LETTER

of the

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

IN CHARGE OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE

GOVERNMENT OF DEMOCRATIC KAMPUCHEA

I ENG SARY

addressed to

ALL THE MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

OF THE NON-ALIGNED COUNTRIES

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March 17, 1978
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Phnom Penh,
March 17, 1978

Excellency,

1- The Government of Democratic Kampuchea would like to highly appreciate Your Excellency's Government, like all the Governments of the Non-aligned countries, which has given full consideration to the Statement of the Government of Democratic Kampuchea dated on December 31, 1977 concerning the acts of aggression and annexation perpetrated by the "Socialist Republic of Vietnam" against Democratic Kampuchea.

2- This attitude of the Non-aligned countries is an encouragement to the Democratic Kampuchea's people and Government that are overcoming all obstacles in order to be always masters of the situation in safeguarding and defending the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of their country and their rights to decide by themselves their own destiny and that of their country. The essence of our present struggle is not different from that of the more than five years (1970 - 1975) struggle for national liberation against the war of aggression perpetrated by the US imperialists, during which our people consented great sacrifices for their own independence as well as for the
victory of the principles of non-alignment. Our present struggle is indeed to allow Democratic Kampuchea to live, develop and move forward as an independent, peaceful and Non-aligned country. In the past, our Great Family of the Non-aligned countries has actively supported the just cause of the Kampuchea's people. Now, it has still continued to pay great attention to the Vietnamese acts of aggression against Democratic Kampuchea. These attitudes have further encouraged our people who have ever since had firm conviction on the principles of the non-alignment, and strengthened their firm confidence in their just cause and its victory.

3- In bringing the problem of the conflict between Kampuchea and Vietnam to Your Excellency's knowledge, we have no intention to give the friendly countries or the Non-aligned movement a new matter of preoccupation. Indeed, we are fully aware of that our movement is facing many difficult problems caused by the interferences and interventions of the imperialists, expansionists and their followers against our movement. We raise the problem of the conflict between Kampuchea and Vietnam just in order to let the friendly countries be fully aware of the truth. We have carried out this attitude for as a founder member of the Non-aligned movement, Democratic Kampuchea has never put herself out of the movement of the Non-aligned countries and has never joined in any group whatever. Besides, as she has always been firmly faithful towards the principles of non-alignment, she has always refused to use the label of "Non-aligned country" for her opportunist interests. Democratic Kampuchea deeply wishes that our Great Non-aligned Family can devote its time and mobilize its forces to struggle against the imperialists, expansionists and their followers. Therefore, in raising the problem of the conflict between Kampuchea and Vietnam, we would like to avoid to the maximum to bother the friendly countries. But as a member of the Great Non-aligned Family, we have the duty to inform Your Excellency's Government about the actual development of this problem as well as our point of view and position.
4- As being underlined in the Statement of the Government of Democratic Kampuchea dated on December 31, 1977, Vietnam has for dozens years set forth its strategic objective to establish the "Indochina Federation", that is to form only one country, one party and one people within this "Indochina Federation". Vietnam wants to force Kampuchea to join this "Indochina Federation", under the Vietnam's thumb. Based on this strategic policy, Vietnam has, since many dozens years, especially since 1975, carried out all kinds of activities, underground or open, through peaceful means or by force in order to force Kampuchea to join its "Indochina Federation" so that Vietnam could annex and swallow Kampuchea in a definite period of time.

But Vietnam has suffered successive defeats in:

- its schemes of seduction about "special friendship", "special solidarity" with Kampuchea,

- its spying, subversive, and undermining activities,

- its attempts at coup d'etat to overthrow the regime of Democratic Kampuchea,

- its military violations and its encroachments of the Kampuchea's territory along the border.

It was only after these defeats that Vietnam launched its large-scale attacks of invasion and aggression having the characteristic of a non-declared war against Democratic Kampuchea, during September, October, November, December 1977 and in the beginning of January 1978.

5- On January 8, 1978, the Revolutionary Army of Kampuchea have wiped out the Vietnamese army of aggression and driven them all out from the territory of Democratic Kampuchea. They then inflicted on Vietnam a new defeat. But Vietnam has not abandoned its strategic policy in forcing Kampuchea to join the "Indochina Federation" under its domination. That is why after January 8, 1978, the situation remains tense. Vietnam has carried on military activities as follows:

- The Vietnamese army have carried on machine-gunning, pounding the Kampuchea's territory, sending in spying agents to
gather intelligence in the territory, territorial waters and islands of Kampuchea, and they continue to successively attack against and penetrate deep into the territory of Kampuchea along the border from the sea up to "Naga's tail", region near the Kampuchea - Lao's border.

- At the same time, the "Socialist Republic of Vietnam" is actively preparing its military forces and it has sent many divisions of its army to quarter along the border and surround Kampuchea from many sides in order to launch new large-scale attacks of invasion and aggression against Democratic Kampuchea in this 1978.

Besides, at present, Vietnam is carrying out activities of underground and open subversion, interfering in the internal affairs of Kampuchea aiming at creating discords and at uprising the Kampuchea's people. This is a part of the Vietnamese plan aiming at setting up a puppet regime in Kampuchea in order to use it as an instrument of the Vietnamese aggression. Vietnam has actively carried out activities on the international arena to slander the regime of Democratic Kampuchea. Even the Vietnamese top leaders, who should politically act with maturity, have also shamelessly slandered, during their peregrinations, the regime that our Kampuchea's people have chosen by themselves. Should Vietnam have any right to carry out such activities?

6- Following its heavy defeats on January 6, 1978, when its objective of "Indochina Federation" has failed once again and in order to cover up their repeated acts of aggression and its preparations for a large-scale invasion and aggression, and in order to attempt to isolate Kampuchea on the international arena, Vietnam has carried out many propaganda and diplomatic activities about "solving the border problem through negotiations". While Vietnam has been intensifying its activities of propaganda on these "negotiations", the Vietnamese army have intensified their attacks against Kampuchea.

On February 4, 1978, that was one day before Vietnam cried out loud for "negotiations", its Soviet and US heavy artillery pieces of all kinds had carried out a concentrated pounding in the territory of Democratic Kampuchea, in the area of Koh Thom, situated in the lower Tonle Bassac river, South of Phnom Penh. And four regiments of the Vietnamese infantry, with the intervention of dozens tanks, many planes and helicopters invaded that area.
On February 5, 6, 7 and 8, Vietnam continued to launch its attacks in the area of the lower Passac river and in many other places of Svay Rieng province.

All these events have shown that the proposals of "negotiations", for which Vietnam has been carrying out a rowdy propaganda on the international arena, are not sincere at all. These Vietnamese proposals for "negotiations" together with their military activities at the battle-fields and their political activities of subversion against Democratic Kampuchea today show that the present situation is not different from the situation prevailing before the Vietnamese large-scale attacks of invasion against Democratic Kampuchea at the end of 1977. While Vietnam is carrying on acts of aggression against Kampuchea and sending many divisions of its army to get ready from many directions for new and large-scale attacks against Kampuchea, it makes proposals for negotiations with Kampuchea. For what does Vietnam want Kampuchea to negotiate with?

7- Democratic Kampuchea has never rejected the principle of solving the problem with Vietnam through peaceful means. As being stressed in the Statement of the Government of Democratic Kampuchea issued on December 31, 1977 and in other official documents of the Government of Democratic Kampuchea, since 1975 Kampuchea has successively taken sincere initiatives to solve this problem with Vietnam.

In June 1975, despite at that time Vietnam was invading and occupying the Kampuchea island, Koh Thom, and that Kampuchea had to face many difficult problems after war, the top leaders of Kampuchea, including the Secretary, the Deputy Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Kampuchea and the Deputy Prime Minister in Charge of Foreign Affairs led a Delegation to Hanoi for negotiations in order to solve the border problem with Vietnam.

In May 1976, Democratic Kampuchea invited a Vietnamese delegation to come and enter into negotiations to solve the border problem in Phnom Penh.

At the same time, desirous to peacefully solve the problem, Democratic Kampuchea has striven to maintain regular contacts with Vietnam through Liaison Committees at the central, regional and district levels.
But Vietnam did not take into consideration at all the goodwill of Kampuchea and took an attitude contrary to the Vietnamese Statements made in 1966 and 1967, which have recognized the present borders of Kampuchea and promised to respect them. Vietnam intensified its military activities against Kampuchea along the border. It used the open relations through Liaison Committees to carry out activities of subversion, spying, undermining, incitements to uprising and to attempt to stage coups d'état to overthrow the regime of Democratic Kampuchea in September 1975, April 1976, September 1976, April 1977 and September 1977. But all these Vietnamese hostile activities have been crushed by the people and the Revolutionary Army of Kampuchea.

Although in such a tense situation, on June 18, 1977, Kampuchea proposed that the two sides:

- avoided armed conflict along the border, both in the mainland and in the sea,

- resolutely did not carry out any activity of spying, violation of territory, machine-gunning, pounding, any activity of violation of airspace, air-raids, of subversion and interference in each other's internal affairs,

- did not quarter their troops at a distance less than 500 to 1,000 meters far from the present border, in order to avoid armed conflict,

- had to educate their men and women fighters and peoples to be fully aware of the principles of friendship and solidarity, of mutual respect, equality, of non-interference in each other's internal affairs, of mutual respect for independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

These Kampuchea's proposals aimed at creating beforehand an atmosphere of detente and mutual confidence favorable for a fruitful further meeting.

But once again Vietnam did not respond at all. On the contrary, in the beginning of July 1977, Vietnam further increased its acts of aggression against Kampuchea. Kampuchea never made publicly known the Vietnamese acts of aggression for she wanted to solve the existing problems through peaceful means and with sincerity.
But as for the Vietnamese side, it has carried out diplomatic activities to slander and aim at isolating Kampuchea on the international arena. Afterwards, as the world opinion has been fully aware of, Vietnam launched a large-scale attack of invasion and aggression having the characteristic of a non-declared war since September 1977.

In a parallel direction with its large-scale attacks of invasion and aggression at the end of 1977, Vietnam carried out a plan aiming at mobilizing the Kampuchea's population to stage a new coup d'état in January 1978. This coup combined with the attacks launched from outside would let Vietnam take possession of Kampuchea at once. Up to now, despite its new failure, Vietnam still stubbornly carries on its same plan.

Therefore, Democratic Kampuchea has patiently and in a consequent way done her utmost to solve the problems through peaceful means, in a spirit of friendship and solidarity.

8- The root of the conflict between Kampuchea and Vietnam is not an ordinary border problem. If it were an ordinary border problem, why at the end of this 1977 did the Vietnamese army invade and aggress deep inside the Kampuchea territory up to some district centers, located at 30 kilometers far from the border? If it were an ordinary border problem, why did the Vietnamese army destroy the State power of the Kampuchea's people and set up their puppets wherever they reached to? and why has Vietnam carried out many activities aiming at overthrowing the present regime of Democratic Kampuchea? The present Kampuchea - Vietnam's border is indeed the baleful result of the successive acts of aggression and annexation perpetrated by the imperialists, colonialists, the Vietnamese feudalists and reactionaries and other foreigners. But this border clearly exists. Through the acts of aggression and annexation during that period, the people of Kampuchea had lost many tens of thousands of square kilometers of territory, like Kampuchea Krom's territories as well as many islands and territorial waters. But the Kampuchea's people would not dig up the old accounts. They wish only to live in peace, honour and dignity, as masters of their territory and their territorial waters within their present borders that have been clearly
defined in historic documents, in texts and maps. During the negotiations between Kampuchea and the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam in August - September 1966, in the solemn Statement of the Central Committee of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam issued in May 31, 1967 and in the solemn Statement of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam issued on June 8, 1967, Vietnam has successively declared to recognize and promise to respect the present border of Kampuchea. Why, at present Vietnam refuses to carry out its promises?

8- The actual root of the conflict between Kampuchea and Vietnam, as being clearly stressed in the Statement of the Government of Democratic Kampuchea issued on December 31, 1977, is the Vietnamese ambition to swallow Kampuchea and strategic policy of forcing Kampuchea to join the "Indochina Federation" under the Vietnamese domination so that Vietnam could annex Kampuchea in a definite period of time and achieve the Vietnamese ambition in Southeast Asia. This conflict could be solved only when this root is eliminated. If Vietnam abandons its baleful ambition and its sinister strategic policy, if Vietnam stops its acts of aggression, annexation and swallowing of the territory of Kampuchea, stops carrying out subversion, spying against Democratic Kampuchea and if Vietnam respects with concrete acts the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity of Democratic Kampuchea, respects the right of the Kampuchea’s people to decide by themselves their own destiny and that of their own country in full independence and sovereignty, then there would be no conflict. A genuine friendship would be surely established, successively strengthened and developed. This is the wish of Democratic Kampuchea. Small country, scarcely populated, she has no troops quartered in foreign countries, she needs only time and peace for national edification and to improve the standard of living of her people. She has no reason to create troubles to anybody and wishes only to live in peace, honour and dignity, in independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

10- At present, when there is no sign at all that Vietnam would create any atmosphere of detente along the border, we have to always hold aloft our vigilance. In fulfilling her tasks to defend her sacred and vital interests, Democratic Kampuchea is also fully aware of her responsibility and her duties towards our Non-
aligned movement. She is convinced that her present struggle is a modest contribution to strengthen the independence, sovereignty and peace in Southeast Asia and in the world against the ambitions of the imperialists, expansionists and their followers. This struggle plays also a role in enhancing the principles of non-alignment.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of our highest consideration.

(Signed) : IENG SARY
Deputy Prime Minister
in Charge of Foreign Affairs of the Government of Democratic Kampuchea