

CHINA'S PEDAGOGICAL WAR:  
CONFLICTING INTERESTS IN INDOCHINA

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## I - INTRODUCTION

On February 17, 1979, the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) attacked Vietnam across the entire 450-mile Sino-Vietnamese border. Twenty-seven days later, on March 15, after penetrating between 10 and 30 miles into Vietnamese territory and fighting several large-scale battles, which resulted in thousands of casualties on both sides, Beijing (Peking) unilaterally withdrew its forces from all but a handful of "contested" points along the border.

This study analyzes the factors that account for the nature and timing of the Chinese action. Its research reveals a complex interrelationship of actions and events, which indicates that far more than the historical relationship between "imperial" China and a "tributary" state was involved. What then were the key components of the Chinese decision?

The Cambodia-Vietnam conflict, along with Hanoi's propensity for closer ties with Moscow, created a situation which became intolerable to Chinese interests and which required positive action. Vietnam refused to become a party to Beijing's "anti-hegemony" united front directed against the Soviet Union following the United States military withdrawal from Indochina in April 1975. In Cambodia, a radical, ultra-nationalist communist state under Pol Pot struck out against its own people and its Vietnamese neighbor, which it had long feared and distrusted. Cambodia's hostility toward Hanoi threatened Vietnam's socialist reconstruction and forced Hanoi to take action. Supported by the Soviet Union, Vietnam's actions in Indochina would come to be perceived in Beijing as an unacceptable threat to its national interests. Indeed, there are many parallels between the way Vietnam reacted to Cambodia and the way China reacted to Vietnam.

As the Cambodia-Vietnam conflict escalated, Beijing would eventually decide that only the use of military force would suffice to remedy the situation. In 1975 Beijing had adopted a carrot-and-stick policy toward Vietnam, holding out the promise of aid and assistance while taking a strong "anti-hegemonist" position. Beijing's domestic turmoil and instability in 1976 and early 1977, however, complicated its ability to measure the direction and implications of the

escalating conflict in Indochina. From Zhou Enlai's (Chou Enlai) death in January 1976 through the purge of Deng Xiaoping (Teng Hsiao-ping), the death of Mao, the rise and fall of the "Gang of Four," and the coming to power of the moderates under Hua Guofeng (Hua Kuo-feng) in October, Chinese decision-making was fragmented. Even after Deng's rehabilitation in July 1977, his primary concern was to broaden his political base and introduce the bold new economic and administrative reforms (the four modernizations) intended to make China a modern nation. Between mid-1977 and mid-1978, Beijing continued its carrot-and-stick policy toward Vietnam, even after Hanoi had committed itself to a hard-line anti-China position. The Vietnamese crackdown on overseas Chinese in Vietnam in March 1978, Vietnam's entry into the Soviet-dominated Council for Mutual Economic Assistance in June, severe Vietnamese military pressure on Cambodia in June and July, and conflict on the Sino-Vietnamese border precipitated a crisis in Sino-Vietnamese relations. At the same time, the growing specter of Soviet involvement in the crisis motivated Beijing to change its policy toward Vietnam.

The decision to respond to Soviet-Vietnamese "hegemonism" with a limited use of military force was motivated by Beijing's desire to avoid forcing the Soviet Union into becoming directly involved militarily in the Sino-Vietnamese conflict and by a desire to avoid those actions which might undermine China's long-range goals of détente with Japan, the United States, and the Third World. During the latter half of 1978 Deng continued to consolidate his political power base in China while moving by diplomatic means to improve China's international position in order to support his programs to strengthen and modernize China. Vietnam's hostility and "collusion" with the Soviet Union was perceived in Beijing as a serious and immediate threat to China's national security and Deng's modernization efforts. Finally, the Soviet-Vietnamese peace and friendship treaty in November 1978, Vietnam's formation of a Kampuchean united front and its attack on Cambodia in December, and the overthrow of the Pol Pot regime in January 1979 set the stage for the implementation of China's decision to attack. Following the normalization of relations between China and the United States in January, and Deng's visit to the U.S. in early February, the Chinese crossed the border.

The invasion, which lasted less than a month, was essentially a demonstration of China's determination to oppose Vietnamese and Soviet expansionism and hegemonism in Southeast Asia. Beijing wanted to make it clear to Moscow, Hanoi and the world that it would not stand by and permit Moscow to "place too many pawns on the World's chessboard." In the minds of Chinese leaders, China's credibility as a world power and its legitimacy as the leader of the Third World were at stake. In an attempt to reinforce its credibility and in the hope of modifying Vietnamese behavior, China engaged in a manner of force diplomacy such as it has employed on several occasions in the past, going back to the Korean War.

The significance of this study in endeavoring to estimate the immediate and long range effects of the China-Vietnam conflict in terms of China's international development and national security is clear. Chinese domestic and foreign policies are intimately related. When the power center is fragmented, foreign policy is far less effective. Nevertheless, China acted as any other nation might have acted to preserve its national security interests. The risks in attacking Vietnam were measured against the possible gains and carefully weighed in terms of its implications on China's overall domestic and foreign policy.

## II - THE ORIGINS OF THE CONFLICT

### The Traditional Perspective

Those who have studied Chinese and Vietnamese history are always quick to point out that there is a long history of conflict between these two countries. At times of internal weakness in China, Vietnam has traditionally tossed off the bonds of a tributary state and expanded its own empire within the region known as Indochina. After consolidating its affairs under a new dynasty, China would respond by sending out expeditionary armies to reassert its suzerainty over its independent-minded southern neighbor. This historical process has led many analysts to adopt a shorthand to explain the dynamics of this relationship. Vietnam is seen as an inherently

virile, expansionist military state. China is labeled a Confucian "father state" seeking ever to reestablish moral harmony between tributary buffer states and the "Middle Kingdom."

The temptation to reduce contemporary Sino-Vietnamese relations to this kind of shorthand is strong, but doing so obscures the many complex variables that are actually at work. The historical traditions no doubt color the perceptions of Chinese and Vietnamese leaders but they are not completely deterministic. In the case of the 1979 invasion of Vietnam by China, the variables which influenced Chinese and Vietnamese decision makers appear to be more closely related to contemporary international political realities than to traditional trends. Indeed, it can be argued that China and Vietnam have acted in much the same manner that any nation in similar circumstances might have acted.

#### Vietnam and China's "Anti-Hegemony" Foreign Policy

In many respects, the year 1975 is the benchmark for most of the decisions that led to the Sino-Vietnamese war.

In 1975, Zhou Enlai, the architect of China's foreign policy for decades, lay on his deathbed slowly succumbing to cancer. He appeared briefly in January at the Fourth National People's Congress (NPC), to oversee the election of his chosen successor, Deng Xiaoping, to the post of First Deputy Premier of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Chief of Staff of the PLA. Throughout 1975 Deng would attempt to carry forward the policies which Zhou had formulated in the post-Cultural Revolution period. The previous year Deng had expounded the most important of these at the United Nations. The "Three Worlds" thesis, proclaiming that China no longer acknowledged the existence of the "socialist camp, was a declaration that China would take upon itself the leadership of the Third (developing) World in its struggle against the hegemony of the imperialists (the United States) and the social imperialists (the Soviet Union).<sup>1</sup> This policy was another manifestation of Beijing's efforts to marshal the widest possible united front against its "main enemy" - Moscow.<sup>2</sup>

For Deng and Zhou in 1975, the successful implementation of this counter-encirclement strategy heavily depended on creating a nucleus of Asian socialist states to build upon.<sup>3</sup> Other states in Latin America and Africa could not be won to the Chinese side without a credible bandwagon effect. Zhou's earlier efforts to tilt the non-aligned nations movement and the Afro-Asian solidarity conferences had been generally unsuccessful for the lack of such momentum.

In the spring of 1975 the sudden collapse of the Lon Nol and Thieu regimes in Cambodia and South Vietnam caught China somewhat unprepared. Beijing had been urging Hanoi to proceed more gradually with its major offensives since 1972, citing the need for greater development of the Maoist "people's war" movement in South Vietnam. Furthermore, the Chinese, now on much better terms with the United States, were in no hurry to see North and South Vietnam reunited. Since the early 1970's, China had grown increasingly apprehensive about the role that an independent, unified, and resurgent Vietnam would play in a Southeast Asia where American influence was dwindling.

During the summer of 1975 Deng visited France, the Philippines, and Thailand and had been successful in persuading both Ferdinand Marcos and Khukrit to include the now familiar "anti-hegemony" clause (a Chinese codeword for anti-Sovietism) in the communiqués establishing diplomatic relations. In August Prince Sihanouk signed a similar anti-hegemony statement on behalf of Cambodia. In an attempt to maintain this momentum, Chinese Vice-Premier Chen Xilian (Chen Hsi-lien) was sent to Hanoi the following month to lay the groundwork for a joint Sino-Vietnamese anti-hegemony communiqué.

Le Duan, Secretary General of the Vietnamese Workers Party, arrived in Beijing on September 22.. He had come to claim the promises Zhou had made in 1973 to extend aid to Hanoi for another five years. Beijing greeted him warmly, but Le Duan apparently refused to sign an anti-hegemony statement in exchange for such aid. Le Duan departed Beijing without hosting a reciprocal banquet and without the usual joint communiqué. A month later he showed up in Moscow, where he received promises of reconstruction aid, and supported Moscow's foreign policy line in a joint communiqué.

By the end of 1975, Sino-Vietnamese relations were cool but not antagonistic. The state bureaucracy under Zhou and Deng appeared to have decided on a carrot-and-stick policy, intended to maintain a strong stance against closer Hanoi-Moscow relations while holding out the promise of assistance, which Hanoi needed to rebuild its war-torn economy. The events of the following year, however, made it extremely difficult for Beijing to implement this policy successfully. In 1976 China entered a period of great internal turbulence. Zhou died in January. Deng was formally purged from his posts in April. After a brief ascendancy of the radicals under the Gang of Four, Mao died in September and a coup led by the moderate faction under Acting Premier Hua Guofeng and aging Marshal Ye Jianying (Yeb Chien-ying) took control in October. Although not as disrupted as it had been during the Cultural Revolution, Chinese foreign policy in 1976 was concerned only with the most pressing and immediate issues. Southeast Asia was not yet in this category.

#### Continuing Conflict in Indochina

The expectation that the reunification of North and South Vietnam and the overthrow of the Lon Nol government in Phnom Penh in April 1975 would mean an end to more than 30 years of war in Indochina was quickly shattered. Hanoi soon became involved in a series of escalating crises with its socialist neighbor, the Democratic Republic of Kampuchea (Cambodia).

Within weeks of these communist victories, Vietnam and Cambodia were on the verge of violent confrontation. In June their troops clashed over contested islands in the Gulf of Thailand. It was no coincidence that these islands had been on the verge of development by Western oil companies. Socialist solidarity notwithstanding, national interests made control of the seabed vital. Neither state had any short-term hopes of developing other significant export industries in their ravaged economies.

In an attempt to sort out their new relationship, Pol Pot visited Hanoi in June and Le Duan made a visit to Phnom Penh in August. Vietnam sought a "special relationship" because, as one Vietnamese official later explained, "there is not another example in history of such a

relationship where the two people have shared each grain of rice, every bullet, suffering and victory."<sup>4</sup> The new Pol Pot regime rejected this idea because it resembled too much the old Indochinese Communist Party relationship, through which the Vietnamese had dominated the Cambodian and Laotian communist parties in the 1930's and 1940's. Cambodia demanded a "normal" relationship between equals, which Vietnam rejected as inadequate. The belief in Phnom Penh that Hanoi was seeking to establish an "Indochinese federation" although consistently denied by Vietnam, took root and grew rapidly following Hanoi's call for a special relationship. This distrust would lead to the breakdown, in May 1976, of the last peacetime talks between Hanoi and Phnom Penh over their border disputes.

Inside Cambodia, Pol Pot's government had initiated radical domestic reforms that resulted, among other things, in the mass evacuation of its cities and the brutal purge of a major portion of its population. These draconian measures were apparently prompted by a severe paranoia in the leadership that pro-Western and pro-Vietnamese spies and criminals" were seeking to overthrow their government before it could establish itself. The new leaders, of peasant origin, were also convinced that the forced establishment of communes was the only way the new socialist Kampuchea could feed itself. This warped worldview, however, would scarcely have been sufficient to lead to a confrontation with Vietnam had not the upheavals that followed in its wake poured out across its borders. The Cambodian government was not able to stem the mass exodus of its people in spite of setting up "free-fire" zones several kilometers deep along its ill-defined borders with Thailand and Vietnam. By 1978 over 150,000 refugees had swarmed into southern Vietnam, creating massive squatter camps in and around Ho Chi Minh City.<sup>5</sup> Besides being an enormous economic burden, these refugees complicated Hanoi's own efforts to set up "new economic zones" in the border areas. Hanoi was unable to divorce its economic reconstruction program in the south from the explosive situation along its border with Cambodia.

By early 1977 Vietnam found itself enmeshed in a growing crisis with its intractable neighbor to the west. From March to May Cambodian forces staged several serious border

incidents, shelling border towns and accelerating the flood of refugees. In June Hanoi proposed high-level talks to de-escalate the tensions. When Phnom Penh turned the proposal down, Hanoi sent its defense minister, General Giap, to Beijing in an attempt to seek Chinese assistance to resolve the difficulties. In Beijing Giap emphasized Sino-Vietnamese friendship:

We will never forget the lofty and fine deeds of the Chinese people who, in the spirit of proletarian internationalism, supported the Vietnamese people in their resistance against the French colonialists and U.S. imperialists.<sup>6</sup>

Giap's overtures, lacking any commitment to an anti-Soviet stance, did not win any promises from the Chinese, who were neither inclined nor able to exert leverage on Hanoi's behalf. On his return from Beijing, Giap personally inspected Vietnamese defenses along the Cambodian front.

In May Hanoi reasserted its independence by promulgating a 200-mile territorial zone in the South China Sea that encompassed the Paracels and the Spratlys, laying claim to their oil-rich seabeds, which until 1975 Hanoi had acknowledged to be Chinese.<sup>7</sup> Along the Sino-Vietnamese border, Vietnamese and Chinese troops were engaged in frequent rock-throwing incidents, harassment of border guards, and the movement of the 300-odd border markers back and forth 50 to 100 meters during the night. It is unclear, at this point, to what extent the deteriorating situation between Cambodia and Vietnam contributed to the deterioration of relations between China and Vietnam, but in the summer of 1977 Hanoi found itself increasingly at odds with both Beijing and Phnom Penh.

Chinese leaders were particularly disturbed with Hanoi in July when Hanoi signed a long-term peace and friendship treaty with Laos, which sanctioned a 40,000 man Vietnamese occupation army on Laotian territory. These forces served as a blocking force which could prevent any direct Chinese troop movements down the road the Chinese were building in Laos toward Cambodia or Thailand. They were also putting pressure on the easily malleable communist government in Vientiane to adopt a pro-Vietnamese position vis-a-vis Chinese interests. This diplomatic maneuver along with the growing tensions along the Sino-Vietnamese

border, was particularly unsettling for the Chinese, who were at the time deeply involved in their own domestic political problems.

### III - PERCEPTIONS AND POLICIES

The development and implementation of a nation's foreign policy is a complex process which involves taking into account the interrelationship of a broad spectrum of independent and dependent variables relating to the problems at hand. When a nation is responding to the circumstances and events leading up to a potential crisis, it is imperative that a nation's decision-making body have a clear picture of the advantages and risks involved in each of several policy options. In the case of China's response to Vietnam's growing hostility and increasing partnership with the Soviet Union, the ability of Beijing's decision-makers to select a policy that would result in the modification of Hanoi's behavior was complicated by several factors. Domestically, the Chinese leadership was involved in what was perhaps the most serious succession struggle in its history. The Maoist and moderate factions were engaged in a bitter battle over who would determine the direction of Chinese domestic and foreign policy for decades to come. In mid and late 1977 it was not at all clear how serious the Vietnam-Cambodia border conflict would become. Although relations between Beijing and Hanoi had deteriorated considerably, Beijing still apparently believed that its carrot-and-stick policy would bring Hanoi around. Finally, the involvement of the Soviet Union in Vietnam had yet to become the serious problem for the Chinese that it would become when Hanoi and Moscow signed a treaty of peace and friendship in November 1978. Throughout the last half of 1977 and the first few months of 1978, then, the major factors that Beijing had to take into consideration did not appear to be approaching a crisis stage. Meanwhile, domestic political considerations were more pressing.

### The Rehabilitation of Deng Xiaoping and the Four Modernizations

With Zhou<sup>1</sup>'s death and Deng's purge in early 1976, the decision-making structure in Beijing fragmented. Even with the death of Mao in September and the purge of the Gang of Four in October, the new leadership under Hua Guofeng had failed to establish an effective political base. By early 1977 the economy was in chaos, food was scarce in parts of the country, the railroad system had all but come to a stop, and the campaign to purge supporters of the Gang of Four had become bloody without approaching a conclusion. As a result, very little national-level attention was being paid to any but the most critical external problems.<sup>8</sup>

The decision to rehabilitate Deng at the Third Plenum of the 10th Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) (July 16-22, 1977), came as a result of two factors: (1) strong lobbying on his behalf by Wei Guoqing (Wei Kuo-ching) and Xu Shiyou (Hsu Shih-yu), leaders in southern China, and (2) recognition in the Politburo that only Deng had a strong enough political base throughout the country to restore order, having coalesced the old opponents of Lin Biao. His rehabilitation had been bitterly argued all spring because many members of the Politburo and the Central Committee, including Chairman Hua, had participated in Mao<sup>1</sup>'s "deepen the criticism of Deng" campaign in 1976. Deng's reemergence marked the beginning of a slow but steady centralization of authority and decision-making.

For the month after his reemergence, Deng would have little time for much else than domestic politicking. It was critically important, if Deng were to carry out his bold new programs, that his own supporters get elected to the 11th Party Congress to be held in August. His success in these efforts resulted in 55 percent of the entire 10th Central Committee members being dropped and a majority of the new members being rehabilitated cadres who shared Deng's pragmatic approach to party policies.<sup>9</sup>

First on Deng's list of priorities was to reintroduce the "four modernizations" policy that Zhou Enlai had first introduced at the Fourth National People's Congress (NPC) in 1975. The primary objective of the four modernizations (agriculture, industry, national defense, and science and technology) was to make China a modern industrial nation by the turn of the century. This

policy was an outgrowth of an earlier confrontation between the radicals and the moderates following the Cultural Revolution. The magnitude of the task was enormous. Not only would China have to make up for long years of isolation, during which its general level of technology had fallen 20 years behind the West, but China would have to heal the deep scars left over from the bitter years of the Cultural Revolution and the maneuverings of the Gang of Four. Virtually no sector of the economy or the society had been untouched. The memories of these years were still fresh in the minds of every Chinese. Deng had to overcome psychological as well as visible obstacles. Furthermore, radicals and supporters of the "gang" were still a force to be dealt with.

As 1977 came to a close, Deng made significant strides in consolidating his power. With his close political ally, Wei Guoqing installed as head of the Political Department of the PLA in October, a new Central Committee behind him, and another round of purges and executions in progress through the provinces to eliminate non-supportive officials and radicals, he had the power centers sufficiently in hand to look outside China's borders. In September he sent a high-level military delegation to France, the highest ever to leave China for the West since 1949, to shop for modern weapons. The same month he announced to the world that China had successfully tested missiles with nuclear warheads. For the first time since Mao's death, China began to move forward under an effective leader.

At the same time, however, the border conflict between Cambodia and Vietnam was escalating and tensions were mounting on the Sino-Vietnamese border. The Chinese leadership at first had been slow to react to the oncoming crisis, but as Deng consolidated his position and initiated economic and administrative reforms to support the new modernization program, he viewed the hostility of the Vietnamese and the specter of Soviet involvement in Southeast Asia increasingly as serious threats to his fourfold modernization drive.<sup>10</sup>

The growing problem with Vietnam threatened China's four modernizations campaign in two ways. China needed time to develop its economic base upon which its industrial and military establishments could grow. A strong, independent Vietnam with Cambodia and Laos firmly in its camp and linked to Moscow in a "military alliance" directed against China, would

confront Beijing with a new and more serious military threat. China would be forced early on to devote ever-increasing resources into the military sphere in order to cope with this threat. This in turn would deprive other spheres (agriculture, industry, science and technology) of resources needed for development and would in the long run slow the entire modernization program. In addition to the external threat, domestically Deng was faced with the challenge of broadening his base of political support and dealing with those who opposed his bold new policies. As the Sino-Vietnamese relations approached a crisis, Deng would come under increasing pressure at home to deal with the problem in a manner which would be accepted by critics and supporters alike. If Deng's policies toward Vietnam and Moscow failed to secure China's interests, Deng risked losing his base of support. Because the four modernizations program was primarily a "Deng show," with Deng gone, the modernization program most probably would not survive.

#### Escalation of the Cambodia-Vietnam Border Conflict

On September 24, 1977, four Cambodian divisions attacked along the border of Tay Ninh Province, killing over 1,000 Vietnamese civilians, by Hanoi's count, between the end of September and early November. As the Cambodian forces dug in on the Vietnamese side of the border, another flood of Cambodian and Vietnamese refugees streamed into Ho Chi Minh City and the surrounding countryside. Four days after the assault had begun Pol Pot arrived in Beijing to participate in National Day festivities, giving Hanoi the impression that China supported the invasion. Chinese weapons and ammunition had made the assault possible, and Pol Pot received no public rebuke for the attack while in Beijing.

The Vietnamese withheld their counterattack, which seems to have been planned since at least early summer, until Pol Pot returned to Phnom Penh on October 4. The counterattack, 13 divisions strong, mauled the invading Cambodian forces. As the Vietnamese pushed the Cambodians back across the border, Hanoi sent its top negotiator, Phan Hien, to Beijing for two weeks of talks. The following month, November, Le Duane himself, the top Vietnamese party

leader, headed a delegation to Beijing. The visit received "cordial" and "friendly" greetings, the last time the veneer of friendship was to be applied for Vietnamese leaders.<sup>11</sup>

On December 31, Phnom Penh and Hanoi broke diplomatic relations. On the following day Vietnamese forces began a major offensive into Cambodia, driving 30 to 40 kilometers before stopping, reportedly because of a warning from Beijing that further advance risked a direct confrontation with China. At this point Hanoi still seemed to shy away from such a confrontation. Beijing responded to the Vietnamese drive into Cambodia by airlifting critical ammunition to Phnom Penh and by stepping up deliveries of heavy armaments (artillery and aircraft), to two shiploads a week.<sup>12</sup>

Beijing continued its carrot-and-stick policy toward Hanoi through 1977. Over 60 aid projects continued in progress, although being refused to step up aid needed for Vietnam's postwar reconstruction until Hanoi fell in line. Hanoi's economy was in severe straits, with rice rations dropping toward the subsistence level as floods and other dislocations dropped production below pre-liberation levels.<sup>13</sup> It no doubt occurred to Beijing that the cost of countering Cambodian belligerence might be the straw to break the back of Vietnamese intransigence. In fact, it only pushed Vietnam closer to Moscow, as Beijing would soon realize.

### Beijing and Hanoi Commit to Forward Strategies

Until 1978, the actions of both Vietnam and China were severely limited. Vietnam had attempted to avoid full-scale hostilities with Cambodia and China was circumspect in dealing with Vietnam. As the year began, both China and Vietnam shifted to more active policies, leading to increasing friction. A fatal interplay of forward policies began.

In January a National Conference on overseas Chinese in Beijing issued a proclamation:

We (Chinese) adopt a policy of uniting with those overseas Chinese who belong to the bourgeoisie. As to those who still harbor misgivings about the motherland and are even hostile to us, we should likewise work energetically among them....<sup>14</sup>

This proclamation aroused deep suspicion in Hanoi. After putting off the socialization of southern Vietnam's economy for almost three years, the Vietnamese leadership was about to close down the thriving private market system, still dominated by "overseas Chinese bourgeoisie." The proclamation from Beijing expressing solidarity with these "capitalists" made Hanoi aware that confrontation with Beijing, whether over Pol Pot's regime, their border disputes, the overseas Chinese, or any combination of the above, was becoming increasingly difficult to avoid.

Also in January Deng took time to make a six-day visit to Burma and a three-day visit to Nepal, apparently to take political soundings in these two neutral states on China's periphery. Zhou Enlai's widow, Deng Yingchao (Teng Ying-Chao), was sent with a Foreign Ministry delegation to Cambodia. The new Beijing leadership found that respect for Chinese influence had slipped and that its neighbors were impressed by Soviet gains in Africa and elsewhere. The need for a more active stance became obvious.

On February 16, China and Japan signed a non-governmental agreement for an eight-year trade agreement for \$20 billion. On February 23, the Central Committee of the CCP announced an ambitious 10-year plan to implement China's modernization goals and make China a modern industrial nation by the year 2000. And on February 25, the Fifth NPC opened with a speech by Premier Hua which committed China to an active opposition to the Soviet Union:

But so far as the overall situation is concerned, there is a strategic task common to the people the world over, and that is to consolidate and expand the international united front against hegemonism.<sup>15</sup>

Hua went on to accuse the West of accelerating the approach of world war by appeasing the Soviet "social-imperialists," and of having "the fond hope of saving themselves at the expense of others." If the West could not stop the Soviet hegemonists, China and those who resisted Russia would. "Our attitude toward a new world war is: 'First, we are against it; second, we are not afraid of it,'"<sup>16</sup> In short, Beijing had come to the conclusion that Western impotence over Soviet

encroachments in Africa and elsewhere, along with its policy of détente and disarmament in Europe, would enable Soviet armed forces to shift to the eastern frontier, gravely threatening China's security. China was going on record as being committed to checking Soviet global expansion, and was inviting others to join in an international unified front to stop the Kremlin. Siad Barre, president of Somalia, then fighting Soviet advisors and Cuban forces in Africa, was entertained in Beijing a month after the conference. A series of high-level Chinese delegations were scheduled to cover Africa for the rest of the year.

At the same time Vietnam was also embarking on a more active policy course. In February Hanoi offered Phnom Penh a three-point peace proposal calling for: (1) an immediate cease-fire with international supervision; (2) a 10-kilometer demilitarized zone, each side pulling back five kilometers; and (3) a border agreement and a peace and friendship treaty. The Pol Pot regime rejected this proposal, insisting talks could not begin until Vietnam proved its good intentions by "not firing a shot" for seven months. Hanoi termed the response "ridiculous" and convened a secret Central Committee meeting in Hanoi.<sup>17</sup>

According to Far Eastern Economic Review correspondent Nayan Chanda, it was at this Central Committee meeting that Hanoi decided to go ahead with the training of a Cambodian refugee "army" to overthrow the Pol Pot government.<sup>18</sup> Other major decisions apparently made at this meeting involved the economic integration and socialization of the reunited south and a crackdown on "bourgeois trade" and "capitalist elements" primarily in the Chinese Cholon section of Ho Chi Minh City. The Central Committee seems to have also approved closer contracts with Moscow and the buildup of forces along the Chinese border. After the meeting, it was rumored that General Giap flew to Vientiane to talk with visiting Soviet Deputy Defense Minister Pavlovsky. Le Duc Tho toured the Cambodian border commands, briefing them on Politburo decisions, as he had done before major offensives in 1968, 1972, and 1975.

#### The Sino-Vietnamese Dispute Becomes a Crisis

Relations between China and Vietnam deteriorated rapidly during the first months of 1978. In February Chinese and Vietnamese forces had clashed at Don Van and Mong Cai, with

30 Vietnamese reported killed at Mong Cai. The propaganda war heated up quickly, with both sides charging the other with border violations, which occurred with increasing frequency. Then on March 24, Hanoi implemented a program, decided on at the Central Committee meeting in February, cracking down on the "bourgeois trade" and "Tcapitalist elements" in Cholon and Hanoi. The primary targets of this campaign were the ethnic (overseas) Chinese traders and merchants in Cholon, who controlled the wholesale rice trade and had continued to trade in gold and foreign currency after the fall of Saigon in 1975. This included Chinese engaged in both legitimate and illegitimate banking and commercial interests. Hanoi also cracked down on the traders and shopkeepers, mostly Chinese, who dominated that city's small private sector.

Within days a mass exodus of the Chinese living in Vietnam had begun and within weeks serious fighting was reported on the China-Vietnam border. On April 30 Liao Chengzhi, long-time head of China's Overseas Chinese Affairs Bureau, expressed concern over the increasing numbers of overseas Chinese trying to return to their homeland from Vietnam and promised them protection. On May 4, Xuan Thuy charged that Chinese subversive groups were spreading horror stories in Vietnamese cities to aggravate tensions, and that the rumor-mongers were causing the exodus. By the end of May Beijing's propaganda machine dropped any semblance of restraint and began accusing Vietnam of atrocities against the overseas Chinese. The pro-Communist press in Hong Kong initiated charges that Vietnam was carrying out such "Moscow's designs," and becoming a "second Cuba," by giving the Soviets a base at Cam Ranh Bay (themes which the Beijing press soon picked up on). On May 27 Hanoi's foreign minister called for an end to polemics and proposed early talks. On June 9' the Chinese Foreign Ministry rejected the call for talks and announced a major cutback on aid to Vietnam, claiming that money had to be diverted to settle the mass of Chinese refugees that had been robbed and brutalized by Vietnam.

As May came to a close, Beijing dispatched two ships from Guangzhou (Canton) to pick up Chinese "victims" of Vietnamese "persecution" at Haiphong and Ho Chi Minh City. Hanoi flatly refused to permit the ships to land, standing on its right to control emigration. After two months) the ships finally returned to Gauangzhou without having picked up any refugees. On

June 16, China announced it was closing the Vietnamese consulates in Kunming, Nanning, and Guangzhou, ostensibly in retaliation for Hanoi's footdragging in responding to Beijing's requests for Chinese consulates in Ho Chi Minh City, Haiphong, and Da Nang. Although China professed concern about its rights to look after the sizeable Chinese populations in these areas, each capital was probably trying to prevent the other from observing significant military preparations along their common border.

Claiming that the Chinese were reinforcing their border, the Vietnamese strengthened their own border forces, reorganized the military command in the border area with more senior cadres, and purged pro-Chinese generals. In mid-June the newly reorganized Vietnamese army began a major military thrust into eastern Cambodia, seemingly aimed less at taking territory than at chewing up Cambodia's modest army. Heavy air strikes and artillery barrages were to continue all summer and fall. Despite solid resistance by the Cambodian forces, Vietnamese cannon-fodder tactics inexorably ate up Cambodian reserves. As the Cambodian army became hard pressed, a wave of an estimated 53,000 Cambodian refugees slipped through the cordon into Vietnam, trying to avoid the mayhem of war and Pol Pot's excesses. The émigré army in Vietnam grew steadily larger under the command of So Phim, who had been a Pol Pot army leader until he mutinied in May 1978 after an alleged coup attempt.

Vietnam, hard-pressed by the costs of its war with Cambodia and experiencing a catastrophic flooding of its rice lands, needed ever-increasing amounts of assistance. On June 28 Hanoi announced it was joining the Soviet-controlled Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CEMA), the Soviet bloc equivalent of Western Europe's Common Market. The move reflected Moscow's efforts to share the increasing financial burden of support to Vietnam with other CEMA members. The price of greater help by the Soviet Union was the abandonment of Hanoi's pretense of neutrality between its two communist benefactors. On July 2, Beijing responded to this action by terminating the last of its 60-odd economic aid programs to Vietnam. The CEMA countries picked up less than a dozen of these. Hanoi's efforts to seek U.S. assistance and investments to bolster its economy were shied away from by the United States, which refused to

normalize relations with Hanoi, even after Hanoi dropped its insistence on war reparations in July.<sup>19</sup> Cut off from Chinese aid because of the ever-deteriorating relations between Hanoi and Beijing, and refused U.S. assistance, Vietnam had turned again to Moscow. Unlike previous years, Hanoi would find it much more difficult to resist Moscow's pressure for "base rights" and similar concessions by playing Moscow and Beijing off against each other.

June and July were months of serious stocktaking in Beijing. Vietnam's offensive in Cambodia had undermined Beijing's earlier confidence that they could "bleed" Vietnam by a drawn-out struggle on foreign soil against a hostile population. It was becoming clear that the Cambodian army could not long survive the heightened level of conflict.

Domestically, Deng was encountering problems overcoming inertia. Despite the rehabilitation of about 110,000 persons who had been detained for periods of as far back as the 1950's, local and regional officials were dragging their feet over full rehabilitation. They were concerned about old scores being settled, about competition for jobs, and about the viability of Deng's new policies. The rapid zigzags of Beijing politics made many wary of going as far as Deng was pushing them.

In July Deng issued, over his own signature, the "July 4 Important Instruction." Its exact contents were not revealed publicly, but it started a new purge of Gang of Four sympathizers, particularly in Beijing, Tianjin (Tientsin), and Guangzhou. Top Deng supporters such as Wei Guoqing and Xu Shiyong went back to their home regions to supervise the execution of this instruction. By the end of the summer Deng's rehabilitation program, his "seek truth from facts" campaign, and his control over regional and local bureaucracies were well established.<sup>20</sup> Deng's political bandwagon was moving throughout the country, giving him the clout he needed for the final showdown with his politburo opponents in the fall.

His political debts to Wei and Xu were also increasing, however. By late summer the economic burdens of settling and providing for 160,000 refugees, with more expected, were putting a heavy strain on Wei's and Xu's political base in the drought-stricken southern

provinces. Deng was forced to pay greater attention to the growing crisis in the south. Vietnam had become a major domestic issue as well as a foreign policy problem.

### China and the Soviet Union

Until China assumed its active anti-Soviet stance in March, Soviet leaders appear to have been hopeful that a rapprochement could be reached with Mao's successors. The lull in active diplomacy in 1976 and 1977, coupled with clear signs of factional differences, led the Soviets to believe that there might be elements in Beijing willing to seek better relations, despite the antagonistic official rhetoric. This hope was probably whetted by a brief warming on the Chinese side in November 1977, when Foreign Minister Huang Hua showed up at the Soviet Embassy reception celebrating its National Day, the first time a high Chinese official had done so in 10 years. Following up on this opening, the Supreme Soviet sent a let-by-gones-be-by-gones letter to its Chinese counterpart, the Fifth NPC, in February 1978. Hua, however, delivered an anti-Soviet diatribe at the Congress and in March the NPC sent an official note to the U.S.S.R. condemning the Soviets for failing to keep alleged past promises (such as demilitarizing Mongolia) and called for "real deeds, not hollow words."<sup>21</sup> At the same time the Chinese extended the period of military conscription for each of the services by one year. In apparent reaction to these signs of renewed hostility, Soviet President Brezhnev and his defense minister made a highly publicized tour of Soviet military commands along the Chinese border from March 28 to April 9.

Chinese hostility increased Soviet interest in Vietnam. When Sino-Vietnamese relations plummeted over the overseas Chinese issue in May, the Kremlin obligingly dispatched a naval task force (two Kresta II's, one Krivak, and one Kashin destroyer) to exercise in the Philippine Sea, a short steam from the contested Paracel and Spratly archipelagoes. On May 11 a serious shooting incident erupted on the Sino-Soviet border, recalling similar incidents in March 1969. Belated, vague Soviet excuses about "chasing a prisoner" did not dispel the impression that

heavy pressure had been brought to bear on China at a time when China was beginning to bear down on Vietnam.

Two other events occurred in May, which no doubt heightened Soviet concerns and further tinged Sino-Soviet relations.

On May .5, Premier Hua Goufeng started his first trip ever outside China by visiting Pyongyang. North Korea's Kim Il-sung, who had committed a size-able Korean aid program to Pol Pot, for the first time adopted a public position that fell only slightly short of espousing Beijing's "anti-hegemonist" line. Addressing a rally welcoming Hua with words about "dominationists," Kim said:

Imperialism and other dominationist forces are engaged in a furious scramble to draw the third-world countries into the sphere of their domination by estranging them from each other and dividing them, and resort to crafty schemings to disorganize the non-aligned movement and the world revolutionary forces . . . The non-aligned countries . . . must not allow the imperialist, colonialist, and dominationist forces to set foot in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.<sup>22</sup>

The Vietnam-Cambodia war promised to provide Beijing a major dividend by putting Pyongyang on China's side against the Soviet Union on this issue.

Also in May, President Carter's national security advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski visited Beijing. His hard-line anti-Soviet ("polar bear<sup>1</sup>" threat) statements won him a much warmer reception than moderate Secretary of State Vance had received the previous year. Brzezinski and Deng held extended discussions about the world situation, after which they ~ stated that they were in agreement. Speculation that Brzezinski may have given all or part of a Top Secret strategic assessment (Presidential Review Memorandum 10) to Deng led Moscow to warn the U.S. against sharing intelligence information, such as satellite data on Soviet force deployments on the Chinese border.<sup>23</sup>

#### IV - CHINA COMNITS TO ACTION

##### Beijing Clarifies Its Options

By mid-July 1978 Beijing was moving to clarify its options in Indochina. It was becoming evident to the Chinese leadership that its policies toward Vietnam were failing to curb Moscow's and Hanoi's "hegemonistic" actions in Southeast Asia. Vietnam's entry into CEMA foretold ever-increasing cooperation between Vietnam and the Soviet Union; Beijing may have even anticipated the eventual signing of the peace and friendship treaty between Moscow and Hanoi. An invitation was sent to Hanoi to set up talks on the deputy foreign minister level, in Hanoi if desired, to try and resolve differences. After having withdrawn its ambassador in the heat of the refugee crisis, Beijing was now ready to reestablish communications with Hanoi on a high level. The deputy foreign ministers met in Hanoi on August 8, and China's Deputy Foreign Minister Zhong Xidong, presented a proposal on overseas Chinese on August 19. Hanoi rejected the proposal. The talks dragged on with intensifying rhetoric paralleled by increasing violence along the border until the talks were terminated on September 26.

Pursuing a second option in July, Beijing sent a senior PLA officer to escort Cambodia's Deputy Premier for Defense, Son Sen, to China. During talks held from July 29 to August 6, amidst festivities for China's Army Day, Deng told Son Sen that China's aid would be to no avail if the Pol Pot regime did not win the support of its people. He encouraged the Cambodian leadership to liberalize the harsh domestic programs, to bring Prince Sihanouk out of house arrest and into a broad unified front, and to prepare for a "people's war" in the countryside in the event their army weakened any further.<sup>24</sup> The Pol Pot government, however, failed to follow Beijing's advice to link more closely the Cambodian government and the Cambodian people.

By early autumn Beijing came to realize that its policies had been based on two faulty assumptions. Since late 1977 it had assumed that the Cambodian army, with Chinese supplies and advisors, could tie down Vietnam in an inconclusive but costly border war. Vietnam's previous offensives in October and January had not exceeded two weeks before tapering off.

There had been major skirmishes since then; but Pol Pot's forces had managed to handle them. However, after four weeks of high-intensity operations starting in mid-June, Beijing was forced to admit that Hanoi was capable of sustaining the conflict at a level of intensity that would soon destroy the Cambodian army. The other assumption, that its pressure on a war-ravaged Vietnam would in the end force Hanoi to soften its position toward Beijing, had in fact pushed Hanoi steadily closer to Moscow. Recognition of its miscalculations played a large part in the reassessment of its military position and the readjustment of its international geo-political position.

In an attempt to maneuver into the most advantageous position from which to counter Soviet-Vietnamese "hegemony" in Asia, Beijing shifted a major portion of its efforts towards improving its relations with Japan, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and the United States. Beijing sought to create a more favorable climate of international public opinion and to strengthen its international position vis-a-vis the Soviet Union and Vietnam. As Beijing was beginning to decide that only a bold military response would suffice to blunt Vietnam's "aggression" in Cambodia and demonstrate its opposition to Soviet-Vietnamese "collusion," it became essential to bolster its strategic position by seeking understanding from Japan, ASEAN, and the United States.

It is important to keep in mind, however, that the conclusion of a peace and friendship treaty with Japan and the normalization of relations with the United States--and steps to improve its general international position, especially with the key ASEAN states of peninsular Southeast Asia--were key components of Deng's strategy to modernize China. If China were successfully to meet the goal of the four modernizations, to make China a modern industrial power by the year 2000, massive inputs of Western and Japanese capital and technology would be required. Between Deng's rehabilitation in July 1977 and August 1978, however, little progress had been made on these issues. Indeed, the normalization of relations with the United States and the peace and friendship with Japan had been "in the mill" since China's diplomatic detente with the West in 1972. Thus, the advancement of Sino-Japanese, Sino-American, and Sino-ASEAN relations

would serve a double purpose. It would contribute to the four modernizations and it would improve China's ability to deal with the Soviet-Vietnamese problem in Indochina.

#### Diplomatic Activity Further Strengthens China's Geo-Political Position

In May China agreed to reopen talks with Japan on a peace and friendship treaty. The talks, which had begun in 1972, had been stalled by Japan's reluctance to antagonize the Soviet Union by accepting an "anti-hegemony" clause in the treaty stating: "neither should seek hegemony in the Asia-Pacific region or in any other region of the world and each is opposed to efforts by any other country or group of countries to establish hegemony." Both sides were now anxious to resolve this issue; Japan because its premier was coming up for reelection and needed a foreign policy "success" and because of heightened Japanese concern over the Soviet military presence in Asia, and China because closer ties with Tokyo were part of its overall strategy for modernization and because of the increasing hostility with the Soviet Union and Vietnam. China and Japan worked out their differences on the anti-hegemony clause and concluded an agreement on August 12, 1978.

One of the motivating factors for Beijing to enter into the peace and friendship treaty at this time was to make it difficult for Tokyo to feign neutrality toward Beijing's and Moscow's escalating competition for influence in Southeast Asia. Not only would more cordial and friendly relations between China and Japan enable China to obtain the technology and capital needed for the four modernizations, but the peace and friendship treaty might serve as a deterrent to increased Japanese-Vietnamese and Japanese-Soviet economic cooperation by forcing Japan eventually to choose between foregoing the benefits accruing from better relations with China or supporting Beijing's anti-hegemonist policies.

In an editorial in Peking Review on August 18, 1978 Beijing left no doubt as to the significance of the anti-hegemony clause. "At present, hegemony is on the rampage in the world, carrying on aggression, interference, expansion, and subversion everywhere . . . Therefore, opposition to hegemonism is a major task in the work of defending peace and an

important part of the treaty." (Emphasis added.) The anti-hegemony clause, included in Article II of the treaty) strengthened the Chinese anti-Soviet, anti-Vietnamese stance, but later proved to be embarrassing for Japan when China attacked Vietnam.

In August, just after the signing of the Sino-Japanese treaty, Premier Hua Guofeng made his much-publicized trip to the Balkans and Iran. According to diplomatic sources in Beijing, the trip was encouraged by Deng, who wanted Hua exposed to the modern world outside China, the better to appreciate the huge technological gap that had to be closed. Hua's willingness to leave the country stilled foreign speculation that he and Deng were vying for the top position in the party, except in Moscow, which continued to insist that a severe factional struggle between the two was in progress. Nevertheless, Hua's 5 sojourn into this area of primary Soviet interest was an attempt to improve Chinese relations with these countries and to demonstrate to the Soviet Union that China intended to oppose "hegemonism," and not just in Asia.

In September and October, Premier Pham Van Dong toured the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand, promising along the way not to support communist insurgencies in these countries. His attempts to forge closer ties with ASEAN were politely rebuffed.

In October Beijing also shifted its position on India. Having castigated India for twenty years as a "bully to its neighbors" and having conducted two limited territorial wars against India, the Beijing press now began to praise the Desai administration in New Delhi, which had been steadily moving away from the close ties with Moscow established by the Nehru government. India's Foreign Minister Vajpayee, scheduled to visit Beijing on October 27, postponed the trip due to "illness." The trip would be made later in February 1979.

On October 26, the Chinese Foreign Ministry issued its first clear threat to Vietnam: "The Vietnamese authorities must shoulder all responsibility for the consequences arising from their encroachments upon Chinese territorial integrity and sovereignty." In a Xinhua commentary on the following day the headline, "How Much Further Will Hanoi Go?" Beijing signaled that it felt it was being pushed toward war:

Since mid-September the situation has gone from bad to worse. the Vietnamese authorities created an atmosphere of military tension by stepping up their war preparations in the border areas. . . With lies and fabrications, they have tried to confound right and wrong. . For more than a month, Moscow openly incited Hanoi "to hit back" at China and declared that' Vietnam "may today as it did yesterday count on the support of the Soviet Union." Moreover the Kremlin has vastly increased its sea and air shipments of arms and military equipment to Vietnam. . . . On September 7, Hoang Son, member of the Central Committee of the Vietnamese Communist Party, even intimated the threat of war saying: "We must admit to the existing danger of war (with China) and prepare to fight" . . . It is still China's hope that they will become a little sober. Should they obdurately persist in their border provocations, their threats of war, they will certainly become victims of their own evil deeds. Let's see how much further the Vietnamese authorities have decided to go.<sup>25</sup>

#### November-December 1978

In the months of November and December 1978, a series of precedent-shattering events occurred which rapidly moved China and Vietnam and their respective allies to the brink of war.

On November 3' Le Duan and Brezhnev signed a 25-year peace and friendship treaty, stating in Article 6, "in the event that one of the parties is the object of an attack or threat of attack, the high contracting parties will immediately begin mutual consultations with a view to eliminating that threat and by taking appropriate and effective measures to ensure peace and security for their countries."<sup>26</sup> At the signing ceremony Le Duan made no evasions that the treaty was aimed at Beijing.

In an effort to prevent this development of events, imperialism and the forces of reaction are doing everything they can to stem the onward march of history. It is indicative that the reactionary grouping in Peking's ruling circles is knocking together forces wherever it can and creating a new alliance with imperialism and fascist toadies.<sup>27</sup>

From November 5 to 14, Deng toured the ASEAN border states (Thailand, Malaysia, and Singapore), and made a brief stopover in Burma. Although the talks were "secret," the word

quickly got out that Deng was probing ASEAN leaders on their position should the Pol Pot government fall to Vietnamese aggression. Talking to a group of Thai journalists, Deng openly mentioned the possibility of the fall of Phnom Penh and said, "If my expectation is correct Cambodia will then be completely overrun, and it will prove to the world what kind of regime the Vietnamese have. Then will be the time for ASEAN to play an important role in solving the problem."<sup>28</sup> From later events it appears that Deng also reached some kind of unpublicized and unacknowledged understanding with Thailand's Prime Minister Kriangsak over the movement of supplies for Pol Pot forces should a guerrilla war become necessary in Cambodia.

Deng went out of his way to seek favorable publicity, even to the point of attending a religious ceremony and meeting with the foreign press. When asked about Chinese support for insurgencies, Deng got a generally favorable response from the press for his frank reply in Bangkok: "I will not copy Pham Van Dong in lying (about supplying insurgents). Sincerity is the prerequisite for good relations among states."<sup>29</sup>

As Deng moved through Southeast Asia, Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Firyubin also toured the area. In his case, however, every effort was made to avoid publicity. At the same time a separate Chinese delegation met in Phnom Penh with Cambodian leaders. Headed by Wang Dongxing (Wang Tung-hsing), a specialist in security matters and including Hu Yaobang (Hu Yao-pang) (Deng's close friend and supporter), the delegation reportedly urged Pol Pot to prepare to evacuate Phnom Penh and start guerrilla fighting in the countryside.

Deng barely had gotten off the plane after returning to Beijing when he convened an extraordinary session of the enlarged Politburo. Borrowing a trick -from Mao, he stacked the Politburo with supporters from the provinces and military regions and called the session an "enlarged working conference."<sup>30</sup> Deng adroitly manipulated the Beijing media, rallies, and wallposters, and his own backers in the Politburo to force self-criticism from Hua, Wang Dongxing, Wu De (Wu Teh) and others who had opposed his pragmatic policies for modernizing China. The incredible events of that fortnight (November 15-30) resulted in Deng's complete control of the party center and its policies. From this point on, Deng spoke without hesitation in

formulating policies. Hua and his backers receded into secondary roles. A full plenum (the Third) of the 11th Central Committee was rapidly assembled in December to ratify Deng's policies and a mass campaign was conducted throughout China to indoctrinate the population on these policies, issued as a 19-point document under the heading "Deng and Li's talks 'with foreign friends.'" From now on Deng could move quickly in high-risk areas without having to compromise with critics. Events would show that Deng was indeed ready to take high risks to make up for lost time.

In the midst of these events the war between Vietnam and Cambodia approached its climax. On December 3, Hanoi announced the formation of the Kampuchean National United Front for National Salvation (KNUFNS), taking the final steps to implement its decision to overthrow the Pol Pot regime made at the February Central Committee meeting. On 25 December, 100,000 Vietnamese regular army forces and nearly 20,000 KNUFNS forces invaded Cambodia and drove for Phnom Penh, entering the defenseless capital 15 days later. The remnants of the Pol Pot government and its Chinese advisors fled into the countryside or over the border into Thailand. China lodged protests with the Vietnamese Embassy in Beijing and with the United Nations, but before a more direct response could be undertaken there remained unfinished business in China's foreign relations.

### China and the United States

On December 4 Deputy Foreign Minister Han Nianlong (Han Nien-lung) (substituting for Huang Hua, who was ill), called on U.S. Liaison Office chief Leonard Woodcock and indicated China was willing to make certain concessions on the terms for normalization of relations with the United States. Following a flurry of messages between Woodcock and Washington, a final agreement was reached by December 15 and announced with a joint communiqué, which included the familiar "anti-hegemony" statement. Premier Hua, in his press conference following the announcement of normalization, made clear Beijing's understanding of the new relationship: "The content of opposing hegemony is included in our joint communiqué. And

this, I believe will contribute to the struggle in Asia and the world against both big and small hegemony. We oppose both global and regional hegemony.”<sup>31</sup>

Responding to the invitation issued by President Carter in early December, when the U.S. and China agreed to normalize relations, Deng departed on January 28, 1979, for a nine-day visit to the U.S. During his visit Deng had little to say publicly about Vietnam or its attack on Cambodia. He focused primarily on the "hegemonists" in Moscow. Cautious at first, Deng increasingly used his appearances as a forum for attacks on the Soviet Union. Deng did refer specifically to Vietnam when he told members of Congress that to safeguard China's borders and security "we need to act appropriately, we cannot allow Vietnam to run wild everywhere. In the interests of world peace and stability, and in the interests of our own country, we may be forced to do what we do not like to do."<sup>32</sup> Deng concluded his trip on February 5, calling the visit "smooth" and "successful" and trailing an informal invitation for the United States to forsake détente with the Soviet Union and to join in an informal alliance with China against the Soviets.

On his way home, Deng visited Tokyo, again making statements that indicated Beijing's intent to invade Vietnam. During a visit with former Japanese Prime Minister Takeo Fukuda he said "the United States is allowing the Soviet Union to place a lot of pawns on the World's chessboard" and "things cannot be allowed to go on this way." Vietnam must be "punished" and China would have to apply "sanctions."

As in the case of the peace and friendship treaty with Japan, the normalization of relations with the United States was a key element in Deng's strategy for China's modernization, but pressing security matters dictated that Beijing adjust its timetable for accomplishment of this major foreign policy objective. There are several reasons why it was to China's advantage to complete normalization prior to its attack on Vietnam.

It is reasonable to conclude that Deng, a seasoned politician, wanted a face-to-face meeting with President Carter to judge the U.S. response to the idea of an attack by China to "punish" Vietnam. Assistant Secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Richard Holbrooke, has stated that Deng, although he did not state it explicitly, left no doubt in President

Carter's mind that China intended to attack Vietnam.<sup>33</sup> Since improved relations with the United States was a key element in Deng's modernization strategy, he wanted to be sure that China's attack would not severely impede the rapid progress that was being made in improving relations with the U.S. In fact, during Deng's trip his repeated references to the "big and small hegemonists" and statements indicating that China would have to "punish" Vietnam drew only mild responses from U.S. government officials and Congressmen. At no time did President Carter or any other member of the administration indicate that an attack by China on Vietnam would result in a slowdown in improving relations between the U.S. and China or that the U.S. might take some punitive action, economic or otherwise.

If China waited until after its attack on Vietnam, opponents of Beijing's conditions for normalization in the United States could point to Chinese "aggression" in Vietnam as a sign that China could not be trusted to rely on peaceful means to resolve the Taiwan problem. In addition, even if this domestic political opposition could be overcome in the wake of a Chinese attack, a delay until the spring or summer of 1979 might have found the Carter administration in a less receptive mood and, as the time for the U.S. presidential elections drew near, less willing to attempt to deal with this issue.

Finally, although Beijing probably placed little value on the ability of the United States to deter the Soviet Union from retaliating against China for an attack on Vietnam, normalization of relations between the U.S. and China and Washington's moderating counsel to Moscow apparently did serve as a counter-influence on the Soviet Union. Richard Holbrooke stated that during the weeks immediately preceding the attack, "we were in constant communication with both Beijing and Moscow."<sup>34</sup> Communicating through Washington, Beijing could make its limited objectives known to Moscow along with Washington's concern that any Soviet action in response to China's attack would be of "great concern" to the United States. The relaxation of COCOM restrictions on the sale of arms by NATO countries in November 1977, the specter of increasing technology transfers to China from the United States, and the normalization of

relations between the U.S. and China, intended or not, gave Moscow the impression that the United States was "behind" China.

### China Attacks

On February 11, just six days before the attack, Beijing rejected overtures by the Vietnamese calling for a cease-fire along the border and a United Nations supervised demilitarized zone on both sides of the border.

Finally, on February 17, Chinese forces, over 100,000 strong, attacked Vietnam along the entire border area. The same day, Vietnamese Premier Pham Van Dong, who had arrived in Phnom Penh just hours before the invasion began, went ahead with the planned signing of a 25-year peace and friendship treaty with the new Vietnam-supported Cambodian government. Included in the treaty were commitments for mutual defense against "international reactionary forces," legitimizing Vietnam's military presence in Cambodia.

Following China's initial thrust into Vietnam, the attack slowed on February 20 and there was a general battlefield lull lasting about two days. While many Western news agencies were suggesting that this lull was an indication that Chinese forces might soon withdraw from Vietnamese territory, this pause enabled Beijing to measure Hanoi's and the Soviet Union's responses to the attack and gave Hanoi an opportunity to "reassess" its position. Peking also later admitted to terrain intelligence problems during this initial phase.

In the initial attack, Chinese forces apparently met with much stiffer resistance than they had anticipated and Hanoi failed to respond in the desired manner. Thus, battlefield activity intensified once again on February 22. In the heaviest fighting of the six-day-old war, Chinese forces launched fresh attacks on Highway 1 north of the Vietnamese provincial capital of Lang Son against Vietnamese units guarding the approaches to Hanoi. Chinese government officials announced that China's "punishment" of Vietnam was not yet finished. On February 23 the PLA clashed for the first time with well-equipped regiments of the Vietnamese regular army that had been deployed in the Lang Son area over the preceding few days.

The inability of China's forces to win a clear-cut victory over the Vietnamese in the initial phase of the attack required further escalation of the conflict in Beijing's "punishment" were to be effective. Although the Soviet Union did not intervene directly in the conflict, they had sent a high-level military delegation to Hanoi, rushed military supplies to Vietnam, and by February 23 had a naval task force of 13 warships off northern Vietnam. These actions, intended to intimidate the Chinese, and the intense Vietnamese propaganda claiming the Chinese invaders were suffering severe losses, placed Beijing in an awkward position. If China withdrew at this point it would appear that it had been defeated by the smaller Vietnam force or had backed down in the face of Soviet threats.

On February 26, during a lull in the fighting, Vice Premier Deng told reporters from Japan's Kyodo News Agency that China's invasion of Vietnam would end in about 10 days, or perhaps a little longer "because Vietnam is stronger than India."<sup>35</sup>

The attack was escalated to a new phase when on February 28, Chinese forces began a large scale attack on Lang Son with the intention of inflicting heavy damage on the Vietnamese regular forces defending the city. By March 3' after an intense battle, Chinese forces drove back the Vietnamese and captured Lang Son. China immediately called for a cease-fire and announced that it was ready to withdraw from Vietnam. Although the attack was not an overwhelming victory for China, the PLA had inflicted sufficient damage on Vietnamese regular forces to strengthen their position vis-a-vis Hanoi and again demonstrate to the world that the PRC would take military action when it perceived its national security interests were threatened. Beijing was now ready to explore detente with Hanoi.

The day after the attack on Lang Son, on March 1, China initiated detente measures intended to prevent the conflict from escalating further. The Chinese government sent a note to the Vietnamese Embassy in Beijing proposing talks "as soon as possible" to end the two-week-old border war. Beijing proposed devising "any constructive measures that ensure peace and tranquility" along the border and then proceed to settle their border disputes "concerning the boundary and territory."

On March 5, Xinhua announced that China had begun withdrawing its troops from Vietnam, stating that the invasion force had been pulled out "after achieving the goals assigned them." On March 15, Beijing announced that all Chinese PLA units had been withdrawn from Vietnamese territory.

#### V - COMPONENTS OF THE DECISION

The foregoing discussion has traced the development and interrelation of the many complex variables that led to China's decision to use military force in Vietnam and those actions taken by China to deal with the developing crisis. Based on an analysis of these variables and events and Chinese statements made after the attack, it appears that China's decision to invade Vietnam can be broken down into three components.

The first decision component was that positive action was necessary to change a situation which had become intolerable to Chinese interests. With Vietnam's entry into CEMA in June 1978, the signing of a peace and friendship treaty with Moscow in November, and the formation of the KNUFNS and attack on Cambodia in December, it became progressively clear to Chinese decision-makers that previous policies and actions toward Hanoi had failed to prevent a serious escalation of the conflict or to modify Vietnamese behavior. In addition Beijing considered this problem in the broader context of Sino-Soviet relations. Beijing believed that it was necessary to demonstrate to both Hanoi and Moscow that it could not permit this threat to its security and modernization efforts to go unchecked. A strong Vietnam with control over Cambodia and Laos would effectively cut China off from a powerful and influential role in Southeast Asia.

Vietnam's intensification of the armed conflict reflected the will of both Hanoi and Moscow. If this will prevails unchecked, China's southern borders areas will never be stable, her territory and sovereignty will be trampled on, and her socialist modernization programs will suffer from increasing interference; Vietnam will become more unbridled in its drive for expansion and, like Cuba, it

will act wildly without being punished, and in that case, the peoples of Laos and Kampuchea will directly suffer from the bitter fruit of aggression and the peace and security of the Southeast Asian countries will also face growing pressure and threat.<sup>36</sup>

The second decision component--that force was essential to remedy situation--was based on the experiential belief that anything short of would not suffice to change Vietnamese behavior.

Facts have proved that in dealing with the Vietnamese authorities, restraint and forbearance were regarded as an invitation to more bullying and all appeals, advice and warnings have fallen on deaf ears. Their bullying has gone beyond the limit of our forbearance.<sup>37</sup>

As far as Beijing was concerned they were confronted by "Vietnamese authorities (who) are nationalist expansionists," who were conspiring with Soviet aid and protection in the encirclement of China.

Hanoi wishfully hoped that so long as China refrained from making any counterattack against its armed provocations in the Sino-Vietnamese border areas, it would be able not only to have an advantage over China in the north, but also to use this as a kind of show of force to intimidate the Southeast Asian nations so that it could ride roughshod over Southeast Asia and expand there.<sup>38</sup>

A public display of China's willingness to employ force to protect its interests was important not only for its impression on Hanoi and Moscow, but on the rest of Southeast Asia and the World. If a small country like Vietnam could ride roughshod over an ally of China, humiliate overseas Chinese, and act provocatively on China's very border, anything less than a resolute display of force would be interpreted as pusillanimous. The credibility of China's legitimacy as the leader of the Third World against the superpowers was at stake. In declaring a victory after the invasion, the Chinese asserted "The situation has not developed as Hanoi and Moscow hoped. No hegemonism, whether global or regional, can frighten people except those who are weak willed."<sup>39</sup> (Emphasis added.) Deng' 5 repeated promises before the attack that "China means what it says" revealed the importance in Chinese thinking of establishing such

credibility. In the specific case of Vietnam, China also felt it was important to "explode the myth of Vietnamese invincibility." The cautious stance adopted by ASEAN countries after the blitzkrieg on Phnom Penh in December-January clearly had eroded Chinese influence in the region. China's "punishment" of Vietnam got a generally favorable press reaction later, and helped to reverse this slippage.

The third decision component--how much force should be used, and in what manner--was essentially a question of risk exposure. Extreme use of force, to overrun major Vietnamese population centers, or to occupy a large amount of Vietnamese territory, posed unacceptable hazards. Moscow might have had no choice but to respond massively to roll back Chinese forces, or lose face. Strategically, this response would logically have had to come as an invasion along the Sino-Soviet border or in the form of a punitive nuclear strike. Beijing was not prepared to provoke a such a response from Russia. The alternative was a limited war, a form of force diplomacy with which Beijing had had considerable experience in the past. The gradual escalation of military pressure through a series of phases (probing, warning, demonstration, attack, and detente) has been a pattern of Chinese conflict management behavior in confrontations going back to the Korean War.<sup>40</sup> China's use of this kind of limited warfare makes a maximum use of signaling devices as increasing pressure is brought to bear. The element of surprise is minimal.

Beijing's election of this option reduced its risks but also reduced its chances of obtaining a clear-cut success in its war aims. By choosing to "punish" Vietnam with a limited strike into Vietnamese territory, it forewent the greatest psychological advantage in warfare: convincing the enemy you will keep escalating pressure until he is no longer willing to endure the punishment and capitulates to your demand. Beijing could hope that Hanoi would transfer its forces in occupation of Cambodia to the new front, it could hope that Vietnam would move enough regular army units to the war zone to permit the Chinese army to win a major battle, it could hope that the hard pressed Vietnamese people would despair of the unceasing military

adventures of their leaders under this new pressure, but it could not guarantee these results with the constraints it imposed on itself.

## VI - AFTERMATH: THE UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

The Sino-Vietnamese war of 1979 was clearly a watershed, but the full significance of the event remains to be seen. Three questions are particularly pertinent: Will China "punish" Vietnam again? How has the war affected Chinese domestic politics? And what was the role of the United States in the development of the China-Vietnam situation and what light does the U.S. role shed on the development of the strategic triangle (China, the Soviet Union, and the U.S.)?

Will China "punish" Vietnam again? Although the war improved Beijing's image among the non-communist Southeast Asian states and enabled China to dispel the "myth of Vietnamese invincibility,"<sup>41</sup> China's action failed to relieve the primary concerns in Beijing: (1) Soviet military penetration of Southeast Asia; (2) the threat of Soviet-Vietnamese military collusion to the four modernizations (and Deng's domestic political position); (3) Vietnamese control over Cambodia; and (4) Vietnam's attitude toward the overseas Chinese in Vietnam.

The strains of war have actually opened the way for greater Soviet military access in Vietnam. Arguing the need to support Vietnam most effectively during the war, the Soviets for the first time have been able to forward-stage TU-95 reconnaissance (BEAR) bombers in Vietnam and obtain permission for Soviet warships to use Vietnamese port facilities. It also appears the Soviets have been allowed to set up an electronic intelligence-gathering facility in Vietnam.

In Cambodia, even after the Chinese attack, the Vietnamese went on to conduct a major offensive. Although some forces may have moved north in the postwar mobilization as Chinese troops withdrew, an estimated 100,000 Vietnamese occupation troops remained in Cambodia, securing the country for Hanoi's puppet regime. To oppose these Vietnamese moves, China, on the military front, has continued to support the Khmer Rouge resistance movement; diploma-

tically, it has taken active measures to undermine the legitimacy of the new Cambodian government, such as attempting to block seating of the Heng Samrin delegation at the Colombo talks.

Both Vietnam and China still have formidable forces facing each other across their common border. Since February, the Vietnamese were reported to have more than doubled the number of their troops in the north)to over 140,000. Despite a charge in May by Vietnamese Vice Foreign Minister Dinh Nho Liem that China has massed "up to 10 divisions" on its border, Western military analysts have suggested that China has considerably reduced its strength in the border provinces of Guangxi and Yunnan, leaving some 250,000 to 300,000 troops, and pulling back equipment and planes for maintenance.<sup>42</sup> Beijing would probably not attempt to launch a new attack until Pol Pot's forces had been regrouped and resupplied, so that they could rise up in coordination with China's new invasion, prepared to exploit any resulting weakness in Vietnam's position in Cambodia. If and when the Chinese do strike, the attack may once again take place along the Sino-Vietnamese border or it might occur in Laos, where the Vietnamese are even more Vulnerable.

Certainly the negotiations to end the war showed no desire to improve relations on either side. China rejected Vietnam's three-point proposal for a cease-fire, return of territory, and a demilitarized zone and the Vietnamese rejected China's eight-point proposal, which insisted on a change of alignment in Vietnam 5 foreign affairs, the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Cambodia, and, significantly, the return of overseas Chinese forced out of Vietnam. A May 5 Xinhua report claimed that 20,000 more refugees had been driven into China since April 1. Each side has claimed continuous, serious border violations by the other side after hostilities ceased.

On May .2, Deng Xiaoping told UN Secretary General Waltheim that it might be necessary to "teach Vietnam another lesson."<sup>43</sup> The statement came at the end of a two-week enlarged party working conference in late April, similar to the one in November 1978 that cleared the way for final preparations for the February attack.

How has the war affected Chinese domestic politics? Quarrels over foreign policy in China usually exacerbate already existing struggles for authority, status, and influence among leaders in the Politburo.<sup>44</sup> Sources in the leftist Hong Kong press give the impression that Deng's dominant party is opposed by the remaining Maoists, led by Wang Dongxin, but give no evidence to show that the Maoists opposed the decision to invade Vietnam. Apart from two short-lived wall-posters (which may have been put up by a human rights group, or even by someone in connivance with the Soviets), there is every indication that the war won wide-spread national support. Deng's press was slow to announce that the war had begun (it was several days until the Chinese people heard about it from their own media), but this reticence was probably due to Deng's caution in waiting for the gamble to show some positive results that could be dressed up before he committed himself publicly. Wang's faction may have taken issue with peripheral decisions made in preparation for the war, such as accelerating ties with Japan and the U.S., and Chinese concessions on the Taiwan issue, but there is no public record of such footdragging. One sole intriguing hint which may not be directly connected with the war except in time, came with a front-page editorial in People's Daily on March 10 as Chinese troops were withdrawing from Vietnam. Headlined "Settle Grudges and Tighten Solidarity," it warned that "There are grudges among many comrades of the party that, in the worst case, led to the formation of a major breach." Further elaboration on what provoked such an editorial at this critical time will be required before it can be related to the war. The fact that Deng personally investigated the situation in Southeast Asia immediately before the November party meeting, and traveled in the U.S. just prior to a final leadership meeting on the eve of the war, also supports the speculation he was warmongering evidence to quell opposing arguments in the Politburo.

The only faction in China strong enough to curb Deng is the PLA. Despite heavy losses in the war, admitted by Deputy Chief of Staff Wu Xiuquan to be 20,000 killed and wounded,<sup>45</sup> the PLA appears to be in Deng's camp. Furthermore, the PLA stands to benefit substantially from Deng's modernization program. In the 1979-80 budget, the military sector received a major increase.

What was the role of the U.S. in the development of the China-Vietnam situation and what light does the U.S. role shed on the development of the strategic triangle? For months prior to China 5 attack, U.S. officials were preoccupied with the effects of possible hostilities on U.S. national interests. In a New York Times story on Hodding Carter's press conference on the day of the attack, it was admitted that the U.S. had been urging China, Vietnam, and the Soviet Union to avoid an armed conflict since September 1978,<sup>46</sup> and that these efforts included meetings with Vietnamese diplomats and messages from Vance to Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko and to Chinese officials.<sup>47</sup> Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Richard Holbrooke reportedly summoned the PRC ambassador twice in the week prior to Deng's U.S. visit, to warn him that an attack during the visit would deeply embarrass the U.S.<sup>48</sup> And just prior to the attack, U.S. Ambassador to Moscow Malcolm Toon conveyed hope to Gromyko that the Soviets would show restraint if an attack came.<sup>49</sup> The U.S. was in the unusual position, as a White House official "who asked not to be named" (probably Brzezinski) pointed out, of being the only global power in a position to talk effectively with both Moscow and Beijing.<sup>50</sup> This role appears to have played a critical function before, during, and after the unfolding crisis.

While these diplomatic activities were taking place a constant stream of intelligence appeared in the Washington, Tokyo, Bangkok, and Hong Kong press to the effect that the size of the Chinese forces near the border was limited, most of the Chinese forces in the south were in defensive positions, and Soviet forces neither reinforced their units on the Russian-Chinese border nor ordered mobilization until after the attack had begun.<sup>51</sup> This information tended to ensure that none of the active participants (China and Vietnam), or a possible participant (the Soviet Union) overestimated and overreacted to changes in the situation.

The conduct of the belligerents and the Soviet Union in this war was strange, judged by any standards. All concerned knew well in advance a war was imminent. Yet Vietnam, a country of 50 million people, chose not to move its mainline army units out of Cambodia, where they were mopping up the remnants of Pol Pot's shattered army, even to protect itself from attack

by a country of over 950 million. Although a movement would have been time-consuming, Vietnam had adequate warning to shift the units, had it so desired. Once attacked, it could have been too late. Hanoi elected not to shift the forces, seemingly risking its survival. Vietnam's treaty with the Soviet Union was not much to count on, given Moscow's record of limited support in wars for North Korea and India, previous treaty allies. Nevertheless, Hanoi seemed to have confidence that Beijing's attack would be limited and brief. Was this confidence based on foreknowledge, and if so what was its Source?

The actions of the Soviet Union appear equally strange. Once the Chinese attacked Vietnam, Moscow did not take the basic precautions of reinforcing its border units and deploying its pacific fleet. Having just signed a defense treaty with the overt purpose of deterring such an attack, and being by nature a suspicious and conservative military power, Russia could have been expected to prepare for the worst as Vietnam and China started over the brink into the unknown. Or was it unknown? Was Moscow the source of knowledge, which account for Hanoi's apparent confidence?

The pattern of Soviet and Vietnamese activity bespeaks a clear understanding of future Chinese activities. Beijing did not announce that it was launching a limited war until the day of the attack; the specific limitations of its actions (depth and duration of penetration, not entering Red River valley, etc.) were not announced for days later. Yet Hanoi and Moscow acted even before the attack as though they possessed this key information and were confident in its accuracy. It is highly unlikely that Beijing could have approached Moscow to probe the threshold of its reaction to possible Chinese attack scenarios, and even if it had, there is no reason to believe that Moscow would have had any confidence in Beijing's assurances. Both wanted to talk about the expected hostilities in Indochina, but needed a reliable intermediary.

U.S. national interests would have supported taking this role, and there are good reasons to believe Washington in fact did. Both Washington and Beijing wanted to avoid an Indochina war spreading into a major Sino-Soviet war, and both found it in their national interests to avoid a situation in Indochina that could lead to Soviet intervention and possibly permanent presence in

the area. The interests of the U.S. and the Soviet Union also overlapped: neither wanted a wider war. Moscow seems to have taken the unprecedented step signaling Beijing through Washington what specific limits of Chinese action could be accepted without Moscow feeling forced to intervene to back up its treaty commitments.

For the first time a new communications grid was apparently established within the strategic triangle, with Washington at its center. In this specific case it appears the United States put its own prestige on the line by supporting the bona fides of the Chinese to the Soviet Union, and vice versa. The ploy was successful because of the enormous stakes involved. But more importantly, its very success may leave these tested channels open for use in future crises.

NOTES

The authors gratefully acknowledge the assistance and guidance of Professor Claude A. Buss of the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School, and emeritus Professor of Chinese history at Stanford, in the preparation of this paper.

<sup>1</sup>For a text of Deng's Three Worlds speech to the United Nations, see Peking Review, No. 16, April 19, 1974. Mao had first enunciated the concept to "a foreign leader" in February 1974. For the fullest exposition of the thesis, see the reprint of a Renmin Ribao editorial, "Chairman Mao's Theory of the Differentiation of the Three Worlds is a Major Contribution to Marxism-Leninism," in Peking Review, No. 45, November 4, 1977

<sup>2</sup>For an excellent summary of Beijing's use of the anti-hegemony statement in treaty-making, see Joachim Glaubitz, "Anti-Hegemony Formulas in Chinese Foreign Policy," Asian Survey, March 1976, pp. 205-215.

<sup>3</sup>Chinese perceptions of encirclement and counterencirclement are elucidated in Francis Romance's, "Peking's Counter-Encirclement Strategy: The Maritime Element," Orbis, Summer 1976, pp. 437-459.

<sup>4</sup>Nayan Chanda, "The Bloody Border: Vietnam Prepares for a Long War," Far Eastern Economic Review, April 21, 1978, p. 17.

<sup>5</sup>Michael Richardson, "A Helping Hand for Vietnam," Far Eastern Economic Review, June 23, 1978, p. 20.

<sup>6</sup>Peking Review, No. 24, June 10, 1977, p. 7.

<sup>7</sup>This at least has been Beijing's consistent contention. For particulars, see extensive arguments presented in Shih Ti-tsu, "South China Sea Islands, Chinese Territory Since Ancient Times," Peking Review, No. 50, December 12, 1975; Xinhua Correspondent, "Xisha and Nansha Islands Belong to China," Beijing Review, No. 21, May 25, 1979.

<sup>8</sup>The best analyses of shifting power bases during this period are probably: Lowell Dittmer, "Bases of Power in Chinese Politics: A Theory and an Analysis of the Fall of the Gang of Four," World Politics, October 1978, pp. 26-60; Jergen Domes, "China in 1976, Tremors of Transition," Asian Survey, January 1977, pp. 1-17; and Ting Wang, "Leadership Realignments," Problems in Communism, July-August 1977, pp. 1-17.

<sup>9</sup>Hong Yang Lee, "The Entanglement of Ideology and Cadre Politics After the Cultural Revolution," a paper presented to the Association of Asian Studies Conference, March 1979, in Los Angeles, California, pp. 25-26.

<sup>10</sup>The relationship between the growing external threat from the south to China's modernization drive has been frequently mentioned without explication; see for example, Peking Review, No. 11, March 16, 1976, p. 16. ("... If we had let such acts of aggression pass, we

would have been encouraging the aggressors. Our socialist modernization programme could hardly proceed smoothly..")

<sup>11</sup>Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), Trends in Communist Media, November 23, 1977.

<sup>12</sup>Nayan Chanda, "Peking Escalates the War of Nerves," Far Eastern Economic Review, March 17, 1978, p. 10.

<sup>13</sup>Vietnam's rice harvests were devastated by monsoon flooding in both 1977 and 1978. One Ho Chi Minh City official estimated 83 per cent of the 1978 winter crop was lost. See Far Eastern Economic Review, October 20, 1978; Wall Street Journal, October 4, 1978; New York Times, March 4, 1979.

<sup>14</sup>Renmin Ribao, January 4, 1978.

<sup>15</sup>Peking Review, No. 10, March 10, 1978, p. 36.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>Nayan Chanda, "The Timetable for a Takeover," Far Eastern Economic Review, February 23, 1978, p. 33.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

According to Richard Holbrooke, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, in a speech at the 1979 World Affairs Council of Northern California Conference at Asilomar, California, although there were no longer any bilateral impediments to the normalization of relations between the United States and Vietnam once Hanoi dropped its demands for war reparations in late Summer 1978, the State Department opposed normalization because of the Vietnam refugee situation and Hanoi's belligerence toward Cambodia.

<sup>20</sup>The "seek truth from facts" campaign, launched during the All-Army Political Work Conference in April-June 1978, became the driving wedge for Deng's moderates in their efforts to overcome foot-draggers like Hua, who were reluctant to espouse an inherently anti-Maoist program. The de-Maoification forces emerged victorious in August, when the final conference instruction took Deng's position rather than the "politics in command" positions taken in earlier speeches by Hua and Marshal Ye Jianying.

<sup>21</sup>Peking Review, No. 13, March 31, 1978.

<sup>22</sup>Peking Review, No. 19, May 12, 1978.

<sup>23</sup>The allegation that PR-10 was shared with the Chinese was made in Stanley Karnow's "East Asia in 1978: The Great Transformation," Foreign Affairs, Vol. 57, No. 3, (no date; special "America and the World" issue, 1979), p 599. The Soviet warning on satellite

intelligence-sharing is from "Soviets Warn U.S. on Release of Reconnaissance Photos," Defense/Space Daily, January 12, 1979, p. 50.

<sup>24</sup>Far Eastern Economic Review, August 11, September 8, 1978.

<sup>25</sup>Peking Review, No. 44, November 3, 1978, pp. 25-26.

<sup>26</sup>Pravda, November 4, 1978 (from ~rrent Di est of the Soviet Press, No. 44, p. 10.).

<sup>27</sup>Ibid.

<sup>28</sup>Nayan Chanda, "Cambodia: Waiting for the Inevitable," Far Eastern Economic Review, November 24, 1978, p. 10.

<sup>29</sup>David Bonavia, "The Marxist and the Monarchy," Far Eastern Economic Review, November 17, 1978, p. 11.

<sup>30</sup>This political technique has been analyzed by Parris Chang, "Research Notes on the Changing Loci of Decision in the CCP," China Quarterly, October-December 1970, pp. 169-194; and Kenneth Lieherthal, A Research Guide to Central Party and Government Meetings in China 1949-1975, (White Plains, N.Y.: International Arts and Sciences Press, Inc., 1976), pp. 3-31.

<sup>31</sup>Foreign Broadcast Information Service, People's Republic of China Daily Report, December 18, 1978, p. A6.

<sup>32</sup>U.S. News & World Report, February 12, 1979, p. 22.

<sup>33</sup>See f.n. 19. The imminence of the Chinese attack at the time of Deng's visit was clear to U.S. policy makers from intelligence data, which the U.S. apparently made available to the press as reports on major troop movements to the border. According to Newsweek, February 5, 1979, p. 32, Holbrooke twice summoned the Chinese ambassador the week prior to Deng's visit to warn him that an attack on Vietnam during the visit would deeply embarrass the U.S. Holbrooke admitted after the attack began in mid-February that President Carter was aware of Chinese intentions, but "had not given any 'green light'."

<sup>34</sup>See f.n. 19.

<sup>35</sup>San Francisco Chronicle, February 27, 1979.

<sup>36</sup>Beijing Review, No. 12, March 23, 1979.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

<sup>38</sup>Beijing Review, No. 12, March 23, 1979.

<sup>39</sup>Beijing Review, No. 8, February 23, 1979, citing a February 18, 1979 Renmin Ribao editorial.

<sup>40</sup>For an excellent analysis of Chinese conflict management behavior, see Steve Chan, "Chinese Conflict Calculus and Behavior: Assessment from a Perspective of Conflict Management," World Politics, April 1978, pp. 391-410.

<sup>41</sup>H. Kamm, "Asians Appear to Side with Peking against Hanoi," New York Times, March 14, 1979.

<sup>42</sup>Far Eastern Economic Review, May 18, 1979, p. 12.

<sup>43</sup>This threat was repeated later in stronger terms by Vice Premier Li Xianni an: The Vietnamese are still firing at us along the Sino-Vietnamese border and I would not like to exclude the possibility of an-other strike back against the Vietnamese in self-defense on the part of China. We tell our friends that this is not the thing we want to do. But if the Soviets and the Vietnamese should compel China to do this, then there is no way out --we have to do it... We now know that our counterattack against the Vietnamese last February did not give the Vietnamese enough of a lesson, because we declared in advance that the attack was limited bot~i in scope and duration. (emphasis added) (Newsweek, Jul 6, 1979).

<sup>44</sup>See Roger Glenn Brown, "Chinese Politics & American Policy," Foreign Policy, Summer 1976; Lowell Dittmer "Bases of Power in Chinese Politics," World Politics, October 1978.

<sup>45</sup>New York Times, May 3, 1979.

<sup>46</sup>Washington Post, February 18, 1979. Note: The Washington Post identified Hodding Carter as the "senior official" mentioned holding the press conference by the New York Times article.

<sup>47</sup>New York Times, February 18, 1979.

<sup>48</sup>Newsweek, February 5, 1979.

<sup>49</sup>Christian Science Monitor, February 26, 1979.

<sup>50</sup>Monterey Peninsula Herald (Al' despatch), February 19, 1979.

<sup>51</sup>Among numerous examples of information clearly from intelligence channels which tended to focus on the limited nature of force redeployments~ see Nayan Chanda, "Mustering for a Border War," Far Eastern Economic Review, February 16, 1979, p. 10; E.Q. White, "Press Coverage of the Indochina Conflict Prr'ves Difficult," Monterey Peninsula Herald (AP despatch) February 27, 1979; K. Beech, "Chinese Troops Move Toward Vietnam Border," San Jose Mercury (AP despatch), January 26, 1979.