

more successful in its attempts to get back into the international community in 1976 and 1977.

Ever since the Paris Agreements were signed at the end of January 1973, Western analysts have found it virtually impossible to make accurate forecasts concerning either Vietnamese policy or the general situation in Indochina. Few specialists were able to predict the rapid collapse of South Vietnam or the significant deterioration in Vietnam's relations with China. It is worth adding that even China itself did not anticipate Vietnam's intervention in Kampuchea in December 1978, nor did it perhaps fully appreciate, at least at the outset, the cruel fanaticism of its ally, the Khmer Rouge regime.

Less than four years after the fall of Saigon, fighting broke out again; this time the conflict was even more vicious, since it resembled a civil war, with opponents who were former members of the socialist fraternity that was forged throughout the years of resistance to the United States. The following is a brief outline of the train of events which led to this renewed strife in Indochina.

RENEWED CONFLICT IN INDOCHINA

No sooner had the last US helicopters beat a hasty retreat in 1975 than the first signs of conflict between the Vietnamese and the Cambodians began to appear. At the same time Beijing viewed the reunification of Vietnam with considerable misgiving. The antagonism between China and the Soviet Union was reflected in Indochina where it inevitably affected relations between Kampuchea, supported by China, and Vietnam, the protégé of the Soviet Union.

The first incidents on the Vietnamese-Cambodian border took place as early as 1975. Until February 1976, however, the two countries continued to negotiate with each other and set up liaison committees to deal with border disputes; these committees carried on their task more or less efficiently until March 1977.¹ That was the year which put paid to

¹ Nayan Chanda, "Clash of Steel Among the Comrades," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 13 January 1978, p. 10 and 11; see also by the same author "The Bloody Border," in *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 21 April 1978, pp. 17-22.