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JPRS L/10325

16 February 1982

# Vietnam Report

(FOUO 3/82)



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MILITARY AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC SECURITY

INFORMATION ON VIETNAMESE MILITARY UNITS

[The following information on Vietnamese military units has been extracted from Vietnamese press sources published in Hanoi, unless otherwise indicated. Unit designators and subordination are as they appear in the original source. The remarks include a brief summary of the salient information available in the news item.]

<u>Unit</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
3rd MR B.19 Gp B.30 Gp N.13 Gp S.66 Gp	Subordinate units coordinate combat readiness and economic construction. (NHAN DAN 4 Jan 82 p 2)
Factory 59, Technical General Department	Completed 1981 plan. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 1 Jan 82 p 1)
Border Defense Post 303, Lai Chau Province	Photo of patrol. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 1 Jan 82 p 1)
Thac Ba Infantry Gp, Hoang Lien	Subordinate units include at least 15 companies of which one is the 17th company. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 1 Jan 82 p 1)
B.33 Gp	Activated in 1975 sometime after April. Composed of regiments from the southern Central Highlands of the 5th Military Region. At that time the regiments converted from combat to economic construction. Has since cleared 10,000 hectares in Krong Pach and Ma Do Rac Districts of Dac Lac Province. Is making preparations to receive settlers from Thai Binh and Nghe Tinh Provinces. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 1 Jan 82 p 2)
Quang Trung Missile Regt -44th Bn	Commander: Trinh Lan [TRINHJ LAAN]. -Battalion Commander: Tran Minh [TRAAHF MINH] (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 1 Jan 82 p 2)

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12th Corps [Binh Doan]	Photo of unit entertainment troupe. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 2 Jan 82 p 3)
B.65 Gp	" " " "
B.33 Gp	" " " "
Truong Son Corps [Binh Doan]	Assigned to economic construction in the Central Highlands. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 2 Jan 82 p 3)
B.91 Gp	An Engineer organization engaged in road construction in the Khau Co area. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 2 Jan 82 p 3)
B.79 Gp	Assigned to an "international mission." (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 2 Jan 82 p 3)
Dong Bang Gp, Tay Nguyen Corps [Binh Doan] Thang Long Gp "Dung Cam Danh Hang" Gp	Conducted tactical competition for subordinate units. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 3 Jan 82 p 1)
068 Transportation Gp	Serving in Kampuchea. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 3 Jan 82 p 1)
1st Bn, M.98 Gp, 1st MR	Photo of patrol on the northern border. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 3 Jan 82 p 1)
4th MR Le Loi Gp -"H" Engineer Gp	Provinces include Thanh Hoa, Nghe Tinh and Binh Tri Thien Provinces. -Road construction at Le Hong Son. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 3 Jan 82 p 1)
M.22 Gp, Tay Bac Forces	Located on northern border opposite PRC forces. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 4 Jan 82 p 1)
B.56 Gp, Tay Bac Forces	" " " "
Vinh Quang Div	Commended editorially for weapons maintenance. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 4 Jan 82 p 1)
M.98 Regt	Commended editorially for training accomplishments. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 4 Jan 82 p 1)
Vinh Quang Div, Huong Giang Corps [Binh Doan] 09 Regt 56th Regt	Produced 2.8 million bricks and 290 tons of lime to construct unit housing and equipment shelters. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 4 Jan 82 p 2)
4th Gp	Located in Lang Giang District, Ha Bac Province. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 4 Jan 82 p 3)

Huong Giang Corps [Binh Doan] Vinh Quang Gp B.25 Gp H.03 Armored Gp B.63 Signal Gp	Proliferation of musical troupes noted. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 4 Jan 82 p 3)
M.22 Gp	A mobile unit located on the northern border. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 4 Jan 82 p 3)
Cuu Long Corps [Binh Doan] S.86 Gp H.4 Gp M. Gp B. Gp	Training activities noted. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 4 Jan 82 p 3)
3rd MR B.29 Div B.50 Div	" " " "
20th Bn, M.98 Gp, 1st MR	Commended for thwarting many PRC border viola- tions. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 5 Jan 82 p 1)
71st Air Force Gp	Activities of unit training battalion reported. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 5 Jan 82 p 1)
National Defense Plant 55, Technical General Department	Director: Nguyen Van Chuong [NGUYEENX VAWN CHUWOWNG]. Located in the south. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 5 Jan 82 p 2)
National Defense Plant Z.51	Photo shows that plant manufactures bicycle tires. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 5 Jan 82 p 2)
Machine Shop 55, Navy	Performs light and medium repairs for vessels. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 5 Jan 82 p 2)
19 May Cement Enterprise, 4th MR	Production results given. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 5 Jan 82 p 2)
Signal Factory X.10	Modifies vehicles for mobile communications and command. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 5 Jan 82 p 2)
Armed Forces Folk Medicine Hospital	Commander [?]: Colonel Trieu Van Cu [TRIEEUJ VAWN CUWJ]. A newly activated organization. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 5 Jan 82 p 3)
103rd Military Hospital, Medical Department, Rear Services General Department	Selects nurse and medical technician of the year. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 5 Jan 82 p 3)
Navy 03 Gp M.47 Gp	Youth union activities reported. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 6 Jan 82 p 1)

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M.26 Gp  
05 Gp  
01 Gp  
B.03 Gp  
M.31 Engineer Gp  
Shop 51  
Shop 70  
Shop 48  
MF.25 Gp  
Shop 58  
Vessel HQ 754  
Vessel 757  
Vessel 746

B.77 AAA Gp Photo of unit Sam missile. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 6 Jan 82 p 1)

8th Co, 134th Gp Wire teams self support farming activities reported. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 6 Jan 82 p 2)

19th Bn, B.08 Gp, 5th MR Self support farming activities reported. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 6 Jan 82 p 2)

H.69 Engineer Gp Serving in Kampuchea. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 6 Jan 82 p 2)

2nd Co, 1st Bn, B.76 Engineer Gp, 7th MR Raising self-support vegetables, bananas and chickens. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 6 Jan 82 p 2)

Fuel Station 7, S.52 Gp Located at Hung Thai Village, Hung Nguyen District, Nghe Tinh Province. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 6 Jan 82 p 3)

26th Regt Located at An Hoa Village. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 6 Jan 82 p 3)

National Defense Factory Z.53, Technical General Department Producing in support of economic construction. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 8 Jan 82 p 1)

30th Bn, B.72 Gp, Truong Son Forces aka Truong Son Corps [Binh Doan] Road construction work. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 8 Jan 82 p 3)

Radar Forces Concentrates on improving basic level units. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 8 Jan 82 p 3)

38th Co, H.91 Gp  
26th Co, Phu Dong Gp  
47th Co, Song Ma Gp  
46th Co, H.95 Gp  
16th Signal Co, Ba Be Gp  
50th Co, H.94th Gp

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12th Infantry Gp, Quyet Thang Corps [Binh Doan]	On 9 January 1982 was visited by a military delegation from the GDR. (NHAN DAN 10 Jan 82 p 1)
Thang Long Air Force Gp	Commander: Pham Thanh Ngan [PHAMJ THANH NGAAN]. On 9 January 1982 was visited by a military delegation from the GDR. (NHAN DAN 10 Jan 82 p 4) NOTE: On 1 October 1981 Pham Thanh Ngan was reported as commander of the B.71 Air Force Gp.
45th Navy Gp	Photo of artillery crew. (NHAN DAN 12 Jan 82 p 1)
"Hai Ba Trung" Self Defense Regt, Kim Dong Textile Plant.	Photo of unit personnel. (LAO DONG 17 Dec 81 p 1)
Factory 1165, Rear Services General Department	Photo of workers checking small motors. (LAO DONG 17 Dec 81 p 3)
05 National Defense Factory	Unit team chief commended. (LAO DONG 17 Dec 81 p 3)
M.17 National Defense Factory	A typical day at the factory described. (LAO DONG 17 Dec 81 p 4)
859th Gp, Quang Nam-Danang Province	Photo of female unit members on firing range. (PHU NU VIETNAM 16-22 Dec 81 p 3)
06 Gp, Chemical Warfare Forces	Located at Ngoc Chau Village, Tan Yen District, Ha Bac Province. (TIEN PHONG 29 Dec-4 Jan 82 p 3)

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INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, TRADE AND AID

CORRUPTION, ECONOMIC WOES PLAGUE COMMUNIST GOVERNMENT

Paris L'EXPRESS 11 Dec 81 in French pp 134-35, 137-38, 141, 143-44, 146

[Article by Thai Quang Trung: "Vietnam: The Lost Revolution"]

[Text] According to the most recent evidence, the economy of Vietnam is experiencing a state of bankruptcy in the Polish style. In order to pay its debts, the government exports its citizens by the hundreds of thousands to the U.S.S.R. Anarchy is rampant in the South. Underground forces are developing. The military occupation of Cambodia is bogged down. Six years after the fall of Saigon (April 1975), is the Vietnamese Communist Party about to "lose the revolution" after having lost the peace? Has Hanoi become one of the weak links of the Soviet system? L'EXPRESS has asked Thai Quang Trung, Vietnamese jurist and historian, to explain the amazing turnaround of this situation.

The disaster is frightening. "Will the ship survive?" an important member of the Central Committee asked himself recently in an editorial in NHAN DAN, the party newspaper. "The only thing the crew and passengers can do is maintain discipline and obey the captain's orders fearlessly. The example is taken from Stalin. His teaching is even more significant for us today." This reverence for Stalin is doubly symptomatic of the state of disarray and the anachronisms that have beset Ho Chi Minh's party for the past year. In the rooms of the Central Committee in Hanoi, Djougatchvili-Stalin coldly surveys the future of party discipline. The Vietnamese Communist Party can no longer cope with the present.

The party is sick. It is suffering from senility: "gerontocrats" are fighting over power in Hanoi. In the Politburo, by Vietnamese standards, the 4th age reigns: Le Duan is 74, Truong Chinh, 74, Pham Vam Dong, 76, and Le Duc Tho, 72. In the Central Committee it is the 3rd age, or close to it. The comrades of Ho Chi Minh--in the party since the 20's and 30's--were formed during the Komintern period. The old guard is worn out. The others, whose character was forged by a long clandestine resistance, have a besieged citadel complex. This caste has hardly changed. Politically paranoid, it refuses to free itself six years after the "liberation." There is a formidable cultural monolith: Stalinism reigns.

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The party leadership is also afflicted with the "Albanian syndrome." Family centralism, a clear sign of degeneracy here as in Albania, has replaced democratic centralism in the party. It is the "gia-dinh tri," or family dictatorship. The party-state is now practically controlled by three clans: the Le Duan family, Le Duc Tho and his brothers, and the Truong Chinh group. Truong Nhu Tang, former minister of justice of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam, and now an exile in Paris, analyzes the paralysis of the party-state as follows: "Le Duan is obsessed with power. He means to reign as a family. The Le Duc Tho system is a party within the party. The administration of Pham Van Dong runs up against the bars put up by Truong Chinh. Everyone obeys only the directives of his own clan."

Factional rivalries are grafted onto the Sino-Soviet quarrel. At the IVth Party Congress, in December 1976, the Le Duan - Le Duc Tho coalition managed to eliminate 27 of the 69 members and deputy members of the Central Committee. Expelled from the Politburo, Hoang Van Hoan--now an exile in Peking--is only the scapegoat. The real target is Truong Chinh ("Long March"), who is well known for his Maoist opinions. He managed to stay in the Politburo and to retain the presidency of the National Assembly thanks to his loud 11th-hour anti-Chinese talk. Truong Chinh is a long-distance runner. This is not his first time around. Secretary-general of the party from 1940 on, this orthodox theoretician had to step aside for Le Duan after the failure of the bloody agricultural reform of 1956. But he has been back in the Politburo since 1958. He has just made a strong comeback by becoming--in July 1981--president of the Council of State, supreme governing body of the country according to the new constitution. As commander-in-chief of the armed forces, he presides over the National Defense Council.

Apparently Le Duan still has the upper hand in the party. Through his son, the first secretary controls the special security force of the Politburo and of the Central Committee. Through his brothers-in-law he oversees the Propaganda Commission, the State Committee on Science and Technology, and the school for party officials, which is directed by Tran Quynh, who has just lost the important Planning Commission. For their part, Le Duc Tho and his brothers have the same inclination for family centralism. The eldest is a member of the Politburo. The other three are members of the Central Committee. Together they run the Party Commission on Security and Organization; the administration of Ho Chi Minh City and the secret police in South Vietnam; the army's logistics; communications and transportation; and the Confederation of Trade Unions of Vietnam. They have just lost the promising Ministry of Petroleum, which didn't work out, unfortunately! Oddly, the Le Duc Tho brothers don't have the same family name. This is undoubtedly for camouflage and for a better division of labor.

As the Vth Party Congress--postponed until spring 1982--approaches, these factions are fighting among themselves, neutralizing each other. The future strong man of the regime seems to be Le Duc Tho. At the IVth Congress he was already in a position of seniority, and spoke out warning the leadership against "divisive factional activity in the party at all levels." A discreet man, he is nevertheless behind every major turning point. He was the enigmatic man Kissinger negotiated with; he was the author of the false peace of 1973. From the taking of Saigon in 1975 to the "north-nationalization" of South Vietnam in 1976, to the conquest of

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Cambodia in 1979, to the campaign to distribute party cards in 1980, he is always there. The changes now being made in the highest quarters of the government depend to a large extent on him. He is now the arbiter of the struggle between Le Duan and Truong Chinh. Is a new coalition taking shape in Hanoi? Is so, who will take the blame for the present disaster? Whatever happens, Le Duc Tho will have the last word.

From the troubled waters of the Politburo--which has become a veritable hornets' nest--To Huu nevertheless emerges as the probable successor of Pham Van Dong, who is said to be "very tired," as president of the Council of Ministers. At the age of 60 this "youth" has somehow managed to get ahead of his elders, in particular general Vo Nguyen Giap, who has been in a free fall ever since he left the Ministry of National Defense in February 1980. To Huu owes his ascent to his unparalleled skill and eloquence in expressing the continually fluctuating party line. He is the regime's official poet. He became famous in 1953 for a poem lamenting the death of Stalin: "Oh Stalin! My love for my father, my mother, my wife, myself, is nothing compared to my love for you. Oh Stalin! What is left on earth and in heaven after your death?" To Huu wrote of the glory of Mao in the same vein in another poem, which oddly enough does not appear in the latest edition (1979) of his collected works. Does this rising star in the party represent the new order which the old guard will give way to?

Legend has it that the Vietnamese Communist Party is the most united communist party in the world. The fact is that it has never been united, even when its founder was alive. Everyone in the small world of Hanoi politics knows about the feuding among Le Duan, Truong Chinh and Vo Nguyen Giap. There is a story: "Shortly before his death, Ho Chi Minh called all the members of the Politburo to his bedside. He asked them to hold hands and made them promise to remain united after he was gone." This pathetic scene didn't really take place. Hoang Van Hoan, who as at Ho's bedside, says it didn't. His version: "The majority of the Politburo wanted this meeting. Le Duan didn't, and opposed it. He said that the Uncle's mind was wandering. Did he question the last wishes of Uncle Ho?"

But right after Ho Chi Minh's death, which was at 9:47 am on 2 September 1969, Le Duan convened a meeting of the members of the Politburo and read them the Uncle's will--"a typewritten text, three or four pages long, according to Hoang Van Hoan"--"which was signed by both Ho Chi Minh and Le Duan!" Oddly, this will appeared on the cover of NHAN DAN a few days later in another form. The beginning of the text was in Ho Chi Minh's highly characteristic handwriting and was dated 10 May 1969. The rest was printed. The signatures of both Ho Chi Minh and Le Duan were gone. Doubts began to arise in the minds of certain members of the Politburo: "The will of Ho Chi Minh is a historical document. Why not publish the whole thing as written by the Uncle himself?" Hoang Van Hoan thinks that "part of the text was manipulated by Le Duan for his own purposes." It's a dark story strangely reminiscent of the use Stalin made of Lenin's will.

There is a crisis at the top, but also at the bottom. The Vietnamese Communist Party is suffering from peasant-sickness. Between 1965 and 1975, the party's membership doubled. The peasantry furnished the overwhelming majority of its combatants. "Cannon fodder," as they were considered at the top. But Vietnamese

communism is still basically a peasant brand of communism. It is in contradiction with the Marxism-Leninism it claims to be founded on. As the party leadership can't hope to carry out an avant-garde revolution with the worker class, it is reduced to eliminating its own peasant members. As of 1974 a resolution of the Politburo called for the elimination of 200,000 party members. After the purification campaign waged by the IVth Party Congress in 1976, a new campaign was launched in February 1980 "to help party members distinguish between true and false Marxism and fight the poisonous influence of Maoism."

Used to constantly submitting to authority in war time, the "can-bo," of peasant origins, no longer know how to use the power they have acquired in peace time. There is incompetence at all levels. Mme Ngo Ba Thanh, democratic alibi of the government, explains: "Power is being transferred to the masses, who are ignorant. That explains why things are badly done, irrational. We are suffering from growing pains." But these people are far from young. The party has aged considerably, from the ground up. In June 1979 an editorial in NHAN DAN denounced the "narrow-mindedness of a certain number of comrades who have grown grey under the harness, their paternalism, and their refusal to let young people into the party hierarchy."

Without mentioning its own position the leadership is advocating a rejuvenation of the upper ranks of the party because, as the REVIEW OF COMMUNISM ("Tap Chi Cong San") pointed out in February 1978: "In many party organs, both central and provincial, a third to a half of the officials will be eligible for retirement in the next 5 years."

The party is going through a crisis in the north, but even more so in the south. A resolution adopted by the Politburo on 20 November 1980 about the organization work done by the party recognizes the fact that "the party is suffering from a permanent state of underdevelopment in the south, where the organizational structure is not homogeneous." At the time of the fall of Saigon the party had 200,000 members in the south (inflated figure) out of a total membership of 1,533,500. This is rather a small number, in view of the complete victory in the south. The figures haven't changed much in the past 5 years: 273,000 in 1978 and 321,000 in 1980, many of whom are unreliable, the "can-bo of 30 April" as they are called in the south. The arrival of large numbers of officials from the north accentuated regional chauvinism. The northern apparatchiks use the party machinery "like a steam roller in the south." As for the southern revolutionaries, they are no longer "in the vanguard as they once were." At all levels of the party they are "eternally in second place."

The regional imbalance in the hierarchy in favor of the north has led to "widespread revulsion" at the base of the party. The northern "can-bo" are rejected by the population in the south, which feels as though it were living under a political-military occupation. Suddenly the party is withdrawing into cloistered arrogance. On 22 June 1980, QUAN DOI NHAN DAN, the army newspaper, warned the party against "narcissism, authoritarianism and sectarianism of officials who no longer have any tie with the masses." In fact, the party has lost the people; the fish is irremediably out of its water. As Hoan Huu Quynh--a party member for 14 years, now gone over to the other side in exile in Paris--says: "In Hue even beggars spit when the can-bo go by."

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The party's weakness in the south reminds one inescapably of the Gulag. That is part of the logic of totalitarianism. "We aren't so human as to commit suicide," Hoang Tung, editor of NHAN DAN, calmly admits. "It's better to arrest 100 innocent people by mistake than to leave a single reactionary at liberty," says a directive issued by the Politburo in the summer of 1985, when people were arrested right and left. The security forces arrest people. So does the army. But they are outdone by the zeal of the peoples' committees. "The can-bo strike in the middle of the night. The present and future of every citizen are the property of the party and its policemen." Since almost everyone in the south has some link with the old regime, it is hard to find a Vietnamese there who doesn't have a relative or a friend in prison or a concentration camp. The Gulag--unknown in the past history of the country--is now part of the Vietnamese landscape.

"This is not Cambodia or Ethiopia!" says colonel Hoang Long Phi, who spent 5 years in forced labor at the sinister concentration camps of Hoang Lien Son, in the far north of Vietnam; today he is a refugee in Denmark. "The Vietnamese Communist Party has mastered the art of dispensing death with a medicine dropper. The terror is not immediate and bloody, but diffuse, visceral." The party has certainly not been unworthy of Stalinism. Prisons, concentration camps, new economic zones, displaced populations, and the use of gas are all part of a vast program of liquidation of all opposition and dissidence--political, religious, or ethnic. The intelligentsia are the first victims because historically, educated people have always been in the forefront of nationalist combat. Some "ideological prisoners with doubtful antecedents" are literally sacrificed by the party in murderous work or the removal of mines. They are usually blown up by the countless bombs left behind by the last war.

In swallowing the south the party is poisoning itself with greed, and contagion is immediate. In the summer of 1975 the south was overrun. "The can-bo fight--sometimes at gunpoint--over public buildings, official residences, factories, housing, automobiles, even furniture. After so many years of privation the can-bo find it hard to resist the mirage of the south." Starting in the fall of the same year, Radio Ho Chi Minh City launched a campaign to warn against "the evils of the society of perdition." Enquiry commissions were set up in the spring of 1976 to fight "abuses." In December of 1979 a report of the People's Committee of Ho Chi Minh City revealed, however, that "highly-placed officials intervened to obstruct the fight against corruption, while others even persecuted the denouncers of corruption." But could it be otherwise? "Even Le Duan's second wife controls--under various honorary titles--a whole network of illicit trade in the rich southern provinces!"

At first corruption was considered a "minor offense." But it quickly assumed astronomic proportions, all the more so in that the party itself is engaged in a deliberate racket, as a policy, against the bourgeoisie and other class enemies. The effect is perverse. Corruption has become a sort of institution, an official remedy for the pauperization of an entire people. "Now that shortages are so widespread, the party has become a sort of asylum for economic refugees," Hoang Huu Quynh admits. "Illicit trading there is almost legal." NHAN DAN of 12 May 1981 reported, after an inquiry, that the workers in 2,563 state firms and cooperatives in 15 provinces "ran" 303 million dong (about 121 million dollars) worth of

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goods during the first quarter of 1980 alone. "There must be an end to collective illicit trading!" concluded the party newspaper.

Didn't the "boat people" racket bring almost 4 billion dollars--immediately used to repay debts to the USSR--into the leaky coffers of the party-state in 1979? Meanwhile almost 25 tons of gold "ran" through the ranks of the party. And the "scraping" continues, even within the party, from the ground up. Nothing is lost in such a system, in the last analysis. Like a cancer, corruption becomes widespread. It reaches the north, as though avenging the south. Thus in March 1980 the REVIEW OF COMMUNISM noted, in its unique language, that: "Due to the interaction between the two parts of the country, the vestiges of the shameful practice of corruption left behind by the neo-colonialist system have ended up invading the north." In October 1979 the same journal looked back with nostalgia at the revolutionary purity of the past; "Communists loved and protected each other in the bush. Today many people think that it is hard to sustain mutual devotion in peacetime."

The revolution is no longer what it was. It has gone bad, rotted. The evil is twofold: corruption in the south, bureaucracy in the north. "Bureaucracy inevitably breeds corruption, which in turn nourishes bureaucrats," explains Nguyen Cong Hoan, who was elected to the National Assembly in 1976 and is in exile today in the United States. "What is novel about it is institutionalized bureaucracy in a regime calling itself the master of the working people." According to the new constitution the people are the masters, the party is the leader and the state is the administrator. But in practice, as the new popular saying goes: "When the master is collective no one is master and everyone is a slave!" In fact, collective power has quickly degenerated into a regime of collective irresponsibility cloaked by abstract references to a fixed, immovable hierarchy. At this impasse, the government is no longer associated with progress. It is tending toward the self-reproduction of a degenerate body. On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the founding of the party, on 3 February 1980, Le Duan lashed out against "corrupt and degenerate elements which are dishonoring the party." And NHAN DAN decried the "oppression of the masses!" But "chinh huan," or rectification campaigns, have become mere bureaucratic exercises.

All over Vietnam the little people are at the mercy of those whom a popular expression calls "six-legged men" (two legs and the four feet of a chair). These new petty kings, always sitting like insects, guard all the "cua-quyen," or the doors to power. The password "dau tien" (priority), when the syllables are inverted ("tien dau"), means "Where is the money?" So the faster you pay, the sooner you get in. Every signature has an equivalent in gold. To get into a hospital one often needs an authorization with three signatures. And not just anyone can be admitted, since the hospitals are reserved for highly-placed officials. Contrary to all ethics, admission to hospitals (as well as schools, factories, and all official entities) depends solely on the political status of the person wishing to gain admittance. The families of prisoners, of "nguy" (phantoms), or of refugees, and people of Chinese origin, are condemned for all practical purposes.

To bury a dead person you have to have a death certificate authenticated by the head of the "khom" (island), stamped by the head of the "phuong" (village), and

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exchanged for an authorization issued by the head of the "quan" (district), which allows you to go and stand in line in front of a state store to buy a coffin. By the time you have finished with all this running around, your neighbor is in an advanced state of putrefaction, and your purse is empty. If you happen to commit suicide your survivors will have to pay a "deserter's tithe" to the state, so only entire families commit suicide. Advanced communism, meant to create the new man, has ended up devouring man. "The new cannibalistic order introduces its own aberrations. The people are not eaten raw." Explains a refugee bonzo, "They are murdered over a slow fire on the altar of the party." In the summer of 1980 a soldier set fire to himself as a sacrifice for the first time in Hanoi--in front of the National Assembly.

Thus civilized society is driven to wither in the haunting daily struggle for survival. Above all, to avoid starvation. Does the party mean to control the people through their stomachs, since it can't control them through their souls? According to a recent FAO report, the average annual rice deficit is more than 2 million tons and will be 4.4 million tons for this year. In the fall of 1980 there were riots in Haiphong and Nghe Tinh because of famine. This had not happened since the popular wave of discontent in 1956. In the south, the socialization of agriculture has turned into a catastrophe. In the Mekong delta--once a rice granary--about a hundred cooperatives are limping along, out of a total of 2000. In Cu Chi, the former stronghold of the Vietcong, the peasants would rather slaughter buffalos than give them to the cooperatives, and prefer to keep the surplus from the paddies for the pigs than "sell" it to the state.

Oddly enough, today the party propaganda is hesitating to resort to the explanation of natural disasters which have plagued Vietnam since 1975. Would it be anti-Marxist to "hold God responsible for all the evils on earth?" The fact is that popular superstition is corrosive, formidable: "Heaven is definitely no longer on the side of the communists." In the villages of Thanh Hoa the peasants--although indoctrinated since 1954--are coming back to the popular saying: "The best ideology is that which fills the stomach with complete meals." A kilogram of rice costs the equivalent of a fifth of an average monthly salary on the free market! You can accomplish a revolution with "sans-culottes," but not with people who are hungry.

Confronted with a catastrophe, the party decided at its 9th plenum in December 1980 to accelerate the liberalization of the economy. After extreme collectivism it was back to the Nep, according to the teachings of Lenin. Two steps forward, one backward, and start again. It is a vicious circle. But to their surprise the Stalinists discovered the laws of the market and material incentives. A reform of state firms and cooperatives is in progress, meant to "substitute contractual work for collective work." With incredible candor, Hoang Tung admits that "our former policy of equalizing salaries and prices only seemed egalitarian. It produced inequality. Only an unequal redistribution of incomes can reestablish true equality." Over the past 6 years the editor of NHAN DAN has said everything

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and the opposite of everything. But will the party end up finding itself by engaging in all this double-talk? At any rate, there has never been such a final confession of the failure of collectivism.

No doubt the party hopes to extricate itself from its difficulties with this tactical retreat. All the more so in that it intends to keep the economy afloat with monthly injections of about 200 tons of goods sent by the Vietnamese diaspora. It is the height of Machiavellism: after chasing its class enemies into the sea, the party encourages these unfortunate refugees to help their families who stayed in Vietnam. Out of solidarity, one inevitably falls into the trap. Thanks to this new form of aid, the people in the towns survive from day to day. System D is surfacing again in Ho Chi Minh City, where thousands of "pocket trades" sprout like mushrooms. In front of the main post office, doctors practice right on the sidewalks. Pharmacists undertake to fill prescriptions immediately by buying medicines from people waiting for parcels from France and America.

But the system is incurable. Profits, which were introduced unequally into the collective sectors, are accelerating corruption more than they are restoring the economy, and at the same time they are whipping up inflation and the black market. Successive reshufflings of ministers--four in 2 years, a real record for the communist world--and the arrival of the "technocrats" haven't changed anything. Day by day the new mandarins preside over the impasse. The new class takes full advantage of its privileges. Humiliated and starving, the little people let themselves slide naturally into the vandalism of the daily struggle. Before the National Assembly, Pham Van Dong indulges in his favorite political tautology: "Today we are taking stock of ourselves and our responsibilities before you." But no one in Hanoi remembers that the first "directive against prevarication, waste and bureaucracy" was signed by Ho Chi Minh himself--in 1952! The evil was there from the beginning.

The party can't live without a scapegoat. In May 1980 it "suggested" to Mme Duong Quynh Hoa--another democratic alibi of the regime--that she should criticize "the silence of intellectuals who did not sound the alarm in time." But what can they do, these outcasts whom the Sino-Vietnamese call "tri thuc" (those who remain alert) who were once so zealous about politics and are now driven to voluntary blindness? Ideological terrorism finally won out over the intellectuals' generous romanticism. Even the scholar Tran Dai Nghia, once so highly praised by the party press, has lost the presidency of the Commission on Science and Technology for committing "the crime of lese-avant-garde": having dared to reflect about the Meiji era and the Japanese model in front of the Politburo, the "sumum of historical intelligence!" The mathematician Ton That Long, a refugee in France, says: "According to the communists, everyone must sing the same song with the same voice in the same tone. I refused to sing. In this advanced communist regime people will no longer need a nose, eyes, or ears; it will be enough to have an antenna on one's head to receive the party line."

While waiting for a miracle, the party urges the population not to give in to "pessimism and discouragement." But more than 8,000 "boat people" still flee Vietnam every month. Not just tradesmen. Peasants are leaving. Former party members. Only the regime's propaganda keeps leaning on the illusion of power,



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but the people are not duped any more. Their verdict about the will of Ho Chi Minh--which states that nothing is more precious than independence and freedom--is unequivocal: "The day after his death, president Ton Duc Thang meets Uncle Ho in the kingdom of the dead. Uncle Ho asks him: 'Comrade, apparently things aren't going too well on earth?' 'But they are, Uncle; the party has implemented a third of your will!' The uncle is stunned: 'What! What! There is nothing left?'" The Vietnamese people remain faithful to their traditions; popular humor takes over. The party is laid bare. It's the death of a legend.

Disarray at home, but war abroad. Is the Vietnamese Communist Party incapable of living in peace? For the old guard of Ho Chi Minh, the great plan of an Indochinese Communist Party could only be achieved through militant communism, a bellicose dialectic serving nothing but the wish for power. Before the Vith congress of the Kampuchean Peoples' Revolutionary Party, Le Duan, on 21 May 1981, reaffirmed the permanent goal: "The alliance between the Khmer, Lao, and Vietnamese peoples now constitutes a monolithic bloc that no maneuver, however perfidious, can break up." As good disciples of Stalin, the leaders of Hanoi transpose the Soviet model of a European ramp to Indochina; under pressure of arms, treaties of assistance are signed to "indissolubly link Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam like three tributaries of a river." It is no longer the old Indochinese Federation. It is a tropical version of the Warsaw Pact!

Another legend has it that the Vietnamese Communist Party is "the most nationalist communist party in the world." In fact it has never been so. Ho Chi Minh "dedicated his whole life to the revolution," as he recalls in his will, written for the day when he would "join the venerable Marx and Lenin." No name of the builders or heroes of Vietnam is mentioned there. This is symptomatic. The Vietnamese Communist Party has in fact turned out to be a particularly active agent of the world revolution, and above all of the expanding Soviet system. Its job is undoubtedly not finished with the invasion of Cambodia. According to Hoang Huu Quynh, the Soviet Communist Party has entrusted its Vietnamese ally with the task of training--at the Hoa Binh Central School of Nationalities--not only Lao and Khmer communists, but the other communists of the region as well, in particular Thai and Malaysian. At the Nguyen Ai Quoc Institute--the school for party officials--there is already talk of a "Union of Socialist Republics of Southeast Asia" for the 90's. Has the Hanoi regime become both the defender of the Soviet order and the legionnaire of its future--another East Germany or Cuba?

Soviet aims and Hanoi's ambitions in the region certainly coincide. But the trap is permanent. In the fall of 1978, when Moscow agreed to the invasion of Cambodia, it was pursuing two complementary goals. First, to move the Sino-Soviet conflict to the southern flank of China, dividing Hanoi and Peking by a lasting antagonism. Then, to consolidate and extend its base of strategic support in Indochina, making Vietnam more dependent than ever on Soviet policy in Asia. Thus coupled with the advance across Afghanistan into the Arab-Persian Gulf, the Soviet thrust in Southeast Asia broadens the USSR's double penetration toward the south. It is a pincer movement toward the Indian Ocean which is threatening the movements of the Western world's merchant marines and navies. Through Vietnam, the USSR has finally succeeded in completing the missing link in its whole naval strategy.

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The alliance with the USSR is unequal. Hanoi lays down the law in Phnom Penh and Vientiane, of course. But Moscow lays down the law in Hanoi. A limited sovereignty, in chains, bound! According to Hoang Van Hoan, the Soviets have been asking for the Cam Ranh and Da Nang bases since May 1975. In May 1979 Soviet warships, with their nuclear submarines, entered there. "It is a duty devolving from the Soviet-Vietnamese friendship treaty," says Moscow. More than 6,000 "lienxo" (Soviet advisors, especially detested by the people) are operating in Indochina now. For 1981-1985, the Vietnamese 5-year plan is integrated into the Soviet Gosplan. According to "the socialist division of labor," 500,000 Vietnamese will go to work in the Comecon, probably in Siberia: "guest workers," as they are proudly referred to in Hanoi! To keep the Vietnamese economy afloat, Moscow injects 6 million dollars per day into it--60 percent of which is military aid. As long as it has weapons, Hanoi's militant communism will keep going. Thus the Cambodian trap has become the chain with which Moscow means to attach Vietnam to the Soviet slave ship.

Is Indochina "a reliable outpost of socialism in Southeast Asia," as Leonid Brezhnev and Le Duan claim? Is the situation there "irreversible"? Moscow didn't lift a finger at the time of the "Chinese lesson" in the spring of 1979, and the general mobilization decreed by Hanoi in March did not awaken the expected patriotic fervor. "In the south the people are even hoping for a second lesson," admits Hoang Huu Quynh. But Peking has chosen a strategy of attrition which is much more costly for Hanoi and less risky vis-a-vis Moscow. China is arming certain anti-Hanoi, Lao, Khmer, and Vietnamese resistance movements. Is time working for the Vietnamese Communist Party this time? In any event, it must henceforth cope with a rising tide of armed resistance, often trained at its own school of guerrilla warfare.

But the threat is not only on its borders, or even on the periphery, in Laos and Cambodia, where certain units of the occupation army desert regularly. It is the regime inside Vietnam that is at risk. NHAN DAN has been pointing to "subversive foci" for the past year in the regions of Viet Bac (north Vietnam), Binh Tri Thien (center) and Kien Giang (south). The mountain partisans of the Fulro took credit recently for several attacks in the Kontum and Pleiku sectors. Radio Hanoi regularly warns the party and the army against "riots and uprisings in combination with attacks from outside." Following the conference on security in the south, which met in Ho Chi Minh City in May 1980, the Minister of the Interior has adopted a series of measures to recruit the population against the rising insecurity. QUAN DOI NHAN DAN often reports arrests of "bad elements who were masquerading as members of the security forces and the army, or as state officials." South Vietnam has become the soft under belly of the regime.

"Can you imagine for a moment that the USSR would tolerate a Scandinavian peninsula under Chinese control?" Vietnam cannot live for long on bad terms with China, whose borders it must share "like the teeth and the lips." Prince Sihanouk made this sensible comment to us in Peking on 5 September 1980: "Just as it is mad folly to try to pit 5 million Khmers against 50 million Vietnamese, it is simply suicide to try to pit 50 million Vietnamese against a billion Chinese!" The diplomatic alternatives now open to Hanoi are disastrous. Alignment with the USSR is antigeopolitical and the occupation of Cambodia is an adventure with no

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way out. The UN's latest vote on Cambodia, on 21 October 1981, is clear enough evidence of Hanoi's political isolation.

The Vietnamese Communist Party has always lived beyond its means. It does not have the means to achieve its ambitions. They are playing apprentice magician in Hanoi again, using the power of the Soviet Union to satisfy their own lust for power. It is a suicidal game for which the Vietnamese people must pay a terrible price. But militant communism is locking itself into its own contradictions. In the long run it runs the risk of a boomerang effect. Hanoi's fundamental weakness: "The Vietnamese Communist Party," all the refugees say, "is no longer identified with the Vietnamese nationalism from which it drew its strength for so long. Sooner or later, the people will rise up." Nothing is irreversible.

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