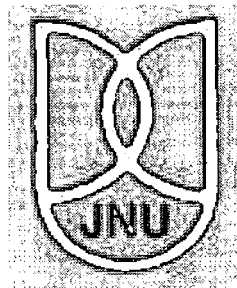


**CHINA-VIETNAM RELATIONS:  
THE PROCESS OF LAND BORDER  
DISPUTE RESOLUTION**

*Dissertation submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for award of the degree of*

**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**

**TRAN DUC MINH**



Chinese Studies Division  
Center for East Asian Studies  
School of International Studies  
**JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY**  
New Delhi 110067  
2010

जवाहरलाल नेहरू विश्वविद्यालय  
CENTRE FOR EAST ASIAN STUDIES

SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES  
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY  
NEW DELHI- 110 067 (INDIA)



Phones : 91-11- 2670 4346  
Fax : 91-11-2670 4346

Date: 26th July 2010

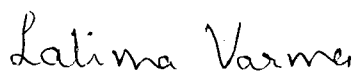
**DECLARATION**

I declare that the dissertation entitled “China-Vietnam Relations: The Process of Land Border Dispute Resolution” submitted by me in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other university.

  
TRAN DUC MINH

**CERTIFICATE**

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

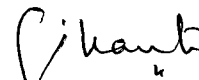


Prof. Lalima Verma

(Chairperson, CEAS)



Chairperson  
Centre for East Asian Studies  
School of International Studies  
Jawaharlal Nehru University  
New Delhi - 110067 India



Dr. Srikant Kondapalli

(Supervisor)  
SUPERVISOR



Centre for East Asian Studies  
School of International Studies  
Jawaharlal Nehru University  
New Delhi - 110067

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

*The first person I must thank is my supervisor, Prof Srikanth Kondapalli who has unflinchingly supported and unfailingly encouraged me to pursue my academic work. His enthusiasm for the study of Chinese affairs and his teaching has inspired me, like so many others. His expertise and accessibility has been of immense help and with his insights and analytical abilities; he brought coherence and logic to my work. Moreover, I have learned from his example as a scholar and gentleman. Kondapalli is one of the best mentors of whom I have been fortunately a student.*

*I would like to thank Dr. Alka Acharya, Dr. Varaprasad Shekhar and Dr. Ritu Agarwal, who gave me the first lessons on Chinese foreign affairs, political system, culture and history. I am grateful to all other members of CEAS who have continuously encouraged and supported me with their comments during this study.*

*I am indebted to my friends for their support and encouragement. Ambuj, Sripana, Ila and my other classmates deserve a special mention here for their good cheer and all manners of support. During my study in JNU, they provided me their soothing accompany and cheerful entertainment and assisted me a lot without hesitance. In spite of studying abroad, I have received a lot of assistance from my friends in Vietnam. I thank Nguyen Tran Tien for helping me to collect a number of essential documents for my dissertation. I am grateful to Phuong and Hoa who have helped me to deal with the problems related to Chinese language. I extend my special thanks to Dr Nghiem Thuy Hang for encouraging and providing me useful material.*

*Thanks are also due to the library staff at JNU Central Library, IDSA Library, Vietnamese Military Library, and Library of Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam for their help in collection of required research material. I also appreciate the support of CEAS office staff, the SIS office staff.*

*I would like to express my deepest gratitude and affection to my parents. Their rock solid faith in me inspires me to move ahead. Especially, I would like to dedicate this work to my father, who, until his last days, had not stopped his great encouragement to me. I also thank my brother Tran Duc Tri, sister-in-law and nephews for taking care of the family in order that I can concentrate on my study.*

*Most of all, thank you Loan, without whom this dissertation could not have been completed. She went through the manuscripts and offered her valuable comments and suggestions. Moreover, she has given more love and support than I can ever hope to repay.*

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

DOC	Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea
SRV	Socialist Republic of Vietnam
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AMM	ASEAN Ministerial Meeting
ARF	ASEAN Regional Forum
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASEAN	Associations for South East Asian Nations
ASEM	Asia-Europe Meeting
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CAFTA	China - ASEAN Free Trade Area
CMAG	Chinese Military Advisory Group
CMC	Central Military Commission
COMECON	Council for Mutual Economic Assistance
CPC	Communist Party of China
CPV	Communist Party of Vietnam
DRV	Democratic Republic of Vietnam
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zones
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GMS	Greater Mekong Sub region
ICP	Indochinese Communist Party
KMT	Kuomintang
OATW	One axis, two wings
PAVN	People's Army of Vietnam
PLA	People's Liberation Army



PRC	People's Republic of China
RVN	Republic of Vietnam
SEATO	Southeast Asia Treaty Organisation
UN	United Nations
U.S.	United States of America
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WPV	Worker Party of Vietnam

## CHAPTER I

### **Introduction**

---

*Over the mountains and rivers of the South reigns the Emperor of the South*

*This has been decided forever by the Book of Heaven*

*How dare you, barbarians, invade our soil?*

*Your hordes, without pity, will be annihilated!*

-Ly Thuong Kiet

#### **1. Introduction**

The above poem is supposed to be written by Ly Thuong Kiet – a Vietnamese General in around 1077 to assert the sovereignty of Vietnamese rulers over the “South Land”. It is also considered as the first Vietnamese Declaration of Independence, right after when the Vietnamese liberated themselves from the “North domination”- China. Also from that time China and Vietnam shared a common land borderline.

In fact, it's hard to clarify the term “border” since people have different concepts of border and the border is also subject to continual change of time, geography and topography. According to English dictionary's definition, “border is the line or frontier area separating political provisions or geographic regions” (Freedictionary). However, in some languages, border even includes limit or limitation. During times, especially from last decades, the concept of “border” has been applied new and different implications – Border can be seen from political, historical, ethical, psychological and artistic perspectives and so on. Besides, if we look at border on a defined demographic base, the border can be an “active border” or a “non-active border”. Thus, border is increasingly seen as “dynamic phenomenon that can emerge, disappear, and re-emerge, as having a transitional character, as being internal zones of negotiation” (Oliveros, 2002).

In general, border is attached to development and integration which have been implemented basically as part of national policies. From that, it is easy to see that perception of borders is still heavily tinged with the notion of exclusive territorial sovereignty (Oliveros, 2002).

In the new era, border issues even play more important role than it did. The international trade and regional development have bloomed out in various levels. Thus, border development becomes a national aim to reinforce sovereignty and following that is economic cooperation and integration. From those interests, the border disputes also arise among countries.

### **Border Disputes**

Literally, dispute is to argue, to debate or to quarrel about something. With this meaning, border dispute means argument or debate of possession of border between two or more countries. So, the term “border disputes” is usually used to indicate such cases where a limit territory bordering more than one state. Border disputes between countries can last for long time without achieving any consent and satisfaction.

Territorial dispute in general or land border dispute in particular is a common phenomenon in history of international relations. Most countries in the world, more or less, have territorial problems with their neighbours because demarcation is always a very difficult task. In all of the borders of a given country, it can be found that there exist varieties of conditions, each of which has its own problems, component elements and different internal and external degrees of coordination and integration.

### **Probable Methods for Setting Border Disputes**

Border disputes frequently correlate with militarised interstate disputes and are more likely to lead to high intensity conflict than other kinds of frictions. In all over the world, many cases of border disputes have led to war – the traditional choice for resolution. However, this choice has become less fashionable when people can opt for better resolution without heavy loss for all involved sides. In general, some probable methods for setting border disputes which many countries have adopted are litigation, arbitration, mediation and bilateral negotiations. Each method has certain advantages that each country can choose to follow in regard of their own “border condition”.

Besides, there is another way of solution – the solution of “doing nothing” which in some cases proved to be the most efficient one.

It is worth to consider that in any cases, the most important criterion in setting border disputes is “the peace-making function of dispute” (Wälde 2004). The effectiveness of the setting depends much on ability of each side to reach a result and then gain acceptance by the parties directly involved and their constituencies. Or in another word, this is largely decided by domestic policy of each country.

Bilateral negotiation and mediation are the methods which typically fail before litigation starts. All the sides using these methods seek for resolution through managed discussions. However, in comparison to bilateral negotiation, mediation is less effective if it is carried out by lawyers with a litigation background. The sharp lawyers with legalistic instincts will tend to resolve disputes on the legal righteous rather than seek for a new and optimal “business model” of collaboration. The mediation also requires both sides and strong forces in both sides willing to cooperate and avoid litigation.

In contrast, the litigation and arbitration have interference of “third parties” and they will decide the interests of each party. Generally, the litigation and arbitration share some common characteristics. In litigation, the involved party at least have to identify the relative value of the various assets in dispute for each party in serious effort, and even look at assets—and third-parties—outside the dispute to put onto the table and to give to each party more than they could expect. The litigation can only be used when governments are definitively unable to settle, even when they had experienced an intensely and externally managed process.

The arbitration is largely like litigation and is an application of law. However, in arbitration, the involved sides can choose their arbitrators. This helps to increase benefits and reduce risks as many as possible. In general, arbitration may be more acceptable if both governments want a settlement but face internal constraints.

### **Process of border definition**

The process of land border delimitation is normally conducted through two stages. First stage is known as delimitation of delineation of border line. During the stage, the political, legal and experts of involved parties conduct negotiations to decide on a precise alignment of a border which can be illustrated on maps and upon which a

treaty can be based. This stage is completed as a treaty on border lines is signed by the concerned parties.

After the conclusion of border treaty, the concerned parties carry out works on ground. Demarcation on ground is the agreed line transferred from the map to the ground where it is physically marked with pillars, posts, fence, etc. The stage is finished with signing of protocols on border management.

### **Case study of China - Vietnam land border dispute resolution**

Whatever the method each involved side adopt to settle the border disputes, the final aim is to protect their sovereignty and national interests followed. The special thing here is as in our study case- China and Vietnam, the relations of the two countries are the relations of “asymmetry” and the issue of land border disputes even become more complicated. Even China is known as the country which has more border disputes than any other country. China has involved in border disputes with all of its fourteen neighbouring countries with whom it shares over 22,000 kilometres of land borderline. Border disputes between China and its neighbours mainly stemmed from the treaties signed by the Qing Dynasty and Western powers in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. After coming into power, the Chinese communists criticised and regarded them as “unequal treaties” which had ceded China’s territory to some Western countries.

Settling border disputes is a crucial but not simple task. Border dispute is very sensitive issue and serves as a source of tension because it bears on a state’s national sovereignty and territorial integrity, its core interests (Fravel 2008: 10). Therefore, if not be carefully treated, it can lead to conflict between the concerned parties. In reality, China's border disputes have led to wars with India, Vietnam and the Soviet Union in 1962, 1969 and 1979 respectively (Kondapalli 2006). However, China, since 1950s up to date (onwards), has successfully resolved territorial disputes with twelve out of fourteen neighbouring countries. Interestingly, with all these border dispute settlements, China has based on the concept of nation-states with territorial limits rather than of civilisation states (Kondapalli 2006) and pursued compromise and offered concessions in seventeen of these conflict (s). China has usually offered to accept less than half of the contested territory in any final settlement. Moreover China has abandoned potential irredentist claims to more than 3.4 million square kilometres of land that had been part of the Qing Empire. Thus, it, in total, has contested

approximately 238,000 square kilometres or just 7 percent of the territory once part of the Qing. (Fravel 2008: 2).

In the China – Vietnam relations, territorial disputes also serves as one of the oldest and most sensitive issue. With thousand-year history of relationship, China and Vietnam - the two neighbours sharing both maritime and land borders - have witnessed a number of ups and downs in their relations. The nature of the relationship has changed in different periods and sometimes depended on the way the Chinese or Vietnamese looked at. In parallel with the development of relations, the border between China and Vietnam has gradually been taken shape and developed when the Chinese emperors expanded their territory southward. Along with the formation of the border, territorial issue has served as the most important and sensitive factors (bò s) in the two countries' history of relations. During thousand years of relationship, Vietnam – a small southern country - has done its utmost to protect its land from the powerful neighbour's expansionary ambition and to assert itself as an independent and sovereign country. However, the Vietnamese people's efforts sometimes were not deservingly repaid. Along with the territorial expansion of Chinese dynasties, the border between the two countries had not existed for ten centuries when Vietnam was annexed into Han Kingdom's orbit.

After a number of uprisings, at last in 10<sup>th</sup> century, Vietnamese people were successful in the course of seeking independence. With the glorious victory in Bach Dang River, Vietnam got out of the Chinese domination and became an independent country. Despite being an independent country, in the relations with China, Vietnam used to be considered as one of its tributary states. On the surface, Vietnamese feudal dynasties accepted such a position, but in nature, the Vietnamese always considered itself as an independent country from China. Nevertheless, the acceptance as a part of Han Kingdom's tributary system could be seen as Vietnam's diplomacy strategy to protect its territory from the ambitious neighbour. Consequently, with flexible and determined diplomacy and incessant efforts, the Vietnamese people have successfully defended their sovereignty and territory from many aggressive wars unreasonably waged by the Chinese dynasties. Therefore, the land border which re-emerged in 10<sup>th</sup> century has remained relatively stable. However, land border between China and

Vietnam, from the 10<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century, existed as regional border rather than a borderline which was recognised by legal documents.

Following the change both in form and nature of China – Vietnam relations as Vietnam was no longer a part of China's tributary system but under the French Protectorate in late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the common border between the two countries was changed from the regional border to a borderline. After invading Vietnam and winning in the Sino – French War in 1885, the French Government and the Qing Dynasty agreed to delimitate and demarcate the border between China and Vietnam. As a result, in 1895 a borderline between China and Vietnam which was accepted by the two sides and in accordance with international law came into existence.

The relations between the two countries once again changed both in form and nature when communists came into power in Vietnam and China in 1945 and 1949 respectively. Consequently, the diplomatic relations between the two countries were established in January 1950. The two countries' relations in modern time were formed on the basis of common ideology and enemies-imperialists. From 1950 to the first half of 1960s was seen as the friendliest stage in modern China-Vietnam relations. The relations in the period were compared with “lips and teeth” as China tremendously helped and aided Vietnam in the wars against the French and American respectively.

Rift in the two countries' relations, however, began to appear in late 1960s due to subjective and objective factors which stemmed from the tension between China and Soviet Union, and China's Vietnam policy. Although in the period of late 1960s to 1978, the relations between China and Vietnam were maintained and China remained one of the biggest aid providers to Vietnam, the relations between the two Asian communists had been worse.

During this period, due to the close relations, the common border between the two countries became a border of friendship and comradeship. Not only did the border region serve as a transit area of aiding goods from China and other communist countries to Vietnam but also a revolutionary base for the Vietnamese communists in the course of country liberation and unification. Despite China – Vietnam relations in the most intimate and warmest period, sign indicating differences over land border issue appeared when the Vietnamese sent a letter proposing the two countries should

maintain the status quo of the historical borderline which had been delimited and demarcated by the Qing and French in late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Reason of the letter perhaps stemmed from the trespasses on Vietnam's land by the Chinese of which the Vietnamese accused in late 1970s when the two countries' relations were broken down. In spite of this, border dispute was not a salient issue in China – Vietnam until the second half of 1970s.

After the 30 April 1975 victory of North Vietnam, the relations between China and Vietnam quickly moved to deterioration. Besides such factors as China's unilateral termination of its economic aid to Vietnam led to Vietnam's dependence on Soviet and participation into the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA); Vietnam sent its troops to Cambodia to overthrow Polpot's regime which was backed by China; and Hoa people (Chinese overseas in Vietnam) problem, territorial disputes between the two countries, especially Chinese military occupation of Paracel Islands from Republic of Vietnam and the increase of small scale conflicts in the land border also heavily contributed to the collapse of the relations in 1979.

On February 17 1979 China opened attack on Vietnam, put an end for the relations which had been built since 1950 and marked the change of nature in the China-Vietnam relations from the relationship between two communist brothers to the hostile one. The border war waged by Chinese although lasted only for nearly one month, its outcome resulted in a freeze of China - Vietnam relations for more than ten years. Consequently, the hostile relations brought about tensions in the border region.

The China-Vietnam relations were only normalized till 1991 after a long normalization process which began in mid 1980s. The normalization opened a new page in history of the two countries' relations. After 1991, China-Vietnam relations have been improved rapidly in all fields and all levels. Political relationship between the two parties and governments has been strengthened through a number of exchange visits at various levels. Series of bilateral agreements on economic and trade fields which have been signed enhanced economic and trade cooperation between the two countries.

The normalisation and improvement of the relations created a favourable condition for the two countries to settle the land border issue. Although the border line



which was defined by French and Chinese was quite clear, there remained some small areas in which agreement between the two parties had not been reached. Moreover, after a long time of existence, the border line had been changed by both natural effects and human being's activities along the border. Therefore, some of these disputes were caused by the fact that border markers have been moved or destroyed. This, combine with other activities carried by the population and local authorities on both sides of the border area, have impinged on the border line. Another development which generated disputes were the Sino - Vietnamese border war in February-March 1979 that left some strategic locations of Vietnamese territory under Chinese control (Amer 2002: 3). As a result, all these developments caused the two countries' different perceptions on the land border line. Disputes over the land border, therefore, appeared and tensions arose in Sino-Vietnamese relations for a long time.

Before the normalisation of the relations, China and Vietnam had two rounds of talks on land border issue in 1977-1978 and 1979-1980, however these rounds failed to reach an agreement. Clear perception of the outcome of the border war in 1979, border conflicts during 1980s and potential risk that can destroy the bilateral relations and cause instability in the region, right after the normalization of relations in 1991, all these contributed to China and Vietnam quickly carrying out settlement of territorial disputes on the basis of peaceful negotiation. The two countries conducted dozens of meetings at different levels to negotiate the land border issue. As a result, after nearly ten years of negotiations, the two countries signed the Land Border Treaty and completed the demarcation and boundary marker placement on land border in 1999 and 2008 respectively. A new modern land borderline which was the result of great effort and fair compromise by both sides came into being, marking significant milestone in the two countries' relations. Not only was one of the toughest and oldest issues between China and Vietnam settled, but also mutual trust and understanding between the two countries have been enhanced.

To explain the China's border resolution policy in general and toward Vietnam in particular, it should not be forgotten that all policies, especially foreign policy which have been put forward are to maximise the national interests. To successfully resolve the border issue, first and foremost, China must have actual demand which stems from national interests. Based on serving the national interests, a proper policy of border

resolution will be decided. In each moment of time, the policies may differentiate from each other due to related components, but their ultimate goal is to maximise the national interest. The most important national interest of China since late 1970s is economic development. To this end, China needs to create a peaceful, stable and favourable environment around it. With the policy, China has resolved almost all of the territorial problems with its neighbours, assuring its sovereignty and creating “a favourable security environment” to “facilitate the rise of China” (Kondapalli 2006: 1). Besides that, the border dispute resolution through peaceful negotiation based on justice and reasonableness and offering compromises in most of these settlements have promoted China’s good image in the international community.

The land border dispute settlement between China and Vietnam was not an exception. The Sino-Vietnamese land border dispute was also resolved on the principle of peaceful negotiation, reasonableness, and justice. The two countries accepted the treaties which were signed by the Qing dynasty and the French government on behalf of Vietnam in 19<sup>th</sup> century as a base to settle the land border dispute between the two sides. During the process of border issue resolution, both side offered compromises to each other. As a result, the land border issue between the two countries was successfully resolved in late 2008 when the last boundary marker was erected. Not only is the success conformable with China’s objective of creating a stable and peaceful environment around, but also brings about opportunity for China to expand its economic cooperation with Vietnam particularly and ASEAN countries generally.

## **2. Existing Literature**

Concerning to China-Vietnam relations and border issue between the two countries, a number of works written by Chinese, Vietnamese and other foreign authors under different views have been issued. These works focus on three main themes: the breakdown of the China – Vietnam relations and the border war in 1979; the development of bilateral relations between China and Vietnam after the normalisation, especially the transformation in border area, the improvement of border trade, and border cooperation between the two countries; and the border dispute resolution between the two countries.

### **Works on the China-Vietnam relations in late 1970s and 1980s**

The book “The Truth of Vietnam-China relations in the last 30 years” issued on October 4<sup>th</sup>, 1979, clarified China’s expansionist and hegemonic plots in the relations with Vietnam. The China’s expansionist and hegemonic plots were exposed through three main events which are regarded as three times of China’s betrayal to Vietnam. The first time, at the Geneva Conference on Vietnam in 1954, Chinese leaders supported the viewpoint of a separated Vietnam. The second time, in the war with the United States, when Ngo Dinh Diem Government was collapsed, China turned on the “green light” for the US bombing the North of Vietnam. And the third time, after the liberation of South Vietnam, Beijing used political, economic and military ruses of weakening Vietnam such as it supported and aided the Polpot’s anti-revolutionary forces to attack Vietnam in 1978 and directly waged the Border War with Vietnam in 1979.

A notable work on border issue between the two countries is the white paper of Vietnamese Foreign Ministry: “Border Issue between Vietnam and China” which was issued by Truth Publishing House in 1979. This paper was regarded as a report which had exposed expansionist plots and tricks which had been implemented by Chinese central and local governments in order to trespass on Vietnam’s territory of China since 1954. From illegally tilling, cropping and using force, moving border landmarks to using building friendly works, drawing Vietnamese map for Vietnam....to invade Vietnam’s land, all of these plots, tricks and measures were clearly reflected with concrete evidence in the book. Besides the accusation of China’s expansionism, the book also mentioned the two border talks between China and Vietnam of which one was held in 1957 and one in 1975. Because China wanted to keep the status quo of the border, while Vietnam wanted to discuss the issue on the basis of the border line defined by the 1885 Sino – French Convention, both of the border talks gained no achievement. In the final section, Vietnamese government condemned the Chinese Central government’s expansionism and hegemonism which tried to weaken and force Vietnam to depend on China, at the same time, to place Indochina and Southeast Asia under its influence.

The books “Evolution of Sino-Vietnamese during the last 40 Years” edited by Guo Ming in 1992 examined the relations between the two countries through different

stages in which such disputes as land border issue, Hoa people, Gulf of Tonkin, Paracels and Spratlys, Cambodian problem were deeply stressed on. The authors tried to prove and explain that main reasons and causes of the disputes and conflicts between China and Vietnam were derived from Vietnam's unfriendliness and violations of the Sino-Vietnamese agreements. On the territorial disputes, the authors took old documents, map and recognition of some other countries as the evidence in order to prove that the Paracel and Spratly islands belong to China. The authors also mentioned Soviet Union's proposal in San Francisco held in September 1951 to request Vietnam return the Paracel and Spratly Islands to China (despite the proposal was rejected by the Conference). They also quoted Vietnamese leaders' words and Prime Minister Pham Van Dong's letter to Chinese Government in 1958 which agreed with China's 1958 declaration on its maritime... to prove China's sovereignty over the Islands. The authors blame that in the process of border negotiation, Vietnamese side intentionally created difficult conditions which pushed the negotiations of 1970s to standstill.

Edward C. O'Dowd (2007) mainly focused on the Sino – Vietnamese border war in 1979 and the conflicts along the land border from 1979 to 1989. The authors provided readers a comprehensive view on the 1979 border war in term of military aspect. The main focus of the work is the performance of Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) in the 3 week war in 1979 and border conflicts during 1980s. He contended that the poor and ineffective performance of the PLA in the conflict precluded China from achieving its national military strategic objective of "inducing the Vietnamese to withdraw from Cambodia". Because the war was not about the Sino-Vietnamese border, as frequently claimed, but about China's support for its Cambodian ally, the Khmer Rouge. Although the Chinese completed their troop withdrawal in March 1979, they retained their strategic goal of driving Vietnam out of Cambodia at least until 1988, but it was evident by 1984-1985 that the PLA, held back by the drag of its 'Maoist' organization, doctrine, equipment, and personnel, was not an effective instrument of coercion.

### **Works on China-Vietnam relations after the normalisation**

In "Sino-Vietnamese Border Trade: the Edge of Normalization", Brantly Womack claimed that in the period of normalization, trade has become a significant force in

shaping the economic prospects of Vietnam and the neighbouring Chinese provinces of Guangxi and Yunnan. With this view in mind, Womack analysed trade's effects on China and Vietnam as well as its position in the general context of Sino - Vietnamese relations. He described Sino-Vietnamese border trade from the first border protocol of 1952 to its re-emergence and blossoming since 1989 when it established a significant and a novel phenomenon for both countries. Then, he described the significance for the border trade for provinces of Yunnan and Guangxi and argued that China's trade with Vietnam fits into a national pattern of border trade. He also pointed out that the border trade has had very different effects on Vietnam. The overwhelming of Chinese light production goods has threatened the local production. In addition, there is much smuggling as well as bribery and collusion of customs and border officials. However, except some minor bad effects, he concluded that trade can be expected to be the source of mutually beneficial economic growth, but also of political friction with characteristic postures of Chinese pushiness and Vietnamese suspicion and defensiveness. Obviously, the border trade plays a stabilizing role as the major expression of a shared material interest in cooperation. As normalization between China and Vietnam continues to develop, the border regions of both countries are being transformed rapidly, and border trade works as a strong factor to stabilize the bilateral relations between China and Vietnam.

Christopher T. Roper's "Sino-Vietnamese Relations and the Economy of Vietnam's Border Region" is another addition to our understanding on the subject. Unlike other articles, Roper used Sino-Vietnamese relations as a lens through which to view the development of the Vietnamese border region's economy. He thought that with specific difference of size between Vietnam and China, Vietnam seemed to be much more sensitive to changes in its relations with China. After 1991, Vietnam's economy policies toward China have also been very sensitive. With a brief history of Sino-Vietnamese relations, he utilised extrapolations from various data sets, discussed and analysed the economies of the border provinces and examined deeply Laichau Province as a case study. With a lot of data on industry, agriculture, some sort of accounting, he gave a picture of general economic welfare in Laichau. The evidence he shows in case study of Laichau was negative effects of trade on the economy. The foreign aid and trade could result on decreased production. That is the thing converses

to the general thinking about the normalization which need to be comprehensively examined in the future.

Gu Xiaosong (2000) shared his view with Brantly Womack as he described the process of normalization on the border during the 1990s, gave an outline of general geography of the border area, and reviewed the course of normalization between China and Vietnam. Focusing on the terrestrial border between China and Vietnam, they saw that the trade development after the post-normalization period has witnessed two phases of policy development on both sides. The first policy phase began with the signing of an interim agreement on border management questions in 1991 and later following by a series of trade policies. With these policies, location becomes an advantage and the border region becomes the most convenient place to buy and sell goods with the neighbouring countries. As a result, economic relations have been developing steadily. They claimed that since normalization, the small-scale trade has been displaced by large-scale trade; however, Vietnam has had a trade imbalance with China. This led to an increase in Vietnam's balance of payments deficit with China. Besides, with the opening of the border areas between China and Vietnam and the flourishing trade between them, tourism across the frontier is also showing significant growth. Many economic cooperation districts such as Beilun River, Pingxiang and Langson are centres for the accumulation and distribution of goods, as well as for trade and information exchange. They assumed that in the future it can be an earth way to China not only for Vietnam but for other Southeast Asian countries as well. Beside trade, travel and cooperation districts, the two governments also stimulate investment on border area infrastructure and municipal administrations. All of these activities created a "golden era of high-speed development" in the 1990s. Especially, local officials and entrepreneurs along the border have used national policies of normalization to tie together China and Vietnam through thousands of small bonds of opportunity.

With all of the activities the two countries have experienced, the two writers thought that there is still plenty of competition on the border as well as cooperation. However, the local governments play important role in promoting border opportunities. There are conditions to believe that the future of economic development and trade in the regions around the Sino-Vietnam border will get prosperity.

## **Works on Sino-Vietnamese border issue resolution**

Relating to the relations and border issue between China and Vietnam, Ramses Amer has written some valuable works such as “The Ethnic Chinese in Vietnam and Sino-Vietnamese Relations”; “The territorial disputes between China and Vietnam and the regional stability”; “The Management of the Border Disputes Between China and Vietnam and its Regional Implications”; “The Management of the Border Disputes Between China and Vietnam and its Regional Implications”; “The management of Vietnam’s Border Disputes: What Impact on Its Sovereignty and Regional Integration?”; “Assessing Sino-Vietnamese Relations through the Management of Contentious Issues” and others

In the research works “The Territorial Disputes between China and Vietnam and Regional Stability” and “the Management of the Border Disputes Between China and Vietnam and its Regional Implications”, Ramses Amer fairly examined the territorial disputes between China and Vietnam and their influences on the relations between the two countries before and after the normalization of relations in late 1991. In the papers, the author also focused on the developments in the process of negotiation on the solution of territorial issues. The evolution has reflected an overall constructive approach to the border disputes with continuous bilateral talks at different levels. However, the author also pointed out the reasons, especially the disputes in South China Sea which have led to the periods of tension in the two countries’ relations. According to him, the tensions have negative implications not only on bilateral relations, but also on the regional stability.

A noticeable point in Ramese Amer’s view on China’s foreign policy toward Vietnam and the region which was reflected in the paper “The Management of the Border Disputes Between China and Vietnam and its Regional Implications” is that “China is consistent in its inconsistency by pursuing two parallel policies, one constructive and peaceful and the other characterised by gradual expansion in the South China Sea. This ‘dual policy’ is not conducive to the building of a stable regional security environment” (Amer and Nguyen Hong Thao 2005)

In “Assessing Sino-Vietnamese Relations through the Management of Contentious Issues”, Ramses Amer analysed and evaluated major developments in the

relationship between Vietnam and China since full normalization of relations in late 1991. Issues such as territorial disputes, smuggling and ethnic Chinese in the relationship were characterized by fundamental changes in the patterns of interaction. Particularly, after China's attack in 1979, the territorial conflicts became increasingly publicised, the land border conflict was more an indication of the divergences. Negotiations were carried out with a highly structured and extensive hierarchy of talks and discussions; on 30 December 1999, a signed treaty relating to the land border reflected the substantially higher degree of progress made in negotiations on the land border. This Land Border Treaty was the first major achievement in the overall process of managing and eventually resolving the border disputes between China and Vietnam. In 2000, the Land Border Treaty was ratified; and the two countries subsequently established a Joint Committee for the demarcation of the land border. The core disputed areas were defined with 'ensuring fairness and satisfaction for both sides'.

Nguyen Hong Thao (2000) in the paper "the China-Vietnam Border Delimitation Treaty of 30 December 1999" stated Sino-Vietnamese land border issue and the process of negotiation on the dispute settlement. He pointed out several factors that led to conclusion of Sino-Vietnamese Land Border Treaty signed in 1999 such as: the two countries needed stability for reconstruction and development of their countries; the two countries have experience of settling border issues; and the State and Party leaders of the two countries actively concerned on the settlement of China-Vietnam border issues (p. 88-89). Besides that, the author also pointed out the principles defining the land borderline which were reflected in the Agreement on Fundamental Principles of 19 October 1993. In conclusion, the author argued that the China-Vietnam land border treaty is a victory for the two nations. They now have a clearly defined and stable boundary and the treaty meets the aspirations of the two peoples, especially those peoples in border areas. The treaty also meets the need of maintaining peace and stability in South East Asia.

In the research paper "The Implementation of Vietnam-China Land Border Treaty: Bilateral and Regional Implications", Do Thi Thuy (2009) pointed out two main factors -favourable international context after the Cold War and political will of leaders of the two countries – which influenced the settlement and implementation of the Land Border Treaty between Vietnam and China. According to her, although the



Sino-Vietnamese Land Border Treaty was a successful story and a landmark event, given the complicated history between Vietnam and China, the way the two countries have concluded and introduced the documents to their public, nevertheless, created a lot of debate, especially in Vietnam, where not a small number of hold that the government had made concessions and suffered loss of territory to China. She also analysed positive impact of the land border solution on not only the bilateral relations between Vietnam and China, but China-ASEAN relations in the context of economic development and security in the region.

Brantly Womack (2006) in “China and Vietnam: the Politics of Asymmetry” touches upon interactions between China and Vietnam in the framework of asymmetric theory. Just as Womack mentioned in his book, the theory of asymmetric relations is the most international relations theory which overlooks the matters of relation between neighbouring states- the stronger and the weaker. In this theory, the case study of asymmetric relation between China and Vietnam is an ideal case. Approaching the subject in “greater priority to “the case” rather than to the theory”, Womack indeed gave a comprehensive understanding of China and Vietnam, especially in the current period of normalization, under influence of asymmetric relations. Its influence can be seen in border trade, national development policy, ideology and so forth.

M. Taylor Fravel (2005) in “Regime Insecurity and International Cooperation: Explaining China’s Compromises in Territorial Disputes” analysed China’s dispute behaviour which he has seen as bearing directly on the future of peace and stability in East Asia. Despite its power advantages to bargain hard over contested land, especially with its weaker neighbours, China pursues peaceful resolution of territorial disputes. Taylor Fravel assumed that this foreign policy is affected by domestic conflicts. In other words, Taylor argued that internal conflict itself creates conditions for cooperation, producing a ‘diversionary peace’ instead of war. In countering their sources of insecurity, China’s leaders are likely to compromise in territorial disputes to regime insecurity, including rebellions and legitimacy crises. Taylor thought that regime insecurity such as the revolt in Tibet, the instability following the Great Leap Forward, the legitimacy crisis after the Tiananmen upheaval, and separatist violence in Xinjiang is the best way to explain the variation in China’s use of cooperation and

delaying strategies. In land border dispute with Vietnam, China sought not only to normalize the relation and thus strengthen neighbouring socialist regimes, but also to facilitate the economic development. As a result, China and Vietnam opened negotiations in 1991 and reached a preliminary agreement in 1993 on principles for settling their disputes. By settling disputes, China has reassures its neighbour about its intentions and potential ambitions, lessening the security dilemma.

Nie Hongyi (2009) in “Explaining Chinese Solutions to Territorial Disputes with Neighbour States” examined factors which drove and had impact on China’s handling of its territorial disputes. She argued that. such existing theories as Domestic politics oriented theories, Transition theories, Equilibrium theories and Institutional theories “place too much emphasis on China when explaining the determinants of its attitude and approach to border issues, and overlooks the dynamics of other states, their effect and influence upon Chinese policy decisions”. Nei Hongyi believed that China’s policy and attitude toward territorial disputes were influenced and derived by its neighbours’ border policy. She argued that changes in China’s neighbours’ border policy would result in changes in China’s territorial policy and stance. It explained that China applied “hard-line approach to expansionary powers, and concessionary approach towards status quo states’ principle”. In her paper, Nie Hongyiy reviewed border policy of China’s neighbours as well as the changes of China’s policy toward the state which had shifted its policy. Especially, the author stressed on explanation of the causes led to the China’s border wars with Soviet Union in 1969, India in 1962 and Vietnam in 1979. She argued that because Soviet Union, India and Vietnam had shifted their border policy toward expansionist one, China had to apply hard-line policy stance. And a result, the border war with these countries was inevitable. From the examination, the author went to three fundamental conclusions: (i). China inevitably took a hard-line policy stance to expansionist states and tended towards a hard-line posture in its handling of border issues with such a state, regardless of differences in military capabilities, ideology, or the nature of that state’s leadership; (ii). In its handling of territorial issues with weak neighbour states, China generally adopts a concessionary position, and does not make territorial demands of such weak states; (iii). Factor like ideology, military capacity, regime stability, and the personal characteristics of state leaders served as limited and conditional effects upon China’s

border policy attitude, while the policies of neighbour states had direct and fundamental effects on China's attitude.

Chi Kinlo (1989) made his attempt to understand the factors, motives behind Chinese policies; the nature of military operations undertaken by China to assert its territorial claims; China's "different attitudes toward different disputes at the same time and different attitudes towards the same dispute at different times". In the book "China's policy toward territorial disputes: the Case of the South China Sea islands" Chi Kinlo took the territorial disputes over the Paracel and Spratly Islands in the South China Sea, especially from the early 1970s as a case study to clarify China's policy toward territorial disputes. Tracing historically China's claims over these islands, Chi-kin Lo said that despite important changes in the political environment of the South China Sea as well as in China's global and regional strategies, its claim to sovereignty over the Paracel and Spratly Islands remained unchanged. Chi-kin Lo asserted that during the 1970s and early 1980s with numerous operations upon the Paracel and Spratly Islands, China have kept on claiming its sovereignty over the islands. China's perception of geopolitical interests in the region also keeps changing due to variations of China's behaviour in territorial disputes. He assumed that China's manner of handling territorial disputes in the future may also vary according to geopolitical considerations. Due to consistent pursuit of economic interests, the "open door" policy has become important and work well within its geopolitical considerations.

### **3. Framework of Research**

#### **Rationale and Scope of the Research**

The China - Vietnam relations have rapidly improved and developed since normalization of relations in 1991. Along with that, the signing of Land Border Treaty in Hanoi on 30 December 1999, the Agreement on Demarcation of Waters, Exclusive Economic Zones and Continental Shelves in the Gulf of Tonkin, the Agreement on Fishing Cooperation in the Gulf of Tonkin and most recently, the completion of demarcation and boundary marker placement of the land border have successfully settled two out of three territorial disputes between the two countries. However, there remain problems related to border and territory issues in South China Sea. If the

disputes are not properly dealt with, they will serve as the source of tensions to the two countries' relations as well as peace and stability in the region. Therefore, experience in resolving the land border issue between the two countries to some extent is worth in application to maritime issue resolution between the two countries in particular and between other countries in the region in general.

The dissertation focuses on land border issue. However since this is subject to overall bilateral conflict of relations, the foreign policy dimension is also explored.

### **Hypotheses**

In this dissertation, two hypotheses are proposed to be tested, viz,

1. Changes of Chinese foreign policy, and Vietnam's foreign policy toward China in 1980s actively impacted on the resolving process of land border issue between Vietnam and China.
2. Land border settlement positively influences on the bilateral relations between Vietnam- China and contributes to the peace and stability in the region.

### **Research Methodology**

To clarify the research questions, inductive method will be applied. The inductive method is a scientific method which is a process of using observations to develop general principles about a specific subject. A group of similar specimens, events, or subjects are first observed and studied; finding from the observations are then used to make broad statements about the subjects that were examined. Besides inductive method, historical and analytical methods will also be used. Materials used in the dissertations will be exploited from both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include documents such as Agreement of Land Border, Joint Communiqués...issued by governments, and related ministries of the two countries, and secondary sources likes books, research works, articles, and internet ...on the issues related to the dissertation.

## **Research Schema**

The structure of the proposed research includes six chapters and each chapter will be further divided into sub-parts. The second chapter attempt to provide readers a background of China – Vietnam relations. Therefore, an overview on China–Vietnam relations since the first contact, through periods, and up to date is the main content of this chapter. The third chapter will examine the course of the Sino – Vietnamese land border formation through periods. In the second part of this chapter, reasons led to the land border dispute between the two countries will be dealt with. In the next section, the conflicts related to land border issue, especially the border war in 1979 will also be looked at. The third part will study the whole process of land border resolution. To this end, land border negotiations before and the normalisation will be carefully examined. The Chapter IV will focus on factors leading to the success of land border dispute settlement between China and Vietnam. In the first place, the influence of state-nationalism on China’s border dispute resolution policy will be looked into. Apart from that, the second part will analyse factors leading to changes in China’s Vietnam policy during 1980s including both external and internal. In the third part, the normalisation and development of relations between the two countries will be dealt with as a factor which creates a favourable condition for land border resolution. The last part will scrutinise the wills of the two countries’ leadership in resolving land border dispute. The Chapter V will look at the significance of land border dispute resolution for bilateral relations between China and Vietnam and the stability and development of the region. Therefore, the influence of land border dispute resolution on the two countries’ relations in such fields as political relations, border area security, economic cooperation and development in border areas will be taken into account. In broader sense, the settlement of land border dispute has implications for the regional security and development. Chapter VI is also the concluding one. It first summarised to analyses in the five chapters above and offers some conclusions, including on the possible impact that this land border resolution could have on other such disputes

## **Conclusion**

Border disputes have been eternally problems that all of countries in the world at least one time have to face. The live-long border disputes can restrain development of foreign relations and more or less cause many bad effects. As in the case of China and

Vietnam, the land border disputes between the two countries had lasted for very long time causing a lot of problems until the disputes were resolved successfully in 1999. The success of the land border disputes was result of a long process in which not only both the two countries' leaders tried their best to reach but also external factors had certain influence on.

The border disputes between China and Vietnam used to be a hot subject in the region because more or less the nature of relations between these two countries has affected the security and stability of the region. Hence, undeniably, once the land border dispute resolution gains success, not only were bilateral relations between the two countries tightened, but also cooperation in the region were, this created a common ground for all the countries co-existing in peace and security for a prosperous future. The success through friendly negotiations can serve as a typical sample for countries that still have border disputes in the region to follow. This could also become a common trend in future.

### **Limitations**

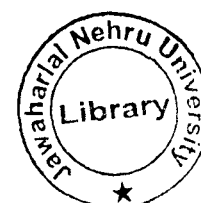
This dissertation has some limitations as follows:

Firstly, due to the sensitiveness of the subject - border issue, especially in China and Vietnam, most documents are classified. Therefore, this dissertation could not consult the classified documents, but consulted the documents in public.

Secondly, since the topic is so specific, this dissertation just dealt with the general aspects.

Thirdly, due to the diversity of Chinese languages and the writer's language limitation, a number of documents in different Chinese languages could not be effectively exploited. Apart from that, both Wade & Giles and Pinyin systems have been used in documents written in English, so conversion from Wade & Giles into Pinyin sometimes overreached the writer's ability. Therefore, some personal names may not be converted.

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## CHAPTER II

### **An Overview on China - Vietnam Relations**

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China and Vietnam are two neighbouring countries which have a thousand year history of relationship. The relations have experienced a number of ups and downs. The nature of the relations has changed in different periods and sometime depended on the way the Chinese or Vietnamese looked at. In the long history of relationship, Vietnam had been regarded as a China's province when it was annexed into China; as a vassal state belonged to China's tributary system; as a friend, comrade in the similar situation; as an enemy; and as a good neighbour again. This chapter purposes to provide a background on China - Vietnam relations since the first contact between the two countries emerged until now.

#### **1. Ancient Times**

China and Vietnam had contacts in very early times from the time of Zhou Dynasty (1045 BCE-256 BCE) in China and Hong Bang Dynasty ruled by Hung Kings (prior to 257 BCE) in Van Lang<sup>1</sup>.

In the time of King Gang of Zhou (1020-996), Hung King (not clear which Hung Kings) sent emissaries to Zhou's kingdom. They called themselves as Viet Thuong Thi and presented white pheasants (Ngo Sy Lien 1998: 20). According to Chinese historical documents, this event took place in 1110 BC, Zhou King offered Hong Bang's emissaries five carriages with needle to return home.

In the late Spring and Autumn Period and beginning of Warring States Period, Yue state after several decades of conflict destroyed Wu state in 473 BCE and became one of the powerful states controlling a large region in South of China. In 473, King Goujian of Yue (reigned 496 BC - 465 BC) who was the king of the Kingdom of Yue (present-day Shanghai, northern Zhejiang and southern Jiangsu) sent his messenger to

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<sup>1</sup> Name of Vietnam under Hong Bang Dynasty

Hong Bang kingdom in order to entice Hung King into submitting himself to the rule of Yue, but Hung King rejected this royal decree.

After conquering six other kingdoms-Yan, Zhao, Qi, Wei, Han, and Chu, Qin state, King Zheng declared himself as emperor and took on the name Qin Shihuang Di in 219. With policy of consolidating and expanding state, Qin Shihuang Di sent his troops to both Northern and Southern parts of China to expand Qin's territory. In the South his generals fought many wars with local people in present-day Guangdong and Guangxi. Even in the expeditions, Qin's troops even approached the capital of Au Lac, near the present-day Hanoi.

At that time, Vietnam was under the rule of King An Duong. King An Duong was the title of Thuc Phan who apparently came upon the Au Viet territory<sup>2</sup> After assembling an army, he defeated King Hung Vuong XVIII, the last ruler of the Hong Bang Dynasty in 257 BCE. He proclaimed himself An Duong Vuong (King An Duong). After unifying the two countries of Au Viet and Lac Viet King An Duong renamed Au Lac which included most of Guangxi and northern Vietnam. He established the new capital at Phongkhe (now in the district of Donganh, district of Hanoi).

King An Duong raised his people against the aggressors and protect Au Lac's territory. In this war, although Qin's troops expanded and occupied a large region in southern part, it could not defeat Au Lac's people.

After Qin Shihuang Di's death, Qin dynasty fell into decay and collapsed in 206 BC and Liu Bang initiated the Han Dynasty four years later in 202 BC. In the wreckage of the empire, Zhao Tuo - a Qin's commander in the south built his own kingdom of Nan Yue (South Viet) covering area of Lingnan, which today comprises Guangdong, Guangxi, Hunan, Jiangxi and other nearby areas of southern mainland China.

Zhao Tuo waged several wars to invade Au Lac, but all were militarily unsuccessful. However, with crafty device, at last Zhao defeated and annexed Au Lac into Nan Yue in 196 BC. After the annexation of Au Lac, Zhao Dynasty divided Au

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<sup>2</sup> Modern-day northernmost Vietnam, western Guangdong, and southern Guangxi province, with its capital in what is today Caobang Province of Vietnam



Lac into two prefectures of Nan Yue: Jiaozhi (Giao Chi) and Jiuzhen (Cuu Chan). Victory of Zhao Tuo in the wars with Au Lac opened a new page in the history of Vietnam when it did not exist as an independent country, but a part of Nan Yue.

Relating to the question when Vietnam officially became a part of China, there are some different opinions. Most Vietnamese modern historians state that Vietnam existed as a part of China when King An Duong was defeated by Zhao Tuo and was integrated into Nan Yue. They argue that because Vietnam had different ethnic roots from northern China and autonomous cultural roots in the Stone Age and Bronze Age (the Dong Son culture of the Red River delta) (Womack 2006:100). If it's true, Vietnam's territory at that time just covered a region of North Vietnam and a part of present-day Guangxi. However, some considered Zhao Tuo the first Vietnamese Emperor. This is the viewpoint of some historians like Le Van Huu, Phan Phu Tien, Ngo Sy Lien<sup>3</sup>...etc. Thus, Vietnam was only regarded as a part of China when Nan Yue was conquered by Han Dynasty in 111 BC and its territory included Au Lac and Nan Yue's territory which covered Guangdong, Guangxi, and Hunan. However, this dissertation is going to take the former which regards Vietnam as a part of China since 196 BC when Au Lac was conquered by Nan Yue and its territory located in northern part of present day Vietnam and a part of southern today Guangxi.

Therefore, in ancient times, China and Vietnam, although, had contacts, it just existed in legend. The relationship between the two countries appeared more clearly as Qin Shihuang Di expanded his territory toward southern part.

## **Vietnam as a Part of China**

### **First Chinese Domination**

The China - Vietnam relations in this period were marked by the failure of Au Lac people in the defensive war against Nan Yue's invasion. Vietnam from an independent country was annexed to China and existed as part of China from 196 BC to 39 AD.

After the annexation, Au Lac was divided into two prefectures of Nan Yue, Jiaozhi and Jiuzhen. Despite being a Chinese, Zhao Tuo followed Yue's customs. He

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<sup>3</sup> In *Dai Viet Su Ky Toan Thu*, these authors have one chapter writing about the era of Zhao dynasty which was considered as other Vietnamese dynasties.

allowed each region to have representatives to the central government and thus his administration was quite relaxed and had a feeling of being decentralized. However, he remained in control.

Despite the proclamation of Nan Yue King, Zhao dynasty in the first years regarded itself as a state which belonged to China's tributary system. In 196 BC Zhao Tuo received Han court's recognition as a King of Nan Yue. However, in the later years Nan Yue acted as an independent country in the relationship with Central Government. Even, Nan Yue dynasty killed Chinese employees appointed by the central government and favoured local Viet customs. In 185 BC, Zhao "took the title of Emperor of Nan Yue and seized territory from Han" (Womack 2006: 100). Dai Viet Su Ky Toan Thu also mentions that in 183 BC, coming to throne, Zhao led his troops to attack Changsha. After defeat of some prefectures, the King returned (Le Van Huu et al 1697: 11). In response, Han court sent its troops for several times to punish Zhao's actions, but was not successful. However till 111 BC, "the Han dynasty sent five armies against Nan Yue and defeated and annexed it" (Womack 2006: 100)

The annexation of Nan Yue officially brought Vietnam into Han Kingdom's orbit. The defeat of Nan Yue gave Lu Bode-a Han general- a chance to march to Jiaozhi and Jiuzhen prefectures and receive the surrender of the prefects. After the annexation, Han organised the old land of Nan Yue into seven prefectures, Nan Hai, Tsang wu, Yu-lin, and Ho-pu were located in modern Guangdong and Guangxi; the other three – Jiaozhi, Jiuzhen, and Rinan prefectures – were in Vietnam (Taylor 1983: 30). The seven prefectures which organised Jiaozhi Circuit were put under the control of governor whose residence located at Luy Lau in Jiaozhi prefecture, but in 106 BC it was moved to the more central location of Zangwu

Han initially continued the practice established by Au Lac and Nan Yue of relying on local leaders (Womack 2006: 101). However, the Han court gradually changed the administrative structure into a more centralized one and imposed greater economic and cultural demands. The old aristocratic hierarchy under a monarchy, whether of Hung Kings, King An Duong, or of the "King of Tay Vu", was officially replaced by bureaucratic relationship based on the theory of prefectural and district administrations (Taylor 1983: 33). The local leaders step by step were replaced by Han

officials. For example, Ren Yan and Su Ding were appointed prefects of Jiuzhen in AD 25, and in AD 29 respectively.

Along with the replacement of local leaders by Han officials, in the first years AD we also witnessed the gradual penetration of Han culture and customs into Vietnam. For instance, in the tenure of Xiguang as prefect of Jiaozhi (1-5 AD), he opened schools, enforced Chinese style-marriage rites, prescribed wearing of hats, sandals, and instructed the people in justice and ritual. Xiguang's reforms show that Han officials were beginning to pursue a more aggressive policy toward the indigenous way of life (Taylor 1983: 33). Jen Yen who was appointed as prefect of Jiuzhen, implemented some reforms in this prefecture. He ordered the production of iron field implements; supervised the opening-up of new land for farming; introduced Chinese-style marriage observances (Taylor 1983: 34).

All the reforms and cultural impositions by Chinese governors in this period were to serve two aims. One was to develop agrarian economy as a stable source of tax revenue. The other was to establish patriarchal society based on monogamous marriage that would be capable of responding to Han-style government. These two aims were related. Raising agricultural productivity meant increasing the role of men in agriculture, which encouraged Chinese concepts of marriage and society; with the use of iron plows and draft animals, the role of men in agriculture increased, as did productivity. Furthermore, clearly defined monogamous family units were easier to register and tax (Taylor 1983: 36).

The administrative and economic reforms, tax policies along with cultural impositions initiated by the Han brought benefits to Han officials and central government while taking away what had belonged to local leaders. This caused contradictions between Han officials and local leaders. As Taylor writes:

Lac Lords and Han officials competed for control of the Lac fields and of the people who tilled them. As discrepancies between the old principle of aristocratic hierarchy and the new principle of prefectural and distinct administration became increasingly evident, the Lac lords were faced with the choice of becoming subordinate officials in Han government, or of taking their case to the battlefields (Taylor 1983: 38).

The contradictions along with miseries of people under Han control with heavy taxes, unreasonable cultural impositions were the reason of people's uprisings. Typically, the most famous early revolt took place in AD 39, when two widows of local aristocrats, the Trung sisters, led an uprising against Han rule. The revolt broke out in the tenure of Su Ding as prefect of Jiaozi who was reportedly greedy and inept. In a short time, Han rule system in Vietnam was collapsed, Su Ding fled, and a large region was liberated. Trung Trac established royal court in Me Ling and was recognized as a queen with title Trung Nu Vuong (King Trung Nu) by sixty-five strong holds (Taylor 1983: 38).

However, the independence of Vietnam in the era of King Trung Nu ended after three years of rule from AD 40 to AD 42 when Han court sent its troops led by Ma Yuan to re-conquer Vietnam. As a result, Vietnam once again was integrated into China. Although Trung Trac's rule fell in a short time, it played a significant role which started a series of uprisings during a thousand years of China rule in Vietnam.

### **The Second Chinese Domination**

Han court, after the defeat of Su Ding by the two sisters Trung Trac and Trung Nhi, drew a lesson in its manner of dominating Vietnam. Han court in the first domination had depended much on local leaders (Lac Lords) to govern Vietnam. Therefore, when the tense and contradictions between Han officials and local people broke out, the local leaders like Trung Trac had enough economic and political conditions to gather local people to overthrow political and administrative institution set by Han court. As a result, Ma Yuan started the second period of Chinese domination with new dominating policy. Ma Yuan spent most of the year 42 building up Han administration in Hong river plain and preparing the local society for Han direct rule. His activities followed three steps. First, he suppressed what remained of pre-Han political heritage. Second, he rooted Han officialdom at prefectural and district administrative level. Third, he bound the local people to this new state of affairs with a personal covenant (Taylor 1983: 45).

Besides, setting administrative institutions strongly and directly ruled by central court in order to integrate Vietnam politically and maximise the economic

exploitation, in this period, cultural assimilation step by step was strongly taking place than ever before. The assimilation went through two forms, the obligatory and natural one. The former was carried out through ruling policies which tried to suppress local customs and culture and spread Chinese one. As a result, a number of Chinese cultural and traditional values gradually became popular in Vietnam such as Confucianism, language, art, architecture and music, etc. Furthermore, the ruling policies of Chinese dynasties actively helped Chinese cultural values penetrate naturally into Vietnam. For instance, to protect political and economic interests, Chinese courts left behind in Vietnam a number of soldiers after the wars with Vietnamese people. These soldiers were allowed to settle in Vietnam and were encouraged to marry local women. Apart from that, a large number of Han people immigrated and settled in Vietnam. These people brought with them Chinese traditions, customs and culture. The traditional, cultural values to some extent would naturally influence the local culture. A number of Chinese cultural and traditional values were absorbed, but not all. Vietnamese people selected what was suitable and developed them into their cultural values. As Womack argues that although Vietnam became a part of China, it did not simply dissolve into it. Vietnam had enough demographic and cultural substance and geographic distance to remain a place where a distinct identity could form (Womack 2006: 115). Even Chinese assimilating policy failed as Han immigrants were more effectively 'Vietnamised' than Vietnamese were Sinicised (Taylor 1983: 53).

The cultural substance explains the reason why during a thousand years of Chinese domination there were a number of revolts waged by the Vietnamese to gain independence. After the two sisters Trung Trac and Trung Nhi's uprising, the most significant revolt was led by Ly Bi who was a regional magistrate of Jiaozhou. In the time of Ly Bi revolt, China was in the Southern and Northern Dynasties Period<sup>4</sup> and Vietnam was under the domination of Liang court in south China. In 543, Ly Bi revolt was successful and he renamed the empire Van Xuan (Eternal Spring) and declared himself emperor. The Ly Dynasty set by Ly Bi lasted approximately sixty years (544-606 AD) with Ly Thien Bao and Trieu Quang Phuc as successors respectively. Vietnam, for the first time after 500 years under Chinese domination since Trung Trac revolt, gained its independence from China. Although the independence was roughly

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<sup>4</sup> Southern and Northern Dynasties was a period (420-589 AD) which followed the Jin Dynasty (265-420 AD)

60 years, it clearly reflected the Vietnamese peoples' aspiration and will for independence. Moreover, the success of Ly Bi in driving away Chinese invaders could be considered as an encouragement for later uprisings.

The Sui Dynasty, after uniting China in 581, sent its troop to conquer Van Xuan in 602. Vietnam again integrated into China and stepped into the third period of Chinese domination. After a short time under the Sui Dynasty's control, in 618 Vietnam fell into the Tang's domination when it replaced the Sui in China. Tang organised twelve provinces and 59 districts. In 679, Tang Dynasty established Protectorate General to Pacify the South as their military government in Jiaozhi. The Sino-Vietnamese name of this government is An Nam do ho phu which can be called for short An Nam (Pacified South). The Tang Dynasty dominated An Nam for roughly 320 years. During the time of Tang control, several Vietnamese people's revolts took place such as Le Ngoc in the early 7th century; Ly Tu Tien and Đinh Kien in 687; Mai Hac De (Mai the Black Emperor) in 722; Mai Thieu De in 722-723 – son of Mai Hac De; Phung Hung 791-799 - called the Emperor the Great Father; Phung An 799-802 - son of Phung Hung; Vuong Quy Nguyen in 803; Duong Thanh in 819–820; and Khuc Thua Du. Almost all of these rebellions failed, except the revolt led by Phung Hung when he drove away the Tang invader and briefly ruled Vietnam from 791 to 798. In the first years of 10<sup>th</sup> Century when Tang Dynasty declined in China, Khuc Thua Du took the chance to push out the Tang from Vietnam in 906, but later worked with the Tang to establish himself as the first Vietnamese governor and ended the practice of Chinese governorships in Vietnam. The success of Khuc Thua Du started the period of autonomy in Vietnam which lasted from 906 to 938.

Finally, in 939, Vietnamese forces under Ngo Quyen took advantage of chaotic conditions in China to defeat local occupation troops and set up an independent state. The victory in Bach Dang River put an end to China's rule over Vietnam.

### **From 938-1858**

Bach Dang victory in late 938 opened a new era of independence and development for Vietnam. Following that, China - Vietnam relations also changed from dominant-dependent relationship to an "equal" one between two sovereign and independent

countries. Especially with the declaration of the Empire of Dai Co Viet by Dinh Bo Linh (Dinh Tien Hoang) in 968 and the Song Dynasty's recognition of Dinh as King of Jiaozhi in 975, the relations between the two independent and sovereign countries was most clearly reflected. Brantly Womack states that after the recognition of Ding Bo Linh as a King of Jiaozhi , "contact between China and Vietnam entered the realm of international relations" (Womack 2006: 117).

For the next thousand years the relations were maintained despite changes of dynasties in both countries. Vietnamese dynasties from Ngo, Dinh, Le, Ly, Tran, Ho, to Nguyen, after a thousand year-Chinese domination, were clearly aware of not only great potential threat from the North, but also asymmetry of power between a small country which had just gained independence and a powerful feudal empire with a history of thousand years. With such perception of a big and ambitious neighbour, Vietnamese dynasties implemented a soft and skilled policy toward China. On the contrary, China, as a dominant country and at the centre of the world, Middle Kingdom, used to regard Vietnam as a subordinate country which was treated as a part of China's tributary system. When dynasties in Vietnam were stable and strong, Chinese emperors carried out a peaceful policy and accepted tribute from Vietnamese kings, but Vietnamese dynasties were weak and instable, Chinese kings sent their troops to invade Vietnam.

Normally, when a Vietnamese king accedes to the throne, he had to send his emissary to China to request title. For instance, Dinh Tien Hoang, after declaring the Empire of Dai Co Viet, appointed ambassador to China to express goodwill of friendship. As a result, in 971 Dai Co Viet was recognized by Song Dynasty.

In 1407, Ming Dynasty attacked Vietnam. Vietnam under Ho Dynasty's rule could not resist and was occupied by Ming's forces. The Vietnamese people led by Le Thai To stood up and defeated Ming invader. In 1428 in spite of winning the war with the Ming, Le Thai To who had the right of establishing Le Dynasty, sent emissary to China to request a title and set up a friendly relationship. In 1802, after defeating Tay Son Dynasty, Nguyen Anh founded Nguyen Dynasty in Vietnam. Nguyen Dynasty, as a general rule, sent a delegation headed by Le Quang Dinh to China to request a title and name of country from Qing Dynasty.

Apart from requesting title, name of country, dynasties in Vietnam used to send their emissaries and paid tributes to Chinese kings and received Chinese envoys' visit. During the time of Ming rule in China, every year Le Dynasty had to send its emissary with tributes to Ming Kings and also received Ming's envoys to Vietnam. According to Chinese statistics, in Song Dynasty, during 220 years from 968 to 1190, Vietnamese dynasties sent more than forty tribute missions to China. During 70 years of Yuan Dynasty in China, there were fifty Vietnamese delegations visiting China to carry out their mission of tribute. During the Ming Dynasty, the number of Vietnamese emissaries to China was about 100 times. To implement China's Vietnam policy, Chinese kings also sent their envoys to Vietnam to confer titles on Vietnamese kings.

Although Vietnamese dynasties requested title from Chinese Emperors and used to send tribute missions to China, in reality China - Vietnam relations were an equal one between two independent countries. Vu Hong Lam argued that Vietnam pursued a "dual policy" toward China. On the one hand, it implemented all ceremonies of a tributary state to China which meant it recognised and accepted China's world order. On the other hand, Vietnam followed its own one (Vu Hong Lam 2004: 3). Guo Ming says that, Tributary relationship between China and Vietnam, to some extent, was a ritual exchange, Chinese feudal dynasties rarely interfered in internal affairs of Vietnamese dynasties (Guo Ming 1992).

The policies and affirmations of Vietnamese people's autonomy were clearly reflected through the wars against the Chinese dynasties. In this period, Vietnamese dynasties' China policies were soft and flexible. Ritually, they regarded themselves as a vassal in China's tributary system and fully paid tribute to the Central government. However, Chinese emperors in almost all dynasties fed their ambition to invade and integrate Vietnam as a China's province. The struggles against all the offensive wars waged by Chinese dynasties from Song, Ming, Yuan and Qing clearly reflected Vietnamese dynasties' policy toward Chinese dynasties and autonomous affirmation of the Vietnamese people.

As King C. Chen puts it "Prior to the French conquest of Indochina, the interaction between China and Vietnam had established a pattern: when China was strong and magnanimous, Vietnam paid tribute to and imitated its northern neighbour; when China was aggressive, Vietnam resisted" (Chen 1969: 142).



## 2. Colonial Times

This was the period in which “the relationship between China and Vietnam was largely unaffected by third-party relationships...” (Womack 2006: 142). Both countries were thoroughly exploited by colonialism. As a result, the Sino-Vietnamese relations were changed as Brantly Womack described “(D)istracted from their mutual differences and sharing similar burdens of oppression, China and Vietnam moved from a face-to-face relationship to a shoulder-to-shoulder one”

In 1839, the Opium War between Qing Dynasty and Britain broke out. After three years of conflicts, the defeat of Qing by Britain marked the beginning of long period which was called “century of humiliation” in China’s history. China - a great country in the previous period - was scrambled by Western imperialists. Due to the defeats in the wars with Britain in 1839-1842 and 1856-1860; France 1884-1885; and Japan 1894-1895, the Qing Dynasty had to sign a number of “unequal treaties” with Western foreigners and as a result the treaties pushed China to the position of a semi-colonial state.

Vietnam, in turn, could not evade the process of colonization. On 31 August 1958, 14 French gun-ships, 3,000 men and 300 Filipino troops under command of Charles Rigault de Genouilly opened an attack to the port of Tourane (present day Danang), causing significant damages, and occupying the city. This inaugurated the first phase of the French conquest of Indo-China (Tucker 1999: 29).

On 18 February 1859 De Genouilly then captured the poorly defended city of Saigon (present day Ho Chi Minh City). On 13 April 1862, the Vietnamese government was forced to cede the territories of three provinces: Bienhoa, Giadinh and Dinhtuong to France. In 1862, France obtained concessions from Emperor Tu Duc, ceding three treaty ports in Annam and Tonkin, and all of Cochinchina, the latter being formally declared a French territory in 1864. In 1867 the provinces of Chaudoc, Hatien and Vinhlong were added to the French controlled territory.

In the 1870s the French turned their attention to northern Vietnam, where Emperor Tu Duc’s hold was weak. The French hoped that, unlike the Mekong, the Red River might offer a viable commercial route to the Chinese interior. Moreover, with the British making inroads into Burma, the French feared that they would beat them to

the Chinese province of Yunnan from that direction (Tucker: 1999: 30). And as a result, in 1873, Hanoi and Namdinh were seized by French troops respectively.

In March 1874 Dupré<sup>5</sup> secured a treaty with Hue that recognised French control of Cochinchina and secured concessions in Hanoi and Haiphong. French gains in Tonkin alarmed China. Vietnam was, after all, still its tributary state, and the Chinese were concerned about the increasing French presence along their southwestern frontier (Tucker 1999: 30-31). Furthermore, Tu Duc's appeal to Qing court for intervention led to series of conflicts between French troops and Black Flag forces reinforced by Qing court which at last caused the Sino-French war in 1884-1885.

In 1881, Henri Rivière stormed the citadel of Hanoi on 25 April 1882. Although Rivière subsequently returned the citadel to Vietnamese control, his recourse to force was greeted with alarm in both Vietnam and China.

The Vietnamese government asked Liu Yongfu for help, whose well-trained and seasoned Black Flag soldiers were of considerable value. Apart from the help of Liu Yongfu, Tu Duc also bid for Chinese support and China agreed to arm and support the Black Flags and to covertly oppose French operations in Tonkin. The Qing court also sent a strong signal to the French that China would not allow Tonkin to fall under French control. In the summer of 1882 troops of the Chinese Yunnan and Guangxi armies crossed the border into Tonkin, occupying Langson, Bacninh, Hunghoa and other towns. The French minister to China, Frédéric Bourée, was so alarmed by the prospect of war with China that in November and December 1882 he negotiated a deal with the Chinese statesman Li Hongzhang to divide Tonkin into French and Chinese spheres of influence. The Vietnamese were not consulted by either party to these negotiations.

However, Henri Rivière went against the order when he used force to storm Hanoi and Namdinh. On 10 May 1883 Liu Yongfu challenged the French to battle in a taunting message widely advertised on the walls of Hanoi. On 19 May Rivière confronted the Black Flags in the Caugiay and was killed in this action.

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<sup>5</sup> Admiral M.J.Dupré was Governor of Cochin China

Rivière's death produced an angry reaction in France. Therefore, the Third Republic voted 5.5 million francs to support operations in Tonkin and despatched 3,000 reinforcements (Tucker 1999: 32). With the heavy reinforcement, in December 1883, French took the Black Flag base at Sontay and in March 1884, they occupied Bacninh

The defeat at Bacninh and Sontay, and further French successes in the spring of 1884, including the Capture of Hunghoa and Thainguyen, led to the negotiations which took place in Tianjin. The Tianjin Accord, concluded on 11 May 1884, provided for Chinese recognition of the French protectorate over Annam and Tonkin and withdrawal of Chinese troops from Tonkin, in return for a comprehensive treaty that would settle details of trade and commerce between France and China and provide for the demarcation of its disputed border with Vietnam.

On 6 June the French followed up their accord with China by concluding a fresh Treaty of Hue with the Vietnamese, which established a French protectorate over both Annam and Tonkin and allowed the French to station troops at strategic points in Vietnamese territory and to install residents in the main towns.

Although the provisional accord was signed, it did not help to avoid the Sino-French war which lasted from August of 1884 to April of 1885. The reason was that the Chinese did not want to put the term of the accord into effect. And when French sent troops to occupy Langson, they was attacked and defeated at Bac Le - a place nearby Langson - by Chinese forces. After the Bac Le incident, despite several negotiations between the two sides took place, all failed

The Sino-French war officially broke out on 22 August 1884 when France attacked Chinese fleet at Fuzhou. Then, French continued to open fire on other battles both in Vietnam and China. Although French troops suffered several defeats in Langson, with military pressures by attacks on Fujian and Taiwan, French forced China to declare its surrender. The second Tianjin Accord was signed in 1885. By the Accord, China relinquished two millennia of claims to Vietnam. In conjunction with other treaties and conventions signed by China in 1876–1885, the external dimension of the Chinese empire was terminated (Womack 2006: 148).

France obtained control over northern Vietnam following its victory over China in the Sino-French war (1884-1885). French Indochina was formed in October 1887 from Annam, Tonkin, Cochinchina (which together form modern Vietnam) and the Kingdom of Cambodia; Laos was added after the French-Siamese War.

The peace treaty of 9 June 1885 formalised France's victory in the Sino-French War. And more importantly, under the Treaty's terms China renounced its suzerainty over Vietnam and recognized the French protectorate there. Thus, with the Treaty of Tientsin, Vietnam was no longer a country which belonged to Chinese tributary system like Chinese point of view.

### **3. Relations between China and Vietnam from the Late Decade of 19<sup>th</sup> Century to 1945**

The historical context pushed China and Vietnam into a similar situation, China from an imperial empire to a semi-colony state which depended on Western imperialism and Vietnam from an independent country to a colony which was under control of French colonialist. And as a result, the new situation led to new relations between China and Vietnam. Vietnam was no longer a China's tributary state. Both China and Vietnam at that time were being brutally oppressed and exploited by Western imperialism and Chinese and Vietnamese people were trying to struggle against the Western domination.

China, in late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, after series of concessions in the treaties signed with Western powers and even Japan, a country which had been considered as a vassal of China, the weak and coward Qing Dynasty witnessed a number of the people's uprisings, typically the Taiping Rebellion taking place from 1851 to 1864; the Boxer Rebellion 1898-1901; and the Xinhai revolution in 1911. Among these Xinhai revolution led by Sun Yatsen overthrew the Qing Dynasty and the establishment of the Republic of China (ROC) in 1912.

In Vietnam, the situation similarly developed as in China. After the failure of stopping French spreading its control over Annam and Tonkin, series of the Vietnamese people's uprisings against the French colonialist continued to break out. In 1885, king Ham Nghi called for a national uprising against the French. This movement

was known as Phong Trao Can Vuong (Supporting the King Movement). However it failed when King Ham Nghi was betrayed and captured by the French in 1888. At the same time, a revolt against the French led by Hoang Hoa Tham was taken shape in Bacgiang, a northern province<sup>5</sup> of Tonkin. The revolt was significant for the Vietnamese as it lasted for roughly 20 years and influenced a large area in Vietnam. However in 1913 Hoang Hoa Tham was assassinated by one of his associates, a Vietnamese working for the French. Although his followers tried to continue the struggle, the movement soon collapsed (Tucker 1999: 36).

The aim of all the uprisings in Vietnam during the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century was to regain independence and they did not care about social and political reforms. As King C. Chen says “their motive for fighting the French was the same as that of their ancestors who opposed the Chinese” (Chen 1969: 14). The defeats of revolts in late 19<sup>th</sup> Century made the Vietnamese understand that they could not liberate their country with the same way as their ancestor had done. In addition, the events happened in China and Japan in the first years of 20<sup>th</sup> Century profoundly influenced on Vietnamese people’s thinking. Some of Vietnamese intellectuals began to look for a new way to save their country. And Japan was one of the most important and significant destination. Phan Boi Chau<sup>6</sup>, one of the most well-known intellectuals in Vietnam, went to Japan to learn how Japan could become a power. In Japan he met Liang Chichao and was introduced to Sun Yatsen and other Chinese revolutionists to learn some of the techniques of revolution, and to obtain funds for his newly organized Vietnam Quang Phuc Hoi (Association for the Restoration of Vietnam). The contact with Chinese revolutionist as Sun Yatsen helped Phan Boi Chau perceive new and modern ideas and gradually changed his thinking. Especially, after the success of the Chinese revolution of 1911, Phan Boi Chau, instead of promoting his original idea of a monarchical regime, favoured a Vietnamese republic (Chen 1969: 15-16).

The meeting of Vietnamese and Chinese patriots could be seen a good start for the later friendly relations between the two peoples. And the relationship had been consolidated years by years with mutual helps. After 1902, China became an important

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<sup>6</sup> Phan Boi Chau (1867-1940) was born in Nghe An. He spent many years in China, where he directed Vietnamese revolutionary movements and wrote a number of propaganda books and pamphlets. He was involved in many uprisings in Vietnam in the pre-World War I. From 1902-1925, before his arrest by the French, he was the leader of the Vietnamese nationalist movement.

base for the Vietnamese nationalist movement. In Canton, Phan Boi Chau united most of the nationalist groups into the League for the Restoration of Vietnam (Viet Nam Phuc Quoc Dong Minh Hoi, or Phuc Quoc). Later when the Whampoa Military Academy was established in Canton, with Phan Boi Chau's arrangement, about 40 Vietnamese young men were enrolled. A number of Vietnamese nationalists' activities took place in China during the first half of 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Vietnam, in return, served as a base for Chinese revolutionary movement in 1907 and 1908, when Sun Yatsen with some other Chinese nationalists came to Hanoi, where he established a temporary headquarters. From Hanoi and Langson, Sun Yatsen directed some uprisings in China (Chen 1969: 15-18).

The close relationship between the Chinese and Vietnamese were also reflected with the birth of Vietnamese Nationalist Party in 1927. The party took the same model of Chinese Nationalist Party with the same name, same doctrines (The Three People's Principles of Sun Yatsen) and received helps from Chinese nationalists. This party was the most important revolutionary organization in Indochina at the time (Chen 1969: 19).

The relationship between the Chinese and Vietnamese nationalists still maintained until the Chinese Nationalists were defeated by communist forces in China.

### **Relationship between Communists**

Apart from the relationship between Chinese and Vietnamese nationalists, in the 1920s relationship between communists of the two countries also began to appear. Along with the development of communist movements in China and Vietnam, the relationship were gradually consolidated and became the most important component and foundation of China - Vietnam relations in later years. As Womack describes:

Certainly the most important dimension of Sino-Vietnamese similarity, contact, and cooperation during the first half of the twentieth century was between the Chinese Communist Party, founded in Shanghai in 1921, and the Indochinese Communist Party, founded in Hong Kong in 1930 (Womack 2006: 153).

Ho Chi Minh who later became President of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam laid the foundation of the relationship between the two parties. In November 1924, Ho Chi Minh under the name Lee Suei (Ly Thuy) went to Guangzhou to implement Comintern's<sup>7</sup> plan of building up and guiding the Communist movement in Indochina. In Guangzhou, Ho Chi Minh opened a Special Political Training Class which included studies of Marxism-Leninism, Sun Yatsen's doctrine, mass movement, and new revolutionary techniques. This class attracted a number of young people to attend. Just over two years from 1925 to 1927, about 200 men who later became the major force of Vietnamese Communist revolution were trained (Chen 1969: 23-24). Besides the Training Class, a weekly paper entitled Thanh Nien (The Youth) was published. The Youth was born with purpose of disseminating anti-colonial and revolutionary ideas. Within two years 88 issues of paper were published and a lot of them were sent to Vietnam with the help of Communist Party of China (CPC).

During the time Ho Chi Minh being in Guangzhou, Mao Zedong was directing a Kuomintang-Communist Peasant Seminar which was nearby Ho Chi Minh's class. The Training Class had a good and close relationship with Mao's Peasant Seminar. CPC not only helped Ho Chi Minh with financial aid but also sent some Chinese Communist leaders like Zhou Enlai, Liu Shaoqi and Peng Pai to present some lectures in Ho Chi Minh's Class.

Prior to Ho Chi Minh's arrival at Guangzhou, Tam Tam Xa (the Heart to Heart Association), a organization which took Marxism as guideline had been set up in 1923 by Ho Tung Mau, Le Hong Phong and others. Ho Chi Minh reorganized it as the Viet Nam Cach Menh Thanh Nien Dong Chi Hoi (Association of Vietnamese Revolutionary Young Comrades), or Thanh Nien. Besides that, He also formed an Anti-Colonial League of Oppressed People of the East, including members from Korea, China, Vietnam, India, Malaya, and Indonesia (Chen 1969: 22-23).

In 1927, the cooperation between the Kuomintang and the CPC was broken when Chang Kai-shek betrayed and killed a number of the communists in 1927. The

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<sup>7</sup> Comintern is the abbreviation of Communist International, also known as the Third International which was an international Communist organization founded in Moscow in March 1919. The Comintern was founded after the dissolution of the Second International in 1916. The Comintern held seven World Congresses between 1919 and 1935. The Comintern was subsequently officially dissolved in 1943.

sudden situation caused difficulties for not only Chinese but also for Vietnamese communists who were in China.

Suffering suppression by Kuomintang (KMT) in Shanghai and other cities and series of unsuccessful urban uprisings in Nanchang, Wuhan and Guangzhou, Chinese Communists finally drove many party supporters to rural strongholds such as the Jiangxi Soviet organized by Mao Zedong. Meanwhile, Ho Chi Minh left China for Moscow and Ho Tung Mau took the leader position of Thanh Nien. In 1928 Ho Tung Mau was arrested by KMT and then forced to move to Hong Kong (Chen 1969: 25). The Communist movements continued to develop in Vietnam. Thanh Nien gradually grew into a Communist party known as Indochinese Communist Party in northern Vietnam along with Annamese Communist Party in Cochinchina and Indochinese Communist League in Annam. In 1930, Ho Chi Minh came to Hong Kong to unite the three Vietnamese communist groups to form a stronger and more united communist organisation. And as a result, on 3<sup>rd</sup> February, 1930, Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) was established and recognized by Comintern. Soon thereafter, at its first plenum the party changed its name to the Indochinese Communist Party (ICP)<sup>8</sup>.

The event of CPV establishment in 1930 marked a very significant point not only for the revolutionary cause of Vietnamese people, but also for the Sino-Vietnamese relations. The relations between Chinese and Vietnamese communists were officially placed under the two communist organisations - CPC and CPV. Right after ICP was recognized by Comintern, CPC sent a letter to leaders of ICP saying “Indochina is one of the most important links in the world chain of imperialism, and the Indochinese revolution is one of the decisive factors in the East” (Chen 1969: 26).

In the first half of 1930s, the revolutionary movements in both China and Vietnam suffered heavy difficulties and losses. While Chinese communists had to confront the KMT’s extermination campaigns, Vietnamese revolutionary movements led by both Nationalists and Communists were brutally oppressed by the French. The situation caused difficulties for the cooperation and mutual help between CPC and ICP. In this period, Chinese Communists had to struggle for their own survival so they were not able to aid the young Indochinese Communist Party (Chen 1969: 28).

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<sup>8</sup> It renamed itself the Indochinese Marxist Study Society in November 1945, the Vietnam Workers Party in 1951, and finally the Communist Party of Vietnam in 1976.



After the Long March<sup>9</sup> to escape from KMT's extermination campaigns to Jiangxi Soviet, Mao Zedong and his comrades led Chinese communists to Yanan in Shaanxi province where they rebuilt Communist forces. In 1937, the breaking out of the second Sino-Japanese War led to the second cooperation between the Chinese communists and KMT. The cooperation was an opportunity for CPC to build up its forces because it avoided a two-enemy war. On the contrary, when the Second World War broke out, to prevent the Indochinese revolutionists from taking of the war in Europe, the French imposed a rule of terror in Vietnam. Thousands of revolutionary people - both Communists and non-Communist - were arrested, killed or sent to prison. As a result, ICP had to quickly go underground and a number of members fled to Yunnan, China. In China, with the assistance of CPC, members of ICP reorganized their force with several party cells under the cover of a legal organization, the "Vietnam Association for Support of China against the Japanese". The front organisation was the "Association for the Liberation of Vietnam."(Chen 1969: 36-39) The relations between CPC and ICP were more consolidated when two parties signed a secret agreement in August 1940 which included some basic articles:

1. establish a "United Front of the Sino-Vietnamese people against Japan";
2. enlarge the Vietnamese Communist armed organization and begin guerrilla activities;
3. unite the ICP with all political parties in an effort to set up a "United Front for National Independence";
4. make the goal of the ICP struggle "Anti-French Imperialism and Anti-Feudalism";
5. the ICP sends cadres to Yanan for training at the Resistance-Japan University; and
6. the CPC serves as representative of the Asian Information Bureau of the Comintern to guide the ICP, but offers \$50,000 (Chinese dollars) per month to the ICP for its activities in China (The Sixth Section of the Koumintang 1955: 12-13).

It was the first formal agreement between the two Communist parties. With the CPC's assistance, the Vietnamese Communist forces gradually developed and became

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<sup>9</sup> Long March was the massive retreat of Red Army and the leaders of the Communist Party of China from Yudu in the province of Jiangxi to Yanan in Shaanxi to evade the pursuit of the Kuomintang. The March lasted from 16 October 1934 to 19 October 1935 with the length of some 12,500 kilometers. During the retreat, membership in the party fell from 300,000 to around 40,000.

a largest organization in Vietnam and Indochina. At the Eighth session of the Central Committee of the ICP at Pac Bo in May 1941, Communist leader decided to organize the Viet Nam Doc Lap Dong Minh (Viet Minh in short form) with three basic goals- to expel the French and Japanese “fascists” and restore the independence of Vietnam; to ally with the democracies who fight against fascism and aggression; and to establish a Democratic Republic of Vietnam (Chen 1969: 52-53).

By March 1945, Viet Minh had built up its guerrilla bases and “people regimes” in six provinces, Caobang, Langson, Baccan, Tuyenquang, Phutho, and Thainguyen (Chen 1969: 99). Meanwhile, the situation in the world and Indochina was quickly changing. On 9 March 1945, the Japanese overthrew the French colonial government in Indochina. On 11 March, the Japanese reinstated Bao Dai as Emperor and created a nominally independent puppet government. This situation encouraged the Vietnamese Communists for a revolution. From March 9 to 12, ICP convened an urgent meeting and issued a directive, “The Japanese-French Conflict and Our Action.” After the meeting, the Viet Minh launched a movement which called on the people to struggle against the Japanese to save the country (Vietnam Foreign Ministry 2002: 40). In response to the call, hundreds of people joined the Liberation Army and revolutionary movements. Besides, Viet Minh accelerated its guerrilla operations in various regions (Chen 1969: 100-101).

On May 7<sup>th</sup> 1945, Germany surrendered to the Allies. Following that on 14 August, the Japanese also declared its surrender. This new favourable situation encouraged the Vietnamese Communists to step up the August General Uprising (later renamed the August Revolution) in order to gain independence for Vietnam and establish a new government. As a result, on 2 September 1945, at Hanoi’s Ba Dinh Square, in front of around 500,000 people, Ho Chi Minh read the declaration of independence giving birth to the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV).

The establishment of the DRV was a deserved repayment for incessant efforts of Vietnamese Communists led by Ho Chi Minh and great sacrifices of thousands of Vietnamese people as well as the help and assistance from international friends, especially from Chinese Communists.

#### 4. Modern Times

The Allies' victory in the Second World War helped Chinese and Vietnamese peoples eliminated a common enemy—the Japanese. However, while China completely escaped from foreign invader, in Vietnam, although the new government with Ho Chi Minh as President was established, Vietnamese people were still struggling against the French domination. Besides the French, the Provisional Government led by President Ho Chi Minh had to face a new danger when Chinese Nationalist force on behalf of the Allies advanced into Tonkin to disarm Japanese troops. With the new international and internal context, the relations between China and Vietnam shifted into a new phase with new features.

After the Japan's surrender, KMT and CPC went to the first post-war peace negotiation held in Chongqing from August 28, 1945 to Oct 10, 1945. Despite the peace negotiation was taking place, battles between the two sides continued until the agreement was reached in January 1946. However, on June 26 full scale war between CPC and KMT broke out when Chiang Kai-shek ordered attack into areas in North China which were under the control of CPC. China then entered a state of civil war that lasted for more than three years.

In Vietnam, after the establishment of the new government, ICP, at the same time, had to face a number of problems which included the French ambition of dominating restoration in Indochina; the danger of Chinese occupation in Tonkin under the cover of Japanese troop disarmament; and the sabotage of counter-revolutionary forces supported by the Chinese Nationalists as Vietnamese Nationalists...This was regarded as the most difficult time for the young government of ICP.

In the South Vietnam, British troops arrived on September 12, while in the North Chinese army totaling 152,500 men under General Lu Han entered from Yunnan and Guangxi in late August (Chen 1969: 120). To cope with the situation, before Lu Han, a Chinese Nationalist general led his troops to enter Tonkin, Viet Minh had prepared a careful and wise policy toward Lu Han troops. Ho Chi Minh Government decided to adopt a peaceful and concessive measure to deal with the Chinese Nationalist army.

With regard to the Chiang Kai-shek troops, it was necessary to avoid clashes, underline their mission which was to disarm the Japanese troops, prevent their acts of aggression, check their acts of intervention in the internal policy of the country; in case they attacked the national sovereignty, it was necessary to stand ready to launch an unarmed opposition, to mobilize the masses to demonstrate, in a word to 'oppose a political struggle to them (Chen 1969: 121).

Facing with the DRV's kid-glove and flexible policy, Lu Han troops had to evacuate their troops in June 1947. The success in dealing with the Chinese Nationalists helped the Vietnamese Communist eliminate one out of two enemies.

### **Relationship between the Two Communists**

At the same time of avoiding clashes and keeping a good relationship with Chiang Kai-shek Government, Viet Minh Government still maintained and consolidated its relations with CPC.

In the first months of 1946 the 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment of the Southern Guangdong People's Force including 600 men ran into Vietnam because of being chased by the KMT. President Ho Chi Minh ordered local party organs to receive and provide food and accommodation for the Regiment. The KMT knew the Ho Chi Minh Government's action and pressured to hand over the Communists, but the Viet Minh Government denied its help to the Chinese Communists.

To enlarge the anti-Chinese Nationalist front and help Vietnamese Communists, in mid-August 1946, around 350 Chinese Communists secretly moved in Vietnam from Yunnan and Guangxi. They were mostly in cultural field and active in Hanoi and Haiphong. They published *Life of Overseas Chinese* and *Overseas Chinese News*. Apart from that, they also opened an evening school for adults and prepared to publish a *Sino-Vietnamese Daily* and open high school (Chen 1969: 187).

To enhance the cooperation and relations, in spring of 1947, a radio line was set up to connect communication between the CPC and ICP. Zhou En-lai and Ho Chi Minh directly took the responsibility for the communication between the two parties.

In the first years, the young Viet Minh Government had been not recognized by any country in the world so that the purchase and transfer of weapons and equipments

faced many difficulties. Before 1948 the supply line went through Thailand. However this line was closed off when Bangkok government adopted an anti-Communist policy. To cope with the obstacle, Viet Minh got the help from the CPC. In September 1947, the Viet Minh arranged with the Chinese Communists to purchase military equipment and shipped to Vietbac before the French fall offensive got underway. Besides, the CPC also helped the Vietnamese Communists to produce and repair weapons and equipments. Some Chinese Communists reportedly worked in repair shops near Tralinh, a border town, in 1947-1949. They primarily manufactured bazookas, grenades, cartridges, pistol, rifles, and light machineguns (Chen 1969: 189-190).

The cooperation between the two communist parties was strengthened when the border areas of China and Vietnam became the common revolutionary bases for the communist forces of both countries. According to Chinese reports from Guangxi, the cooperation of the Chinese and Vietnamese Communists in the border area set a pattern of guerrilla warfare (Chen 1969: 192). In 1947, when the French launched the Fall Offensive to northern Tonkin, the Viet Minh forces had to withdraw from the cities and move into Pingmeng, a town on Chinese side. On the contrary, the Chinese Communist forces had to take refuge in Socgiang, on Vietnamese side when they were chased by the KMT army.

The mutual cooperation and help of the two communist parties in the period contributed to the success of the revolutionary causes of both countries. And as a result, in October 1949, the Chinese revolutionary cause gained achievement when President Mao Zedong declared the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) at Tiananmen Square.

Right after the birth of PRC, on December 5 1949, President Ho Chi Minh sent his congratulation to Mao Zedong and expressed hope for a closer Sino-Vietnamese relationship. In response, Mao said: "China and Vietnam are on the front line of an imperialist struggle. With the victorious development of the struggle for liberation of the two peoples will surely become closer day by day..." (Jiefang jun Bao, Shanghai, 26 November 1949).

## **From 1950 to 1975**

The victory of the Chinese Communists opened a new chapter in Chinese history, as well as in history of Sino-Vietnamese relations. On January 14 1950 President Ho Chi Minh declared that “the Government of Democratic Republic of Vietnam is willing to establish diplomatic relations with the government which respects the right of equality, territorial integrity and sovereignty of Vietnam in order to protect peace and build up the world democracy” (Ho Chi Minh Selection 2002: 7-8). Following that, on January 18, China and Vietnam officially established diplomatic relations after the exchange of mutual recognition letters between Vietnamese Foreign Minister Hoang Minh Giam and Chinese Foreign Minister Zhou Enlai. Thus, China became the first country which recognised and established diplomatic relations with the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. The establishment was not only a historical turning-point in China - Vietnam relations, but also was regarded as a significant and critical achievement for DRV in the cause of gaining international recognition. As Vietnamese Foreign Minister Hoang Minh Giam described: “This was Vietnam’s greatest diplomatic victory since the war of resistance began. The more important new China’s position in the world becomes, the greater will be the significance of this victory...” (Vietnam News Agency, January 27, 1950).

After the Chinese recognition, on January 30, 1950 Soviet government recognized and established diplomatic relations with DRV. Following suit, other countries in Communist bloc also granted their recognition to DRV such as Democratic People’s Republic of Korea on January 31; Czechoslovak Republic and German Democratic Republic on February 2; Rumania on February 3; Poland and Hungary on February 4; Bulgaria on February 8; Albania on March 13...Therefore, the recognitions granted by PRC opened the way for DRV to communist bloc led by the Soviet Union. With the “membership card”, Ho Chi Minh government could have supports and aid from the countries in the bloc, especially from China. This was truly important for DRV because as King Chen puts it,

The recognition of Viet Minh regime changed the balance of power between the two governments in Vietnam and caused great concern to the West. Prior the recognition, the DRV was isolated without any foreign aid, whereas the Bao Dai government in Saigon was politically and militarily supported by France. After recognition however, the prestige of Ho’s

regime rapidly increased and Chinese aid became 'legitimate' (Chen 1969: 234).

This was regarded as one of the vital factors which helped DRV later succeed in the resistant wars against the French and the American ahead.

The good start led to the most intimate period in the two countries' modern history of relationship. There were many factors which brought about the friendship. Firstly, as Guo Ming points out they shared a similar situation, similar ideology, and a long comradeship in struggle (Gou Ming 1992: 18-19). Both countries were victims of imperialism and invaded by Western powers. PRC and DRV have been led by communist parties, CPC and Vietnam Workers Party<sup>10</sup> which shared a commitment to socialist internationalism, party discipline, class struggle, and united front (Womack 2006: 154). As above mentioned, the comrade relationship which had been built up by Chinese and Vietnamese leaders as Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai, Ho Chi Minh, Pham Van Dong...in the first days of both countries' revolutionary cause as well as the mutual help and cooperation served as the ground for the PRC and DRV relations after CPC came to power in China.

Secondly, both countries needed each other. DRV needed China's support, and aid for the wars against the French and later the American. On the contrary,

China's aid to Vietnam was its most important sustained foreign policy commitment from 1952 to 1975, and the survival and success of the VWP was crucial to China. First, Vietnam's struggle and success validated the significance of the Chinese revolution by extending its methods beyond China's borders. Aiding Vietnam promoted a socialist internationalism that was implicitly China-centred. Second, the struggle with the United States that had begun in Korea could be continued in Vietnam without risking China's own security..., China perceived the United States as its primary threat until 1969, and therefore offering full support for someone else's war against the United States made sense. Third, support for Vietnam had domestic resonance. Especially in 1965 mobilization for Vietnam and against America played a role in stirring a general sense of crisis and danger that was useful for Mao's domestic agenda in the Cultural Revolution (Womack 2006: 163).

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<sup>10</sup> In 1951 the ICP renamed itself Vietnamese Worker Party. Its ideology followed Marxism and Leninism.

The China - Vietnam relations in this period could be divided into two phases. 1950 to 1965 was seen as the friendliest and most intimate phase in history of China - Vietnam relations when China was the biggest aid provider to Vietnam. The second one was from 1965-1975. In this stage, although the friendly relations were quite well maintained, there were rifts in China and Vietnam relation emerging due to China's adjustments of foreign policy and relations toward the Soviet Union and the United States.

### **Lips and Teeth: 1950-1965**

The Western scholars describe this stage in China - Vietnam relations as a "honeymoon", while both Chinese and Vietnamese leaders called the comradely relationship "as close as lips and teeth" (chun chi xiangyi in Chinese, or gǎn bó như môi với răng in Vietnamese). The comradely and intimate relationship was obviously and vividly reflected through the Chinese help and aid to DRV in the wars against the French and the American respectively.

To promote the cooperation and relations between the two countries, on February 22, 1950, DRV sent Hoang Van Hoan, Head of DRV Representative Delegation to China. In April 1951, the Delegation was upgraded into embassy level. Apart from the Vietnamese Embassy in Beijing, DRV also opened three consulates in Yunnan, Guangxi, and Guangdong from 1953 to 1954. On the contrary, in on August 28, 1954 PRC opened its embassy in Hanoi and Luo Guibo was the first PRC Ambassador to DRV. Although DRV was busy with the war against France, the exchanges of high ranking delegations between DRV and PRC were regularly carried out. On July 23, 1951 Hoang Quoc Viet, President of the Standing Committee of the Vietnam Labour Federation, led a delegation paying an official visit to China. Deputy Prime Minister Pham Van Dong had a visit to China from 2-10 August 1954. During the visit, Pham Van Dong had talks with Chinese top leader as Prime Minister Zhou Enlai.

However, the most remarkable aspect in China - Vietnam relations in this phase was China's military help and aid to Vietnam in the war against the French. Only one day after the establishment of diplomatic relations, on January 19 Ho Chi



Minh secretly went to Beijing (Vietnam Foreign Ministry 2002: 121). During the visit, Ho Chi Minh discussed with Chinese leaders on the Chinese aid to Vietnam. After that, Ho Chi Minh left Beijing for Moscow. During the time in Moscow, Ho Chi Minh had talks with both Stalin and Mao Zedong who was the Soviet Union to sign the Treaty of Sino–Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance. After the discussion on revolutionary situation in the world in general and in Vietnam in particular, Stalin and Mao Zedong agreed and assured to provide DRV with aid of weapons, equipments, medicine and foods. Concretely both China and the Soviet Union would equip 6 divisions with weapons. Mao also said Guangxi province would be the direct rear for Vietnam (Vo Nguyen Giap 1999: 14-15).

Following the agreement, in April 1950, two regiments of 308<sup>th</sup> Division came to Yunnan from Hagiang and one regiment of 312<sup>th</sup> Division to Guangxi from Caobang to receive weapons and equipment. In addition, the Chinese transported a large amount of weapons to equip two regiments which were busy fighting in Caobang. Additionally, the Chinese transportation network including both roads and railways leading from China to Vietnam was improved and constructed. On February 10, 1950, an office was set up in Nanning to direct the transportation of Chinese military supplies. A railway from China to North Vietnam was begun to construct in September 1950 and completed in October 1951. This was the busiest supply route from China to North Vietnam. Nanning became the key city for the forwarding of supplies. The war materials were transported to North Vietnam overland and by sea. The land route had three lines- a highway from Tunghsing to Mon Kay; a rail line from Nanning to Chen-nan-kuan, then by truck to Dongdang (Vietnam), from there to Langson and to Caobang; and a rail line from Kunming, Hokow to Laoky. In late 1953 and early 1954 a special road was built from Mengtse (Yunnan) via Laichau to the Dien Bien Phu area. The sea route included a line from Yulin and Haikow ports (Hainan Island), a line from Jinzhou Bay, and a line from Wei-chow-tao. Shipment by sea went to Viet Minh areas near Haiphong, Nghean, Quangtri, Quangngai and Danang (Chen 1969: 275).

From January to September 1950, DRV received from PRC about 40,000 rifles, 125 machineguns, 75 mortars, 3,000 boxes of ammunition, and 870 tons of other military equipment (Chen 1969: 262-263), despite China started getting involved in

the Korean War. The Chinese aid to Vietnam increased steadily from only 10-20 tonnes per month in 1951 to 250 tonnes per month in 1952, to 600 tonnes/month in 1953 and especially to 1,500 to 4,000 tonnes monthly during the last year of the war in 1954 (Clodfelter 1995: 18-19).

Besides material supply, PRC helped DRV to train both armed and unarmed men. Throughout the summer of 1950 at least 20,000 Viet Minh troops were trained and equipped by Chinese in Yunnan and Guangxi and returned to Vietnam. Thousands of unarmed Vietnamese crossed the border to China by trucks at night. Especially, the Chinese Second Field Army in Yunnan and Guangxi helped train five Viet Minh divisions: the 304<sup>th</sup>, 308<sup>th</sup>, 312<sup>th</sup>, 316<sup>th</sup>, and 320<sup>th</sup> in 1950. The training of DRV troops in some centers in China such as Nanning, Chinghsi, Lungchow (in Guangxi), Tunghsing (Guangdong), Yulin and Haikow (in Hainan Island), Wenshan, Malipo, Hokow, and Guangnan (in Yunnan) was kept going in later years. In 1951 and 1952 about 20,000 more were reported. Besides these, there were about 10,000 trained officers, engineers, technicians, political workers and para-troops (Chen 1969: 262-270).

In the sense of human support, the PRC sent a Chinese Military Advisory Group (CMAG) to Vietnam to provide military assistance to Vietnamese forces fighting the French in April of 1950. CMAG was led by General Wei Guoqing along with Senior General Chen Geng, the “scholar general,” and the PRC ambassador to North Vietnam. 281 officers with many having command experience who were selected from the Second, Third and Fourth People’s Liberation Army (PLA) field armies were sent to North Vietnam (Li Xiaobing 2007: 208-209). By March 1952, estimating that some 15,000 Chinese Communists were serving in Vietnam in various “technical, advisory and garrison capacities” with the People’s Army of Vietnam (PAVN) against the French (National Intelligence Estimate).

This military aid provided by China enabled the PAVN to expand into a well armed and trained conventional force capable of defeating the French Army in large scale offensive operations. From a force in 1950 of 3 divisions the PAVN would expand two years later into a force of 7 divisions. All in all the Chinese military aid would arm a total of over 7 PAVN divisions. The Vietnamese Army now was a lethal force well equipped with small arms, machine guns, heavy 120mm mortars and

105mm howitzers, in addition to 20 and 40mm anti-aircraft guns (Davidson 1988: 123).

With well trained and equipped troops, from September 1950 to May 1954 the Viet Minh carried out a number of operations in battles such as Dongkhe in September 1950; Caobang in Oct. 1950; Langson in Oct. 1950; Laocai in Nov. 1950; Vinhuyen in Jan. 1951; Maokhe in Mar. 1951; Ninhbinh in June 1951; Hoabinh in Nov 1951 and in Feb 1952; Nghialo in Oct. 1952; Nasan in Dec. 1952; Samneua in Apr. 1953; Laichau in Dec. 1953; and Dien Bien Phu from Mar-May 1954, of which the Dien Bien Phu operation was the finally decisive blow which pushed the French to negotiation table at Geneva.

### **China and the Geneva Conference**

The Geneva Conference opened on April 26, 1950 with two issues in the agenda: Korea and Indochina. After the Korean issue came to a deadlock by the suggestion of discontinuing the discussion, the agenda on Indochina started on May 8 and ended on July 21, 1950 after 75 days with 31 meeting sessions. There were nine countries attending the Geneva Conference: The Soviet Union, the PRC, the United States, France, Great Britain, DRV, South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. The Soviet Union and Britain were co-chairmen. DRV delegation came to the Geneva Conference with the status of a winner. Therefore, its main purpose was peace, full independence, unity, and democracy (Vietnam Foreign Ministry 2002: 141).

This was the first time PRC had taken part in a conference with full participation of the big powers to resolve international issues. The participation in this event was very significant for PRC. Firstly, after coming to power, the government of CPC had been only recognised by 20 countries, of which 11 countries were in communist system. So, as Womack puts it:

Participation in the conference marked the confirmation of its status as a major state and the resolution, at least for the time being, of the two major conflicts on its borders. Together with the Asian African Conference in Bandung in 1955, where China was one of the five sponsoring countries, the Geneva Conference marked the general acceptance of China as a state, though a revolutionary one, and in response China offered the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence as the basis for state-to-state relations

and suggested that nations with different political systems could still cooperate (Womack 2006: 169).

Before the Geneva Conference happened, PRC had repeatedly affirmed its important role in solving international problems. On November 18, 1953 an editorial in People's Daily reiterated Zhou Enlai's statement of October 8:

It is impossible to solve pressing international questions without the participation of China with her population of several hundred millions. The Chinese people have proved themselves a mighty force in the preservation of world peace. They have every justification to demand the restoration of their legitimate rights in international affairs (Jen min jih pao, November 18, 1953, Support the Statement of Foreign Minister Molotov, editorial).

The China's view was supported by both DRV and the Soviet Union. Secondly, the Geneva Conference took place at the time when China started implementing its 5-year plan of economic development. This, however, was an unfavourable moment of time due to the Western countries' embargo. So the participation gave a chance for China to call for normalization of commerce with the Western countries, and more especially, to prevent the United States' encirclement and intervention into Indochina.

With the above objectives, in the Conference, PRC actively performed. China's enthusiasm made other countries understand that PRC was more intent on working for her "big power" position than on a peace settlement (Chen 1969: 309). However, it could not be denied about PRC's role in the settlement of various issues. One of PRC's most important contributions leading to the final agreement of the Conference was that China and other big countries agreed a solution under which Vietnam would be temporarily separated at and a general election would be held in 1956. Although it did not satisfy DRV and Vietnamese people's legitimate aspiration of country unification, the government of DRV finally accepted the arrangement.

Thus, the Geneva Conference was ended with the well-known agreement. According the documents, three most important points were:

1. A cease-fire would become effective on July 27 in northern Vietnam, August 1 in central Vietnam and August 11 in the south (in Cambodia it was August 7, and in Laos, August 8). Viet Minh forces were to leave Laos and Cambodia, while French troops were to withdraw from all three;

2. A provisional military demarcation line was drawn along a river beneath the 17<sup>th</sup> parallel. It was to be eliminated after the general election in July 1956;
3. An assurance of the principles of full independence, unity, and territorial integrity for Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. It provided that general elections were to be held in July 1956 under the supervision of an international commission composed of the representatives of the member states of the ICC, with the understanding that Vietnam would be reunified as a result of this free expression of the national will (Chen 1969: 322-323).

Thus, the result of the Geneva Conference basically met the participants' purposes: France could withdraw from the Indochinese War in honour; China showed its important role as a "powerful country" which could participate in a process of solving international problems; Vietnam at last gained peace, independence, territorial integrity. On the contrary, South Vietnam and the United States did not subscribe to the agreements. Whether or not this was done under the collaboration between the two delegations, it subsequently gave them a pretext to act otherwise, although the United States said it would "refrain from the threat or the use of force to disturb" the agreement (Chen 1969: 323).

### **China - Vietnam Relations after the Geneva and in the American War**

After the Geneva Conference, Vietnam was divided into two parts with DRV government governed in the North and Emperor Bao Dai in the South. In the north, Ho Chi Minh government seriously implemented the provisions of the agreements and at the same time initiated the reconstruction process. On the contrary, in the south, the United States expanded its containment policy and implemented its intervention plan in Asia. To supplant totally France, the first American move was that in June 1954 the United States pressured Vietnamese Emperor Bao Dai to appoint Ngo Dinh Diem Prime Minister, and in July Diem returned to Saigon to formally take control of the government. From an American point of view, Diem was a logical choice for the premiership of an independent Vietnam (Olsen 2006: 50). Under the protection of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO) established by the US on September 8, 1954, Ngo Dinh Diem began to consolidate his regime in the southern zone. The Diem

government, which was supposed to succeed the French and undertake their obligations with regard to the Geneva agreement, refused to participate, claiming that since South Vietnam was not a signatory of the Geneva accords, it had no obligations whatsoever. During the autumn of 1955 Diem further consolidated his power. On 23 October 1955 he arranged a referendum in South Vietnam, by which he dethroned the former Emperor Bao Dai and had himself elected president. Shortly afterwards he broke off economic relations with France, left the French Union, and finally proclaimed the Republic of Vietnam (RVN) on 26 October 1955. All Diem's steps were supported by the U.S and indicated that the general election would not take place.

Beginning in the summer of 1955, Diem launched the "Denounce the Communists" campaign, during which communists and other anti-government elements were arrested, imprisoned, tortured, or executed. Diem instituted a policy of death penalty against any activity deemed communist in August 1956. About 12,000 suspected opponents of Diem were killed in the years 1955–1957 and by the end of 1958 an estimated 40,000 political prisoners had been jailed.

The relations between PRC and DRV after the Geneva Conference were consolidated and strengthened. The first Chinese move was to establish its embassy in Hanoi on August 28, 1954 PRC with Luo Guibo as the first PRC Ambassador to DRV. In this period, China tried to scale back its military involvement in North Vietnam to reduce international tension. In 1954, for instance, Wei Guoqing planned to continue training in China for the PAVN artillery troops, but Mao turned Wei's proposal down. He forwarded Wei's report to General Huang Kecheng, vice chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC), in April 1954, adding,

Expecting a possible cease-fire in Vietnam . . . training the [Vietnamese] new artillery force is no longer appropriate within the boundaries of our country. It may be better to transfer all the used training artillery batteries and other equipment into Vietnam's boundaries at an early date (Li Xiaoping 2007: 215).

In September 1955, the CMAG returned to China, but China continued to provide weaponry, equipment, and military training to North Vietnam. China still played a vital role as the main provider and organizer of aid and advice to PRV in deciding important questions in their foreign and domestic policies. From 1955 to

1960, Vietnam received 49.585 tonnes of aid of which China's aid was 19.580 tonnes of both weapons and logistical goods.

In this period, besides Chinese aid, Vietnam also began to receive more aid from the Soviet Union due to the adjustment of the Soviet Union's policy toward DRV. Economic assistance was the most important part of Soviet policies towards Vietnam in the early years after Geneva. The first formal economic assistance agreement between the two countries was signed in July 1955. The signing took place during DRV President Ho Chi Minh's visit to Moscow from 12 to 18 July 1955. It was mainly an aid programme under which the Soviet Union promised to assist North Vietnam in a large number of projects (Olsen 2006: 52).

After many efforts to make the fulfilment of the Geneva agreement, but failed, DRV changed its strategic guideline from a peaceful method to arm struggle. In January 1959, the Worker Party of Vietnam's (WPV) Fifteen Plenum issued a secret resolution authorising an "armed struggle" as a mean of reunifications. This authorised the southern communists to begin large-scale operations against the South Vietnamese military. On December 20, 1960, the National Liberation Front as a common front controlled by the communist party in the South was established. Neither did the DRV's move to violent struggle to reunite the country come from China nor the Soviet Union's advice. Until early 1961, Beijing and Moscow agreed that the Vietnamese should emphasize political struggle.

The decision of armed struggle came out when the deterioration of Sino-Soviet relations was publicly exposed. The situation put Vietnam in a quandary that was complex and acutely uncomfortable (Womack 2006: 172), because DRV needed the support and aid both from China and the Soviet Union.

However, China had positively changed its point of view on Vietnamese armed struggle to reunite the country since 1961. The Chinese support for an armed struggle in Vietnam was more stressed when Mao insisted at the Tenth Plenum of the CPC's Central Committee in September 1962 that China "must support the armed struggles in South Vietnam and Laos without conditions" (Yang 2002: 22). Along with this, Chinese aid to DRV from 1960 to 1964 rapidly increased. According to Tran Tien Hoat and Le Quang Lang's statistics – the two research fellows in Institute of History

of Vietnamese People's Army – introduced in the Conference on Vietnam was Chinese aid to Vietnam increase from 19,580 in the phase 1955-1960 to 22,982 tonnes in 1961-1964.

When armed resistance was finally permitted, the political vacuum in the countryside created by the Diem regime made it quite successful and this in turn drew the United States (U.S.) into increased military support for Diem. By 1963 Diem's failure to stem the tide of rural insurgency led to an American-supported coup and his replacement by a succession of military governments. ROV government, under new president Nguyen Van Thieu, suffered strong resistance and lost control of 40 percent of the South Vietnamese countryside. On August 2 and 4, with the Gulf of Tonkin event,<sup>11</sup> the U.S. President Johnson had a good opportunity to seek authorisation from the U.S. Congress to escalate U.S. intervention in South Vietnam. In February 1965 the U.S. government sent the first U.S. combat troops and launched Rolling Thunder, a massive bombing campaign against North Vietnam (Li Xiaoping 2007: 216).

### 1965-1975

Development of the war in Vietnam pressed China to increase support and aid to Vietnam. On April 8, 1965 in response to the Vietnamese request for help, Liu Shaoqi, president of the PRC and vice chairman of the CPC, said:

It is our policy that we will do our best to support you. We will offer whatever you are in need of and we are in a position to offer. . . . If you do not invite us we will not come, and if you invite one unit of our troops, we will send that unit to you. The initiative will be completely yours (Westad 1998: 85).

In July 1965, China began sending troops to North Vietnam, as well as surface-to-air missiles, anti-aircraft artillery, and railroad, engineering, mine-sweeping, and logistics units. Chinese forces operated anti-aircraft guns and surface-to-air missile sites and built and repaired roads, bridges, railroads, and factories. Chinese participation enabled Hanoi to send more PAVN troops to South Vietnam to fight the Americans.

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<sup>11</sup> Gulf Tonkin Event referred to North Vietnamese boats supposedly attacked American warships.



Between 1965 and 1968, China sent twenty-three divisions, including ninety-five regiments, totalling some 320,000 troops (Li Xiaoping 2007: 217).

After “Ten Offensive” in 1968, however, China criticised DRV for conducting negotiation with Washington and refrained from participating in the Paris Peace talk. In 1970, China withdrew all of its troops from Vietnam. The Chinese pressure on Vietnam was to continue to fight instead of holding peace talks. This generated differences with the Vietnamese (Li Xiaoping 2007: 226-251). However China still increased its aid to Vietnam till 1975.

In this phase, the break of Sino-Soviet relations negatively impacted Sino-Vietnamese one. Parallel with the deterioration of the Sino-Soviet relations in 1960s, the Vietnamese-Soviet relations were rapidly strengthened with large economic, military and advisory aid from Soviet. The new Soviet approach to Hanoi’s struggle, and Moscow’s decision to actively support Hanoi in its military struggle for reunification, soon caused China’s concern. In 1965, Zhou Enlai told Pham Van Dong that Vietnam should refuse Soviet aid. According to Zhou the reasons why the Soviets wanted to aid Vietnam were, first, to isolate China; second, to improve Soviet - U.S. relations; and, last to engage in subversive activities against China and possibly against Vietnam. As these reasons suggest, China’s major problem with Soviet aid was the effect of Soviet involvement in Vietnam on China’s struggle with the Soviet Union. As Zhou put it in 1967, “So, we hold that the closer to victory your struggle is, the fiercer our struggle with the Soviet Union will be.” China did reluctantly accommodate itself to Soviet involvement and provided rail transport to Vietnam for Soviet goods, but it never accepted the notion of Vietnam - Soviet friendship (Womack 2006: 177). Although China did permit a railway corridor for the delivery of Soviet supplies, but the Vietnamese saw this as less advantageous to their national liberation struggle (Li Xiaobing 2007: 251).

According to Womack, one of important factors which widened distance the Sino - Vietnamese relations in late 1960s was China’s leftism. What happened in the Cultural Revolution showed that China was unreliable as a model and as an intimate friend (Womack 2006: 178).

One event that contributed to DRV's concern about China was the U.S. President Nixon and Secretary of State Kissinger's visits to Beijing in 1971 and 1972. Although after the visit, Chinese leaders still expressed their firm support and even increased military aid to DRV, this Beijing's move was seen as a "stab in the back" by Vietnamese leaders (Duiker 1986: 59-60).

Besides these, territorial disputes concerning both land and maritime started emerging. PRC and DRV accused each other of territorial violations hundreds of violations. In 1974 there were 300 reports of territorial violation by both sides. Especially, in January 1974, China sent its troops to occupy Paracel Islands which was controlled by RVN forces. Although DRV did not claim until 1978, it did not mean Hanoi agreed with Beijing's action because the war was going on in Vietnam, DRV depended on China's aid and wanted to maintain a good relationship with Beijing. However the move showed China's territorial ambitions which were seen for thousand years by Vietnamese people.

Thus, 1950-1975 was seen as the most intimate period in modern history of China - Vietnam relations. The two countries relationship was built on the basis of geographical, cultural proximity, similar situations, same ideology, convergence in interests and especially China's help to Vietnam. However, although the good relationship was maintained and China remained an important source of aid to DRV, the rift in the two countries' relations appeared in late 1960s and 1970s due to the deterioration of the Sino - Soviet relations.

### **1975-1978**

Looking at the whole process of China - Vietnam relations since 1950 when the two countries officially established diplomatic relations, 1975-1979 is regarded as the transitional period from intimate relations to hostile one which was marked by the border war in February 1979.

After the victory of DRV in 1975, the relations between the two countries began to cool. This was reflected in the first visit of Secretary-General Le Duan in September 1975. Although China still agreed to new aid program, they were not generous as Vietnamese requested. Mao said to Le Duan "Today you are not the

poorest under heaven. We are the poorest. We have a population of 800 million.” (Westad 1998: 195). However, right after that, in October of the same year, China rejected the new request for aid and started lagging in the implementation of existing agreements (Womack 2006: 191-192). On July 3, 1978, China announced to stop all its aid to Vietnam. And in the same year public dispute over ethnic Chinese in Vietnam. At last the border war broke out in 1979.

According to Womack the reason for the breakdown in China - Vietnam relations is

China’s insensitivity and Vietnam’s over-sensitivity interacted in a negative complementarity of misperception, a process that can be seen in the four major issues of the war: the Soviet-Vietnam alliance, Cambodia, Hoa people, and territorial issues (Womack 2006: 188).

The improvement of Vietnamese - Soviet relations caused serious concern to China. After the Sino - Soviet Border war in 1969, the Soviet Union became the China’s primary threat rather than the U.S. To some extent, Vietnam interpreted China’s anti-Soviet pressures as a deliberate attempt to isolate and dominate Vietnam. On the contrary, China perceived Vietnam’s unwillingness to join its opposition to the Soviet Union as an indication of hostility (Womack 2006: 192-193). The problem became more serious when Vietnam joined the Soviet-led Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON) in June 1978 and signed a treaty of friendship and cooperation with the Soviet Union in November. In the Chinese view, Vietnam allied with the Soviet Union to isolate China.

If the problem of triangular relations between China, Soviet, Vietnam is the reason of suspicion and worry, Cambodia issue is regarded as a pretext for China to wage the war against Vietnam.

After only one month of the victory in April 1975, Vietnam had to face with the challenge when Cambodia began a series of aggressive actions against Vietnamese towns and cities along the Cambodia – Vietnam border and escalated in 1978. Many efforts were made by Vietnam to solve the problem through negotiations, but failed. Finally in response to the call of Kampuchean United Front for the National Salvation, in December 1978 Vietnam took a decision to launch a military campaign to defend

the border and liberate Cambodia from Khmer Rouge regime (Vietnamese Foreign Ministry 2002: 305). Within one month of the campaign, Khmer Rouge forces were defeated and pushed back to Cambodia - Thailand area. On January 10, 1979 the People's Republic of Cambodia was established.

From China's perspective, Hanoi move was simply a matter of Vietnamese expansionism egged on by the Soviet Union (Womack 2006: 194). In contrast, Hanoi saw the Chinese aid and support to Khmer Rouge as an action against Vietnam. The misperception to other seriously worsened the China - Vietnam relations.

The third issue which deteriorated China - Vietnam relations was the Hoa people issue. In 1976 at the Fourth Party Congress, Hanoi decided to push the South to catch up with the North in socialist transformation. In early 1977, the "Campaign against Comprador Bourgeoisie" in Ho Chi Minh City was launched. A year later, in March 1978, the "Campaign to Transform Private Industry and Commerce," which declared private enterprise illegal was implemented. The two campaigns negatively affected the Hoa people (ethnic Chinese in Vietnam) who mostly was running private businesses. Many of Hoa people ran out of Vietnam. In response to the situation, Beijing charged Hanoi with deliberately seeking the forced expulsion of the Hoa from Vietnam, and the crisis of trust between the two nations became deeper.

Last but not least, it was territorial disputes. In fact the problems concerning territorial issue had appeared and existed since 1950s (see next chapter), but were suppressed by both sides. The territorial problem grew up when the relations between China and Vietnam became tense in 1970s. In 1974, the report on territorial violations became public by both sides. The number of such reports rapidly increased in the later years. In 1975, Vietnam accused China of 234 incursions in 1975, and 2,175 in 1978 while China announced 1108. Especially, on May 4, 1977 the two sides clashed violently near Friendship Pass (Youyiguan in Chinese; Huu Nghi Quan to the Vietnamese). Besides territorial incidents concerning to land border, maritime issue also became a burning point in China - Vietnam relations. On May 12, 1977 Hanoi issued a statement on the territorial sea, the contiguous zone, the exclusive economic zone (EEZ), and the continental shelf of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in which the Paracel and Spratly Islands were declared as Vietnam's territory. The statement officially opened a confrontation over the maritime issue with China. To solve the

problem, the boundary talks were held in November 1977. However the dispute over the islands soon became one of the obstacles to progress (Chi Kinlo 1989: 105). The stalemate in resolving the problems related to territory pushed China - Vietnam relations into a more confrontational situation.

All the above unsettled-issues along with the change in China's foreign policy as Deng Xiaoping re-emerged in late 1970s finally pushed China - Vietnam relations into a crisis which happened in February 1979 as China launched a limited war against Vietnam.

Thus, in this period, China - Vietnam relations which exhibited closeness ended in hostility. The transformation process of the relationship lasted for nearly 30 years. It went from the peak of intimacy in 1950s to rift in 1960s and break in late 1970s.

### **1979-1990**

The Border War began on February 17, 1979 when China sent hundreds of thousand troops across the border to attack northern part of Vietnam. On March 5 China announced its intention of withdrawal. On March 16, 1979 the war ended when the withdrawal was completed (the Border war will be mentioned in next chapter). The 3 week-war marked a gloomy chapter of China - Vietnam relations which lasted for more than 10 years.

In this period China - Vietnam relations went from state of hostility to normalization. The process could be divided into two phases: from 1979 to 1984 in which the relationship was tensed and hostile; from 1985-1989 there were some improvement in the relationship and was regarded as the phase of normalization process.

In the first phase, the China - Vietnam relations really fell into situation of stalemate and hostility. One day before the Chinese withdrawal was completed, the Vietnamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs had notified Beijing that it was willing to open negotiations one week after the last Chinese soldier left Vietnam. As a result, the negotiating talks were opened in Hanoi in the next month. By the end of the year

although a number of meetings between the two sides were held both in Hanoi and Beijing, there was little progress made toward resolving their differences (Mackerras 1982: 618-621). While Vietnam wanted to discuss the problem solely related to the armed conflict and ways of reducing tension around the common border, China wanted Vietnam to recognise Chinese sovereignty over the Paracel and Spratly Islands to withdraw troops from Cambodia; to change policy toward Laos and Cambodia (Vietnam Foreign Ministry 2002: 312). All of the Chinese proposal could not be accepted by the Vietnamese.

In this period, Cambodia issue influenced the two countries' relation. Vietnamese withdrawal from Cambodia became an indispensable condition for the resumption of relations.

Away from the negotiating table, although China withdrew its troops from Vietnam on March 16, the fighting was still fierce in the border area. Even China threatened to teach Vietnam a "second lesson" (O'Dowd 2007: 89). From 1980 to 1989 China launched a number of offensive campaigns toward Vietnam, especially the campaign to occupy Vietnamese territory at Laoshan in 1984.

Since 1985, there had been some improvements in the two countries' relations when Vietnam announced its intention to withdraw troops from Cambodia at the Eleventh Meeting of the Indochina Foreign Ministers Conference in Phnom Penh on August 16, 1985. In December, an agreement on avoiding border conflict had been reached. However, despite some positive signals China still rejected Vietnamese proposals for official talks, claiming that the promise to withdraw troops "did not merit attention," and heavy fighting continued at the border into 1987, especially at Lao Shan (Womack 2006: 207). The most spectacular of these was a naval confrontation in the Spratly Islands in March 1988 in which two Vietnamese ships were sunk and seventy sailors lost their lives (Kenny 2002: 66-67).

However, the situation had some positive changes when the U.S. Secretary of State James Baker announced that the U.S. (which supported China over the Cambodia issue during 1980s) would seek contacts with Hanoi to reach a Cambodian settlement and would no longer support the three-party coalition containing the Khmer Rouge in the United Nations (U.N). The U.S. action left China as the only supporters of the

Khmer Rouge, and this led China to a serious reconsideration of its position for the first time since 1979 (Womack 2006: 208). As a result, a secret summit meeting between top Chinese and Vietnamese leaders was held in Chengdu, Sichuan in 3-4 September 1990. During the meeting the two sides reached consensus on Cambodia issue settlement, paving the way for the normalisation of relations between the two countries.

### **1991-2008**

Hanoi and Beijing officially normalised the relations by a joint statement made during the Vietnamese Secretary-General Do Muoi and Chairman of Ministerial Council Vo Van Kiet's visit to China in November 1991.

Since full normalization, the relations between China and Vietnam have been characterized by two trends: one positive with expanding contacts and cooperation in many fields, and the other clearly less positive with continued differences over the territorial disputes (Amer 1994: 366).

In political aspect, the close relationship between CCP and CPV; Chinese and Vietnamese governments has expanded through a steady stream of exchange visits at various levels. From November 30 to December 4, 1992 Chinese Premier Li Peng paid an official visit to Vietnam. In November 1994 Secretary-General and President Jiang Zemin had a visit to Vietnam. In December 1999, Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji visited Vietnam.

On Vietnamese side, President Le Duc Anh paid a visit to China in 1993, Congress Chairman Nong Duc Minh in 1994; Secretary-General 1995 and 1997.

In February 1999, in the official visit of Secretary-General Le Kha Phieu, the general secretaries of the two parties set up a sixteen-word principle to promote the relations between the two countries in 21st Century, namely "long-term stability, future-oriented, good-neighbourliness and comprehensive cooperation" as the framework guiding Sino-Vietnamese relations in the new century (Vietnam-China Joint Statement in 1999).

In December, 2000 Vietnamese President Tran Duc Luong visited China, the two sides signed a joint declaration on comprehensive cooperation for the new century concretizing the sixteen-word principle in specific means to develop the relations between the two countries in all areas. The two sides also agreed to make the two countries “good neighbours, good friends, good comrades and good partners” (Vietnam-China Joint Statement in 2000).

At the beginning of 21<sup>st</sup> century, China has paid much attention to its ‘strategy toward South Asia and its Southeast Asia policy which created better conditions for development of Sino – Vietnamese relations. The relations between the two countries rapidly and comprehensively developed which have been reflected through official visits of both countries’ top leaders.

From 2001 to 2008, general secretaries of CPC and CPV have conducted seven mutual visits of which the Secretary-General of CPC had visited Vietnam in March 2002, November 2005 and November 2006, and Secretary-General of CPV in November 2001, April 2003 and August 2006 and May 30, 2008 The visit was Manh's fourth since he took the CPV helm in 2001 Manh's recent four-day visit to China.

Between February 17 and March 1, 2002, Secretary-General of CPC and President Jiang Zemin paid an official goodwill visit to Vietnam. The leaders of the two countries had an in-depth exchange of views on strengthening the party and state relations between China and Vietnam in the new century; and agreed to maintain high-level contacts, expand in depth economic and trade cooperation, and educate the people of the two countries with the spirit of long-standing Sino - Vietnamese friendship (Vietnam – China Joint Statement in December 2001).

In 2006, both the highest leaders of the two parties mutually paid official visits. It was the first time Secretary-General Nong Duc Manh travelled abroad since he has held the highest position in CPV. For Secretary-General Hu Jintao, it was his fourth time he has visited Vietnam and his second time on the highest post of the party and the state. And most recently from May 30<sup>th</sup> to June 2<sup>nd</sup> 2008, Secretary-General Nong Duc Manh paid an official visit to China. The visit was Manh's fourth since he took the CPV helm in 2001 The frequent visit exchanges of both the highest leaders of the two parties reflected the two countries’ aspiration for enhancing friendly relations and



comprehensive cooperation based on the guiding principle "long-term stability, future-oriented, good-neighbourliness and comprehensive cooperation" and the spirit countries "good neighbours, good friends, good comrades and good partners".

Besides, within seven years, the presidents of two states had six official visits to each other. Vietnamese President visited China three times in September 2003, July 2005 and May 2007 and Chinese President visited Vietnam in March 2002, November 2005 and November 2006. These visits enhanced China – Vietnam relation to a new high level and play an active role for peace, stability, development and cooperation in the region and the world.

The heads of the two governments also had exchange of visits. In May 2004, Vietnamese Prime Minister Phan Van Khai paid an official visit to China and in response in October 2004 Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao also had a visit to Vietnam. And most recently in October 2008, Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung paid an official friendship visit to China and attended at the seventh Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM7) held in China. The Vietnamese Prime Minister had talks with highest ranking leaders of the Party, State and Government of China and at the same time two sides gave out a Joint Statement. On the occasion, Chinese President Hu Jintao "highlighted that China - Vietnam ties were "in a new phase of comprehensive development." He noted China highly valued its relations with Vietnam and was willing to make joint efforts with the country to push for the fast and sound development of the bilateral comprehensive and strategic partnership based on the 16-word principle of "long- term stability, future-oriented, good-neighbourliness and comprehensive cooperation" (Hu Jintao Meets with Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung on 2008-10-22).

The frequent exchange of visits between highest leaders of the two countries, especially since 2004, became rare events in history of the relations of the two countries. It proved that China paid much attention to neighbourhood Policy and at the same time the Sino – Vietnamese relations have been developing smoothly.

Apart from the top leader visits of the both countries, every year, more than 100 delegations at ministerial, departmental, local and grass-root levels of both sides

are exchanged. These activities have contributed to enhancing mutual understanding and trust and expanding the bilateral cooperation.

The exchanges of high ranking officials of the two countries have strengthened Sino – Vietnamese relations in depth. The leaders of the both sides have expressed their utmost efforts to consolidate and enhance Sino – Vietnamese relations, mutual trust, and comprehensive cooperation at various levels.

Trade and economic relations have been continuously improved. So far, the two countries have signed around 70 agreements and 40 documents at state level of which more than a half directly related to economic and trade cooperation. These agreements and documents create legitimate basis for developing trade and economic relations between the two countries. Some important agreements are Framework Agreement on Oil and Natural Gas Cooperation in Agreed Zones in the Tonkin Gulf, Agreement on Fishery Cooperation in the Tonkin Gulf, Memorandum of understanding cooperation in the two economic corridors and the pan- Tonkin Gulf economic circle....Besides, the two countries also set up China - Viet Nam Committee on Trade and Economic Cooperation to further deepen bilateral trade and economic relations.

Bilateral trade increased from US\$ 32 million in 1991 to US\$ 10.4 billion in 2006, and was expected to reach US\$ 25 billion in 2010 of which border trade has accounted for a large amount. China also provides loans and assistance to upgrade Chinese-built factories in northern Vietnam

China is now a leading trade partner of Vietnam. It is Vietnam's biggest import market and third largest export market after the U.S and Japan. The import-export turnover increased from US\$ 10.42 billion in 2006 to US\$ 15.85 billion in 2007, beating the set target of US\$ 15 billion by 2010. The bilateral trade volume accounts for 0.6 percent of China's total foreign trade volume and 12 percent of Viet Nam's total foreign trade volume. Since 2001, Viet Nam has seen constantly increasing deficit in trade with China.

Besides that, though Vietnam and China have reached some achievements on settling border disputes so far such as the signing of the Land Border Treaty on 30 December 1999, the Agreement on the Demarcation of Waters, Exclusive Economic

Zones (EEZ), and Continental Shelves in the Gulf of Tonkin on 25 December 2000 and most recently the completion of land border demarcation in December 2008, the relations have usually faced with challenges from issue of border dispute (overlapping claims to the Paracel and Spratly archipelagos, to water and continental shelf areas in the South China Sea and in the Tonkin Gulf, to areas along the land border) or in another word, the territorial disputes still serve as a source of tension between the two countries in 1990s. And in recent years, after the China's State Council approved setting up Sansha city on the Hainan Island to administer three islands, including Paracel and Spratly archipelagos in November 2007, Vietnam also played a move as Dangnang authority appointed Chairman of Hoang Sa (Paracels) island district on April 25th, 2009. As a result, the events triggered the governments and the peoples' response from both sides.

Since the normalisation of relations since 1991, China - Vietnam relations have gained remarkable achievements in all fields. The two sides eliminated hostility toward each other and stepped into a new chapter of relationship. Especially two out of three territorial disputes have been successfully resolved. This is result of incessant efforts made by the two countries' peoples, parties, and governments. Although there remain territorial disputes related to South China Sea (East Sea by Vietnamese), significant improvements in the relations opened prospect of resolving the existing problems.

## **Conclusion**

An examination of China - Vietnam relations from the beginning up to now shows that the two countries' relationship has started very early. The first contacts recorded by both countries' historical works were in the ancient time – Zhou dynasty in China and Hung dynasty in Vietnam. The relationship began to appear clearly and continuously when Qin Shihuang Di expanded his country southward. The nature of the relationship changed for the first time when Vietnam was incorporated into China in 196 BC. For more than one thousand years Vietnam was under Chinese domination and regarded as a part of China. In this period, Chinese feudal dynasties applied draconian ruling policies to the Vietnamese people. Besides this, efforts of assimilating the Vietnamese were also made. There were many uprisings waged by the Vietnamese to oppose the

Chinese domination. Finally, Ngo Quyen succeeded with the well-known victory in Bach Dang River in 938 ending Chinese domination for more than one thousand years.

Since 938 China - Vietnam relations stepped into a new period. Vietnam was no longer regarded as a part of China. The relationship was built on the basis of two independent countries, but under principle of big and small countries. From the Chinese perspective, Vietnam served as a vassal state which belonged to China's tributary system. In contrast, Vietnam, on the surface, used to follow rites as a vassal state and pay tribute to China, but tried its best to have a relative independent from Chinese regimes. Despite Vietnam got away Chinese control, Chinese dynasties did not abandon their ambition to invade Vietnam. Therefore, there were a number of wars waged by the Chinese during the period. However, after every war the relations between the two countries were restored.

Late 19<sup>th</sup> and beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> Century witnessed changes in China - Vietnam relations when both countries had to face colonialism. China became a semi-colony exploited by several western powers, while Vietnam fell into France's domination. The failure of China in the Franco-Chinese war in Tonkin served as a significant turning point in history of China - Vietnam relations. With the Tientsin Accord in 1885, China had to renounce its suzerainty over Vietnam. In this period, the relationship of the two peoples emerged, particularly relationship of Chinese and Vietnamese Communists. In the years of struggle against internal and external enemies, relationship based on same ideology, similar situation between CPC and ICP had been developed. The relationship served as a very important ground for the later relations between China and Vietnam.

In September 1945, Vietnam gained independence after the success of the August Revolution. The DRV came into being under the leadership of ICP. Despite of gaining independence Vietnam remained in the war with the French. Four years later, the Chinese Communists came to power after the victory in the Civil War with KMT in 1949. In 1950, PRC and DRV officially established diplomatic relations. This was very significant event for the two countries to open a new page in the modern history of China - Vietnam relations. During the first Indochina War, CPC supported and provided huge aid to Vietnam. With the help from China, Vietnam won in the war with France. The first Indochina war ended, the relations between the two countries had been more and more consolidated and developed.

After the French evacuated from Indochina, the US expanded the Containment policy in Asia with intervention in Indochina, especially in Vietnam. The Second Indochina war began when the North Vietnam implemented armed struggle to reunite the country. China remained a country which provided large amount of aid to DRV in the war with the American. However in late 1960s and beginning of 1970s rifts in China - Vietnam began to emerge due to some problems such as the break of Sino-Soviet relations and the improvement of the Soviet-Vietnamese relations; territorial disputes between China and Vietnam etc... China - Vietnam quickly deteriorated after Vietnam was reunited in April 1975. Besides the remaining problems, some new disputes as Cambodia issue, Hoa people issue in Vietnam worsened the relations. As a consequence, the Border War which the Chinese called a "lesson to Vietnam" broke out in February 1979. The three-week war had frozen China - Vietnam relations for over ten years. From an intimate relationship, China and Vietnam became enemy of each other. Not until 1991, the relations were normalized after great efforts of both sides. Since then China - Vietnam relations have strengthened and quickly developed. Over the last 20 years, despite of some remaining problems concerning territorial disputes, in South China Sea, the relations have gained remarkable achievements in all fields. Two out of three territorial disputes have been successfully resolved. Political, economic, cultural, educational, military ...cooperation between the two countries have impressively increased. All the recent achievements in China - Vietnam relations reflect truly aspiration and interests of the two countries' parties, governments and peoples.

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## **CHAPTER III**

### **Sino-Vietnam Land Border Formation, Disputes and the Process of Resolution**

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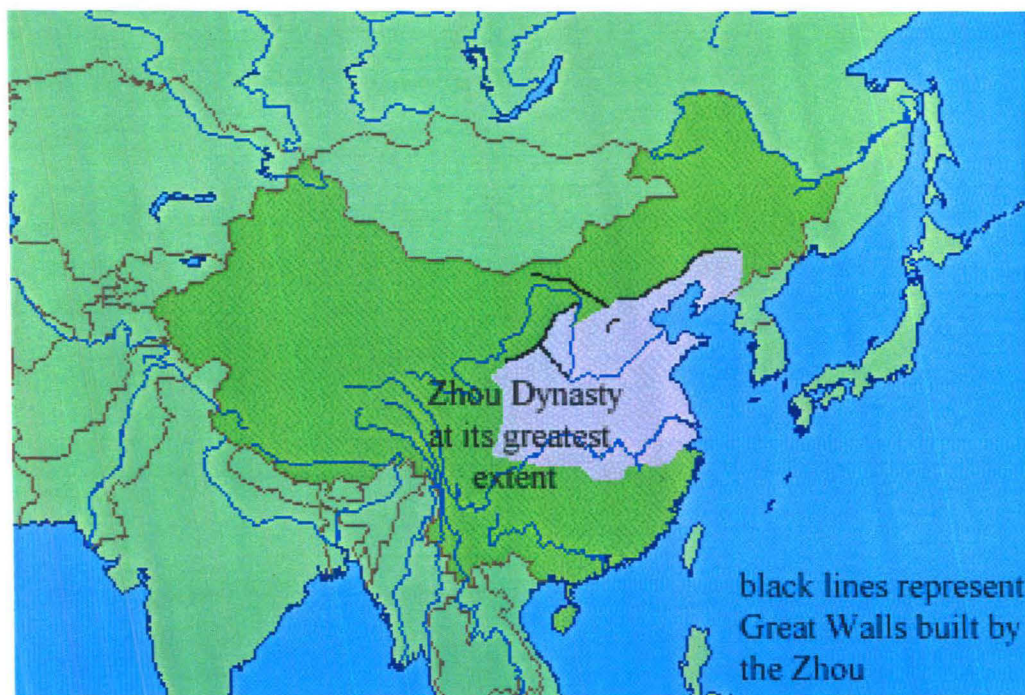
Sino-Vietnamese land border formation is a long process which has experienced for centuries. Along with the expansion of Northern Kingdom to its southern part, the border had gradually formed. Not until 10<sup>th</sup> century, the border between China and Vietnam emerged when Vietnam existed from Chinese domination. Since then, the border has remained relatively stable. In 19<sup>th</sup> century it was for the first time delimited and demarcated by the Chinese and French who ruled over Vietnam and became a legal border line. Thus, the Sino-Vietnamese border changed from a buffer zone into a border with regional nature, and then borderline. The changes of the border were due to the development of the two countries' relations. However, when Vietnam and China became new modern state in 1945 and 1949 respectively, the demand for redefining the common border emerged. Experiencing numbers of difficulties, the two sides reached the Land Border Treaty in 1999 and completed the work of demarcation and border marker placement in late 2008. Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to depict the formation process of the Sino-Vietnamese land border through different periods in the first section; to examine disputes concerning to the border in second section; and to narrate the process of dispute resolution in the last one.

#### **1. Land Border through Periods**

##### **1.1. Vietnam as a Part of China**

Historically, along with the formation of China – Vietnam relations, Chinese-Vietnamese border have been formed. In Zhou Dynasty from 1045-256 BC, China territory covered a region equivalent to roughly twice the area of contemporary Vietnam (Womack 2006: 96), and located in north of China as today. During this period, no southern border is formally delineated. City names extend to just south of the Yangtze and the area beyond is shown as “Yue” (Wade 2000: 35). Vietnam, at that

time, was under the name of Van Lang which located on the Red River delta in present-day northern Vietnam. Thus, between China and Vietnam in the period of the first dynasties there existed a buffer zone where Yue people<sup>12</sup> were living. Yue people scattered from today Shanghai down to Guangxi next to northern part of Vietnam which was known as Lingnan.



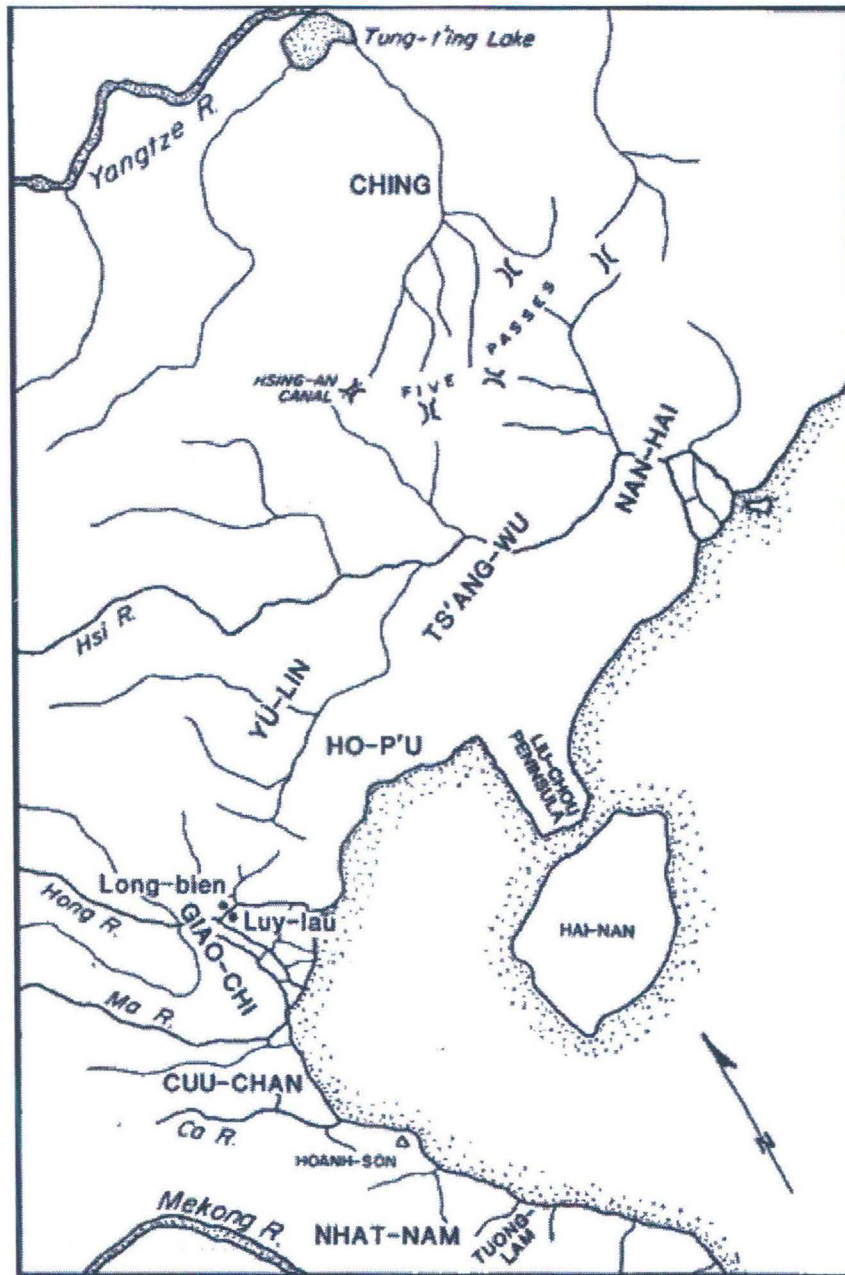
**Map 3.1: Map of the Zhou Dynasty**

Source: <http://www.mnsu.edu/emuseum/prehistory/china/map/map.html>

The buffer zone between China and Vietnam was narrowed as Qin Shihuang Di expanded the Qin's territory to Lingnan region which today comprises Guangdong, Guangxi, Hunan, Jiangxi and other nearby areas of southern mainland China. The Qin carried out a series of wars with the local people. These largely unsuccessful campaigns were the beginning of prolonged Chinese expansion into the area (Barlow 1987: 251). In the southern expeditions, the Qin troops even approached Au Lac's territory, near the present day- Hanoi.

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<sup>12</sup> Yue people in Lingnan region are different from people who were living in northern part of today Vietnam

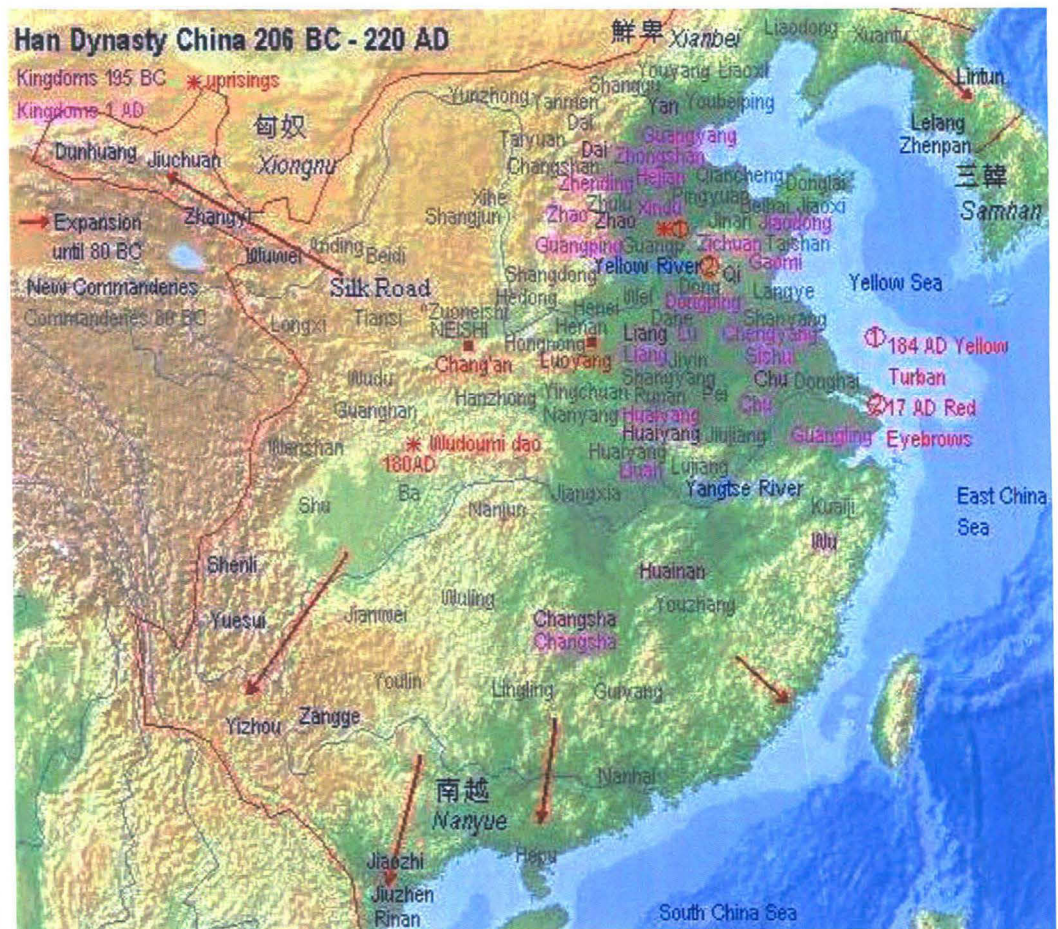


**Map 3.2: Map of Jiaozhi**

Source: Taylor 1983 : 31

This region became independent when Zhao Tou built his own kingdom of Nan Yue (South Viet) covering area of Lingnan. Zhao defeated and annexed Au Lac into Nan Yue in 196 BC. However, Nan Yue was reconquered and incorporated into China by the Han dynasty in 111 BC. The annexation led to more than one thousand year period of non-border between China and Vietnam.





**Map 3.3: Map of the Han Dynasty**

Source: <http://www.mnsu.edu/emuseum/prehistory/china/map/map.html>,

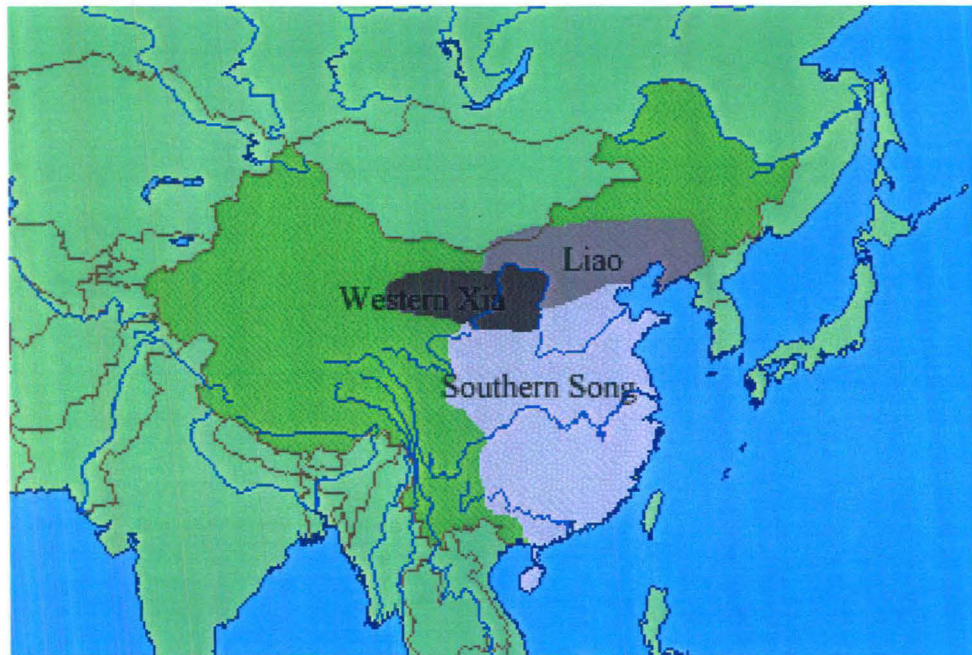
Accessed 15 March 2010

There were a number of the Vietnamese uprisings to get out of the Chinese domination during the ten centuries. Trung sisters' uprising was the most famous and successful one. Not only did the Trung sisters' uprising gain bring Vietnam but built up a regime with territory covered today northern part of Vietnam and Lingnan region. However King Trung Nu regime just existed for three years.

Following the Trung sisters' revolt, there were some uprisings waged by the Vietnamese, but all failed. Not until 938 with the glorious victory of Ngo Quyen at Bach Dang River who later became Empire of Dai Co Viet, Vietnam escaped from Chinese domination and became an independent country. Not only did the Bach Dang victory bring independence to Vietnam, but also marked a turning point in the process of Sino-Vietnamese border formation. Along with the emergence of Vietnam from Chinese domination, the border between the two countries was formed.

## 1.2. An Independent Vietnam

Following the victory by Ngo Quyen on the Bach Dang River, with the declaration of the Empire of Dai Co Viet by Dinh Bo Linh in 968, and especially with the Song's recognition of Dinh as Kinh of Jiaozhi in 975, Vietnam was no longer regarded as a part of China. Vietnam became an independent country with its own political regime. The changes in Vietnam's political status meant the Vietnamese had their own territory and sovereignty over it. The Song attempted and failed to regain control of Vietnam by invading in 981, and again in 1077, after Vietnam had invaded, seized, and sacked Nanning in 1076. The current border between China and Vietnam was set after the second failure (Womack 2006: 113). According to the set of historical maps of China edited by Tan Qixiang, it is only with the map of the Song Dynasty that areas of modern northern Vietnam are excluded from the map of China (Wade 2000: 35).



**Map 3.4: Map of the Song Dynasty**

Source: <http://www.mnsu.edu/emuseum/prehistory/china/map/map.html>,

Accessed 17 March 2010

However, the border between China and Vietnam at that time was just today Guangxi and Guangdong. The border section between today's Yunnan on Chinese side

and Dienbien, Laichau, Hagiang on Vietnamese side had not been formed. This border section between the two countries was formed along with Chinese dynasties' territorial expansion to today's Yunnan region. The beginning of the Chinese push into Yunnan region was marked by the efforts of the Tang Dynasty to incorporate the state of Nanzhao, centred at Dali in the 8<sup>th</sup> century (Wade 2000: 37). However the Tang was not successful to bring Dali into the Kingdom's orbit. Following the Tang, the Mongol Yuan Dynasty continued to expand China's territory to Yunnan. The Yuan brought the succeeding Dali kingdom into its huge empire, but it was only with the Ming invasion of Yunnan in the 1380s, that part of Yunnan were formally incorporated within the Chinese state (Wade 2000: 37).

Although the wars waged by the Chinese dynasties caused some slight changes of the border, basically the border which had been set since 10<sup>th</sup> century remained relatively stable until it was officially defined by the Sino - French conventions in 1887 and 1895.

### **1.3. Sino - French Conventions and China - Vietnam Border Line**

The Sino - French Peace Treaty signed in Tianjin in June 9, 1885 ended the war between the French and the Chinese in Tonkin. Under its terms China renounced its suzerainty over Vietnam and recognized the French protectorate there. Besides that, Article III of the Treaty also defined "Within a period of six months from the signature of the present treaty, Commissioners appointed by the high contracting parties shall proceed to the spot in order to define the frontier between China and Tonkin. They shall place landmarks wherever necessary to render the line of demarcation clear. In those cases where they may not be able to agree as the location of these landmarks or on such rectification of detail as it may be desirable to make, in the interest of the two nations, in the existing frontier of Tonkin, they shall refer the difficulty to their respective Governments." (Mayers 1906: 240)

Immediately after signature of the Treaty, a Sino - French Commission to demarcate the border between China and Vietnam was established. The joint commission included Chou Dejun, Hung Luxu and Qing Dengcheng on Chinese side and M. Bourcier Saint-Chaffray, M. Scherzer, the French consul in Canton, Dr Paul

Neis, Lieutenant-Colonel Tisseyre, Captain Bouinais, and M. Pallu de la Barrière (though the latter took no part in the commission's work) on the French side.

The Chinese and French agreed to divide the entire border into two regions: Yunnan was one sector, and Qinzhou Prefecture in Guangdong Province and Guangxi region were one sector. (Qinzhou Prefecture, which is in Guangxi today, was under jurisdiction of Guangdong Province at that time). And the Qing dynasty sent two separate delegations, one for Guangxi and Guangdong region and another for Yunnan region while the French government just organized one group for both regions (JPRS Report on China 1993).



**The land border marker erected by Sino - French Land Border Demarcation Commission during 1887-1895.**

Source:<http://media.photobucket.com/image/cot%20moc%20bien%20gioi/khesanh/CotMoc18-1979.jpg>, Accessed 20 April 2010.

Demarcation work began in late 1885 and was completed in 1887. The French rejected Chinese claims to the Vietnamese town of Dongdang, Langson province close to the Guangxi border and the site of a French victory during the Sino - French War, but agreed that the Pak-lung peninsula on the western border of Guangdong province should be awarded to China. A dispute over two areas on the border between Yunnan

province and Tonkin was settled by the award of Meng-suo and Meng-lai to Vietnam and the transfer of a large tract of fertile arable land between Ma-pai-kuan and Nantan-shan to China. An agreement confirming the new border between Vietnam and China was signed in Beijing on 26 June 1887 by the French and Chinese representatives.

After the border delimitation on text was complete, the demarcation works on site were started. The works on site lasted from late 1889 to April 1896. Around 341 border markers were raised along the 1400 kilometres length of the common border



**Map 3.5: Sino-Vietnamese Border Map defined by the Sino-France Conventions of 1887 and 1895**

Source: [http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/middle\\_east\\_and\\_asia/china\\_vietnam\\_border\\_88.jpg](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/middle_east_and_asia/china_vietnam_border_88.jpg), Accessed 17 March 2010.

Thus, experiencing thousands years of formation, the land border between China and Vietnam has been formed and for the first time become a legal border line which was recognised by international law. After the demarcation by the Chinese and

French, the Sino-Vietnamese land border stretches through seven Vietnamese provinces: Dienbien, Laichau, Laocai, Hagiang, Caobang, Langson, and Quangninh and two of China's provinces: Yunnan, and Guangxi with 341 boundary markers.

According to the Carte de l'Indochine 1:100,000 published by the French Service Géographique de l'Indochine and on the series Indochine--Carte de la Frontière du nord-ouest and Carte de la Frontière du nord-est 1:200,000 published by the same source which are the same to Chinese maps, alignment of the Sino-Vietnamese boundary is described as follows:

From the China--Laos--Vietnam tripoint at approximately 22°34'00" North and 102°08'30" East, the boundary between China and Vietnam extends eastward and then northward long the main drainage divide. Joining the Nam Nop stream, the boundary follows its median line to the Black River before following the latter downstream for approximately two miles. The boundary leaves the Black River for the Nam La stream before rejoining the drainage divide. The three river sections of the boundary total approximately eighteen miles. For about seventy-five miles, the boundary coincides with the drainage divide north of the Black River. A limited number of demarcation pillars mark this rugged and relatively uninhabited region.

Joining the source of the Nam Le, the boundary is delimited by the median line of this stream to the Nam La, then down it for a very short distance before turning northward to join its tributary, the Nam Coum. The river sector totals approximately thirty miles. Rejoining the watershed gain, the boundary follows the ridges southeastward for twenty-five miles to the Hung Ngau Ho that leads the frontier northeastward to the Red River. Its median line then serves to the confluence of the left bank tributary, the Nam Ti Ho, northwest of Lao Kay. The median line of the Nam Ti and then the Kan brings the boundary back to the watershed about eight miles north of Lao Kay. As in the previous sector, a twenty-five mile section of ridge line (marked by twenty-three pillars) leads the boundary back to rivers, first the T'ieng-lang Ho and then the Song Chay, a tributary of the Red River. The total distance along the two rivers measures about twelve miles. At the confluence of the Tong Kai Ho, the boundary leaves the Song Chay to follow, northeastward, the watershed between these two streams. Eight pillars mark this twenty-two mile sector. Rejoining the Song Chay, the median line of it and its tributary, the Nam Kiong Ho, form the frontier for a short stretch of 6.5 miles.

The continuation of the boundary is most complex. For approximately seventy-five miles, the border stretches generally northeastward along minor watersheds. However, it crosses the Rivière Claire 1.5 miles northwest of Thanh Thuy, as well as the Song Mien, before joining the Chin Chiang at the northernmost point on the frontier.

Following this tributary of the Claire for about 7.5 miles downstream, the boundary is then delimited by a series of straight lines through an area of limestone before it again coincides with the watershed. For about sixty miles, minor watersheds form the boundary although the Song Gam does cut through at boundary pillar 129. After a ten-mile portion delimited by straight lines and other nonphysical features near Sac Giang, the watersheds again delimit the frontier for about fifty-five miles. Exceptions are made as three minor streams cut the frontier.

The boundary to this point has meandered generally eastward. However, at 22°48' North and 106°52' East, it turns sharply to the south. The region through which the boundary now passes is composed of limestone (karst) topography without permanent surface drainage. As a consequence, the alignment is complex; an increased density of boundary pillars, however, clearly marks the limits of the two states. Joining the Song Ba Veng, the boundary continues its southward trend before crossing first the Lung Chiang and then the Sung-hsing Ho. While the dominant landscape form is still karst, surface drainage appears to a greater degree than to the north. The southward trend of the boundary terminates at the famous Porte de Chine, immediately to the north of Dongdang. Here the Tonkin-Hunan-Kwangsi railroad crosses the frontier.

Turning eastward, the frontier follows minor watersheds but cuts the headwaters of several small streams to approximately 22°39' North and 106°29' East. Here, it joins the median line of several small streams. After following these for approximately ten miles, the boundary continues eastward in a series of short, straight-line segments to the source of the Pei-lun Ho. The median line of this river forms the boundary for approximately thirtyseven miles to the Gulf of Tonkin. East of Mon Cay, the northern distributary is the boundary channel to the midpoint between the islands of Tra-Co and Man-wei.

The boundary is demarcated by at least 285 pillars in approximately seven series. The smallest series, in the extreme west, appears to have one pillar while the largest, in the east-center, comprises 140 numbered pillars plus several unnumbered ones (The Geographer, Office of the Geographer 1978: 5-6).

## **2. Border Disputes**

### **2.1. Reasons Causing Border Disputes**

One interesting question about Sino - Vietnamese land border dispute should be raised is that why land border dispute happened and why the border had to be re-demarcated while both China and Vietnam recognise the legitimacy of 1887 and 1895 Sino - French Conventions which delimited and demarcated quite clearly the border

between China and Vietnam. The dispute stems from following reasons that, after along time of existence, the border line had been changed by both natural effects and human being's activities along the border. Therefore, some of these disputes were caused by the fact that border markers have been moved or destroyed. These, in combination with other activities carried by the population and local authorities on both sides of the border area, have impinged on the border line. Another development which generated disputes was the Sino - Vietnamese border war in February-March 1979 that left some strategic locations of Vietnamese territory under Chinese control (Amer 2002: 3). Moreover, the simplicity of 1887 and 1895 Sino - French Conventions contributed to the dispute over a number of places along the common border. According to the book *Zhongguo Zhoubian Guanxi Yu Anquan Huanjing* (China's Relations with Its Neighbours and Its Security Environment), the unclear delineation and delimitation of the 1887 and 1895 Sino - French Conventions caused the two countries' different perception on the border line.

The Sino-Vietnamese land frontier was demarcated long ago and the boundary between the territories of both sides is clear for the most part. Nevertheless, in separate sections, there are some places about which the understanding of both parties handed down throughout history is not identical. Consequently, controversy has arisen. The reason, in some cases, is that the applicable boundary treaty documents and attached drawings are contradictory. In other cases, the boundary documents and attached drawings do not agree with the actual terrain, or the explanation provided is oversimplified, making on the ground recognition difficult (JPRS Report on China 1993: 1).

Similar to the Chinese position, on the Vietnamese side, Deputy Foreign Minister and head of the Vietnamese border negotiation delegation, Le Cong Phung said that the text of 1887 and 1895 accords are vague. The border line in many areas was not described clearly, 341 border markers are too less for 1400 km border line and the markers were not defined with coordinates. The border line was drawn on large scale maps from 1/20,000 to 1/ 500,000 ratio, a small adjustment could result in a big difference. All of these led to the both sides' different perceptions on the border line in many areas (Interview of Le Cong Phung on the Sino - Vietnamese Land Border Resolution 2002). Apart from the above reasons led to the border dispute, both China and Vietnam accused each other of territorial encroachment.



In Chinese view, the reason led to land border dispute was that:

In 1974, Vietnamese authorities began to create incidents on the Sino-Vietnamese border in an organized, planned, and purposeful way. They forced Vietnamese border people to enter Chinese territory to reclaim agricultural land, build roads, and plant trees in a constant nibbling away at Chinese territory. They dispatched armed personnel on patrols into Chinese territory, set up fortified points, built fortifications, planted land mines, and set up obstacles. They even made forcible incursions into Chinese border villages to register house-holds and issue registration certificates in an effort to change their administrative subordination. Acting on various pretexts, military commanders arbitrarily designated the boundary line, moved, destroyed, and privately implanted national boundary markers in an infringement of China's territory. Thereafter, Sino-Vietnamese land border disputes occurred frequently. What had been a peaceful and friendly border became a tense and confrontational border (JPRS Report on China 1993: 1-2).

During 1974-1979, Beijing accused that, the Vietnamese carried out hundreds of provocations along the common border. The account of the number of provocations are shown in the following table.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Provocations</b>
1974	121
1975	439
1976	986
1977	752
1978	1108
1979	129

**Table 3.1: Vietnam's Provocations**

Source: Tretiak 1979: 1

On the contrary, the Vietnamese announced that Chinese authorities intentionally carried out various activities to encroach on Vietnamese territory. According to the book “Border Issue between Vietnam and China” issued by Vietnamese Foreign Ministry in 1979, Chinese expansionist policy was systematically implemented with various measures such as: the Chinese exploited the close and friendly relationship between people of the two countries in border region, they sent Chinese civilians to Vietnamese territory for farming and grazing cattle. Those Chinese civilians then built houses and settled down in the areas. When they were asked to leave the territory, they insisted that the territory belonged to China. And at last Chinese government intentionally claimed that the areas were China’s territory and even they forced Vietnamese people out of their lands. This measure was carried out in such areas as Trinhtuong, Quangninh province; border markers No 25, 26, 27 in Thanhloa commune, Caoloc district, Langson province; boundary marker No 17-19 in Caobang; No 14 in Hatuyen; No 2-3 in Hoang Lien Son. Taking chances in helping Vietnam build friendly constructions in order to change the borderline. In 1955, Chinese government sent workers to help Vietnam to restore a railroad from Hanoi to the Friendship Gate. Chinese workers placed the point of junction of the railroad between Vietnam and China 300 metres inside Vietnam. Hanoi took it as a mistake by the Chinese workers but the Chinese authorities stated that the position of the marker was exactly where it should be, on the joint border. This conflict was never resolved even though the two countries were close friends during the following two decades. Chinese authority unilaterally built constructions along the common border in order to encroach on Vietnamese land. The activities were carried out at the area of boundary marker No. 53 in Damthuy commune, Trungkhanh district, Caobang province, in Chi Ma district, Langson province, and in Socgiang, Caobang province. They moved and destroyed boundary marker to adjust the historical borderline. In addition the Chinese used the Vietnamese’s belief in China’s help to re-draw the border map in order to adjust the borderline. They also ordered armed forces to occupy Vietnamese territory in Traman – Suoilung (boundary marker No. 136-137)... (Vietnamese Foreign Ministry 1979: 8-9).

The Vietnamese statistics of number of Chinese border incursions during 1974 – 1978 was shown in the following table.

<b>Years</b>	<b>Incursions</b>
1974	179
1975	294
1976	812
1977	873
1978	2175

**Table 3.2: China's Incursions**

Source: Vietnamese Foreign Ministry 1979: 18

The accusations by the two countries showed that China - Vietnam relations seriously deteriorated. All of these led to the border war in 1979.

## **2.2. Border War in 1979**

Following Deng Xiaoping's declaration of "teach Vietnam a lesson", on 17 February 1979 Beijing waged a limited war against Vietnam. To prepare China's so-called "defensive war", Beijing mobilized eleven Chinese armies of regular ground forces, militia, and naval and air force units from the Kunming Military Region, Chengdu Military Region, Wuhan Military Region and Guangzhou Military Region, totaling at least 450,000 troops against roughly 50,000 Vietnamese troops of militia and border defense units (O'Dowd 2007: 45-55). At dawn of 17 February 1979, around 30,000 Chinese PLA troops (this number had been later increased to around 120,000) - crossed the 480 mile long Sino - Vietnamese border at fourteen different points (Elleman 2001: 292) - attacked 6 border provinces in northern Vietnam, opening the

border war between China and Vietnam. Chinese troops organised their attack from three main directions to assault Langson, Caobang, Laocai.

### **On Langson direction**

PLA assembled troops from 43<sup>rd</sup>, 54<sup>th</sup> and 55<sup>th</sup> Army to occupy Dongdang, Tamlung, Locbinh and Langson town. To occupy Langson, PLA organised to attack from two directions. The 43<sup>rd</sup> was responsible for assaulting town of Chi Ma and through that point via local route 402 to Locbinh, about ten kilometres to the southwest. From Locbinh, the 43<sup>rd</sup> would hook northwest along Highway 4B to the ultimate objective, Langson. The 55<sup>th</sup> Army was ordered to attack Friendship Pass, between border markers 15 and 20. From that, it moved against its initial objective, the town of Dongdang. The 55<sup>th</sup> Army and the 43<sup>rd</sup> Army, together with the 54<sup>th</sup> which began the battle in reserve, thus were to attack Langson from two directions with purpose of isolating the Vietnamese 3<sup>rd</sup> Division (O'Dowd 2007: 55).

In the Langson battlefield, Chinese troops faced the fierce resistance of Vietnamese 3<sup>rd</sup> Division. As the invasion unfolded, the PLA attack rapidly fell behind schedule. It took more than a week of fighting for the Chinese 55th Army to move more than three kilometres into Vietnam. However, with vastly outnumbered forces, Chinese took advantage and pushed Vietnamese troops back southward. On February 23, the Dongdang railroad station and Thammo were taken by the 55<sup>th</sup> Army, on the east of the Langson Front, after eleven days, the 43rd took Locbinh, seventeen kilometres from its assembly positions, and in early March, it reached Langson (O'Dowd 2007: 57).

Although seized some objectives in Langson, Chinese forces were facing the strong resistance from Vietnamese troop. The battle for Langson did not end until the Chinese captured Hill 413, southwest of the city, on March 5. On the same day, the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced China's intention to withdraw from Vietnam (O'Dowd 2007: 58).

### **On Caobang direction**

On this direction, PLA assembled around 200,000 troops including the 41<sup>st</sup> and 42<sup>nd</sup> Armies from Guangzhou Military Region, the 12<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Armies from Nanjing Military Region, the 50<sup>th</sup> Army from Chengdu Military Region of which the 41<sup>st</sup> and 42<sup>nd</sup> Armies were the primary attacking forces and the rest were backing one (O'Dowd 2007: 58-59).

The mission of the Chinese 41st Army was to cross the border along a wide front and attack Tralinh and Trungkhanh. After seizing the two objectives it would focus on Caobang, the main objective twenty kilometres distant. On the other extreme of the Chinese front, the 42nd Army was to attack Caobang from the southeast, out of Longzhou County-the assembly deployment base. Before linking up with the 41<sup>st</sup> Army to strike Caobang, the 42<sup>nd</sup> would have to conquer Thatkhe and Quanguyen (O'Dowd 2007: 59).

On Caobang front, Chinese troops faced strong resistance of Vietnamese 346<sup>th</sup> and 311<sup>th</sup> Divisions which slowed the PLA's advance to Caobang. The attacks by the 41st Army ran immediately into the Vietnamese 677th Regiment, which stopped it in its tracks. It was not until February 22 that the PLA secured Tralinh. Till the end of February 22, it penetrated deep inside Vietnamese territory no more than 10–15 kilometres from the border (O'Dowd 2007: 60).

On other directions, the 42nd Army's advance were more faster, and by the night of February 22, the 42nd had taken Phuchoa, Thatkhe, Quanguyen, and Dongkhe, penetrating into Quanguyen about twenty-five kilometers from Shuikouguan.

Although some hard lessons were learned along the way, on February 25 Caobang was taken. On February 27, the Chinese seized Guan Tiat airfield, southwest of Thatkhe. The Vietnamese counterattacked, and the two sides continued to contest the field. The Vietnamese also counterattacked at Quanguyen and Tralinh on February 27, with Chinese control of the towns not being restored until March 2 and 3, respectively.

On March 3, Duet Long was occupied by two Chinese forces from Thatkhe and from Dongdang. The Langson area of operations was thus linked to the Caobang area

of operations, and the major gap between the troops of the Guangzhou Military Region closed.

### **On Laocai Direction**

Responsibility for Laocai front was the 11<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> Armies from Kunming Military Region and the 14<sup>th</sup> Army from Chengdu Military Region which brought more than 125,000 troops to the battle. The 11th conducted the attacks in the western sector of operations, assaulting Phong Tho (Laichau province) and hooking east toward Sapa and Laocai. The 14<sup>th</sup> Army was responsible also for the attack on Muongkhuong and probably approached Laocai from the east. The 13th Army conducted the operations against Laocai and went on to Camduong, immediately to the south of Laocai. On Vietnamese side, 316<sup>th</sup> and 354<sup>th</sup> Divisions were the primary defensive forces to counter against the Chinese forces (O'Dowd 2007: 62).

The first objectives on February 17 were Laocai and the small towns of Bat Xat, Muongkhuong, and Phalong. The main assault was aimed at Laocai, with those against Bat Xat, about fifteen kilometres northwest of the city, and against Muongkhuong and Phalong probably intended to divert Vietnamese attention from the attack on Laocai. There do not seem to have been any attacks against Phong Tho on the first day of the campaign.

After three days of fighting, on February 25, the Chinese took Camduong. Problems were by now manifesting themselves in the rear of the invading forces, however, and the PLA had to spend the next two days clearing out pockets of resistance in Laocai and other towns that it thought it had secured.

To the southwest, on 1 March Chinese troops took Sapa. A Chinese force slipped around Sapa to cut off the retreat of the defending PAVN 316th Division by attacking toward Binhlu. This enveloping force apparently skirted around Vietnam's highest mountain, Phan Xi Pang, and crossed part of the Hoang Lien Son mountain range to accomplish its mission. Binh Lu, which is forty-four kilometres west of Sapa, was a significant objective because it prevented reinforcements from reaching the 316th Division by blocking the best road from Laichau. Although there is no indication that the Chinese got all the way to Binhlu, this blocking position was at least

forty kilometres from the Chinese border and was to prove the deepest Chinese penetration of the war.

Although Sapa had fallen on March 1, the Vietnamese 316th Division had continued to hold out against the 14th Army in the surrounding areas. It resisted for one more day, its fight ending finally on March 5. The Chinese claimed to have killed 1,398 Vietnamese soldiers, wounded 620, and captured thirty-five.

After three weeks of intense fighting, on 5 March, China announced its decision to withdraw from Vietnam. China could claim that out of Vietnam's six provincial capitals near the border, it had captured three—Caobang, Langson, and Laocai (Elleman 2001: 292). On their way back, Chinese troops looted North Vietnam, removing industrial machinery, equipment, and government property, and destroying the remainder. Many artillery and tank units fired indiscriminately at Vietnamese towns. Some units that had suffered heavy casualties retaliated by burning villages, bridges, and anything else they could ignite (Li Xiaobing 2007: 255).

### **Aftermath**

According to Vietnamese statistics, more than 330 villages, communes, 735 schools, 428 hospitals and infirmaries, 41 farms and 38 plantations, 81 factories, mines, 80,000 hectares of food and agricultural produce were completely destroyed. A half of 3.5 million of border province inhabitants lost their houses, and thousands of civilian people were killed during the two-week war (Nguyen Huy Toan et al 1996: 89).

There are some different statistics of casualties from both sides. According to the PLA Deputy Chief of the General Staff Wu Xiuquan's revelation in a meeting with a French military delegation, Chinese casualty rate was extremely high, about 20,000 killed and wounded in the two-week war (Tretiak 1979: 757). While Hanoi radio claimed 45,000 Chinese dead and wounded, but has given no figure for Vietnamese losses (Jencks 1979: 811-812).

A "reliable Chinese source" told AFP's George Biannic that, at a Party rally on March 16, Deng Xiaoping had announced estimated Vietnamese losses of 37,000 dead,

7,000 wounded and 5,000 prisoners. By contrast, other Chinese sources have estimated equal losses of about 10,000 dead on each side (Jencks 1979: 812).

When the war ended, it is believed that China's attack against Vietnam was a complete and total failure. According to Ellis Joffe:

These [PLA] shortcomings were demonstrated in China's 1979 invasion of Vietnam. The PLA's superiority in manpower was nullified by the shortage of trucks and armoured personnel carriers. Tactical communications were so primitive that orders were transmitted by foot soldiers sent from division to division. Artillery units did not have sufficient ammunition. The front did not receive food and water for days because supplies had to be transported by peasants. Food stocks—mainly noodles and bean curds—were perishable and quickly spoiled in the heat. Maps were outdated, and disintegrated in the rain. Some companies and platoons lost contact with main forces and suffered heavy casualties because they did not have proper radios. No air reconnaissance had been made of the battlefield, which increased casualties as troops discovered unexpected obstacles. In this brief but bloody engagement Chinese casualties amounted to some 26,000 men killed and 37,000 wounded (Joffe 1978: 95).

### **2.3. Border Conflicts during 1980s**

The Chinese withdrawal from Vietnam in March 1979 did not end the border conflicts. For the next decade, PAVN units, along with a rearmed and retrained militia, maintained as many as eight hundred thousand troops in northern Vietnam. Across the border, more than two hundred thousand Chinese troops faced them (Li Xiaobing 2007: 259).

Border skirmishes continued throughout the 1980s, mainly in Laoshan area. In May and June 1981, the PLA attacked Vietnam again after many small border conflicts. The Chinese troops occupied and defended several hills.

In April-May 1984, PLA conducted the largest offensive campaign to attack PAVN positions in the mountains near Laoshan. The attack began on April 2 with the Chinese artillery heavy shell-fire and continued until April 27. On April 28, the infantry troops from Yunnan Province charged the Vietnamese defensive positions at Lao Son, including hills 395, 423, and 662. They occupied hill 662, the highest position in the Laoshan mountain. Consequently, after several days, the Chinese troops



controlled most of the mountain. On April 30, the Chinese forces attacked the Vietnamese positions on Yen Son Mountain. By May 15, the Chinese occupied most of the positions on the two mountains and built defensive works against the PAVN counterattacks (Li Xiaobing 2007: 260).

The Chinese troops held their positions for three years, until April 1987. They constructed defensive works, launched small-scale attacks, defeated Vietnamese troops, and defended their positions on these two mountains. A large force with two armies, usually including two artillery divisions, four infantry divisions, and several tank regiments were maintained in the Lao Son area (Li Xiaobing 2007: 260).

In April 1987, CMC reduced its scale of the PLA's operations in Vietnam, though the Chinese maintained routine patrols at Laoshan and Yenson. From April 1987 to October 1989, there were only eleven attacks, most of them simply artillery bombardments. To give more troops combat experience, the PLA began to rotate troops into the Laoshan and Yenson areas. Many PLA units, including infantry, artillery, antiaircraft, and reconnaissance troops, moved into Vietnam from Guangxi and Yunnan provinces. By the end of the 1980s, China and Vietnam had normalized their diplomatic relationship. In 1992, all Chinese troops withdrew from the Lao Son and Yen Son areas and returned to China. In 1993, to develop trade between the two countries, the PLA troops in Guangxi and Yunnan began large-scale mine-clearing operations along the Chinese-Vietnamese border (Li Xiaobing 2007: 260).

The 1979 border war not only marked a dark period in history of China - Vietnam relations, but made the border issue between the two countries more difficult and complicated. Many border markers and vestiges were completely erased, increasing the number of disputed areas between the two sides. Moreover, some strategic locations such as Laoshan area in Vietnam's territory remained controlled by Chinese troops, and later were claimed as Chinese territory. All of these complicated the process of land border issue resolution between the two countries.

### **3. Process of Border Dispute Resolution**

#### **3.1. Border Talks before 1991**

The process of border issue resolution between China and Vietnam began on 2 November 1957, when the Central Committee of the Worker Party of Vietnam proposed to the Central Standing Committee of the CPC that the two parties “should maintain status quo of the historical border. The border question is an important issue that requires being resolved on the basis of legal principles, existing or redefined, as decided by the two Governments. Any outstanding disputes should be settled through negotiations” (Vietnamese Foreign Ministry 1979: 7). In April 1958, China responded, accepting the Vietnamese proposal, thereby indicating an acceptance of international law and the principle that treaties on borders remain valid whatever the changes in administrative circumstances (Nguyen Hong Thao 2000: 87). These were the first official documents concerning land border issue between China and Vietnam since the two countries had established relations.

Due to the war situation in Vietnam, the two countries put the border issues aside. Not until March 18, 1975 Chinese government gave a proposal of holding meeting on land border between the two governments. On April 12, 1975, DRV replied with agreement on principles and suggested that the two sides should postpone the talks in a proper time and in the waiting time open discussion at provincial level. However the negotiations at provincial level did not reach any progress (Vietnamese Foreign Ministry 1979: 20) while the reports on border incursion by both countries rapidly increased.

The second meetings on border issue<sup>13</sup> at the level of Deputy-Minister of Foreign Affairs was held in Beijing from October 7, 1977 to June 1978. The Vietnamese delegation came to the meeting with the reaffirmation that the two sides should respect the Conventions of 1885 and 1897 on the land and maritime border. Therefore, both the maritime and land border should be discussed in the meetings. Chinese side, however, just wanted to discuss on land border issue and demanded

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<sup>13</sup> The first meetings on border issue was held in Beijing in August 1974, but it was to settle the territorial issue in Gulf of Tonkin.

Vietnam to abandon the viewpoint of the border line in Gulf of Tonkin which had been defined by the conventions of 1885 and 1897 (Vietnamese Foreign Ministry 1979: 20). For the Chinese, Vietnam's proposal for a 'package plan for solution to the land border and the Tonkin Gulf "sea border"' was unreasonable and was refused (JPRS Report on China 1993: 1). Vietnam accepted to discuss the land border issue in this meeting and leave the maritime border to be solved later, at the same time brought out a "nine article -border agreement draft." Under terms of the agreement draft, the two sides recognised the border line which defined by the Sino - French Conventions in 1887 and 1895; areas in which either side exercises jurisdiction cut cross the border line mentioned at the Article I are to be returned to other side unconditionally; for the disputed areas, if after comparing, there remains a difference in viewpoint, the two sides will do field work, negotiate on the principle of fairness and reasonableness; after this agreement comes into force, the two sides will establish Vietnamese-Sino Joint Commission including an equal number of delegates from both sides to do the border demarcation work on field (Vietnamese Foreign Ministry 1979: 21-26). However, the Chinese side refused to consider the agreement draft. In the Vietnam's view, the Chinese refusal of the agreement draft introduced by the Vietnamese came from the reason that China wanted to maintain the existing border rather than the status quo of the historical border<sup>14</sup> in order to retain the areas which had been occupied by the Chinese (Vietnamese Foreign Ministry 1979: 26). The second round negotiation came to a standstill after more than ten months of discussion.

The third round of negotiation was restarted on April 18, 1979 in Hanoi and then continued in Beijing from June 8, 1979. Due to the fact that the negotiation was held right after the Border war of 1979, apart from the border issue, the main focus of the meetings was to settle the problems in China - Vietnam relations after the border war. However after eight months of discussion, there was no progress in the negotiations except the two sides reached an agreement of prison exchange (Vietnamese Foreign Ministry 2002: 312). In early 1980, the negotiation was suspended.

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<sup>14</sup> It should be understood that the historical border line which had been demarcated by the Conventions of 1885 and 1897 are different to the existing border line mentioned by Chinese side, because after nearly one hundred years, the historical had been changed due to the China trespassing activities (for more information see China - Vietnam border disputes in previous part).

### **3.2. Process of Land Border Dispute Resolution after the Normalization**

#### **System of Talks**

The border issue settlement is a long and complicate process with high sensitiveness that demands a careful treatment. To do that, China and Vietnam agreed to set up a system of border negotiation which is divided into three levels, Expert-level talks (on a regular basis); Government-level talks (at Deputy/Vice Minister, Foreign Minister Levels); and High-level talks (at Secretary-Generals of the CCP and CPV, Presidents and Prime Ministers Level) (Amer 2004: 327). The meetings of the Expert Group essentially were guided by the talks of vice-ministerial level. The vice-ministerial meetings in turn were driven by the high level meetings between the Chinese and Vietnamese leaderships which have been held once a year since 1991 (Ang Cheng Guan 1998: 1124).

#### **Process of Negotiation**

The process of border resolution began in the right moment of normalisation of relations between the two countries. During the visit to China by Vietnamese Secretary-General Do Muoi and Chairman of Ministerial Council Vo Van Kiet from 5 November to 10 November 1991 to normalise the bilateral relations, the two countries signed a temporary agreement on border affairs. The Article I of this provisional agreement called for the signatories to maintain the status quo on the border and included a prohibition against human activities which change status quo on the border. The pact also called for representatives of China and Vietnam to negotiate according to the principles of equality and mutual benefit (Legislative Documents Relating to the Vietnam - China Land Border Control 2005: 8). This was the first basic agreement between China and Vietnam which provided a legal base for resolving the border issue. Three days later, the resolution of border issue once again was mentioned in the Joint Communiqué when the two countries agreed ‘to continue take the necessary measures to maintain peace and tranquillity along the border and encourage the border inhabitants to restore and develop traditional friendly exchange so as to turn the Sino-

Vietnamese border into a border of peace and friendship (Sino-Vietnamese Joint Communiqué on Restoring Relations, Xinhua News Agency).

Right after the normalisation of bilateral relations, in February 1992, China's Foreign Minister Qian Qichen visited Vietnam and held talks with Vietnamese leaders. An agreement on establishment of working group to discuss territorial disputes was reached during the visit (Chinese Foreign Minister's Visit to Vietnam, Voice of Vietnam).

Although some progress in bilateral relations and territorial disputes between the two countries had been made, several Chinese moves as passing a new law on territorial waters which stipulated that the Paracel and Spratly islands and most of the South China Sea waters were to be regarded as part of China's territory in February; signing an agreement with the Crestone Energy Corporation, a US company on oil exploration in a 10,000 square mile area in the South China Sea in May, increased tension between the two countries (Vietnam Claims Sino-US Oil Exploration Pact a Violation of Sovereignty, Voice of Vietnam).

Following the Provisional Agreement on Border Affairs, the negotiation on boundary and territorial issues between the two countries were discussed during the visit of one of China's Vice Foreign Ministers to Hanoi in September 1992, but no agreement was reached (China's Vice Foreign Minister in Vietnam for "Friendly" Talks, Xinhua News Agency). Talks on border issue at expert-level took place for the first time on 12-17 October in Beijing. In this round of territorial negotiation, China and Vietnam agreed to establish joint working groups to negotiate the land border questions (China-Vietnam Border Talks Make "Some Headway", Voice of Vietnam). In the same year, from November 30 to December 4 Chinese Premier Li Peng had an official visit to Vietnam-the first visit by Chinese Premier since Zhou Enlai's in 1971. One of the main purposes of the visit was to discuss territorial differences and the mechanism of negotiations. Consequently, the two sides agreed to continue territorial discussions at expert level and soon to start discussions at government level (Legislative Documents Relating to the Vietnam-China Land Border Control 2005: 121). Following the Li Peng's visit, during the visit of Vietnam's Defence Minister Doan Khue in December, the territorial issues continued to be discussed (Vietnamese Defence Minister Visit to China, Xinhua news agency). The visits of Li Peng and

Doan Khue were regarded as good opportunities for China and Vietnam to ease the tension and settle the border issue at high-level. In the joint communiqué, the two sides reasserted they would settle the bilateral territorial and boundary disputes through peaceful negotiations (“SRV-China Joint Communique” on Li Peng’s Vietnam Visit, Voice of Vietnam).

Besides the meetings to negotiate border differences, China and Vietnam also initiated activities which created favourable conditions and encouraged process of border issue resolution as well as the cooperation between the two countries. On March 27, 1992 the Vietnamese chairman of the Council of Ministers issued a directive to open several border gates along the Sino - Vietnamese border (Vietnam and China Open Border Gate and Port, Voice of Vietnam). As a result the Friendship Gate (Youyiguan in Chinese and Huu Nghi Quan in Vietnamese) between Langson province in Vietnam and Guangxi in China was reopened in April.

The year of 1993 was seen an important and successful year in the process of land border issue resolution as a number of positive activities related to border issue took place. On April 7, 1993 Chinese Army began an operation to clear mines from the Sino-Vietnamese border, along a section of more than 1300 Km (China Conducts Mine-Sweeping Operation, Xinhua News). Besides that, many border gates between the two countries were reopened such as Hekou-Laocai border gate between Yunnan in China and Laocai in Vietnam on May 18; Tianbao-Thanhthuy in on June 20; Jinshuihe border checkpoint of Yunnan on November 10; Shuikou-Talung on December 1. Besides those events, border talks also took place. From 14-19 February, experts from the two countries held their second round of border talks in Hanoi. However result of the meeting was not reported Amer 2002: 49).

From 23 to 30 August China and Vietnam held the negotiations in Beijing to discuss principles for solving issues on their land boundary and the delineation of the Gulf of Tonkin (China and Vietnam to Hold Talk, Xinhua). This was the first round of boundary negotiations at government level between the two countries. Head of Vietnamese delegation was Vice-Foreign Minister Vu Khoan and Vice-Premier and Foreign Minister Qian Qichen was on the Chinese side. The talks ended with important progress when the two sides reached a “general understanding and consensus” on “fundamental principles” for solving the territorial issues (Sino-Vietnamese Border

Talks End, China Radio International). The both sides asserted that that neither side had conducted activities to make the conflict more complicated, used force nor threatened to use force (Border Talks Conclude, Voice of Vietnam).

Following the Beijing meeting, the talks continued in Hanoi in October. As a result, an agreement on the basic principles for the settlement of border territory issues between PRC and SRV was formally signed in Hanoi on October 19, 1993 (Border Agreement, Xinhua News). The content of the Agreement mentioned to the principles for settling the land boundary and delimitating the Gulf of Tonkin. It stipulated that the: “Two sides agreed to base on the Convention on border delimitation concluded by French and Chinese Empire on June 26 1887 and the Additional Convention to the Convention on border delimitation on June 20 1895 and other enclosed documents and map of delimitation and demarcation, confirmed or defined by the above mentioned Convention and the Additional Convention, as well as on the clearly demarcated marks to compare and redefine the whole of Vietnam - China land borderline.” (Legislative Documents Relating to the Vietnam - China Land Border Control 2005: 23-24)

So, under the Agreement, the most important principle was that Conventions of 1885 and 1897 were recognised and used as the fundamental base for redefining the whole of Sino - Vietnamese land border.

The second principle underlying the negotiations was an equitable and reasonable approach to the settlement of areas of distinction. For the areas where the Sino - French Conventions have clear definitions the direction of borderline should be defined on the basis of dispositions of the Conventions. Areas traversing the borderline or areas belonging to one side but being under the management of the other side must be handed over to the owner without any conditions. For the areas where the Sino-French Conventions haven't clearly fixed the boundary, the two sides agreed to take into account the following factors to define the borderline: the legal basis of the French - Chinese Conventions; historical management; topography; historical maps; and convenience of management. It was further agreed that, as necessary, experts of both sides should carry out surveys on site and negotiate (in a spirit of sympathy and compromise) with each other in the search for an equal and reasonable solution (Nguyen Hong Thao 2000: 89-90).

The signing of the Agreement on Fundamental Principle was an important achievement in the process of land border dispute resolution between China and Vietnam.

During the visit of Vietnamese President Le Duc Anh to China in November 1993, the recent agreement on principles for resolving the border issue continued to be discussed. The two sides' leaders also asserted the necessity to settle the remaining issues relating to land and sea borders, through negotiation, in order to find a solution which would meet the aspiration and interests of both sides.

On the basis of the previous achievements, the first meeting of the joint working group on the land border took place in Hanoi in February 1994. The result of the four day meeting was that the two sides reached an agreement on procedural issues, content of group's programme and tasks (Amer 2002: 50).

However, the Sino - Vietnamese relations and process of land border issue negotiation faced challenges which were caused by the territorial disputes in South China Sea in mid 1994 (for the detail see next chapter). Despite the problem was discussed during the meeting between Foreign Ministers of China and Vietnam, and the two sides agreed to exercise self restraint and not do anything to make the situation deteriorate, tension over territorial disputes continued. The territorial disputes in South China Sea negatively affected the second round of talks of joint working group on land border which was held in China from 25 June to 1 July 1994. Result of this second round was reported no substantial progress (Amer 2002: 50).

From 14-18 August 1994, the second round of talks at government level on border disputes was held in Hanoi. The two sides achieved some common understandings and full exchange of views on the Spratly issue. They agreed that the two countries' border and territorial issues, including the Spratly issue, should be properly settled rationally through negotiation and normal development of the relations should not be affected by disputes (Xinhua Report Sino-Vietnamese Border Talks, Xinhua News).

The visit to Vietnam by Secretary-General of CPC and Chinese President Jiang Zemin on 19-22 November 1994 provided the two countries with another opportunity to address the border issues at the highest level (Jiang Zemin begins



official visit to Vietnam, Xinhua News). During the summit meeting, the two sides reaffirmed that they will persist in peaceful negotiations to solve boundary and territorial issues existing between the two countries. They also agreed to strive for an early settlement of the issues over the land boundary and over the division of the Gulf of Tonkin. Finally, the two sides agreed that before the issues were settled, the two sides would refrain from taking actions that will complicate or enlarge the disputes and will also refrain from using force or threatening to use force (Joint Communiqué issued on Jiang Zemin visit, Voice of Vietnam).

Following the summit meeting between the highest leadership of China and Vietnam in the late of 1994, series of talks on territorial issues at various levels including land border, delimitation of Gulf of Tonkin and South China Sea took place in 1995. The fourth round talks of Joint working group on land border were held in China from 16-23 January. Reportedly, the session, which took place in the atmosphere of friendship, sincerity, frankness and mutual understanding, got certain positive progress. The two sides agreed to convene the fifth session in Hanoi in May 1995 (Joint Working Group on Border Meets in Beijing, Vietnam News Agency).

On 17-19 May, Vietnam's Foreign Minister, Nguyen Manh Cam, visited Beijing to hold talks with his Chinese counterpart Qian Qichen. Besides overall bilateral relations, the territorial issues were carefully discussed. Both sides agreed on the need to settle the territorial disputes through peaceful negotiations (Chinese and Vietnamese Foreign Ministers discuss Spratlys, Cooperation, Xinhua News). Following the high meeting of the two countries' foreign ministers, the fifth rounds of joint working group on land border issue at the expert-level were held in Hanoi on 22-27 May. According to the report, there was some progress during the talks and the two sides agreed to convene the next session in China in September ("Some Progress" Reported in Border Talks with China, Vietnam News Agency).

After the third round talks on the border issues at government-level held in Beijing from 11-13 July (China-Vietnam Border Talks Held in Beijing, Vietnam News Agency), the six meeting of the joint working group on land border issue took place in China from 9-14 October. During this meeting, the two sides agreed on a number of technical measures leading to the signing of a border agreement (Official Describes "Frank and Friendly" Border Talks with China, Vietnamese Radio).

In the connection with the bilateral relations in general and border issues in particular, Vietnamese Secretary-General Do Muoi arrived China on 26 November. In the joint communiqué issued on 2 December, the two sides agreed to properly resolve the issue of territory along the borders on the basis of international law international practices and through peaceful negotiations (Sino-Vietnamese Joint Communiqué Pledges “Peaceful” Resolution on Border Issue, Xinhua News Agency).

In an interview with Voice of Vietnam following the visit, Vietnam’s Foreign Minister, Nguyen Manh Cam, elaborated on the discussions and stated that on the basis of the progress in the recent talks on land border issue between the specialist delegations of the two countries, both sides had reached agreement on various principles to open the border rail route. He confirmed that expert-level talks would continue on the land border, Gulf of Tonkin and South China Sea. To create a favourable atmosphere for resolving the land border issue in order to achieve the signing of a treaty on this problem as soon as possible, both sides had agreed that all conflicts at the border areas should be resolved quickly and on the spot (Foreign Minister Reviews Secretary-General’s China Visit, Voice of Vietnam).

In the connection with the highest level meetings, the seventh round of talks of the joint working group in the land border held in Hanoi in January 1996. According to the report, this round of talks concluded with positive development (Border Talks with China Conclude with “Positive Development”, Voice of Vietnam). Right after that, on the occasion of opening of the Sino-Vietnamese rail link on 14 February, the Vice-Foreign Ministers of the two countries met in Langson to review the implementation of earlier bilateral agreements and to speed up negotiations on the border issue (Vietnamese, Chinese Ministers Discuss Links, Vietnam News Agency).

On the occasion of the first Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) on 1-2 March 1996 Chinese and Vietnamese Prime Ministers had a meeting in which the territorial issues were also discussed. On the border issue, China’s Prime Minister Li Peng stated that the two countries had reached consensus. Both sides had agreed that they would take the whole situation into account, make compromises and approach the problem in a fair and reasonable manner, so that the issue would be solved gradually and properly. With reference to specific disputes he said that negotiations on the land border had entered the substantial stage and that talks on demarcating the Gulf of Tonkin were

about to be resumed. Vietnamese Prime Minister Vo Van Kiet reportedly agreed and welcomed Li's view (Chinese and Vietnamese Premiers Meet; "Consensus" on Border Issue, Xinhua News Agency).

However, in April 1996, controversy erupted following the signing of a contract between Petro-Vietnam and Conoco Vietnam Exploration and Production B.G., a U.S. company, for the exploration and exploitation of Vietnamese blocks 133 and 134 in the South China Sea (Spokesperson Rejects China's Reaction to Oil Exploration, Voice of Vietnam). And on 15 May when China issued a statement defining the baselines of its territorial sea adjacent to the Chinese mainland and in relation to the Paracel Islands (China Issues Statement Defining Sea Baselines for Paracel Islands, Xinhua News Agency). However, interestingly, the tensions relating to sea problem did not negatively affected the eighth round talks of the joint working group on land border issue held in Beijing on 6-11 May. Reportedly there was positive progress during the talks (Land Boundary Working Group Meets, Vietnam News Agency).

The tensions cooled down when Chinese Premier Li Peng came to Hanoi on the occasion of the 8<sup>th</sup> National Congress of CPV in late June. Following the visit by Li Peng, there was positive developments in bilateral relations generally and process of territorial disputes resolution particularly. At the fourth meeting at government-level held in Hanoi on 17-20 September, the two sides discussed how to speed up negotiations and agreed on guidelines for joint working group on land border. In connection with the meeting at government-level, on 14-18 October, the joint working group on land border issue met in Hanoi for the ninth round. The two sides exchanged views on the issues agreed upon during the government-level talks (Amer 2002: 53).

However, despite the positive development in the relations and process of border disputes resolution, territorial dispute over South China Sea remained a source of tension. On 15 March Vietnam protested against Vietnam sending ships to conduct exploratory oil drilling in Vietnam's continental shelf (for detail see next chapter). However, the problem was solved when Chinese tugboat withdrew from Vietnam's EEZ and continental shelf.

On the occasion of the third Chinese-ASEAN high ranking officials' political consultation held in Anhui Province, China, on 17-18 April, Deputy Foreign Ministers of Vietnam and China had discussion on bilateral relations and more specifically the territorial disputes. According to Vietnam News Agency both sides agreed to promote talks in order to solve the land border issue, to demarcate the Gulf of Tonkin and to continue talks on issues of territorial water (ASEAN-China Conference Agrees on Maintaining Stability on South China Sea, Vietnam New Agency). Following the meeting, the tenth round of expert-level talks on the land border was held in China on 7-12 May. However, result of the meeting was not reported (Amer 2002: 53).

The visit to China by Vietnam's Secretary-General Do Muoi from 14 to 18 July expressed the determination of both countries to settle the remaining border disputes when Do Muoi and his Chinese counterpart Jiang Zemin agreed to conclude the treaty on land border and another on the maritime delineation in the Gulf of Tonkin before the end of 2000 (Nguyen Hong Thao 2000: 88).

In the connection with the summit, the two countries held a meeting between the Foreign Ministers to particularly discuss territorial disputes. Both ministers stressed the readiness of their respective countries to speed up negotiations and consultations on the land border, and Gulf of Tonkin issues in order to resolve them at an early date (China, Vietnam Agree on Need to Speed up Border Talks, Xinhua News Agency).

Following the summit meeting in July, the fifth round of boundary talks at government-level was held in Beijing from 13-15 August. During the negotiations, the two sides discussed concrete measures to speed up the process of negotiations with a view of implementing important consensus which were recently reached by leaders of the two countries to early sign an agreement on land border and delineation of the Gulf of Tonkin before the year 2000 (Fifth Round of Boundary Talks Held in Beijing, Vietnam News Agency).

Tensions along the land border emerged when Vietnam protested China to build a 1kilometre long stone wall in the river, extending some 6-8 metres from bank at the Dongzhong border post. On the opposite side is Hoanh Mo border post (for detail see next chapter). The problem was discussed during the eleventh round of talks

of joint working group on the land border held in Hanoi on 12-22 January 1998. During the meeting the two sides also reviewed the aerial surveys over the border for mapping purposes, exchange views on the draft agreement on the land border and discussed various conflicts in the border region (Eleventh Round of Border Talks Held in China, Voice of Vietnam).

Despite the tensions related to South China Sea issue continued to emerge during the year of 1998, the 12<sup>th</sup> round of talks on land border at expert-level held in Beijing from 26 May to 5 June and the sixth round of border talks at government-level was held in Hanoi from 25-26 September resulted in some positive progress. Both sides agreed to speed up the negotiating process and shorten the intervals between talks with the aim of living up the agreement between high-ranking officials of the two nations and signing an agreement on land border before the year 2000 (Sixth Round of Sino-Vietnamese Border Talks Held, Xinhua News Agency).

From 19-23 October, Vietnam's Prime Minister Phan Van Khai paid an official visit to China. During the visit, Phan Van Khai had meetings with Chinese leaders and discussed border and territorial issues. The two sides agreed to make a greater effort to solve the land border issue this century (Premier Zhu, Vietnamese Counterpart Hold Talks in Beijing, Xinhua News Agency).

Soon after the visit to China by Vietnamese Prime Minister Phan Van Khai, Chinese Vice-President Hu Jintao paid a visit to Vietnam from 17-19 December. During the visit Hu had talks with Vietnamese leaders. Both sides affirmed the determination to implement high-level agreements between the two countries, especially the agreements to speed up negotiations on the border issues in order to sign a land border treaty before the year 2000 and to reach an agreement on the delimitation of the Gulf of Tonkin not later than the year 2000 (Amer 2002: 26).

Under the pressure of time-limit, the 13<sup>th</sup> round of talks on land border issue at expert-level was held in Hanoi from 7-21 January 1999. During the meeting, the two sides "discussed their different views and some initial results were reached in finding a solution to the disputed border areas. They also exchanged views on the making of a border map between the two countries." (Joint Border Committee with China Holds Talks, Voice of Vietnam).

From 25 February to 2 March 1999, Vietnam's Secretary-General Le Kha Phieu visited China. During the visit, Le Kha Phieu had talks with his Chinese counterpart Jiang Zemin. They agreed to sign a land boundary treaty this year.

Although the positive progress in border issue resolution, the tensions relating to South China Sea still remained (see next chapter). However, the tensions did not negatively affect on the 14<sup>th</sup> round of talks of the joint working group on land border held in Beijing from 29 March to 5 May. During the meeting, some initial results obtained in the search for solutions to the demarcation of the border areas relating to which the two sides held different opinions. They also compared notes on drawing a border map between the two countries (Amer 2002: 55).

During the visit by Vietnam's Deputy Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung to China in mid May, the border issues were also discussed between Nguyen Tan Dung and Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji. They discussed the measures to speed up the negotiation process on the land border issue so that a mutual agreement could be concluded in 1999 (Amer 2002: 28).

In the connection with Nguyen Tan Dung visit, the 15<sup>th</sup> round talks of joint-working group on land border issue was held in Hanoi from 22 June to 22 July. During the talks, the two sides reached some results in finding a solution to those border areas where the two sides hold different views. The two sides exchanged views on the making of a border map and their solutions to 76 remaining areas.

Only one month after the 15<sup>th</sup> round had finished, the 16<sup>th</sup> round of land border talks at expert-level was held. There was no report on this round and its outcome, but on 30 November, a spokesman of Chinese Foreign Ministry stated that the two sides had agreed to uphold the principles of respecting the overall situation, mutual accommodation, mutual understanding, and fair, reasonable, and friendly consultations in order to speed up negotiation (Spokesman Reports Progress on Sino-Vietnamese Border Issue, Xinhua News Agency).

On 4 December, the two governments announced that all outstanding problems concerning the land border had been resolved and the negotiations had been successfully concluded. In accordance with the agreement of the high-level talks in February 1999 the two countries would concentrate their efforts on urgently addressing

technical issues in order to quickly complete the drafting of an agreement on the land border. Furthermore, the two parties would try their best to sign an agreement before the end of the year (Amer 2002: 29).

Finally, on 30 December 1999, the Land Border Treaty was signed in Hanoi by China's Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan and Vietnam's Foreign Minister Nguyen Manh Cam. Thereafter, the Land Border Treaty was ratified by Chinese National People's Congress on 29 April and Vietnamese National Assembly on 9 June 2000.



**Map 3.6: Map of Land Border Delimitation by China and Vietnam in 1999**

Source:<http://biengioilanhtho.gov.vn/bbg-vie/ZoomImage.aspx?belongSite=vie&AdvImageShortId=7fafc811&AdvImageItemShortId=05ac64de&CurrentIndex=0>, Accessed 21 March 2010.

Thus, after sixteen rounds of talks at expert-level, seven rounds at government-level and series of high-level meetings, the land border problem between China and Vietnam was basically resolved, except some disputed areas as Bac Luan Estuary, the Friendship Border Gate, and Ban Gioc Waterfall....All of these areas would be settled during the process of border demarcation on site.

### **3.3. The implementation of the 1999 Land Border Treaty**

Soon after signing of the Land Border Treaty in December 1999, China and Vietnam quickly carried out the work to bring the border line from map to ground. The two countries agreed to establish a Joint Committee for Demarcation of Land Border in November 2001. The committee which comprised 12 joint working teams was in charge of border demarcation and marker planting as well as drafting a protocol on border demarcation and marker planting (Xinhua 24 Feb 2009, China, Vietnam Settle Land Border Issue). Planting on site officially started on 27 December 2001 when the two first national border markers-No. 1369/1 and No. 1369/2- were fixed at the Dongxing-Mongcai International Border Gate (Do Thi Thuy 2009: 7).

From October 2002, the two sides at the same time started border demarcation and marker placement along the whole frontier line from West to East. However, due to the initial difficulties, the rate of progress was slow; only 89 markers were erected in 2003 and 2004.

From 2004 to 2006, to speed up the process of boundary demarcation and marker planting, the two sides agreed to apply principle of “take the easy things first, leave the difficult ones later”. With the method, the pace of boundary demarcation and marker placement rapidly increased. In late 2006, 70 percent of the whole border line was completed. However, in 2007, this work was slowed down because the remaining areas were sensitive and historically disputed ones. There were months when no markers were planted. In that context, Viet Nam and China took measures to accelerate the work with the most important focus on a package solution. This means dividing areas into different packages of similar characteristics such as “border gate package”, “package of old markers agreed from the French-Qing time”, “package of Bac Luan River’s mouth and Ban Gioc waterfall”. These packages are interrelated. The package solution was undertaken in the spirit of equality, mutual respect, interests and legal basis to obtain results acceptable to both sides and to minimize the impacts on the livelihood of the people in the border areas (Vietnamese Foreign Ministry, Deputy Minister Vu dung: A Historic Event in Vietnam - China Relations). With the flexibility in resolving the disputed areas, on 31 December 2008 the two countries settled all the remaining land border disputes and completed the demarcation of the whole land border. The final boundary marker was implanted



Thus, after the eight-year effort, Chinese and Vietnamese held 14 rounds of meetings between the heads of the two governmental-level delegations, 34 rounds joint committee's meetings and 15 rounds of expert group meetings. At final stages, negotiations became tougher. Only in 2008, the two sides conducted 11 negotiation rounds between co-chairs of the Committee, the shortest round lasted for 9 days and the longest for 23 days. The longest negotiation session lasted for more than consecutive 30 hours. As a result, the two sides have completed the demarcation of the whole 1,400 km-border line (including the 344-kilometres border line along 21 main rivers and streams) and planted nearly 1971 markers, including over 1,549 main markers and over 422 supplementary ones. The marker system has been recognized and described as suitable to the real topography in an objective, scientific and detailed manner. In comparison with the border lines of other countries, the Viet Nam - China land border line has the densest and most clearly-defined markers using modern methods to ensure the accuracy and long-lasting durability.

#### **3.4. Settlement of Some Disputed Areas**

After comparing the maps, the two sides reached consensus on 900 kilometres of the 1,350 kilometres common border. The remaining 450 kilometres in disagreement which accounts for 33 percentage of the total borderline contained 289 areas with 231 square kilometres. These disputed areas were divided into three types: Type A, B and C.

The type A including 74 areas and 51 areas classified as the type B ranged from different viewpoints, interpretation of maps and past treaties. The areas classified as type A and B was just 5 square kilometres. The type C including 164 areas was 227 square kilometres ranged from conflicting historical maps, current management and control, current or recent occupancy, terrain definition, and international law. Not until late 1999, these disputed areas were successfully solved these disputed areas. According the negotiations the 227 square miles were divided and China received 114 square kilometres and 113 square kilometres went to Vietnam (Le Hong Thao 2009).

Some areas like Friendship Gate, Ban Gioc Waterfalls and Estuary of Bac Luan River were more complicated and sensitive, so they were settled during the work of demarcation and boundary marker placement.

### **Friendship Gate**

Friendship Gate (Youjiguan in Chinese and Huu Nghi Quan in Vietnamese) is a border gate located at Dongdang Town, Langson Province in Vietnam and Pingxing Town, Guangxi Province in China. In this area, before 2008, this was one of two most complicatedly and sensitively disputed areas. In reality, disputes over this area related to three points. The first was the Friendship Gate. The second was related to few old border markers planted by the Chinese and French in 19 century. The third was the junction point of the railway from Pingxing in China to Dongdang which was built in 1950s.

The disputes over the Friendship Gate stemmed from the reason that numbers of Vietnamese people had believed that this gate located on the border line between China and Vietnam. This was a wrong perception because some historical records prove that this gate was built by the Chinese. “Dai Nam Nhat thong chi” (Geographical Atlas of Dai Nam from the Nguyen Dynasty) said that Nam Quan Gate had been built since the Ming Dynasty. After that, it was repaired by the Qing Dynasty in 1726. During 1887-1895 when the Sino-Vietnamese border was demarcated by the Chinese and the French, the two sides planted No.19 which was about 150 metres far from the Gate southward. Thus it lies on the Chinese side and the borderline is at the South of the Nam Quan Gate. The Vietnamese government agreed with the view (Vietnamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Deputy Minister Vu dung: A Historic Event in Vietnam-China Relations).

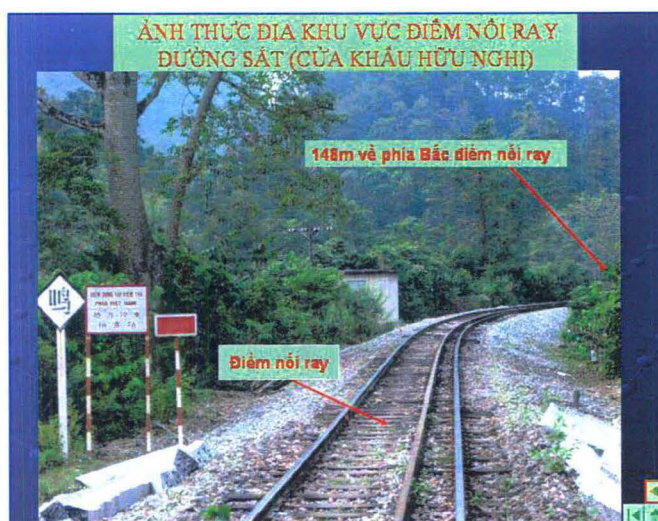


**Friendship Border Gate at Chinese side**

Source: <http://chinadan.com/10longzhou/40lz02h.html>

Another dispute stemmed from the different perceptions on the position of the junction point of the railway. The Vietnamese accused the Chinese of moving the junction point of the railway 300 metres inside Vietnam's territory in 1954 when Chinese government sent workers to help Vietnam build a railroad from Hanoi to Friendship Gate. On 31 December 1974, the Vietnamese government proposed the Chinese side to readjust the junction point. However, the Chinese replied that the issue would be discussed when the two sides talks on the whole border line (Vietnamese Foreign Ministry 1979: 10).

The Vietnamese also accused the Chinese of destroying a number of border markers during the Border War in 1979 of which the border marker No 18 near the Friendship Gate was the most evident. The book "Border Issue between Vietnam and China" wrote that "after destroying the border marker No. 18 which located 100 metres from the Friendship Gate to erase the vestige of historical border line, the Chinese moved the milestone No. 0 inside Vietnam's territory over 100 metres and regarded its position as the two countries' border." (Vietnamese Foreign Ministry 1979: 10)



**Picture of the result of settlement of Sino-Vietnamese railway junction point**

Source: [http://www.tapchicongsan.org.vn/details.asp?Object=6&news\\_ID=27270351](http://www.tapchicongsan.org.vn/details.asp?Object=6&news_ID=27270351), Accessed 15 April 2010.

The dispute over this area broke out when the historical vestiges had been destroyed and the Chinese argued that the railway junction point was on the exact place where it should be, or in other word it laid on the border line between the two countries. The problem here is how to locate exact place where the common border should be. This was a complicate and sensitive issue which was just settled after the signing of the Land Border Treaty. After surveying the ground and comparing with the Sino-France Convention of 1887 and 1895, the two sides reached agreement on the settlement of problem in this area. Following that Vietnam and China planted the marker No.1117 at the same position of formerly marker No.19. The borderline passes the point of km zero, formerly marker No.19, 148 meters from the current railway linkages. Therefore, it could be stated that the borderline demarcated at Friendship border gate is fully compatible with the history and management practices in this area (Vietnamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Deputy Minister Vu dung: A Historic Event in Vietnam - China Relations).

## **Ban Gioc Waterfalls**

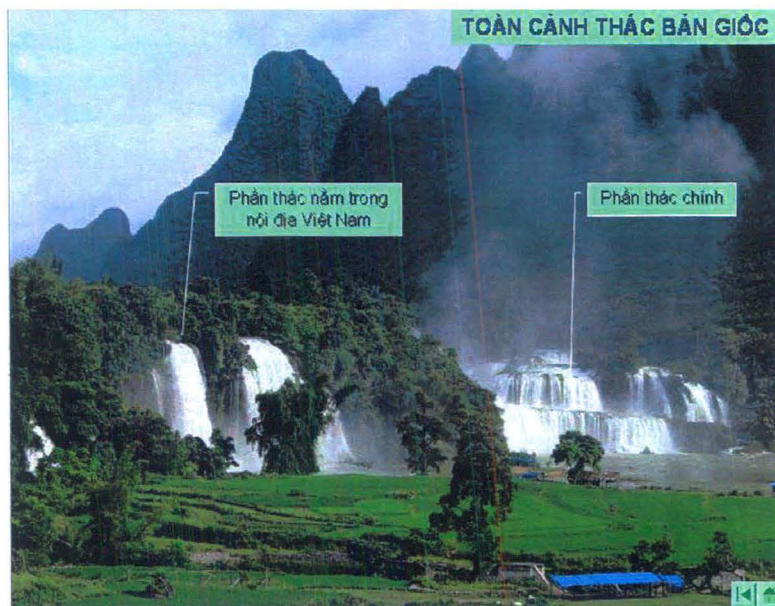
Ban Gioc Waterfalls on the Quay Son River located in Damthuy Commune, Trungkhanh District, Caobang Province, Vietnam. The Quay Son River rises from China flowing into Vietnam in Po Peo (Ngockhe Commune) and to communes including Dinhphong and Chivien. When it reaches Damthuy Commune of Trungkhanh District, the mild river circles around Co Muong mountain bottom and flows to rice fields of Damthuy towards the large maize alluvial plain of Ban Gioc village. Here, the flow divides into many branches and lowers its flow to create Ban Gioc Waterfalls. Ban Gioc Waterfalls: Ban Gioc Waterfalls comprise of two parts, namely the main waterfalls and the small waterfalls.



**Picture of Ban Gioc Waterfalls**

Similar to the case of Friendship Gate, many Vietnamese people had believed that the whole Ban Gioc Waterfalls belonged to Vietnam. To explain the reason, it might be that Vietnamese people could not access to the legal documents which defined the Sino-Vietnamese border on the Ban Gioc Waterfalls signed by the French

government and the Qing dynasty in 19 century. In reality, the Sino - French Conventions of 1887 and 1895 defined the Sino-Vietnamese border lying on the Quay Son River Ban Gioc Waterfalls shared by the two countries. During the rounds of negotiations the two sides basically agreed with the Sino - French Conventions, the only dispute in the area was the Po Thoong dune with area of about 2.6 hectares on the Ban Gioc Waterfalls. The dispute was not resolved until very late days of 2008. The two sides agreed that the borderline starts at the formerly marker No. 53, passing Po Thoong dune to the midpoint of the main waterfalls and then the main flow of Quay Son river. Vietnam and China also agreed to work together in exploring the potential of economic and tourism cooperation in the Ban Gioc Waterfalls (Vietnamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Deputy Minister Vu dung: A Historic Event in Vietnam- China Relations). Thus, the small waterfalls wholly lie on the Vietnamese side while the main waterfalls run down to the Quay Son River, the shared border river.



**Picture of Ban Gioc Waterfalls**

Source: [http://www.tapchiconsan.org.vn/details.asp?Object=6&news\\_ID=27270351](http://www.tapchiconsan.org.vn/details.asp?Object=6&news_ID=27270351), Accessed 19 April 2010.

### **Bac Luan's Estuary**

The Estuary of Bac Luan River starts from Tuc Lam dune to the starting point of demarcation line of Tonkin Gulf, about 14 kilometres in length. This area had been

demarcated by the Chinese and French in 19<sup>th</sup> century; however at that time such dunes as Tuc Lam, Tai Xec, and Dau Got were not manifested on the map. When the 1999 Land Border Treaty was signed, the two sides did not reach agreement for this area. Not until the last day of 2008, the two sides agreed to apply political solution for this area. Following that, the border line passes all the dunes and divides them into two parts, one for China and one for Vietnam. Under the principle,  $\frac{3}{4}$  of Tuc Lam belongs to Vietnam and  $\frac{1}{4}$  to China;  $\frac{1}{3}$  of Dau Got to Vietnam,  $\frac{2}{3}$  to China. After passing the dune, the border line connects to the starting point of demarcation line of Tonkin Gulf. Besides that, the two sides agreed that neither side builds man-made project in this area and at the same time establish a free zone for border inhabitants (Nguyen Hong Thao 2009).



**Map 3.7: The Delimitation map of Estuary of Bac Luan River**

Source: [http://www.tapchicongsan.org.vn/details.asp?Object=6&news\\_ID=27270351](http://www.tapchicongsan.org.vn/details.asp?Object=6&news_ID=27270351), Accessed 22 April 2010.

Thus, the result of the above sensitive and complicated areas resolution is fair, concessive, complying the principles agreed by the two sides and the 1999 Land Border Treaty. The final result also meets the two sides' concern, assuring the long stable management and avoiding dispute in future.

## **Conclusion**

Thus, with the southern expansion of the Chinese empires, the land border between China and Vietnam has gradually been formed. For over one thousand years, the border did not exist due to the Vietnam's annexation into China. Not until 10<sup>th</sup> century when Vietnam gained independence from China, the border between the two countries has re-emerged. Despite a number of wars between the two countries, the border remained stable until it was for the first time demarcated by the Qing Dynasty and the French who controlled Vietnam in late 19<sup>th</sup> century. After the communists in Vietnam and China came to power in 1945 and 1949 respectively, and the two countries established diplomatic relations in 1950, the demand for re-defining the land border appeared due to the fact that, the unclear delimitation of the 1887 and 1895 Sino - French Conventions; the changes of the borderline caused by both natural effects and human being's activities along the border; the outcomes of the border war in 1979.

In 1970s the two countries held two rounds of land border negotiations, they, however, did not bring them close to an agreement due to the deterioration of their relations. The land border negotiations were resumed in late 1991 when the two countries normalise their relations. After nearly ten years of negotiation with dozens of meeting at various levels, China and Vietnam signed the Land Border Treaty in December 1999. Soon after the signing of the Land Border Treaty, the two countries implemented border demarcation and boundary marker placement. Following that, the first boundary marker was erected in at the Dongxing - Mongcai International Border Gate in December 2001. With great efforts made by both sides, 1971 markers, including over 1,549 main markers and over 422 supplementary ones were fixed.

In November 2009, the two countries signed a Protocol on demarcation, a Treaty of land border management regulation and other relevant documents with a view to translating the Vietnam - China Land Border Treaty into reality. Together with the completion of demarcation, the two sides undertook to work with each other closely to maintain peace and stability for mutual development in border areas.

The completion of the land border demarcation and marker placement between Vietnam and China is a historic event in China - Vietnam relations. Accordingly, for the first time, the two sides have clearly defined the land border with a system of



modern markers, creating new opportunities for national development in each country, especially the development of economic cooperation and friendly exchanges between border localities, and laying firm foundation for the building of Vietnam – China border into a border of peace, friendship and long-term stability.

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## **CHAPTER IV**

### **Factors Leading to the Success of Land Border Dispute Resolution**

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The territorial disputes between China and Vietnam existed for centuries. In the past, the two countries' feudal dynasties had several times of negotiating the problem. Although, land border issue between the two countries for the first time was quite completely settled by the French government and the Qing Dynasty in late 19 century, after gaining power, both communist governments of China and Vietnam agreed to redefine the borderline on the basis of the border which was demarcated by the Chinese and French due to both subjective and objective reasons. To resolve the border issue, China and Vietnam spent almost fifty years since it was first time mentioned in 1954, nine years to reach the Land Border Treaty, more than eight years to complete the work of demarcation and boundary marker placement. Thus, settling the land border issue was not a simple task for both the countries. Besides the efforts made by the both sides, a number of factors resulted in the success of the task. The purpose of this chapter is to study and evaluate the factors which actively influenced the process of border issue resolution between the two countries.

#### **1. Nationalism and China's Border Policy**

To successfully resolve the border issue, first and foremost, China must have actual demand. The demand stems from national interests. Based on the national interests, a proper policy of border resolution will be decided. In each moment of time, the policies may differentiate from each other due to related components, but their ultimate goal is to maximise the national interest. The goal of nationalism is also to maximise the national interests, so it is regarded as one of factors which strongly influence on foreign policy in China. Policy of border issue resolution is an important part of China's foreign policy. Thus, in this section, nationalism is observed and evaluated as a factor which actively influenced on China's policy of border issue resolution in general and China's land border issue resolution with Vietnam in particular.

## 1.1. Concepts

Nationalism is a modern concept which appeared with the emergence of the nation-state system in Europe and spread to the rest of the world after non-European countries were brought into the system (Zhao Suisheng 2000: 3). The idea of a nation-state is associated with the rise of the modern system of states, often called the "Westphalia system" in reference to the Treaty of Westphalia (1648) which ended the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648) in the Holy Roman Empire, and the Eighty Years' War (1568–1648) between Spain and the Republic of the Seven United Netherlands. The treaties initiated a new political order in central Europe, based upon the concept of a sovereign state governed by a sovereign. Therefore, nation-state is "a territorial-political unit (the state) whose borders coincide or nearly coincide with the territorial distribution of a national group." (Connor 1994: 39)

According to Anthony Smith, 'Nationalism' is understood as "an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity and identity on behalf of a population deemed by some of its members to constitute an actual or potential 'nation'." (Smith, Anthony 1991: 73)

The concept of nationalism has just appeared and developed in China since 19<sup>th</sup> century. Before that, China was not a nation-state, as the Chinese people were not imbued with an enduring sense of nationalism based on the loyalties to the nation-state or ethnicity (Zhao Suisheng 2000: 3).

According to Zhu Tianbao, "the origin and development of Chinese nationalism is also largely associated with the formation and development of the modern Chinese state." He argues that "the key factors that gave rise to Chinese nationalism were the repeated aggression against China by the Western powers, and their control over different parts of China since the Opium War of the 1840s. Given this history, generations of the Chinese elite came to the belief that only by building a strong China, could they fight against foreign aggression and become independent of foreign control" (Zhu Tianbiao 2001: 3). Zhu's opinion concurs with John Fitzgerald's argument that "the Chinese nation has been created and recreated in the struggle for state power, and it has ultimately been defined by the state as a reward of victory" (Fitzgerald 1995: 76).

According to Guo Yingjie in China there are two main types of nationalism which include cultural nationalism and political nationalism. He argues that “whereas the former represents identification with the nation, particularly with ‘national spirit’ or ‘national essence’, the latter is galvanized by a drive for a strong, sovereign state, national salvation and modernity, capitalist or socialist, at the sacrifice of cultural traditions” (Guo Yingjie 2004: 17).

Similarly, James Townsend also argued that there are other types of nationalism co-existing with state nationalism in China, such as ethnic nationalism in which a certain existing ethnic group strives to become an independent state (Townsend 1992). He conceptualises state nationalism that it is state-centred, as it places the state at the centre of its concerns and ‘portrays the state as the embodiment of the nation’s will, seeking for its goals the kind of loyalty and support granted the nation itself and trying to create a sense of nationhood among all its citizens (Townsend 1992: 116). For Chinese state nationalists, “the nation is first and foremost a political-territorial unit, and Party rule and a strong state are of paramount importance in maintaining national autonomy, unity and identity. These nationalists also promote traditional culture in state-nation building, but culture is a means to a political end rather than an end in itself” (Guo Yingjie 2004: 17).

Guo Yingjie believes that in China, the dominant type of political nationalism was state nationalism (Guo Yingjie 2004: 17). The state nationalism began to emerge in China since 1949 when the communists came into power. Instead of promoting Han nationalism, the Chinese government has been constructing the “Chinese nation” (zhonghua minzu), which includes all ethnic groups in China. In fact, patriotism (aiguo zhuyi), rather than nationalism (minzu zhuyi), has been the officially preferred word to define people’s national sentiments. This again links nationalism to nation-state making and building (Zhu Tianbiao 2001: 4).

Gungwu Wang argued that Chinese nationalism has many faces, and “the most common face concerns questions of polity and stresses the recovery of sovereignty, the unification of divided territory, and national self-respect.” Zhu Tianbiao called “the most common face” of Chinese nationalism as “ultimate goal of Chinese nationalism” - that is, to seek and preserve national independence (Zhu Tianbiao 2001: 4). To reach this goal, the state has to protect its territorial integrity, promote its good image in the

international community, and engage in economic development in order to build a strong national power. These are key state interests, and are the means to reach the goal of nationalism (Zhu Tianbiao 2001: 4). Therefore, the policy of border issue resolution serves as one of the means to reach the goal of nationalism.

## **1.2. China's Border Issue Resolution**

China has disputes with all of its 14 neighbouring countries of which led to wars with India in 1962, the Soviet Union in 1969 and Vietnam in 1979. However since 1949, China has resolved seventeen of its twenty-three territorial disputes (Fravel 2005: 46) with 12 of its neighbours, leaving only Bhutan - which has no diplomatic relations with China - and India.

Since 1950s, China has carried out the policy of border issue resolution with its neighbours. Not until 1960s it gained some achievements in resolving border issue with some countries. In 1960 China resolved territorial dispute over nearly 2000 square kilometres area with Burma after five years of negotiations. Interestingly, China just received 18 percent of total disputed land.

In 1961, China signed Boundary Treaty with Nepal after settling 956 square kilometres of disputed area of which China received only 6 percent. The tri-junction remains a contentious issue between India, China and Nepal.

The border issue with North Korea was solved in 1962 when the two countries signed the Border Treaty. China received 40 percent of 1,165 square kilometres disputes area.

In 1962 the border issue between China and Mongolia was quickly settled after some month of negotiations. China received 29 percent of 16,808 square kilometres of disputed land.

With Pakistan, the dispute was resolved in 1963 when the Boundary Treaty was signed. The Sakshgam valley was transferred to China and recent reports indicate that the Chinese actual line of control has been extended to about 60,000sq km in the western sector (including the 5,180 km of Sakshgam valley, 38,000 of Aksai Chin and further Chinese incursions) (Kondapalli 2006: 2).

In 1963 China signed the Boundary Treaty with Afghanistan. Before that, the two countries had disputed over 7,381 square kilometres area along the common border. However, the problem was solved but China did not receive any of the disputed Wakhan corridor.

China and Bhutan have 1,128 square kilometres in dispute. The two countries have held talks on border issue since 1984. In 1998, the two sides reached maintenance of tranquillity agreement (MTA). China reportedly offered to hold 24 percent of the disputed land, however the dispute has not solved, and dispute is still active.

In 1991, China and Laos signed Boundary Treaty after two year of negotiations. 18 square kilometres of disputed area was evenly divided for the two countries.

China and India have disputed around 125,000 square kilometres. The two countries have talked on border issue since 1960. The two sides reached MTA, Confidence Building Measures and Principle agreement in 1993, 1996 and 2005 respectively. However the dispute is still active.

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, China had border disputes with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Russia. With Kazakhstan, China has 2,420 square kilometres land in dispute. The two countries began to negotiate the border dispute in 1992 and reached Boundary Treaty in 1994. China received 22 percent of disputed land.

China and Kyrgyzstan disputed over 3,656 square kilometres of land. The two countries started the process of border issue resolution in 1992. As a result, a border agreement was signed in 1996, under which China received 32 percent of disputed area.

The border dispute between China and Tajikistan was solved in 1999 when the two countries signed border agreement after 8 years of negotiations. The two countries had 28,430 square kilometres land in dispute. After negotiations, China received 4 percent of disputed Pamirs and other sectors were divided evenly.

With Russia, China had three areas in dispute. In Russia Eastern border, the two countries disputed over around 1,000 square kilometres area. The problem was

settled in 1991 when border agreement was signed. Under the agreement China received 52 percent of the river islands; other areas were divided evenly. In Russia western border, the two sides signed an agreement affirmed the line of actual control in 1994. For some strategic islands along the common border, in 2004 China and Russia signed supplemental agreement under which China controlled Abgaitu Island and Hexiazi Island was divided evenly.

Hong Kong and Macao and Taiwan are three “homeland” disputes. While Hong Kong and Macao intactly returned to China in 1997 and 1999 respectively, Taiwan still remains a disputed area. Besides, homeland and frontier disputes, China also have disputes over offshore islands. Paracel archipelago is the disputed area between China and Vietnam; Senkaku island between China and Japan; and Spratly Islands between six parties, China, Vietnam, Taiwan, Philippines, Brunei, and Malaysia. Currently disputes over these islands are active.

Taking a close look at the China territorial issue resolution indicates that firstly China has based its resolution of border disputes on the concept of nation-states with territorial limits rather than of civilization states (Kondapalli 2006: 1); secondly China has accepted the general boundaries that the “unequal treaties” signed between the Qing dynasty and foreign powers created except in the cases of Hong Kong and Macao; thirdly China “has not used its power advantages to bargain hard over contested land, especially with its weaker neighbour”, but it “has offered substantial compromises in most of these settlements, usually receiving less than 50 percent of the disputed land” (Fravel 2005: 46-47).

There are some ways to explain the China’s border resolution policy, but it should not be forgotten that all policies, especially foreign policy which have been put forward are to maximise the national interests. As above mentioned, these national interests are the means to reach the goal of nationalism. The most important national interest of China since late 1970s is economic development. To serve the objective, a peaceful, stable and favourable environment around China needs to be created. With the policy, China has resolved almost all of the territorial problems with its neighbours, assuring its sovereignty and creating “a favourable security environment” to “facilitate the rise of China” (Kondapalli 2006: 1). Besides that, the border dispute resolution through peaceful negotiation based on justice and reasonableness and

offering compromises in most of these settlements have promoted China's good image in the international community.

The land border dispute settlement between China and Vietnam was not an exception. The Sino-Vietnamese land border dispute was also resolved on the principle of peaceful negotiation, reasonableness, and justice. The two countries accepted the treaties which were signed by the Qing dynasty and the French government on behalf of the Vietnam in 19 centuries as a base to settle the land border dispute between the two sides. During the process of border issue resolution, both side offered compromises to each other. As a result, the land border issue between the two countries was successfully resolved in late 2008 when the last boundary marker was erected.

Thus, China's policy of border dispute resolution is suitable for the goal of nationalism, or in other words Chinese nationalism has, to some extent, influenced China's border dispute settlement. This is regarded as favourable factor which led to the success of China's border dispute resolution with its neighbours generally and with Vietnam particularly.

## **2. Factors Influencing the Changes in China's Policy toward Vietnam and Land Border Disputes between the Two Countries**

After the 1979 border war, the border region between two countries turned into a dead area. The land border dispute became the hottest point in the China - Vietnam relations. After the failure of the talks on restoration of the two countries' relations and border issue in 1979-1980, the China - Vietnam relations was tense and hostile for more than ten years and so the border issue between the two countries was not settled, but fell into a worse situation. Resolving the border disputes after the 1979 border war was not simple to settle the differences in territorial perception, but it had to be started from solving the contentions in the two countries' relations. The process of normalisation began with changes in China's policy toward Vietnam and the border issue between the two countries. The changes in China's Vietnam policy stemmed from both internal and external factors.



## **2.1. External Factor**

### **2.1.1. The Soviet Union**

As mentioned in the previous chapter, in parallel with the collapse of Sino-Soviet relations in 1960s and 1970s, the development of Soviet - Vietnamese relations were the reasons which caused misunderstandings and then breakdown of China - Vietnam relations in late 1970s. Because in China's perception, the Soviet Union and the Vietnamese were forming an alliance in order to contain China. Stepping into decade of 1980s, the world political context had profound changes. The big powers strongly re-adjusted their strategies, promoting detente and improving relations with each other. The triangular relations between China, the Soviet Union and the United States had great changes compared to the late 1970s. After the improvement in 1970s, the Sino-U.S relations quickly ran into obstacles due to the Taiwan Relations Act, signed into law by the Carter administration in March 1979 (Yu Bin 2005). Following that, along with the Soviet's efforts to normalise relations with China, the improvement of Soviet-U.S relations influenced China's perception of new world context which led to adjustments in China's foreign policy. China subsequently adopted an "independent" foreign policy in 1982, with the goal of a more balanced posture between the two superpowers (Yu Bin 2005). The improvement of Sino - Soviet relations during the second half of 1980s profoundly affected China's position on Soviet-Vietnam alliance in general and Vietnam in particular.

The relations between China and the Soviet Union had frozen until March 1982, when the Soviet Secretary Leonid Brezhnev gave a speech conciliatory toward PRC in Tashkent. With this move, the Moscow hoped to warm the frozen relations between the two countries. China actively responded to the Soviet's move with the "private" visit to Moscow of Yu Hongliang, director of the Soviet and East European Affairs Department in the PRC Foreign Affairs Ministry (Segal 1985: 9-11). Following that, in autumn 1982, Sino-Soviet relations resumed at the vice-ministerial level. During the time of 1982-1985 there were high-level Chinese delegations attended the funerals of Soviet leaders Leonid Brezhnev, Yuriy Andropov, and Konstantin Chernenko, creating favourable condition for improving the bilateral relations. As a result, Sino-Soviet relations improved gradually in many areas: trade expanded, economic and technical exchanges were resumed (including the renovation

of projects originally built with Soviet assistance in the 1950s), border points were opened, and delegations were exchanged regularly (Horn 1987: 731-739).

The process of normalisation of the relations between China and the Soviet Union really got momentum when Mikhail Gorbachev became the Soviet Secretary-General in 1985. During Gorbachev's first year in office, Sino-Soviet political contacts and economic cooperation notably expanded (Mills 1987: 3). With the Soviet Union's efforts, the relations between the two countries gradually improved. As a result, in May 1989, the Sino-Soviet relations officially normalised during the visit to China by Gorbachev.

Thus, it took eight years to restore the Sino-Soviet relations since Moscow, for the first time, had showed its good will to improve relations with China in 1982. It was not a simple task because there remained unsolved problems between the two countries such as the Soviet's troops in Afghanistan; large amount of Soviet's troops along the Sino-Soviet border; and especially, the Soviet's support to Vietnam. The Soviet's anxiety for normalisation of relations placed China on an advantageous position. With the cards in its hands, China set out pre-conditions for normalisation of relations which it referred to as "three obstacles" that Moscow had to remove: the Soviet presence in Afghanistan, Soviet's support for Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia, and the presence of the Soviet forces along the Sino - Soviet border and in Mongolia.

Thus, one of three conditions imposed by Beijing directly attacked the Vietnamese - Soviet relations. It pushed both the Soviet Union and Vietnam into a dilemma. For Vietnam, the Soviet Union was the most important source of economic, political and military support. Soviet support enabled Vietnam to continue its China and Cambodia policies despite ongoing Chinese military and diplomatic support for the Khmer Rouge and its coalition partner as well as periodic Chinese attacks on Vietnam's northern border and to escape from the isolation imposed by China, ASEAN, and the United States, and their allies and friends. Therefore, Vietnam had a good reason to worry about the Soviet's efforts to normalise relations with China. Hanoi although expressed its support for "the Soviet Union's policy of normalising relations with China", but its grudging support "was likely the quid pro quo for Moscow's explicit assurance that it would not develop relations with China "at the

expense of any other countries' interests and not at Socialist Vietnam's expense" (Horn 1987: 745).

For Moscow, to fulfil the three China's conditions means it has to sacrifice its strategic relations with Vietnam which had a certain importance for Moscow in implementing its Southeast Asia policy, especially in military aspect where Vietnam was providing military facilities such as the Soviet naval facilities in Cam Ranh Bay. Cam Ranh Bay is located in a strategic position which is proximate to several economic and political-military centres of consequences-China, the US naval facility in the Philippines, the ASEAN states, the Indian Ocean and the heavily used straits connecting that ocean to the Pacific-make it a valuable asset to Moscow, not least in terms of confirming a Soviet presence in the region (Horn 1987: 756). However, the determination of restoring relations with China influenced adjustment in Vietnam's Cambodia policy and China's Vietnam policy as well.

For China, Moscow's efforts to normalise relations with this country reduced China's concern on the so called Soviet - Vietnamese alliance which had been accused of being formed to contain China in Asia. Thus, one of the reasons which had caused the breakdown of China - Vietnam relations was solved. The changed shape of the Sino-Soviet-Vietnamese triangle advantaged China in solving the remaining problems, especially Cambodia issue with Vietnam. With the cards in its hands, Beijing could put pressure on Moscow to force Hanoi to withdraw troops from Cambodia. In reality, Beijing had number of times to do this. For instance, in March 1983, an important PRC Foreign Ministry statement on Cambodia called on the Soviet Union to cease supporting Vietnam's actions in Cambodia (McGregor 1990: 271).

Moscow although did not put much pressure on Hanoi in settling Cambodia issue with China, it called on Hanoi to directly talk with Beijing. In his memoirs, Deputy Foreign Minister, Tran Quang Co writes: 'since 1984, the Soviet Union began to hasten Vietnam and Cambodia to adopt a political solution; suggests Vietnam to contact with Prince Suhanouk and discuss with the US and China on Cambodia issue (Tran Quang Co 2005). Moreover, on 28 July 1986 Gorbachev gave a landmark address on Soviet Asian policy at Vladivostok, a speech replete with warmly phrased concessions and initiatives toward Asia and in particular toward China (Mills 1987: 3). The Gorbachev's speech expressed Moscow's effort to normalise relations with

Beijing as two out of three obstacles set by the Chinese were addressed. That was the unilateral Soviet troop withdrawals from Afghanistan and Mongolia and concession on the border-demarkation matter. In March 1988, a small armed conflict broke out between Chinese and Vietnamese naval in Spratly archipelago. Moscow did not express any move to protect Vietnam's interests despite its troops were stationing in Cam Ranh. It raised a question about the validity of the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with the Soviet Union in 1978. The Moscow's move more or less, influenced on Hanoi's position toward Cambodia issue and relationship with China. Although in Hanoi's foreign policy, Moscow remained the most important sheet-anchor, it was time to think of a way out. Settling Cambodia issue and improving relations with China were the urgent tasks in Hanoi's foreign policy which were decided by Politburo with Resolution No. 32 on 9 July 1986 (Tran Quang Co 2005). On 26 August 1988, Vietnamese National Congress mended the preamble which had depicted China as the most direct and dangerous enemy. Moreover, Vietnam's position on settlement of Cambodia issue began to soften (for the Cambodia issue, see next section). All these moves strongly affected China's Vietnam policy. As a result, the first official meeting at vice-ministerial level between the two countries was held in January 1989 after eight years. Following that, the China and Vietnam relations gradually improved and officially normalised in November 1991.

Thus, the Soviet's adjustment in its foreign policy in general and its China policy in particular changed the balance of power in triangular relationship between China, the Soviet Union and Vietnam. The changes strongly affected the position and policy of China and Vietnam which gradually pushed the two countries from confrontation to negotiation, creating opportunity for the two countries to normalise the relations and to settle remaining problems.

### **2.1.2. Cambodia Issue**

The second factor which actively affected China's Vietnam policy during the second half of 1980s was the changes in Vietnam's Cambodia policy. Not only had the Cambodia issue contributed to the breakdown of the China - Vietnam relations, but was a major obstacle for the process of normalisation of the relations. During the

major part of 1980s, increased Chinese military activities along the common border seemed to have been linked to Vietnamese offensives in Cambodia (Amer 1994: 364). China strictly attached the normalisation of relations to the Vietnam's total withdrawal from Cambodia.

Right after the withdrawal of Chinese troops from Vietnam in March 1979, China and Vietnam held talks to solve the problems in the two countries relations after the border war. In the meetings, one of the conditions which were included in the eight-point proposal was the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops in Cambodia. It stated that China's conditions for improving China - Vietnam relations, making clear that withdrawal of Vietnamese troops was what Beijing wanted most from Hanoi.

On September 23, 1980, despite Vietnam expressed its good will to resume talks with China, Chinese Foreign Ministry rejected the proposal, stating Vietnam's military presence in Cambodia and its "anti-China activities," specifically provocations on the Sino-Vietnamese border. But it said that China was ready to resume negotiations "once positive factors truly conducive to the negotiations appear" (McGregor 1990: 271).

In October 1982, at the first round of talks between China and the Soviet Union, China gave out a Five-Point proposal in which the second point speculated that "if Vietnam announces a total withdrawal, China will discuss with Vietnam on the normalisation of relations" (Tran Quang Co 2005).

In March 1983, China's Foreign Ministry issued a statement on Cambodia calling on Vietnam to "declare an unconditional withdrawal of all its troops from Kampuchea." If it did so, China "would be willing, after the withdrawal of the first batch of Vietnamese troops, to resume negotiations with Vietnam for the normalization of relations between the two countries." As Vietnam withdrew more troops, China "would take practical steps to improve relations." Vietnam's "annual partial withdrawals" were rejected as of no "practical significance" (Foreign Ministry Statement, Beijing Review).

The tension between China and Vietnam to some extent reduced in 1985 when Vietnam had moves to adjust its Cambodia policy. At the Eleventh Meeting of the Indochina Foreign Ministers Conference in Phnom Penh on August 16, 1985 the

Vietnamese announced: “Vietnamese volunteer forces will conclude their total withdrawal [from Cambodia] by 1990. In case these withdrawals are taken advantage of to undermine the peace and security of Kampuchea, the governments of the People’s Republic of Kampuchea and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam will consult each other and take appropriate measures” (Documents on the Kampuchean Problem, 1979–1985: 188-189).

The announcement despite had not made a turning point, it actively influenced on the China - Vietnam relations Following that, there were some contacts at low levels between the two countries. On the occasion of Vietnamese National Day, China’s President, Li Xiannian congratulated Vietnam. A Vietnamese delegation attended Guangzhou Trade Fair in late 1985 (Womack 2006: 207). Although heavy fighting continued in 1987, especially in Laoshan, by December, an agreement on avoiding border conflict was reached and especially was resumed in 1988. According to Ramses Amer, “this evolution indicates that China gradually stopped linking the military evolution in Cambodia to its own policy along the border with Vietnam” (Amer 1994: 364).

One of the Vietnam’s moves to speed up the process of Cambodia issue resolution and normalisation of relations with China was that in May 1988 Vietnam announced it would withdraw 50,000 troops from Cambodia by the end of the year. This Vietnamese move pushed China to a dilemma because China wanted an internal political settlement in Cambodia which benefited it. According to McGregor, “China could not abandon the Khmer Rouge until it was certain that the Vietnamese were withdrawing. But even if it decided that was the case, to abandon its support for the Khmer Rouge before an internal settlement on the future of Cambodia had been decided would be to reduce the bargaining power of the main counterweight to a pro-Vietnamese settlement” (McGregor 1990: 273).

The situation forced China to adjust its Cambodia and Vietnam policy. Just some previous months China had insisted its hard line, calling for strict international supervision of any withdrawal and had rejected Hanoi’s timetable for a complete withdrawal by late 1990 or early 1991. However, in November 1988 that China began to adopt a far more conciliatory approach. On November 13 Chinese Premier Li Peng

stated that, in the Chinese view, the end of June 1989 would be the most desirable time for a Vietnamese withdrawal (McGregor 1990: 276-277).

A week later, the China made a major concession when Li Peng announced:

“If the Vietnamese can produce a timetable for the withdrawal of its troops that is satisfactory to all parties, and at the same time can subject its military pullout [to] international supervision, then the military assistance to all the four parties in Kampuchea must and also can be gradually reduced and even totally stopped” (McGregor 1990: 277).

After the visit to Moscow by Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen at the beginning of December 1988, the Soviet Union informed Vietnam that Qian expressed a slight change in his attitude toward Cambodia issue. He signalled Hanoi that China's proposed deadline was open for discussion and reiterated that China would only talk to Vietnam once it had "unconditionally" withdrawn its troops from Cambodia. In mid-December Li Peng reiterated that "if Vietnam withdraws its troops ... all sides may even gradually reduce such military support in step with the tempo of the troop withdrawal" (McGregor 1990: 277).

On 24 December 1988, in reply to the letter by Vietnam's Foreign Minister, China invited a Deputy Foreign Minister to Beijing in order to exchange views prior to an official of Ministerial level between the two countries. This was the first time China accepted bilateral talks on Cambodia issue between the two countries since 1980. This China's move not only reflected the changes in China's Vietnam policy, but also the beginning for the process of normalisation of relations between the two countries.

The first round of talks on Cambodia issue between the two countries' Vice-Foreign Ministers was held in Beijing from 16 to 19 January 1989. The talks did not achieve progress due to the different positions from the two sides. China insisted on settling the Cambodia issue before normalization could be discussed and it insisted that the Khmer Rouge participate in any coalition government (Womack 2002: 207).

Beijing's position suggested its concern that a unilateral Vietnamese withdrawal, while reducing Vietnam's day-to-day influence in Cambodia, might not affect its long-term strategic influence in the region and might even sustain it (McGregor 1990: 280).

Despite the two sides had not reached a political agreement, military tensions in border area between the two countries reduced. The army newspaper, Jiefangjun Bao, reported on January 20, 1989, that the army was returning farmland in a border area in Yunnan province that had been used for military purposes to its peasant owners. The implication of the announcement was clear: Chinese troop levels on the Sino-Vietnamese border were being reduced. Such intelligence is unlikely to have been revealed accidentally. It can be assumed that Beijing was encouraging Hanoi to proceed with its proposed troop cuts (McGregor 1990: 280).

A second round of Sino-Vietnamese talks was held from May 8 to 10 in Beijing. The talks did not result in positive progress. On July 28, Renmin Ribao underlined the importance to Beijing of verification of Vietnam's withdrawal. Qian Qichen, in his speech on July 31 to the International Conference on Cambodia in Paris, specified in greater detail what Beijing meant by total withdrawal:

Vietnam should withdraw all its armed forces in Kampuchea, including its military advisers, disguised military personnel in the Heng Samrin forces, armed militia among the Vietnamese immigrants and also all its weapons, ammunition and other military materiel (McGregor 1990: 280).

He also called for the formation of a provisional quadripartite government, arguing that "the reality in Kampuchea today is the simultaneous presence of four political parties, each possessing its own armed forces." He concluded that China would only cease military aid to the Cambodian resistance "following a comprehensive agreement" and a complete Vietnamese troop withdrawal under international supervision.

The China's statements showed that the main objective of China was to reduce Vietnam's influence on Cambodia and have advantage of Cambodia internal political settlement. Thus, China insisted on its position of a provisional quadripartite government headed by Sihanouk which included Khmer Rouge. On September 2 Renmin Ribao wrote:

It is undeniable that the Khmer Rouge have made mistakes in the past, but they are now one of the important forces resisting Vietnamese aggression and also a component part of the legitimate Cambodian government.... A future government without the participation of the Khmer Rouge is not



only unjust but will also be unable to realize internal peace (McGregor 1990: 281).

In 1990, there were two rounds of talks at vice-ministerial level held in Beijing and Hanoi in May and June respectively. During the fourth round of talks between Chinese Vice-Foreign Minister Xu Duxin-Xu was the highest level Chinese official to visit Vietnam since 1980- and his Vietnamese counterpart Tran Quang Co, the two sides made some progress on Cambodia issue, leading to a discussion of bilateral issues such as reducing tensions along the border and the encouragement of cross-border trade (Thayer 1994: 515).

In July 1990, an unexpected situation happened when Secretary of State James Baker announced, that the United States would seek contacts with Hanoi to reach a Cambodian settlement and would no longer support the three-party coalition containing the Khmer Rouge in the UN. The American action left China as the only supporter of the Khmer Rouge, and this led China to a serious reconsideration of its position for the first time since 1979 (Womack 2002: 208).

Only one month after the announcement by James Baker, Beijing surprised Hanoi by sending a message that Secretary-General Jiang Zemin and Premier Li Peng invited Vietnam's Secretary-General Nguyen Van Linh, Prime Minister Do Muoi and Pham Van Dong currently an advisor to the VCP Central Committee to Chengdu, Sichuan for a secret meeting on 3 September 1990.

In Chengdu, after two days of talks, the two sides made an "eight-point summary minutes" in which seven points mentioned to Cambodia issue, only one point referred to improvement of China - Vietnam relations, but settlement of Cambodia issue remained a condition for normalisation of relations (Tran Quang Co 2005). The result of the Chengdu summit meeting clearly reflected the importance of Cambodia factor in adjustment of China's Vietnam policy. And as Carlyle Thayer stated, "the Chengdu summit marked China's abandonment of its 'bleed Vietnam white' policy and the start of Sino-Vietnamese normalization." (Thayer 1994: 517)

After the Chengdu meeting, the settlement of Cambodia issue went to the final stage. On 23 October 1991, all four of the Cambodian factions signed an agreement in Paris that allowed for free elections to be supervised by the United Nations. Polpot was

unhappy with the arrangement, but his Chinese mentors had effectively abandoned him and he had no option but to go through the motions (Tully 2005: 241-251).

When the Cambodia issue was basically addressed, the condition for normalisation of relations with Vietnam imposed by China was fulfilled. As a result, in November 1991, the official summit meeting held in Beijing formally normalised the relations creating a favourable condition for settling the remaining border issues between the two countries.

Thus, Cambodia issue was the biggest obstacle for the normalisation of relations between China and Vietnam. With the condition set by the Chinese that China - Vietnam relations would be normalised when the Cambodia issue was resolved, the relations between the two countries had frozen for more than ten years. However, efforts to solve the problem step by step were effective, actively contributing the process of normalisation of relations between China and Vietnam.

## **2.2. Internal Factors**

### **2.2.1 Demand for a Peaceful and Stable Environment for Development**

Since late 1970s, China stepped into a new period of development which was marked by the third plenum of the Eleventh Congress of the CPC held in December 1978 when it defined that the Party would move from the “class struggle” of the past to socialist modernization and economic construction. Following that, CPC put forward strategic guideline of revitalizing domestic policy and opening to the outside world, and officially carry out “four modernizations”.

The Twelfth National Party Congress held in September 1982 put forward three main tasks of 1980s: (1) To accelerate socialist modernization; (2) to strive for China's reunification and particularly for the return of Taiwan to the motherland and to oppose hegemonism and work to safeguard world peace, of which economic development is at the core of these tasks (Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping, Vol III, 1982-1992).

To meet the demand for economic development, apart from the implementation of the policy of opening to outside world, development of foreign trade with all

countries on the basis of Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence, especially with the developed countries to import advanced science and technology, capital and experience in management, China has to build peaceful and stable surroundings. The independent foreign policy of peace which has been implemented since 1982 is to serve this end.

However, the relations between China and Vietnam were tense and hostile after the border war in 1979. Failure of the rounds of negotiations to restore the relations between the two countries in 1979 and 1980 resulted in an unsecured and dead area along the common border between the two countries for more than ten years. The reason leading to the situation was that in China's view the close relations between the Soviet Union and Vietnam at that time was to contain China and spread the Soviet Union's influence in Asia and the Vietnam's action of sending troops to Cambodia was to carry out its hegemony in Indochina. All of these moves were regarded as threats to China's security. In addition, opposing hegemonism was one of the highlight features in China's foreign policy during 1980s. So, maintaining an unsecured area along the common border with Vietnam, although, went against China's policy of economic development, it could be understandable. The brief border war and tense situation between the two countries were the China's purpose in order to pressure Vietnam to settle the Cambodia issue. Consequently, in the negotiations to normalise relations with the Soviet Union and Vietnam, China set out the conditions to demolish the threats and at the same time to gain advantage in settlement of Cambodia issue. Beijing well understood that the political moves of Vietnam and especially of the Soviet Union during 1980s indicated that China still controlled the situation and had advantage over Vietnam and Soviet Union. It made Beijing confident in negotiations over the remaining problems with both the Soviet Union and Vietnam. As a result, China achieved its goal when both Vietnam and the Soviet Union, to some extent, made concessions to China. Thus, during the 1980s China gained some strategic interests at the expense of smaller interests, or in other word, China set 'a sprat to catch a mackerel', but it still assured the relative stability for its economic development.

Till beginning of 1990s, when Beijing's goals were satisfied, building a peaceful and favourable environment around became a task in priority. As a result, China accepted to normalise relations with Vietnam with one of the purposes to settle

the border issue between the two countries. Of course, there were several factors which affected the China's Vietnam policy since late 1980s, but reducing tension and building the area along the common border between the two countries into a peaceful and stable region for economic development was China's strategic goal.

Accordingly, the demand for a peaceful and stable environment for development is a China's strategic end. The normalisation of bilateral relation between China and Vietnam in November 1991 was to serve this end. This has been proved in China's Neighbourhood Diplomacy which has been seriously concentrated since 1990s. In the Report at the 15<sup>th</sup> National Party Congress held in 1997, Secretary-General and President Jiang Zemin stressed:

We should uphold the good-neighbourly policy. This has been our consistent stand and will never change. Keeping in mind the overall objective to maintain peace and stability, we should settle the disputes between China and the surrounding countries through friendly consultations and negotiations. Should this fail to serve the purpose, we can put them aside for the time being, seeking common ground while reserving differences (Report at the 15<sup>th</sup> National Party Congress).

This policy continued to be a main task of China in the new millennium when in the Report at the 16<sup>th</sup> National Party Congress in 2002, Secretary and President Jiang Zemin repeatedly stressed:

Peace and development remain the themes of our era"... "We will continue to cement our friendly ties with our neighbours and persist in building a good-neighbourly relationship and partnership with them. We will step up regional cooperation and bring our exchanges and cooperation with our surrounding countries to a new height (Report at the 16<sup>th</sup> National Party Congress).

And lately, neighbouring diplomacy remains one of five pillars in China's foreign policy when at that 17<sup>th</sup> CCP National Congress, Secretary-General Hu Jintao stated:

For our neighbouring countries, we will continue to follow the foreign policy of friendship and partnership, strengthen good-neighbourly relations and practical cooperation with them, and energetically engage in regional cooperation in order to jointly create a peaceful, stable regional

environment featuring equality, mutual trust and win-win cooperation (Report at the 17<sup>th</sup> National Party Congress).

### **2.2.2. Tiananmen Square Incident**

Tiananmen incident which happened on 4 June 1989 marked a grey chapter in Chinese modern history. However, this event resulted in changes in China's foreign policy during 1990s. According to David Shambaugh, one of six events in the early and late 1990s appear which have been important in laying the perceptual groundwork for the policy changes that would emerge around the turn of the millennium was the Tiananmen Incident (Shambaugh 2006: 26). The changes in China's foreign policy stemmed from situation in which it had been isolated and embargoed by the US and the Western countries after the Tiananmen Incident. Despite the US and Western countries condemned China, "many Asian countries did not join the rest of the world in condemning, sanctioning, and ostracizing the PRC government for the Chinese military's killing of civilians in Beijing". Moreover, the ASEAN states lead a diplomatic campaign to "engage," rather than isolate, China (Shambaugh 2006: 26).

The Tiananmen Incident happened as China - Vietnam relations were in the progress of normalisation. Although there had been some positive signs, the process of normalisation of relations between the two countries remained standstill due to the Cambodia issue. However, in reaction to the Tiananmen Square Incident, Vietnam expressed a supportive attitude. This Vietnam's attitude could be understood that Vietnam was seeking to normalise relations with China. The Tiananmen Square Incident was taken as a chance by Vietnam in order to express its good wills and its support to Chinese Government.

The Asian countries' and Vietnam's attitude toward China after the Tiananmen Square Incident apparently left an impression on Chinese leadership. Accordingly, Deng Xiaoping stated that:

In the past several years we have concentrated too much on one part of the world and neglected the other... the U.S. and the other Western nations invoked sanctions against us but those who are truly sympathetic and support us are some old friends in the developing countries... This course may not be altered for 20 years (Dittmer 1999: 11).

In addition, Chinese Premier Li Peng also expressed his opinion that:

The Chinese government would reiterate that developing relations with other Third World countries is the basis of China's foreign policy...China recently put down a counter-revolutionary riot in Peking. Some Western countries have stirred up an anti-China wave. But developing countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America have expressed their understanding and support to China because they had similar experiences as China did and know how Western countries interfere in the internal affairs of other countries on the pretext of defending human rights and freedom. (Li Peng Says "Developing Relations with other Third World Countries" Is "Basis of China's Foreign Policy", Xinhua News Agency)

As a result, soon after the Tiananmen Square Incident, China sought to establish and restore its diplomatic relations with series of the Southeast Asian countries. It established diplomatic relations with Singapore in October 1990, and Brunei in 1991, and restored relations with Laos in 1989, with Indonesia in 1990. These China's efforts to improve relations with Southeast Asian countries showed the importance of the region in China's foreign policy in post - Tiananmen Incident.

The adjustment in China's perception of Asian countries, especially the Southeast Asian countries after the Tiananmen Square Incident served as a catalyst which, to some extent, positively affected the process of normalisation of China - Vietnam relations. Vietnam is not only China's neighbour, but also an important country in this area. Its strategic location is very important for China. The improvement of relations with Vietnam would help China easily access to the Southeast Asian region which was emerging as the centre of the most dynamically economic development. This has been totally suitable with China's strategy of economic development which has been initiated since late 1970s.

Thus, the Tiananmen Incident caused the situation which was followed with the adjustment in China's foreign policy in late 1980s. The adjustment was to escape from the isolation and embargo imposed by the U.S and the Western countries and at the same time to expand its relations with the third world countries, especially the Southeast Asian countries. In this context, Tiananmen Incident played the role as an incentive which speeded up the process of normalisation of relations between China and Vietnam.

### **3. Normalisation and Development of the Bilateral Relations**

Border dispute resolution is a long and complicated process which, besides the determination of the parties concerned, requires a favourable environment. During the process of land border issue resolution between China and Vietnam, the normalisation of relations in 1991 and the quick development of bilateral relations afterwards served as the important factor contributing to the success of the border dispute resolution.

Recall that, before the normalisation of relations in 1991, the border issue had been discussed by the two countries, but no result was achieved. One of the reasons was that the issue was not settled in a right moment and a favourable environment. The border disputes resolution was the first time mentioned in 1957 when the Central Committee of the WPV sent a letter proposing to the Central Standing Committee of the Communist Party of China that the two parties should maintain status quo of the historical border. The border question should be resolved on the basis of legal principles, existing or redefined, as decided by the two Governments. Any outstanding disputes should be settled through negotiations. In response, CPC agreed with WPV's proposal. However, settlement of land border disputes had been suspended until March 1975 when Chinese government proposed to hold talks on land border issue. Therefore, although both sides had agreed to settle the land border dispute, the problem had never been mentioned again for the time of nearly 20 years. To explain for the delay, there might be some different ways, but the most suitable one is that it was not a proper time and favourable environment for the settlement of land border issue between China and Vietnam. After the 1954 Geneva Agreement, Vietnam was divided into two parts-North and South. Following that Vietnam had to experience the twenty-year war with the U.S. to unify the country.

Meanwhile, for China, the Sino-Vietnamese land border issue resolution was not in a proper time. The most concern for China in the relations with Vietnam during the time was to help DRV in the war against the U.S. The border issue, although, was important, it could be postponed for the proper time and favourable environment.

The land border dispute was the first time discussed in October 1977, two years after China had proposed Vietnam to settle the land border issue. This negotiation

failed to bring both sides closer to an agreement because, to some extent, it took place in the context in which the Sino - Vietnamese relations were deteriorating. In late 1976, a border conflict broke out in the area of Caobang and Langson. This was result of hundreds of border incursions accused by both sides during 1974, 1975, and 1976. A long with that, armed conflicts in Vietnamese - Cambodian border region negatively affected the Sino - Vietnamese relations. In Vietnamese viewpoint, Cambodia's military activities along the Vietnamese - Cambodian border were backed by the Chinese. During the time of the talks on land border were taking place in Beijing, Vietnam's Secretary-General Le Duan visited China. In the talks with Chinese leaders, the two sides' point of view on Cambodia question considerably diverged (Vietnamese Foreign Ministry 2002: 311). It resulted in the misunderstanding and mistrust in the Sino - Vietnamese relations. With the deterioration in the two countries' relations, failure of this round of negotiation on land border issue was understandable.

Immediately after the 1979 border war, China and Vietnam agreed to hold talks on border issue. This round of negotiation focused on settling the land border issue and problems in Sino-Vietnamese relations resulted by the war. In this round, Vietnam put forward "the important principles and contents of solution for problems in the relations between Vietnam and China" (Vietnamese Foreign Ministry 2002: 312). For border issue, the Vietnamese presented a three-point proposition, which included the stipulation that:

The settlement of boundary and territorial issues between [the] two countries should follow the principle of respecting the status quo of the boundary created by history and delimited by the conventions of 1885 and 1897 concluded by [the] French and [the] Chinese Empire, and approved by the Vietnamese and Chinese sides (Nguyen, Hong Thao 2000: 88).

On the contrary, the Chinese advanced an 8-point stand which stipulated that Vietnam had to recognise China's sovereignty over Paracel and Spratly Islands; withdraw troops from Spratly Islands; change policy toward Laos, Cambodia; and, accept China's point of view in solving Cambodia problem (Vietnamese Foreign Ministry 2002: 312). The Chinese stance was regarded as conditions which could not



be accepted by the Vietnamese. As a result, the negotiation ended without any progress in land border settlement.

Thus, despite the land border dispute was discussed during 1970s, no agreement was reached. Looking back these land border negotiations, there were some noticeable points such as the negotiations were carried out in unfavourable environment. That was China - Vietnam relations were worsening or hostile; both sides insisted their stands; land border issue was not separated from other issues, even China used land border issue as a card to reach its other purposes.

Not only did the normalisation of bilateral relations between China and Vietnam in November 1991 ended the period of more than ten years of hostility, but created a good chance for the two countries settle the border issue left over from history. Thus, during the first official visit by Vietnamese Secretary-General Do Muoi and Chairman of Ministerial Council Vo Van Kiet, border dispute settlement was one of the most important topics which were discussed by the leaders of the two countries. It was marked with the Temporary Agreement on Border Affairs. In addition, in the Joint Communiqué issued by the two countries' leaders, the border issue was mentioned as an important task which must be fulfilled by the two countries. Thus, this was a good beginning for the long process of border settlement ahead.

After the normalisation, the China - Vietnam relations have rapidly improved in all fields. Politically, the close relationship between CCP and CPV; Chinese and Vietnamese governments has expanded through a steady stream of exchange visits at various levels. During nine years, from the time of normalisation in 1991 to 1999 when the Land Border Treaty was signed, Chinese top leaders officially paid three visits to Vietnam – one by Chinese Secretary-General and President Jiang Zemin in 1994 and two by Chinese Premier Li Peng and Zhu Jongji in 1992 and 1999 respectively while on Vietnamese side, there were five official visits by President Le Duc Anh in 1993, Secretary-General Do Muoi in 1995 and 1997, Le Kha Phieu in 1999, and Prime Minister Phan Van Khai in 1998.

The frequent exchanges of visits between highest leaders of the two countries have played a crucial role in guiding and developing the relations between the two countries. The frequent exchange of visits between highest leaders of the two countries

became rare events in history of the relations of the two countries. It proved the Sino – Vietnamese relations have been developing smoothly.

Especially in 1999 the two countries' relations were enhanced to a new high level when Vietnamese Secretary-General Le Kha Phieu paid an official visit to China in February. China and Vietnam's leaders agreed to initiate a sixteen-word principle to promote the relations between the two countries in 21st Century, namely "long-term stability, future-oriented, good-neighbourliness and comprehensive cooperation" as the framework guiding Sino-Vietnamese relations in the new century (Sino-Vietnamese Joint Declaration in 1999).

Apart from the visits of top leaders, every year, more than 100 delegations at ministerial, departmental, local and grass-root levels of both sides are exchanged. These activities have contributed to enhancing mutual understanding and trust and expanding the bilateral cooperation.

The visit exchanges of high ranking officials of the two countries have strengthened China – Vietnam relations in depth. The leaders of the both sides have expressed their utmost efforts to consolidate and enhance China – Vietnam relations, mutual trust, and comprehensive cooperation at various levels.

Trade and economic relations have been developing steadily. Since normalization, the two countries have signed more than 20 documents covering trade and economic cooperation matters. These agreements have covered a range of matters, including economic and trade issues; air, sea, and rail transportation; cultural affairs; public security questions; customs and taxation matters; and other subjects (Gu Xiaosong and Womack 2000: 1045). These agreements and documents create legitimate basis for developing trade and economic relations between the two countries. The two countries also set up China-Viet Nam Committee on Trade and Economic Cooperation to further deepen bilateral trade and economic relations.

Bilateral trade increased from US\$ 32 million in 1991 to more than US\$ 1.5 billion in 1999, and was expected to reach US\$ 25 billion in 2010 of which border trade has accounted for a large amount. China also provides loans and assistance to upgrade Chinese-built factories in northern Vietnam. China had 41 investment projects in Vietnam that year with a contracted value of \$102 million. Both sides sought to

raise the value of two-way trade to \$2 billion by the turn of the century, though in the end this goal was not achieved (Gu Xiaosong and Womack 2000: 1045).

In military aspect, after the normalisation, despite defence cooperation between China and Vietnam was modest comparing with other aspects, it gained some certain achievements. Defence contacts between Vietnam and China were first opened with the exchange of delegations by the external relations departments of their respective defence ministries in February and May 1992, respectively. Vietnamese Defence Ministers had two official visits to China during 1992-1999. Vietnamese Defence Ministers Doan Khue and Pham Van Tra visited China in 1992 and 1998 respectively while Chinese Defence Minister Chi Haotian visited Vietnam in 1993. Besides that, the two sides have exchanged visits at the level of vice minister, Chief of the General Staff, and General Political Department. Defence relations between China and Vietnam appear almost entirely focused on exchanges of views on 'army-building', regional security, ideological matters and border security issues. Since the normalization of relations, both China and Vietnam have undertaken to de-mine and to dispose of unexploded ordnance in their frontier area (Thayer 2008: 5).

The rapid development of China - Vietnam relations in all aspects at various levels have enhanced mutual trust and understanding, creating firm foundation and favourable environment for settling the unsolved problems, especially the border dispute between the two countries.

#### **4. The Wills of the Two Countries' Leadership**

The land border dispute resolution between China and Vietnam was a long and difficult process. It was carried out in the context in which despite the China - Vietnam relations have remarkably improved, there have been tensions related to territorial issues. These tensions could cause breakdown of the two countries' relations and the process of land border resolution at any time. However, all the tensions happened during the years were managed well, creating the most favourable condition for solving the border problem. It indicated that both Chinese and Vietnamese leaders gave top priority to and were strongly determined to settle border disputes between the two countries.

The determination and will of Chinese and Vietnamese leaders in settling the border issues manifested in the first official summit meeting in order to normalise relations between the two countries in December 1991. During the meeting, border disputes resolution was one of the most important issues which were seriously discussed by the two countries' leaders. This was reflected in the Joint Communiqué was issued the two countries' leader and a Provisional Agreement on Border Affairs. In the Joint Communiqué, the two countries' leaders agreed that "...the border issues between the two countries will be solved through peaceful negotiations."

Soon after the two countries' relations had been normalised, the process of border disputes resolution which just started to be carried out, was challenged by tensions related territorial disputes over both land and maritime issues. In February 1992, China passed a new law on territorial waters which stipulated that the Paracel and Spratly archipelagos and most of the South China Sea water were to be regarded as part of its national territory (Law on Territorial Water, Xinhua News Agency). Following that, in May, China signed an agreement with the Crestone Energy Corporation, a US company, on oil-gas exploration in a 10,000 square mile area in the South China Sea. These China's moves caused tensions between the two countries when Vietnam reacted with claim that the area was located on its continental shelf. The tension continued when Vietnam accused China of having landed troops on Da Lac coral reef in the Spratly archipelago in July (Vietnam Protests over Chinese Landing on Spratlys Coral Reef, Voice of Vietnam). And in September, Vietnam strongly protested China to carry out drilling for oil in a disputed area of Gulf of Tonkin (Vietnam Demands Chinese Ships Withdraw from Tonkin, Voice of Vietnam). Apart from the tensions related to maritime issue, the problem on land border dispute caused tensions. Continued disputes over the demarcation issues prevented the resumption of rail traffic between the border provinces of Langson and Guangxi. Vietnam accused China of occupying a stretch of some 300 metre of the railway, including Vietnam's pre-1979 end-station (Amer 2002: 9).

Not only did the territorial disputes caused tensions in the bilateral relations, but directly threatened the process of land border negotiations which had just taken place. However, tensions reduced when Chinese Premier Li Peng paid an official visit to Vietnam in December 1992. The visit by Li Peng provided the opportunity to ease

tensions and to address the border issues at the highest political level (Amer 2002: 10). In the Joint Communiqué issued on 4 December, the two sides “reasserted the spirit of agreements reached at the Vietnam - China 1991 summit that they would settle bilateral territorial and boundary disputes through peaceful negotiation.... Pending a settlement, the two sides will not conduct activities which will further complicate the territorial and boundary disputes” (“SRV-China Joint Communiqué” on Li Peng’s Vietnam Visit, Voice of Vietnam).

The meetings of the two countries leaders during the visit by Li Peng to Hanoi played a vital role in reducing the tensions and promoting the process of border disputes resolution between the two countries. Through 1993 there was no dispute in the two countries’ relations. Besides that, process of border disputes resolution gained some positive progress when the first meeting of joint working group on the land border took place in Hanoi in February 1994.

However, the Sino - Vietnamese relations and process of land border issue negotiation faced challenges which caused by the territorial disputes in South China Sea in mid 1994. The tensions began when Vietnam launched official protest over seismological surveys carried by Crestone Energy Corporation on behalf of China in an area referred to as the Tu Chinh coral reef area in April. Vietnam claimed that “the Tu Chinh area lies fully within Vietnam economic zone and continental shelf and determinedly reaffirms its sovereignty over this area” and that Vietnam “has the sovereign right to explore and exploit natural resources in these areas” (Vietnam Reiterates Its Claims on Spratlys, Voice of Vietnam and Foreign Ministry Rejects Chinese Claims to Thanlong Sea Area, Vietnam News Agency). In response, on 10 May a spokesman for China’s foreign ministry was reported as saying that “the Blue Dragon sea area belongs to the adjacent waters of the Nansha islands” which is also known as Spratly Islands. Moreover, he also stated that an exploration contract signed between Vietnam and the US’s Mobil Oil Company in the Blue Dragon oil field was “illegal” (Note of Foreign Ministry Rejects Chinese Claims to Thanlong Sea Area, Vietnam News Agency).

Tension continued when a spokesman of Chinese Foreign Ministry made a statement which demanded once again that Vietnamese government stop its acts of infringement upon China’s sovereignty. He said that since mid-May this year, the

Vietnamese side had sent exploratory vessels to Wan'an Reef (Vanguard Bank) located in China's Nansha sea area to conduct geophysical operation. He reiterated that China had indisputable sovereignty over the Spratly Islands and their adjacent water. He accused Vietnam of repeatedly harassing the normal scientific surveys and fishing activities of Chinese vessels. Now it had moved into this area for oil and gas prospecting and development, thus violating Chinese sovereignty and putting in serious jeopardy the contract between China National Offshore Oil Corporation and Crestone Energy Corporation (China "Demands" Vietnam Stop "Infringement of Southwest Spratly Area, Xinhua News Agency).

In response to the accusation, on 17 June a spokesman of Vietnam's Foreign Ministry made a statement refusing the Chinese claim that the Tu Chinh area, which it called the Wan'an Reef, was part of China's Nansha islands. He added the China's agreement to explore for oil in the area with the U.S. Crestone Energy Corporation, defied the principles of international law and practice, especially the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. He reiterated that it was an undeniable fact that the Tu Chinh area lied located entirely within Vietnam's exclusive economic zone and its continental shelf. China should not make statement or violate Vietnam's undeniable sovereignty in this area (Foreign Ministry Disputes China's Claim to Spratly Reef, Voice of Vietnam).

On 2 July Chinese Foreign Ministry protested against Vietnam's seizure of Chinese fishing boats in the Gulf of Tonkin. Chinese sides requested the immediate release of the Chinese fishermen and boats and demanded that no such incidents should occur in the future. Vietnam responded with the statement that Chinese boats had been seized in two separate incidents, on 2 and 3 July respectively. The spokesman of Vietnamese Foreign Ministry affirmed that Chinese boats had violated Vietnam's territorial waters and that the seizure of the boats was in accordance with Vietnamese and international laws. He added Vietnam was still carrying out its investigation and that the boats would be dealt with in conformity with above the laws and in line with relations between Vietnam and China. He reiterated that Vietnam requested China to immediately stop sending boats to Vietnamese waters for illegal fishing and violently opposing Vietnamese inspection vessels (Amer 2002: 13-14).

In the meantime, the second round of talks of joint working group on land border was held in China from 25 June to 1 July. After a week of negotiations, result of this second round was reported no substantial progress (Amer 2002: 50). Perhaps, the tension related to territorial disputes in South China Sea more or less negatively affected the round of talks.

The tensions temporarily reduced when the meeting between Foreign Ministers of China and Vietnam, on the occasion of the 27<sup>th</sup> Association of South-East Asian Nations Ministerial Meeting (AMM) and the first official meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) was held in Bangkok on July 22, 1994. During the meeting, the two sides agreed to hold talks at the level of Vice-Foreign Minister to discuss joint development in areas with overlapping claims in the South China Sea and reached an agreement on the basic principles concerning the territorial disputes. The two sides agreed to exercise self restraint and not do anything to make the situation deteriorate (Amer 2002: 13).

Tension over territorial disputes continued. On 8 September, China reiterated its indisputable sovereignty over the Spratly Islands (Spokesman Reiterates Sovereignty over Spratly Islands, Xinhua News Agency). In response, one day later a spokesman of Vietnam's Foreign Ministry reaffirmed that Truong Sa archipelago (Spratlys) was the part and parcel of Vietnam's territory. Any statement or claims over Spratly archipelago was in violation of Vietnam's territorial sovereignty (Hanoi Reaffirmed Sovereignty over Spratlys In Response to Chinese Statement, Voice of Vietnam). While tension related to territorial dispute over South China Sea were taking place, tensions over the Gulf of Tonkin emerged. On 14 October, China launched a protest against Vietnam's invitation of foreign investors to develop the Gulf of Tonkin. A spokesman of Chinese Foreign Ministry stated that Chinese government had declared that no foreign company was allowed to conduct activity violating China's rights and interests in the aforesaid waters (China Says Vietnam's Invitation to Investors to Develop Tonkin Gulf Is "Not Acceptable", Xinhua News Agency). In response, on 17 October Vietnam made a statement demanding that China inform its own people to stop their chronic violations of Vietnam territorial water and EEZ (Foreign Ministry Says Chinese Territorial "Violation" Are "Unacceptable", Voice of Vietnam). Immediately, on the same day China stated that China was gravely

concerned that Vietnam was prospecting for oil together with foreign oil companies in the Wan'an Reef area of China's Nansha sea water (Spokesman: China "Gravely Concerned" about Vietnamese Oil Prospecting in Spratlys, Xinhua News Agency). Eventually, on the following day, Vietnam stated that the area referred to by China was in fact the Tu Chinh area and was located within Vietnam's continental shelf, and thereby, refuted China's claim to it. It also was added that Vietnam was carrying out normal activities in the area on its own and in collaboration with foreign partners (Spokesman Dismisses Chinese Claims to Spratly and Paracels as "Absurd", Voice of Vietnam).

The visit to Vietnam by China's Secretary-General of President Jiang Zemin from 19 to 22 November provided the two countries with another opportunity to settle the tensions and border issues at the highest political level (Amer 2002: 15). The border solution was one of the most important issues which were discussed during the visit. In the 4<sup>th</sup> point of the joint communiqué issued on 21 November, "the two sides agree to strive for an early settlement of the issues over the land boundary and over the division of the Gulf of Tonkin in accordance with the Agreement on the Basic Principles of Solving the Boundary and Territorial Issues between the Two Countries signed by the two sides. Meanwhile, the two sides will continue negotiations on the issues involving the seas so as to seek a basic and long-term solution acceptable to the two sides. Before the issues are solved, the two sides will refrain from taking action that will complicate or enlarge the disputes and will also refrain from using force or threatening to use force" (Joint Communiqué Issued on Jiang Zemin Visit, Voice of Vietnam).

In the conference held in Hanoi on 22 November, replying question on the new efforts of Vietnam and China to consolidate relations between the two countries by a Voice of Vietnam Radio correspondent, Jiang said, "... on the issues remaining between us, both sides need to focus on the primary goal, which is maintaining friendly Chinese-Vietnamese relations, developing peace and stability in the region and resolving disputes step by step through friendly negotiations. As for issues which cannot be resolved in the immediate future, we should not let them affect the development of bilateral relations" (Jiang Zemin, Qian Qichen Address News Conference, Voice of Vietnam).



Replying question on the relations between the two countries, Qian Qichen, Chinese Vice-Premier and Minister of Foreign Affairs, who was accompanying Jiang Zemin, said “Currently, some people in the international community are very concerned about problems between China and Vietnam, and there are people who make daily forecasts on when conflicts between the two countries are going to break out. President Jiang Zemin’s visit and the Sino-Vietnamese Joint Communiqué strongly show that there is no such possibility in relations between the two countries” (Jiang Zemin, Qian Qichen Address News Conference, Xinhua News Agency).

On the Vietnamese side, Foreign Minister Nguyen Manh Cam when answered the question on oil exploitation in the East Sea (South China Sea) by a Bangkok Post reporter, said that “the summit conference did not discuss it.” He reiterated Vietnam’s affirmation about Paracel and Spratly archipelagos located within Vietnam’s territory.

Thus, despite one of the reasons (oil exploration on South China Sea) which had caused tensions in China - Vietnam relations was not discussed during the summit meeting, both sides affirmed that the remaining problems would be solved through friendly negotiations. Positively, the visit to Vietnam by Jiang Zemin enhanced and tightened the relations between the two countries, at the same time reduced the tensions caused by the territorial disputes. Although the visit could not solve the existing problems, it brought the tensions under control and positively influenced on the border issues negotiations which were taking place.

After the Jiang’s visit to Hanoi, there had been no dispute relating to territorial issues for more than one year. During the time rounds of border negotiations got substantial progress (see previous chapter).

Nevertheless, as the territorial disputes over the South China Sea and Paracel and Spratly archipelagos have been solved, they remained the source of tensions between the two countries. In April 1996, Petrovietnam and Conoco Vietnam Exploration and Production B.G., a U.S. company signed a contract for the exploration and exploitation of Vietnamese blocks 133 and 134 in the South China Sea. The signing of this contract restarted controversy between the two countries. While Vietnam affirmed the oil lots 133 and 134 signed by the companies were partly under the sovereignty of Vietnam (Spokesman Rejects China’s Reaction to Oil Exploration,

Voice of Vietnam), China stated that China had indisputable sovereignty over the Spratly Islands, and that Vietnam's permitting foreign petroleum companies to explore for oil in the sea of Spratly was illegal and invalid and was an encroachment on China's sovereignty and its marine rights and interests (Foreign Ministry Spokesman Reiterates Claim over Spratly Islands, Xinhua News Agency).

Another source of tension emerged on 15 May when China issued a statement defining the baselines of its territorial sea adjacent to the Chinese mainland and in relation to the Paracel islands. China stated that this was done in accordance with its 1992 law on the territorial sea and contiguous zone (China Issues Statement Defining Sea Baselines for Paracel Islands, Xinhua News Agency). On 18 May, Vietnam expressed its stand by a foreign ministry statement that the Chinese law of 1992, stipulating that the Paracel and Spratly archipelagos are Chinese territory, violated Vietnamese sovereignty. Furthermore, it was stated that Chinese delineation of baselines around the Paracel Islands was a severe violation of Vietnam's territorial sovereignty (Ministry Says China's Statement on Islands a "Severe Violation" of Sovereignty, Voice of Vietnam).

The tensions resulted from territorial disputes reduced when Chinese delegation headed by Premier Li Peng arrived to Hanoi on the occasion of the 8<sup>th</sup> National Congress of CPV in late June. During the visit, Li Peng had talks with Vietnam highest leaders and made a speech at the CPV Congress in which he alluded to the territorial disputes by stating that the two sides would continue their efforts aiming at reaching solutions to unresolved problems in the spirit of friendly consultation and seeking common ground while reserving differences (Premier, Senior Leaders Depart for Vietnam Party Congress, Xinhua News Agency).

Following the visit by Li Peng, there was positive developments in bilateral relations generally and process of territorial disputes resolution particularly. On 23 August a new border gate between Travinh district, Caobang province and Lung Ping district of Jingxi County of China's Guangxi was opened (China and Vietnam Open Border Gate, Xinhua News Agency).

However, tension related to South China Sea issues once again emerged when Voice of Vietnam announced on 15 March 1997 that China had sent its Kanta Oil

Platform No.3 together with two pilot ships to conduct exploratory oil drilling in Vietnam's continental shelf at the coordinates 17°13'45''North latitude and 108°39'30''E longitude; or 55 nautical miles from the closest point of Vietnam's base line. In the announcement, Vietnam strongly demanded that China immediately halt activities and withdraw the oil platform and refrain from similar activities in the future (Foreign Ministry Asks China to Order Cessation of Oil Exploration, Voice of Vietnam). China reacted with a statement on 18 March that China's normal operations within its continental shelf and EEZ was indisputable. And the oil exploration was carried out in the northern part of the South China Sea within the EEZ and continental shelf zone claimed by China (Spokesman Says Operation within Continental Shelf Legal, Xinhua News Agency).

To deal with the controversial issue, China and Vietnam agreed to hold talks (China Reportedly Agrees to Talks on Oil Rig Operation, Voice of Vietnam). The talks on oil rig operation were held in Beijing on 9-10 April. However the talks did not result in any bilateral solution of the dispute. Despite no solution reached, interestingly on 9 April a Vietnamese expert was quoted, in a report by Voice of Vietnam, as saying that since 1 April the Chinese rig and its tugboats had been withdrawn from Vietnam's EEZ and continental shelf. Thus, the Chinese action causing the dispute had ceased and Vietnam's demand for a withdrawal had been satisfied (Talks on Chinese Drilling Rig Begin in Beijing, Voice of Vietnam).

The territorial disputes once again were discussed at highest political level when Vietnam's Secretary-General Do Muoi paid an official visit to China on 14-18 July 1997. Do Muoi and his Chinese counterpart Jiang Zemin agreed on the need to accelerate the negotiation process on the remaining issues in bilateral relations including border and territorial issues (Vietnamese Party Boss Leaves for China, Xinhua News Agency) and to try to conclude the treaty on land border and another on the maritime delineation in the Gulf of Tonkin before the end of 2000 (Nguyen Hong Thao 2000: 88).

Thus, during the Do Muoi's visit to China, the two countries' leaders strongly expressed their will and determination to solve the remaining territorial disputes between the two countries as soon as possible when both sides agreed to set a time-

limit for the land border issue resolution. This meant that the two countries' leaders were increasing political pressure on process of land border resolution.

Although the bilateral relations between the two countries developed smoothly, tensions along the land border emerged when Voice of Vietnam broadcasted an interview by Vietnam News Agency with Nguyen Dinh Tho, Deputy Chairman of the People's Committee of Quangninh Province on 22 January 1998. According to Nguyen Dinh Tho, "in late May 1997, without informing us, Fangcheng built a 1 kilometre long stone wall in the river, extending some 6-8 metres from bank at the Dongzhong border post. On the opposite side is our Hoanh Mo border post. The construction is a severe violation of the temporary agreement signed in 7 November 1991 to settle the disputes along the Sino-Vietnamese border". Besides that, this wall reportedly had detrimental effects during the rainy season, the irrigation system on the Vietnamese side being destroyed, with flash flooding the result causing damage and serious erosion. To deal with the problem, through contacts at district, provincial and government levels, the Vietnamese tried to stop the construction of the wall and to bring about its removal, but the Chinese side refused to yield these demands. In response to China's reaction, Vietnam built a stone wall in late September to prevent further erosion and in order to rebuild the irrigation system. In doing so the Vietnamese stated that they had strictly observed the 1991 agreement by informing the Chinese beforehand about their purpose and action. However, on December 11, 1997 Chinese began to fill up the border river and nearly two hectares was reportedly filled in, thus encroaching upon Vietnamese territory (Official Interviewed on Border Dispute with China, Voice of Vietnam).

China responded with a statement on 24 January that the truth of the matter was that since August 1997, the Vietnamese had been building an embankment and increased the height and consolidated a check dam in the area and by so doing artificially changed the alignment of the boundary river. The actions had seriously damaged the interests of the Chinese side and that this had compelled the Chinese to build a bank to protect farmland and to avoid land erosion. Eventually he added that when the bank was built the interests of the Vietnamese side were taken into full consideration (Spokesman Says Vietnam Started Current Border Dispute, Xinhua News Agency). The controversy later was discussed

In parallel with the positive progress of the border talks on land border, Gulf of Tonkin and South China Sea, the tensions related to South China Sea disputes continued to emerge during the year of 1998. In April the Vietnamese complained about Chinese plans to use the Paracel islands for tourism and Vietnam reiterated its sovereignty over both Paracel and Spratly archipelagos. On 20 May Vietnamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that the Chinese ship Discovery 08 was operating in the Spratly archipelago and even deeply into Vietnam's continental shelf and that this was a violation of Vietnam's territorial sovereignty (Spokesman Says Chinese Ship Violated Sovereignty, Vietnam News Agency). In response to newspaper reported that China was conducting scientific surveys in the Spratly archipelago and its adjacent zone which according to the Vietnamese lay deep in Vietnam's continental shelf in the Tu Chinh area, on 4 September Vietnamese foreign ministry spokesman stated that Vietnam has irrefutable sovereignty over the Paracel and Spratly archipelagos and reiterated that Tu Chinh area is within Vietnam's EEZ and continental shelf and that the area has no connection to the Spratly archipelago; that Vietnam had repeatedly declared that it considers the contract signed by the Chinese with Crestone to be illegal and demands its annulment; and, that the activities of China and Crestone to prospect oil in the Tu Chinh area clearly violate Vietnam's sovereignty (Spokesman Reaffirms "Irrefutable" Sovereignty over Spratly, Paracel Islands, Vietnam News Agency).

China's reaction came on 8 September with the statement that China had made serious representations to Vietnam strongly demanding that it withdraw from two submerged reefs that it had unlawfully occupied. The two submerged reefs were referred to as Aonan and Jindun located to the south-east of Nanhuitan in the Spratly archipelago. China also demanded that Vietnam dismantle all facilities which had and been illegally erected and that the Vietnamese side guarantee that no such acts of occupation would occur again (China "Strongly Demands" Vietnam Withdraw from Reefs in Disputed Island Archipelago, Xinhua News Agency).

One day after, Vietnam responded to the China's accusation by reiterating its sovereignty claim over the Paracel and Spratly islands. It was also stated that the two economic-scientific technological services for the Vietnamese fishery were civilian facilities and that they were located on the Ba Ke submerged reef area within Vietnam's continental shelf. Furthermore, it was clarified that the submerged reef

does not belong to the Spratly archipelago. Finally, the Vietnamese stated that the operations carried out were normal civil ones within the country's sovereignty and in accordance with international law, in particular UNCLOS (Claim to Sovereignty over Spratlys, Paracels Reiterated, Vietnam News Agency).

Tensions related to territorial disputes in South China Sea cooled down when Vietnam's Prime Minister Phan Van Khai paid an official visit to China from 19-23 October 1998. During the visit, Phan Van Khai and Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji discussed border and territorial issues. Zhu noted the "positive progress" in the negotiations on border issues and highlighted the 1997 agreement between the two General Secretaries that the two countries "should settle boundary issues and demarcation of the Gulf of Tonkin by the year 2000". Phan Van Khai echoed Zhu's remarks, saying that "the Vietnamese side has the resolve to achieve the objectives set by the two top leaders of the two countries." Both the premiers agreed to speed up related negotiations to settle both border and Beibu (Tonkin) Gulf demarcation in the set period of time (Premier Zhu, Vietnamese Counterpart Hold Talks in Beijing, Xinhua News Agency).

On the occasion, Phan Van Khai also had meetings with Chinese President and Secretary-General Jiang Zemin and Chairman of the Standing Committee of the Chinese National People's Congress. During the meeting with Phan, Jiang expressed his delight over the important progress made at the government-level negotiations through efforts over the past year and more and stressed the importance of resolving the border issues at an earlier date. Li Peng, during the talks with the Vietnamese Prime Minister, also expressed his hope that "the two sides make a greater effort to reach an agreement on the demarcation of the borders between the two countries this century" (President Hold Talks with Vietnamese Premier, Xinhua News Agency).

Only two months after the visit to China by Vietnamese Prime Minister Phan Van Khai, Chinese Vice-President Hu Jintao visited Vietnam from 17-19 December. During the visit Hu had talks with Vietnamese leaders. Both sides affirmed the determination to implement high-level agreements between the two countries, especially the agreements to speed up negotiations on the border issues in order to sign a land border treaty before the year 2000 and to reach an agreement on the delimitation of the Gulf of Tonkin not later than the year 2000 (Amer 2002: 26).

The visit by Vietnam's Secretary-General Le Kha Phieu to China from 25 February to 2 March 1999, besides the enhancement of the bilateral relations, aimed at promoting the process of border issues resolution between the two countries. Prior to the visit, in the interview with Voice of Vietnam, Chinese Ambassador to Vietnam Li Jiazhong informed that during Le Kha Phieu's visit to China, he and Chinese party leader Jiang Zemin would also work on measure to promote bilateral border talks so as to settle all border issues before the year 2000 (Ambassador Previews Party Leader's Visit to China, Voice of Vietnam). During the visit, Le Kha Phieu had talks with his Chinese counterpart Jiang Zemin. They agreed that it was imperative to settle border and territory problems through negotiations at an early date. The two leaders also agreed to sign a boundary treaty this year, and to settle the demarcation problem of the Gulf of Tonkin in 2000. They issued a Joint Declaration on 27 February that:

The two sides agree to place the primary issues foremost, show sympathy and compromise with each other, conduct fair, rational and friendly consultations and, taking into account international law and reality, try to satisfactorily settle the outstanding territorial and border issues between the two countries through peaceful negotiations. The two sides express their determination to accelerate the process of negotiations and raise their working efficiency for the concluding of the treaty on land border in 1999; to complete settlement of the maritime delineation of the Gulf of Tonkin in 2000; and to join efforts in making their common borderline one of peace, friendship and stability (China – Vietnam Joint Declaration in 1999, Xinhua News Agency).

Although the positive progress in border issue resolution, the tensions relating to South China Sea still remained. In response to a decision by China to ban fishing in the South China Sea from 1 June to 31 July 1999, the Spokesman of the Foreign Ministry stressed that "Vietnam has, on many occasions, affirmed that it has full historical evidence and legal basis to prove its indisputable sovereignty over Hoang Sa (Paracels) and Truong Sa (Spratly) archipelagos. As a coastal country, Vietnam has full sovereign rights over its exclusive economic zone and continental shelf" (Vietnam Criticises China's Move on Spratlys) Voice of Vietnam). However, the tensions did not negatively affect on the 14<sup>th</sup> round of talks of the joint working group on land border held in Beijing from 29 March to 5 May. During the meeting, some initial results obtained in the search for solutions to the demarcation of the border areas

relating to which the two sides held different opinions. They also compared notes on drawing a border map between the two countries (Amer 2002: 55).

During the visit by Vietnam's Deputy Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung to China in mid May, the border issues were also discussed between Nguyen Tan Dung and Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji. They discussed the measures to speed up the negotiation process on the land border issue so that a mutual agreement could be concluded in 1999 (Amer 2002: 28).

From 1-4 December 1999, China's Premier Zhu Rongji visited Vietnam. During the visit, he had talks with Vietnam's leaders. During the talks with Vietnam's Prime Minister Phan Van Khai, both the Prime Minister were satisfied with reports presented by the Vietnamese and Chinese chief negotiators relating to the progress made in the negotiations on the land border issue (Amer 2002: 28).

During the talks with Vietnam's Secretary-General Le Kha Phieu on 3 December, both the leaders hailed an agreement on bilateral land boundary issue reached Friday [3 December] as a 'great achievement'. Zhu expressed the hope that the land boundary negotiation teams would speed up their preparation for the signing of the treaty within this year so that the two countries could enter the 21<sup>st</sup> century with a common land boundary of peace, friendship and cooperation (Chinese Premier, Vietnamese Party Leader Hail Boundary Issue Pact, Xinhua News Agency).

With the greatest efforts from both sides, eventually, the Land Border Treaty was signed on 30 December 1999 in Hanoi by China's Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan and Vietnam's Foreign Minister Nguyen Manh Cam. The Land Border Treaty came into force after was ratified by Chinese National People's Congress on 29 April and Vietnamese National Assembly on 9 June 2000.

Taking a close look at the whole process of the land border dispute resolution between China and Vietnam shows the responsibility and assumption of two countries' leaders for settling the border issue between the two countries. The resolution of border issue were discussed at every summit meeting between the two countries top leaders and mentioned as an important and urgent task in every joint communiqué and joint statement. Despite controversies over territorial issues remained a source of tension in China - Vietnam relations, the two countries' leaders tried their best to



reduce the tensions, step by step dealt with the remaining problems, and most importantly did not allow the disputes to negatively affect the process of land border issue resolution. This was the most important and necessary effort which contributed to the success of border dispute resolution. In addition, the determination of two countries' leaders which was reflected by setting the deadline for resolving the land border issue put much pressure on the experts of both sides to speed up the negotiations. In the year of 1999, the two sides carried out four rounds of negotiation on land border issue at expert-level of which the longest round lasted for more than one month and the shortest one lasted for more than two weeks. Besides that, only within one year, four high ranking meeting of the two countries' top leaders took place to speed up the negotiation process on land border issue. All these showed that the will, determination and assumption of the two countries' leaders played a very crucial role in resolving the border issue between the two countries.

## **Conclusion**

The success of land border dispute resolution was definitely the result of both of the two countries' efforts to overcome challenges, difficulties and events happening during process of land border disputes resolution. However, it is worth to mention that the land border dispute resolution would not succeed without positively subjective attitude of each country. Especially, as in the case of China – a giant country, policy of China itself played an important role in the process. China itself from 1950s followed the so-called China's nationalism which was to gain national interests as many as possible. Hence, in land border disputes with its neighbouring countries, China followed policy of compromises rather than seizing by force and power. This could be seen clearly from land border resolutions between China and other countries such as Burma, Nepal, Laos, Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, etc. Toward Vietnam, China was also keen about resolving land border disputes in peace.

In addition, external factors and internal events happening inside China put great impacts on China's policy toward Vietnam. If China used to look at close relations between Vietnam and Soviet Union as an "alliance" form to contain China, during 1970s, the change in international context like change in relations between Soviet Union and US, issue of Taiwan put China in consideration of its own position

and moves. In order to gain balance between Soviet Union in one side and US in another side, China started to institute relations with Soviet Union through normalization. China also took advantage of this condition to request for Vietnam's withdrawal from Cambodia. Both Soviet Union and Vietnam adjust flexibly to China's request and agreed to let Vietnamese troops withdraw from Cambodia. This move significantly affected on China's attitude toward Vietnam.

An unexpected event happening in China was the Tiananmen Incident which created storms in China's arena of politics and discontented attitude in society and international opinion. However, the fact that Southeast Asian countries, especially Vietnam showed supportive attitude towards China's government made China have a new look on those countries. China recognised it was necessary to pay more attention to "old friends" for friendly and cooperative relations. Furthermore, China itself was aware of the need of developing economy and cooperating with all the countries in the new international context in which all the countries seek for peace, security, cooperation and development. This led China intentionally created a favourable surrounding environment in which Vietnam was one of the important focuses.

China's positive policy towards Vietnam and Vietnam's expectation to have good relationship with China led to normalization of the two countries relations after the dark period of hostility. Both China and Vietnam's leadership sought for development of bilateral relations paving the way to complete development and cooperation in all aspects. Since normalization, with good will and determination, series of visit exchanges and meetings were held to accelerate process of land border dispute resolution – one of the obstructions remaining at that time. Although the disputes on South China Sea have not reached any consent agreements, the land border disputes successfully resolved with the Land Border Treaty signed on 30 December 1999. Both sides also finished erecting the last landmark in 2009, marking a new development in bilateral relations of the two countries.

Obviously, China's nationalism, changes in international conditions, change in China's policy toward Vietnam, Vietnam's positive attitude and importantly the normalization of bilateral relations together with the leadership's determination indispensably led to success of land border dispute resolution helping China and Vietnam develop their relations further in future.

## CHAPTER V

### **Significance of Land Border Issue Resolution for China - Vietnam relations and Its Implication to the Region**

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The successful resolution of land border dispute is the common victory for both China and Vietnam. The significance of the victory is not only for the two countries bilateral relations, but also for peace and stability of the region. In this context, this chapter attempts to examine the significance of the land border issue resolution for the two countries' bilateral relations as well as implication to the region. For the bilateral relations between China and Vietnam, the chapter will primarily focus on significance for political, economic, trade, security aspects. In the meantime, for the region, stability and development aspects will be examined.

#### **1. Significance of Land Border Issue Resolution for China – Vietnam Relations**

##### **1.1. Political Relations**

Territorial dispute as mentioned earlier was the most complicated and toughest problem in China – Vietnam relations which existed for ages. Historically, China as an ambitious and powerful neighbour used to wage aggressive wars in order to turn Vietnam into a part of China or to occupy Vietnam's land. Even during the period of 1950s and 1960s in which China – Vietnam relations were the most intimate and closest, Vietnam remained sensitive to border issue with China. It was reflected with the Central Committee of WPV's letter to Central Standing Committee of the CPC in 1957 in which the Vietnamese proposed the two sides should maintain status quo of the historical border and any outstanding disputes should be settled through negotiations. Moreover, in the second half of 1970s the border issue was emerging as one of the sources which caused the tension and the breakdown of the relations between the two countries when the two sides accused each other of occupying and encroaching upon the other side's territory. Consequently, in the Vietnamese view,

China was regarded as an expansionist and a threat. Therefore, the land border issue resolution plays very significant role for the two countries relations.

Firstly, the success of land border resolution means that one of the oldest disputes was settled. Moreover, the problem was resolved through peaceful negotiations with full consideration of international law, international practices and concessions from both sides, opening prospects for the two countries settle the other disputes. For instance, the success of land border dispute settlement with the conclusion of the Land Border Treaty in 1999 created a momentum for the two countries to reach the Agreement on Demarcation of Waters, Exclusive Economic Zones and Continental Shelves in the Gulf of Tonkin and the Agreement on Fishing Cooperation in the Gulf of Tonkin. In addition, the land border resolution is the valuable experience for the two countries in peacefully settling the dispute in South China Sea.

Secondly, the land border issue resolution not only ended one of the disputes related to territory, but also more significantly enhanced trust and understanding between the two countries. With a well-defined borderline in accordance with international law and international law, the Vietnam's concern about land dispute with its powerful and ambitious neighbour in border region is cleared away. This is very significant for small countries, especially for Vietnam which has experienced a number of defensive wars against China to protect its sovereignty and territory because it helps the Vietnamese feel secure to develop relations with China. In a broader sense, the settlement of territorial disputes contributes positively to Vietnam's capacity to safeguard its sovereignty (Amer and Nguyen Hong Thao 2005: 441). Vice chairman of Vietnam's National Assembly's Committee for Foreign Affairs Ngo Quang Xuan said "When a big neighbour recognises and respects your national frontiers, this cements your international position" (Border to bring nations closer).

Seen from China's perspective, the conclusion of land border dispute resolution with Vietnam is a success of its neighbourhood diplomacy which is seeking to build good and friendly relationship with its neighbouring countries. The border issue settlement serves as a major confidence building measure between the two countries. With the success of land border issue resolution through peaceful negotiation, China, to some extent, has improved its image which had been seen as an aggressive and

ambitious country. Apart from that, it has initially built confidence which is based on to settle other disputes through peaceful negotiations with Vietnam. This has been served as a firm ground for China and Vietnam to develop their bilateral relations since the normalisation in late 1991.

Taking a closer look at the process of border issue settlement and development of relations between the two countries indicates that along with the progress of border issue resolution, the bilateral relations between China and Vietnam have also gradually improved. Annually, highest ranking leaders exchanged their visits to discuss measures to settle the land border problem and to enhance relations between the two countries. Especially in 1999 when the land border issue resolution went to the final stage. During the visit to China by Vietnamese Secretary-General Le Kha Phieu, China – Vietnam relations was enhanced a new high level with the sixteen-word principle, namely "long-term stability, future-oriented, good-neighbourliness and comprehensive cooperation" as the guiding framework in the new century. This indicates that when the oldest, most complicated, and sensitive problem was settled, trust and understandings to each other have been also increased. This is the most important ground for China and Vietnam to build their bilateral relations as the framework which had been put forward by the two countries' leaders.

Consequently, since 2000 the China – Vietnam relations stepped into a new period - the period of development. In December, 2000 during the visit to China by Vietnamese President Tran Duc Luong, the two sides signed a joint declaration on comprehensive cooperation for the new century which concretise the sixteen word principle in specific means to develop the relations between the two countries in all areas and also agreed to make the two countries "good neighbours, good friends, good comrades and good partners".

In that connection, from 2001 to 2008, general secretaries of CPC and CPV exchanged seven mutual visits of which the General Secretaries of CPC paid visits to Vietnam in March 2002, November 2005 and November 2006, and Secretary-General of CPV in November 2001, April 2003 and August 2006 and May 30, 2008.

In February and March 2002, Chinese Secretary-General Jiang Zemin paid an official goodwill visit to Vietnam. The leaders of the two countries had an in-depth

exchange of views on strengthening the party and state relations between China and Vietnam in the new century; and agreed to maintain high-level contacts, expand in depth economic and trade cooperation, and educate the people of the two countries with the spirit of long-standing Sino-Vietnamese friendship (Vietnam-China Joint Statement in December 2001).

In 2006, both the highest leaders of the two parties mutually paid official visits. It was the first time Secretary-General Nong Duc Manh travelled abroad since he has held the highest position in CPV. For Secretary-General Hu Jintao, it was his fourth time he has visited Vietnam and his second time on the highest post of the party and the state. Recently, from May 30<sup>th</sup> to June 2<sup>nd</sup> 2008, Secretary-General Nong Duc Manh paid an official visit to China. The visit was Manh's fourth since he took the CPV helm in 2001. The frequent visit exchanges of both the highest leaders of the two parties reflected the smooth development of the bilateral relations as well as the increase of trust and understanding between the two countries.

Besides that, within seven years, the presidents of two states exchanged six official visits to each other. Vietnamese President visited China three times in September 2003, July 2005 and May 2007 and Chinese President visited Vietnam in March 2002, November 2005 and November 2006. These visits enhanced China – Vietnam relations to a new high level and play an active role for peace, stability, development and cooperation in the region and the world.

The heads of the two governments also had exchange of visits. In May 2004, Vietnamese Prime Minister Phan Van Khai paid an official visit to China. In response to Khai's visit, in October 2004 Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao visited Vietnam. And most recently in October 2008, Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung paid an official friendship visit to China. The Vietnamese Prime Minister had talks with highest ranking leaders of the Party, State and Government of China and at the same time two sides issued a Joint Statement. On the occasion, Chinese President Hu Jintao highlighted that China-Vietnam ties were in a new phase of comprehensive development. He noted China highly valued its relations with Vietnam and was willing to make joint efforts with the country to push for the fast and sound development of the bilateral comprehensive and strategic partnership based on the 16-word principle.

The frequent exchange of visits between highest leaders of the two countries, especially since 2004, became rare events in history of the relations of the two countries. It proved that China paid much attention to neighbouring foreign policy and at the same time the Sino – Vietnamese relations have been developing smoothly.

Apart from the top leader visits of the both countries, every year, more than 100 delegations at various levels from ministerial to grass-root one of both sides are exchanged. These activities have contributed to enhancement of mutual understanding and trust and expansion of the bilateral cooperation.

The visit exchanges of high ranking officials of the two countries have strengthened Sino – Vietnamese relations in depth. The leaders of the both sides have expressed their utmost efforts to consolidate and enhance Sino – Vietnamese relations, mutual trust, and comprehensive cooperation at various levels.

Although the two sides eliminated hostility toward each other and stepped into a new page of relationship history and their bilateral relations have gained remarkable achievements in all fields there remain territorial disputes related to South China Sea. The territorial disputes still serve as a source of tension between the two countries. Disputes relating to oil exploration in the South China Sea and the signing of contracts with foreign companies for exploration were prevalent during of 1994, 1996, and 1997. During 1998 there were shorter periods of tension relating to the disputes. During 1999 the focus was on reaching a settlement of the land border dispute and no significant tension was caused by any of the border disputes. And recent years, after the China's State Council approved setting up Sansha city on the Hainan island to administer three islands, including Parcel and Spratly archipelagos in November 2007, Vietnam also played a move as Dang Nang authority appointed Chairman of Hoang Sa (Paracels) island district on April 25th, 2009. As a result, the events triggered the governments and the peoples' response from both sides.

Tensions in this area indicate that solving the disputes is not a simple task. It demands great efforts not only from China or Vietnam, but also from other countries involved. However, the success of land border and Gulf of Tonkin resolution, to some extent, brought about the faith that such territorial disputes could be settled through peaceful means and negotiations.

## 1.2. Security Significance

The border war in 1979 and then a number of border conflicts between military forces of two countries turned border region of friendship and cooperation in 1950s, 1960s and first half of 1970s into a region of hostility and death for more than ten years. Hundred thousands of troops were maintained in the common border by both sides and possibility of another border war could occur at any time. Therefore, the land border dispute resolution played a very crucial role in removing a source of tension and dispute between the two countries. The Temporary Agreement on Border Affairs signed in November 1991 was the first step to bring peace and stability to the border region between the two countries. Following that, the two sides have carried out series of activities to restore security and order in border region. The most important move was that most of military positions along the borderline which had built for the border war in 1979 have been basically removed. There was no longer the appearance of army troops at the border except the border guard troops which have turned the war zone into a civil and free one for cooperation and development. Apart from that, the agreement of border issue resolution created a favourable condition for the two sides to cooperate with each other in order to conduct mine-sweeping operations at the border region. It needs to know that millions of landmines were laid at the border region during the border war 1979. For instance, at least 10,000 landmines were laid within a 3km radius of the Friendship Pass on the border during 1979 – 1989 (Chinese soldiers nearly done with landmine sweeping on Sino-Vietnam border). Those landmines are dangerous to people and threaten security in the border region. The report by Landmine Monitor which conducted field survey on provinces of Guangxi and Yunnan, both bordering Vietnam shows that in three surveyed counties in Guangxi, there were 359 mine casualties identified. No new mine casualties had been reported in three counties since 1996. In Wenshan Prefecture in Yunnan, 5,310 casualties identified, including 3,811 survivors. The latest mine incident in September 2000 (International Campaign to Ban Landmines: 639). Since the normalisation of relations, three campaigns of landmine clearance have been conducted. The first two campaigns were conducted from 1992 to 1994 and 1997 to 1999. The third campaign, which began in 2005, was aimed at areas around prospective boundary markers to pave the way for a complete boundary settlement before the end of 2008 (Chinese soldiers nearly done with landmine sweeping on Sino-Vietnam border). According to China's



report, mine threat on the Chinese side along the Sino – Vietnamese border had been basically removed (International Campaign to Ban Landmines: 639). This is an active result of the Sino – Vietnamese land border dispute resolution.

Along with the development of the bilateral relations, trans-border activities between the people of the two countries have been increasing quickly. Besides the activities of cooperation and development, criminal activities, especially smuggling, mainly Chinese and drug and human traffic also increased quickly. These activities are the causes of disorder and insecurity in border region between the two countries. Moreover, the issue of smuggling of Chinese goods, drug trafficking and its negative impact on Vietnamese economy had also been a source of contention before the two countries concluded the Land Border Treaty (Do, Thi Thuy 2009: 12-13). Consequently, Hanoi, in an effort to control the trafficking and flooding of Chinese goods into Vietnamese market, banned 17 categories of Chinese import during 1992 – 1993, however the attempt was not successful (Gu, Xiaosong, and Womack, Brantly 2000: 1047). To deal with the issue of trafficking, the two countries discussed regulation of cross border economic activities in 1997. Eventually, an agreement on cross-border trade between China and Vietnam was reached on 19 October 1998 in the connection with the visit to China by Vietnamese Prime Minister Phan Van Khai.

Apart from goods smuggling and drug trafficking, trans-border human trafficking has been also emerging as a security concern. In recent years, the cases of Vietnamese women and little boys trafficking have been increasing. A survey in ten northern cities and provinces by Vietnamese Ministry of Public Security shows that in 2002 1,088 cases of Vietnamese women and children were kidnapped and trafficked to China, among which 1,066 cases were women, accounting for 98 percent, and 22 cases were children (mostly boys under 10 years old). In 2005, about 15,000 Vietnamese women migrated to China (mainly across the border region) to become prostitutes or wives of Chinese men. According to a report by Guangxi province's Security Department, there are currently 30,000 to 40,000 Vietnamese in Guangxi, including women and children born in China, among whom 80 percent are Chinese wives and the rest are prostitutes. China expelled and returned to Vietnam about 6,667 cases from 1996 to 2002 and about 3,000 cases in 2003 alone (Do, Thi Thuy 2009: 13).

To deal with the problem, Chinese and Vietnamese border police and guards have cooperated with each other to take series of actions such as sharing information and conducting joint border patrol to put the situation under control. Besides that, the two governments made effort to create favourable conditions for the struggle against illegal trans-border activities by reaching agreements on border affair. Concretely, on 18 November 2009, China and Vietnam signed a package of agreements on the demarcation of their land border which includes a protocol on demarcation of the land boundary, an agreement on land boundary management regime and an agreement on land port and its management regime (China, Vietnam sign land boundary demarcation agreements). Undoubtedly, the clearly demarcated border line helps the police and border guard forces to easily patrol and control and at the same time fosters and expand security cooperation of the two countries at the border region.

Thus, with the land border issue resolution, border security issues between China and Vietnam have been basically settled and improved. As the two scholars remarked:

Clearly demarcated borderlines will be easier to control and to patrol. Security cooperation can be stepped up, expanded, and made more efficient. An additional potential benefit is that more efficient measures could be implemented to combat smuggling across the land borders. In the long term that fact that borders are settled ought to prevent them from becoming disputed issues such as during the second half of 1970s between Vietnam and China (Amer, Ramses, and Nguyen, Hong Thao 2005: 439-440).

### **1.3. Economic Cooperation and Development**

China has two provinces which are adjacent to the common land borderlines. The area of the two provinces is about 610,000 square kilometres (Guangxi accounting for 230,000 square kilometres and Yunnan 380,000 square kilometres) with total population approximately 90 million, roughly equal to Vietnam's population. Their combined gross domestic product (GDP) in 1997 was 365.9 billion yuan –almost 5 percent of China total. On the Vietnamese side, six border provinces combined an area of 55,584 square kilometres, accounting for 16.8 percent of the country's territory. These provinces' GDP in 1996 was about US\$ 720 million, contributing 2.9 percent to national total (Gu Xiaosong and Womack 2000: 1043).

With the condition, potential of economic cooperation between border provinces are very promising. The re-opening of border would create good opportunities for the two sides to exchange trade and cooperate in economic field.

### **1.3.1. Border Trade**

Along with the demilitarisation of the border region between China and Vietnam which followed the signing of the Temporary Agreement on Border Affairs, some of border gates between the two countries have been opened for civil activities such as Youyiguan – Huu Nghi Quan on 1 April 1992; Hekou – Laocai on 18 May 1993; Dongxing – Mongcai on 17 April 1994 (Nguyen Minh Hang 2001: 127), which have promoted trans-border economic activities between the two countries. Border trade activities have been rapidly flourishing. Small-scale trade has been displaced by large-scale trade (Gu Xiaosong and Womack 2000: 1047-1048). Volume of trade exchange between Guangxi and Yunnan and Vietnam's border provinces have quickly increased. In 1988 only ten types of commodity were traded across the border, but in 1992 the varieties of commodities were more than seventy. By 1993 there were 36 trade locations on the Guangxi border (Womack 1994: 499). Guangxi Province saw the value of its total trade with Vietnam increase rapidly from 450 million yuan in 1988 to 2.6 billion yuan<sup>15</sup> in 1992, an almost six-fold jump (Gu Xiaosong and Womack 2000: 1048).

According to Vietnamese statistics, within three years (1994 – 1996), total exported-imported border trade volume between China and Vietnam was US\$ 750.59 million, in 1996 alone was US\$ 409.28 million, increasing 170 percent in comparison with 1995 (Nguyen Minh Hang 2001: 134).

However, due to the Asian economic crisis in 1997, China – Vietnam trade volume has flattened out, dropping 13 percent in 1998. Guangxi and Yunnan saw their trade with all destinations fall that year by 3%. In 1999, the province's trade with Vietnam was 2.864 billion yuan, only 10 percent increase over seven years (Gu Xiaosong and Womack 2000: 1048).

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<sup>15</sup> At that time 1 USD is equivalent to 4 yuan.

The conclusions of land border issue resolution in 1999 and the demarcation of Gulf of Tonkin in 2000 created favourable conditions for the two countries to cooperate in trade and economic fields which have rapidly improved bilateral trade between China and Vietnam. So far, the two countries have signed around 70 agreements and 40 documents at state level of which more than a half directly related to economic and trade cooperation. These agreements and documents create legitimate basis for developing trade and economic relations between the two countries. Some important agreements are Framework Agreement on Oil and Natural Gas Cooperation in Agreed Zones in the Tonkin Gulf, Agreement on Fishery Cooperation in the Tonkin Gulf, Memorandum of understanding cooperation in the two economic corridors and the pan- Tonkin Gulf economic circle....Besides, the two countries also set up China-Viet Nam Committee on Trade and Economic Cooperation to further deepen bilateral trade and economic relations.

Bilateral trade increased from US\$ 32 million in 1991 to US\$ 10.4 billion in 2006, US\$ 15.85 billion in 2007, beating the set target of US\$ 15 billion by 2010. According to Chinese Customs In 2009, China - Vietnam trade volume rose 8.2 percent to US\$21.05 billion, including US\$16.3 billion worth of Chinese exports to Vietnam, up 7.8 percent year on year, and US\$4.75 billion Chinese imports from Vietnam, up 9.5 percent. A new target is set up to reach US\$ 25 billion in 2010 of which border trade has accounted for a large amount. Vietnam has been Guangxi's largest and Yunnan's third largest trading partners over the past decade. In 2009, nearly 4.9 million people crossed the Dongxing border, rising from about 4.6 million in 2008 (Rong Xiandong et al 2010). The bilateral trade volume between Vietnam and these two provinces is considerable. The Guangxi – Vietnam trade volume reached US\$ 2.370 billion and US\$ 4.1 billion in 2007 and 2008 respectively, accounting for 15 percent of the total bilateral trade turnover, while that between Yunnan and Vietnam is about 4 percent and is expected to rise to at least 10 percent of the total bilateral trade volume of China and Vietnam in the near future (Do, Thi Thuy 2009: 22).

Year	Total Value (US\$ Million)	Year	Total Value (US\$ Million)
1991	30	2004	6,740
1995	361.9	2005	7,200
1999	1,417	2006	10,420
2000	1,538	2007	15,850
2001	1,518.3	2010	17,600
2002	2,668	2015	30,000
2003	4,870	2020	50,000

**Table 5.1: China – Vietnam’s Trade Volume from 1991 to 2020**

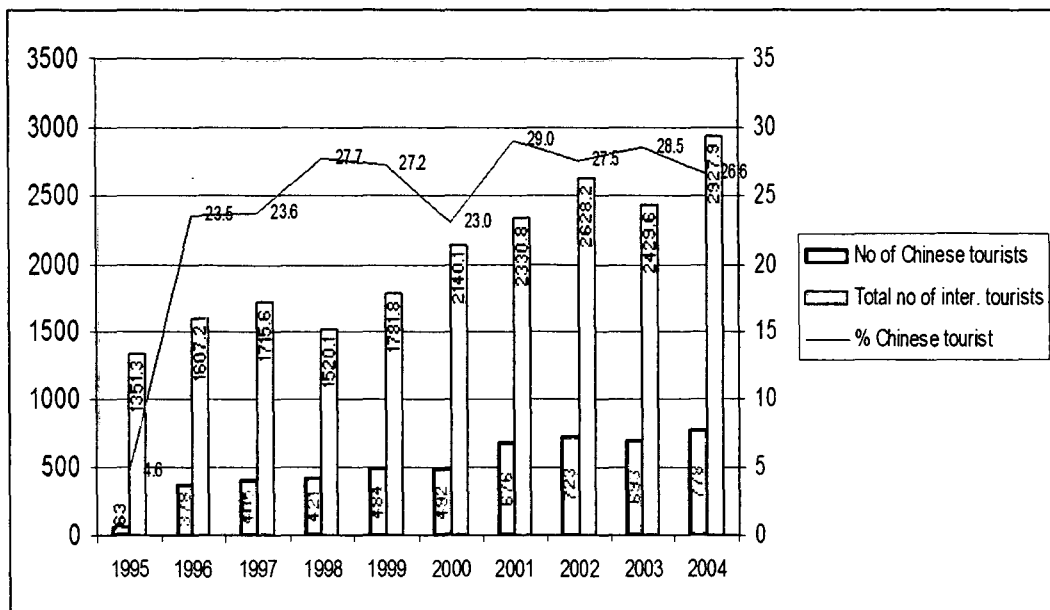
Source: Ministry of Trade and Industry and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Vietnam. Data from 2010 onwards are estimated by Vietnam’s Ministry of Trade and Industry. (Dinh Van An 2005).

### **1.3.2. Tourism**

The opening of the border areas and the booming trade between China and Vietnam after the normalisation in 1991 paved the way for the development of tourism across the border between the two countries. Guangxi and Yunnan in China and Vietnam’s six northern border provinces combine together creating an area with great potential for tourism development. With a number of landscapes favoured by nature and diversity of cultures which have been created by various ethnic minorities, the border region between China and Vietnam has become an ideal destination for tourists from both countries.

Historically, during the 1980s there had been almost no cross-border contact between China and Vietnam except for occasional furtive expeditions by border residents (Gu Xiaosong and Womack 2000: 1050). However, tourism blooming after the normalisation has blotted out the past of a deadly border region. With the demilitarisation of the border region, people from the two countries now can easily visit many places with beautiful landscapes around border region such as China's Kunming, Dali, Lijiang, Xianggelila, Xixoangbana, Beihai, Guilin, Nanning, Hainan, Hongkong, Macao, Guangzhou, and Shenzhen, and Vietnam's Sapa, Bacha, Mongcai, Langson, Halong Bay, Haiphong, Hanoi etc...

Since 1992 number of Chinese and Vietnamese people visiting other side's landscapes has increased rapidly. From 1993 to 1998, there were 12.77 million border crossings between China and Vietnam - 8.18 million from China and 4.59 million from Vietnam (Gu Xiaosong and Womack 2000: 1050). During the period of 2000 – 2004, except the year of 2003 due SARS, the average number of Chinese tourists accounted for 26.5 percent of total international tourists visiting Vietnam. In 2004 alone there were 778,000 Chinese tourists coming to various destinations in Vietnam, while the number of Vietnamese tourists visiting China was 167,700, increasing 30 percent in comparison to 2003 (Dinh Van An 2005).



**Figure 5.1: Number of Chinese Tourist to Vietnam from 1995 to 2004**

Source: Dinh Van An 2005

To promote border tourism, China and Vietnam agreed to simplify custom procedures for visitors in 2006. Instead of applying for visa, visitors can use tourism-card. However, the limitations of tourism card is the holder cannot stay for a long time and travel further than the places adjacent to border. To deal with the shortcomings, most recently, Vietnam has revised the regulation, allowing Chinese tourism-card holders to travel to its nation-wide tourism attractions (Do Thi Thuy 2000: 16). Besides that, the two countries have established cooperation mechanisms to further develop tourism in border region. For instance, with the completion of demarcation work on borderlines in such sensitive places as Ban Gioc Waterfalls, Bac Luan Estuary, Friendship border gate, the Nanning – Hanoi railway has resumed operation; a special mechanism applied for Ban Gioc Waterfalls to jointly exploit tourism potential in this area.

Not only has the development of border tourism contributed to the increase of both countries' GDP, but also created a lot of jobs and improved living standard for border residents. Apart from that, tourism activities have created favourable condition for people from the two countries to visit each other, promoting exchanges in various fields which have contributed to enhancement of friendly relations between China and Vietnam.

### **1.3.3. Cross-Border Regional Economic Cooperation**

With great potential of border region economic development, soon after the border region between the two countries became normal, China and Vietnam agreed to put forward plans to develop cross-border economic cooperation at the pairs of border gates between the two countries. The cross-border economic cooperation will help to “reduce tedious and unnecessary formalities, promote exchange and trade, bring about progress in local economies, and promote friendly intercourse between the peoples of the two countries” (Gu Xiaosong and Womack 2000: 1051)

One of the first cross-border economic cooperation zone initiated in 1992 was the Beilun River economic cooperation district which includes Dongxing in China and Mongcai in Vietnam, with an area of approximately 1,000 sq. km and a population of 160,000. Dongxing and Mongcai are the largest and closest pair of border port cities,

separated only by the relatively narrow Beilun River. The cities lie on the coast of the Gulf of Tonkin. The advantage of the economic zone is the convenient transport system on both land and the water. Apart from that, ethnic commonalities in this area are also an advantage. In Jiangping District of Dongxing, there are about 15,000-strong community of people of the Jing nationality, a Chinese minority that is ethnically the same as Vietnam's majority Kinh nationality (Gu Xiaosong and Womack 2000: 1051). Most recently, in January 2010, South China's Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region and Vietnam approved the framework agreement to establish a new cross-border economic zone between Dongxing and Mongcai which was designed to replace the current four-square-kilometre cross-border economic zone in Dongxing approved by China's cabinet, the State Council, in 1992. Vietnamese side had approved the plan in 2009. According to the initial plan, the new cross-border zone will cover about four square kilometres in Mongcai city and about 5.8 kilometres in Dongxing in the first phase and the city hopes to expand the size of the Dongxing section of the zone to around 13 square kilometres in the future. A second bridge will be built on Beilun River on the border between China and Vietnam as part of the new infrastructure to further boost border trade in the future Dongxing - Mongcai economic zone (Rong Xiandong et al 2010).

China and Vietnam are also working to set up a 17-square-km trans-border economic zone in the city of Pingxiang in Guangxi and Langson province of Vietnam (Le Tian 2007). The Pingxiang – Langson economic zone lies in a very important and convenient location, just 150 kilometres from Hanoi and there is a railway port. Its location has made it a centre for the accumulation and distribution of goods, as well as for trade and information exchange. In the future, it may become an entryway to China not only for Vietnam but for other Southeast Asian countries as well (Gu Xiaosong and Womack 2000: 1052).

Just on 8 June 2010, the discussions to build a cross-border economic cooperation zone between Hekou Yao Autonomous County in Yunnan and Laocai, a province of north-eastern Vietnam have been completed and the framework agreement was signed. The Hekou – Laocao cross-border economic cooperation zone is in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Asian Development Bank (ADB)'s plan to support China and Vietnam to build two cross-border economic



zones, another is between Pingxiang of Guangxi and Langson Province in Vietnam. An official from the UNDP China said that the economic cooperation zone will improve the quality and level of development, and promote economic prosperity in the border areas between China and Vietnam. Chinese Assistant Minister of Commerce said that China-Vietnam cross-border economic cooperation, will further strengthen the Sino-Vietnamese border area in China - ASEAN Free Trade Area (CAFTA) and the attractiveness of regional cooperation and influence in favour of the adjustment and optimization of both the Sino - Vietnamese border areas economic structure, for the economic development of border areas between the two countries to provide strong motivation and a broader space (Mao Minnie 2010).

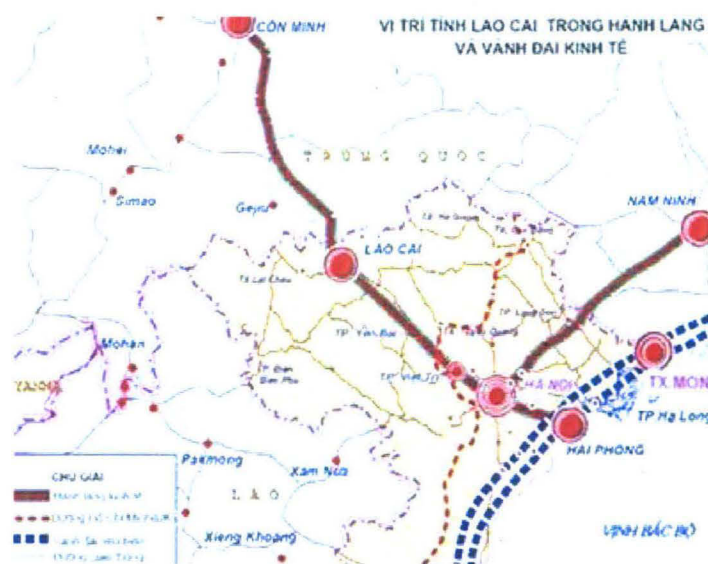
Recognising the great potential of cross border economic cooperation, the two countries agreed to expand the economic cooperation area. In the connection the project of “Two Corridors, One economic Belt” has been put forward.

#### **“Two Corridors, One Economic Belt”**

“Two Corridors, One Economic Belt” is a common project which aims at developing regional economic cooperation between China’s southern region and Vietnam’s northern provinces. The “Two Corridors, One Economic Belt” covers an area of 869,000 square kilometres with the total population of about 184 millions. Idea of the project was first time initiated by Vietnam’s Prime Minister Phan Van Khai during the visit to China in May 2004. Immediately, it was supported by Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao. In October of the same year, during the visit to Vietnam, Chinese and Vietnamese Prime Ministers committed to making the idea become true.

The two corridors involve China’s Yunnan, Guangxi, Guangdong, and Hainan provinces and Vietnam’s five northern provinces, Laocai, Langson, Quangninh, Hanoi, and Haiphong. One corridor covers four cities in Yunnan Province (Kunming, Yuxi, Honghe, and Wenshan) and eight Vietnam northern cities and provinces (Laocai, Yenbai, Phutho, Vinhphuc, Hanoi, Hungyen, Haiduong, Haiphong, and Quangninh) with area of 80,000 square kilometres and population of around 19 million people. Another connects China’s Nanning with Vietnam’s Langson, Hanoi, Haiphong and Quangninh provinces which covers a total of 60,000 square kilometres with population

of around 20 million and total GDP of US\$ 13 billion. The corridors have three firm bases for sustainable development, namely fair similarity in geography and natural conditions, close connection to the CATFA, and strong political bonds between the two nations (Dinh Van An 2005).



**Map 5.1: Map of the Two Corridors**

Source: <http://ngoai.vuhagiang.gov.vn/home/nc72/tintuc-176/Phat-trien-hai-hanh-lang-mot-vanh-dai-kinh-te-viet-nam-trung-quoc-se-hinh-thanh-chuoi-do-thi-cua-khau.html>,

Accessed 12 June 2010

This initiative of economic cooperation, which focuses on developing three different levels of industrial division of labours - first, the Pearl River Delta, electronics, telecommunications, and services; second, Yunnan and Guangxi, labour and capital-intensive industries; third, Vietnam, consumer market - linking China's southern provinces of Yunnan and Guangxi with Vietnam (Liu Fukuo 2008).

While the Kunming – Laocai – Hanoi – Haiphong corridor focuses on developing infrastructure, enhancing trade, financial, social cooperation..., the Nanning – Langson – Hanoi – Haiphong corridor develops commercial goods, commercial service, investment, eco-technical cooperation, transport...

The two corridors will help implement Vietnam's policies on pushing socioeconomic development in its northern mountainous provinces and assist China in carrying out its strategy to "open up" the west - an important part of the country's overall economic development plan

Through these corridors, two regions will complement to each other through cooperation. Kunming and Nanning are fairly developed areas, comparing to Vietnam's northern region. Production factors of two provinces Yunnan and Guangxi are concentrated in these two cities. This corridor also facilitates transporting Kunming's exports to other countries through Vietnam's ports. Laocai, Hanoi and Haiphong had a transport system going to the sea, with abundant inexpensive labor force and a rather vast market, although these provinces do not have adequate capital, knowledge and production technology (Dinh Van An 2005).

Economic belt is developed on the advantageous basis of Gulf of Tonkin. It is circled by the north-eastern coast of Vietnam, southern Guangxi coast's Leizhou Peninsula and Hainan Island of China with its 1,595 kilometres coast and an area of over 26,000 square kilometres. Currently it embraces China's Guangxi, Guangdong, Hainan (and even extends to Hong Kong and Macao) and 10 coastal provinces of Vietnam, namely Quangninh, Haiphong, Thaibinh, Namdinh, Ninhbinh, Thanhhoa, Nghean, Hatinh, Quangbinh, and Quangtri. One of the advantages of the Gulf of Tonkin economic belt is that there are several big harbours along the belt such as Qinzhou, Fangcheng ports in Guangxi, China and Cailan, Haiphong in Vietnam. The cooperation between China and Vietnam along the belt focuses on infrastructure development, tourism, fishery, environment protection...

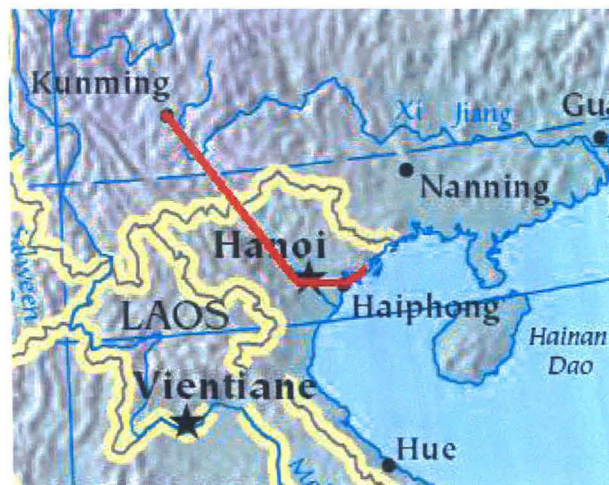
Two economic corridors and the economic belt will form a triangle whose 3 vertices are three most developed cities and areas of the regions. All these vertices are potential in creating significant spillover effects in their own regions, despite that this effect is different from location (Dinh Van An 2005).



**Map 5.2: Map of Gulf of Tonkin Rim Economic Belt**

Source: [http://vi.wikipedia.org/wiki/V%C3%A0nh\\_%C4%91ai\\_kinh\\_t%E1%BA%BF\\_v%E1%BB%8Bnh\\_B%E1%BA%AFc\\_B%E1%BB%99](http://vi.wikipedia.org/wiki/V%C3%A0nh_%C4%91ai_kinh_t%E1%BA%BF_v%E1%BB%8Bnh_B%E1%BA%AFc_B%E1%BB%99), Accessed 12 June 2010

With the development and cooperation models, China and Vietnam will take full advantage of geographical proximity and the convenience of transport system of both countries. The development of the Kunming – Laocai – Hanoi - Haiphong corridor will considerably reduce travel time from mainland to the sea and outside markets.



**Map 5.3: Map of Kunming – Laocai – Hanoi – Haiphong corridor, the shortest route to the sea from Yunnan Province**

Source: [http://vi.wikipedia.org/wiki/T%E1%BA%ADp\\_tin:KunmingHaiphong.png](http://vi.wikipedia.org/wiki/T%E1%BA%ADp_tin:KunmingHaiphong.png), Accessed 12 June 2010.

Thus, the “two corridors, one economic belt” is one of the unofficial regional cooperation models akin to the “development triangle” in ASEAN’s sub-regional cooperation. Being different from the CAFTA with its strict regulations and mechanisms, “two corridor, one economic belt” bases mainly on bilateral efforts without the binding regulations (Do Thi Thuy 2009: 19). The “two corridors, one economic belt” has opened a new development direction for economic and trade cooperation between China and Vietnam based on principle of equality and mutual benefit.

In the future, as the “two corridors, one belt” and its transport system are improved, it will remarkably reduce the transport line and time, facilitating the development of China – Vietnam as well as China – ASEAN economic cooperation into a new height (Do Thi Thuy 2009: 19).

#### **1.3.4. Infrastructure Development**

To promote cross-border economic cooperation, soon after the border re-opened, China and Vietnam have carried out series of projects to improve infrastructure in border region.

In 1992, the Guangxi provincial government invested more than 200 million yuan in numerous infrastructure projects in border area. Fourteen of these projects worth 123 million yuan of investment are intended to be in or aid Dongxing. These projects have focused on improvement and development of electricity, water, telecommunication and transport supplies. For instance, a second-class highway from Fangcheng to Dongxing was constructed; power lines with a capacity of 110 kV have been stretched between those same cities; a bridge from Dongxing over into Vietnam has been built over the Beilun River; Dongxing has received a new waterworks that supplies 40,000 tons of water per day, and some 5,000 direct-dial telephones have been installed (Gu Xiaosong and Womack 2000: 1052).

To promote the development in border area, Vietnam has also poured its investment into various projects in order to build up the infrastructure of its border

area. These projects have included the improvement of the Hanoi-Langson and Hanoi-Mongcai highways; the erection of power transmission lines from Hanoi to both of those cities; the construction of direct-dial telephones in these areas; and the building of the Vangia port and a heliport at Mongcai. Furthermore, municipal administrations at Mongcai, Langson, and Laosai have been greatly upgraded in order to cope with the added burdens of border commerce (Gu Xiaosong and Womack 2000: 1052).

In parallel with the development of bilateral relations, cross-border economic cooperation has greatly developed, demanding more investment into modernisation of infrastructure from both sides. To promote the cross-border economic cooperation, especially the project of “two corridors, one economic belt”, China and Vietnam have accelerated improvement and development of transport infrastructure. On the Chinese side, since 2000, Yunnan Province has invested and upgraded the national highway with six lanes from Kunming to Hekou in order to connect with Vietnam’s transport system from Laocai Province to Hanoi and Haiphong. The total length of the route is about 793 kilometres. This is the most important road to develop the Kunming – Laocai – Hanoi - Haiphong corridor and the shortest way to transport goods from Yunnan to Vietnam and to a third country. The whole road was put in use in 2007. Apart from that, the building of an international standard railway from Kunming to Hekou was completed in 2007. In the meantime, Vietnam upgraded the national road No. 70 from Hanoi to Laocai. In addition, in April 2009, Vietnam began construction of a new Hanoi - Laocai highway and expects to complete in 2013. The 245-kilometre highway will connect with the highway from Kunming to Hekou in Laocai (Nguyen Ba An 2008: 43). To enhance transport capacity, the two countries agreed to upgrade the Yunnan - Hanoi rail route to international standard gauge of 1,435 mm. From Kunming to Hekou, besides the upgrading of the old railway with gauge of 1,000 mm, a new railroad with international standard is being constructed and expected to complete in 2011. On the Vietnamese side a new international standard railway from Laocai to Haiphong which connects the railway from Kunming to Hekou is being constructed. Along with the new roads and railways construction, the transport network from Hanoi to Haiphong is also being upgraded to meet transport demands. A new freight station with capacity of 1000 containers/day was put in use in Laocai Province. To enhance transport capacity and to diversify types of transport, Vietnamese Government has invested to construct an airport in Laocai in order to open

a new airline Kunming – Laocai – Hanoi in 2012. In 2009, a bridge across Red River was completed to link Kimthanh trade centre in Laocai with Beishan trade centre in Hekou, Yunnan.

To develop the Nanning – Langson – Hanoi – Haiphong corridor, Guangxi Province upgraded and completed the national highway from Nanning to Friendship Border Gate which linked with Vietnam national highway No. 1 in 2005. Consequently, travel time from Nanning to Hanoi reduced from 8 to 4 hours, speeding up goods exchange, reducing transport fees and enhancing competitive advantage. Besides that, China agreed to build three new highways to connect Guangxi with northern part of Vietnam. One is 136 kilometres long from Nanning to Fangcheng harbour which is connected with the national highway network. The Nanning – Fangcheng highway is under operation. The second highway is from Fangcheng to Dongxing which is linked with Vietnam's Mongcai – Halong Bay. And the third which is 128 kilometres long from Bose to Longbang is being constructed and expected to complete in 2010. Meanwhile Vietnam is speeding up the building of Hanoi – Langson highway with 6 lanes and expected to complete in 2015 (Nguyen Ba An 2008: 44).

For development of economic belt, the two countries agreed to build a highway route and a railroad. The highway route will pass the cities and provinces of the two countries such as Zhanjiang – Beihai - Qinzhou – Fangcheng – Halong – Haiphong – Thaibinh – Namdinh – Ninhbinh – Thanhhoa – Vinh – Hatinh – Donghoi – Dongha. The road could be connected with the highway in Vietnam's central region and the East – West corridor of four countries Vietnam, Laos, Thailand and Myanmar. Currently, China completed the Nanning – Hainan - Dongxing highway route. In the meantime, Vietnam is promoting the construction of the highway route from Halong to Mongcai with 170 kilometres in length. It is funded by the Chinese official development assistance (ODA) planned to put in use in 2015 (Nguyen Ba An 2008: 45). In parallel with conducting projects on land, the two countries agreed to improve the harbour systems in order to meet the demands of maritime transportation. In Guangxi, three harbours of Fangcheng, Qinzhou, Beihai have been upgraded and modernised. Vietnam has also built and upgraded Haiphong port with capacity of 15 million tonnes per day in 2010. Additionally, Cailan harbour is being developed as the

main gate of the Hanoi – Haiphong – Quangninh economic corridor. Apart from that, the border gate pairs have been renovated and redecorated to promote trans-border activities between the two countries.

Thus, thank to the land border issue resolution, cross-border economic cooperation activities between the two countries have been restored and increased remarkably. Along with the building of cross-border economic zones, development of border regional infrastructure have been heavily invested by both sides, resulting in the transformation of the border areas. Surely, in the future, when the infrastructure system, especially the “two corridors, one economic belt” is perfected, the cross-border economic activities will much more increase, enhancing linkage and cooperation between the peoples of the two countries.

#### **1.4. Current Problems**

In parallel with the rapid development of economic cooperation, trade exchange between the two countries, China – Vietnam economic relations have been challenged by the trade imbalance. Since 2000, Vietnam has suffered an increasing trade deficit with China, from US\$ 211 million in 2001 to \$ 1.7 billion US dollar in 2004 and to US\$ 3.5 billion in 2006. The problem has more and more deteriorated. In 2007, the trade deficit between Vietnam and China was 9.14 billion US dollar and is expected to continue over the next five years. Besides that, there are a number of other existing problems in economic and trade relations between China and Vietnam. While Vietnam has exported mainly raw material, China has exported equipment, electronic appliances, garment and textile, etc. This somehow reflects the weaknesses of competitiveness of Vietnam’s manufacturing goods. Moreover, the payment mechanism for Vietnam – China trade is still not effective, especially at the border, increasing the trade risks. In addition, Vietnam is not yet an effective point in the regional production network, meaning low level of intra-industry trade (Dinh, Van An 2005).

Besides those, fakery and low quality commodities are very popular. In the process of trade exchange through border, the quantity of fakery and bad quality



commodities occupy a noticeable ratio. This will affect directly to commodities from both of the countries, especially to the reputation of Chinese commodities in Vietnam.

Smuggling has not been also solved completely. Because of the long borders both land and maritime, the authorities in both countries have faced many difficulties in controlling smuggling activities. These illegal activities affects directly to healthy development of the boundary area. Moreover, the cheap priced commodities from smuggling created an unfair competition and messy condition in trade causing obstacles for win-win cooperation in the bilateral trade.

All these problems may cause obstacles for the economic and trade cooperation between the two countries in future. Therefore it needs effort of both sides to deal with these problems in order to enhance mutual trust and understandings and further cooperation between the two countries.

## **2. Implications for the Region**

### **2.1. Regional Stability**

Not only has the success of Sino – Vietnam land border dispute resolution enhanced trust and understanding, creating a firm ground for development of the bilateral relations between the two countries, but also played a very significant role for regional stability. As noted by Ramse Amer, “stable bilateral relations would be beneficial to regional stability.” (Amer 2000: 10)

Historically, the region witnessed the instability for more than ten years when China and Vietnam conflicted in their border region and in Cambodia. After the Cambodia issue was settled, territorial disputes have become the only source which could, any time, cause conflict between the two countries. Therefore, the success of land border and Gulf of Tonkin disputes resolution indicates that the two countries not only settled their own problems, but also have reduced the source of tension which could bring about the instability in the region.

The border dispute resolution through peaceful negotiations shows that the two countries have good will to prevent the region from instable situation. Moreover, it removes lingering doubts about the ability and political will of the two countries to

resolve their border disputes and also signals that China and Vietnam are committed to settling border disputes by peaceful means. This is particularly significant for the countries which have remaining border disputes with China and Vietnam (Amer 2000: 10). It could be regarded as a sample of territorial disputes settlement for other countries. So far, Vietnam has signed land border treaties with all its neighbours, China, Laos, and Cambodia. Regarding maritime disputes, it has resolved disputes with China (Gulf of Tonkin), Thailand (Gulf of Thailand) and Malaysia (overlapping maritime area). Currently, Vietnam continues to negotiate with Cambodia over existing maritime disputes and with China, Indonesia and the Philippines over overlapping continental shelf in the South China Sea. In the meantime, through peaceful negotiations and compromises, China has resolved its land border disputes with almost all its neighbouring countries, except India, which it is trying to settle outstanding territorial disputes through peaceful means.

In the broader sense, the implication of border issue resolution creates favourable conditions for expanding economic interaction and cooperation in the field of regional security in the wider Pacific Asia, i.e. East- and South-East Asia. The talks between China and Vietnam on South China Sea issue so far have contributed to a more stable situation in the volatile area with bilateral and multilateral territorial disputes, positively affecting regional stability (Amer 2000: 10). Currently, China, Vietnam and other countries involved are making effort to prevent the situation from getting more complicated. Positively, some general frameworks have been reached i.e. putting aside the issue of sovereignty for joint exploitation of natural resources, refraining from the use of force, signing the code of conduct with other ASEAN claimants in the South China Sea disputes (DOC), and agreeing on a programme for joint exploration between China, Vietnam and the Philippines. This tendency will create favourable conditions for building peace and stability in the region.

## **2.2. Regional Development**

A part from the contribution to the regional stability, the border dispute resolution between China and Vietnam also opens a prospect of regional economic cooperation, promoting the development in the region. With the role as a gate through which China

could expand its economic activities southward, stable and friendly relations between China and Vietnam are very important. The cooperation between the two countries in project of “two corridors, one economic belt” is not only significant for the two countries cross-border economic cooperation but also plays a crucial role for regional economic cooperation, especially for the materialisation of the “One axis, two wings” (OATW) or the China – ASEAN “M” shaped strategy.

### **“One Axis, Two Wings” or the China – ASEAN “M” Shaped Strategy**

OATW was, for the first time, mentioned at the Forum on Economic Cooperation of Gulf of Tonkin Rim held in Nanning in July 2006 by the Secretary of the CPC Guangxi Committee Liu Qibao. He put forward the proposal on building the Pan Gulf of Tonkin economic cooperation zone which combined South China’s Guangdong, Hainan and Guangxi provinces with six ASEAN countries of Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Vietnam. OATW is a model of economic cooperation including three main components: the Nanning – Singapore Economic Passage, the Pan – Gulf of Tonkin Rim Economic Cooperation Region and Greater Mekong Sub-region cooperation (GMS). Because, the three cooperation projects form a big “M” in the map, and in addition, the initials of the three plans of regional cooperation (Mainland economic cooperation, Marine economic cooperation and Mekong sub-region cooperation) all start with the letter “M”, the project is also called in another name China – ASEAN “M-shaped Strategy” (New Development Strategy Raised by Beibu Gulf Rim). The initiative would work on

- (i) Extending sea links with Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Brunei, and the Philippines;
- (ii) Constructing a Nanning-Singapore economic corridor through highway and railway projects linking Nanning, Hanoi, Phnom Penh, Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, and Singapore;
- (iii) And, Deepening GMS cooperation among all member states and enhancing communication and cooperation between China's southern provinces and Southeast Asian countries (Liu Fukuo 2008).

The Nanning – Singapore economic passage is one axis in OATW which starts from Nanning, Guangxi to Singapore. This serves as the main axis in China – ASEAN cooperation. Spine of this axis is two main transport systems, highway and railway

which link Nanning, Hanoi, Phnom Penh, Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore. It could become a corridor for the flow of human resources, commodities, information, and capital. It will make multilateral cooperation possible in many fields such as trade, investment, tourism, ports, and economic cooperation along the border (Gu Xiaosong and Li Mingjiang 2008: 1).

The Pan – Gulf of Tonkin Rim economic cooperation region is the right wing of OATW. China has carried out the plan to develop economic zone which is constituted by the cities of Beihai, Fangcheng and Nanning. This economic zone lies in the centre of the China – ASEAN Free Trade Area and the convergent point of the Zhu (Pearl) River Region, the western region’s economic belt and the ASEAN economic belt. In the project of “Two Corridors, One Economic Belt”, China and Vietnam are developing the Gulf of Tonkin Rim Economic Belt which includes three China’s southern provinces, Guangxi, Guangdong and Nanhai and Vietnam’s Gulf of Tonkin provinces, Hanoi, Haiphong, and Quangninh. In the framework of OATW, the Pan – Gulf of Tonkin Rim economic cooperation is expanded to such countries as the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and Brunei.

The left wing of OATW is the Mekong Sub-region cooperation which comprises China, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam. This is the programme of sub-regional economic cooperation initiated in 1992 with assistance of Asian Development Bank (ADB) to enhance economic cooperation among the countries. The programme has contributed to the development of infrastructure to enable the development and sharing of the resource base, and promote the freer flow of goods and people in the sub-region. It has also led to the international recognition of the sub-region as a growth area (Greater Mekong Subregion). The strategic framework for the GMS programme which was endorsed by the six GMS Leaders at the first Summit held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia in November 2002 focuses on five development thrusts to achieve this goal:

- strengthen infrastructure linkages through a multi-sectoral approach;
- facilitate cross-border trade and investment;
- enhance private sector participation in development and improve its competitiveness;
- develop human resources and skill competencies; and,

- protect the environment and promote sustainable use of the sub-regions shared natural resources.

Strategically, the GMS vision seeks to achieve enhanced connectivity, increased competitiveness, and a greater sense of community in the GMS (The GMS Strategic Framework).

OATW has been viewed as a China – ASEAN regional economic cooperation strategy with the following objectives: to form a new economic growth belt in the western rim of the Pacific, focusing on developing the Pan-Tonkin Gulf cooperation into a new sub-regional cooperation project between China and ASEAN and placing it into China – ASEAN’s general cooperation framework; to create stability for both the land and maritime border regions, opening new development space for China, especially opening up and developing China’s western region, via GMS through the Indian Ocean, to the world market; and, to add more substances and efficiencies to China – ASEAN cooperation, thus enhancing the wider East Asian overall cooperation and at the same time ensuring energy security for China in the South China Sea (Le Van Sang 2007: 55-56).

Generally, the OATW is an important strategy of economic cooperation with large sphere in the region. This strategy stems from (i) domestic demand of the Chinese economy; (ii) the big vision of the Chinese leadership and greater proactiveness of China in regional and international integration; (iii) a combination of the Vietnam – China “two Corridors, One Economic Belt” with CAFTA; and (iv) generally, it combines five major strategies that China is adopting currently, namely, maritime strategy, energy strategy, western region development strategy, CATFA strategy and sub-regional cooperation enhancement strategy with surrounding countries (Le Van Sang 2007: 55-56).

It believed that OATW enjoys advantages in geographical location, transportation, power resources and human resources. The complementarities in social and economic development in this region would bring about a great cooperation potential. Major areas for future cooperation are port construction, energy resources, tourism and human resources, etc (New Development Strategy Raised by Beibu Gulf Rim).

With OATW, China reaffirmed its ties to the ASEAN members, emphasizing shared interests and the benefits of “win-win cooperation” over the past 15 years. China also used the initiative to recommit itself to the agreed Sino – ASEAN projects, especially the CAFTA, which both sides see a crucial to deepening economic integration between China and ASEAN. At the 2005 Nanning Summit, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao announced that by the end of the year China would provide US\$ 5 billion in preferential loans to Chinese companies that start business ventures in ASEAN countries (Do Thi Thuy 2009: 33-34).

The models of regional economic cooperation countries have enhanced bilateral trade between China and ASEAN. Since 1991, trade volume between the two sides has increased 15-fold. According to Chinese statistics, the volume of bilateral trade in 2005 reached US\$ 130 billion; in 2007, hit US\$ 202.6 billion, a 26 percent increase on a year-on-year basis, making China ASEAN’s largest overall trade partner and breaking the target to reach US\$ 200 in 2010 (Do Thi Thuy 2009: 34). Surely, with the OATW strategy, China and ASEAN economic cooperation will be deepened and expanded greatly, increasing trade exchange between the two sides. Most recently, according to the latest data from China's Ministry of Commerce from January to April 2010, China-ASEAN trade volume increased 58.5 percent year-on-year, of which China’s exports to ASEAN countries rose 45.6 percent and its imports from ASEAN surged 71.7 percent. The result exactly reflected positive impact of CAFTA since this area was established at the beginning of 2010 (China-ASEAN trade grows nearly 60% between Jan. and Apr).

In the framework of OATW, Vietnam plays very significant role. Geographically, Vietnam is the only country that embraces both one axis and two wings. Therefore, it can take part in all three “M” cooperation (maritime, mainland, and Mekong). With these favourable conditions, Vietnam will serve as the “bridgehead” between China and Southeast Asian countries (Le Van Sang 2007: 58). This role will create great opportunity for Vietnam to enhance economic cooperation, trade exchange with both China and the Southeast Asian countries, and to upgrade its infrastructure and transport system.

Recognising the strategic role, Vietnamese leaders have constantly affirmed its determination to participate in the strategy and serve as an important bridge between

China and ASEAN by enhancing economic cooperation with both China and ASEAN members. In 2006, Vietnam – ASEAN’s turnover was more than US\$ 20 billion, increasing 40 percent in comparison with 2005. ASEAN countries has invested in more than 1,000 projects in Vietnam with the total capital of US\$ 13 billion, accounting for 20 percent of foreign investment in Vietnam. Vietnam also has more than 120 projects in ASEAN countries with a total capital of US\$ 1 billion. In the same year, Vietnam – China’s trade volume reached US\$ 10.4 billion, a 20 percent growth from 2005.

With the rapid development of economic cooperation and trade exchange between Vietnam and ASEAN and Vietnam and China and the advantage of geographical position, surely Vietnam will be successful in the role of an important “bridgehead” to connect China with the rest of the Southeast Asian region, contributing to the regional development and prosperity.

### **Conclusion**

Thus, thank to the land border dispute resolution, a war zone between China and Vietnam has quickly turned into a civil one, opening a prospect for cooperation and development in the border areas for the two countries. The reality, since China and Vietnam agreed to settle their border dispute in 1991, especially reached the agreements on land border issue in 1999, shows that land border settlement has served as one of the most important incentives for the development of the two countries’ relations in all fields, especially economic one. Moreover, it has built the confidence, trust and understanding between China and Vietnam to further their cooperation. The “two corridors, one economic belt” is a cooperation model which had been built on that basis. Despite some obstacles and shortcoming such as Vietnam’s trade deficit with China, smuggling, children and women trafficking, etc have arisen during the land border settlement, it should be noted that the advantages outnumber disadvantages. However, to deal with these problems, both the governments need to enhance their cooperation on the basis of mutual interests and in the spirit of looking at the big picture.

Apart from that, the success of land border dispute settlement under the principle of peaceful negotiation has created the faith and momentum that all other disputes between China and Vietnam, for instance the case of Gulf of Tonkin, could be settled in that manner.

In a broader sense, the Sino – Vietnamese land border issue resolution through peaceful negotiations is also significant for the stability and development in the region. The efforts made by the two countries to control the source of tensions related to territorial disputes are contributing to the regional stability and serve as a model for other countries to settle their disputes. Furthermore, the border settlement creates favourable condition for economic cooperation in the region. The prospect of the cooperation model “two corridors, one economic belt” between China and Vietnam is source of idea for OATW initiative while the OATW is a logical and extended development of the “two corridors, one economic belt”. Therefore, the “two corridors, one economic belt” will serve as the core for development of OATW (Do Thi Thuy 2009: 36). In addition, economic cooperation between China and Vietnam through the “two corridors, one economic belt” is facilitating the implementation of CAFTA, contributing to the development of the region.

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## CHAPTER VI

### Assessment and Conclusion

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#### 1. Summary

Success of land border dispute resolution between China and Vietnam can be considered as a vital historical event in their histories of neighbour relations. This is also the first time the two independent countries has a clear borderline marked by modern landmarks comfortable for administration. To gain this success, both countries have overcome numbers of difficulties and challenges; especially as in this particular case that China and Vietnam had sensitive relations in the long history of invader-China and invaded – Vietnam, this event really opens a new change of peace, cooperation and development for the two countries.

History of relations and borderline between the two countries can be traced from thousands years ago. In the period of legends and myths around 2000 BC, there was a small kingdom under the name of Van Lang and later Au Lac locating in the Red River Delta while the Zhou Dynasty covered a region in the North of today China. Between China and Vietnam was an area where Yue people were living. Hence there was no Chinese southern border with contemporary Vietnam as nowadays.

Around eleventh-tenth century BC, Hung Kings used to send emissaries to Zhou's kingdom. Later, after Qin Shihuang Di conquered and integrated six other kingdoms – Yan, Zhao, Qi, Wei, Han and Chu, Qin followed the policy of consolidating and expanding state, and sent his troops to both Northern and Southern parts of China. Once Qin Shihuang Di expanded his Empire southward, Yue area was shrunk and even Qin's troop reached Au Lac's territory. Au Lac's territory first was integrated into Nan Yue ruled by Zhao and later into Han dynasty in 111 BC.

At that time, one of commanders of Han Dynasty- Zhao Tuo went downward the South to build his own kingdom of Nan Yue. Zhao, after several wars equipped with crafty device, defeated and annexed Au Lac into Nan Yue in 196 BC. As a result, Au Lac became two prefectures of Nan Yue, one is Jiaozhi (Giao Chi), and the other is

Jiuzhen (Cuu Chan). Later on, when Nan Yue was annexed to Han Empire in 111 BC, Au Lac belonged to Chinese tributary system too. This event opened a new period of Chinese domination over the Vietnamese for almost 1000 years. It is also worth to mention that Vietnam at this time was only a part of large Han Empire's territory, so the land border between these two countries did not form.

Existing as a part of China, Vietnam had to accept Han administrative structure as well as satisfy Han economic and cultural demands. Moreover, Han people implanted series of Han life standards, conducts and philosophy in purpose of assimilating Vietnamese people. However, extremely miserable conditions for the Vietnamese had enlightened uprisings and protestant movements against Han Empire. In 39 AD, two sisters Trung Trac and Trung Nhi led an uprisings against Su Ding and established a royal court in Me Linh. However, the independent time did not last for long time when Ma Yuan on behalf of Han King re-conquered Vietnam and set up a more completed administration system and greater economic exploitation. Policy of assimilation was strengthened with a great number of obligatory actions. But Han implementing policy of assimilation did not mean the Vietnamese would be assimilated in one side; conversely, Han officials and immigrants were also actively influenced by Vietnamese culture as well.

In 543, Li Bi, a regional magistrate of Jiaozhi took a revolt, declared himself emperor of Van Xuan Empire and gave an end to a dark age of more than 500 years under Chinese domination since Trung Trac Revolt. However, in 602, Vietnam was once again annexed into China under Sui Dynasty and later Tang Dynasty. In 679, Tang Dynasty established Protectorate General to Pacify the South or An Nam in Sino-Vietnamese term as their military government in Jiaozhi. During this time, numbers of Vietnamese people's revolts took place but got no result. Finally, in 939, Ngo Quyen's convulsing victory in Bach Dang River against Chinese domination put an end to the period of thousand years in which Vietnam was a part of China.

Vietnam history turned to new page of its own feudal dynasties. Sino-Vietnamese relations also moved from dominant- dependent relationship to an equal one. And the most important thing was that the border line between the two independent countries – the two neighbours was forming. However, until the Song

Dynasty, the current border between China and Vietnam was set up at the area of today Guangxi and Guangdong.

Being aware of great potential threat from the North, Vietnamese feudal dynasties from Ngo, Dinh, Le, Ly, Tran, Ho to Nguyen insisted on adopt a soft and flexible policy towards China. On the surface, Vietnamese dynasties requested title, country's name, and sent regularly emissaries and paid tribute to Chinese kings and received Chinese envoy's visit; however, in reality, China- Vietnam relations maintained equally. Meanwhile, time by time, Han Dynasties continuously paved wars to expand territory but only put some light changes on the border. Generally, the border remained as it had been since 10<sup>th</sup> century.

Together with expansion of Western colonization in all over the world, both China and Vietnam suffered the same vulnerable destiny. Both were economically exploited and witnessed collapse of long-lasting feudal system. As a result, the Sino-Vietnamese relations shifted from "a face-to-face relationship to a shoulder-to-shoulder one".

In the battle against colonialism, the Qing Dynasty of China lost with Britain in 1839-1842 and 1856-1860; France in 1884-1885; and Japan in 1894-1895 and had to signed "unequal treaties" and stood at position of a semi-colony state. More vulnerably, Vietnam could not escape from French control. Tonkin and Cochinchina turn by turn became French controlled territory. This affected directly on China since China still considered Vietnam as a China's tributary state. Despite Chinese efforts to save Vietnam from France, at last after several losses in battles with France, in May 1884, China had to sign the Tianjin Accord to recognize the French protectorate over Annam and Tonkin, and proceeded to settle details of trade and commerce. In 1887, France formed French Indochina including Annam, Tonkin, Cochinchina and the kingdom of Cambodia. Thus, Vietnam officially was no longer a tributary state of China but a French protected territory. Also, the frontier between China and Tonkin had to be defined. A Sino-Franco Commission was established to finish the demarcation work on plan from late 1885 to 1887 and on site from late 1889 to April 1896. According to the agreement, Pak-lung peninsular on the western border of Guangdong, land between Ma-pai-kuan and Nan-tan-shan belonged to China, and

Meng-suo and Meng-lai to Vietnam. Around 341 border markers were also planted along the 1400 kilometres length of the legal common border.

In that dark time, both China and Vietnam had similar enemies- colonialism and Western imperialism. A great number of movements and uprisings took place and many intellectuals went to find a way to liberate the country. In that particular situation, the Chinese and the Vietnamese had the same purpose. Revolutionists and patriots from both countries has opportunities to meet together and indispensably, the Sino- Vietnamese relationship had been consolidated year by year with mutual helps.

Significantly, not only relationship among revolutionists and nationalists was tightened, also was the relationship between communists of the two countries. From 1920s onwards, this relationship became the most important element and a concrete foundation of China- Vietnam relations in later years. Especially, in the escalating wars with large imperialists such as France, Japan and the US, China gave a considerable support to Vietnamese communists both in training and in equipment. Tangibly, CPC and ICP signed a secret agreement in August 1940 covering some basic urgent requirements at that time such as establishment of a “United Front of the Sino- Vietnamese people against Japan”, setting up a “United Front for National Independence” or US\$ 50,000 per month offering to the ICP for its activities in China.

In 1945, DRV was established in the North Vietnam and continued the struggling battle against the French re-domination, threat from China and the sabotage of counter-revolutionary forces supported by the Chinese Nationalists. Though the new-born Vietminh government of DRV faced a lot of obstacles, CPC became a valuable partner to support ICP in purchase and transfer of weapons and equipments. Moreover, the two communist parties also used the border areas of China and Vietnam as the common revolutionary bases for the communist forces of both the countries.

In 1949, PRC was born and this event created not only a new era in Chinese history but also a red mark in history of Sino- Vietnamese relations. Significantly, China recognized the right of equality, territorial integrity and sovereignty of DRV. As a result, China officially established diplomatic relations with Vietnam in January 1950 and next was Soviet government on 30January, 1950 and other countries in Communist bloc. After setting up diplomatic relations with Vietnam, China together

with Soviet Union gave military help and aid of medicine and foods to Vietnam in the war against the French. Even, the PRC sent CMAG to Vietnam to assist Vietnamese forces. Finally, with well trained and equipped troops, Viet Minh government defeated the French in the historical victory in Dien Bien Phu battle in May 1954 and pushed the French to negotiation table in Geneva. In the Geneva Conference, Vietnam at last gained peace, independence, and territorial integrity and China as a “powerful country” could participate in a process of solving international problems. The success of Geneva Conference contributed to strengthen the relations between PRC and DRV. From 1955 to 1960, China continued to provide weaponry, equipment, military training as well as advice to PRV. This time was considered as the period of the friendliness and intimacy in Sino- Vietnamese relations.

In 1959, DRV decided to follow armed struggle as a mean of reunification and received consent from China and Soviet Union in early 1961. From 1961 to 1968, Chinese aid to DRV rapidly increased when US increased military support for Diem regime in the South Vietnam and day by day escalated US intervention in this area and this support from China continued until 1975.

However, relations between Vietnam and China had gradually deteriorated when DRV conducted negotiation with Washington and refrained from participating in the Paris Peace talk. Also, further aid from Soviet to DRV also made China unpleasant. The relations became worse when territorial disputes on both land and maritime emerged with hundreds of violations. Finally, the fact that Border war in 1979 broke out led to a period of hostility in the two country relations lasting until 1984.

The Border war in 1979 was a result of series of aggressive activities and actions of encroachment. Why were there these kinds of actions when the borderline had been demarcated in the Sino- Franco Conventions? In fact, although the land common border had been demarcated officially with hundreds of land markers along the borderline under the Sino- Franco Conventions in 1885-1895, in reality, natural factors and human activities along the border changed the border line seriously, causing long lasting border disputes between the two countries. During times, inhabitants and local authorities on both sides of border area have continuously impinged on the borderline; also, numbers of border markers were removed or

destroyed. Moreover, the misunderstanding of each other in Sino-Franco Conventions in 1887-1895 as well as vagueness in the text of 1887 and 1895 Accords made the land border disputes worse. As a result, both China and Vietnam accused each other of territorial encroachment.

The land border disputes were escalating when China accused Vietnam of creating incidents in “an organized, planned, and purposeful way”. Hundreds of provocations along the common border were also recorded by China during 1974-1979. In contrast, Vietnam announced that Chinese authorities intentionally encroached on Vietnamese territory by various activities such as sending Chinese civilians to build house and do farming in Vietnamese border area, forcing Vietnamese out of their lands and trying to change the borderline. Vietnam also recorded hundreds of border incursions made by China during 1974-1978.

China sent thousands of PLA troops crossing Sino-Vietnamese 480 mile long border at fourteen different points from three main directions to attack Langson, Caobang, and Laocai. However, Chinese attacks did not get any results as expecting, instead, PLA troops got stuck with fierce resistance of PAVN Divisions. After three weeks of fierce fighting, China announced to withdraw from Vietnam on 5 March. The China’s “defensive war” at last ended with 45,000 Chinese dead and wounded according to Hanoi statistics and 37,000 Vietnamese dead and 7000 wounded according to Chinese source. On the way back their country, PLA did not forget to loot North Vietnam, remove industrial machinery, equipment and government property and destroy the remainders such as villages, bridges and other else. Beside vulnerable remains left in Vietnam, what China got from this border war was losses of human lives, properties and hostility in the two country relations.

After Chinese withdrawal from Vietnam in March 1979, border conflicts between the two countries continued on different levels. The PLA kept on attacking Vietnamese border area partially and sparsely during 1980s.

In April- May 1984, PLA made the largest offensive campaign to occupy PAVN positions in the mountains near Laoshan. In short time, PLA day by day occupied Vietnamese defensive positions in Lao Son mountain, Yen Son mountain. Even, PLA built defensive works against the PAVN counterattacks and hold their

positions until April 1987. Moreover, PLA used these positions for troop's combat experience; many PLA military devices were brought into Vietnam.

The non-stop land border disputes did not mean that both the countries disregarded to the security of this area or thought little of this matter. In fact, during the period of heavy border disputes as well as aggressive activities to each other, both China and Vietnam seek for border resolution on the basis of legal principles from November 1957. WPV and CPC agreed to keep treaties on borders valid whatever there might be changes in administrative circumstances.

Several meetings for negotiation on border disputes had been held in different levels. In April 1975, negotiations at provincial did not get any result while in the negotiation at the level of Deputy-Minister of Foreign Affairs from October 1977 to June 1978, Beijing refused Vietnam's border agreement draft and insisted on maintaining the existing border which covered the areas occupied by the Chinese. Right after the Border War in 1979, another round of negation was restarted on April but two sides only reached agreement of prison exchange.

One of reason why China - a giant country was willing to negotiate for a peaceful resolution with Vietnam was China's nationalism which almost dominated all Chinese moves. Basically, China's nationalism is served for national interests. And policy of border issue resolution would be inside circle of that kind of nationalism which has just appeared and developed in China since 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Beside negotiations with Vietnam, China began to follow policy of border issue resolution since 1950s with many neighbour countries. Turn by turn, China resolved territorial disputes with Burma in 1960, Nepal in 1961, North Korea and Mongolia in 1962, Pakistan and Afghanistan in 1963, Bhutan in 1988, Laos in 1991, Kazakhstan in 1994, Kyrgyzstan in 1996, Tajikistan in 1999, Russia in 2004. Surprisingly, China got less than 50 percent of disputed territory with most of those countries. Even in some cases, China received only 6 percent of disputed area with Nepal or 4 percent of disputed Pamirs with Tajikistan. Obviously, in these resolutions, China showed its positive and cooperative attitude toward its neighbours in order to create a good image in the international community to well-serve for its final aim – the rise of China.

The changes in China's policy toward Vietnam were influenced by many external as well as internal factors. Externally, Soviet Union and Cambodia were the two most important factors directly affecting on the relations between Vietnam and China. In the defence war against US, Vietnam received supportive aid from both China and Soviet Union. Naturally, Vietnam and Soviet Union became closer to each other and this relationship under Chinese view as a result was an "alliance" form to contain China. Thus, China always kept a defensive and preventing look upon Vietnam. However, change in the international conjuncture in late 1970s such as the improvement of Soviet- US relations and obstruction in Taiwan Relations Act between China and US pushed China to new decisions. One of the new decisions was that China quickly adopted an "independent" foreign policy in 1982 to create balance between the two superpowers- Soviet Union and US. Hence, Sino- Soviet relations were heated with 'private' visits, economic and technical exchanges and increasing cooperation. China also smartly took advantage of its position to figure out pre-conditions for normalization by requesting Soviet Union to remove Soviet presence in Afghanistan, Soviet's support for Vietnam's 'invasion' of China and the presence of the Soviet forces along the Sino- Soviet border and in Mongolia. Soviet adjusted to China's request by unilaterally withdrawing from Afghanistan and Mongolia and calling for a direct talk between Hanoi and Beijing. These Soviet moves relieved China's concern on Soviet- Vietnamese "alliance" and therefore affected to China's Vietnam policy which led to the first official meeting between two vice-ministers of the two countries in 1989.

Besides, in the relations with Vietnam, in one side, China proceeded to military activities along the common border with Vietnam; in the other side, China continuously demanded for full withdrawal of Vietnamese military forces from Cambodia in return for relation improvement. Standing before the changes in relations between China and Soviet Union as well as China's insistent require for Vietnamese withdrawal from Cambodia, Vietnam found itself necessary to change its Cambodia policy. Vietnam recognized that only when Vietnam's military force withdrew from Cambodia, did China normalize its relations with Vietnam. Consequently, in May 1988, Vietnam announced to withdraw 50, 000 troops from Cambodia by the end of the year. In response, China requested unconditional withdrawal, but simultaneously wanted to settle internal political infrastructure there. Cambodia issue was firstly



discussed between the two countries in December 1988 to reach satisfactory to all the participants. In 1990, the fact that US contacted to Hanoi to reach Cambodian settlement and stop support the three-party coalition containing the Khmer Rouge in the US forced China to consider its position in new international condition. Hence, Chengdu summit meeting was held to mention to Cambodia issue – an important factor in China's Vietnam policy and in accelerating the process of normalization.

In addition to external factors like the change in Sino- Soviet relations and Cambodia issue, internal factors in China were also noticeable. On one hand, China was aware that China needed to revitalize its domestic policy and open to the outside world in order to adapt to the new period of development. Subsequently, China figured out the foreign policy of friendship and partnership with surrounding countries. Moreover, once China achieved its goal in Cambodia issue when both Vietnam and Soviet Union, to some extent, made concession to China, China would like to build a peaceful and favourable environment for economic development with Vietnam. That's why China quickly accepted to normalize relations with Vietnam and settle the border issue.

One the other hand, an event which made China speed up the normalization with Vietnam was the Tiananmen incident. The Tiananmen incident occurring in China in June 1989 put China in vulnerable condition when US and the Western countries isolated and embargoed China. In contrast, ASEAN especially Vietnam shows its supportive attitude toward China, and this made China have a new look on "old friends and Third World countries". As a result, China established diplomatic relations with series of Southeast Asian. Among these Asian countries, Vietnam proved its important role when it possessed a strategic location toward China, helping China to access to the Southeast Asian region – a new economic developing centre in Asia.

The entire above objective and subjective conditions as well as external and internal elements resulted in normalization of China- Vietnam relations in 1991. After normalization, visits between leaders of the two governments and the two communist parties were exchanged regularly in order to set up a framework for Sino- Vietnamese relations. Trade and economy developed dramatically with more than 20 documents covering trade and economic cooperation matters. Military defence cooperation

between the two countries was also carried out by delegations from defence ministries of the countries. In general, both China and Vietnam have sought for mutual trust and understanding, comprehensive cooperation, creating favourable environment for settling the unsolved problems, especially the border dispute between the two countries.

However, although the two countries' bilateral relations improved fast and showed good prospect in future, tensions of territorial disputes still continued with many encroaching actions which created difficulties for the process of land border dispute resolution.

Especially, disputes on Paracel and Spratly Archipelagos sometimes made the two countries' relations became tense. Two countries continuously accused each other of occupying the national territory as well as having activities which were harmful to each other's national interests. Activities like signing agreement to explore oil and gas with foreign company, seizing fishing boats, or building bank on river harmful to farming and environment made the process of land border resolution more difficult.

Nevertheless, with good will and determination, the leaders of both sides tried to reduce tensions as much as possible to speed up the land border resolution by series of official meetings. Basically, year by year, although there were some obstructions in some different points of view, both sides tried to create favourable conditions to encourage process of border issue resolution as well as the cooperation between the two countries. Positively, Chinese troops withdrew from Lao Son and Yen Son Mountain in 1992. The Friendship Gate between Langson province in Vietnam and Guangxi in China was reopened, Hekou-Laocai, Tianbao- Thanh Thuy, Jinshuihe, and Shuikou- Talung border gates were also reopened in 1993-1994.

On 19 October, 1993, an important agreement between PRC and SRV was formally signed mentioning to the principles for setting the land boundary and delimitating the Gulf of Tonkin. Under the Agreement, Conventions of 1885 and 1897 were used as the fundamental base for redefining the whole Sino-Vietnamese land border. Furthermore, areas belonging to one side but under the other side's management would be returned to the owner without any conditions, experts of both side also carried out surveys on site and negotiated equally and reasonably. This

Agreement of Fundamental Principle was an important step for further process of land border dispute resolution between China and Vietnam.

Significantly, in 1994, President Jiang Zemin in a visit to Vietnam agreed to strive for an early settlement of the issues over the land boundary and seek for a basic and long-term solution acceptable to the two sides. Later, in late June 1996, Premier Li Peng spoke at the CPV Congress that two sides would continue their efforts aiming at reaching solutions to unresolved problems in the spirit of friendly consultation and seeking common ground while reserving differences. With that spirit, both sides agreed to set a time-limit for the land border issue resolution. In 1997, in the Prime Minister Phan Van Khai's visit to China, Premier Li Ping again claimed to make a greater effort to reach an agreement on the demarcation of the borders between the two countries. The official meetings between two sides gave good result in the process of border demarcation and the most important result was the Land Border Treaty signed on 30 December 1999 and ratified by Chinese National People's Congress on April 29 and Vietnamese National Assembly on June 9, 2000. Obviously the good will and determination were necessary and important elements helping the two sides overcome tensions and obstructions to reach land border resolution in friendliness and equality.

Taking the Land Border Treaty into effect, two sides started to plant first two national border markers at the Dongxing - Mongcai International Gate on December 27, 2001. To late 2006, 70 percent of border markers were erected. Different package solutions were also figured out in the spirit of equality, mutual respect, interests and legal basis.

During process of planting, many meetings took place regularly to keep on track with the speed of planting on site. Especially, some extremely complicated and sensitive areas such as Friendship Gate, Ban Gioc Waterfalls and Estuary of Bac Luan River required more intention and careful resolution. Finally, in 2008, the two sides completed the demarcation of the whole 1400 kilometres borderline with a marker system suitable to the real topography in an objective, scientific and detailed manner. Land border resolution between China and Vietnam meets the two sides' satisfaction, assuring peace and stability in border areas as well as other activities there.

The success of land border issue resolution has definitely brought benefits on many aspects for both Vietnam and China. It is easy to see visible changes in political, economic relations between the two countries. The most important change in the two countries' relations was the consolidation of trust and mutual understanding which gave way to a broader prospect for the two. Since land border disputes were resolved satisfactorily through peaceful negotiations, Vietnam could be relieved from the giant threat to safeguard its sovereignty; also, China could improve its image as a fair and peaceful power under international view. The two countries could have confidence to step into a new period of development and cooperation together.

From 2001 to 2008, meetings and visits exchanges between the two countries were carried out regularly on many levels from highest leaders of the two parties, the presidents of the two states, the heads of the two governments to high –ranking officials and hundreds of delegations from various ministries, departments and organizations. These activities have contributed to enhance mutual understanding, trust as well as bilateral cooperation

Furthermore, the success of land border issue resolution contributed to the stability and security in the region. Military positions in the Border War 1979 have been removed and three campaigns of landmine clearance also have been conducted. The dead and desolated areas along the common border have become developing areas which attract investments from both the countries and foreigners.

Beside political significance, the success also brought economic cooperation and development in the relations of the two countries in general and in the border areas in particular. Clearly, the border trade has increased dramatically with US\$ 21.05 billion of China- Vietnam trade volume in 2009 compared to only hundred millions US dollars in 1990s.

Tourism has also flourished since 1992 when numbers of Chinese and Vietnamese people travelled other side's landscape. From that time onwards, numbers of Chinese and Vietnamese travellers and traders has crossed the border line for trading and visiting have risen considerably. In order to promote tourism, China and Vietnam agreed to issue tourism cards instead of visa enabling tourism card holder to travel to nation-wide tourism attractions.

It is also worth to mention to cross-border economic cooperation zones along the borderline. These cooperation zones connecting Dongxing and Mong Cai; Pingxian and Langson;, and Hekou Yao and Laocai in China and in Vietnam respectively showed considerable improvement in trade exchange between two countries. Outstanding is the project naming “Two corridors, one economic belt” which was set up to attract potentials of cross border economic cooperation between China’s southern region and Vietnam’s northern provinces. The project was firstly initiated by Vietnam’s Prime Minister Phan Van Khai in May 2004 and materialized in October of the same year. Basically, two economic corridors and the economic belt form a triangle three vertices are three most developed cities and areas of the regions having significant economic effects in their own regions. With this kind of triangle, both Vietnam and China take full advantage of geographical proximity and the convenience of transport system.

Development of cooperation zones definitely needs a suitable infrastructure. Hence, series of projects of investment on infrastructure have been completed. These projects mainly focus on improvement and development of electricity, water, telecommunication and transport supplies. Particularly, an international standard railway connecting Kunming to Hekou in China and then to Laocai- Hanoi- Haiphong corridor creates the shortest way to transport goods from Yunnan Province to Vietnam. In addition, China upgraded and completed the national highway from Nanning to Friendship Border gate linking with Vietnam national highway in 2005, and has built three more new highways connecting Guangxi with northern part of Vietnam.

However, beside development in trade and economic cooperation, negative effects of cross-border trade like smuggling, fakery and low quality commodities create difficulties and challenges to authorities in border areas. There also exists imbalance of trade exchange between Vietnam and China while China has exported cheap equipment, electronic appliances, garment and textile. Both China and Vietnam need to find a solution for these problems in the future.

The success of Sino- Vietnam land border dispute resolution not only improved relations between China and Vietnam in all aspects, but also put certain influence on regional stability as well as regional development. In the past, China and Vietnam used to experience hostility and tensions which caused a lot of difficulties in the two

countries' relations and more or less influencing on the regional environment. Now, when China and Vietnam agree to resolve disputed areas through peaceful and goodwill negotiations, this event became a sample of territorial dispute settlement for other countries, especially to those who have border disputes with China and Vietnam. With that such a good progress, both China and Vietnam resolved their remained land border disputes with their neighbours such as Laos and Cambodia as in the case of Vietnam. Moreover, China, Vietnam and other countries have held various meetings discussing South China Sea issue and reach some general frameworks i.e. putting aside the issue of sovereignty for joint exploration of natural resources, refraining from the use of force and signing the code of conduct.

In addition, the expansion of economic cooperation between China and Vietnam after full resolution plays an important role for regional economic cooperation since Vietnam with its strategic location become a strategic gate for China stepping into the Southeast Asian region. Especially, the project named "one axis, two wings" or the China- ASEAN 'M' shaped strategy was built up to form a new economic growth belt in the western rim of the Pacific, create stability for both the land and maritime border regions, add more substances and efficiencies to China-ASEAN cooperation and enhance the wider East Asian overall cooperation and simultaneously ensure energy security for China in the South China Sea. This kind of model has improved bilateral trade between China and ASEAN among which Vietnam serve as an important "bridgehead" between China and Southeast Asian countries. This position helps Vietnam develop rapidly in cooperation with China and ASEAN and contribute to the regional development and prosperity.

Obviously, the success of land border dispute resolution between Vietnam and China open new changes for stability, security and development not only for the two countries but also the whole region, promising bright prospect in the near future.

## **2. Hypothesis Verification**

The research begin by formulating two hypotheses, the first was changes of Chinese foreign policy, and Vietnam's foreign policy toward China in 1980s actively impacted on the resolving process of land border issue between Vietnam and China and the

second was land border settlement positively influences on the bilateral relations between Vietnam - China and contributes to the peace and stability in the region. In due course of my research, these two hypotheses have successfully proved. For the first one, since mid 1980s, when Vietnam began to change its China policy by softening its Cambodia policy in order to meet the China's condition for normalisation of bilateral relations. Vietnam's effort actively influenced China's Vietnam policy. Consequently, from the hostile policy and low contact, since late 1980s the two countries resumed higher-level talks and at last normalised the bilateral relations in late 1991. Right at the moment of the normalisation of relations China and Vietnam started their land border dispute resolution with the Temporary Agreement on Border Affairs. Thus, the changes in China and Vietnam's policy toward each other created favourable condition for the two countries to resolve their land border dispute.

The success of land border dispute resolution not only settled one of three territorial disputes between China and Vietnam but also enhanced mutual trust and understandings between the two countries. Thanks to the land border settlement, border areas where during late 1970s and 1980 had been a war zone, have been demilitarised, creating favourable environment for cross-border economic cooperation between the two countries. The project of "two corridors and one economic belt" obviously demonstrates the success. In broader sense, the Sino - Vietnamese land border dispute resolution has contributed to the stability and development of the region. The settlement opened the "gate" for China to engage its economic cooperation with the ASEAN countries.

### **3. Assessment**

Through the study of China - Vietnam relations and their land border dispute resolution, following assessments are withdrawn:

In the relations with Vietnam, and particularly in the settlement of land border dispute, China always places its national interests on priority. China could sacrifice small interests to gain bigger ones. To this end, China, at different times, has had different attitudes toward the same issue in order to maximise its national interests. During the year of 1980s, China rebuffed most of Vietnam's proposals to restore the

relations and to negotiate border dispute because China's main objective was to increase its influence on Cambodia in particular and Indochina in general. Therefore, China abandoned interests resulted from the normalization of relations and border disputes resolution to force Vietnam to withdraw troops from Cambodia. In reality, the relations between China and Vietnam were only normalised and the land border issue resolution was resumed when Cambodia issue had been settled. Moreover, since the beginning of 1990s, the increase of demand for a stable and peaceful environment to facilitate economic development along with the isolation and embargo imposed by the Western countries in post-Tiananmen Incident placed China in a situation in which normalisation of relations and settlement of land border dispute with Vietnam were wise choices. Because firstly, it helped China reduce the financial burden of maintaining large military forces along the common border between the two countries; secondly create a stable and favourable environment for economic development in Yunnan and Guangxi – the two border province - where economic growth has lagged behind the coastal areas; and, thirdly open the “gate” to access the Southeast Asian region through Vietnam. Thus, China's normalisation of relations and land border dispute resolution are completely to serve its national interests – economic development.

Apart from that, China as a big power always tries its best to gain advantage in relationship with other countries as well as resolving disputes. It even created disputes and took them as “playing card” to bargain with the involved parties. During 1960s and the first half of 1970s, China used its aid to Vietnam as a “card” to induce Vietnam to lean on its side, aiming to reduce the Soviet Union's influence in Indochina. When the relations between Vietnam and the Soviet Union got closer in the second half of 1970s, China criticised and pressurised Vietnam by series of conflicts along the land border and even military occupation of Paracel Islands in 1974. The closer relations between Vietnam and China were the more border incursions China did. And China even encouraged Khmer Rouge forces to provoke Vietnam along the Southwest border between Vietnam and Cambodia. When Vietnam joined the Soviet-led Council for Mutual Economic Assistance in June 1978 and signed of the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with the Soviet Union in November 1978, Beijing calumniated that Hanoi joined hands with the Soviet Union to contain China and dominate Indochina and triggered the separation between Hoa and Vietnamese people in order to bring about



disorder in Vietnam. Finally, when Beijing could not force Vietnam to change its policy, it took Vietnam's actions in Cambodia as a pretext for waging the border war in 1979. Finally, during 1980s, land border conflicts were exploited by China to put pressure on Vietnam in settling the Cambodia issue.

Despite land border and Gulf of Tonkin dispute between China and Vietnam were successfully resolved disputes related to South China Sea remained a source of tension between the two countries and in the region. Concerning South China Sea, two main disputes are Paracel Islands and Spratly Islands. While dispute over Paracels is only between China and Vietnam, Spratlys, except China and Vietnam, is related to four other parties, the Philippines, Malaysia, Taiwan and Brunei. Currently, all the involved parties are making effort to prevent the situation from getting more complicated. Positively, some general frameworks have been reached i.e. putting aside the issue of sovereignty for joint exploitation of natural resources, refraining from the use of force, signing the code of conduct with other ASEAN claimants in the South China Sea disputes (DOC), and agreeing on a programme for joint exploration between China, Vietnam and the Philippines. However they are just interim solutions, to permanently settle the disputes it seems to be overreached ability of all parties as no party is ready to offer compromises and concessions.

The experience in relations and settlement of land border dispute with China indicate that Beijing will do its utmost to maximise interests in South China Sea. In reality, China is carrying out inconsistent policy regarding the territorial disputes in the South China Sea, which displayed by China's stated commitment to solve the disputes by peaceful means, to shelve the disputes and move ahead with joint development and exploration, while it is, at the same time, restoring actions aiming at expanding the area under Chinese control. Amer (2000) argued that "China is consistent in its inconsistency by pursuing two parallel policies, one constructive and peaceful and the other characterised by gradual expansion in the South China Sea." In parallel with that, China is exploiting its advantage as a big power by bilateral negotiations with the concerned countries. However, no matter what happens, settling the disputes through peaceful negotiations is the best way for all the concerned parties and for the stability in the region. In spite of that, to find a fair solution for all parties is not an easy task,

especially in settling disputes with China. Therefore, Vietnam in particular and other involved countries in general should do some following measures:

- Uniting with each other and avoiding bilateral negotiations with China to minimise its advantages in settling the disputes. Exploiting ASEAN's role is also a good measure.
- Internationalising settlement of the disputes by inviting international arbitrator or the United Nations' interference.
- Refraining from actions that cause tension and avoiding conflict related to the disputes.
- Attempting to settle the disputes as soon as possible.

However, with any measures, settlement of South China Sea disputes only succeeds on the basis of actual demands and fairly meets interests of all the parties involved.

In brief, the process of land border dispute resolution was a long period of strategic intentions. Normalization of bilateral relations and resolution of border disputes were like China's "chess moves" to further its national interests. China unhesitatingly stepped back for a while to make a strike to a more powerful position. Under the guise of a fair and peace-loving country, China step by step expands its influence on the Far East. However, whatever China's concealed ambitions are, it could not be denied that the success of land border dispute resolution brings new prospects for the two countries and the whole region, strengthening security, cooperation and development in all aspects. Promising things are waiting ahead.

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**Appendix: Chronology of High Level (presidential and ministerial level), Government Level and Expert Level Meeting 1992-2000**

High Level shown as: **High Level**; Government Level as: **Government Level**; Expert Level as: **Expert Level**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Type of Negotiation</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
5-10 November 1991	<b>Vietnamese Secretary-General Do Muoi and Chairman of Ministerial Council Vo Van Kiet</b>	China	Normalisation of relations	The relations was normalised; A temporary agreement on border affairs was signed
12-15 February 1992	<b>Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen-visit</b>	Vietnam	Border disputes	Agreement to establish working groups to discuss territorial issues.
12-21 September 1992	<b>Chinese Vice Foreign Minister-visit</b>	Vietnam	Border problems	No agreement, but scheduled further talks in Beijing, October
12-17 October 1992	Vietnamese & Chinese Experts	China	Second round talks on general border issues	No substantial outcome
30 Nov – 4 December 1992	<b>Chinese Premier Li Peng – visit</b>	Vietnam	General discussion	No significant progress but emphasised that differences would be settled by negotiation
7-13 December 1992	<b>Vietnamese Defence Minister General Doan Khue – visit</b>	China	General discussion	No outcome reported
14-19 February 1993	Vietnamese & Chinese Experts	Vietnam	Second round talks	No outcome reported
13-20 May 1992	<b>Chinese Defence Minister Chi Haotian – visit</b>	Vietnam	General discussion	No outcome reported
22 July 1993	<b>Chinese &amp; Vietnamese Foreign Ministers</b>	ASEAN meeting Singapore 2002	General discussion	The two sides reiterated that the existing border and territorial issues would be resolved through negotiations

23-30 August 1992	<b>Vietnamese Government Delegation</b>	China	First round of talks on border issues	Two sides reached a general understanding and consensus on fundamental principles for solving the territorial issues
18-21 October 1993	<b>Chinese Government Delegation</b>	Vietnam	Talks on border issues (First round continued)	Agreement signed including basic principles for settling the territorial issues relating to the land border and to the division of the Gulf of Tonkin. Agreed to concentrate on efforts to resolve them. Agreed to set up joint working groups at expert level to deal with them
9-15 November 1993	<b>Vietnamese President Le Duc Anh - visit</b>	China	Bilateral relations	Both sides contended with the recent agreement on principles for resolving the border issues. They agreed to settle the remaining issues relating to land and sea borders through negotiation.
22-25 February 1994	Joint Working group on land border	Vietnam	First round of talks	Agreement reached on procedural issues, content of group's programme and tasks
25 June-1 July 1994	Joint Working group on land border	China	Second round of talks	No substantial progress
22 July 1994	<b>Chinese &amp; Vietnamese Foreign Ministers</b>	Thailand AMM and ARF	Border issues	Agreed to hold talks at vice foreign minister level to discuss joint development in areas with overlapping claims in the South China Sea. Agreement on the basic principles concerning the territorial dispute. Nguyen Manh Cam said both countries had agreed to exercise self-restraint and not do anything to make the situation deteriorate.
14-18 August 1994	<b>Governmental level</b>	Vietnam	Second round of talks	According to Xinhua News Agency, the two sides agreed that the territorial issues, including the Spratly issue, should be settled through

				negotiation and that both sides would refrain from the use of force or the threat of force. The territorial disputes would not be allowed to affect the normal development of bilateral relations. The Vietnamese reports concurred with the Chinese version on most points with notable different that Vietnam referred to issues related to the East Sea, i.e., the South China Sea as a whole, instead of the just the Spratly Islands issue, as China did.
22-27 October 1994	Joint Working group on land border	Vietnam	Third round of talks	Nothing substantive reported
19-22 November 1994	<b>Chinese Secretary- General &amp; President, Jiang Zemin - visit</b>	Vietnam	Border issues	Joint communiqué, the two sides reaffirmed that they would persist in peaceful negotiations to solve boundary and territorial issues. Negotiations would be pursued on the issues involving the seas in order to seek a basic and long-term solution acceptable to both sides. Agreed to establish an expert group to deal with issues involving the seas. Agreed to refrain from taking actions which would complicate or enlarge the disputes and refrain from using force or its threat.
16-23 January 1995	Joint working group on land border	China	Fourth round of talks	Nothing substantive
17-19 May 1995	<b>Vietnamese Foreign Minister Nguyen Manh Cam</b>	China	Talks with Chinese counterpart Qian Qichen	Discussed territorial disputes. Agreed on need to settle territorial disputes through peaceful negotiation.
22-27 May 1995	Joint working group on land border	Vietnam	Fifth round of talks	Resulted in some progress

11-13 July 1995	<b>Government level</b>	China	Third round of talks	The two sides decided to form a joint group of expert on the sea border to work on territorial issues in the South China Sea
9-14 October 1995	Joint working group on land border	China	Sixth round of talks	Agreed on a number of technical measures leading to the signing of a border agreement
26 November -2 December 1995	<b>Vietnamese Secretary-General Do Muoi-visit</b>	China	Summit meeting	Joint communiqué issued on 2 December. Agreed to properly resolve the issue of territory along the borders in the basis of international law, international practices and through peaceful negotiations. It was also announced that an agreement in principle on railway transportation had been reached.
January 1996	Joint working group on land border	Vietnam	Seventh round of talks	According to the report, this round of talks concluded with positive development.
29 February 1996	<b>Chinese and Vietnamese Premiers</b>	Thailand ASEM	Border issues	Li Peng stated the two countries had reached consensus on the border issue. Negotiations on the land border had entered the substantial stage.
6-11 May 1996	Joint working group on land border	China	Eighth round of talks	Reportedly positive progress was made during the talks.
17-20 September 1996	<b>Government level</b>	Vietnam	Fourth round of talks	Discussed how to speed up negotiations and agreed on guidelines for joint working group on land border
14-18 October 1996	Joint working group on land border	Vietnam	Ninth round of talks	The two sides exchanged views on issues agreed on during the government-level talks
17-18 April	<b>Deputy Foreign Ministers</b>	China-ASEAN meeting	Border issues	Agreed to promote talks to solve border issues.
7-12 May 1997	Joint working group on land border	China	Tenth round of talks	No outcome reported.

14-18 July	<b>Vietnamese Secretary-General Do Muoi – visit</b>	China	Meeting with Chinese counterpart Jiang Zemin	Agreed on need to accelerate negotiations.
13-15 August 1997	<b>Government level</b>	China	Fifth round of talks	Discussed concrete measures to speed up the negotiations to implement the consensus reached by the General Secretaries to sign agreement on the land border and Gulf of Tonkin issues by 2000. Also agreed to continue with negotiations on the East Sea issues, i.e. the South China Sea issues
12-22 January 1998	Joint working group on land border	Vietnam	Eleventh round of talks	The two side reviewed the aerial surveys over the border for mapping purposes, exchanged views on the draft agreement on the land border and discussed various conflicts on the border region.
26 May-5 June 1998	Joint working group on land border	China	Twelfth round of talks	Agreed to speed up the negotiation process and to shorten the intervals between the talks with the aim of meeting the goal of signing an agreement in 2000.
25-26 September 1998	<b>Government level</b>	Vietnam	Six round of talks	No substantive progress.
19-23 October 1998	<b>Vietnamese Prime Minister Phan Van Khai-visit</b>	China	Meeting with Chinese counterpart Zhu Rongji	Agreed to speed up negotiations.
17-19 December 1998	<b>Chinese Vice President Hu Jintao-visit</b>	Vietnam	Meeting with Vietnamese leaders	Affirmed the determination to implement high-level agreements.
7-21 January 1999	Joint working group on land border	Vietnam	Thirteenth round of talks	Some initial results were reached in the search for a solution to the disputed border areas. Views were also exchanged on the making of a border map.
25	<b>Vietnamese</b>	China	Meeting	Agreed to place the primary

February-2 March 1999	<b>Secretary-General Le Kha Phieu</b>		with Chinese leaders	issues foremost, to show sympathy and compromise to each other, to conduct consultations in a fair, rational and friendly fashion, and to take in to account both international law and reality when negotiating a settlement to the outstanding territorial border issues. Both sides expressed the determination to accelerate the negotiation process and raise their working efficiency in order to reach a land border treaty in 1999.
29 March-5 May 1999	Joint working group on land border	China	Fourteenth round of talks	Some initial results obtained in the search for solution to the demarcation of border areas relating to which the two sides held different opinions. They also compared notes on drawing a border map between the two countries.
Mid-May 1999	<b>Vietnamese Deputy Foreign Prime Nguyen Tan Dung - visit</b>	China	Meeting with Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji	Discussed measures to speed up the negotiation process on the land border issue.
22 June-22 July 1999	Joint working group on land border	Vietnam	Fifteenth round of talks	Some results were reached in the search for solution to those border areas where the two sides hold different views. The work on the border maps continued. The two sides exchanged their solutions to 76 remaining areas and agreed to fully consider the views of the other party for the next round of talks.
Early August? 1999 (no end date publicised )	Joint working group on land border	Not publicised	Sixteen round of talks	This round was officially the final one in the negotiation process at the expert-level. No outcome was reported.



1-4 December 1999	<b>Chinese Premier Minister Zhu Rongji – visit</b>	Vietnam	Talks with Vietnamese leaders	All outstanding problems concerning the border had been resolved and the negotiations had been successfully concluded. In accordance with the agreement of the high-level talks in February 1999 the two countries would concentrate their effort n urgently addressing technical issues in rder to quickly complete the drafting of an agreement on the land border.
30-31 December 1999	<b>Chinese Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan</b>	Vietnam	Talks with Vietnamese counterpart	Signing of Land Border Treaty, 30 December 1999.
24-27 February 2000	<b>Vietnamese Foreign Minister</b>	China	Land Border Treaty	Pledged to work for early implementation of the Land Border Treaty and accelerate negotiations in order to resolve Gulf of Tonkin issue in 2000.
10 May 2000	<b>Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji and Vietnamese Deputy Prime Minister Nguyen Manh Cam</b>	China	Land Border Treaty	China informed that the Land Border Treaty had been ratified.

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