

## NECESSARY BUT UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPTS AT MEDIATION

Since 1978, strange things have been happening in Indochina; the number of actors involved continues to increase; would-be mediators vie with each other in their attempts to produce a settlement and everyone takes part in similar dialogues which are conducted in a sort of code so as to disguise their real intentions.

Since the Vietnamese invaded Kampuchea, each year has seen a new crop of peace proposals but as yet none of these has produced any tangible results. From time to time there has seemed to be some hope of success, but this has never lasted in the face of the intransigence of the parties directly involved. Since the middle of 1985, and more particularly since the beginning of 1986, there have been more specific proposals which may have spurred the antagonists on to greater efforts. In the next chapter we will deal at some length with the reasons for this new situation and the possible developments which may arise from it.

Before proceeding, however, it is necessary to begin with a brief analysis of the way in which the earlier period led to a complete deadlock. In this initial stage of the conflict ASEAN and Vietnam vied with each other in proposing solutions. From the very beginning ASEAN has tried to have the conflict dealt with in the international arena, whereas Vietnam has wanted to keep it a purely regional matter. While they use quite different strategies, both sides pursue very similar aims, since for each of them the ultimate objective is to gain time, so as to win the battle in the field.

With these as starting points it is possible to give a better account of the reason for the total deadlock which lasted until 1985.