

contention over and above the underlying political disagreement.⁴¹

During the whole of 1977 Pol Pot's troops engaged in numerous clashes with the Vietnamese troops along their common border. The Chinese government, which had initially shown considerable caution, gave Pol Pot a triumphant welcome when he paid an official visit to Beijing in September. Furthermore, the treaty of friendship and co-operation which Vietnam signed with Laos on 18 June 1977 served to convince China that this was the first step towards the establishment of a Federation of Indochina. On 31 December relations between Hanoi and Phnom Penh were broken off; the Khmer Rouge had refused a Vietnamese offer to negotiate⁴² and in addition, some very serious border incidents had taken place.

At the beginning of 1978 the outlook for negotiation and mediation seemed better; China sent Chou En-Lai's widow, Deng Yingchao as an emissary to Cambodia and the Vietnamese Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, Phan Hien, visited Beijing.⁴³ However, these visits did not result in any agreement and the dispute between the two countries became even more serious when Vietnam hastened to enforce the measures it had been contemplating for some time against the Vietnamese overseas Chinese, the Hoa.

In March 1978 all private enterprise was forbidden in Vietnam; troops entered Cholon, the famous Chinese quarter of Ho Chi Minh City and the business people there had the choice, once all their belongings had been confiscated, to flee the country or be deported to the new economic zones.⁴⁴ And so, in the words of J.B. Cabestan describing the situation at the time, "Hanoi's policy together with the increasingly difficult living

⁴¹ On the territorial and maritime disputes between China and Vietnam see also, François Joyaux, "La Chine, ses frontières et l'équilibre de l'Extrême-Orient" in P. de Beauregard et al., *op.cit.*, pp. 40-50. See also Martin H. Ketchen, "The Spratly Islands and the Law of the Sea: Dangerous Ground for Peace", *Asian Survey*, December 1977, Vol. XVII, no. 2, pp. 1167-1181.

⁴² Leszek Buszynski, "Vietnam Confronts China," *Asian Survey*, vol. XX, no. 8, August 1980, page 934.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, page 834.

⁴⁴ *Far Eastern Economic Review*, page 834.