<sup>28</sup>

B-52s also scored a direct hit on Trapeang Krapeu village in Kompong Cham. At least twenty people died. Other raids in the area destroyed hundreds of hectares of rubber plantations<sup>29</sup>.

Still in the Eastern Zone, a 1973 bombing strike killed five elderly people near Krachap village in Prey Veng (CPK Region 24). A subsequent visit to the area by a reconnaissance plane was followed by four Dakota helicopters bringing troops. According to a local peasant woman, the troops "drove our cattle away and stole clothes, pots and pans, everything. There was nothing left here". (In 1970, Saigon troops had already killed three of Krachap's inhabitants and stolen three-quarters of the cattle-herd.) The woman says that at this point, in 1973, she had yet to even meet a "Khmer Rouge"<sup>30</sup>.

The CPK Secretary of Region 24, a man known as Chhouk, was then based further north, in a village which his widow claims was bombed twice a month:

(The pilots) could see motorcycles coming and going and they knew that an office was there. While I was there over thirty people were killed by bombs, in their houses, in the trenches, or while running to the trenches. Some entire households were killed in their homes<sup>1</sup>.

Presumably this involved accurate targeting of a Khmer Rouge base. In a similar incident, a Khmer Rouge cadre recalls a direct hit on the district office in Komchay Meas, in which forty people were killed. (He adds that a number of other people, who were merely foraging or trading along the roads, also died in raids by B-52s, Phantoms, and F-105s.)<sup>32</sup> A third case occurred in the same area, according to a female cadre, when a jungle office was bombed in one of many attacks, each of which took several lives. "There were spies inside," she claims, not only revealing the accuracy of the bombing, but also touching on an increasing Khmer Rouge tendency to punish alleged culprits who were simply more accessible than those actually performing the raids<sup>33</sup>. As we shall see, innocent village people suffered at the hands of the Khmer Rouge as a result of the bombing raids, even if they had escaped direct bombardment by US or Lon Nol aircraft.

In January and February 1973, the heaviest B-52 bombing was in the northern part of the Eastern Zone, known as Region 21. One local cadre from Memut says that O Klok village suffered a direct hit "right through the village" in this period. Thirty people were killed and over a hundred wounded, and 100 houses were destroyed<sup>34</sup>. In March 1973 the bombing spread across the whole country, but remained heaviest



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in the East<sup>35</sup>. Associated Press reported popular complaints "about the bombing by the US B-52s and jet fighters, with increasing reports of bombs killing civilians and destroying villages"<sup>36</sup>. Even around Phnom Penh itself, international relief officials in the capital estimated that "no fewer than 3,000 civilians" were killed in the last three weeks of March<sup>37</sup>. According to a United Press International dispatch at the end of the month:

Refugees swarming into the capital from target areas report dozens of villages, both east and southeast of Phnom Penh, have been destroyed and as much as *half their population killed or maimed* in the current bombing raids by B-52s and F-111 tactical fighter-bombers<sup>38</sup>.

Within days of this report, the US bombardment intensified, reaching a level of 3,600 tons per day on April 2-3, 1973<sup>39</sup>. B-52 carpet bombing was reported within ten miles of Phnom Penh, as well as on the outskirts of Kompong Thom city. After thirty consecutive days of intensive American bombing, a US intelligence officer who had interrogated refugees from the village of Ban Krom, sixteen miles from Phnom Penh, remarked: "Ban Krom has been completely leveled. There have been many dead, many wounded and many secondary explosions. We judge the bombing results quite satisfactory."<sup>40</sup> Ban Krom may even have been a military target. But large-scale civilian casualties must have been anticipated and accepted. As Elizabeth Becker wrote in the *Far Eastern Economic Review* on April 16, "according to military reports, the targets of these devastating missions are in heavily-populated areas"<sup>41</sup>. One "source" was cited by Associated Press to the effect that "the Americans are reluctant to call in air strikes on villages where the opposition forces are mingling with the civilian inhabitants"<sup>42</sup>. But considerable evidence exists that even villages which did not house opposition forces were bombarded, resulting in massive loss of civilian life. One reason was later outlined to William Shawcross by the chief of the political section in the US Embassy in Phnom Penh, William Harben. Shawcross writes that Harben was appalled by the bombing toll "and now did what others might have done":

He cut out, to scale, the 'box' made by a B-52 strike and placed it on his own map. He found that virtually nowhere in central Cambodia could it be placed without 'boxing' a village. "I began to get reports of wholesale carnage", he says. "One night a mass of peasants from a village near Saang went out on a funeral procession. They walked straight

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Into a 'box'. Hundreds were slaughtered."<sup>43</sup>

Shawcross also tells the story of Donald Dawson, a young Air Force captain who flew twenty-five B-52 missions over Cambodia in 1973. A report that "a Cambodian wedding party had been 'boxed' by B-52s... forced him, he said, to realize that the Cambodians were human beings and to recognize that nonmilitary targets were being hit". On June 19, 1973, Dawson refused to fly another mission. (He then joined in a lawsuit to have US courts declare the bombing of Cambodia illegal. To prevent the possibility of such a judgement, the US Government granted Dawson conscientious-objector status, and the High Court never heard the case.)<sup>44</sup>

The B-52s needed ground radar beacons to guide them to their targets. One had been sited on top of the US embassy in Phnom Penh, but it was removed in April 1973 for fear of an accident. Shawcross continues: "At the same time more and more beacons were installed in Cambodian towns to cope with the expansion of the bombing. On August 7 one navigator who was using the Neak Luong beacon forgot to flip his switch. Six miles above the town the plane's belly opened and the long thirty-ton string of bombs 'boxed' without warning onto the people below." 137 townspeople were killed and 268 wounded<sup>45</sup>.

Even apart from the death toll, as in earlier years the population movements forced by the 1973 bombing were enormous. As Richard Blystone reported from Phnom Penh for Associated Press: "No one can say with confidence how many refugees there are in Cambodia... The government's latest estimate is 520,000 registered displaced persons country-wide, with another 200,000 unregistered. A consultant to a US Senate Subcommittee estimated recently that as many as 3 million people have been forced to leave home at one time or another during the country's three-year war," out of a population of seven million. Blystone then added:

Among dozens of refugees interviewed, many said fear of US bombing was one of their reasons for fleeing, but few told of actually being bombed. At a pagoda outside of Phnom Penh one woman said her 13 year-old son and two cousins died two weeks ago when a bomb hit a jungle bunker where the family had taken shelter.

Asked whether they wanted the bombing stopped whatever the consequences for the Phnom Penh government, her neighbors grew enthusiastic. They said "Yes"<sup>46</sup>.

From April to June 1973 the bombing was most concentrated in

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the Southwest and Northern Zones of Kampuchea<sup>47</sup>. April also saw the heaviest bombing of the Northeast. Then in July and August the Southwest was carpet-bombed in the most intensive B-52 campaign yet, while tactical bombing raids increased by 21 percent, flouting Nixon's agreement with Congress that the intensity of the bombing would not be raised after July 1<sup>48</sup>. The heretofore delicate CPK factional balance in the Southwest Zone<sup>49</sup> warrants close attention to the bombing's impact there. Did it tip the balance in favor of the Pol Pot Center group?

In many cases, careful digging of trenches by locals was sufficient to reduce deaths. Ampil Tuk village in Region 15, for instance, was bombed eight times in 1973; twice by B-52s, four times by US jets, and twice by Lon Nol T-28s. "There were wounded but no one was killed because everyone hid in trenches," a villager reports<sup>50</sup>. However, another man from the same Region says that, only three days before the bombing halt on 15 August:

Three F-111s bombed right center in my village, killing eleven of my family members. My father was wounded but survived. At that time there was not a single soldier in the village, or in the area around the village. 27 other villagers were also killed. They had run into a ditch to hide and then two bombs fell right into it. The bombs seemed to be guided into it like they had eyes<sup>51</sup>.

Even where civilian casualties were not known to be high, the CPK were now able to recruit large numbers of peasants by highlighting the damage done by US air strikes. An Intelligence Information Cable, dated 2 May 1973, from the CIA's Directorate of Operations made this point after investigations in Region 25 of the Southwest Zone:

1. Khmer Insurgent (KI) cadre have begun an intensified proselyting (*sic*) campaign among ethnic Cambodian residents in the area of Chrouy Srao, Kaoh Thom district, Kandal province, Cambodia, in an effort to recruit young men and women for KI military organizations. *They are using damage caused by B-52 strikes as the main theme of their propaganda.* The cadre tell the people that the Government of Lon Nol has requested the airstrikes and is responsible for the damage and the 'suffering of innocent villagers' in order to keep himself in power. The only way to stop 'the massive destruction of the country' is to remove Lon Nol and return Prince Sihanouk to power. The proselyting (*sic*) cadres tell the people that the quickest way to accomplish this is to strengthen KI forces so they will be able to defeat Lon Nol and stop the

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bombing.

2. This approach has resulted in the successful recruitment of a number of young men for KI forces. Residents around Chrouy Snao say that *the propaganda campaign has been effective* with refugees and in areas of Kaoh Thom and Leuk Dek districts which have been subject to B-52 strikes<sup>52</sup>

In Chamcar Ang village, Tram Kak district of Region I3 (Takeo province), in the same Zone locals say more than eighty people died when B-52s hit the village and its pagoda<sup>53</sup>. In the same Region, a CPK cadre recalled that Wat Angrun village was annihilated; a single family survived, and 120 houses were destroyed in the air raid. The cadre added, however: "The army was not hit all that hard, because at that time we put our lines right up against the enemy, and most of the bombs fell behind us. This was especially true in the case of B-52s which hit either the people or nothing."<sup>54</sup>

Region I3 was one of the strongholds of the CPK Center, which it ruled through its ally Mok. Mok's son-in-law, Khe Muth, was Deputy CPK Secretary there, and chief of Tram Kak district. The 1973 bombing saw an intensification of CPK Center control. Now Muth was promoted to become CPK Secretary of a newly organized military force, the 3rd Southwest Zone Brigade. His wife Khom, daughter of Mok, then became CPK Secretary of Tram Kak district<sup>55</sup>.

In Kompong Chhnang (Region 3I), Mam Lon, who was then a CPK subdistrict cadre, says that both T-28s and B-52s bombed his village of Prey Thom. He claims more than one hundred people were killed and wounded. "The people were very angry at the imperialists," he adds. Although he draws no connection, Lon also reports that soon afterwards, as in Region I3, the CPK's political line hardened significantly, and a number of cadres, including himself, were soon dismissed<sup>56</sup>. These two examples reflect a general trend in the Southwest Zone in 1973, which we will examine in detail.

## **THE HEREDITARY ENEMY**

Early in 1973, while continuing to wage war against Lon Nol, the CPK began an intensified campaign to drive the Vietnamese communists from the country, in combination with a new purge of Sihanoukists, pro-Vietnamese communists, and other dissident 'Third Force' cadre. At public meetings in the Southwest province of Kampot, Sihanouk was accused of supporting "the hated Vietnamese," and both were described as enemies like Lon Nol<sup>57</sup>. According to a subdistrict cadre from Kompong Speu, Zone Secretary Mok rounded

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up hundreds of Khmer dissidents "from all over the Southwest" during 1973. They were taken to a worksite and forced to perform hard labour before being executed<sup>58</sup>.

The reason usually given by CPK leaders for their increased hostility towards the Vietnamese communists in 1973, was the attempt, flowing from the Paris talks with the US, to get the CPK to negotiate with Lon Nol. In Kompong Speu, the same subdistrict cadre reports, "Mok told us that there had been three countries fighting the imperialists together. 'Now Vietnam and Laos have negotiated with the US. Kampuchea will not.' He said all cadres had to be instructed that Kampuchea would not negotiate."<sup>59</sup>

Mok made this speech only two weeks after the new US bombing campaign began, and the subdistrict cadre's own village had just been destroyed by B-52s, with the loss of three lives. He continues: "And Mok said that the US had previously divided its bombing between Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea. But now that the other two had gone to negotiate, the US was bringing all its bombs to drop on Kampuchea alone, twenty-four hours a day, *because it did not negotiate*."<sup>60</sup>

On the other hand, in Region 13, Zone cadres contradicted these claims, proclaiming that negotiations would not stop the bombing, but "would only lead to a prolongation of the war". The CPK's real intention was to allege Vietnamese perfidy, and to assert that, that, in the words of these cadres, refusal to negotiate "would demonstrate to the world that our Khmer Organization was independent".

Mok preferred not to stress that the Vietnamese were withdrawing from Kampuchea as a result of the Paris Agreement, nor that, as was well known in the Party, not only Vietnam but "some of our friends like China also wanted us to negotiate"<sup>61</sup>. Thus, because it negotiated with the US while the CPK refused to, and because it had tried to get the CPK to change its mind, Hanoi was blamed by the CPK for the resultant American bombardment of Kampuchea.

A more reasonable explanation, it seems to me, would limit blame to the parties directly involved in continuing the Kampuchean war. For its part, the CPK can hardly be blamed for the bombing itself, even though it profited politically. Responsibility for the aerial devastation and massacre of course lies with its instigators, the US Government. Yet the 1973 bombing is unlikely to have been ordered in the event of a negotiated ceasefire like that concluded in Laos in February 1973. The CPK leadership would have been aware of this from the outset.

The CPK Center may have expected the bombing to indirectly serve its aims by inflaming hatred of the Vietnamese, and as we have

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seen this did occur in a number of cases. But the hatred often had to be conjured up by stressing more remote issues. A woman from the Southwest's Region 33, for example, says that Vietnamese communist troops were camped "in the forest west of my house" throughout 1973. They behaved well and created no problems, and the villagers talked without strain of solidarity, she says. But when they left at the end of the year, the CPK subdistrict chief began to talk of "mutual enmity" between the two peoples<sup>62</sup>. He was probably following local CPK documents which referred to Vietnamese as the "hereditary enemy" and the "acute enemy"<sup>63</sup>.

A Hanoi-trained Khmer communist cadre, Yos Por, recalls a meeting in Kampot in late 1973, which was addressed by Mok, and two CPK Region 35 leaders.

They collected all of us who had studied abroad, at Wat Chhouk, and started to accuse us... of selling the territory to Vietnam. They were instigating the breaking of solidarity with Vietnam, talking in terms of history. Mok said that Kampuchean territory was wherever there are sugar palms. This included Kampuchea Krom ('Lower Cambodia', the Mekong Delta), which Vietnam had taken (in the eighteenth century). The Kampucheans would fight to get it back, Mok said<sup>64</sup>.

Within months, a CPK district chief in Kompong Chhnang (Region 3D), told his subordinates: "Kampuchea Krom must be liberated; it was once Khmer territory and we have lost it all. If we do not fight the Vietnamese, we will lose the rest of our country... Vietnam is the most acute enemy, the hereditary enemy. After victory we aim to go and liberate Kampuchea Krom."<sup>65</sup>

Underlying the anti-Vietnamese position, then, was the CPK's revival of national chauvinism. Defeat of the US and Lon Nol was only a step towards the national and racial grandeur of which young members of the traditional elite had long dreamed<sup>66</sup>. In rural warlords like Mok (and Pauk in the Northern Zone), the former members of the upper classes who made up the CPK Center now had the means to put their dreams into effect.

## THE CLASS ENEMY

On 20 May 1973, as the US bombardment approached its height, the CPK Center launched a 'cooperativization' program, which initially involved organizing peasants into groups of ten, twenty, or thirty families. This had already occurred in many CPK-held areas, but now land was to be collectivized as well and the produce of the

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peasants' labour was to be confiscated by the authorities. In some cases, regulations concerning the destruction of religion and family life, and enforced communal eating in mess halls, were also implemented. This was termed the "Democratic Revolution"<sup>67</sup>.

The increased demands of the CPK armed forces, resulting from the bombing, partly motivated this new campaign. The CIA Intelligence Information Cable of 2 May 1973 reported the testimony of a CPK platoon commander, who said that "B-52 strikes in Leuk Dek district killed many soldiers and guerrillas of the K-24 and K-25 battalions. He said villagers left their homes and took only what they could carry. In spite of the disruption, Khmer Insurgent (KI) finance-economy cadre were ordered to collect as much food and money as possible to supply KI and North Vietnamese army forces. This has caused resentment among the villagers, many of whom were already short of food."<sup>68</sup>

A CPK document dated February 1974 gave one of its reasons for the campaign, as follows: "Our country is at war and no mercy has been shown us. Therefore, many of our young people have gone off to the battlefield, and only the old and women are left."<sup>69</sup> A CPK member later explained that by ensuring a minimum subsistence for all villagers through collection of rationing of supplies, the communists could "release forces" for the army and its logistical needs, notably the able-bodied who in theory were no longer needed to support their families<sup>70</sup>.

However, both these CPK sources also gave a second reason, an ideological one. The CPK document explained: "We must construct a clean, honest society." What this meant was to be outlined the next year in the CPK's internal magazine, *Tung Padevat* (*Revolutionary Flags*). Its author expressed a studied ambivalence about the situation in communist-held areas up to 1973:

There was progress on the one hand, and the same old society on the other... The state confiscated land from the traitors... and took control of it... This was a good point... (Secondly, however) those in possession of the land continued to keep their private ownership. Furthermore, previously landless peasants, and previously landless workers now received land from the state. Therefore, land remained in private ownership in general<sup>71</sup>.

The result was that "the traders and the enemy... were the masters... We could not become the masters if we continued on this road... Our state was their satellite." The example given illustrates the extreme sensitivity of the CPK: "Kratie township showed the same signs as in the old society. Honda motorcycles were speeding up and down the streets

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like before, while our ragged guerrillas walked in the dust."<sup>72</sup>

So in 1973 the CPK Center decided that it must ensure that "the state controlled everything". Kratie's population was evacuated to the countryside. There was to be "no more trading, mortgaging, labor exchanging or buying on credit". A state monopoly was decreed over rice, salt, fuel, cloth and petrol. Without petrol, private owners of vehicles (and Honda motorcycles) "disappeared"; the CPK state took over their equipment. Private ownership of land and of the means of production was also abolished<sup>73</sup>.

The political motivation for all this is underlined by a former Eastern Zone CPK member, who attributes the changes to heightened revolutionary zeal resulting from the advances the Party had made thus far: "The reason was that the people supported the Khmer Reds, so the Khmer Reds decided to move on to higher-stage cooperatives."<sup>74</sup> Given more than an inch by their association with Sihanouk, their aid from the Vietnamese communists, and the popular reaction to the US bombing, the CPK Center now decided to take a mile. Popular approval of relatively moderate policies became an excuse for extremist ones.

The accounts of two peasants from different parts of the country illustrate this. They also contradict the claim that the cooperatives provided a superior means of ensuring the subsistence of villagers. Nem, 46, from Region 31 in the Southwest Zone, says that the mutual aid teams introduced in 1972 were popular in his village; each person earned an adequate ration of paddy per year. But in late 1973, cooperatives were organized, and Nem became a cook in the communal eating hall. Rations were insufficient, popular disenchantment rose, and within a year villagers were being executed for stealing food from the common store<sup>75</sup>.

Sang, 43, a peasant from Region 22 in the Eastern Zone, recalls that "the living conditions of the people were really prosperous" after the introduction of mutual aid teams in 1972. "It was easy, no problems." But,

Then in 1973 the cooperatives were formed, and difficulties began. The rice was stored in collective warehouses, and food ran short. Eventually people ate only rice gruel, with salt, water and banana stalks. We had to get permission to raise our own poultry, under pain of imprisonment.

Importantly, though, Sang noted that the cooperatives were not established "all at once" in mid-1973. Rather, the local Party leaders "selected certain good places, with good cadres" to start with, "for



fear of popular reaction". The process was not complete even two years later, when communal eating was finally instituted (much later than in the Southwest). Sang described the local CPK district and subdistrict chiefs up to that time, in favorable terms. Three villagers were imprisoned in 1974, but he reported no executions or starvation. It is hard to believe that the cooperatives could have been established at all without, firstly, some degree of public confidence in the local CPK leaders, and secondly, the fact that "people in our village were furious with the Americans". For it was in Sang's village, called Chalong, that more than twenty people were killed in a T-28 bombardment in 1973, and seventy others immediately joined the communist army<sup>76</sup>.

## **THE NORTHERN ZONE : THE EMERGENCE OF DEMOCRATIC KAMPUCHEA**

Outside the Eastern Zone, the CPK response to the bombing was far more dramatic. Even where no deaths resulted, there were frequently subsequent arrests of villagers suspected of being "spies" who had called in the air strikes. The most proximate potential culprit again took the blame. Paranoia began to plague the Khmer communist movement as never before. In the Northern Zone, Kun Chhay, who lived in Sankor village of Region 32, recalls that Ke Pauk's CPK troops now accused the villagers of being "CIA agents" who had brought in the US planes. The people of Sankor, now afraid of both US bombing and Pauk's justice, offered no resistance when Lon Nol forces penetrated the area and created a third alternative: "(They) pointed guns at us, and told us to leave for Kompong Thom City."<sup>77</sup>

According to Chhay, this new Lon Nol army patrolling was the culmination of "countless" raids on Kompong Svay district by B-52s, T-28s, F-105s, F-111s, and Skyraiders, mostly from mid-1972 to March 1973. B-52s, for instance, struck Stung Kambot village at 9 o'clock one morning in February 1973. They killed 50 villagers and seriously wounded 30 others. No Khmer Rouge were among the casualties. A week later another raid struck at nearby Prey Tup village. Then in March 1973, B-52s and F-111s bombarded an ox-cart caravan at O Saray in the same district, killing ten peasants<sup>78</sup>.

The effect of all this was predictable. Chhay says: "It often happened (that) people were made angry by the bombing and went to join the revolution." And if they did not, they ran the risk of being blamed, as spies, for the damage and loss of life their communities had suffered. Pauk's troops killed peasants on such accusations. (And after the war ended in 1975, Chhay says, further revenge was exacted by CPK cadres from city people and others they held responsible for the bombing.)<sup>79</sup>

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Further south, a peasant youth named Thoun Cheng recalled the impact of the bombing on his village of Banteay Chey. For three months, B-52s bombed the village three to six times per day. Several of Cheng's family members were injured in the raids, and over 1,000 people were killed — nearly a third of Banteay Chey's population. After the bombing ended, Cheng says, "there were few people left to be seen around the village, and it was quiet"<sup>80</sup>.

Another young peasant, Tong Teng, joined the communist army in 1970 in Santuk district of the Northern Zone. He told François Ponchaud and Bruce Palling in a 1982 interview that "bombing was a normal thing from 1970 on". He added:

If you mean big bombs, I saw them being dropped at Andaung Pring (village)... The bombs came tumbling down in a big clump... right onto Andaung Pring, and that time villagers were killed in amazing numbers... The bombs fell in the village, setting fire to people's houses and killing them... sometimes they didn't even have the time to get down out of their houses.

The bombing was massive and devastating, and they just kept bombing more and more massively, so massively you couldn't believe it, so that it engulfed the forests, engulfed the forests with bombs, with devastation<sup>81</sup>.

Chhit Do had come into the communist movement from a similar background, and at the time of the 1973 bombing he was an agitprop leader in the Angkor Wat area of northern Kampuchea. He was there at the time of Norodom Sihanouk's clandestine visit in March, 1973. (He recalls: "Sihanouk had been gone only a day when the B-52s came after him and bombed... The bombing completely tore up that road, as if it had never existed.") In late 1973 Chhit Do became a CPK subdistrict chief, and after victory in April 1975, commander of a 3,000-strong regional work brigade. In 1979, he fled the country, and three years later he too looked back on the period of the US bombing: "It was difficult in every possible way... due both to everybody's fear of the bombing and to the fact that everybody was engaged in making war outside of their villages. All the young people had gone off to war... There wasn't anything to eat. They still had to turn over rice to the Khmer Rouge." Bruce Palling then asked Chhit Do a series of questions:

Q. Were people being killed by the bombs ?

A. Oh yes, there were some... Some Khmer Rouge soldiers and

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some ordinary people were killed by the bombs, by the planes.

Q: Did the Khmer Rouge make use of the bombing to do propaganda against the US ?

A: Oh yes, they did make use of it. They did use it to stigmatize the US. They said that all this bombing was an attempt to make us an American satellite, a manifestation of simple American barbarism, because, after all, as they pointed out, we had never done anything to these Americans, the people had never done anything at all to America. The Khmers didn't even have any airplanes and here the Americans had brought theirs to bomb us, causing great pain to us, with their war. Their country was way over there somewhere and here they had come to interfere with us... (The) propaganda was that this guy Lon Nol had already sold the country to the Americans, because Lon Nol wanted power, wanted to be President...

.....

Q: Could you be more specific about the content of their propaganda?

A: They shouted and they cursed and called for opposition to the Americans. Moreover, they took the people to see the effects of the bombing as a kind of additional political education. Every time after there had been bombing, they would take the people to see the craters, to see how big and deep the craters were, to see how the earth had been gouged out and scorched. And the political education cadres would pick up pieces of shrapnel and these slabs of metal that had been part of the bomb casings to show them to the people and point out that the bombs were the size of a man, the size of 100 kilogram rice sacks. They would say that the purpose of the bombing was to completely destroy the country, not simply just to win the war while leaving the people alive to rebuild it after the war was over, but to annihilate the population, and that it was only because we were taking cover, moving around to avoid the bombing, that some of us were surviving. So they used the bombing, the bomb craters and the bomb shrapnel to educate the people politically, to make the people hate and be enraged at the Americans. They said that in Japan, the Americans had dropped an atom bomb during World War II. They said that we must point our anger at the Americans and never forget, that even if every last one of us were killed, we still must not give up. As long as anybody was left alive, we must just keep

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on struggling and struggling.

Q: That's what the cadres said, but how did the people themselves feel?

A: The ordinary people were terrified by the bombing and the shelling, never having experienced war, and sometimes they literally shit in their pants when the big bombs and shells came. Artillery bombardments usually involved 200-400 shells per attack, and some people became shell-shocked, just like their brains were completely disoriented. Even though the shelling had stopped, they couldn't hold down a meal. Their minds just froze up and would wander around mute and not talk for three or four days. Terrified and half-crazy, the people were ready to believe what they were told. What (the Khmer Rouge) said was credible because there were just so many huge bombs dropped. That was what made it so easy for the Khmer Rouge to win the people over... It was because of their dissatisfaction with the bombing that they kept on cooperating with the Khmer Rouge, joining up with the Khmer Rouge, sending their children off to go with them, to join the Khmer Rouge....

Q: So the American bombing was a kind of help to the Khmer Rouge ?

A: Yes, that's right. It was a kind of help. It helped to get them to come over to the Khmer Rouge and help, because the people saw, well, sometimes the bombs fell and hit little children, and their fathers would be all for the Khmer Rouge...<sup>82</sup>

An earlier account of the effects of the bombing in the Northern Zone comes from a CPK infantryman who subsequently defected to the Lon Nol government. His first battle was the early 1973 siege of Kompong Thom, which he says progressed successfully for several months. Towards the end of that period the town's residents began to flee through the battle lines into the insurgent zones. "But one night... we heard a terrifying noise which shook the ground; it was as if the earth trembled, rose up and opened beneath our feet. Enormous explosions lit up the sky like huge bolts of lightning; it was the American B-52s."

In the morning we received the order to retreat at the double from Kompong Thom. The countryside was upturned, cratered with huge holes; the trees were smashed to splinters and all our trenches had been disemboweled or buried. Hundreds of our comrades had been killed. We were scarcely better off

-we could no longer hear anything, and we could hardly walk straight. With the other survivors we headed by truck towards the forests of the Northwest.

Just as they did in the Southwest, CPK internecine antagonisms in the Northern Zone became most serious in 1973. The same soldier reports that by the year's end:

There had been conflicts between the civil and military leaders (Koy Thuon and Ke Pauk, respectively) of the Organization. The civil leaders claimed that the military offensive had been launched too early, and that its failure had compromised the establishment of the new administration. The military claimed that the civilians' mistakes had broken the patriotic spirit of the population, who after the B-52 raids and the retreat of our forces had fled to the other side.

Many villagers, peasants and officers had been executed and the disorganized Khmer Rouge militias had been fighting one another<sup>63</sup>.

Obviously, the military debacle sparked recriminations. As Pol Pot himself had his headquarters in the Northern Zone, these proved crucial. Koy Thuon was later accused of "giving no thought to the battlefield"<sup>64</sup>. A previously influential moderate CPK leader, Thuon was pushed aside by Ke Pauk, whose fellow warlord Mok, another Pol Pot ally, was at that very time turning his guns on moderates in the Southwest Zone.

After the bombing halt in August 1973, the soldier returned with his unit to Kompong Thom to find that the population movement into the countryside had reversed. 50,000 peasants had in fact fled into Kompong Thom town. "The countryside was deserted, the villages empty," the soldier recalls. This was not just because of the US bombardment or the aggressive Lon Nol army patrolling. It was also because Ke Pauk (and probably Pol Pot's wife Khieu Ponnary, who in July 1973 was reported to have become CPK Secretary of Kompong Thom province) had fully implemented the Democratic Revolution in the region.

In the Kompong Thom region the Organization (the CPK, was) led by very severe men... Their discipline was terrible; there were many executions... Buddha statues were destroyed and pagodas secularized; youths forced to work very hard, especially when the villages had been reorganized and

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rebuilt; the Organization had not allowed the construction of individual houses; there were camps for women, children, young women and young men; meals were eaten communally and rations consisted only of rice soup without meat... children were forbidden to respect their parents, monks to pray, husbands to live with their wives...<sup>85</sup>

In Kompong Kdei district of Siemreap province, during 1972, some bombing of the area had already begun; and although the digging of trenches kept the number of local deaths low, the appearance of US planes inspired great fear. According to a Kompong Kdei woman: "At that time it was not so hard working under the Khmer Rouge; we were afraid only of dying under the bombs." Here as elsewhere, intensification of the US aerial campaign was accompanied by a significant hardening of communist policy. B-52 bombing of the area began in March 1973, and in that month, according to the woman, Kompong Kdei was forcibly evacuated by CPK forces and the market closed down; the town's one thousand families, now alleged to be 'upper class' (*vanna kphuos*), were sent into the forest to clear the land for farming. Work was collective, in twelve-family groups, and the harvests confiscated to feed the increased requirements of the army. "They only left us with what we managed to hide away," the woman recalls<sup>86</sup>.

In September 1973, thirteen battalions of Pauk's forces seized half of the city of Kompong Cham, and penetrated to within a hundred meters of the Lon Nol province governor's residence. When they withdrew, they took 15,000 townspeople into the countryside with them. (Four Khmer communist troops captured by the Lon Nol forces claimed that Vietnamese communist forces had offered fire support for the siege of the town, but, they said, the CPK commander had "refused this support at a critical stage of the fighting" because he preferred to deploy his troops "to escort civilian captives" rather than to pursue the battle for the town.)<sup>87</sup>

In February 1974, Pauk's forces were committed to a drive towards Phnom Penh, and thousands more peasants in the Northern Zone took the opportunity to flee into the Lon Nol-held province capital of Kompong Thom. Their accounts, particularly of low food rations, confirm other descriptions. "We were forced to work very hard, and got nothing," a former village chief told journalist Donald Kirk soon afterwards. The death penalty was commonly applied, particularly for evasion of the CPK draft. The refugee continued:

In April of 1973 they stopped talking about Sihanouk... They said that he was "not the only man," that he was "no good

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now," and that "we do not need him any more"... If you still use his name and support Sihanouk, then you will be sent away, and you will never return... (We were told to) "support Khieu Samphan and no others."<sup>88</sup>

The 'state' of Democratic Kampuchea had emerged fully grown from the Democratic Revolution in the Northern Zone. When that state was officially proclaimed by the Pol Pot regime in January 1976, Norodom Sihanouk was quickly replaced as Head of State by Khieu Samphan.

## THE NORTHEAST ZONE

Because of its remoteness and sparse, mainly non-Khmer tribal populations, little is known about political developments in the Northeast. A defector reported in 1973 that for strategic reasons, the Zone was "under the direct administration" of Pol Pot's CPK Center<sup>89</sup>. The latter's cooperativization program may have been inimical to the various montagnard tribal populations there, and in combination with the US bombing and the local influence of Vietnamese-trained communist cadres, may have been responsible for a communist mutiny there in 1973<sup>90</sup>. Vietnamese sources claim that the Zone military commander and his Staff Assistant (both of whom had spent the 1954-1970 period in Vietnam), and the Deputy CPK Secretary of Rattanakiri province, led a popular rebellion in Voeunsaï district in 1973<sup>91</sup>. They were unsuccessful, and the three withdrew to the Vietnamese border; in 1974 they were joined by another Hanoi-trained cadre, from Stung Treng<sup>92</sup>. At any rate the Northeast in general receded in strategic significance for the Center as CPK forces closed in on Phnom Penh.

But because of its importance as a staging point for Vietnamese communist troops on the Ho Chi Minh Trail, the Northeast Zone was an area of Kampuchea closely monitored by US forces. Moreover, after 30 June 1970, congressional limitations on the bombing of Kampuchea restricted it to the interdiction of men and supplies en route to Vietnam. This restriction "was ignored from the start" ("I want this purpose interpreted very broadly," Nixon said), and "the falsification of bombing reports was now accepted as normal"<sup>93</sup>. But the procedure was to nominate the northeast, to be called Freedom Deal, as "a virtual free fire zone"<sup>94</sup>. Later, the area was extended to the whole of eastern Kampuchea, as far as the Mekong River. As Shawcross reports:

It was gradually pushed southward and westward into more heavily populated areas, as the fighting spread. Bombing outside Freedom Deal was reported as being inside, and bombing in populated areas inside as being in wild, uninhabited places. The misreporting meant that there was

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very little follow-up or 'bomb damage assessment', after missions<sup>95</sup>.

Nevertheless, the sparse population and jungle cover in the Northeast Zone did favour reporting by US agents crossing the border from Vietnam. The majority of Bomb Damage Assessments declassified by the US Government are reports on the Northeast Zone, and nearly half come from one district, Andaung Pich, of Rattanakiri Province, adjacent to Vietnam<sup>96</sup>.

The major US targets in this Zone were undoubtedly Vietnamese communist troops (North Vietnamese Army or Viet Cong). This was apparent, for instance, in the US Army reports on the destruction of the province capital of Rattanakiri:

..... on 27 April 1973, Ba Kev City, Cambodia, was in ruins. All (Illegible) completely destroyed (Illegible) raid. The city had been abandoned and all civilians were believed to have moved to safer locations. The suspected NVA battalion-size base camp within the city had been completely devastated and no evidence of NVA presence remained in the city....

Installations/facilities destroyed included two bunkers of an NVA bunker complex and an undetermined number of dwellings within the city<sup>97</sup>.

But as the bombing reached its peak in mid-1973, the civilian toll mounted. Villages were often bombed because they were near alleged military camps or convoys of Vietnamese or Khmer insurgent (KI) troops. But civilian casualties frequently outnumbered military ones. In two such incidents in early August 1973, the reported casualties were as follows:

1. Seven houses destroyed, nine civilians killed and 20 wounded. Extent of communist military casualties unknown.
2. Eighteen houses destroyed, three civilians killed and one wounded. One Khmer insurgent killed and six wounded. One North Vietnam Army (NVA) soldier killed<sup>98</sup>.

Note that such statistics, according to Shawcross, are likely to *underestimate* civilian casualties.

On 3 August 1973, US aircraft bombed the village of Plei Loh in Rattanakiri province. According to an American agent who reported on the damage nine days later, "the village was totally destroyed, with 28 civilians and five VC guerrillas killed"<sup>99</sup>. He reported that about 30



people had been wounded.

The next day, B-52s attacked Plei Lom village in the same area. According to the Army's Bomb Damage Assessment dated 16 August: "At Plei Lom village there were 23 houses. Two bombs fell on two houses killing twenty people, including children."<sup>100</sup> On 10 August, Plei Lom was bombed again, "resulting in 30 montagnards and an unknown number of guerrillas killed."<sup>101</sup>

On the same day B-52s also struck nearby Plei Blah village: "As a result 50 montagnards were killed, 30 houses in Plei Blah village, Cambodia, and three houses in Plei Nhai village, South Vietnam, were destroyed. An unknown number of communist troops and cadre were killed." It was later noted that Plei Nhai village was in fact located in Cambodia, not Vietnam. The US army report continued: "Because the strike took place so close to South Vietnam, the Communists intend to use this incident for propaganda purposes."<sup>102</sup> However, not enough is known about the CPK internecine struggles in the Northeast Zone to conclude that they bore any relationship to political effects of the US bombardment of the Zone. The pattern is much clearer in what became the heartland of the Pol Pot regime — the Southwest Zone.

## AFTERMATH: THE SOUTHWEST ZONE

The Southwest Zone saw the greatest convulsions in the revolutionary ranks in 1973. This was the year that the Mok-Thuch Rin tendency, closely allied with the Party Center, established its supremacy over Chou Chet, Prasith and their more moderate colleagues, and completely eclipsed the Hanoi-trained Khmer communists throughout the Southwest Zone.

**Table 2.**  
**COMMUNIST PARTY of KAMPUCHEA**  
**SOUTHWEST ZONE PARTY COMMITTEE, 1972-1974<sup>103</sup>**

POST	1972	1974
Chairman	Chou Chet (demoted 1973)	?
Secretary	Mok	Mok
Deputy-Secretary	Prasith (killed mid-1974)	Kang Chap (from 26 August 1974 —?)
Member	Sangha Hoeun (killed 1973)	?
Member	Thuch Rin	Thuch Rin
Member	Phouk Chhay (demoted 1973)	?

N.B. Chou Chet, Kang Chap, and Phouk Chhay were all arrested and executed in Democratic Kampuchea in 1977-78. Mok and Thuch Rin remained important leaders of the exiled Party of Democratic Kampuchea in 1988.

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The first high-ranking victim was apparently Sangha Hoeun, a communist veteran and a member of the Southwest Zone CPK committee. A former monk from Kompong Speu, who had joined the communists in 1970, recalls:

In 1971-72 the revolution was good; the people were not worried at all. Sangha Hoeun was friendly with the Vietnamese and never had any trouble with them. And the people liked Sangha Hoeun a lot because he sponsored theater performances with traditional national music. Also, there were plenty of Lon Nol soldiers who came to the liberated zones from Phnom Penh and the province capitals, to join the revolution. Sangha Hoeun and Chou Chet re-educated and taught these people. I saw this; they did not kill them. But Mok did kill such people, and he became angry with what the other two were doing. There was a power struggle.

In 1973 the killings began. At first there were transfers of subdistrict and Region cadre. Then Chou Chet and his followers fought with Mok's followers, at a combined Zone and Region meeting in our subdistrict, which I helped organize. The fight broke out over politics and theory, in the middle of the meeting. Chou Chet then left for the west to discuss the question of the execution of the Lon Nol soldiers. Phouk Chhay went with him. I was told they were transferred to Koh Kong.

Two weeks later, Sangha Hoeun was arrested by Mok's troops. At first they took him under guard to our village for a day and a night, and then to the Center or Zone (headquarters). Five trucks came to take his followers away to Kompong Chhnang.

In 1976, Democratic Kampuchea security personnel reported that Sangha Hoeun had been "smashed"<sup>104</sup>.

From across the Vietnamese border, the US analyst Kenneth Quinn reported that in 1973, Chou Chet "had his authority and influence ... reduced because of his pro-NVA and pro-Sihanouk stands and, in fact, was even ambushed and slightly wounded by the (CPK forces) once in late November while travelling with some NVA soldiers on Route 16."<sup>105</sup>

After his arrival in Kompong Chhnang, Chou Chet continued to stress solidarity with the Vietnamese at political meetings<sup>106</sup>. A member of the CPK youth movement there also claims that, because Chet was an intellectual, he was in constant conflict with a "forest" revolutionary like Mok. Further, Chet and others like Phouk Chhay (and Koy Thuon in

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the North) appreciated Prince Sihanouk's appeal, even if to them he was only a figurehead. In fact, "the people believed in Sihanouk more than in the revolution"; problems arose when the Party began to criticize the Prince openly, and Mok's response was to impose his authority by force:

Mok was cruel ever since 1971-72. Unlike Chou Chet and Phouk Chhay, he was fierce, a killer. The killings began in 1973, as the bombs were falling. Also, some prisoners of war were executed, and others put in re-education centers. 1973 was the year the US began bombing (the area) with B-52s, so they had to fight back hard. The killings were in accordance with regulations. This was called "strengthening the Democratic Revolution". No one dared resist the changes.

I know for sure, from friends who worked directly with Mok, that he was the one who ordered the killings. They took place in the forest....

Mok had the power but he did not have much understanding of politics. Phouk Chhay was educating him (but) there was conflict between the "forest resistance", people like Mok, and the "internal (urban) resistance", people like Phouk Chhay who had recently arrived, since 1970. The conflict arose because the internal group wanted to train the forest group to increase their capacity, and to assert their authority over them<sup>107</sup>.

Here again they seem to have lost out. The CPK Secretary of Region 31, Chan, was replaced in 1973 by Sarun, who was still loyal to the Party Center eight years later. A campaign criticizing Sihanouk was launched, and according to the local subdistrict cadre Mam Lon, there was a "change in the political line". Lon was expelled from the Party in October, and soon afterwards one of his comrades in the youth movement was executed along with three other local officials<sup>108</sup>.

Kenneth Quinn reports that local elections were no longer held in the areas newly seized from the Lon Nol government; from 1973, he says, village chiefs and subdistrict officials were merely appointed by CPK district committees. Buddhist festivals were reduced to two per year, and Muslim ones "totally forbidden." In Kampot in July 1973, each Buddhist *wat* was ordered to supply ten monks to serve as infantrymen in the army's depleted ranks. Soon afterwards, in both Takeo and Kampot provinces, all but four monks in each *wat* were drafted, which Quinn notes "decimated the monk population" there. At the same time, towns in the area were evacuated, and in rural areas a "large-

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scale relocation process" was implemented — 20,000 people were moved out of their villages in two districts of Kampot alone. Quinn continues: "In parts of Takeo and Kampot, the Khmer Communists brought in a large number of new cadres to implement this programme, having lost faith in many older cadre whom they considered to be either pro-North Vietnamese or not tough enough to carry it out."<sup>109</sup>

July 1973 also saw the defection to the Lon Nol regime of the Khmer communist military commander of Region 38 (Kompong Speu), who had undergone training in Hanoi in 1971. (Two Khmer veterans who had spent the years 1954-70 in Vietnam, also defected in 1973, the first to do so since 1971.)<sup>110</sup>

Popular unrest was also mounting<sup>111</sup>. Quinn reports that fighting broke out between rival communist units in the Southwest in November 1973. He cites three incidents in Kampot of popular and military reaction to attempts by CPK cadre to forcibly relocate the population and confiscate rice harvests. In one case, dissident communist forces "rallied about 500 villagers to come to their aid, and, armed with scythes, machetes and hatchets, drove the KK (*Khmer Krahom*, or official CPK forces) off, killing nine and wounding twenty". A fourth clash in the same area in December saw a hundred people killed and wounded, and by January 1974 "a large pro-Sihanouk force was reported maneuvering to gain control of all of Route 16 from Tani to Tuk Meas, as well as part of Route 205 each of Tani". In March 1974, 742 communist dissidents surrendered to the Lon Nol regime in the Southwest. They claimed to represent a total force of 10,000 who were ready to follow them if Lon Nol granted them operational autonomy to continue their fight against their CPK rivals. (They were refused.)

In Region 13, the imposition of the Democratic Revolution sometimes provoked assassinations of cadres by enraged, recalcitrant villagers. As one local CPK soldier tells it:

At first the Khmer Reds were popular, from 1970 to 1974. Their line was good, with no oppression. The people were prepared to follow them into the socialist revolution. In July 1973 I enlisted because I believed what they said about liberating Kampuchea from oppressors and imperialists. But persecution began in 1973-74, when everything was collectivized. Communal eating was introduced in May 1973, in groups of 12 families. (Soon) people were eating banana leaves, sugar palm roots, coconuts, and finally weeds. Then there was nothing left at all. In the end the people rebelled, killing cadres in all villages. Here (Prey Pley village) one cadre was taken off and disappeared. So the Khmer Reds had to give in, and in 1974 private eating was once again allowed.

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But this district, Tram Kak, run by Mok's daughter Khom, was to be officially lauded by the Party as the first in Takeo to introduce communal eating, which of course resumed after victory in 1975. Meanwhile, in nearby Kong Pisei district (Region 33), two Region-level cadre were assassinated by their own couriers in 1974, after they had attempted to send out orders to implement the new measures. Although it is possible that Quinn underestimated the solid base of support that the CPK had developed among a minority of poor peasants in the Southwest, the thrust of his conclusion is undeniable: "In early 1973 when the KK entered the new harsh phase of their campaign in which all rules were strictly enforced and unpopular programs carried out, with stiff penalties for non-compliance, almost all popular feeling turned against them."

Finally, and perhaps most important of all in the political sense, came the destruction of Prasith, the Southwest Zone Deputy Party Secretary who actually outranked Mok on the CPK Central Committee. He ran coastal Koh Kong province. An ethnic Chinese woman who was living there at the time recounts what happened to Prasith and his lieutenant Prachha, whom she calls the "free Khmer Rouge":

In late 1973, the Vietnamese..... were told to go back to their country and we saw no more of them.

In 1974, hard times began. Zone and Regional armed forces from Kompong Sella arrived in Koh Kong:..... Prachha was arrested and taken away. They said he was going to study, but actually they killed him. Everybody in Koh Kong was afraid, because their leader had been taken away. Prasith disappeared about the same time..... It got harder and harder. The Khmer Rouge began killing people; people who did anything wrong were taken away and shot. In 1974 they recruited every youth 16 years old or more into the Army.... Some who didn't go were killed.

According to Lon Nol intelligence, which confirms this account of Prasith's execution, CPK Center member Vom Vet assumed control of in mid-1974.

There was one exception. About 200 of Prasith's followers escaped arrest and fled into the Cardamom mountains along the Thai border, where they initially set up five small bases, each of platoon strength. Led by Sae Phuthang, these people held out for the next six years. Abandoned by the Vietnamese communists, they constituted no real threat to the CPK regime, but were occasionally aided by ethnic Khmers and local Thai officials across the border. With the

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overthrow of Democratic Kampuchea in 1979, a hundred of them emerged to participate in the formation of the People's Republic of Kampuchea. Sae Phuthang became Deputy Secretary of the ruling People's Revolutionary Party of Kampuchea, and two of his lieutenants became Party Secretaries of Koh Kong and Kampot provinces.

### Conclusion

There is no doubt that B-52 bombardment was at times a devastating weapon against massed forces, and that CPK and NVA units suffered enormous casualties from it. Table 3 summarizes declassified assessments by the US Army of major damage done to communist units in eastern Kampuchea during air strikes in 1973. These assessments are striking for the high killed-to-wounded ratios claimed, recalling Shawcross's point about the fabrication of reports. But they are not inconsistent with the claim of General John Vogt, Commander of the US Seventh Air Force, that 16,000 Khmer insurgents were killed by US bombing in 1973<sup>12</sup>. If this is the case, the 1973 bombing postponed the revolutionary victory for a crucial two years.

On the other hand, it is apparent that on many occasions CPK and other "Khmer insurgent" forces did avoid casualties by digging air-defence shelters. One report to the US Army in July 1973 stated: "In headquarters areas, many of the shelters are of solid construction and able to withstand bombs. In frontline areas, shelters are often built under bamboo groves and are relatively safe, barring a direct hit." But for civilians the effect was much more devastating. The same report continued:

*Civilian reaction to US air strikes:* Most houses in the combat zone have been totally destroyed, either by US bombs or by the communists themselves. Civilian reaction to the devastation is mixed; but an objective appraisal seems to be that the US, Cambodian government and the communists are equally responsible (sic). It is a fact, however, that the civilian population fears US air attacks far more than they do Communist rocket attacks or scorched-earth tactics<sup>13</sup>.

According to the historical division of the US Department of Defense, more than 11,000 Khmers were killed by US bombing<sup>14</sup>. This seems a serious underestimation, perhaps because of the difficulty and fabrication involved in the monitoring of casualties in areas distant from the Vietnamese border. The evidence of survivors from many parts of Kampuchea suggests at least tens of thousands, probably in the range of 50,000 to 150,000 deaths, resulted from the US bombing campaigns in Kampuchea from 1969 to 1973.

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### Table 3.

## DECLASSIFIED US Bomb DAMAGE ASSESSMENTS:

**EFFECTIVE AIR STRIKES AGAINST COMMUNIST TROOPS IN EASTERN KUMPUCHEA, 1973**

DATE of Strike	PLACE	ZONE	Killed	Wounded	CIVILIAN CASUALTIES, DAMAGE
3/23/73	Kampot	SW	30 dead or seriously wounded		<p>"Very many houses of Cambodian people" were destroyed in the B-52 strike, including "the western half" of Mi Satum village "completely destroyed."</p> <p>"No civilian damages...reported."</p> <p>"Dead civilians were buried in the vicinity...500 meters northeast of Phum Sos Dong."</p> <p>"2000 Cambodian nationals crossed the Cambodia/Vietnam border for refuge" from the bombing.</p> <p>Those killed and wounded included "Cambodian civilians" (exact number</p>
4/26/73	Memut	E	100 VC and KI	150	
4/29/73	Memut	E	70 VC	200	
4/30/73	Kompong Cham	E	40 VC 60 KI	35 KI	
4/73	Takeo	SW	1000		
5/73	Neak Luong	E	2000		
6/13/73	Phnom Penh	SW	c.1000		
7/22/73	Komchay Meas	E	37 NVA 30 KI		
8/5/73	Rattanakiri	NE	105 KI	100	
8/6/73	Romeas Hek	E	100	30	
8/7/73	Kompong Trach	E	425	500 "seriously"	
8/8/73	Rattanakiri	NE	5 VC		
10/8/73	Romeas Hek	E	113 KI	30 KI	
8/12/73	Svay Rieng	E	25 NVA	over 30 Vietnamese and Khmers	
8/11/73	Takeo	SW	c.300 KI	killed or wounded	
8/12/73	Tbaung Khmum	E	50	70 "seriously"	
8/15/73	Andaung Pch	NE	40 NVA		
<b>TOTALS:</b>			c.5,400	c.1,300	Unknown

Sources: US CIA and Department of the Army, documents declassified 19 February and 7 April 1987.

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What was achieved? The Khmer Republic, the intended benefactor of the bombing, may perhaps be given the last word on the matter. On 28 July 1973, the J-2 intelligence section of the Khmer National Armed Forces reported on the "Enemy Outlook after 15 August 1973". It noted: "The American bombing halt can only favorably influence the morale and the behavior of the enemy." But it went on to make a devastating criticism of the bombing's effect on the armed forces of Lon Nol's Khmer Republic:

On the other hand, it will have a sad effect on the state of mind and the attitude of our own forces who have been accustomed for the last six months to benefit from the unlimited support of the air force and will have great difficulty in doing without it. In effect, too often air intervention had been called in when ground action would have been sufficient. They depended on this support so much that certain units, already little inclined to go beyond the limits of their quarters, no longer adventured on the terrain if air support was not assured. This tendency at all levels, and particularly at the basic units level, of *considering the bombing "as an end in itself,"* has seriously compromised the fighting capability of many units. Because of this, *our troops were not able to take advantage of the air intervention which, logically, should have enabled them to pull themselves together and retake the initiative starting at the end of January*<sup>115</sup>.

For his part, Henry Kissinger has staunchly defended the US role, claiming in 1979 that "We destabilized Cambodia the way Britain destabilized Poland in 1939."<sup>116</sup> He states in his memoirs: "It was Hanoi — animated by an insatiable drive to dominate Indochina — that organized the Khmer Rouge long before *any* American bombs fell on Cambodian soil."<sup>117</sup>

Five years earlier, however, Kissinger had had a more perceptive view. In an April 1974 cable to the US Embassy in Phnom Penh, he had written:

In the areas such as southeast and southwest Cambodia where there has been a Khmer Rouge organization since the 1940s, we could assume that at least the political organization if not the military is dominated by Khmer Rouge who not only had little training abroad but probably resent and compete with the better-trained men from North Vietnam. It is not happenstance that there is significant conflict between the VC/NVA and the Khmer communists in these areas of southern Cambodia so close to South Vietnam.



"Nevertheless," Kissinger added,

a Titoist Cambodia which is independent and doctrinaire would be dangerous to its neighbors as a sanctuary for communist rebels. The Khmer communists, such as Saloth Sar (Pol Pot), Koy Thuon and Khieu Samphan are probably xenophobic both when it comes to Vietnamese and the local Chinese inhabitants. One objective of a Cambodian communist regime would be to expel or severely control these groups.

By 1974, then, Kissinger was aware — largely through the reports of Kenneth Quinn — of the existence of the chauvinist Pol Pot tendency. But he was as yet unsure that the CPK Center played the dominant role in the Khmer Rouge movement. He noted that "our lack of precise knowledge of the insurgency makes it difficult to describe the decision-making process and identify the decision-makers":

Convincing arguments can be made that the insurgency is less a centrally controlled communist rebellion and more an insurgency with several regional bases. It is difficult to say whether one can go so far as to describe it as warlordism, but it does square with Cambodian tradition, and the nature of this particular war. A factionalized insurgency with a veneer of central control does explain certain past anomalies in insurgent operations and apparent conflicts. The insurgents no doubt have a central committee and if the Communist Party is as advanced as it should be after 25 years of existence there probably is a presidium made up of little known leftists such as Saloth Sar, Nuon Chea, Koy Thuon, Non Suon, and more prominent French-trained individuals such as Khieu Samphan, Ieng Sary, Son Sen, Hou Yuon and to a lesser extent Tiv Ol and Phouk Chhay. These men in our view wield the real power<sup>118</sup>.

How true this last sentence was to prove. Saloth Sar, Nuon Chea, Khieu Samphan, Ieng Sary and Son Sen *still* make up the Khmer Rouge leadership in 1988 (having purged and executed the other five second-level figures on Kissinger's lists, between 1975 and 1978)<sup>119</sup>.

The tragedy of Kissinger's indecision as to whether the insurgency was regional, and factionalized with only "a veneer of central control," or whether "the real power" was wielded by the central presidium headed by Pol Pot, is that the former was largely true in 1972; the latter was largely true in 1974; and Kissinger and Nixon were largely responsible

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for what had happened in between.

The year 1973 was a watershed in Kampuchean history. The massive bombardment of that year had several major effects. First, it decimated and even destroyed a number of CPK regular units. (The casualties were particularly heavy among Southwest Zone units during the siege of Phnom Penh in July 1973<sup>120</sup>, and this may have helped tip the balance of power there in the CPK Center's favour.) Second, the bombing caused enormous losses of Khmer civilian life and property. Third, these drove a large number of new recruits into the revolutionary ranks, recruits who were often motivated as much by a desire for revenge as by positive political or social goals. Such people were an asset to the Pol Pot group.

In one case, CPK cadres told young survivors of US bombardment that "the killing birds" had come "from Phnom Penh" (not Thailand or Guam), and that Phnom Penh must be made to pay for its assault on rural Kampuchea<sup>121</sup>. On the day the bombing ended, 15 August 1973, CPK propaganda leaflets found in bomb craters in Rattanakiri attacked the "Phnom Penh warriors" who were, they claimed, soon to be defeated<sup>122</sup>.

The popular reaction to the bombing was cleverly manipulated by the CPK Center. This was probably fatal for relatively moderate CPK leaders like Prasith, who was overwhelmed by fanatics and killed just as Chou Chet and Phouk Chhay also lost out to Mok and Thuch Rin in the crucial struggle for control of the Southwest Zone at this time. It is clear too, that Koy Thuon's position in the North, in relation to the Zone military commander Ke Pauk, was severely undermined by the impact of the bombing there. Had all these people been able to hold their ground, the history of Kampuchea in the remainder of the 1970s might well have been different.

The Pol Pot leadership of the Khmer Rouge can in no way be exonerated from responsibility for committing genocide against their own people. But neither can Nixon or Kissinger escape judgement for their role in the slaughter that was a prelude to the genocide. Worse, but for that extreme example of US militarism, the Pol Pot group may have been denied their opportunity. It remains to be hoped that they will not get another one.

<sup>1</sup> See Shawcross, William. *Sideshow: Kissinger, Nixon and the Destruction of Cambodia* (London: )1979: .21-23, 31: "The bombing was not merely concealed; the official, *secret* records showed that it had never happened".

<sup>2</sup> See Kieran, Ben. *How Pol Pot Came to Power* (London: Verso) 1985: 349, for references. Parts of what follows are drawn from Chapter 8 of that book.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*: 323, for the full quotation.

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<sup>4</sup> See Hersh, Seymour M. *The Price of Power: Kissinger in the Nixon White House* (New York, 1983), Chapters 38-40.

<sup>5</sup> Snepp, Frank. *Decent Interval* (New York: Penguin) 1977: 61.

<sup>6</sup> Shawcross, *op. cit.*: 264, 266-7.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*: 242. (See also Kiernan, *op. cit.*: 403, n.241.)

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*: 297. (See also Kiernan: 403, n.242.)

<sup>9</sup> Figures from former Cambodia analyst for the CIA, Sam Adams. After Adams left the CIA in May 1973, his superiors produced a paper criticising the methodology he had used to arrive at his estimates, and gave their own estimate as 41,000 to 51,000 *regular combat forces* (Adams' figure had been 80,000) plus an unknown number of administrative services troops and guerrilla/militant personnel. The paper nevertheless conceded a growth in CPK regular forces, from 15-30,000 in mid-1971, to 41-51,000 in mid-1973. CIA Memorandum, "Khmer Communist Forces," (23 July 1973).

<sup>10</sup> Shawcross, *op.cit.*: 218-9.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*: 294-5.

<sup>12</sup> Author's interviews with Chan Mon, Suong, and Nguon Ao, Kandol Chrum, 7 August 1980. See Kiernan: 349-357, for further details.

<sup>13</sup> Shawcross, *op.cit.*: 174-5.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*: 174.

<sup>15</sup> "Cambodia: Can the Vietnamese Communists Export Insurgency?" *Research Study*, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, US Department of State (25 September 1970): 4,6.

<sup>16</sup> Kun Chhay, interview with William Shawcross and Ben Kiernan, Kompong Svay, 16 October 1980.

<sup>17</sup> These figures according to the Pentagon, in Hersh, *op.cit.*: 202.

<sup>18</sup> Hildebrand, George G.; Gareth Porter, *Cambodia: Starvation and Revolution* (New York: Monthly Review) 1976: 109, n. 83. They cite interviews conducted with Khmer refugees in 1971 by the General Accounting Office, *Congressional Record* (18 April 1973):S7812.

<sup>19</sup> Baczynskyj, Boris. "Bombing Turns Cambodian Villagers into Refugees" *Asian Reports* (21 February 1972). The youth had since defected.

<sup>20</sup> Hildebrand, Staffan; personal communication.

<sup>21</sup> Author's interview with Trlet Sambath, Kompong Trabek, 8 October 1980; and Stephen Heder's interview with a local villager, Kamput, 11 March 1980.

<sup>22</sup> Author's interviews with Suon Sarat, Chantrea, 23 July 198; and Touc Muong, Romduol, 23 July 1980.

<sup>23</sup> Shawcross, *op.cit.*: 250-1.

<sup>24</sup> Author's interviews with Som Yan and others, O Reang Au, 6 October 1980.

<sup>25</sup> See maps, in Shawcross, *op.cit.*: 266-7.

<sup>26</sup> See note 24.

<sup>27</sup> Author's interviews with Chin Chhuon, Chhal Chhoeun, Khim Veng and Yem Yem, at Ampil Tapok, 6 October 1980; and author's interview with Sang, O Reang Au, 6 October 1980.

<sup>28</sup> Author's interviews with Song Rus and others, Prek Chrey, 7 October 1980.

<sup>29</sup> Author's interview with Chheng Sia, Tbaung Khmum, 5 October 1980.

<sup>30</sup> Author's interview with Prak Voa, Krachap, 9 October 1980. See also Kiernan:

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306.

<sup>31</sup> Author's interview with Suas Samon, Phnom Penh, 12 August 1980.

<sup>32</sup> Author's interview with Chim Chin, Prey Veng, 28 July 1980.

<sup>33</sup> Author's interview with Prok Sary, Prey Veng, 12 July 1980.

<sup>34</sup> Author's interview with Preap Pichey, Kompong Cham, 8 August 1980.

<sup>35</sup> See maps, Shawcross, *op.cit.*: 266-7.

<sup>36</sup> Associated Press dispatch from Phnom Penh, March 1973, copy in AP bureau, Bangkok.

<sup>37</sup> United Press International dispatch. Boston Globe, 1 April 1973.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.* (Emphasis added.)

<sup>39</sup> Schmidt, Dana Adams. *Christian Science Monitor* (5 April 1973).

<sup>40</sup> *Boston Globe* (7 April) (UPI); and 8 April 1973. Quoted in Noam Chomsky, *Towards a New Cold War* (New York: ) 1981: 131, 415.

<sup>41</sup> Quoted in Chomsky, *ibid.*: 415.

<sup>42</sup> AP files, Bangkok, January-April 1973. It may have been true, as AP reported that US officials testified at the time, that the US ambassador in Phnom Penh had vetoed a number of Lon Nol army requests for bombing raids, "on grounds they might do *more* harm to the civilian population than be of military advantage to the Lon Nol government" (emphasis added). But, because any battlefield assistance was valuable to the desperate Lon Nol government, this may suggest that a consequent civilian death toll up to an *equivalent* level would have been tolerable.

<sup>43</sup> Shawcross, *op.cit.*: 272.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*: 291-4.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*: 294-5.

<sup>46</sup> AP files, Bangkok bureau, January-April 1973.

<sup>47</sup> See maps, Shawcross, *op.cit.*: 266-7.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*: 297.

<sup>49</sup> See Klerman, *op. cit.*, ch.8, especially: 314 ff., 331 ff., 340-7.

<sup>50</sup> Heder, Stephen, interview with an Ampil Tuk villager, Kamput, 11 March 1980.

<sup>51</sup> Heder, Stephen, interview with a former inhabitant of Region 15, Sa Keo, 7 March 1980.

<sup>52</sup> "Efforts of Khmer Insurgents to Exploit for Propaganda Purposes Damage Done by Airstrikes in Kandal Province." 3-page document declassified by the CIA on 19 February 1987. (Emphasis added.)

<sup>53</sup> Author's interviews with Kus villagers, 16 July 1980.

<sup>54</sup> Heder, Stephen, interview with a region 13 CPK cadre, Sa Keo, 8 March 1980.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, and author's interview with Ieng Thon, Tram Kak, 16 July 1980.

<sup>56</sup> See Klerman, pp.354-5, for references.

<sup>57</sup> Quinn, K.K. "The Khmer Krahom Program to Create a Communist Society in Southern Cambodia," Airgram from US Consul, Can Tho, to Department of State, 20 February 1974: 7.

<sup>58</sup> Author's interview with Nou Mouk, Oudong, 26 August 1981.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.* (Emphasis added).

<sup>61</sup> Heder interview, *op.cit.*

<sup>62</sup> Author's interview with Rat Samoeun, Kong Pisei, 13 September 1980.

<sup>63</sup> Chap Hen, *op.cit.* See Kiernan: 361.

<sup>64</sup> Yos Por, *op.cit.* Por says Mok was backed up in this view by the CPK Secretary of Region 35 (Kampot), Kang Chap, and his deputy Sa Rin. The next year Por was arrested and told he was going to be executed. He escaped to Vietnam and in 1979 became Secretary-General of the Kampuchean United Front for National Salvation in Phnom Penh.

<sup>65</sup> Author's interview with Kim Kal, Kompong Chhnang, 4 September 1980. See Kiernan: 361-2.

<sup>66</sup> See Kiernan, *ibid.*: 25-33, 119-122. See also Kiernan, Ben. "New Light on the Origins of the Vietnam-Kampuchea Conflict" *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 12.4 (1980): 61-65.

<sup>67</sup> *Tung Padevat* (the CPK's internal monthly magazine) .8 (August 1975): 14, notes that "we launched the Democratic Revolution from mid-1973 onward..."

<sup>68</sup> See note 52.

<sup>69</sup> *Decisions Concerning the Line on Cooperatives of the Party in Region 31* (apparently from the Kompong Thom area), February 1974. Translation by S.R. Heder.

<sup>70</sup> Heder, Stephen. Interview with Chap Lonh, Chantaburi, 11-12 March 1980. The same source adds that, as for those already enlisted, "their relatives at home would be better off and more secure and they themselves would have better morale, and more to fight for".

<sup>71</sup> *Tung Padevat, op.cit.*

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> Author's interview with Mau Met, Kompong Cham, 5 October 1980.

<sup>75</sup> Author's interview with Nem, Oudong, 18 September 1980.

<sup>76</sup> See note 27 and Kiernan, *op.cit.*: 353. For further information on the Eastern Zone and its political differences with the CPK Center, see Ch.8, especially: 364-7, and Kiernan, Ben. "Wild Chickens, Farm Chickens and Cormorants: Kampuchea's Eastern Zone under Pol Pot," in D.P. Chandler and Ben Kiernan (eds.), *Revolution and Its Aftermath in Kampuchea: Eight Essays* (New Haven: Southeast Asian Studies Program) 1983: 136-218; and Kiernan, Ben. *The Eastern Zone Massacres* (New York: Columbia University, Center for the Study of Human Rights) 1986: 100.

<sup>77</sup> Kun Chhay interview (see note 13).

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> Author's interview with Thoun Cheng, Ubon, 13-14 March 1979. For the full account of Cheng's experiences, see Ben Kiernan and Chanthou Boua, eds., *Peasants and Politics in Kampuchea, 1942-1981* (London: Zed) 1982: 330-4.

<sup>81</sup> Tong Teng, interview with François Ponchaud and Bruce Palling, Paris, January 1982.

<sup>82</sup> Chhit Do, interview with François Ponchaud and Bruce Palling, Paris, January 1982. (I am grateful to Bruce Palling for sending me translations of these two interviews.)

<sup>83</sup> Debré, F. *Cambodge: La révolution de la forêt* (Paris: ) 1976: 187-8.

<sup>84</sup> *Ompi pankar ruom chong kraoy* ("On The Last Joint Plan"). Democratic Kampuchea security services, 1978. Translation by U.S. Embassy, Thailand.

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- <sup>85</sup> Debré, *op.cit.*: 188-9. See also Kiernan: 371 for references.
- <sup>86</sup> Author's interview with Ung Channa, Paris, 30 November 1979.
- <sup>87</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, *Developments in Indochina*, 20 September 1973: 2. Document declassified 19 February 1987.
- <sup>88</sup> See Kiernan: 372, for references.
- <sup>89</sup> Carney, T.M. *Communist Party Power in Kampuchea* (Ithaca: Cornell University) 1977: 43.
- <sup>90</sup> *Livre Noir: Faits et preuves des actes d'agression et d'annexion du Vietnam contre le Kampuchea*, Phnom Penh, 1978, claims that Hanoi had "grafted" a parallel state power onto the Zone. See Kiernan: 308-9.
- <sup>91</sup> Nguyen Xuan Hoang. "Campuchia, Mot Su Kien Cach Mang Tuyet Voi," In *Hoi Nghi Khoa Hoc Chao Mung Cach Mang Campuchia Toan Thang* (Southeast Asia Institute: Hanoi) 1979: Ch.3; 3,4.
- <sup>92</sup> The four were Bou Thong, Soy Keo, Bun Mi, Nou Beng. See Kiernan: 374-5.
- <sup>93</sup> Shawcross, *op.cit.*: 213, 215.
- <sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*: 215, 271.
- <sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*: 215.
- <sup>96</sup> Of 64 such documents released to me on 7 April 1987, 27 relate to Andaung Pich district.
- <sup>97</sup> "B-52 Strike Results" and "Bomb Damage Assessment, Ba Kev," US Army documents, dated 21 May and 2 July 1973.
- <sup>98</sup> US Department of Defense, Intelligence Information Report, Cambodia, Bomb Damage Assessment, Report No.2 274 2003 73, dated 15 August 1973: 2.
- <sup>99</sup> US Army Bomb Damage Assessment, 20 August 1973.
- <sup>100</sup> US Department of Defense, Intelligence Information Report, No.2 724 2014 73, dated 16 August 1973.
- <sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, No.2 724 2083 73, 23 August 1973.
- <sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, and No.2 724 2116 73, 27 August 1973.
- <sup>103</sup> See Kiernan: 313-5, 331-9, 375-80. (On Kang Chap, see US Central Intelligence Agency, Intelligence Information Report, "Comments of the Chief of KC Region 405 on KC Requirements to Strengthen Control Within the Region," 12 November 1974; declassified 19 February 1987. See also n. 64, above.)
- <sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*: 375-6, 380.
- <sup>105</sup> Quinn, *op.cit.*: 7
- <sup>106</sup> Nou Mouk, *op.cit.*
- <sup>107</sup> Author's interview with Chhuong Kau, Kompong Chhnang, 1 September 1980.
- <sup>108</sup> Kiernan: 376-7.
- <sup>109</sup> Quinn, *op.cit.*: 12, 23, 25-6, 32.
- <sup>110</sup> Kiernan: 377.
- <sup>111</sup> The following section is taken from Kiernan: 377-80.
- <sup>112</sup> Shawcross, *op.cit.*: 298.
- <sup>113</sup> "Effectiveness of US Bombing in Cambodia," US Army document dated 21 August 1973: 2. Declassified 7 April 1987.
- <sup>114</sup> *National Geographic* (August 1982): 137.

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<sup>115</sup> "Enemy Outlook after 15 August 1973," Khmer Republic, Khmer National Armed Forces General Staff, J-2, Special Memorandum for the Major-General, CINC, and Chief of General Staff, 28 July 1973, 5pp. translated document declassified by the US Defense Intelligence Agency, 2 June 1988. (Emphasis added.)

<sup>116</sup> Page, Bruce. "The Pornography of Power," In Anthony Barnett and John Pllger, *Aftermath: The Struggle of Cambodia and Vietnam* (London: New Statesman) 1982: 43-53, at p.51.

<sup>117</sup> Quoted in Page, *ibid.*: 45.

<sup>118</sup> "Emergence of Khmer Insurgent Leader Khieu Samphan on the International Scene," cable from Secretary of State to US Embassy, Phnom Penh, April 1974, 4 pp. The cable is signed "Kissinger".

<sup>119</sup> See Klerman, Ben; Chanthou Boua, eds. *Peasants and Politics In Kampuchea, 1942-1981* (London: Zed) 1982: 286 ff.

<sup>120</sup> Carney, *op.cit.*: 10.

<sup>121</sup> Hildebrand, Staffan, personal communication.

<sup>122</sup> US Army, Intelligence Information Report, "Bomb Damage Assessment, Cambodia," No.2 725 1716 73, 22 August 1973: 2.