STATEMENT OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM ON THE VIETNAM-CAMBODIA BORDER ISSUE
(Complete text). 31st December, 1977

Vietnam and Cambodia are two neighbouring countries, two fraternal countries. A great friendship, built and fostered in a long struggle lasting almost a century against colonialism and in the struggle against the US imperialist aggressors and their henchmen in particular, has bound the peoples of the two countries and the two communist parties of Vietnam and Cambodia. This special relationship was a decisive factor for the complete victories of the Vietnamese revolution and the Cambodian revolution. As the CPK Central Committee stressed in its message on 30th January 1975 to the Central Committee of the then Vietnam Workers Party, "...The Communist Party of Cambodia and the Cambodian people, and the Vietnam Workers Party and the Vietnamese people have built with their blood an unbreakable militant solidarity and fraternal friendship".

The Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV), the Government of the SRV and the Vietnamese people have developed these fine relations of fraternal friendship and comradeship between the peoples of the two countries and between the two Parties. We have made all-out efforts to consolidate and strengthen our mutual trust, our sincere long-term co-operations, and our mutual assistance on the principles of complete equality, of respect for each other's sovereignty and territory, and of non-interference in each other's internal affairs. The CPV, the Government of the SRV and the Vietnamese people have at all times respected the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and freedom of other countries, considering this as a correct policy to defend our own national independence.

It is the policy of the SRV that the border and territory issue between Vietnam and Cambodia should be settled with Democratic Cambodia on the basis of respect for each other's territorial sovereignty, and also by consolidating and promoting the relations of solidarity and fraternal co-operation between the two countries, thereby building a permanent border of friendship between Vietnam and Cambodia on the principles of fairness and reason.

The Party and the Government of Vietnam have consistently pursued this policy. But it is regrettable that Cambodia has created an increasing tension on the border, making the relations between the two countries deteriorate seriously.
As early as the beginning of May 1975, Cambodia employed its armed forces in attacks on Phu Quoc and Tho Chu islands, during which more than 500 civilians were carried off, and in incursions into Vietnam's territory at different places from Ha Tien to Tay Ninh. In December 1975 Cambodian armed forces again attacked and occupied Vietnamese territory in the provinces of Gia Lai-Kontum and Darlac.

Most serious has been the period since April 1977, when Cambodia fielded a great force made up of many divisions. This force, with massive fire support provided by many cannons and mortars positioned in Cambodia, has made many concerted attacks on almost all the border areas from Ha Tien to Tay Ninh. Cambodian armed forces have repeatedly shelled many populous areas and new economic zones, including areas far behind the border; such as Chau Doc town and the townships of Ha Tien and Tinh Bien. These attacks were combined with looting and the burning and sacking of pagodas, schools and hospitals. At many places, Cambodian troops have perpetrated utter inhuman crimes, raping, tearing foetuses from mother's wombs, disembowelling adults, burning children alive. Many entire families have been butchered, Cambodian troops have caused very great losses in lives and property to the local population. At some places thousands of inhabitants have been killed or wounded, thousands of houses and property of other kinds destroyed, and tens of thousands of civilians have had to move farther from the border for security. The peaceful labour of the Vietnamese people along the border is being seriously sabotaged.

Cambodia has whipped up a deep and broad campaign among the people and army of Cambodia aimed at sowing enmity towards the Vietnamese nation. On the propaganda front, with the design of slandering Vietnam and confusing public opinion, the Cambodian press and radio keep releasing reports alleging that Vietnam has carried out acts of aggression, intervention and subversion against Cambodia.

In face of these continuous violations of Vietnamese territory by Cambodia, the people and armed forces of Vietnam in the border areas have been forced to fight in self-defence, to safeguard their territorial sovereignty, and to protect their lives, property and peaceful existence.

At the same time, the CPV and the Government of the SRV have persistently undertaken to hold negotiations with the CPK and the Government of Democratic Cambodia with the aim of quickly settling the border question between the two countries. Early in April 1976, the CPV Central Committee and the CPK Central Committee agreed that leadership of the two Parties would meet in June 1976. To prepare for this meeting, early in May 1976, the two sides held a preparatory meeting in Phnom Penh. This meeting was underway when it had to be postponed at Cambodia's request. Afterwards, Vietnam several times proposed a resumption of the meeting; but Cambodia did not respond. At the preparatory meeting in May 1976, the two sides agreed on three concrete measures aimed at increasing solidarity and solving border conflicts. These measures were: That the two sides strive to educate the cadres, combatants and peoples of their respective countries in the border areas to strengthen solidarity and friendship and avoid conflicts; all conflicts must be settled in a spirit of solidarity, friendship, and mutual
respect; and the liaison committees of the two sides must investigate the conflicts and meet to settle them.

Vietnam has done all it could to strictly implement the three measures agreed upon. It is regrettable that Cambodia has not only failed to do the same but has also continued its violations of Vietnam's territorial sovereignty in a systematic and ever more serious manner.

On 7th June 1977, the CPV Central Committee and the Government of the SRV sent another letter to the CPK Central Committee and the Government of Democratic Cambodia proposing that meetings be held as early as possible between high-ranking leaders of the two Parties and the two governments so as to solve the border issue between the two countries.

In their letter of reply dated 18th June 1977, the Central Committee of the Party and the Government of Cambodia considered that such meetings were necessary but proposed that they be resumed only after "a period of time until the situation returns to normal, without further border conflicts..." However, it was precisely at the time that Cambodia increased its military attacks, its encroachments upon Vietnamese territory and its massacre of Vietnamese civilians, sabotaging the peaceful labour of the Vietnamese people in border provinces, particularly Kien Giang, An Giang, Dong Thap, Long An and Tay Ninh.

The truth about developments at the border and Cambodia's criminal actions over the past two years flatly refutes the slanders against Vietnam made in the statement of 31st December 1977, of the Government of Democratic Cambodia. This is a very crude distortion of the actual developments at the border between the two countries, a distortion which seriously hurts the existing close sentiments between the two peoples. These slanders run entirely counter to what was clearly expounded in the message of 3rd February 1976 sent by the CPK Central Committee to the Central Committee of the then Vietnam Workers Party, that "the CPK Central Committee expresses its deepest gratitude to the Vietnam Workers Party and the Vietnamese people for the support and assistance they have reserved for the CPK during the revolutionary war for national liberation and people's liberation as well as in the new historical stage of Cambodia after liberation".

Loyal to its consistent line, the Government of the SRV solemnly declares: Vietnam is resolved to defend her independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity and at the same time always respects Cambodia's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, and does all she can to preserve the militant solidarity and great friendship between Vietnam and Cambodia. This is a principled stand, a just, unalterable stand of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

Once again, the Government of the SRV proposes that the two sides meet as early as possible, at whatever level, so as to together solve the border issue between the two countries in a spirit of brotherly friendship.

The peoples of the two countries have for decades struggled shoulder to shoulder against the imperialist aggressors to recover the independence and freedom of each country, and have won glorious victory. Both the immediate and long-term interests of the Vietnamese as well as of the Cambodian peoples require that
they continue to maintain solidarity and friendship on the basis of respect for each other's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, and co-operation and mutual assistance in the cause of defending their countries and the revolutionary gains which each nation has obtained at the cost of tremendous sacrifice and hardship.

The people and the Government of the SRV believe that in the immediate and long-term interests of the two nations, the border issue between the two countries will certainly be solved with success. This is an earnest desire of the two peoples and also a hope of the peace-loving peoples in this region and elsewhere in the world. The great friendship and militant solidarity between the peoples of the two countries are everlasting and nothing can break them.