

APPROVED FOR RELEASE
DATE: MAY 2007

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

10 July 1963
OCI No. 2110/63
Copy No. 103

THE NORTH VIETNAMESE PARTY AND THE
"NEW SITUATION" IN SOUTH VIETNAM

DD/I STAFF STUDY

CIA/RSS

REFERENCE TITLE ESAU XXII-63

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~THIS MATERIAL CONTAINS INFORMATION AFFECTING THE NATIONAL DEFENSE OF THE UNITED STATES WITHIN THE MEANING OF THE ESPIONAGE LAWS, TITLE 18, USC, SECTIONS 793 AND 794, THE TRANSMISSION OR REVELATION OF WHICH IN ANY MANNER TO AN UNAUTHORIZED PERSON IS PROHIBITED BY LAW.~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

THE NORTH VIETNAMESE PARTY AND THE
"NEW SITUATION" IN SOUTH VIETNAM

This is a working paper, a report which attempts to describe one effect of U.S. policy in South Vietnam upon the North Vietnamese regime. The report also deals with the interplay between the North Vietnamese Communist party's treatment of its problem in South Vietnam and the position of that party in the Sino-Soviet dispute.

Although the writer has benefited from consultations with [] OCI and [] ONE, he is solely responsible for the paper as a whole. The DD/I Research Staff would welcome comment on the paper, addressed to Charles F. Steffens, the writer, or to the Chief or Deputy Chief of the Staff. All are at []

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

OCI No. 2110/63

THE NORTH VIETNAMESE PARTY AND THE
"NEW SITUATION" IN SOUTH VIETNAM

SUMMARY

The Vietnamese Workers Party (VWP)--perhaps more than any other party--has continually evinced concern for the unity of the Communist movement. Recently, VWP materials also began to show an unusual concern for the problem of maintaining unity within the VWP itself. These materials made the point that in much the same fashion as "divergencies" of opinion had arisen within the international Communist movement, divergencies could also arise between members of the same party. In late February, the North Vietnamese Minister of Defense, General Giap, emphasized that the maintenance of inner-party unity had been the source of past VWP success and that this unity had been most subject to strains at times when the party either adopted "new" revolutionary lines or attempted to modify current lines of policy. Giap spoke of a "new situation and new tasks" facing the party in its struggle in South Vietnam, suggesting that the question of modifying DRV policy to counter the U.S.-SVN programs in that area had precipitated a serious division of opinion within the leadership of the VWP.

In reviewing its policy in South Vietnam, the leadership apparently was divided over the question of whether to maintain the tempo of military and political action which had prevailed for the past two years or to decrease the tempo of military action and give higher priority to political measures. Although the VWP apparently decided to maintain its pressure against the U.S.-SVN programs, regime comment in March indicated that an influential minority within the party remained in favor of the second alternative. As part of the campaign to counter the influence of this minority on the question of policy in South Vietnam, in mid-March the dominant leaders drew strong analogies between, and paralleled the activities of, "revisionists" in the international movement and "opportunists"

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

at home, both of whom tended to retreat in the face of "imperialist" pressures. In the process of this campaign, the virulence of VWP attacks against Yugoslav revisionism greatly increased and the party came to agree with one of the positions of the Chinese Communist party in the Sino-Soviet dispute, namely that Yugoslavia was no longer a member of the socialist camp. At the same time as the VWP was attempting to hold the line within the party against a call for "retreat" in South Vietnam, regime broadcasts to its forces in South Vietnam reflected a high degree of pessimism on the prospects for a speedy achievement of their objectives and admitted that the U.S.-SVN military and (in particular) political programs would probably score some successes in the immediate future.

The timing of the dispute within the VWP in February and March 1963 raises the question of the relationship of concurrent developments in Laos and developments in the Sino-Soviet dispute. The precipitation of the crisis in Laos seems to have been unrelated to the VWP discussion of policy. Although the expansion and consolidation of Pathet Lao control over Laos is to the advantage of the VWP, it appears that the course of events there was not primarily the result of a decision on the part of the VWP but rather the result of increasing frictions between the factions in the Laotian coalition government.

As regards developments in the Sino-Soviet dispute, it appears that Communist China remains somewhat dissatisfied with the position of the VWP in the dispute despite the fact that the party has been an on-balance supporter of the CCP for the past three years. In the view of the CCP, the VWP should abandon its pose of non-combatant and sometime mediator in the dispute with the CPSU and join the CCP and its other supporters as an adversary of the CPSU. Although there is no evidence of either Soviet or Chinese attempts to influence the various factions within the VWP during the argument over policy in South Vietnam, it appears likely that the CCP, in dispatching Liu Shao-chi to Hanoi in May 1963, hoped to exploit the aftermath of the argument within the VWP. In dealing with a divided VWP leadership in which a group favoring the maintenance of an aggressive course in South Vietnam had become dominant, the CCP may

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

have expected that Liu would find the task of swinging the VWP into complete rather than partial support of China somewhat simpler. During his visit, Liu attacked the CPSU on the issue most likely to appeal to the VWP at this time, namely that of the unreliability of Soviet support for revolutionary struggle. Nevertheless, judging from the communique issued at the end of Liu's visit, the CCP does not seem to have succeeded in moving the VWP to a position of open opposition to the CPSU.

The persistence of the VWP in following this course in the Sino-Soviet dispute has in almost all instances been dictated by the desire to maintain its independence of action in both domestic and foreign affairs. The continuing refusal of the VWP to abandon its role of non-combatant on the CCP side for that of adversary of the CPSU is derived from the fact that in its present position, the DRV enjoys economic, political, and military support from both the Soviet Union and China and benefits from the latitude provided by their competition with each other for North Vietnamese favor. Complete alienation from one or the other party in the dispute could put the DRV into a position of complete dependency upon one party, in which--having no alternative to turn to--the VWP would be forced to subordinate its own objectives to those of its larger partner. Since it is believed that neither the Soviets nor the Chinese presently see great merit in using pressures in the realm of state-to-state relations to acquire the complete allegiance of the VWP, it seems most likely that future changes in the position of the VWP in the dispute will be the result of developments within the party leadership. Such developments, which may occasionally make the VWP more susceptible to influence from one or the other party in the dispute, are more likely to arise--as in this recent case--from immediate problems, such as problems in South Vietnam and Laos and questions of domestic policy, than from the various issues in the Sino-Soviet dispute itself.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

THE NORTH VIETNAMESE PARTY AND THE
"NEW SITUATION" IN SOUTH VIETNAM

With the deterioration in relations between the Soviet party and the Chinese party over the past three years, the North Vietnamese party--perhaps more than any other third party--has continually evinced concern for the unity of the Communist movement. On 10 February 1963, the politburo of the Vietnamese Workers Party (VWP) published a statement on the unity of the international Communist movement which echoed Khrushchev's call at the SED Congress for an end to polemics between parties, called for a conference of all the parties to discuss the "divergencies of views" between them, and laid the responsibility for the success of such a meeting upon the CPSU and the CCP. The chief interest of the statement until now has stemmed from its republication by the Chinese Communists one month later, just prior to the publication of the CPSU letter of 21 February and the CCP answer of 9 March in which both parties agreed to initiate steps similar to those outlined in the Vietnamese statement. Of more interest, however, is the fact that soon after the 10 February statements, other VWP statements began to show an unusual concern for the problem of maintaining unity within the VWP. It seems probable, moreover, that the particular issue which gave rise to this problem of unity was one of deciding upon the proper course of North Vietnamese action as regards South Vietnam.

The Problem of Party Unity

Prior to 10 February, articles and editorials in the North Vietnamese press had made only pro forma mention of party unity and exhibited little or no doubt that the current tactics followed in South Vietnam would eventually result in North Vietnamese success. Although a September 1962 internal Viet Cong appraisal of the status of the revolutionary movement in South Vietnam contained the admission that the VWP had underestimated the effectiveness of the military and, particularly, the political programs mounted by the U.S. during 1962, there had been few public reflections

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

of this judgment. Public comment tended toward statements such as the 29 January article of General Giap, the North Vietnamese Minister of Defense. In this article, written in celebration of the New Year, Giap spoke of the "merry atmosphere of a spring full of hope" and cited the achievements of the regime in the fields of economic construction in the North and in the field of "peaceful reunification" in the South. Giap cited the costs--in manpower, money and equipment--of the programs mounted by the United States and the government of South Vietnam in their attempt to counter "reunification" efforts in South Vietnam. The "U.S.-Diemist administration is being dissolved or paralyzed", according to Giap, while the force of revolution in the South was "maturing, growing, and being trained daily" in the struggle; Giap said that the United States had to "admit that they have fallen into a tunnel without an exit".* General Giap then cited the successes achieved by "our southern compatriots" in destroying strategic hamlets and in defeating South Vietnamese forces in a series of actions throughout the South as the cause for this U.S. pessimism. Giap also mentioned the growing economic strength of the socialist bloc and the success of the national liberation movement in such places as Laos, Algeria, and West Irian. Moving on to the Sino-Soviet dispute, and commenting on the differences that have "recently occurred among a number of friendly parties", Giap noted that such differences were "not always avoidable" and were, in any case, "only temporary." Speaking of the role of the army during the coming year, Giap stated that "in the light of the correct military policy of our party", the North Vietnamese army would remain faithful to the cause of socialist construction and to the struggle to "reunify the fatherland." On the occasion of the New Year, Giap wished political and military success

*North Vietnamese propaganda on the U.S. effort in South Vietnam has made much of the first part and ignored the remainder of President Kennedy's remark, at his 13 December 1962 press conference, that "we don't see the end of the tunnel (in South Vietnam) but I must say I don't think it is darker than it was a year ago, and in some ways lighter".

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

to his compatriots in the South "in their protracted and difficult struggle" against the U.S. and the Diem Government and hoped that the VWP would "elevate continuously Marxist-Leninist doctrine.., daily strengthen unity and unanimity among its ranks.., and contribute positively to the unity and unanimity of the international communist movement." Giap's recognition of the seriousness of the U.S.-SVN effort and his repetition of the long-standing North Vietnamese characterization of the war as one which would be "protracted" seemed to be counter-balanced by his description of Viet Cong successes and his optimistic view of the coming year. Similarly, although Giap's article manifested concern for the divergencies between parties in the Communist movement, inner-party unity did not warrant any special emphasis.

On 1 February, Hanoi radio broadcast the text of an article by Ho Chi Minh written for the 3 February celebration of the 33rd anniversary of the VWP. Ho's article emphasized the victories scored by the party in the past but warned against a slackening of effort by pointing out that the "revolutionary path" was still long and that there were still "many difficulties" to be overcome both in building socialism in North Vietnam and in accomplishing the reunification of all of Vietnam. The VWP was expanding its membership and the tasks faced by the party were becoming "increasingly numerous and complicated." In this situation, Ho appealed for party unity:

The strength of the party lies in its unity and singlemindedness. Each party cadre and member must heighten his consciousness of organization and discipline, correctly implement the party line and policy, and respect the party's principles, organizations and life.

Although this statement might have indicated some apprehension as to the state of party unity, Ho Chi Minh has always been both the symbol and most outspoken advocate of unity in the VWP. Ho's listing of current "shortcomings" within the party, moreover, provided little evidence that party unity was currently under strain. These "shortcomings"

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

included individualism, liberalism, bureaucratism and authoritarianism, corruption and waste, and laziness; among the signs of laziness, Ho pointed to the practice of "paying little heed to the situation in one's own country as well as to international problems". As a result, party members and cadres were optimistic when everything went well, but when faced with adversity they became "pessimistic and disturbed"--presumably because of lack of familiarity with both the experiences of other Communist parties and those of their own party. Party members afflicted with "laziness" were described as lacking the "spirit of independence, consideration, objectiveness, and creativeness". Other than this reference to pessimism on the part of party members, Ho's article, like that of General Giap, gave no indication of unusual concern about either the situation in South Vietnam or conditions within the VWP itself.

The 10 February VWP politburo statement dealt exclusively with the Sino-Soviet dispute and laid the causes of the dispute to the fact that the various parties in the Communist movement were "carrying out their activities in very different conditions, and the development of the revolutionary movement has raised before the parties many complicated problems; hence the fact of one party and another having different views on certain questions is something difficult to avoid." On 11 February, Nhan Dan, in an editorial discussing the politburo statement of the day before, repeated the statement's formulation as to the causes of the dispute but made a logical extension of the argument:

We hold that the situation in one country and one party differs from that in another, that the outlook of one people may also differ from another, and that divergencies of views may arise not only between communist and workers parties but also right among comrades within the same party. (emphasis added)

Although Nhan Dan's explicit recognition that "divergencies" could exist even among members of the same party would seem to be a truism, it is not an observation customarily

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

made in VWP materials (or, for that matter, in those of other Communist parties). Earlier in the editorial, Nhan Dan had warned, as had the politburo statement, that "discord, differences, and lack of unity between a number of brother parties in the international movement...may be taken advantage of by the enemies, the imperialists and their lackeys". In the concluding section of the editorial, the analogous lesson for the VWP was pointed out:

The most dangerous enemies of the people throughout our country are the U.S. imperialists and the Ngo Dinh Diem clique, their lackeys. Unity is our strength to defeat the enemies and win successes for the revolution. To strengthen the unity within the party and the people, we must always be vigilant for the disruptive and provocative schemes of the imperialists... We communists...who have a sense of organization and discipline, must always uphold our sense of responsibility for unity within the party, the people, and the international communist movement...

At a time when the VWP was emphasizing the point that the continuing lack of unity between the parties was weakening the international movement as a whole, it seemed inappropriate for Nhan Dan to suggest that the VWP itself was also vulnerable on the same score.

Ten days after the Nhan Dan editorial of 11 February and less than a month after his New Year's article, General Giap wrote a second article which laid primary emphasis upon internal unity within the VWP. The article, entitled "To Develop Our Party's Tradition of Internal and International Unity", was ostensibly written as part of the celebration of the 33rd anniversary of the VWP. Although Giap dealt with the problem of unity within the international Communist movement, most of his article was devoted to emphasizing the proposition that the secret of VWP success had been the preservation of unity within the party. "Our party has withstood all storms" in defeating the attempts of such enemies as the French, the former Vietnamese emperor,

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

the Japanese, and the U.S. at destruction of the party; the party's history of success also proved "that our party's unity is indissoluble...and similar to a brass wall, which is able to meet any challenge and will last forever." Party unity had been maintained "because in all phases of our revolution the party laid down appropriate lines and policies which serve as basis for the unity of mind and action of the whole party". Giap then expanded on the connection between party unity and party policy by stating that the party was "struggling on two fronts against occasional irresoluteness... (1) when adopting and carrying out the lines, strategy, and policy during each phase of the revolution and (2), when modifying the lines, policy and form of the struggle," implying that unity within the party might currently be in jeopardy because of differing points of view within the leadership of the party as to its courses of action. Giap then developed the long-standing thesis that the path of any revolutionary movement was "complicated and tortuous" by providing examples drawn from the history of the party where, despite various setbacks, "our comrades were confident in their cause and in victory. They protected each other and rebuilt their enterprise." Giap's remarks constituted a surfacing of the problem which had been recognized by the VWP at least as far back as September 1962 and implied that the VWP was currently in a phase where the revolution had indeed become "complicated and tortuous". Now, however, the question as to what action to take in the situation was causing a division of opinion in high party ranks into at least two groups, one favoring continuance of present policy and the other (e.g., those subject to "occasional irresoluteness") favoring modification of that policy and pursuit of a possibly less hazardous course. Giap noted that the "surely victorious" struggle of "our compatriots in South Vietnam is a very hard struggle" and "in view of the new situation and new tasks" it was urgent for the entire party to further develop its internal strength. Although the VWP had been faced with chronic problems in its economic construction, particularly in agriculture, there had been no evidence of "new" problems which would require new decisions on domestic policy. Rather, the issue seemed to be one of foreign policy and one which was marked by apprehension as to a new threat posed by the enemy. Giap indicated this by noting that the "solidarity and unity

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

within the ranks of our party" had been the core in the decisive "battles against the enemy, as well as in the struggle for building a new society", i.e., unity on the question of tactics toward the enemy was primary at this point--with questions of domestic policy not at issue.

The Issue of Policy in South Vietnam

Conjectures as to the details of the issue which caused dissension within the VWP can only be based on Giap's references to "irresoluteness" at times when the VWP either "adopted" or "modified" policy and upon his reference to a "new situation and new tasks" in the context of affairs in South Vietnam. We speculate that the initial successes of the various U.S.-supported programs in South Vietnam and VWP recognition of the threat implicit in these programs probably constituted the "new" situation which caused a re-appraisal of North Vietnamese policy toward the area. In April, May, and June of 1962, the DRV stepped up its infiltration of men and equipment into South Vietnam and perhaps a similar decision for 1963 had to be made during February and March of this year. At least three choices can be suggested as open to the VWP leadership. One was to greatly increase the flow of men and material into South Vietnam with the object of increasing the frequency and size of Viet Cong attacks upon strategic hamlets, Civil Guard posts, isolated ARVN installations, etc. This alternative would imply a possible decision to escalate the campaign against the South Vietnamese government even though this could risk exposing the Viet Cong to large-scale attacks by South Vietnamese forces and an increase in the scope of U.S. assistance to South Vietnam. Emphasis on political action, under this alternative, would become secondary to military action. A second course was that of continuing present policy and involved sending in only enough men and material to replace the losses experienced by the Viet Cong over the previous months, thus enabling the VC to maintain its capabilities for mounting attacks against targets of opportunity in South Vietnam. This would imply a decision to continue to exploit weak spots in the various programs of the Diem government while continuing to slip the South Vietnamese counterblows. Emphasis upon political action to expand Viet Cong influence

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

in South Vietnam would remain very important. A third course would involve the introduction of very little, if anything in the way of men and material, a drop in both the frequency and scale of VC military attacks, and a general emphasis upon protecting existent VC assets rather than attempting to expand them. The argument for this course would follow the line that with the diminution of VC activity, the U.S. might find it difficult--in the face of South Vietnamese suspicion of the ultimate objectives of the U.S. and possible domestic pressures within the United States--to sustain the present level of assistance to South Vietnam. We doubt that the first alternative was seriously argued, for we do not believe that the DRV is now prepared to move into a phase of more direct and conventional military clashes with the ARVN, nor do we believe that they would view an increase in the U.S. presence in South Vietnam as desirable. Rather we think that the issue involved the second and third courses, with the second--continuation of the policy of the past year--prevailing. Giap's articles suggest the outline of the issue and subsequent VWP comment suggested that although the policy of maintaining--rather than increasing or decreasing--the pressure in South Vietnam had prevailed, sentiment for the third alternative remained strong within the party.

The 14 March anniversary of the death of Karl Marx served as the occasion for publication of several articles and speeches by the VWP leadership which shed further light on the nature of the argument within the VWP. Further, the anniversary marked a change in the North Vietnamese public attitude toward Yugoslav "revisionism". Up to this time, North Vietnamese comment had tended to be limited to quotations decrying Yugoslav "revisionism" taken from the 1960 Moscow declaration. Although North Vietnam had not mounted systematic attacks against the Yugoslavs in its press--as had the Albanians, Chinese, and North Koreans--reports in late 1962 indicated that the VWP had commenced denunciation of Yugoslavia in political education meetings in much the same terms as the Chinese attacks. Marx's anniversary served as the point where the North Vietnamese began to bring these attacks into the open; moreover, it is probable that these attacks against Yugoslavia, against "revisionism and right opportunism" in the international sphere--in particular,

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

the charge that "modern revisionists" tended to retreat and compromise in the face of "imperialist" attacks--were intended to parallel the similar attack against elements within the VWP itself who argued for a less aggressive posture toward the enemy in South Vietnam. In each case, these materials used the Marx anniversary to plead for unity within the international Communist movement, to discuss the necessity for maintaining the "purity" of Marxism-Leninism against "revisionist" and "rightist-opportunist" ideas, and to argue against "retreat" in South Vietnam.

The March issue of the theoretical organ of the VWP, Hoc Tap, in discussing the existence of "disagreement" between the various parties, repeated Nhan Dan's February discovery that such disagreements could also exist "among comrades of the same party". In a reference to the differing Chinese and Soviet appraisals of the "imperialist" threat, Hoc Tap specified that the current differences between "brother parties" were over "basic problems, problems concerning the degree of assessment of the plots and capabilities of the immediate concrete enemy, the methods for and forms of struggle against imperialism in order to achieve the prescribed goal..." Although Hoc Tap did not admit that the existence of differences between the members of the VWP had arisen--as it had in the analogous case of the differences between parties--over the question of assessing the strategy and tactics of the enemy facing the VWP, such a message was implicit in the article's emphasis upon party unity as the "important reason" for the VWP's revolutionary victories. The Nhan Dan editorial of 14 March, also commemorating Marx's death, cited the "incomparable vitality" of Marxism-Leninism but pointed out that the path of its development had not been smooth; its path had not been one of "evolution" but rather one of "continuous revolution". In addition to overcoming the "reactionary theories of the bourgeoisie," Marxism-Leninism had also had to overcome the many theories of "opportunists who had worked their way into the workers movement and distorted Marxism in an attempt to deprive the working class and toiling people of their theoretical weapons!" Nhan Dan saw the present world situation as "favorable" to the movement and "heading toward final assaults in the history of class struggle"; nevertheless, the "imperialists...are frenziedly seeking to counter

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

the revolutionary trend." These "imperialist ringleaders headed by the U.S." were "actively misusing modern scientific inventions for aggressive and war purposes"; under such pressures, Nhan Dan continued, "the opportunists are making many ambiguous and sophisticated allegations to bar the attacks of the revolutionary forces." Nhan Dan's citation of "revolutionary retreats" in the face of "imperialist" misuse of "modern scientific inventions" paraphrased the standard Chinese Communist charge that some members of the Communist movement (e.g., the Soviet Union) have been willing objects of nuclear blackmail. Nhan Dan, however, did not specify "nuclear" or "atomic" weapons, which suggests that the statement was also intended to refer to the use of defoliant chemicals, as well as helicopters and other types of modern military equipment, in the war in South Vietnam. Thus Nhan Dan was attacking those in the VWP ("opportunists") who argued ("ambiguous and sophisticated allegations") that it might be well to drop the tempo of Viet Cong operations ("bar the attacks of the revolutionary forces") to avoid the effects of U.S.-SVN tactics. Nhan Dan carried this argument forward by citing "rightist opportunism and modern revisionism" as the "main danger" to the Communist movement, describing "Yugoslav revisionism"* as the "worst manifestation" of it, and then showing how the influence of such elements in the international movement was reflected within the VWP:

The facts have proved that the assessment of various international problems is closely connected with the assessment of internal problems. Errors in international problems are reflected every day--in this or that manner--in the line of struggle for achieving peace and national reunification. They also influence badly the improvement of the

*This editorial also numbered the "socialist countries" at 13, explicitly including Cuba and implicitly excluding Yugoslavia--and was thus a statement of North Vietnamese agreement with the Chinese Communist conception of the composition of the Bloc.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

revolutionary virtues and organizational
and disciplinary spirit of the communists.
(emphasis added)

In other words, Nhan Dan was charging that those elements within the VWP who erred on the question of the "line of struggle" to be pursued in achieving "national reunification" were under the influence of international "revisionism," ostensibly of Yugoslav origin but also susceptible to interpretation as being of Soviet origin. Further, Nhan Dan was admitting that the prevalence of these views within the party was having an injurious effect upon party discipline.

The anniversary of Marx's death was also marked by speeches by two VWP leaders, Politburo member Nguyen Chi Thanh and VWP First Secretary Le Duan. Both speeches were primarily devoted to attacking revisionists in the Communist movement who were adulterating Marx's concept of struggle and thereby advocating retreat in the face of attacks by "imperialism". Nguyen Chi Thanh extolled the "compass" provided by Marxism-Leninism to the VWP in laying out the correct strategy and tactics of the revolution and expressed satisfaction with the current line of the party. In discussing the deviations which the VWP had "overcome" in settling the question of revolutionary strategy, Nguyen Chi Thanh placed more emphasis upon the threat posed by the "rightist" deviation--the tendency to "overestimate imperialism" which "leads to lack of confidence in our final victory, to wavering and pacifism..." --than on the threat of leftist deviations--whose main cause was failure to "fully assess the characteristics of a colonial and semi-feudal society". Le Duan's 13 March speech, which was printed a month later in the April issue of Hoc Tap, was a more systematic and doctrinal discussion of many of the same points made by Nguyen Chi Thanh--the attacks upon Yugoslav revisionism and the insistence upon the primacy of continued and violent struggle in revolutionary situations. Toward the end of his article, Le Duan moved from theoretical discussion to discussion of the struggle in South Vietnam, pointing out that the revolutionaries in the South "cannot discontinue" their attempts to "liberate" South Vietnam. In rejecting the suggestion that

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

the tempo of struggle in the south be decreased, Le Duan noted that "as the revolutionary practice in the South shows", once the people have risen and "if they follow a correct line of struggle, no reactionary force on earth... can halt their advance!" Le Duan saw a further lesson in South Vietnam for those within the VWP who had doubts about the course of the party's strategy and tactics:

The same practice shows that when the leadership and the popular masses have a high revolutionary spirit and refuse to retreat an inch before the enemy, it is possible in spite of all difficulties to discover the right way to struggle, to preserve and enhance the strength of the revolutionary forces... (emphasis added)

Le Duan seemed to be admitting that the VWP had not yet come up with any real answer to the problem of insuring VWP success in South Vietnam; nevertheless, any new strategy could not be based on diminution of dissident activity in South Vietnam. Both Le Duan and Nguyen Chi Thanh found criticism of "revisionism," with its emphasis upon compromise with the imperialist, a useful auxiliary weapon in their assaults upon those within the VWP who argued for a different course in South Vietnam. Both leaders were insistent on the maintenance of current VWP policy in South Vietnam and critical of those who were prepared to change to a less aggressive policy and only slightly concerned with the more abstract problem of maintaining inner-party unity. This difference between their treatment of inner-party unity and that of General Giap and Ho Chi Minh earlier in the year appears to reflect the personal identification of Nguyen Chi Thanh and Le Duan as partisan defenders of current VWP policy in South Vietnam both at the time it became an issue and at present when some within the VWP remain unpersuaded of its wisdom.

The Current Course in South Vietnam

The unusual expressions of concern for party unity within the VWP in February and March indicate the existence

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

of a substantial degree of dissension within that party. Further, it had been argued that the issue precipitating this dissension was that of policy toward South Vietnam, which was settled, for the time being, in favor of continuing the policy of the past two years. The decision apparently continues to be questioned by an influential minority within the VWP, judging from the Marx anniversary statements, and the potential for another argument and, possibly, a change in policy still exists. Hard intelligence on the VWP's estimate of the situation in South Vietnam and its reading of the effects of U.S.-SVN policies upon its objectives remains difficult to obtain. Nevertheless, perhaps a rough approximation of the VWP estimate of the situation and the subsequent VWP conclusion as to tactics to be followed in the "new situation" can be drawn from broadcasts made to dissident elements in South Vietnam in the last two weeks of March. Two broadcasts, one on 19 March entitled "The South Vietnamese Revolution Must Surely be Long-drawn, Arduous, and Complicated but Certainly Victorious", and the other on 27 March entitled "We Must Identify and Resolutely Smash the Enemy's Maneuvers in the Immediate Future," give respectively, long-term and short-term appraisals of the situation in South Vietnam. Both broadcasts show apprehension as to the effects of current U.S.-SVN policy upon the "revolution" and neither provides much in the way of optimistic reassurance for its listeners.

The 19 March broadcast admits (as had the September 1962 appraisal) that the revolutionary forces in South Vietnam are much weaker in the military sense than the U.S.-SVN forces and provides facts and figures on U.S. forces and aid to South Vietnam as well as other aid in various forms from the U.K., West Germany, Australia, and Japan. While describing the period 1960-61 as one of "repeated failures" for U.S.-SVN forces, the broadcast credits those forces as having "exerted tremendous efforts to regain their offensive position" with the result that the revolution in South Vietnam "has had to deal with the enemy in a new situation since the beginning of 1962!" As for military prospects in 1963, the U.S.-SVN "capability of fighting and attacking the revolution will not diminish...but can grow fiercer!" The broadcast then compares the present enemy, the U.S., with a former enemy, France, and concludes that

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

"it is obvious that the U.S. is much stronger and has caused the revolution major difficulties!" Nevertheless, Vietnamese revolutionaries have had a great deal of experience in defeating "an enemy much stronger than ourselves" and the broadcast cites the experiences gained from fighting Chinese invasions during the Ming dynasty and in defeating the French as examples. On the positive side, the broadcast cites comments by General Harkins and Secretary McNamara that show that the U.S. had had to abandon its ambitions of "pacification within 18 months" and is now "forced to talk about the lengthy nature of their aggressive war!" Moreover, the revolution in South Vietnam is "leaning on a firm rear area, namely North Vietnam" and favorable conditions thus exist for "final victory." Most important for the long-term victory of the revolution, however, is the fact that the "South Vietnamese people are stronger politically".

Even here, however, the broadcast voices strong dissatisfaction with the results of political action in South Vietnam. It makes the point that if "only the collaboration" of members of the Diem "clique" could be counted on by the U.S. and Diem, then the support for the South Vietnamese government would be "flimsy and weak /and that/... it is because they see this shortcoming that the American imperialists prodded the Diem clique to look for all means to develop its social base. To this end, the policies called 'agrarian reform', 'cooperatives', and 'agricultural credit service' are carried out!" The broadcast also strongly objected to Diem's "national revolutionary movement" which is a "policy of poisoning the minds of youths and turning them into hoodlums!" Although the broadcast insists that these programs have failed, its sensitivity to them suggests that Viet Cong continues to have difficulty in counteracting them. Similarly, the broadcast shows great disappointment with VC political action among those sections of the Vietnamese population which are neither pro-Viet Cong nor pro-Diem; although the "masses" have risen up to struggle, the "intermediate strata have not completely leaned toward the revolution!" These classes, because "they do not clearly see the compatibility between the interests of socialism and those of the nation, cannot help having doubts and hesitations!" The "enemy" has "taken advantage of these momentary doubts to act, so that in case he could

- 14 -

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

not attract the intermediate classes and strata and push them to the side hostile to the revolution, then at least he would keep them sitting on the fence!" The broadcast somewhat wistfully concludes that the problem of these intermediate classes is a "very complicated problem" for any revolution and for the South Vietnamese revolution, "this is even more complicated!"

After outlining a militarily bleak and politically unsatisfactory situation the broadcast comments that the situation in South Vietnam is not even a "pre-revolutionary" situation; such a situation cannot occur until both the "broad masses" are ready to fight and the "intermediate strata lean to the revolution!" Although the revolution in South Vietnam is "enjoying many favorable opportunities... these are not ripe. From favorable opportunities to ripe opportunities, a certain time is needed!" The broadcast acknowledges that the desire of revolutionary fighters "for a speedy realization of the revolution... is very legitimate... however, the revolution must develop according to its own rules, and our activities must be carried out on the basis of them, not in disregard of them. That is why the question of revolution is not a purely sentimental one; it must be closely coordinated with reason!" The "long-drawn, arduous, and complicated" character of the revolution "rests chiefly" upon the comparison of strengths between revolutionary and counter-revolutionary forces; the broadcast notes that this is primarily in terms of "strategy." Tactically, the broadcast argues for urgent daily action to "annihilate the enemy step-by-step, maintain the revolutionary forces, and choose the best opportunities to score decisive victories!" Nevertheless, the broadcast concludes, even in tactics, the revolutionary forces must "avoid adventurous, dangerous, and subjective maneuvers caused by irritation and precipitancy..."

The 27 March broadcast was much less general in scope than that of the 19th and was aimed at bolstering the faith of forces fighting in South Vietnam in the ultimate victory of their cause in the face of what the broadcast forecast would be difficult times in the immediate future. It argues that the "great successes" of the South Vietnamese revolutionaries during 1962 and early 1963 in "initially"

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

(i.e., not finally) breaking up the Staley-Taylor plan and in "initially" defeating the enemy's "commando and helicopter tactics" has forced the United States to speak in terms of a prolonged war. Nevertheless, the broadcast warns against lessening vigilance and insists that the revolutionary forces "should not merely see the weak and disintegrated aspects of the enemy and lose sight of its many temporary capabilities!" A remarkably candid outline of the programs mounted by the U.S. then follows which makes it clear that a general counter-offensive is expected which will not be restricted to larger-scale actions by conventional military forces. The broadcast predicts an expansion of the strategic hamlet program, more pressure on the "liberated areas" in terms of sabotage and the cutting off of "our food and resources" as well as military attacks upon those areas; it foresees the establishment of more military posts, the opening up of new roads and canals, and the probable continuation of the chemical warfare campaign. On the one hand, the enemy will step up the military draft in South Vietnam, and on the other, carry out its plans for the arming of Montagnard and Khmer units; the enemy's intelligence and espionage networks will be expanded and its agents will attempt to infiltrate the "liberated areas" and the "revolutionary troops and organs!" Politically, the enemy will boast of its strength and attempt to limit the influence of the National Front for Liberation of South Vietnam (NFLSV). The broadcast then sums up as follows:

The foregoing are some of the enemy's immediate maneuvers. With its existing means and forces, with its present conditions and those of our military forces, the enemy can carry out some of these maneuvers.

Having admitted the possibility that some of these programs are likely to be successful, the broadcast then outlines the measures that must be taken to "thwart" them:

First, political action to strengthen the united front in South Vietnam; the NFLSV must attempt to rally more people from all strata of society, "regardless of their political tendency, religion, or social class!"

- 16 -

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Second, military action, with emphasis upon expansion and preservation of present strength and expansion of the "people's war" through formation of militia, guerrilla, and self-defense units and through the building of "combat villages!"

Third, opposition to the strategic hamlets and "other dark schemes" by appropriate forms of political struggle. The political and military struggle to "turn public opinion" against the enemy must be expanded and we must "preserve our human and material power--with respect to military action in areas under enemy control--in order to render the enemy's rear constantly insecure!"

Fourth, bolstering the understanding by both military and civilian members of the enemy forces of the policies of NFLSV.

Fifth, achieving a general strengthening of the revolutionary organizations, attacking the enemy "politically", expanding the "liberated areas" and transforming them into strong bases which will stimulate the revolutionary movement in other regions, and "coordinating armed activities with cultural, social, and economic activities". The broadcast repeats the theme that the revolution will "still be long and perilous," but:

even if the enemy forcibly expands the region under its control, or continues to herd the people into strategic hamlets, and in whatever situation we find ourselves, we will certainly be able--if we satisfactorily carry out the foregoing tasks--to limit or thwart the enemy's maneuvers, and at the same time, to gain great success in the immediate future...

The broadcast concludes with the reassurance that the enemy has many weaknesses which, in time, will increase the difficulties facing him and eventually cause his defeat.

Both broadcasts document General Giap's 21 February estimate that the VWP is facing a "new" situation in South

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Vietnam and suggest that the circumstances are now greatly different from those existing in September 1960 when the VWP proclaimed that the South Vietnamese struggle was "in the new historic stage under fundamentally favorable conditions!"* The September 1960 judgment apparently was the result of the initial successes of the new phase of stepped up terrorism and guerrilla warfare inaugurated earlier in that year. Here in 1963, the striking feature of the VWP assessment of the "new" situation is not so much the admission of military weakness and the emphasis upon preservation and maintenance of revolutionary assets--this has been part of the mystique of the Vietnamese revolution for some years--but rather the admission that the VWP programs for political action in South Vietnam have not been successful. Although the admission that some VWP military assets in South Vietnam may be eliminated in coming months plays a part in the conclusion that the situation is not even a "pre-revolutionary" one, the more important factor appears to be that of the VWP's inability to accomplish the political "isolation" of the Diem government. This conclusion is manifest in the disappointment expressed over the inability of the "revolutionary forces" to win over the "intermediate strata" of the South Vietnamese population and the sensitivity shown in regard to the non-military aspects of U.S.-SVN policy. Further, the general conclusion which seems to be evident in all of these VWP discussions of the problem in South Vietnam is that the regime has not been able to settle upon new policies which can confidently be presented as holding some promise of effectively countering those of its opponents. Aside from the more conventional evaluations of the efficacy of U.S. policy in South Vietnam (e.g., statistical comparisons of casualties, weapons captures, defections, desertions, etc., on both sides) perhaps this recent VWP assessment serves as an additional indication of the preliminary effectiveness of U.S. policy in South Vietnam.

*This estimate was part of the 10 September 1960 Communique of the 3rd VWP Congress. Le Duan, who gave the political report to that Congress, also spoke in a similar vein, noting that the "balance of forces" in the south "is gradually changing in favor of the revolution."

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

o Other Ramifications of the Issue

Dissension within the VWP over the question of policy in South Vietnam appears to have come to a head in February at approximately the time both the situation in Laos began to deteriorate and the dispute between the CPSU and the CCP began to move into the stage of negotiations for bilateral talks. We can see little direct connection between the VWP discussion of the problem in South Vietnam and events in Laos and only indirect reflections of these discussions in the positions taken by the VWP in the Sino-Soviet dispute.

Laos

In regard to Laos, the assassination of Kong Le's field commander, Colonel Ketsana, on 12 February by the North Vietnamese-backed Pathet Lao might suggest that the VWP had initiated a crisis in Laos aimed both at diverting Free World attention from South Vietnam and at increasing Viet Minh control of some of the main infiltration routes into South Vietnam. Aside from the fact that the VWP discussions of their problems make no mention of Laos, it appears to us that the assassination of Ketsana was intended as simply another step in the continuing campaign to weaken and splinter the neutralist faction in the Laotian coalition government. Individual units of Kong Le's forces stationed in Pathet Lao territory had been prevented from rejoining the main force on several occasions during 1962; also beginning in 1962, the neutralist forces found that supplies shipped for their use through Pathet Lao territory either never reached them or were unexpectedly diminished upon arrival. Neither Ketsana's assassination nor the mid-March defection to the Pathet Lao of a group of neutralist troops under the influence of the "progressive" neutralist Colonel Deuane appear to have resulted in a drastic deterioration of the situation in Laos. Rather, the 1 April assassination of Quinim Pholsema (apparently in reprisal for that of Ketsana), the foreign minister of the coalition government and the generally accepted leader of the pro-Pathet Lao faction within the neutralist party, seems to mark the point of precipitation of real hostilities within and between the various factions in the coalition government.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Spokesmen for the Pathet Lao, as well as the DRV, studiously avoided connecting the assassination of Quinim with that of Ketsana until 19 May, when General Singkapo, chief of the Pathet Lao, tacitly admitted in an interview that one was the result of the other. Although Singkapo characterized the assassination of Ketsana as a "machination" of the U.S. "which finally resulted" in that of Quinim, the impression remains that Quinim's assassination was an unexpected and unwelcome development to the Communists. Whether the assassination of Ketsana was carried out on local initiative as the result of a breakdown in VWP control of the NLHX or was a planned step in the developing campaign of weakening Kong Le in which the possibility of reprisal was not taken into account, Quinim's death entailed the loss of an important component of the policy of eroding the position of Kong Le while maintaining the facade of the neutralist party. The loss appears to have made it difficult for the Communists to continue the policy of expanding Pathet Lao control through political action and to have made necessary more direct measures to expand Pathet Lao control over Laos. There is no doubt that the expansion and stabilization of Pathet Lao control over Laos serves the interests of the VWP and is useful to it in dealing with its problems in South Vietnam; however, if the Laotian crisis were primarily a reflection of the VWP response to its "new" situation in South Vietnam, we believe we would have detected signs of a decision to increase the tempo of action in South Vietnam at the time the problem was argued within the VWP.

The Sino-Soviet Dispute

Given the seriousness of the breach between the Soviet and Chinese parties, it is reasonable to assume that the VWP, as is the case with many other Communist parties in and out of power, is split into factions which favor one side or the other in the dispute. Yet neither the early 1963 discussions of VWP unity nor other sources provide the evidence needed to document VWP factionalism on the question of the Sino-Soviet dispute. In the meantime, the North Vietnamese party as a whole has attempted to follow a non-combatant's role in the Sino-Soviet dispute, acting as mediator between the two parties to the dispute, and carefully balancing statements of support for one

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

party on one issue with subsequent statements of support for the other party on other issues. Nevertheless, the VWP has been an on-balance supporter of China in the dispute since at least 1960 chiefly because of VWP agreement with the Chinese position on the crucial issue of authority and discipline within the international movement.* Like the Chinese, the North Vietnamese will not accept the principle that "democratic centralism" is applicable in relations between Communist parties as it is in relations within individual Communist parties. The VWP agreement with China on this principle stems less from a desire to agree with the Chinese per se and more from a North Vietnamese desire to maintain full independence of action in meeting its own objectives. Put another way, VWP subscription to the principle of democratic centralism within the Communist movement holds the danger that a given DRV policy, say, in South Vietnam, could be overruled in the interests of the Communist movement, in which under the operation of this principle, the Soviets would have the major voice. Despite North Vietnamese agreement with China on this important issue, despite the geographical proximity of China, and despite a superficial similarity between the Chinese problem with Taiwan and the DRV's problem with South Vietnam--all factors which tend to draw the VWP and the CCP together--the DRV still manages to find areas of agreement with the CPSU and to avoid becoming a hard supporter of one party and the adversary of the other. Thus, last fall during the Cuban crisis and the Sino-Indian border conflict, the DRV supported China's position on the Indian border and, almost simultaneously, gave credit to the USSR for withdrawing its missiles in Cuba and "preserving peace" (an action which the Chinese have characterized as "capitulationism"). Further, during the January visits of both the Supreme Soviet delegation headed by Andropov and the Czechoslovak delegation headed by Novotny, the VWP gave its full support

*For a detailed study of the relations between the VWP and both the CPSU and the CCP, see the Current Intelligence Staff Study, North Vietnam and Sino-Soviet Relations (ESAU XVIII-62), of March 1962.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

to the Soviet proposal* (made by Khrushchev at the SED Congress) for an end to polemics and the initiation of bilateral negotiations between the CPSU and the CCP to attempt to resolve the issues of the dispute. Another example of the attempt of the VWP to preserve its non-combatant role was provided in the April issue of Hoc Tap which, in addition to carrying Le Duan's Chinese-oriented speech of March, carried an article by a Soviet writer holding up the CPSU experience in building the Soviet state as an example for other Communist parties in power.

Perhaps the best testimonial to the VWP's reluctance to fully associate itself with the CCP in the dispute with the Soviets is the evidence of Chinese dissatisfaction with Hanoi's position and the continuing Chinese effort to bring about a change in this position. One of the privileges accruing to a party which fully supports the Chinese party in the Sino-Soviet dispute is that of seeing statements by party leaders and materials from party organs reprinted in People's Daily.** Old allies of the Chinese, such as the Albanian party, and more recent allies, such as the Japanese, Indonesian, North Korean, and New Zealand parties, have achieved increased prominence in People's Daily as they have strengthened their commitment to the Chinese position. Except for flurries accompanying the Chinese publication

*The Soviets take credit for this proposal, when in actuality, the idea had been broached by several other parties, including the VWP, months before Khrushchev made it at the SED Congress. Essentially, the VWP was supporting a Soviet pretension to having made a contribution; this action cannot have pleased the CCP.

**Materials of parties hostile to the CCP have also appeared in People's Daily but they have usually been accompanied, or subsequently followed, by a CCP rebuttal.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

of the correspondence between the CCP and the CPSU in March* and Liu Shao-chi's visit to Hanoi in May, People's Daily during 1962 and early 1963 has given very little coverage to the affairs of the Vietnamese party. Most of the VWP material mentioned earlier in this paper was neither summarized nor reprinted by the Chinese at the time it was published despite the fact that a number of these articles agreed with Chinese positions in the dispute, in particular, with the Chinese position on Yugoslav revisionism. Of the three main items devoted to the anniversary of Marx's death in March, only Le Duan's speech was reprinted in People's Daily. Neither the 14 March Nhan Dan editorial, which had the effect of excluding Yugoslavia from the socialist camp, nor Nguyen Chi Thanh's speech attacking revisionism, was reprinted.

Liu Shao-chi's visit to Hanoi between 10 and 16 May appears to have been an attempt both to counteract the effects of CPSU lobbying in Hanoi and to move the VWP closer to Chinese positions through personal diplomacy. In this respect, Liu's visit was similar to his visits to Indonesia and Burma where his visits seemed to be aimed at counterbalancing the effects of those of Marshal Malinovsky; in Hanoi, he followed the May Day visit of Grishin, candidate member of the Soviet Politburo and head of the Soviet Trade Union Federation, latest in the series of Soviet delegations which had begun to visit Hanoi in December 1962. Liu's public statements during his visit suggest that the course of his talks with the leadership of the VWP was not smooth. On 12 May, at a mass rally in Hanoi, Liu put forward the Chinese position in terms calculated to appeal to the situation

*On 12 March the CCP reprinted the Ho-Novotny statement of 27 January, the 10 February VWP Politburo statement, the 11 February Nhan Dan editorial, and an article from the March issue of Hoc Tap, all of which were concerned with the problem of bloc unity and which supported the idea of negotiations between the CCP and the CPSU. These materials served as the prelude to Chinese publication, on 14 March, of the CPSU letter of 21 February and the CCP answer of 9 March in which both parties agreed to initiate steps for such a meeting.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

faced by the VWP. Liu saw the prospects of the Communist world as "excellent" as the result of the "trials of strength and struggles that have radically changed the international balance of class forces" in favor of the socialist camp. While he agreed with the Soviet argument that the achievements of the socialist camp "play a great exemplary role," he argued that Khrushchev's socialist "power of example" could not "replace or cancel" either the "revolutionary struggle of oppressed nations" or "class struggle in the world arena!" Liu stated that the victory of the "people of each country could only be won by relying on their own resolute struggle" and specifically cited Le Duan's March speech on the importance of "struggle" as testimony for his thesis. Liu warned the VWP that strong dependence upon the (Soviet) line of "peaceful coexistence" in attempting to achieve its objectives held little prospect of success. Liu further developed this attack upon the Soviet Union by implying that coexistence as practiced by the USSR led to "liquidation" of revolutionary struggle and that Khrushchev's pursuit of the economic development of the Soviet Union led to a diminution of support to the struggles of all "oppressed nations and peoples!" In an appeal to those within the VWP who may have felt that the Soviet Union had not in the past given, and might not now be giving, the maximum support to VWP objectives in South Vietnam and Laos because of the consequences for Soviet national objectives, Liu insisted that "the foreign policy of socialist countries...must not be used to supersede the revolutionary line of the proletariat of various countries and their parties."

The results of Liu's public argument on 12 May, and probably his private discussions with the VWP leadership, seemed to have been unsatisfactory for on 15 May, at the VWP Party School, Liu gave a short and rather impatient lecture on the proper study of Marxism-Leninism in which he made even sharper attacks upon the CPSU. Liu led off by acknowledging the VWP's thanks to China for its assistance but pointed out that the important fact was that the VWP had also helped China thus illustrating that in "proletarian revolution, assistance has always been mutual!" Liu contrasted this attitude with the non-Marxist-Leninist attitude of "certain people who always stress their

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

assistance to others and disavow other's assistance to them"--in essence accusing the USSR of arrogance in emphasizing the importance of Soviet experience and material assistance to the rest of the Communist movement. (Chen Yi, who accompanied Liu on his trip, made this same point in his speech of 15 May before a different audience.) Liu then went on to deny that any "proletarian" revolution could follow a path other than that followed by the Soviet October Revolution despite the fact that "some people now claim that it is not necessary to perform what the Russians have performed!" In stating that this latter point of view "is utterly wrong," Liu was flatly contradicting the Soviet thesis that given the military and economic strength of the socialist camp, and particularly, the Soviet Union, the opportunities for accession to power of Communist parties through non-violent means had increased and the imperatives for violent revolution as the means to power had, in consequence, lessened. Liu then discussed the current study of Marxism-Leninism at a time when the Communist movement was in a "crucial period" and an "acute struggle between Marxist-Leninists and the modern revisionists" was taking place. The central issues in the struggle were "whether or not" revolutions should be carried out and "whether proletarian parties should lead" these revolutions. In this "struggle of principle" Liu indicated his dissatisfaction with the VWP's non-combatant role in the dispute saying that "we cannot act as onlookers or follow a middle course!" After citing the dangers posed by "revisionism" to the movement, Liu repeated this point, insisting that "the militant task of all Marxist-Leninists is not to evade the challenge of modern revisionism!" Liu exhorted his listeners to "seek instruction from Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin" and for instruction "by negative example", to read the works of both the modern and "old-line" revisionists as well as "imperialist evaluations of modern revisionism!" Liu agreed that "all of us" had read some Marxist-Leninist works but the important task at present was to re-read them with the object of "answering the challenge of modern revisionism". Liu's conclusion was that such a re-reading would show that the propositions advanced by the revisionists were not (as apparently some of his listeners believed) "creative developments of Marxism-Leninism" but simply repetitions of the arguments of the

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

"old-line revisionists" (Bernstein, Kautsky, Plekhanov, et al.) which had been "repudiated long ago by Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin." Liu concluded his speech after devoting three sentences to the dangers of "dogmatism" for the movement.*

A striking element in Liu's discussion of Marxism-Leninism versus modern revisionism at the Party School was that there was no mention of Yugoslavia. In avoiding mention of Yugoslavia as the specific source of modern revisionist influence, by attacking a series of positions held by the CPSU in the Sino-Soviet dispute, and by denying that "true" Marxist-Leninists could "follow a middle course", Liu was calling on the VWP to join the CCP and its allies in attacking the real, rather than apparent, source of "revisionism", the CPSU. Liu's concentration on the problem of revolution during his visit was calculated to appeal to one of the two main problems facing the VWP, that of reunification with South Vietnam. As stated earlier in the paper, we have no hard evidence that the CPSU in early 1963 advocated dropping the tempo of the revolution in South Vietnam; we do, however, have good grounds for believing that the VWP became badly split over the question in February and March. Regardless of whether the Soviets did or did not play a role in the VWP dispute, the CCP must have seen the advantages of dealing with the leadership of a party which apparently had become divided and in which a faction favoring an aggressive course of action apparently was dominant. If the CPSU had indeed become involved, the Chinese could expect that the hostile reaction of some members of the VWP leadership to such interference would additionally facilitate the objective of shifting the VWP off its "middle" position.

*Although Nhan Dan stated that the audience "stood up and applauded wildly" at the end of Liu's "informal" speech, Nhan Dan also excised all of Liu's attacks on the CPSU, greatly shortened the speech, and gave the impression that Liu had put almost equal stress on the dangers of both "dogmatism" and "revisionism". People's Daily, on the other hand, put the full text on its front page the next day. (16 May).

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

The Ho Chi Minh-Liu Shao-chi communique of 16 May suggests that Liu was unsuccessful in gaining the active support of the VWP in the CCP's dispute with the CPSU and the careful splitting of the communique into sections to express the views of "both parties," "both governments," "Chairman Liu," and "President Ho," indicated an absence of complete agreement.* None of Liu's attacks upon Soviet positions in the dispute was reflected in the communique; the passage devoted to attacking "revisionism" was scrupulously focussed upon the Yugoslav variety, which had "led Yugoslavia out of the socialist camp" and which needed "further exposure." This, in our view, seems to have been only a more nearly precise expression of the VWP position taken in March, which already supported the Chinese position. On the issue of peaceful coexistence which, given the VWP's concern for remaining clear of foreign limitations upon its actions, would seem to have had some appeal, Ho apparently would not agree to the inclusion of some formulation similar to that proposed by Liu in his Hanoi rally speech ("The foreign policy of socialist states must not supersede the revolutionary line of proletarian parties").** As other observers have pointed out,*** differences in emphasis between the VWP and the CCP are also evident in the

*A contrasting example of the type of communique which results from talks between the CCP and one of its strong supporters is the 25 May CCP-New Zealand CP statement. Here, both parties "completely agree in their stand and views on the important questions now confronting the international Communist movement" and both parties attack the CPSU by asserting that "to side with" the Yugoslavs is a "betrayal of Marxism-Leninism".

**The CCP seems to have been most disappointed by this for, in an editorial which otherwise dealt strictly with the communique, People's Daily (18 May) quoted this passage from Liu's speech to explain what was supposed to be meant in the communique's treatment of the "foreign policy of the socialist countries".

***FBIS/RPB, Bloc Survey, 31 May 1963.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

statement and in the subsequent treatment of the statement by each party: Hanoi interpreted the communique as a call for bloc unity while Peiping has attempted to picture it as a sign of VWP agreement with the Chinese position in the dispute; Peiping saw the statement as showing that the struggle against imperialism can best be served by supporting the national liberation movements of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, while Hanoi stressed that these goals are best attained by strengthening the unity of the bloc. Both parties profess favor for unity and for meetings to bring this about but Ho Chi Minh alone is credited with the prediction that the talks will succeed.

The North Vietnamese treatment of Liu Shao-chi's visit suggests that the North Vietnamese leadership remains firmly committed to its overriding objective of maintaining its independence of action in both domestic and foreign affairs. The course followed by the VWP in the Sino-Soviet dispute has in almost all instances been dictated by this desire, beginning with its rejection in 1960 of the Soviet view of authority and discipline within the Communist movement because of its implied subordination to the control of a Soviet-oriented majority, its preference for emphasizing the importance of liberation struggles rather than peaceful coexistence because of its problem in South Vietnam, and continuing with its refusal to abandon its role as a non-combatant on the side of the CCP for that of adversary of the CPSU. The maintenance of freedom for independent action apparently will not be served, in the view of the VWP, by open alliance with China, for hostility to the USSR could have unpleasant consequences. In its present position the DRV is dependent upon both the USSR and China for economic assistance, but the relationship is a relatively happy one for there is no evidence that either donor is prepared to use its assistance as an instrument of pressure--apparently fearing that the DRV will turn to the other. Although each donor has the capability to take over the other's economic role in the DRV, the VWP, having once rejected the support of one of the parties, cannot be entirely sure that the other will do so without attaching unacceptable conditions. The problem of military protection of North Vietnam also militates against adopting a hostile position in relation to one or the other parties to the dispute. In maintaining its role

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

as a non-combatant in the Sino-Soviet dispute, the VWP has the hypothetical protection of both parties against the United States (which, however, the VWP hopes will not have to be tested). Further, the position of the DRV allows it to receive the benefits of the substantial influence wielded by the Soviet Union in the world's councils,* which China cannot provide, and yet maintain an amicable relationship with its powerful Chinese neighbor.

This concern of the VWP for bloc unity, which, in turn, furthers the objective of preserving the regime's independence of action, may come to affect its attitude toward China. Although the VWP is on record as agreeing with the Chinese position that Yugoslavia is not a "socialist" state, we speculate that the VWP may not fully support the Chinese contention, stated most recently in the CCP letter to the CPSU of 14 June, that a necessary condition for agreement between the Soviets and Chinese is the complete repudiation of Yugoslavia by all socialist states. There is some similarity between the position of North Vietnam and Yugoslavia: both regimes gained power chiefly through their own efforts and both insist upon the maximum control over the destinies of their respective states and a minimum of subordination to the interests of the larger states in the socialist camp. Notwithstanding the usefulness of attacks upon Yugoslav "revisionism" in an inner-party context and despite a strong distaste for the symbol of moderation Belgrade represents in bloc attitudes toward the U.S., it may have occurred to the North Vietnamese leadership that a Chinese victory on this point (i.e., exclusion of Yugoslavia by all socialist states) could serve as a precedent for similar action against the VWP itself on a future occasion when their objectives happen to run counter to those of the rest of the movement. The implication for

*There have been, however, some indications that the DRV has felt that the USSR could have done more in the way of promoting its interests in the world, particularly in mounting a campaign to force U.S. withdrawal of its forces from South Vietnam

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

the future unity of the Communist movement raised by the intransigent attitude of the CCP toward the CPSU, as manifest in the 14 June letter, also may not be welcome to the VWP, for the letter seems to suggest that the CPSU must either capitulate completely or face an even stronger polarization of the movement into Chinese and Soviet groupings. For a party whose national interests are believed to be best served by a unified, or at least an "un-split," movement, Chinese cornering of the CPSU may be seen by the VWP as a most unfavorable development, for the difficulty in avoiding active association with one or the other grouping could increase drastically.

Under its present leadership, the DRV will probably continue to attempt to avoid participating in the dispute as the adversary of either China or the Soviet Union because of the disadvantages involved in fully alienating either party. We have suggested that a conflict within the party leadership over the strategy to be pursued in South Vietnam was a major factor in the March escalation of the VWP attacks against Yugoslavia and the subsequent increasingly pro-Chinese stand of the VWP. We also suggested that the CCP attempt, during Liu Shao-chi's visit to Hanoi, to swing the VWP completely into the Chinese camp was not successful. Since we do not believe that either the Soviets* or the Chinese see great merit in using economic and other pressures in the realm of state-to-state relations to acquire the complete allegiance of the VWP, we believe that future changes in the position of the VWP in the dispute will most likely be the result of developments in the VWP leadership. Such developments, which from time to time may make the VWP more susceptible to influence from one or

*We believe that the CPSU may have become somewhat disenchanted with the efficacy of economic pressures as means to political objectives because of its experience with Albania and China. In North Korea, the mere threat of Soviet economic pressure apparently served to push the regime into the Chinese camp.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

the other party in the dispute, are more likely to arise from immediate situations, such as the problems in South Vietnam and Laos and questions of domestic policy, than from various issues in the Sino-Soviet dispute itself.

- 31 -

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~