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THE HYDROCARBON POTENTIAL AND TECTONICS OF INDOCHINA

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Indochina covers a wide area between the South China Sea and the Bay of Bengal. The eastern half of the region is selected for the study of the tectonic analysis and the investigation of the hydrocarbon potential. The Kontum Massif, composed of a metamorphosed basement complex, seems to be the core of the Indochina region, and crops out from eastern Vietnam to Laos and Kampuchea. The concept of concentric growth of the orogenic belts along the periphery of this massif seems to have been accepted as being within the scope of the classic theory of orogeny. The application of the modern plate tectonic hypothesis with the aid of LANDSAT image analysis has however enabled a new interpretation of the tectonic development of the area to be made.

The hydrocarbon potential of Indochina is here investigated, based on this interpretation of the region's tectonic development, and taking account of the morphological and textural characteristics detected from the LANDSAT imagery integrated with fundamental geological factors. Three areas, (1) the Mekong Delta, (2) the Khorat Plateau, and (3) the Hanoi Basin, are selected for detailed discussion on their hydrocarbon potential.