

THE CHINA-VIETNAM CONFLICT

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For nearly a quarter century, China and Vietnam described their relationship as being "like lips and teeth". But since April 1978 the two former allies are at a sword's point and dangerously moved toward an outright military conflict.

It is ironic that Vietnam, after figuring so prominently in China's politics, should now precipitate Peking's worst foreign policy disaster since the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution that cut the country off from the rest of the world. The suspension of China's economic aid estimated at \$ 300 000 000 a year, withdrawal of hundreds of Chinese technicians and engineers working on twenty major construction projects in Vietnam, expulsion of Vietnamese students from the Chinese universities and technological institutions, closing of the Vietnamese consulates in southern China and the armed clash at the "Friendship pass" signaled that the most brilliant chapter of Sino-Vietnamese relations has come to an unexpected and premature end.

In the course of her history, Vietnam was a colony of China, with her own suzerainty and sending tributes to Peking. The Chinese Communists have demonstrated a strong sense of national interest and a determination to play the role of an interested and involved power in Vietnam. They always resented the efforts by the Soviet Union to secure a predominant influence over the affairs of Vietnam.

Almost every Vietnamese, on the other hand, is deeply aware of the past role of China in Vietnam and is apprehensive about the Chinese policy and action. Experience has convinced them that the Chinese are, by nature, imperialists and that whenever China is strong then Vietnam is threatened by Chinese imperialism. When China turned expansionist toward Vietnam in the past, Vietnam resisted. The Vietnamese also know too well that whenever China has dominated Vietnam, they have been mercilessly exploited to enrich the Chinese. After the end of the Second World War, when China temporarily occupied Vietnam, the Chinese soldiers stripped the country of every item of value which could be removed into China.

The arguments that the Chinese character has gone to a considerable change for the better under the Communist regime carry no conviction among the Vietnamese. Peking's reaction to Hanoi's program to eradicate the "capitalist business activities" in the south by moving against the ethnic Chinese because of their traditional grip on the economy of the region is sufficient enough to refresh the memory of the Vietnamese of Chinese imperialism.

A memorial to the Trung sisters, leaders of an unsuccessful revolt against the Chinese rule in the past century, standing in Hanoi's Central Square is a continual reminder to all Vietnamese, who view it as their nation's past servitude under Chinese rulers. It also serves as a testimonial that national sentiment is a more enduring source of political action than an avowedly common ideology.

But despite the present maneuvering that are taking place, much has remained unclear about the Sino-Vietnamese rift. Why are the Chinese and the Vietnamese so critical of each other? What are the major issues that have come between Peking and Hanoi? Are the disagreements over Hanoi's policy toward the ethnic Chinese and the Chinese support to Cambodia responsible for the rift? The present essay is an attempt to provide some answers to these questions.

BEGINNING OF THE CONFLICT

The conflict between the Chinese Communists and the North Vietnamese began shortly after the Geneva Conference of 1954 when Peking forced Hanoi to accept the Geneva accords. The Geneva agreements received different assessments from Peking and Hanoi. The conference had substantially raised China's international status in the eyes of Asian and African countries. The North Vietnamese, on the other hand, were thoroughly dissatisfied because they lost a chance to conquer the south and to unify the country under Hanoi's leadership. Prime Minister Pham Van Dong declared: "We had the country won after the victory of Dienbienphu, but were persuaded to move from the battleground to the ballotbox ..."¹.

The relations between Peking and Hanoi remained cordial, however. In the fall of 1954 China agreed to send technicians to North Vietnam to help restore communication facilities, notably the railroad linking China's two southern provinces with Vietnam. When the Chinese arrived in Vietnam, Hanoi took particular care to assure its people that the Chinese had come by "invitation" of the Government and the "Chinese aid is being rendered entirely in the interest of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam", in an endeavor to counteract the general suspicion of China's policy and action and the recollection of plunder by the Chinese army after the end of the Second World War².

At the Bandung Conference in 1955, the North Vietnamese publicly resented the Chinese pressure to affirm that Hanoi would refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of Laos³. The Chinese policy of pressuring the North Vietnamese suggested that Peking subordinated Hanoi's dream of unifying Indochinese states of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia under Hanoi to wider Chinese interests. China was anxious to see that Laos and Cambodia remained independent, hopefully depending upon Peking.

The gap between the Vietnamese and the Chinese Communists was widened in 1956 when Truong Chinh, a pro-Chinese North Vietnamese leader, was discharged from the post of the Secretary General of the Lao Dong Party for the failure of the land reform which he had modeled after China. Hanoi's suspicion of China's policy was heightened after Peking supported the Soviet armed intervention to crush the rebellion in Hungary. The North Vietnamese apprehension in this matter might well have arisen from their own fear of a Chinese armed intervention to topple the regime which had discharged a pro-Chinese leader. Echoing the Government's apprehension, the organ of the Lao Dong Party, Nhan Dan, pointed out that Vietnam and Communist China fully respected "each other's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity" and the two countries had always dealt with each other in a "spirit of equality"⁴.

In November 1956 Prime Minister Chou En-lai made his first visit to Hanoi and assured the North Vietnamese leaders that China would not follow the Soviet example and pledged that Peking would always "oppose the great nation chauvinism". Chou also visited the shrine of Trung sisters and laid flowers in memory of their sacrifice to stress that Communist China would not "repeat the errors of former China"⁵.

HANOI MOVED TOWARD MOSCOW

At that time the North Vietnamese leaders were at odds on domestic matters and also what stand should they take toward the Saigon regime. The Geneva accords brought no concrete result to Hanoi's foreign policy goals. At the 15th Plenum of the Lao Dong Party held in January 1959, it was resolved to resort to armed struggle in South Vietnam. It was also resolved that the task of building of economic, political and military strength in the North was indivisible from the task of completing the "national democratic revolution" in the South. Hanoi then moved closer to the Soviet Union for arms, industrial equipment and technological aid. China, being a backward nation, was unable to supply factories, machinery and heavy arms Hanoi needed. A delegation led by Ho Chi Minh went to Moscow to insure the Soviet aid. Shortly after the visit to Moscow, North Vietnam and the Soviet Union launched a coordinated campaign against South Vietnam and gave

prominence to the armed warfare as the "main means" of achieving the unification of Vietnam⁶.

At that time China found herself in an ideological conflict with the Soviet Union and launched its first public attack on the Soviet policy by publishing an article entitled "Long Live Leninism" in the theoretical organ of the CCP, Red Flag. In May 1960 Chou En-lai visited Hanoi to enlist the support of North Vietnam against Moscow. But his mission was not successful⁷.

During this period the Soviet Union and the East European countries provided North Vietnam with industrial equipment and technical skill needed for the development of the country. They also sent arms to Hanoi required to open the armed warfare in the south. It was, therefore, no wonder that Hanoi leaned toward Moscow. At the third Congress of the Lao Dong Party held in September 1960, the North Vietnamese leaders spoke favorably of the Soviet Union and its policy. There was no mention of China. The Chinese delegates attending the Congress were shocked. Li Fu-ch'un, leader of the Chinese delegation, devoted most of his speech to the "comradship-in-arms" between the Chinese and Vietnamese people and stressed the factors that bound the two countries closely. He attacked the "revisionism" and praised the North Vietnamese leaders for following the "correct revolutionary line" on domestic and foreign affairs⁸.

The Congress was a victory for the Soviet Union in its ideological dispute with China because it won the most important South East Asian Communist nation, Vietnam, which had hitherto maintained a strict neutrality in Sino-Soviet conflict. Thereafter, the influence of China in Vietnam was greatly reduced. This was followed by withdrawal of a considerable number of Chinese technicians and advisers and the reduction of the Chinese aid. The Soviet aid, on the other hand, increased considerably.

The North Vietnamese leaders were aware of the fact that the success of the armed warfare to unify south Vietnam depended more on the Soviet aid than the Chinese support. But their interest was not to toe the line of the Soviet Union in the ideological conflict between Peking and Moscow⁹. Apprehensive of the North Vietnamese policy, a Chinese military delegation led by Marshal Yen Chien-ying visited Hanoi in an attempt to negotiate a Sino-Vietnamese military pact. But Hanoi refused to sign such a treaty¹⁰.

A further clue of differences between Hanoi and Peking came to public in 1961 when Le Duan declared that "we have learned much from China, now as in the past", but "we do not model ourselves on the Chinese ... We have to learn from others, but only what suits us"¹¹.

The difference between Moscow and Peking over the Sino-Indian border conflict and the Cuban crisis in the summer of 1962 posed a dilemma for

Hanoi. On the Sino-Indian border issue Hanoi praised the withdrawal of the Chinese troops, while declining to express its approval to the Chinese military action against India. On the Cuban issue, Hanoi leaned toward the Soviet Union. Thereafter, China's relations with Vietnam were markedly deteriorated.

PEKING WOES HANOI

In early 1963 cordial relations between China and North Vietnam were restored. In May of that year Liu Shao-chi paid a visit to Hanoi and sought North Vietnam's support in China's conflict with the Soviet Union asserting that "we cannot act as onlookers or follow a middle course". North Vietnam refused to support China and in their speeches the North Vietnamese leaders praised both Peking and Moscow¹². Liu's visit convinced Peking that Hanoi would not support China in its conflict with the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, Peking continued to criticize the Soviet policy toward Vietnam to gain Hanoi's favour.

In July 1963 when Hanoi announced its support to southern insurgency, China quickly endorsed the plan setting the stage of exploiting the Vietnam conflict in its quarrel with the Soviet Union¹³. North Vietnam, in return, accorded its support to China's denunciation of the partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. Hanoi also endorsed Chou En-lai's proposal for a world disarmament conference, suggesting a shift to Peking's side in the Sino-Soviet conflict¹⁴. In any case, the fear of losing the supply of arms from China played an important role in Hanoi's support to Peking.

The downfall of Ngo Dinh Diem in November 1963 accelerated North Vietnamese involvement in the war. Peking also stepped up its military assistance to the Viet Cong. The January 1964 issue of Hoc Tap, theoretical organ of the Lao Dong Party, carried an editorial that rebutted the argument that the people in the south should pin their hope on the "sincere desire for peace" of the United States, denied the thesis that they should wait for twenty more years for the reunification of Vietnam through peaceful and economic competition and upheld the Chinese views concerning the Vietnamese conflict¹⁵. Angered by Hanoi's stand, the Soviet Union limited the shipment of heavier weapons, spare-parts to North Vietnam.

While China would continue to be the main supplier of small arms and materials, Hanoi needed Soviet support to insure access to the heavier equipment to carry out largescale offensive operations. In February 1964 Le Duan travelled to Moscow to assure the Soviet leaders that Hanoi did not lean toward Peking and sought Soviet supply of arms and weapons. In the summer of that year, the Soviet Union indicated on a number of occasions that it was satisfied with the turn of events in North Vietnam¹⁶.

SINO-SOVIET COMPETITION IN NORTH VIETNAM

The disappearance of Khrushchev in October 1964 brought a rapid change in the Soviet policy toward North Vietnam. The new Soviet leaders were determined to enhance their position in Hanoi and to frustrate the Chinese challenge there. In early November 1964 Prime Minister Pham Van Dong arrived in Moscow to meet the new Soviet leaders and to discuss the question of arms aid to North Vietnam. Following his visit, the Soviet Union initiated a dramatic campaign of political, economic and military support to Hanoi with a promise of arms, economic and other assistance¹⁷. Moscow's promise resulted in increase of Soviet prestige and Hanoi gained an understanding that the Soviet assistance would be more forthcoming to escalate the war in the south.

The Chinese Communists clearly regarded the Soviet campaign of political and military assistance to Hanoi as a challenge to their influence in North Vietnam. When in January 1965 Pravda announced that the new Soviet Prime Minister, Kosygin would visit Hanoi shortly, the Chinese were seriously perturbed. They did not favor the Soviet Union's attempt to gain influence in North Vietnam. On February 5, 1965, on the eve of Kosygin's arrival in Hanoi, the Chinese Communist Party sent a message to Lao Dong Party announcing that "the two parties and two countries will consolidate our unity and friendship by stepping up our campaign against American imperialism and modern revisionism"¹⁸. There could be no better evidence of the Chinese determination to thwart the Soviet attempt from gaining any influence in North Vietnam.

The Soviet Prime Minister arrived in Hanoi on February 6 accompanied by top military and economic experts. The composition of the Soviet delegation suggested that Moscow intended to give military aid to North Vietnam, primarily air defences. The Soviet motivation to grant military and economic aid to Hanoi was mainly dictated by its effort to regain some of the influences among Asian Communist parties that had been usurped by Peking.

In February 1965 after the US air strikes against targets in North Vietnam, the Chinese had unsuccessfully attempted to bring the Lao Dong Party under their control and to impose their policy on Hanoi by increasing substantially China's material assistance and by dispatching logistic and anti-aircraft troops to North Vietnam. The Chinese also took a hard line toward the Soviet Union and accused Moscow of "betraying the revolutionary cause of the Vietnamese people". The Soviet aid to Vietnam, commented the Chinese, was "far from commensurate with the strength of the Soviet Union"¹⁹. The Chinese also made clear that the struggle against the Soviet "revisionists" would henceforth weigh heavily in China's support to North Vietnam.

Meanwhile, the Soviet Union recommended quietly to the North Vietnamese leaders to take a more flexible attitude toward the Vietnam issue so that they could win at the conference table what they could not win in the battle field. In the pursuit of the goal, the Soviet Union agreed to an international conference on Cambodian neutrality in an apparent expectation to use it as a backdoor forum for discussion of the Vietnam crisis. In a joint communiqué issued at the end of the visit to Moscow of a high-level delegation from North Vietnam, Moscow and Hanoi agreed that a conference on Cambodia would be "useful"²⁰. The Chinese Communists took an exception of the joint move by Hanoi and Moscow and blocked the Cambodian conference. In an admonition China warned both the Soviet Union and North Vietnam not to talk of peace about Vietnam²¹.

After the escalation of the war, North Vietnam was in need of a coordinated support from the Communist world. In February 1965 the Soviet Union proposed to China a "united action" in Vietnam. The Soviet proposal included: 1. the use of two air bases in Yunnan and Sinkiang and the right to station 500 Soviet air personnel; 2. transit rights for military weapons through China; 3. an air corridor over China; 4. permission for 4 000 Soviet military personnel to pass through China on the way to Vietnam. China rejected the Soviet proposal²².

The rejection of the Soviet proposal for a "united action" created disenchantment in Hanoi because it hurt North Vietnam most. China's rejection was obviously directed against Moscow for Peking feared that a Soviet military presence in China might result in Soviet military influence in Chinese military affairs.

Hanoi refused to support China's rejection of the Soviet move and Prime Minister Pham Van Dong publicly endorsed Moscow's call for such an action²³. North Vietnam also mobilized various Communist parties to persuade Peking to cooperate with Moscow on Vietnam. An attempt by the Japanese Communist Party to win over China to cooperate with the Soviet Union was firmly resisted by Mao Tse-tung²⁴. On his way to Moscow to attend the 23rd Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Le Duan sought to persuade the Chinese leaders to cooperate with the Soviet Union on Vietnam²⁵. Ho Chi Minh also personally appealed to Mao Tse-tung to accept the Soviet bid²⁶. He also sent a letter to the 23rd Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union urging unity of the Communist parties and the Communist countries against the United States²⁷. As a result many Communist countries and Communist parties endorsed the call for unity and action. The East German Communists accused China of giving "encouragement" to American "imperialism" in Vietnam by turning down all proposals for a "united action" to end the American aggression there²⁸. The Hungarian Communist party criticized the Chinese leaders for hampering "by all possible means the combined aid of the socialist countries to Vietnam" and their "tacit collusions with the Americans"²⁹.

The Soviet Union also accused China of obstructing the Soviet arms shipments to North Vietnam via China. During his visit to Hungary in April 1966 Marshal Rodin Malinovsky in a speech charged Peking for obstructing Soviet arms delivery to Vietnam³⁰. The Soviet charge against Peking was repeated by Marshal Andrei Greshko in February 1967³¹ despite China's sharp rebuttal to the Soviets for their "fantastic lies" to "deceive" the world and "to sow dissensions in the militant friendship" between China and North Vietnam³². A Chinese inspired report asked the Soviet leaders if they could send arms to India by sea routes "then why is it that the Soviet Union has not done the same" in the case of North Vietnam³³! The Chinese also accused the Soviet Union of supplying "obsolete" weapons to North Vietnam and alleged that most of the Soviet arms to Hanoi had already been discarded by the Soviet Army. "These things [arms] both in quantity and quality", the Chinese said, "have been far below the aid which the Soviet Union has given to Indian reactionaries"³⁴.

The Soviet Union, on the other hand, accused China of pursuing a "reckless" policy in Vietnam. The Soviets contended that Communist China was responsible for "US aggression" in Vietnam and claimed that if China would only agree to a "joint rebuff" to the United States' action in Vietnam "a quick end would have been put to US outrages"³⁵. Podgorny accused the Chinese leaders of opposing proposals by North Vietnamese Foreign Minister Trinh that talks with the United States could begin if bombing attacks on North Vietnam were stopped unconditionally. Peking's silence on Trinh's initiative, he said, was a "proof" that China's policy did not accord with the views of North Vietnam³⁶.

A SINO-US UNDERSTANDING

At that time the Chinese leaders were concerned with averting a spill-over of the war into China and avoiding a Sino-American confrontation. The Chinese also indicated that a Sino-American armed confrontation was neither desired nor encouraged. Mao Tse-tung told Edgar Snow that China had no intention of fighting the United States as long as its own territory was not violated³⁷. Lin Piao made a similar statement in September 1965 and Prime Minister Chou En-lai made a formal statement in April 1966 saying that China would not take "initiative" to provoke a war with the United States³⁸.

In a major foreign policy speech on February 12, 1966, William P. Bundy, Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, called for a reassessment of American policy toward China. He said that Peking was "tactically cautious" and did not seek a "confrontation of military power" with the United States. Bundy described the Sino-American talks in Warsaw as very

effective and a means through which the United States told China that it had 'no hostile designs' on it"³⁹. On February 23, 1966, in a speech President Johnson reiterated that the United States did not want a war with China⁴⁰. In any case, there was a strong evidence to suggest that Peking and Washington reached a tacit understanding regarding their involvement in Vietnam as far back as 1966.

Reports of a tacit understanding between Peking and Washington on Vietnam began to appear in the foreign press in the summer of 1966. In September Izvestia reported that "the Chinese and American ambassadors in Warsaw had clearly defined conditions which will prevent a clash between the two countries in Vietnam"⁴¹. In December both Pravda and Literaturnaya Gazeta reported of a "tacit understanding" between China and the United States on Vietnam⁴². The western press also published reports of a Sino-American understanding. U. S. News and World Report reported in January 1967 that in early 1966 the Chinese embassy in Paris contacted the Quai d'Orsay and asked it to inform Washington that China would not enter the Vietnam war if the United States did not invade China. American officials accepted the Chinese offer and gave "the necessary signals to Peking"⁴³. The Chinese, however, described the reports of "tacit understanding" between Peking and Washington as "fabrications" and accused Moscow, Washington and New Delhi of trying to undermine the "militant solidarity" between the Chinese and Vietnamese people⁴⁴. According to Kenneth Young, the Warsaw talks between the Chinese and American ambassadors had "at least implicitly set forth the extent of interests and delimited the boundaries of the [Vietnam] conflict"⁴⁵.

By the end of 1965 the pattern of Chinese involvement in Vietnam was firmly established. Without involving into the war, the Chinese leaders saw a significant advantage in the continuation of the Vietnam war. It served as a factor to undermine a possible American-Soviet détente and presented a model for wars of national liberation in the under-developed world. China encouraged Vietnam to fight to the end and urged to respond to US escalation with Mao Tse-tung's strategy of protracted struggle to wear down the enemy.

HANOI TOOK AN INDEPENDENT LINE

China's intransigence gave rise to Hanoi's resentment toward Peking. It took an independent line and refused to follow Mao's strategy of protracted struggle and to support China's "no-peace" position. Lin Piao's lengthy exposition "Long Live the Victory of People's War" published in September 1965 stating alleged righteousness of Mao's people's war doctrine to a Communist victory in every country was rejected by Hanoi leaders. While the Chinese leaders like Chou En-lai and P'eng Chen were lauding the Vietnamese

people for "creatively applying the weapons of people's war", implying Peking's satisfaction to Vietnamese strategy, Hanoi made no public reference to Lin Piao's people's war thesis⁴⁶.

The North Vietnamese leaders continued to stress the strategy developed by General Vo Nguyen Giap urging a pragmatic mixture of offensive and guerilla tactics though with less emphasis on the former to preclude a military defeat of the enemy. Rejecting the suitability of Mao Tse-tung's strategy of people's war in Vietnam Le Duan stated:

We cannot automatically adopt the revolutionary experience of other countries and practise it in our own country ... Those, who do not understand the people and history of Vietnam cannot understand the strategy and tactics needed in the Vietnamese revolution⁴⁷.

General Nguyen Chi Thanh, a member of the Politbureau of the Lao Dong Party, also rejected Mao Tse-tung's tactics for Vietnam. "To apply an obsolete historical pattern without any change into the new reality and to repeatedly assert its correctness is indeed a very reckless action"⁴⁸.

The year 1966 witnessed an increase in Soviet aid and Soviet-Vietnamese friendship. According to Die Welt the Soviet Union sent large amounts of arms, including rocket-launching equipment, anti-aircraft guns, planes, tanks, coastal gun boats to North Vietnam worth of \$ 500 000 000. Moscow had also trained North Vietnamese pilots, rocket personnel, tank drivers and artillery specialists⁴⁹. In March a delegation of the Lao Dong Party led by Le Duan attended the 23rd congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, despite the Chinese boycott. The standing ovation given to Le Duan at the congress clearly signaled the growing Soviet-Vietnamese friendship.

An assurance by T'ao Chu at a mass meeting in Peking on July 22, 1966, supporting Hanoi after US bombardment of petroleum storage depots on the outskirts of Hanoi and Haiphong were deleted from publication to Hanoi press. China tried to gain Hanoi's cooperation by denouncing all peace proposals and demanding that the US should immediately and unconditionally withdraw or else Vietnam "should carry through the war to the end"⁵⁰.

At the height of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, Hanoi took steps to keep Maoist cult from its border. Chinese crew members of ships docked at Haiphong carrying arms and other materials were told by the North Vietnamese officials to remove their Mao Tse-tung lapel badges before going ashore. The North Vietnamese authorities also banned the Chinese seamen from taking ashore their little red book containing quotations of Mao Tse-tung⁵¹.

In May Day rally in 1967 in Hanoi, the North Vietnamese leaders, while expressing their gratitude for the aid from the Soviet Union, did not say

a word about the Chinese assistance⁵². The significant omission came amid mounting reports that the Chinese aid was lagging while the Soviet assistance was snowballing. The shortfall of Chinese aid during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was the result of disruption of industry and transport system in the country.

The cult of personality which reached unprecedented proportions in China during the Great Proletarian Revolution evoked distaste in Hanoi. Hoc Tap, theoretical journal of the Lao Dong Party, commented: "If a certain leader, at a certain time, regardless of the objective rules and the subjective situation, acts in accordance with the subjective wishes, he will not be able to avoid all failing or falling into a situation in which every move will be in vain, like Don Quixote struggle against the windfall. We respect and love our leader, but we do not deify him. Deification of a leader will lower the position of the masses of people and even the leader himself"⁵³.

Meanwhile, North Vietnam continued to follow an independent policy of Peking on two directions - the possibility of peace talks with the United States and a closer relationship with the Soviet Union. In January 1967 Prime Minister Pham Van Dong announced that Hanoi's four conditions of 1965⁵⁴ as basic conditions for the settlement of the Vietnam problem⁵⁵. A month later Foreign Minister Nguyen Duy Trinh listed the halt of US bombing as the only condition for peace talks with the United States, and then repeated the statement in October 1967 and January 1968. The Soviet Union supported Hanoi. During his visit to London Prime Minister Kosygin said that cessation of American bombing was "necessary in order to enable talks to take place"⁵⁶.

China disliked these developments and applied pressure on North Vietnam by placing new restrictions on the shipment of Soviet arms to Hanoi⁵⁷. Prime Minister Chou En-lai also threatened that China would send troops to Vietnam in the event of a "sellout peace"⁵⁸. But Hanoi declared: "We want peace. We do not wish to continue the war"⁵⁹.

Mindful of the price that Vietnam had paid for military occupation by the Chinese troops in 1945-46, the North Vietnamese leaders were determined to keep the Chinese troops off North Vietnamese soil. It was, therefore, logical that Hanoi accepted President Johnson's offer of peace talks in April 1968.

In the summer of the year, Hanoi and Peking drifted further apart. The Soviet armed invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968, which received sharp denunciation in Peking⁶⁰, received publication in North Vietnamese press, implying Hanoi's support for the Warsaw Pact action⁶¹. In October in a message to the leaders of the Czechoslovakian Army General Vo Nguyen Giap urged the Czechoslovakian Army to strengthen their national defence "to defend the gains of socialist construction of the Czechoslovakian people"⁶².

Angered by Hanoi's support to the Warsaw Pact action in Czechoslovakia, Peking progressively limited the publication on Vietnamese affairs and reduced its support to Hanoi. For more than one year, it sent no fraternal delegation to North Vietnam.

By the time China and the Soviet Union had become increasingly involved in direct conflict on their borders and consequently the threat of China's security occupied the Chinese attention. To the disappointment of Peking, the Sino-Soviet border conflict of March 1969 received no mention in the North Vietnamese press. The conflict of interests led to the strained relations between Peking and Hanoi. Following the death of Ho Chi Minh in September 1969, the North Vietnamese leaders took the advantage of the expressed statement in Ho's testament hoping for a resumption of cordial relations with China. Prime Minister Chou En-lai flew to Hanoi and paid his final respect to Ho Chi Minh. In October of that year Prime Minister Pham Van Dong went to Peking to attend the 20th anniversary of the founding of People's Republic of China. Relations between the two countries were gradually reestablished.

The Cambodian crisis of early 1970 provided a golden opportunity for China to regain the lost influence. Mao Tse-tung offered Prince Sihanouk refuge in Peking, treated the deposed Prince as a constitutional chief of state and helped to organize a united front of the Indochinese Communists and revolutionaries⁶³. The Hungarian news magazine *Magyar Nemzet* reported that the Chinese support to the deposed prince was conditional. "Peking promised to support Prince Sihanouk", it said, "only after he promised a key role to pro-Chinese Red Khmer movement in a post-coup Cambodian Government"⁶⁴. Nevertheless, Peking emerged from the crisis as the protector of the revolutionary cause in Indochina.

The Laos invasion of February 1971 offered Peking another opportunity to ally itself closely with Hanoi. Prime Minister Chou En-lai paid a secret visit to Hanoi in March 1971 to demonstrate China's support for North Vietnam. In a speech Chou declared that "the Chinese people will not fear to make the greatest sacrifice to aid the Indochinese people until final victory . . . The Vietnamese, Laotian and Cambodian peoples are brothers-in-arms united in life and death. We shall fight together; we shall win together"⁶⁵. In a joint communiqué with Prime Minister Pham Van Dong Chou En-lai promised to extend all out assistance to North Vietnam to meet further escalation, "not flinching even from the greatest national sacrifices"⁶⁶.

HANOI'S REACTION TO SINO-AMERICAN DÉTENTE

The Chinese "ping-pong diplomacy" that began in March 1971 irritated Hanoi. The North Vietnamese were highly displeased with the Chinese gesture and believed that the moderation of Peking-Washington relations would be a possible disadvantage to North Vietnam. Hanoi initially treated the Sino-US development with silent suspicion. North Vietnamese officials and diplomats also refused to comment⁶⁷.

Henry Kissinger's visit to Peking July 1971 increased Hanoi's distrust of the Chinese diplomacy. The Chinese invitation to President Nixon to visit Peking came as a shock. Sino-Vietnamese relations experiences a decline.

Hanoi's attitude toward China developed into puzzlement. It was not certain what was going on in China. To Hanoi, it appeared that a major upheaval in China's foreign relations was underway. On July 19, 1971, Nhan Dan remarked:

Vietnam is not a big country, with neither a vast territory, nor a large population. Yet she has defeated several big imperialism, one after the other. The time when the imperialists could dictate their will to the world is definitely gone. The time when a big power could bully a small country has also ended for good.

The North Vietnamese then warned President Nixon that his efforts to seek a solution of the Vietnam crisis in Peking would be in vain. North Vietnam is a sovereign and independent state and would not submit to China's pressure. "Only those who have defeated them [Americans] have the voice of decision. . . . The most important cause of our victories, is our correct and creative independent and sovereign line."

Acting along the independent and sovereign line of our party, let our entire army and our people perform their best, march forward valiantly, win still greater victories, smash to pieces the "Vietnamization plan" and the "Nixon Doctrine", preserve in and intensify the fight and carry the war of resistance against US aggression, for national salvation and the socialist revolution to complete victory⁶⁸.

In a statement the North Vietnamese Foreign Ministry reaffirmed the determination to continue to fight against the Americans.

Our people are determined to implement the paths made when paying their last tribute to President Ho Chi Minh to devote all their minds and energy to carrying the ever victoriour banner of President Ho Chi Minh to its final goal. As long as they firmly hold to their right to decide their line and policies, and rely mainly on their own strength, no brutal force, no perfidious maneuver of the US imperialists can make the Vietnamese people deviate from their correct path⁶⁹.

Hanoi then reminded the Chinese that President Nixon was the "worst anti-Communist, bellicose and reactionary". He always advocated the settlement of international problems "by force"⁷⁰.

At a reception given by the Chinese military attaché, Chang Hsiu-shan, in Hanoi General Vo Nguyen Giap declared that no matter what the Chinese leaders proposed to do with President Nixon, Hanoi would continue to fight until the final victory.

Under the leadership of the independent line of Marxism-Leninism and the Vietnam Workers' Party, the Vietnamese people's armed forces by means of their own effort and the great support and assistance of the socialist countries are confident than ever in their invincible strength and are more determined to completely defeat the US aggressors⁷¹.

The North Vietnamese also warned Peking that the Chinese attempt to cajole Hanoi to abandon the armed warfare and make peace with the United States would not succeed.

At present there is no small nation in the world that has not been regarded as a target of aggression by the US imperialists and no big power that has not been considered by it as a target to dictate, press and encircle outward and destroy inward. We should especially heighten our vigilance against the character of the US policies toward socialist countries and its evil dividing forces⁷².

The purpose of President Nixon's visit to China, Hanoi asserted, was to "infiltrate" the socialist countries and to carry on "subversive activities" through economic, scientific, technical and cultural contacts and to strive "counter-revolutionary" peaceful development. President Nixon was accused of trying to arouse nationalism in China and to encourage "friction and mutual attacks" among the socialist countries.

Nixon is attempting to stop the advancing revolutionary forces by creating new obstacles and weakening the influence of the socialist camp over the national liberation movement. His visit to China is beneficial only to the United States and the counter-revolutionaries. His sole purpose is to obstruct revolution and to preserve neo-colonialism⁷³.

Hanoi's distrust and suspicion of the Chinese policy and action offered a golden opportunity for Moscow to promote its image in North Vietnam. On August 14, 1971, Radio Moscow stated that the Chinese leaders had now gone over to the imperialist camp. "They have whole heartedly tried to make friendly contacts with the US imperialists, the fiercest enemies of Vietnam and other Indochinese countries. They have displayed more and more openly their indifference to the interests of Vietnamese patriots. We

must point out that in the recent Sino-American formal conference held in Peking, the Chinese side did not even ask the United States to stop obstructing the Paris peace talks and to withdraw its troops from Vietnam before the end of the year".

Five days later Radio Moscow ridiculed China's statements denouncing US bombing of North Vietnam adding that "it is obvious what damage the Chinese invitation to Nixon will inflict upon the Indo-Chinese people's anti-imperialist struggle. . . . The Chinese leaders place their friendship with the US ruling clique above the interests of the Indochinese people"⁷⁴.

Faced with unfavorable reaction in Hanoi to China's invitation to President Nixon and the Soviet exploitation of North Vietnamese fear, Prime Minister Chou En-lai assured Hanoi that Peking would not "trade" the interests of the Vietnamese people for an agreement with the United States. In an interview with a Japanese newspaper Chou stated: "We have told the Vietnamese comrades that China is prepared for the greatest national sacrifice in order to contribute to the final victory of the Vietnamese people. When Nixon visits China, we will first ask the United States to fulfill the demand of the Vietnamese and all Indochinese people"⁷⁵.

In early September 1971 the Chinese Government denounced US bombing of Quang Binh province and promised Peking's aid to Hanoi⁷⁶. When on September 16, 1971, North Vietnamese Foreign Minister Nguyen Thin Bing stopped at Peking on his way home from Moscow, Prime Minister Chou En-lai personally called on him at the guest house to assure once again that Peking would not "trade" Hanoi's interests for a détente with the United States.

China also sent an economic mission led by Li Hsien-nien, deputy Prime Minister, to North Vietnam to assure Hanoi of China's continued friendship. At a banquet Li reaffirmed China's support saying that "the Chinese people are willing to endure the greatest national sacrifice for Vietnam"⁷⁷. On September 27, 1971, Peking and Hanoi signed an agreement providing Chinese military and economic aid for 1972.

In the communiqué issued by Prime Minister Chou En-lai and President Nixon after the Peking summit in February 1972, the two leaders restated their governments' position on Indochina. Prince Sihanouk announced that Prime Minister Chou En-lai had discussed the summit with him for three hours. He said that Chou had told President Nixon that China would not mediate the Indochina war and that China would support the "Indochinese resistance"⁷⁸.

In March 1972 Prime Minister Chou En-lai visited Hanoi to discuss the Peking summit with the North Vietnamese leaders. But his diplomatic talent did not satisfy the Hanoi leaders⁷⁹. On the contrary, China's attempt to

reach an understanding with the United States reinforced Hanoi's determination to continue the war. While Chou En-lai was in Hanoi, Nhan Dan assailed President Nixon as a "bellicose, ferocious, ruthless and tricky imperialist" and described the "US as the No. 1 enemy of all people of the world"⁸⁰.

SOVIET AID TO HANOI

The Soviet Union, disturbed by the implications of Sino-US détente, was determined to exploit the opportunity to enlarge its influence in Hanoi to the detriment of China. On October 3, 1971, President Podgorny arrived in Hanoi and signed several agreements with North Vietnam covering military and economic aid for the coming year and setting up a joint committee to work out the details. The Podgorny mission was followed by a high-level Soviet military delegation led by Marshal Pavel Fedorovich Batitsky, Deputy Minister of Defense and Commander-in-Chief of the USSR Air Defense Force. Other members of the delegation included Chief of the Ground to Air Missile Force, Chief of the Radar Command and Chief of the General Political Department of the Armed Forces.

The Soviet military mission remained in Hanoi until the end of March 1972. During this period substantial Soviet military equipment, including tanks, long-range artillery, mobile anti-aircraft missiles and SA-2 missiles brought into North Vietnam. The price of the Soviet military aid to North Vietnam had been estimated at \$ 700 000 000.

Equipped with the Soviet military hardware Hanoi launched an all out offensive in the spring of 1972 for a quick military victory. The United States renewed air and sea attacks on North Vietnam and on May 8 stepped up the bombing and announced a blockade of Haiphong and other North Vietnamese ports. The Chinese reacted comparatively mildly to the US escalation of the war and expressed a few sympathetic words for Hanoi.

At that time two American Senators, Hugh Scott and Mike Mansfield, were en route to Peking on an official invitation. Even though the heaviest bombing was going on, the Chinese did not cancel their visits. The direction of the political wind from Peking was felt strongly in Hanoi. President Nixon had attained his objective in depriving North Vietnam of one of the strongest supporters of its policy to defeat the Americans.

China also indicated that it would not oppose American moves to frustrate Hanoi's achievements that would make North Vietnam a powerful state in South East Asia, possibly leading to an enhanced role for the Soviet Union. China seemed to prefer a divided Indochina with two Vietnams, a weak Laos and a weak Cambodia. When announcing the mining of the North Vietnamese

harbours, President Nixon warned both the Soviet Union and North Vietnam. Significantly, he did not address a word of admonition to China.

On January 23, 1973, US Ambassador William Sullivan, discussing China's role in achieving the ceasefire agreement in Indochina, remarked that Peking wanted a "Balkanized Indochina" with two Vietnams and independent states of Laos and Cambodia. A united Vietnam with Laos and Cambodia under the control of Hanoi would form one of the strongest states in Asia and might establish the role in Asian affairs inimical to that of China. Such a strong united Indochina would not be China's liking or advantage.

On May 29, 1972, the Soviet Union and the United States signed a unique document committing both nations to seek peaceful solutions to disputes. For Hanoi, it was a ominous sign and a warning that it had become necessary to make concessions so that the American involvement in Vietnam war could be brought to an end.

On June 15, 1972, President Podgorny went to Hanoi to inform the altered situation to the North Vietnamese leaders. The United States also sent Henry Kissinger to Peking to assure China that the US-China détente was firm. Three days after, on June 18, Podgorny declared in Calcutta that negotiations to end the Vietnam conflict would be resumed in Paris. The Paris talks were broken off by President Nixon on March 13 as fruitless. On June 29 the United States announced that the Paris negotiations would be renewed on July 13.

On December 14, 1972, negotiations led to a stalemate and on December 18 the United States resumed a major bombing campaign against North Vietnam and warned that unrestricted bombing would continue until there was a peace agreement. Peking and Moscow condemned the bombing but did not take any steps.

On December 17, 1972, when Mrs. Nguyen Thi Binh, Foreign Minister of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the South, arrived in Peking, the Chinese told her that the time had come to reach an agreement with the United States. Peking also advised the US to "stop all its war acts in the whole of Vietnam, conduct negotiations in a serious manner and speedily sign the agreement to end the war and restore peace in Vietnam"⁸¹. On December 30, 1972, President Nixon ordered a halt of bombing of North of the 20th parallel and on January 15 a halt of bombing in North Vietnam.

During the peace negotiations in Paris, the Chinese attempted to persuade the North Vietnamese to agree to the partition of Vietnam and a peace under which American soldiers would stay in the south. Hanoi rejected the Chinese bid because it would "leave Vietnam divided"⁸². The Chinese hoped to see Vietnam remained divided because a division would not only delay the development of a strong Vietnam, but also facilitated China's role in Indochina.

The war was officially ended on January 27, 1973. Shortly, thereafter Prime Minister Pham Van Dong called for the "liberation" of the south⁸³. According to Vietnamese sources, China advised Hanoi not "to launch an offensive" to unite the south because it would upset the power balance in South Vietnam⁸⁴. The Chinese also argued that the presence of the US military power in the Pacific was "necessary" to prevent the Soviet Union from moving into the region to fill the vacuum. North Vietnam again rejected the Chinese advice⁸⁵.

The Soviet Union, on the other hand, encouraged and fostered Hanoi's efforts to gain control of South Vietnam. On the first anniversary of the ceasefire, North Vietnam launched an all out offensive, but failed to achieve the victory. Hanoi then decided to undertake a limited offensive to conquer the south. In 1975 with relatively shortly period of time and without expensive fighting, North Vietnam completed the conquest of the south.

PEKING MOVES AGAINST HANOI

The conquest of South Vietnam by Hanoi was greeted by China with disguised perplexity. While publicly applauding the "liberation" of the south, China expressed concern over the strategic and political implications of Hanoi's success. Peking's primary concern was concentrated on Vietnam's relations with Laos and Cambodia and on the issue of an Indochinese federation under Hanoi. The Chinese feared that a strong and united Indochina under Hanoi would prevent Peking in exercising the hegemony to which it aspired. Moreover, a united Indochina would become a rival to Peking in Asia. The fear of rivalry led the Chinese to oppose the unification of three Indochinese states under Hanoi. Thus China's policy toward Vietnam took a turn from friendship to hostility.

The Vietnamese leaders, on the other hand, are conscious of the fact that an Indochinese federation under Hanoi would be a strong instrument of greater leverage and bargaining power in state-to-state relations with China. Traditional Vietnamese distrust of China has provided added justification for such a goal.

Since President Nixon's visit to Peking in February 1972, the Soviet Union had emerged as the most important aid-giving nation to North Vietnam. From then on Hanoi relied on Soviet arsenal for its ultimate victory. After the military conquest of the south, Hanoi sought Soviet assistance for reconstruction of the war ravaged country. Moscow promised assistance to Vietnam and declared all previous capital loans as nonrefundable, underlining a new phase of relations between the two countries⁸⁶.

In October 1975 Le Duan visited Moscow and signed a joint declaration with Leonid Brezhnev endorsing the Soviet position on all key issues where this

position differed from that of the Chinese. The Soviet Union and Vietnam also signed a long-term economic agreement providing Soviet aid for forty projects, dispatch of Soviet specialists to Vietnam to assist the five-year plan scheduled for 1976. In addition, the Soviet Union announced that an agreement had been reached for the "coordination of the national economic plans of Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the USSR during 1976-80", indicating that Moscow was preparing ground to bring Hanoi into the Soviet-led COMECON⁸⁷. In June 1978 Vietnam joined the COMECON.

In contrast, Vietnam's dealings with China became noticeably reserved in tone. When Le Duan visited Peking in September 1975, he was received with great fanfare and the Chinese attempt to reestablish cordial relations ended in a fiasco. At a reception given in his honor, Teng Hsiao-ping noted Cambodia's independence victory alongside that of Vietnam and insisted that the fight against "superpower hegemonism" was now the "vital task facing the people of all countries". Le Duan replied by calling for "further consolidation of the international Communist movement". An economic agreement was signed, but Le Duan left Peking without issuing the customary joint communiqué. The Chinese leaders insisted on Vietnamese agreement to anti-hegemony clause which Le Duan refused to support⁸⁸.

Since the foundation of the Indochinese Communist Party by Ho Chi Minh in 1930, the Vietnamese are propagating an Indochinese federation. The subsequent party resolutions repeated the Vietnamese dream of a federation after the liberation of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia from the French. In 1951 the program of the Indochinese Communist Party expressed the hope that there might come about an "independent federation of states of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia"⁸⁹.

Since the end of the Second World War, the whole of Indochina was the theatre of war led by Ho Chi Minh against France and the Vietnamese Communists nurtured on Laotian and Cambodian soil during the fight. But this was rejected by the Geneva accord in 1954, which recognized the independence of Indochinese states.

Guided and trained by North Vietnam, the Pathet Lao remained under Hanoi's control. The Laotian Communists retained de facto control of two northern provinces bordering North Vietnam. The situation of Hanoi's allies in Cambodia was less fortunate. The Cambodian government refused Hanoi's allies any enclave on its territory. After the Geneva accord, several thousands of Cambodian Communists departed for North Vietnam. They remained there until 1970 and returned to Cambodia when a right-wing coup d'état toppled the government of Prince Sihanouk.

The intensification of the war reinforced the dependence of both Laotian and Cambodian Communists on North Vietnam, who maintained troops in Laotian and Cambodian soil. The Laotian Communists remained close to

the North Vietnamese. Even after the abolition of the monarchy and the proclamation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Lao Patriotic Front leaders stressed the solidarity of three Indochinese people for postwar reconstruction⁹⁰.

Although heavily dependent on North Vietnam, the Khmer Rouge managed to extricate themselves from the North Vietnamese control as early as 1973 when Hanoi cut its aid to the Cambodian Communists. The Chinese then assumed the burden of supplying arms to the Khmer Rouge needed to win the struggle against the Lon Nol regime⁹¹.

After the fall of Cambodia to the Khmer Rouge in April 1975, Radio Phnom Penh declared that "Cambodia's great victory is a great victory for the Chinese people", announcing to the world a Peking-Phnom Penh axis against Hanoi⁹².

With China's support Cambodia also began to emphasize its independence and its refusal to permit foreign bases on its soil - all statements aimed at Vietnam, which used to dominate the Cambodian Communist Party and stationed troops inside Cambodian frontiers. While tensions rose between Phnom Penh and Hanoi, Cambodia's relations with Peking improved. Gradually China emerged as the greatest friend of Cambodia and provided the country with arms and technical assistance.

The Chinese were heartened by Cambodian display of independence from Vietnam. In August 1975 Peking granted economic and technical aid to Cambodia. China also delivered a few naval vessels to Phnom Penh to be utilized against the Vietnamese in its conflict over the disputed islands of Phu Quoc and Tho Chu in the Gulf of Thailand⁹³. In its treatment, China began to emphasize Cambodia's independence to encourage it further to oppose Hanoi's plan of an Indochinese federation⁹⁴.

In June 1975 Prime Minister Pol Pot travelled to Hanoi, Le Duan came to Phnom Penh in August and the Cambodian deputy Prime Minister, Khieu Sam Phan went to Hanoi in September. The leaders of the two countries discussed the future relationship. The Vietnamese asked for "special relationship" with Cambodia, based on their history and common struggle and sought Cambodian cooperation on foreign and domestic policies. The Cambodian leaders rejected the Vietnamese proposals, but suggested the conclusion of a treaty of friendship⁹⁵.

Thereafter, Cambodia sought China's assistance to oppose Vietnam's plan of "incorporating Cambodia into a new Indochinese empire"⁹⁶. In August a joint communiqué issued at Peking declared the Chinese support for Cambodia and stated that the Cambodians and the Chinese were determined "to unite still more closely"⁹⁷. The joint communiqué was followed by massive military support by China for a major build-up of the Cambodian Army. According

to Hanoi, Cambodia raised an army of 200 000 men with China providing arms and training personnel⁹⁸.

By that time China also began to seek close relations with Laos by offering economic and technical aid to Vientiane⁹⁹. The Laotian Communists thanked Peking for the economic assistance and declared that "the victories recorded by the Lao people cannot be thought without the assistance of the Chinese party, government and people"¹⁰⁰. Through economic and technical assistance, the Chinese obviously hoped to enhance their influence in Laos, but it was soon dislodged by the Vietnamese and the Soviets.

In March 1976 Laotian Prime Minister May Sone attended the 25th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and thanked Moscow for its "invaluable and effective support and assistance"¹⁰¹. Moscow and Vientiane signed an agreement providing the Soviet economic and technical aid, including the construction of an airfield at Phonsavan, on the plain of Jars, in the heartland of Indochinese peninsula¹⁰².

In July 1977 Laos and Vietnam signed a twenty-five-year Friendship Treaty affirming "special relationship" between the people of Laos and Vietnam. The treaty included economic and military provisions as well as delimitation of the frontier. The text of the treaty was not published, but there are speculation that the treaty also ratified the presence of vietnamese troops in Laos¹⁰³.

Meanwhile, in a demonstration of its firmness toward Vietnam, China asked Hanoi to return the Spartly islands, which it had occupied in 1975¹⁰⁴. To the Chinese demand, the Vietnamese army newspaper Quan Doi Nhan Dhan replied that the Vietnamese army was "ready to accept any mission anywhere" and "to go as far as the border areas and sea islands to maintain the security of the fatherland"¹⁰⁵. General Vo Nguyen Giap warned China that any attempt to occupy the Spartly islands would meet with Vietnamese armed resistance. He declared:

We must steadily protect our nation's inalienable independence and sovereignty and the sacred territorial integrity of our fatherland with all its land, airspace and territorial waters from the frontier and mainland to the islands and continental shelf¹⁰⁶.

By that time Cambodia's relations with Vietnam degenerated into border warfare. In September 1976 when the Pol Pot regime discovered a coup d'état plan by opposition forces, it promptly blamed Vietnam and eliminated some 4000 pro-Vietnamese Cambodian Communists, who returned from Vietnam beginning 1970¹⁰⁷.

The elimination of all pro-Vietnamese elements coincided with the launching of an armed attack on Vietnamese borders in January 1977. A Vietnamese

proposal for immediate high-level negotiations to end the border conflict was turned down by the Cambodian government. Cambodia asked Hanoi to end its "aggression" first in order to create the necessary atmosphere for "mutual confidence".

In April 1977 Cambodia provoked further border clashes. Vietnam claimed that "since April 1977 Cambodia has used several divisions supported by artillery units to carry out senseless attacks against almost every areas located along the Vietnamese border, and particularly against the settlements of the new economic zones"¹⁰⁸. In August Cambodia mounted an armed raid deep into the Vietnam province of Tay Ninh¹⁰⁹. Thereupon, in September 1977 Hanoi sought China's aid to negotiate an agreement with Cambodia. Peking refused, apparently pleased with the military success of Cambodia. When the mission to China failed, Vietnam launched an offensive into Cambodia in October to convince the Pol Pot government that it had to end the frontier attacks. After three months fighting in Cambodia, Vietnam withdrew its forces and proposed that both sides pull their forces back five kilometers from the frontier and agree to international supervision of a truce. Cambodia rejected the proposal. The Vietnamese held China responsible for Cambodia's belligerence.

In December 1977 the Cambodian government charged Hanoi with aggression and ordered the withdrawal of the Vietnamese mission from Phnom Penh¹¹⁰. On January 1, 1978, Cambodia broke off diplomatic relations with Vietnam. When President Souphanouvong of Laos visited Cambodia in December 1977 in an apparent attempt to mediate the conflict between Phnom Penh and Hanoi, the Cambodian authorities seized the occasion to proclaim that they would "resolutely preclude any foreign country [Vietnam] from stationing its forces on Cambodian soil"¹¹¹.

In January 1978 China airlifted substantial amounts of military hardware to Cambodia and increased its arms shipments to two ships a week. China also sent Madame Teng Ying-chao, widow of late Prime Minister Chou En-lai and a member of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, to Phnom Penh to demonstrate its support¹¹². By that time as many as 10 000 Chinese military personnel were attached to the Cambodian army¹¹³.

China then abandoned all semblance of neutrality. Foreign Minister Huang Hua in a speech to party cadres referred to the Cambodian-Vietnamese frontier conflict and accused the Soviet Union of "complicity". The Soviet aim, he claimed, was to turn Cambodia into an "advanced base for Soviet expansion in South East Asia"¹¹⁴. In February 1978 in his report to the Fifth National People's Congress Chairman Hua Kuo-feng condemned Vietnam for its conflict with Cambodia without naming Hanoi. He said that "no country should seek hegemony in any region or impose its will on others. Whether a country treats others on an equal footing or seeks hegemony is a

major criterion by which to tell whether it follows the five principles of peaceful coexistence and whether it is a genuine or sham socialist country. A socialist country should set an example in treating others as equal"¹¹⁵.

The Cambodian-Vietnam war thus became a conflict between Peking and Hanoi.

THE ESCALATION

In March China's simmering dispute with Vietnam boiled over. Reports of armed battles along the Yunnan frontier between the Chinese and Vietnamese border guards filtered out of Indochina. The reports of fighting coincided with Vietnamese crackdown on the ethnic Chinese in the south and added fuel to the flames of animosity which had been kindled as early as 1974.

In April reports were circulated about ethnic Chinese fleeing Vietnam or applying for repatriation at the Chinese Embassy in Hanoi. On May 1, 1978, Liao Chen-chih, head of the overseas Chinese office, told Western diplomats in Peking that "tens of thousands" of ethnic Chinese were crossing the border "in search of better living conditions".

As the Chinese exodus swelled to nearly 200 000 China published its first major attack on Vietnam. It accused Vietnam of conducting a "savage campaign" against ethnic Chinese living in Vietnam and charged that the Hanoi authorities had "robbed, beaten and shot" at many refugees. Peking then warned that Hanoi would "bear the consequences of its despicable acts"¹¹⁶. A Peking radio broadcast reminded the Vietnamese leaders that the ethnic Chinese had "never flinched from bloodshed" during the war years against France and the United States and that Vietnam had returned "evil for good in planned line of action to threaten and intimidate"¹¹⁷. The Chinese also accused Hanoi of "racial discrimination" and "arbitrary, truculent and illegal treatment" of ethnic Chinese and announced that they were sending two ships to the Vietnamese ports "to bring home persecuted Chinese from Vietnam"¹¹⁸. After waiting a month for permission to take the Chinese refugees, the ships returned to China. On reaching Hongkong, Malaysia and Thailand the Chinese refugees reported that the Vietnamese expropriation policy "though painful" had been uniformly applied both to Vietnamese and Chinese¹¹⁹.

Hanoi, of course, rejected the Chinese charges claiming that the exodus was started "by certain Chinese residents, who are spreading rumours in an attempt to stir up troubles between Vietnam and China". At a later date the Vietnamese charged that the Chinese embassy was involved in spreading those rumours in April. They rebuked the Chinese for their protests over the confiscation of the property of Chinese merchants and stated:

The socialist transformation of private capitalist industry and trade, a universal law of socialist revolution, has been achieved in China. But when it is being carried out in Vietnam, should it stop before masses of property owned by bourgeoisie just because they are Vietnamese of Chinese descent?¹²⁰

The Vietnamese also pointed out that there was no such protest when thousands of ethnic Chinese fled Cambodia for Vietnam in 1975¹²¹. In a statement Hanoi then accused China of "stimulating anti-Vietnamese activities" and of "spreading alarmist rumours" about the fate of the ethnic Chinese living in Vietnam and suggested a conference of representatives of two nations "to dispel the dark clouds troubling Sino-Vietnamese friendship". Hanoi also assured Peking that the ethnic Chinese were not being "mistreated" but were merely undergoing the same economic reform as the Vietnamese¹²². The organ of the Lao Dong Party, Nhan Dan, also rejected the Chinese charges against Vietnam and remarked that "all sober-minded people know that the Vietnamese are not so stupid as to seek trouble with China"¹²³.

The Chinese, meanwhile, systematically reduced their relations with Hanoi to a minimum. They withdrew Chinese aid projects from Vietnam, expelled Vietnamese students from China, closed Vietnamese consulates in China and finally closed the border points where Vietnam had been permitting ethnic Chinese who had requested permission to emigrate to cross into China.

Peking also did not reply to Vietnam's proposal for a conference between the two countries to seek a peaceful solution of the ethnic Chinese issue. Instead, to demonstrate its power, a Chinese fleet gathered off Hainan Island in the South China Sea raising tensions to a new high. In July when Peking finally accepted the Vietnamese suggestion, it once again accused Hanoi of "persecution and ostracism" of ethnic Chinese¹²⁴.

In August when the deputy Chinese Foreign Minister, Chung Hsi-tung, and the deputy Foreign Minister of Vietnam, Hoang Bieh Son, met at Hanoi to discuss Peking's charges that Vietnam was "discriminating" the citizens of Chinese origin, each side accused the other of starting the trouble. Negotiations between the two countries broke down and the Chinese delegation left Hanoi for Peking¹²⁵. Prior to the meeting the Chinese Deputy Premier, Li Hsien-nien, declared that unless Vietnam had abandoned its policy toward the ethnic Chinese, the conversations between the representatives of the two countries would lead to no result¹²⁶. The Vietnamese rebuked the Chinese for inventing the story of "Chinese martyrs" and dismissed the Chinese complaint as "nothing short of a comedy"¹²⁷.

The Soviet Union, which is supporting Vietnam with economic and military aid, denounced the Chinese "slanderous campaign" against Hanoi. In a leading article Pravda declared that "Peking is deliberately using the issue of ethnic Chinese to worsen relations between the two countries. By shedding

crocodile tears over the fate of the ethnic Chinese in Vietnam, Peking is trying to cover up its hegemonistic plan toward its neighbour". It then warned Peking that an aggression against Vietnam would be resisted. "The Vietnamese people had not defended their independence from imperialist encroachment to please the great power chauvinists in Peking"¹²⁷.

Moscow also accused China of supporting Cambodia against Vietnam. "It is not secret", said Pravda, "that China's shadow looms behind the Vietnamese-Kampuchean conflict. Peking is not only supplying large quantities of arms to Kampuchea and sending its advisers there, but it is erecting all sorts of obstacles in the way of a peaceful settlement of the conflict"¹²⁸.

Soviet allies in Eastern Europe also accused China of its "hegemonistic plan" toward Vietnam. The organ of the Socialist Unity Party, Neues Deutschland, declared that "the Peking leaders are attempting to create difficulties in the construction of socialism in Vietnam by supporting the aggressive acts of the Cambodians"¹²⁹. The First Secretary of the Polish Communist Party, Edward Gierek, also condemned the "great power hegemonistic policy" of the Chinese leadership toward Vietnam and offered Polish assistance¹³⁰. Janos Kadar of Hungary expressed his deep concern over the Chinese policy in Indochina¹³¹. Finally, China's former ally, Albania paid a tribute to the heroic Vietnamese people for "opposing the political, economic and military pressure by China"¹³².

Rumania, which refused to join the Soviet Union in its conflict with China, criticized Vietnamese intervention in the internal affairs of Cambodia. The organ of the Rumanian Communist Party, Scinteia, described Vietnam's intervention in Cambodia as a "heavy blow to the relaxation of international tension". It said that "no amount of declarations could justify an intervention in the domestic affairs of another state, especially between the two socialist states"¹³³.

In a speech at the Party congress, the former Foreign Minister of Yugoslavia, Milo Minic, denounced Vietnam's intervention in Cambodia as a "foreign invasion", a "massive military operation" and a "combition of the Doctrine of Blitzkrieg and the subversive warfare"¹³⁴.

Meanwhile, scanning its strategic environment, the Chinese saw a connection between the Soviet support for Vietnam in its conflict with Peking and Phnom Penh and the Soviet desire to pressure Hanoi into an alliance against Peking. The Chinese claimed that the Soviet Union wanted to obtain a naval base in Vietnam as a part of its strategy from the Horn of Africa to Vladivostock. A pro-Peking newspaper in Hongkong published the story alleging that Vietnam had already given the Soviet Union the right to use her naval base at Cam Ranh Bay as well as Haiphong harbour¹³⁵.

China's ally Cambodia also accused Moscow of supporting its "lackey Vietnam" in order to realize its "expansionist and hegemonistic plan in South East Asia"¹³⁶. In return the Soviet Union charged Cambodia for "mass killing" following the wellknown method of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China and for turning the country into a "police state"¹³⁷.

By that time ominous signs of a shooting war clouded the Sino-Vietnamese relations with mounting tensions in the border between the two countries. In a demonstration of its military power, China's jets invaded Vietnamese airspace and the People's Liberation Army staged manoeuvres along the frontier of Vietnam. The Chinese then raised the tension to another notch by moving troops to the border areas. Finally, on August 25, the Chinese and the Vietnamese frontier guards fought their first battle at the "Friendship pass".

Despite its own trouble with Vietnam, China continued to encourage Cambodia against Hanoi. When the Cambodian Foreign Minister, Ieng Sary, and the Defense Minister, Son Sen, visited Peking Chairman Hua Kuo-feng and the deputy Prime Minister, Teng Hsiao-ping, celebrated the occasion as the "memorable day of Sino-Cambodian friendship". At a banquet Chairman Hua described the Cambodian leaders as "comrades-in-arms" and promised China's assistance to Cambodia's war against Vietnam because "it is a just war for the just cause"¹³⁸.

Plainly worried, Prime Minister Pham Van Dong criticized the Chinese leadership for its "anti-Vietnam policy" and accused it of "expansionist and hegemonistic" plan in Asia. Hanoi also denounced the Sino-Japanese treaty¹³⁹.

China, of course, rebuked Hanoi for "interference" in its internal affairs and described Vietnam as "Asian Cuba"¹⁴⁰. Peking then asserted that Vietnam "wanted to keep the iron hot to realize the old dream of establishing a federation of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos inspired by Moscow and dominated by Hanoi"¹⁴¹. In order to prevent such a federation, the Chinese appealed to Japan, the United States, Australia and West European countries to join them against Vietnam. They asserted that Moscow was building a "gigantic base" in Vietnam to control the sea route from Pacific to Atlantic. It was trying to "liquidate" the ASEAN States in a bid to replace it by an Asian Collective Security to push the United States out of Western Pacific. A Soviet "bridgehead" in South East Asia was directed against Japan, Australia and Western Europe. The Chinese also expressed the fear that the Soviet Union wanted to "encircle" China. To realize the goal Moscow has created a base at Ussuri in the north and "is now creating a new base in Vietnam". The Chinese then urged Japan, the United States, Australia and Western Europe to redouble their supports to the prowestern governments in South East Asia "before it is too late"¹⁴². But there is no response to the Chinese proposal.

Vietnam was left in a dilemma. The prospect of a negotiated settlement of the Vietnamese-Cambodian conflict was dim. China also showed no intention to seek a peaceful solution of its conflict with Vietnam. The deputy Foreign Minister of Vietnam, Hoang Bieh Son, declared that China had created a "state of tension in the border region" and a "war is not excluded".

While further sharpening the conflict in the border region, they the Chinese keep supplying weapons for the Pol Pot - Ieng Sary regime. The Chinese penetration across the border into Vietnam is getting ever more frequent. In October there were twice as many intrusions as in the previous month. The Chinese armed forces violate Vietnam airspace. The navy intrudes on our waters. They are deliberately sharpening the situation and are acting more rudely and cynically. It is not excluded that China launch a war on Vietnam. In such a situation, Vietnam has no choice but to prepare for defending the border¹⁴³.

Vietnam faced with the grim prospect of a two-front war. An escalation of war against Cambodia was not advisable because it would invite a Chinese armed intervention. The tension in the Sino-Vietnamese frontier has compelled the Vietnamese to shift their military attention away from Cambodian border. It has encouraged Phnom Penh's determination to continue the war.

Meanwhile, relations between Peking and Hanoi moved to the breaking point with dizzy speed. China continued to warn "serious action" against Hanoi to put an end what it called Vietnamese "provocations" amidst barrage of vituperation. The Chinese thought that the Vietnamese stood on feet of clay and would be easy to topple them quickly without any serious consequences in South East Asia. Since the Chinese menace assumed dangerous proportions, the Vietnamese saw no alternative but to seek Soviet assistance.

CONSEQUENCES OF THE SOVIET-VIETNAMESE TREATY

China's action to frighten the Vietnamese boomeranged pitifully. Vietnam did not submit to the Chinese threat and sought to counter Peking's move by allying itself with the Soviet Union.

Le Duan and Pham Van Dong hurried off to Moscow and on November 3, 1978, signed a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with Leonid Brezhnev and Alexei Kosygin, providing the Soviet support in the event of a Sino-Vietnamese war¹⁴⁴.

The treaty set in motion a chain of reaction in Peking and placed the Chinese leaders in a most perilous situation. The immediate consequences was that it created a panic in China. The Chinese leaders saw it as a "military alliance" directed against their country¹⁴⁵.

The Foreign Minister of Hungary, Frigyes Pujy, hinted broadly that the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies would act in favor of Hanoi in the event of an armed conflict between Vietnam and China. He said that the Soviet Union would, of course, "aid Vietnam against Chinese and Cambodian provocations. The Hungarian people also offer help for we, too, bear solidarity with the long-suffering people in its struggle to consolidate the situation in Indochina and bring fighting at last to an end in this area"¹⁴⁶. Hanoi was delighted because it gained a powerful ally, a super-power, to revenge against China.

From then on, China, fearful, counted every day to witness the end of the Pol Pot regime. The Chinese did not believe any more that they could protect the dreadful Cambodian government. After a visit to Phnom Penh in early December the deputy Prime Minister, Yu Chiu-li, drew a dismal picture of the military situation there and indicated that Peking would not aid Cambodia in its final battle against Vietnam¹⁴⁷.

Vietnam watched the shock reaction in China. With the disappearance of the danger of a Chinese armed intervention, Hanoi began to concentrate its army for the final showdown in Cambodia. In January 1979 Vietnam moved swiftly to crush the Pol Pot regime. As the Chinese leaders pondered what to do next, a pro-Vietnamese group of Cambodian Communists led by Heng Samrin brought the country under their control, and on January 11 proclaimed People's Republic of Kampuchea. The Chinese launched a violent propaganda campaign on behalf of the Pol Pot government, but nothing came of it in the end.

China's prestige in Asia, indeed in the world, has been suddenly shattered. The Soviet Union has played a deep game with China's new enemy. Desperate, Peking invoked the "anti-hegemony clause" of the Sino-Japanese Treaty and proposed a joint action against Hanoi. Tokyo politely refused¹⁴⁸. The deputy Prime Minister, Teng Hsiao-ping, advocated an "alliance" between China, the United States and Japan to "restrain" the Soviet "polar bear"¹⁴⁹.

Despite the Chinese opposition, the Soviet Union has been able to penetrate into South East Asia and establish a significance presence in the southern flank of China. The Soviet purpose coincided largely with Hanoi's desire to crush the Peking-Phnom Penh axis and deal a blow to the prestige of China. It has also provided the occasion for the formation of a Moscow-Hanoi alliance.

It should be noted that all these developments have occurred despite the widespread belief that the Chinese did not wish to alienate Vietnam for fearing of driving Hanoi into the arms of the Soviet Union. By their paranoical fear of a Soviet-backed Vietnam, the Chinese have created problems for themselves that they wanted to prevent.

THE CHINESE INVASION

By the end of January China's attitude toward Vietnam toughened. Along the frontier in the provinces of Yunnan, Kwangsi and Kwantung the Chinese gathered something between 150 000 and 200 000 troops. The frontier forces were bolstered by several hundred Chinese fighter planes, suggesting the preparation for an invasion of Vietnam.

On January 30, the Chinese army launched lightning raids across the border with Vietnam, but a Vietnamese counter-attack forced them to retreat. Then in a demonstration of military power, the Chinese jets invaded Vietnamese territory. Thereafter, the Vietnamese jet fighters began patrolling the frontier with China¹⁵⁰.

During his visit to the United States, China's deputy Prime Minister Teng Hsiao-ping confirmed that China had moved "divisions" to the frontier with Vietnam "to punish" Hanoi for its invasion of Cambodia. "We cannot permit Vietnam to play wild-man", he declared. "In the interest of peace and stability, we have been forced to do something we want to avoid"¹⁵¹. Teng also informed President Carter of China's determination to invade Vietnam. President Carter's attempt to discourage the Chinese leader from such an attack produced no result. Teng offered no assurances that there would not be a Chinese invasion into Vietnam. "The Chinese mean what we say", he stated. "We, Chinese, do not act rashly, but Vietnam and Soviet mentors must be taught some necessary lessons"¹⁵². In Tokyo he repeated China's intention to invade Vietnam adding, "once we say we will do something, we will do it"¹⁵³.

As the massing of Chinese troops along the frontier areas continued, Vietnam accused Peking of preparation of an "armed invasion"¹⁵⁴. In a letter to the President of the United Nation's Security Council, Hanoi said that China had created "serious tension" in the border areas and warned that a war between the two countries might threaten the world peace¹⁵⁵.

By the first week of February, China deployed 20 divisions along the frontier of Vietnam. Thereupon, Hanoi appealed to "friendly nations" for aid against Peking and accused China of "massing troops" and of "armed provocations" against Vietnam¹⁵⁶. Peking also accused Hanoi of "provocations" against China. In a statement it said that from January 1 to February 13, 22 Chinese soldiers had been killed and 20 others were wounded and warned Hanoi of "serious consequences". Li Hsien-nien, China's deputy Prime Minister declared that China would take "military action" if Vietnam continued border "provocations"¹⁵⁷. At the same time China moved its troops in advanced positions facing Vietnam and issued a "stern warning" to Hanoi saying that "our patience is not unlimited. Vietnam must pay the price"¹⁵⁸.

Facing the threat of an imminent Chinese invasion, Vietnam sought the support of the United Nations. In a letter to the Secretary General, Kurt Waldheim, Foreign Minister Trinh charged China of "feverish war preparations" and the massing of "twenty divisions" along the frontier with Vietnam and expressed the fear that a war between Vietnam and China was imminent¹⁵⁹.

On February 16, the Chinese army occupied some strategic hills in Cao Loc district of Lang Son province. The occupation of the Vietnamese hills made the situation along the frontier extremely dangerous. Hanoi demanded that China immediately withdraw its "occupationist troops" from the Vietnamese soil and described the incursion as a "serious, dangerous and premeditated step by the Chinese authorities in their criminal hostility toward Vietnam". It also accused the Chinese troops of crossing into northern provinces, laying mines, clearing forests and occupying Vietnamese territory¹⁶⁰. The Chinese did not respond to the Vietnamese charges.

In the early morning of February 17, between 100 000 and 170 000 Chinese troops supported by tanks, artillery and warplanes invaded Vietnam along 640-kilometer long frontier "to teach the Vietnamese a lesson". In an editorial Jen-min jih-pao declared that "after hitting back at the aggressors as far as it is necessary, our frontier forces will turn to guard strictly the frontier of our motherland. We do not want a single inch of Vietnamese soil. What we want is a peaceful and stable frontier". It then called upon the Vietnamese for peaceful negotiations of the conflict¹⁶¹.

The Chinese invasion caught Hanoi by surprise but created no panic. When the Chinese army invaded Vietnam, Hanoi's top leaders were in Phnom Penh. The news of the Chinese incursion created no concern. They remained in Cambodia and signed a Treaty of Friendship with the new government before returning to Hanoi.

Vietnam, of course, rejected the Chinese "peace" offer as a "robber's trick". Radio Hanoi asked "what is to be negotiated when the Chinese troops are trampling our soil? This is tantamount to a robber whetting his knife to compel the house-owner to negotiate the haul"¹⁶². Vietnam also said that Chinese warplanes had bombed factories, power plants and communication facilities in the northern part of the country, inflicted "terrible damage" and caused many "civilian casualties"¹⁶³.

China's invasion of Vietnam brought sharp denunciations from the Soviet Union. In a statement, Moscow warned Peking to stop its invasion "before it is too late" and declared that it would "honor its obligations" under the Soviet-Vietnamese Treaty of Friendship signed in previous November as a "loyal ally". It, however, made no threat of a Soviet military retaliation across the Soviet-Chinese frontier¹⁶⁴. The Soviet Defense Minister, Dmitri Ustinov, also denounced China's "dangerous provocations against neighboring sovereign states" and stated that "the Chinese are trying to plunge the world into a war"¹⁶⁵.

In their commentaries, the Soviet newspapers blamed the United States for its tacit support to the Chinese invasion. Washington's policy in castigating both the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia and the Chinese invasion of Vietnam was scornfully dismissed by the Soviets as a tilt toward Peking¹⁶⁶.

Finally, Leonid Brezhnev denounced China's "brazen, bandit attack on a small neighboring country" and demanded that the "invading forces retreat to the last soldier". He simultaneously warned China against extending its invasion into Laos, but made no threat to intervene militarily in Indochina. Brezhnev also did not repeat the Soviet charges that the United States had given its blessing to the Chinese invasion. Instead, he dwelt optimistically for a summit meeting with President Carter and for a Salt II treaty¹⁶⁷.

Thereafter, Soviet officials informed Asian diplomats in Moscow that the Soviet Union had no plan for a military intervention in Chinese-Vietnamese war "as long as the scale of hostilities remains limited".

The Soviets expressed their confidence that the Vietnamese were entirely capable of handling the Chinese invasion and Peking would be taught a lesson rather than the other way round¹⁶⁸.

In a demonstration of its support to Vietnam, the Soviet Union dispatched two missile-armed destroyers to join the squadron of 13 Soviet ships cruising near Vietnam. Support ships of the Soviet navy anchored at the Vietnamese port of Danang causing speculation over a possible permanent Soviet base in South East Asia. The Soviet Union airlifted some anti-tank missiles and ammunitions and sent senior army officers to Hanoi. There was no rush of Soviet freighters carrying arms to Vietnam. Hanoi also did not seek massive arms aid from the Soviet Union.

China also did not expect a Soviet armed intervention. China's deputy Prime Minister Teng Hsiao-ping said that if the Soviet Union wanted to come into Chinese-Vietnamese war to help Hanoi "we are prepared against them". But he doubted if the Soviet Union would take too big action. "If they should really come", he stated, "there is nothing we can do about it. I think, our action is limited and it will not give rise to a very big event". He once again denounced Vietnam as a "Cuba of Orient" adding that "we cannot tolerate the Cubans of Orient to go swashbuckling in Laos, Kampuchea or even in the Chinese border areas". China would teach a "limited lesson" to Vietnam. "It will not last long. But in teaching Vietnam a lesson, the myth of Vietnamese invincibility and the claim that it is the third strongest military power in the world will be shattered"¹⁶⁹.

Even after a week of the invasion, the Chinese dream of "teaching Vietnam a lesson" did not fulfill. China's deputy Prime Minister Wang Chen commented that "we are still in the process of teaching Vietnam a good lesson" and that the Chinese forces would not enter into "Vietnamese flatlands".

"Our action will be limited in scope and duration. What we intend is to defend our border and safeguard peace in the border regions"¹⁷⁰.

Meanwhile, the United States continued to urge China to withdraw its troops from Vietnam. U. S. Treasury Secretary Michael Blumenthal, who visited Peking to discuss trade and commercial relations, delivered President Carter's private appeal to deputy Prime Minister Teng Hsiao-ping and Chairman Hua Kuo-feng and explained that "even limited invasions risk wider wars and turn public opinion against the transgressor". The Chinese leaders were unmoved and rejected Washington's appeal to withdraw their troops from Vietnam. They defended China's invasion and declared that the war was "limited and a very unimportant affair". It was necessary "to teach the Vietnamese a lesson" and "to shatter the theory of Vietnamese invincibility"¹⁷¹. The Soviet Union attacked Blumenthal's visit to China calling it a "clear encouragement" to Peking's aggression against Vietnam¹⁷².

Failing "to teach Vietnam a lesson", the Chinese decided to pull back their troops in an opportune moment. Chairman Hua Kuo-feng told the British Industry Minister, Erich Varley, that the Chinese military action was "going well" and that the Chinese did not want "an inch of Vietnamese territory" and that a "withdrawal will take place shortly"¹⁷³. The Vietnamese made clear that they would fight till the "aggressors are driven out of our sacred soil". They declared that "our war of self-defense against the Chinese aggressors has begun. China is not conducting a limited operation, but intends to occupy the Vietnamese territory"¹⁷⁴. The Central Committee of the Lao Dong Party announced that "every province and every city of Vietnam is a battlefield. The whole country is a battlefield"¹⁷⁵.

Meanwhile, the Chinese realized that an extended conflict would be brutal and a deadly blow to Peking. The Vietnamese had amply proved their ability to hold a theoretically stronger adversary at bay during years of fighting against France and the United States. The Vietnamese possess an impressive battle-tested air-defense system of surface-to-air missiles as well as a fleet of sophisticated Soviet-built MIG-21s, which are considered more than a match for Chinese out-dated MIG-19 fighters.

On March 5, 1979, China announced that it was ending its 17-day-old invasion of Vietnam and withdrawing "all Chinese frontier troops to Chinese territory" without mentioning if China had succeeded in "teaching Vietnam a lesson". But the Vietnamese said that the border war was "expanding" with Chinese reserves pouring into action. Hanoi then ordered a general mobilization "to defeat the Chinese, who are frenziedly carrying out a war of aggression against our country" and ignored Peking's announcement that the Chinese forces had begun pulling back¹⁷⁶. In Manila, the Vietnamese deputy Foreign Minister, Hoang Bich Son, said that "from our experience with China, we know that they say one thing and do another. They say, they

are withdrawing their troops. It means they are preparing for intensification of the war. We do not believe what they the Chinese say"¹⁷⁷.

Faced with the Vietnamese determination, the Chinese warned the Vietnamese authorities that "they must make no more armed provocations and incursions along the Chinese border after the withdrawal of the Chinese troops. The Chinese government solemnly states that the Chinese side reserves the right to strike back again in self-defense in case of a recurrence of such Vietnamese activities". The Chinese also repeated their earlier call for negotiations to insure what they called "peace and tranquility" along the border"¹⁷⁸. Hanoi rejected the Chinese offer as a "trick" and denounced them as "liars". In an editorial Nhan Dan declared that "the reactionaries in China are trying to make the public believe in an imminent withdrawal of Chinese troops . . . A major war started on February 17 is expanding. The whole of Vietnam is fighting and each Vietnamese is a fighter"¹⁷⁹. Nevertheless, on the next day, Hanoi announced that it would agree to talk with China on improving relation if Chinese troops carried out their announced plans to withdraw from Vietnam. Simultaneously, Vietnam charged China of "gross aggression" with half-a-million troops and claimed that China had been forced to announce withdrawal¹⁸⁰.

Peking, however, claimed that its invasion was a "complete success" and congratulated the Chinese soldiers for their "dauntless revolutionary heroism" and "glorious counter-attack in self-defense". To their own satisfaction the Chinese claimed that the war had "exploded the myth of the invincibility of 'Asian Cuba'" and dealt a "telling blow to the Soviet scheme for aggression and expansion in South East Asia". China also repeated its objections to the presence of Vietnamese troops in Cambodia saying that "the Vietnamese aggressor troops must completely pull out of Kampuchea", but did not tie this demand to the negotiations it was seeking with Hanoi¹⁸¹.

Vietnam claimed that the Chinese troops had been "badly defeated" and that China had been forced "to announce its retreat". After charging the Chinese troops of "barbarous criminal acts of war" Hanoi said that it would continue the war if the Chinese troops did not carry out Peking's stated intention of withdrawal¹⁸². In an editorial Nhan Dan declared that "in order to show our goodwill for peace, we will allow them the Chinese to withdraw their troops". It, however, threatened to punish the Chinese invaders if they continue to commit acts of war. It described the outcome of the war as a "glorious victory" and spoke of "disastrous defeat" for China. Finally, it asserted that 45 000 Chinese soldiers had been killed or wounded during the fighting, but did not mention Vietnamese casualties¹⁸³.

The Chinese did not contradict the Vietnamese figure, but stated that 10 000 Vietnamese soldiers had been killed or wounded. Teng Hsiao-ping said that "we do not believe the figures are serious or will frighten the people".

Nevertheless, he confirmed that the Chinese casualties were higher than the Vietnamese¹⁸⁴.

The invasion has produced first stirrings of an anti-war movement to nearly every important city of China. Anti-war posters appeared in Peking's "Wall of Democracy" briefly. They asserted that China had invaded Vietnam and it had violated the international law. The posters were quickly vanished, apparently torn down by the authorities¹⁸⁵. According to Jen-min jih-pao it has also created a "major breach" in the Chinese Communist Party leadership and provoked "factionalism" and "struggle" between rival groups¹⁸⁶.

The Vietnamese claimed that a "serious rift within the ruling Chinese circles has broken out since the launching of the aggressive war". The growing anti-war feeling in China had forced the Peking leaders to announce the withdrawal of their invasion army. A dissident radio station inside China had been making broadcasts against the war¹⁸⁷.

Though the Chinese are withdrawing their troops from Vietnam, the conflict between the two countries are far from over. Vietnam has accepted the Chinese offer of negotiations to restore normal relations, but insisted on complete withdrawal first. China has demanded that Vietnam stop provoking border incidents. Such demands could stall the talks indefinitely if one side or the other charges that prior conditions for negotiations have not been met. This will lock the two countries in an endless tussle and a prolonged period of anomosity.

Footnotes:

- 1) Interview with Pham Van Dong in The Statesman, October 3, 1965.
- 2) New China News Agency, December 29, 1954; Vietnam News Agency, December 12, 1954.
- 3) George McT. Kahin, The Afro-Asian Conference, Cornell University Press, 1956, p. 27.
- 4) Nhan Dan, November 18, 1956.
- 5) New China News Agency, November 22, 1956.
- 6) Mezhdunarodnaia Zhizn, July 1959, p. 20.
- 7) New China News Agency, May 19, 20 and 22, 1960.
- 8) New China News Agency, September 5, 1960.
- 9) Le Duan's Report to the Central Committee of the Lao Dong Party in Le Duan, On Some Present International Problems, Foreign Languages Publication House, Hanoi, 1964, p. 56.
- 10) New China News Agency, December 15, 21, 30, 1961.
- 11) Le Duan, On the Socialist Revolution in Vietnam, Vol. 3, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1967, pp. 56-57.

- 12) New China News Agency, May 10, 12, 15, 16, 18, 1963.
- 13) Jen-min jih-pao, July 19, 1963.
- 14) Vietnam News Agency, August 20, 1963.
- 15) Hoc Tap, January 1964; Radio Hanoi, February 11, 1964.
- 16) Pravda, July 22, 28 and August 6 and 8, 1964.
- 17) Pravda, November 28, 1964; February 1 and 3, 1965; New York Times, February 3, 1965.
- 18) New China News Agency, February 5, 1965.
- 19) Jen-min jih-pao und Hung Ch'i joint editorial, November 11, 1965.
- 20) Izvestia, April 20, 1965.
- 21) Jen-min jih-pao, April 27, 1965.
- 22) Statement by Liao Chen-chi, Chairman of the China Committee of the Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee, New China News Agency, July 16, 1965; The Observer, November 14, 1965.
- 23) Vietnam News Agency, April 13, 1965.
- 24) Kikuzo Ito and Minoru Shibata, The Dilemma of Mao Tse-tung, The China Quarterly, July-September 1968, pp. 59-60.
- 25) New York Times, March 30, 1966; Jen-min jih-pao, March 28, 1966.
- 26) The Statesman, December 8, 1966; Radio Paris, December 6, 1966.
- 27) Nhan Dan, March 30, 1966.
- 28) Neues Deutschland, September 4, 1966.
- 29) Nepszabadsag, December 17, 1966.
- 30) New York Herald Tribune, April 23, 1966.
- 31) Tass, February 22, 1967.
- 32) Jen-min jih-pao, July 7, 1966.
- 33) Bashkimi, June 5, 1966.
- 34) New China News Agency, December 22, 1965.
- 35) Izvestia, October 14, 1965.
- 36) Pravda, March 10, 1967.
- 37) Times of India, January 31, 1965.
- 38) Peking Review, September 3, 1965, p.12. Also Ibid., May 13, 1966, p. 5.
- 39) Department of State Bulletin, February 28, 1966, pp. 310-318.
- 40) Ibid., March 14, 1966, p. 393.
- 41) Izvestia, September 22, 1966.
- 42) Pravda, December 14, 1966; Literaturnaya Gazeta, December 20, 1966.
- 43) U. S. News and World Report, January 23, 1967, p. 97.
- 44) New China News Agency, March 18, 1967.
- 45) Kenneth Young, Negotiating with the Chinese Communists: The United States Experience 1953-1967, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1968, p. 275.
- 46) Peking Review, September 3, 1966, pp. 5-6.
- 47) Quoted in Masao Yamashita, The Intricate Triangle Relation, World Weekly, October 25, 1966.
- 48) Ibid., November 26, 1966.
- 49) Die Welt, March 21, 1966.
- 50) Jen-min jih-pao, December 20, 1966.

- 51) Christian Science Monitor, January 15, 1967.
- 52) Ibid., May 5, 1967.
- 53) Hoc Tap, May, 1967.
- 54) The four conditions were: 1. recognition of the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Vietnam and the withdrawal of US forces from the area pending reunification of Vietnam; 2. respect for the military provisions of the 1954 Geneva agreement, including those barring foreign forces; 3. settlement of South Vietnam's internal affairs by the South Vietnamese in accordance with the program of the National Liberation Front; 4. peaceful reunification of Vietnam by the peoples of North and South without foreign interference.
- 55) New York Times, January 8, 1967.
- 56) Ibid., February 9, 1967.
- 57) Ibid., February 10, 1967.
- 58) Ibid., May 17, 1967.
- 59) Ibid., April 13, 1968.
- 60) Hemen Ray, China's Initiatives in Eastern Europe, Current Scene, December 1, 1969.
- 61) Vietnam News Agency, August 22, 1968; New York Times, August 26, 1968.
- 62) Vietnam News Agency, October 5, 1968.
- 63) For details of the Indochinese Summit Conference held on April 24-25 in Canton, see Vietnam News Agency, April 30, 1970.
- 64) Magyar Nemzet, April 10, 1970.
- 65) New China News Agency, March 8, 1971.
- 66) Jen-min jih-pao, March 11, 1971.
- 67) China News Analysis, June 18, 1971, p. 1.
- 68) Nhan Dan, July 20, 1971.
- 69) Vietnam News Agency, July 21, 1971.
- 70) Nhan Dan, July 22, 1971.
- 71) Ibid., August 1, 1971.
- 72) Ibid.
- 73) Quan Dai Nhan Dan, August 15, 1971.
- 74) Radio Moscow, August 19, 1971. See also Literaturnaya Gazeta, July 21, 1971.
- 75) Japan Times, August 30, 1971.
- 76) New China News Agency, September 4, 1971.
- 77) Jen-min jih-pao, September 26, 1971.
- 78) Indian Express, February 27, 1972.
- 79) Vietnam News Agency, March 3, 1972.
- 80) Nhan Dan, March 3, 1972.
- 81) Jen-min jih-pao, December 29, 1972.
- 82) Interview with Nguyen Co Than, New York Times reprinted in Soviet News, October 17, 1978, p. 352.

- 83) Vietnam News Agency, February 3, 1973.
- 84) Le Monde, August 8, 1978.
- 85) Interview with Hoang Bich Son, Hungarian News Agency MTI, November 29, 1978.
- 86) Moscow Radio, August 28, 1975.
- 87) Pravda, October 31, 1975.
- 88) New China News Agency, September 22, 1975.
- 89) People's China, Supplement, Supplement, May 1, 1951.
- 90) Vietnam News Agency, October 18, 1975.
- 91) Far Eastern Economic Review, April 14, 1978.
- 92) Radio Phnom Penh, May 11, 1975.
- 93) Far Eastern Economic Review, June 13 and August 29, 1975.
- 94) New China News Agency, September 6 and 15, 1975.
- 95) Vietnam News Agency, August 2 and September 4, 1975; Le Monde, July 31, 1978.
- 96) Radio Phnom Penh, August 17, 1975.
- 97) Peking Review, August 22, 1975, pp. 6-12.
- 98) Hanoi Radio, February 21, 1978.
- 99) New China News Agency, February 2, 1976.
- 100) Ibid., March 15, 1976.
- 101) Pravda, March 6, 1976.
- 102) Agence France Presse, April 4, 1976.
- 103) Washington Post, July 19 and 20, 1977.
- 104) New China News Agency, November 26, 1975.
- 105) Quoted in New York Times, January 25, 1976.
- 106) Hoc Tap, May, 1976; Radio Hanoi, May 6, 1976.
- 107) Far Eastern Economic Review, May 19, 1978.
- 108) Hanoi Radio, April 3, 1977.
- 109) New York Times, August 9, 1977.
- 110) Los Angeles Times, December 31, 1977.
- 111) Far Eastern Economic Review, January 16, 1978.
- 112) Ibid., March 17, 1978.
- 113) Pravda, January 8, 1978; New York Times, January 1, 1978.
- 114) New York Times, January 5, 1978.
- 115) New China News Agency, March 6, 1978.
- 116) Ibid., May 2, 1978.
- 117) Peking Radio, May 5, 1978.
- 118) Ibid., May 28, 1978.
- 119) Time, July 3, 1978.
- 120) Nhan Dan, May 29 and June 17, 1978.
- 121) Ibid.
- 122) Vietnam News Agency, June 19, 1978.
- 123) Nhan Dan, June 20, 1978.
- 124) Reuters' dispatch from Peking, July 19, 1978.

- 125) New China News Agency, August 9, 1978; Vietnam News Agency, August 9, 1978; Die Welt, September 27, 1978.
- 126) Interview with Hoang Bieh Son, Hungarian News Agency, MTI, November 29, 1978.
- 127) Pravda, June 9, 1978.
- 128) Ibid., June 25, 1978.
- 129) Neues Deutschland, September 3, 1978.
- 130) Pravda, August 4, 1978.
- 131) Hungarian News Agency MTI, November 19, 1978. For the statement by Todor Zhikov of Bulgaria see Pravda, August 15, 1978.
- 132) Zeri i Popullit, July 17, 1978.
- 133) Scinteia, January 9, 1978.
- 134) Die Welt, January 17, 1978.
- 135) Christian Science Monitor, May 30, 1978; Japan Times, June 1, 1978.
- 136) Radio Phnom Penh, August 27, 1978.
- 137) Komsomolskaia Pravda, September 20, 1978.
- 138) New China News Agency, August 6 and September 4, 1978.
- 139) Vietnam News Agency, September 4 and 5, 1978.
- 140) New China News Agency, August 29, 1978.
- 141) Ibid., September 4, 1978.
- 142) Ibid.
- 143) Hungarian News Agency MTI, November 29, 1978.
- 144) For the Text of the Treaty see Pravda, November 3, 1978.
- 145) Statement by Teng Hsiao-p'ing, AP dispatch from Bangkok, December 14, 1978. Teng obviously referred to Paragraph 6 of the Treaty which said: "The high contracting parties will consult each other on all important international issues affecting the interests of the two countries. In the event of one of the parties becoming the object of attack or of threats of attack, the high contracting parties will immediately begin mutual consultations for the purpose of removing that threat and taking appropriate effective measures to ensure the peace and security of their countries.
- 146) Hungarian News Agency MTI, December 28, 1978.
- 147) Die Welt, December 28, 1978.
- 148) Tagesspiegel, January 25, 1979.
- 149) Die Welt, January 30, 1979.
- 150) Vietnam News Agency, January 30 and 31, 1979.
- 151) New York Times, February 9, 1979; Die Welt, February 9, 1979.
- 152) International Herald Tribune, February 9 and 27, 1979.
- 153) Yomiuri Shimbun, February 8, 1979.
- 154) Vietnam News Agency, February 10, 1979.
- 155) Vietnam News Agency, February 13, 1979.
- 156) Ibid., February 15, 1979.
- 157) New China News Agency, February 13, 1979.

- 158) New China News Agency, February 14, 1979.
- 159) Vietnam News Agency, February 14, 1979.
- 160) Ibid., February 16, 1979.
- 161) Jen-min jih-pao, February 17, 1979.
- 162) Radio Hanoi, February 18, 1979.
- 163) Vietnam News Agency, February 18, 1979.
- 164) Tass, February 18, 1979.
- 165) Pravda, February 23, 1979.
- 166) See editorials of Pravda, February 18, 1979 and Izvestia, February 19, 1979.
- 167) Pravda, March 2, 1979.
- 168) An Asian diplomat stationed in Moscow.
- 169) Time, March 12, 1979, p.14.
- 170) New York Times, February 25, 1979.
- 171) International Herald Tribune, February 26 and March 8, 1979.
- 172) Tass, February 25, 1979.
- 173) New York Times, March 5, 1979.
- 174) Radio Hanoi, March 4, 1979.
- 175) International Herald Tribune, March 5, 1979.
- 176) Hanoi Radio, March 5, 1979.
- 177) International Herald Tribune, March 6, 1979.
- 178) New China News Agency, March 5, 1979.
- 179) Nhan Dan, March 5, 1979.
- 180) Radio Hanoi, March 5, 1979.
- 181) Jen-min jih-pao, March 7, 1979.
- 182) Vietnam News Agency, March 7, 1979.
- 183) Nhan Dan, March 7, 1979.
- 184) International Herald Tribune, March 7, 1979.
- 185) Newsweek, March 12, 1979.
- 186) Kyodo Dispatch from Peking quoting Jen-min jih-pao, March 11, 1979.
- 187) Nhan Dan, March 11, 1979.