

battles for them. In Cambodia, each side is trapped by a similar strategy, that of carrying on a war of attrition. Each believes that if the war drags on it will reap political advantages and bring about the exhaustion of its adversary. The symmetrical nature of the positions held by the opposing sides has produced a deadlock which has now lasted for nine years.

Secondly this survey also deals with the confrontational relationship between China, Vietnam and the Soviet Union. An appreciation of how this Moscow-Beijing-Hanoi triangle operates is necessary for a better understanding of both the cooperation and the antagonism which exists between these three Socialist countries. By studying how these three states behave, from an historical perspective, it is easier to understand to what extent their behaviour is motivated by cool calculations of national interest and how cultural traditions persist. These traditions are apparent in arguments where nationalism clearly takes precedence over Marxism-Leninism.

Finally this study tries to give an account of the various attempts to initiate a dialogue between the opponents. There have been innumerable peace proposals, suggested settlements and compromises. Despite all these attempts at mediation, however, and the diplomatic activity which they have involved, the deadlock persists.

But in the last months of 1987* there seem to have been renewed grounds for hope. Attempts have been resumed, even if sometimes they are merely ritual exercises, to work out scenarios which would be acceptable to all those involved. The on-going dialogue between the various Khmer factions does give reason to hope that a new stage has been reached in the attempts at negotiation. It is possible that because of the generally favourable climate in international affairs the conflict has now reached a stage which may permit new concessions to be made and new compromises to be arrived at. Vietnam, the principal actor in this confrontation, is well aware of this and realizes just how far it can modify its intransigent position without giving too much to China or upsetting its Soviet ally, and without risking the security of the buffer zone it has created in Cambodia.

* This monograph is written in April 1988