PREFACE

The present study is a critical appraisal and analysis of Vietnam's policy towards China. It analyses landmark developments in the South East Asian region particularly relevant in Sino-Vietnam relations since 1972. We have a plethora of studies on American involvement in Vietnam in the recent past but little has been written about Vietnam's attitude, policy making and ideological moorings. Vietnam's attitude particularly towards China has great implications for the politics of Indochina and with it the entire South East Asian region. This thesis is an attempt to highlight some of those issues.

This thesis has focussed its attention on developments mainly during 1972 to 1985. During this period significant developments took place in the region which turned China, which had been friendly to Vietnam, hostile to it. This period was marked by American efforts towards de-escalation in Vietnam, Sino-American friendship and signing of the Shanghai Communique (1972), the Paris Peace Agreement (1973), the Chinese occupation of Paracel Islands (1974), American withdrawal from Indochina (1975), the unification of Vietnam (1976), Vietnam's intervention in Kampuchea (1978) and finally the revival of enmity in Sino-Vietnamese relations.

The year 1972 was a landmark in Sino-Vietnamese relations because it was then that Vietnam took note of
the growing Sino-American rapprochement. Thereafter China sought closer contacts with the United States and ignored its commitments towards Vietnamese comrades. When President Richard M. Nixon visited China in 1972, it upset the existing power balance at the regional and international level. The Communists in the two parts of Vietnam were particularly baffled and disturbed by this development.

The year 1985 marks a decade after Vietnam's victory over the American forces. China by then was successfully applying diplomatic pressure on Vietnam to withdraw from Kampuchea. Vietnam was also reviewing its internal and external policies and expressing its willingness to withdraw from Kampuchea. It was ready to cooperate with the Americans to give more information regarding those missing in action (MIAs). It was trying to get closer to the ASEAN countries, though without much success. Vietnam did not succeed in either breaking out of its regional isolation or coming out of the Kampuchean quagmire.

The present study is covered in six chapters. The first chapter introduces the problem with a brief history of Sino-Vietnam relations and the historical experiences that have a bearing on Vietnam's China policy. Chapter Two analyses the impact of Sino-American rapprochement.
on Vietnam's relations with China. Chapter Three analyses the developments leading to the unification of North and South Vietnam and China's reactions to it. Chapter Four evaluates the developments involving Vietnam's intervention in Kampuchea and its consequences. The exodus of Hoas (overseas Chinese) from Vietnam and China's retaliatory attempts to "teach a lesson" to Vietnam are also covered. Chapter Five analyses the Sino-Vietnamese claims over the spratlys and subsequent disputes between them over this issue. Chapter Six makes some concluding observations.

It is observed finally that Vietnam's successful handling of the China question is pivotal to the peace and development of Vietnam and the entire Indochina region. The success or failure of Vietnam's foreign policy, its economic development and national reconstruction are inextricably connected with its successful handling of the China policy, Vietnam's present miseries may cease earlier and its economic growth accelerated if its China diplomacy is tackled successfully to benefit Vietnam's interests.

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