to secure US complicity in all these manoeuvres.

As far as Kampuchea was concerned, the Chinese rulers had, since the sixties, noticed the ultra-nationalistic tendencies of the Pol Pot—Ieng Sary group, who had seized leading posts in the Khmer Communist Party. In 1965, while Mao Zedong was preparing to launch his "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution," he received
Pol Pot in Peking and lavishly praised on him for his "patriotism". Back to Kampuchea, Pol Pot directed his attacks against Norodom Sihanouk, then an ally of revolutionary forces in Vietnam and Laos. According to Pol Pot, Kampuchea's enemy was French colonialism, not US imperialism (Sihanouk's pro-French feelings were well known). He demanded the withdrawal of South Vietnamese liberation forces from their bases in Kampuchea, which had been tolerated by Sihanouk. At this juncture, Lon Nol staged a coup d'Etat. With Vietnam playing a conciliatory role, an anti-Lon Nol national united front was set up in Kampuchea, embracing both Sihanouk's and Pol Pot's followers. Vietnam gave all necessary assistance to this front, which declared its opposition to US aggression against Kampuchea and the two other Indochinese countries. Vietnamese volunteers were sent to Kampuchea to help organize armed resistance against the US imperialists. A summit conference of the Indochinese peoples was convened in April 1970 to emphasize solidarity between Vietnam, Laos, and Kampuchea in face of US aggression. The Chinese rulers took advantage of the holding of that conference to drop a hint to the USA that China might help it find an honourable way out.

Following the stunning blow dealt by Vietnamese, Lao and Kampuchean patriots to Nixon's war plans, Sihanouk proposed a second Summit Conference in late 1971. By then, however, China was preparing to receive Henry Kissinger and, some time later, Richard Nixon himself. Consequently it urged Pol Pot—Eng Sary to oppose the Sihanouk initiative. Another proposal was put forward by the Chinese rulers to the Vietnamese leaders in March 1971: to call a conference of five countries and six parties (the Northern and Southern zones of Vietnam, Laos, Kampuchea, China, and the People's Democratic Republic of Korea) to promote the fight against Japan (1). Vietnam of course refused to agree to this strange proposal.

Hardly had Saigon been liberated when on the very next day—1 May, 1975—acting on Peking's instructions, Pol Pot sent troops across the frontier for a foray into the South Vietnamese province of Tay Ninh. On 9 May, more troops landed on Phu Quoc island, and on 10 May, they seized Tho Chu island and captured 515 of its inhabitants. Those people had never been sent back to Vietnam. From September 1977 onward, attacks on Vietnam by Pol Pot forces were stepped up along the border from Ha Tien to Tay Ninh.

While 16 Khmer Rouge divisions were formed and trained by Chinese advisers and equipped with Chinese weapons. A campaign was unleashed among the Kampuchean people to stir up racial hatred between Kampuchean and Vietnamese: brutal actions committed by Vietnamese feudal officials in the 19th century against the Kampuchean people were evoked by Pol Pot propaganda, while atrocities were perpetrated against the Vietnamese population by Pol Pot units in the course of their inroads. All this was aimed at fanning up inter-racial hatred.

A new trip to Beijing was made by Pol Pot and Ieng Sary towards the end of 1977 to attend the founding anniversary of the People's Republic of China. Received with great pomp, they delivered strongly anti-Vietnamese speeches, which were warmly applauded by high-ranking Chinese personalities.

Back to Kampuchea, Pol Pot personally accompanied China's Vice-Premier Chen Yungkwei when the latter inspected Kampuchean positions along the border with Vietnam. In December 1977 at the end of this tour, Chen Yungkwei declared: "No force can hamper friendship between China and Kampuchea, which will remain comrades for ever!"

Soon after Chen's departure, on 31 December, 1977, with the assistance of the Chinese Foreign Ministry, Democratic Kampuchea's ambassador to Peking publicized the existence of differences between Vietnam and Kampuchea and proclaimed a unilateral decision taken by Phnom Penh to suspend diplomatic relations with Hanoi.

China openly sided with Pol Pot. Back from a visit to Kampuchea, Deng Ying chao, vice-chairwoman of the Chinese National Assembly, told visiting French Premier Raymond Barre that, in China's view, Kampuchea had been the victim of aggression by the Vietnamese, who were then occupying three localities on Kampuchea's territory.

Persevering in its peace policy, on 5 February, 1978, the Vietnamese government made a three-point proposal:

—an end to hostile military activities along the Vietnam-Kampuchea border, the troops of both sides to be pulled back 5 kilometres from the frontier;
— meeting between representatives of the two countries either in Hanoi, Phnom Penh or somewhere on the border to negotiate and sign an agreement whereby each side would pledge to respect the other’s independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, not to commit aggression, not to use force or threat of force against each other; not to interfere in each other’s internal affairs, and to promote a spirit of equality, friendship and good neighbourliness. The two sides would sign an agreement on the delimitation of frontiers on the basis of mutual respect for each other’s territorial sovereignty in accordance with existing frontiers;

— a form of international guarantee and control would be agreed upon.

Those proposals received no positive answer from the Khmer Rouge side. Meanwhile, more visits were exchanged between China and Kampuchea; Deng Sary and Son Sen, the Vice-premier and Defence Minister of Democratic Kampuchea, going to Peking in August; Wang Dongshing going to Phnom Penh in November... The number of Pol Pot army divisions rapidly rose to 23 and towards the end of 1978, 19 of those divisions were concentrated along the border with Vietnam. On Vietnam’s northern frontier, a similar concentration of Chinese troops took place. The two prongs of the pincers were ready.

While relations between Vietnam and Democratic Kampuchea worsened following the suspension of diplomatic ties, the same situation prevailed in relations between Vietnam and China. In the first months of 1978, Peking agents spread these rumors among the Hoa (ethnic Chinese) in Vietnam:

“China supports Kampuchea against Vietnam. Sooner or later, war will break out between China and Vietnam. So the Hoa had better leave Vietnam quickly.”; “the Chinese government calls on the Hoa to go back to their Homeland; those who do not respond to this appeal will be considered as traitors”. On 24 May, 1978, a spokesman of the Chinese government accused Vietnam of practising a policy of “discrimination, persecution and expulsion against the Hoa” and of compelling them to go back to China by the thousand. The Hoa colony was panic-stricken. Then, under the pretext of expenditures on the settlement of repatriated Hoa, the Chinese government suspended all aid to Vietnam and recalled its technicians. On 16 June, 1978, it ordered the closing of Vietnamese consulates general in Kunming, Nanning and Canton. Showing extreme arrogance, and without consulting the Vietnamese government, it announced the sending to Vietnam of two Chinese ships to repatriate all Chinese desirous to leave Vietnam; those ships would arrive in Haiphong and Ho Chi Minh City on 20 June 1978. As an expression of goodwill, the Vietnamese authorized the Chinese ships to cast anchor off Vietnamese ports pending formalities. In discussions with representatives of the Chinese embassy in Hanoi, the Vietnamese Foreign Ministry presented lists of Hoa people having applied to leave Vietnam, but the Chinese refused to accept them saying that the Chinese ships were to repatriate only “persecuted and expelled” Hoa. Requested to give a list of such people, the Chinese negotiators said they had none. Thereupon, the Vietnamese handed over a list of 1507 Chinese who had been truly “persecuted and expelled” from Kampuchea by Pol Pot and who had sought temporary refuge in Vietnam: those Chinese were not accepted either, and the two Chinese ships sailed back to China without any passenger.

In the meantime, China had cut all rail, air and even postal relations with Vietnam, and border incidents increased with every passing day.

It remained for Vietnam to prepare for all eventualities. On 3 November, 1978, a treaty of friendship and cooperation was signed with the Soviet Union. At the end of 1978, responding to the call of the National United Front for the Salvation of Kampuchea (FUNSK) and counter—attacking a Pol Pot offensive, units of the Vietnamese army entered Kampuchea to help insurgent people there liberate their national territory.

Peking angrily reacted. The Chinese propaganda machine heaped slanders on Vietnam accusing it of aggression; attempts at restoring the Indochinese Federation, hegemonistic plans, etc... and harping on the theme of “Vietnam’s working for Soviet hegemony”.

Deng Xiaoping, on a visit to the USA and Japan, proposed and got the green light to “teach Vietnam a lesson”.

In this early part of 1979, the attraction of China for Western, and especially American and Japanese, capitalist circles was great indeed. China appeared as an immense market which would need hundreds of billions of dollars’ worth of equipment and goods for its industrialization. In the midst of the structural crisis of capitalism hitting the USA and even Japan, why not to sympathize