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ЗА ЛУЧШЕЕ БУДУЩЕЕ

STUDENT RESEARCH REPORT

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VIETNAM AND THE SOVIET ASIAN STRATEGY

GARMISCH, GERMANY

APO NEW YORK 09053

R-569/75

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VIETNAM AND THE SOVIET ASIAN STRATEGY.

9 Student research paper

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11 June 1977

12 53p.

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F O R E W O R D

This research project represents fulfillment of a student requirement for successful completion of the overseas phase of training of the Department of the Army's Foreign Area Officer Program (Russian).

Only unclassified sources are used in producing the research paper. The opinions, value judgments and conclusions expressed are those of the author and in no way reflect official policy of the United States Government; Department of Defense; Department of the Army; Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff of Intelligence; or the United states Army Institute for Advanced Russian and East European Studies.

Interested readers are invited to send their comments to the Commander of the Institute.

ROLAND LAJOIE
LTC, MI
Commander

SUMMARY

This paper examines the place of the Vietnam war in Soviet Asian strategy. The USSR's policy toward North Vietnam since the mid-1950's is seen as a part of a broad strategy designed to reestablish the Sino-Soviet alleance by creating an American military threat to China. When the U.S. decided to gradually withdraw support from South Vietnam, the Soviet's goal shifted to containment of Chinese influence in Asia.

One important key to Soviet strategy over the last 15 years was the conflict in Vietnam. Soviet policy toward Vietnam was part of a broad strategy designed to reestablish the Sino-Soviet alliance. The Soviet Union attempted to entangle the United States in a military conflict in Vietnam that in turn would create an American military threat to China. The Soviet leadership hoped that this threat would force the Chinese to seek Soviet support against the United States. They implemented this strategy by supplying North Vietnam with a continuously expanding military capability while simultaneously refraining from initiatives in the international arena that might hinder U.S. military deployments to Southeast Asia. This strategy failed and achieved exactly the opposite results desired when, in 1969, the United States and China began steps toward rapprochement.

As a result, the Soviet Union altered its strategy to one that closely resembled the American "containment policy." It was hoped that by isolating China, the Chinese would be pressured into concessions to and eventual rapprochement with the Soviet Union. In conjunction with efforts to increase Soviet influence in a number of Asian countries that ringed China, the Soviet Union decided to provide North Vietnam with the military means to defeat South Vietnam in a conventional war. The defeat of South

Vietnam would greatly diminish U.S. influence in Southeast Asia and establish a strong pro-Soviet regime on China's border, a regime tied logistically to the Soviet Union. This would damage American credibility as a reliable ally and contribute to China's isolation in Asia. The Soviet Union achieved its policy goals in Vietnam, but failed to achieve its primary goal of reestablishing the Sino-Soviet alliance.

The Strategic Problem

The most important factor on the international political scene since 1957 has been the Sino-Soviet rift.[1] As a result of the communist conquest of China, the Soviet Union had enjoyed a secure eastern border since 1949. The Korean War had enhanced this security by creating a long-term adversary relationship between the United States and China. Mao Tse-tung's 1957 decision to launch China on an independent path of development found expression in the 1958 Great Leap Forward. The Great Leap carried with it serious strategic implications for the Soviet Union, as Mao's new course once again raised the problem of a hostile eastern border.[2] In broad strategic terms, this Chinese action threatened to destroy Soviet wartime gains in Asia and to alter the world balance of power to the disadvantage of the Soviet Union.

From the Soviet point of view, China could follow only one of three fundamental foreign policy paths. First, she could continue as a client of the Soviet Union, allied with and dependent on the Soviet Union. Second, she could follow an independent path of development. As a backward agrarian state that sought to become a major world power, however, it was unlikely that China would follow an unaligned course over the long term. Third, and most seriously from the Soviet point of view, China could turn to the capitalist world, specifically the United States, for technological assistance and military alliance. The Great Leap Forward moved China to the second alternative and raised the very real possibility that she would take the third path. The Soviet Union thus correctly calculated that it faced a strategic crisis in Asia.

The Solution

Khrushchev consolidated his personal power in 1957, coming to power simultaneously with the rapidly developing crisis in Asia. In order to retain his grip on power, he needed to solve the Chinese problem and re-establish Soviet domination in Asia. Khrushchev, as a result, developed a strategy designed to force China to restore the Sino-Soviet alliance. Vietnam played a major role in this strategy.

The Soviet Union planned to exploit the existing tension in Southeast Asia in an attempt to entangle the

United States militarily in Vietnam.[3] American military action against a socialist country bordering on China would threaten China's security and could lead to Sino-American hostilities. This would reinforce the adversary relationship between the United States and China and eliminate for the Chinese the alternative of alignment with the United States. It was hoped the Chinese, when faced with a military threat from the most powerful nation in the world, would follow the most logical foreign policy course and ally with the Soviet Union against the United States.

Khrushchev based his plan on an understanding of Chinese politics that often escapes western observers. Mao's decision to launch the Great Leap Forward did not receive the unanimous support in the Chinese hierarchy, but in fact, provoked a major split in opinion. The Great Leap ushered in a period of continuous struggle for power in China. A number of powerful figures favored continued good relations with the Soviet Union as the correct path toward rapid modernization of their nation. These leaders, notably Liu Shao-chi, helped to curtail some of the excesses of the Great Leap while increasing their personal power at the expense of Mao. This group came to be called by Mao and his followers "the pro-Soviet group."[4]

Khrushchev intended to influence the Chinese power struggle in favor of the pro-Soviet group. The American threat would provide a highly public issue about which opposition to Mao could unite. In conjunction with the Vietnam effort, the Soviet Union would attempt to isolate China both on a state to state and on a party to party level. The simultaneous increase of American military activity and decrease of support from the socialist camp would give events in Vietnam a more threatening character and be more likely to propel Mao's opponents to victory in the struggle for power.

A series of Soviet military and political actions in Indochina helped create a situation in mid-1963 that found the North Vietnamese aligned with China in the Sino-Soviet rift and a confident United States committed to the preservation of South Vietnam.[5] Beginning in mid-1963, the Soviet Union employed a carefully escalating military logistics effort to cause a gradual escalation in the level of conflict in Vietnam.[6] This escalation eroded the confidence of American decision-makers in the estimate that the Vietnam effort was a low-risk, high-return venture.[7] The rapidly deteriorating situation forced the United States to consider the fundamental question, should the United States terminate involvement or should it become irrevocably committed to the war in Vietnam? President Johnson, based on a February 20, 1964, recommendation by the National

Security Council, made the decision that the United States should do whatever necessary to preserve a non-communist regime in South Vietnam.[8]

The public expression of this decision, which included suggestions that the United States would be willing to take direct military action against North Vietnam, provoked an internal policy debate in China.[9] The issue in the debate was precisely the extent of the American threat to China from the south. Mao and his spokesmen argued that the United States did not present a military threat to China and even offered to improve Sino-American relations, implying that the Vietnam crisis was not a barrier to rapprochement. Spokesmen for the opposition, including Lo Jui-ching and Peng Chen, argued that the United States was a threat and that China should prepare to fight a major war. Stated differently, China should re-establish good relations with the Soviet Union in return for military assistance.[10]

Mao forced a crisis in the ongoing Soviet strategy after the Tonkin Gulf incident by denying the Soviet Union land access to Vietnam across China.[11] The Soviet Union, in order to meet now expanded logistics requirements, was forced to supply the North Vietnamese by sea. The risks for the Soviet Union, because of her marked naval inferiority, substantially increased as a result. During the internal crisis over the solution to this problem, Khrushchev was removed from power.[12]

The Soviets accepted the risks and supplied the Vietnamese by sea in the fall of 1964.[13] The resulting increase in Viet Cong military capabilities caused the situation to deteriorate, from the American point of view, to a desperately precarious point. In response, the United States avoided defeat by initiating the sustained bombing campaign of North Vietnam known as "Rolling Thunder" and injected U.S. ground troops into the war.[14]

Mao had argued, until that point, that the United States could not present a serious military threat to China without ground troops present in Vietnam. The March 1965 decision to put U.S. troops on the ground in Vietnam undercut Mao's position and forced him to compromise on the crucial issue of land access. In April 1965 Soviet military supplies rolled across the Chinese railway system for Vietnam.[15] Mao, with this compromise, prevented efforts at a more fundamental rapprochement with the Soviet Union.

The Cultural Revolution

Until the opening of the Chinese railway system, the Soviet Union had been at a strategic disadvantage. With land access, the Soviets could now provide North Vietnam with the means to escalate the conflict by utilizing a secure line of communication. From April 1965, the United States was committed to an ever escalating spiral of military conflict.[16] This fact had serious implications for Mao Tse-tung. It would only be a matter of time before the escalated American presence and concomitant rising American threat provoked new calls for intervention by Chinese forces or, at the least, partial rapprochement with the Soviet Union. By inaction, given current circumstances, Mao would certainly lose the power struggle. He therefore reacted by moving to physically remove his opponents from positions of power and simultaneously attempted to gain control over their organizations. Mao's assault against his opponents has become known as the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.[17]

Mao's plan had two fundamental phases. In the first phase he attacked opponents in the army and established control over that organization through Defense Minister Lin Piao. One of the earliest victims of the Cultural Revolution, as a result, was Lo Jui-ching, Chief of Staff of the People's Liberation Army. Lo had been one of the primary spokesmen for unity with the Soviet Union against the American threat.[18] The second phase of Mao's attack was the use of ad hoc organizations to attack the party and state apparatuses in an attempt to wrench control of these organs from Liu Shao-chi and his followers.[19]

Mao's first tentative steps came in late 1965 and the Cultural Revolution increased in intensity throughout 1966. Mao attacked "those in high places who are taking the capitalist road," "China's Khrushchev," and "those who sing in chorus with revisionists in foreign countries" --all referring to Liu Shao-chi and his followers.[20] This offensive, however, did not overwhelm his opponents, but instead forced them to unite in self-defense. Through a variety of ploys, and always acting in the name of "the thought of Mao Tse-tung," they managed to confuse instructions to various Cultural Revolution groups and committees. In many cases, provincial party leaders created rival groups of the so-called "Red Guards." Although Mao managed to gain control of the situation in Peking in mid-1966 by using PLA troops, confusion mounted in the provinces. Mao initially could not gain control of the provincial party apparatus.[21]

The Soviet Union continued to try to influence the power struggle from without. It steadily increased the fighting strength of the North Vietnamese in an attempt to stay ahead of the ever increasing American buildup. At the same time, the Soviet press carried on a steady campaign of calls for united action over Vietnam.[22] More ominously, the Soviets created a second military threat to China with Soviet forces. Beginning in late 1965, the Soviet Union began to increase Soviet strength all along the Sino-Soviet border.[23]

One Soviet criticism of the Cultural Revolution reflected events rather accurately and played a major role later in the contest. The Soviets accused Mao of attempting to create a military dictatorship by using the "main pillar of support," the army, to enforce his will against the party.[24] Mao, in fact, was forced to rely increasingly on the strength of the PLA. By the end of 1966, Mao, employing PLA troops to perform internal police duties, gradually, but with great difficulty, started to gain the upper hand in the struggle.[25]

Soviet Strategy in Crisis

On the battlefield in Vietnam, meanwhile, the United States had achieved a minor logistics miracle. As a result, the United States used increasingly superior firepower and mobility to progress in the space of one year--1966--from near defeat to preparations for a general offensive.[26] This success aided the political stability in Vietnam as the Ky-Thieu regime consolidated power and planned legitimizing elections for late 1967.[27]

The U.S.-South Vietnamese military-political success combined with Mao's apparent ascendance in the power struggle in China to present fundamental problems to both North Vietnam and the Soviet Union. The North Vietnamese were losing the war and, as a result, external influences on the Chinese power struggle were insufficient to decisively shift the balance of power in favor of Mao's opponents. The joint North Vietnamese-Soviet solution to their related problems resulted in the 1968 TET offensive.

The North Vietnamese decided in July 1967 that a major offensive in the South was needed.[28] They had to arrest South Vietnam's political progress and set back the pacification effort. If the Soviets could be convinced to support such a large-scale offensive, the assault would be more effective. Additionally, because an operation of this sort would necessarily involve large-scale losses of men and equipment, Soviet replacement of equipment would greatly reduce the negative military results of the engagement.

In August events in China convinced the Soviet Union to fully support the proposed offensive. As stated, Soviet criticism of Mao had noted the army's role in the Cultural Revolution. This role increased in the summer of 1967 and by August, Mao had 20 of 37 Army corps committed internally. The PLA leadership, a thoroughly professional military group, did not view the weakening of China's national security with complete approval. In August 1967, a number of highly placed officers rebelled against Mao and were purged. The Soviets immediately noted the occurrence in their press with reports that "lately resistance to Maoism has begun to develop even in the army, where another purge is now being carried out."[29]

Although Mao was winning the internal struggle, it was far from over and the PLA held the balance of power. If the Soviet Union could increase the external threat to China in her weakened condition, the PLA leadership might adjust their loyalties and align with those who opposed Mao. The Soviet Union, as a result of this analysis, continued to increase Soviet strength on the Sino-Soviet border and supplied the logistical base for the TET offensive.

The Soviets hoped the TET offensive would provoke a huge input of U.S. troops into Vietnam. The United States was stretched so thin at this point that a major troop increase would force mobilization. A mobilized U.S. with an army approaching a million men in Vietnam would considerably heighten the Chinese threat perception. It was also conceivable that the Americans would launch ground operations into Laos, Cambodia or even North Vietnam.[30]

Le Than Nghi, Hanoi's primary aid negotiator, and Dinh Duc Thien, Chief of the Logistics Department of the North Vietnamese Army, negotiated the agreement for the TET logistics effort in Moscow from August 14 until September 23, 1967.[31] The agreement was signed on that date and thereafter Soviet shipping to Vietnam made a quantum jump until the TET offensive in 1968.[32]

Initial indications suggested that the U.S. response to TET would be to increase its troop strength by nearly a quarter of a million men, thus making mobilization inevitable.[33] As the Soviets hoped, these events did influence elements in the Chinese military, as China apparently faced growing military threats both on her northern and southern borders. In a struggle ostensibly over the composition of Revolutionary Committees, Yang Ch'eng-wu, acting Chief of the General Staff of the PLA, Yu Li-chin, Political Commander of the Air Force, and Fu Ch'ung-pi, commander of the Peking garrison, attempted to turn against Mao in early March.[34] The U.S. public reaction to TET, however, played an unexpectedly strong role and it became apparent before the end of March that the U.S. was unlikely to commit the additional forces requested by Westmoreland.[35] The threat appeared to subside and Mao managed to purge all three officers.

On March 31, 1968, President Johnson made an offer to negotiate with North Vietnam, curtailed U.S. bombing and withdrew his name from the Presidential race.[36] Despite new waves of attacks in May and August, the U.S. refused anything but token reinforcements and enforced troop ceiling of 549,000 men.[37] The American threat thus receded as an issue in Chinese politics.

Transition

Mao took advantage of the American response to press his initiative in the Cultural Revolution. He moved toward the final public disgrace of Liu Shao-chi and by late 1968 stood on the threshold of victory. Events in Europe took center stage at this time, however, with ominous implications for the Chinese. Soviet tanks crushed Czechoslovakia in August 1968, as the Brezhnev doctrine took form. After the Czechoslovakian tragedy, the Soviet Union intensified its border buildup, clearly implying that the lessons of Czechoslovakia could be applied to China.[38]

Faced with the object lesson of Czechoslovakia and the menacing Soviet border buildup, Mao Tse-tung could not keep over half of the PLA involved in internal police duties. As a result, Mao terminated the Cultural Revolution prior to final victory and deployed the PLA against the Soviet Union.[39] Tension along the border grew to crisis proportions and erupted into armed conflict between Soviet and Chinese forces in early 1969.

This Soviet pressure preserved the remnants of an opposition group in China, but finally forced Mao to take the step so feared by the Soviet Union--rapprochement with the United States.

Although the United States did not respond to Mao's 1964 and 1965 signals that he wanted to improve Sino-American relations, the Americans did make overtures in 1966 and 1967. These were rebuffed, reflecting the unresolved power struggle in China.[40] Mao was not in a political position at the height of the Cultural Revolution to seek rapprochement with the leading imperialist power. At the end of 1968, however, the situation had altered to Mao's advantage. The external manifestation of the Chinese decision to seek the U.S. as a counterweight to the Soviet Union came in December 1968. The Sino-American Warsaw talks reopened at the highest levels at the request of the Chinese.[41]

Thus, a dramatically changed situation greeted the new American President, Richard Nixon. Clearly Mr. Nixon's highest priority upon taking office would be to bring the war in Vietnam to an acceptable conclusion.[42] He saw that in the unique circumstances of 1969, Chinese and U.S. interests precisely coincided in this regard. An acceptable conclusion would remove the American ground role from Vietnam, but leave behind a military balance between North and South Vietnamese forces. This would completely eliminate the U.S. threat to China in Asia, prevent Soviet domination of Southeast Asia and establish U.S. credibility as a reliable ally. From Nixon's point of view, this solution would secure a strong U.S.-Asian position, but end the conflict that had disrupted the U. S. internally.

On a broader strategic plane, Mr. Nixon decided to utilize Sino-American cooperation over Vietnam to seize the initiative in world affairs. He recognized that the Soviet Union, on the basis of an unprecedented program of military spending, was rapidly eliminating American advantage in strategic weaponry. Given spiraling military costs and the growing anti-military mood in the U.S. Congress, Mr. Nixon realized that the United States simply would not be able to continue all out military competition with the Soviet Union. As a result of this understanding, Mr. Nixon attempted to restructure world power relationships to the advantage of the United States--to build a "stable structure for peace." Essentially, the U.S., China, West Europe and Japan represented four centers of power with a common interest in containing Soviet expansion. The United States would play the leading role in a loose alliance designed to check Soviet expansion. The pivotal part of this plan was the Sino-American relationship.[43]

After 20 years of hostility, such a bold plan required careful diplomatic preparation. Nixon, upon taking office, began a "delicate diplomatic minuet" with China that included secret meetings and unilateral signals from both sides. The structure of the rapprochement took shape throughout the first Nixon years, and cooperation over Vietnam began immediately.[44]

After the immediate crisis on the Sino-Soviet border eased in 1969, the Chinese did not fully reopen the Chinese railway system to Soviet traffic, as they restricted the types and amounts of goods permitted to flow to Vietnam.[45] Mr. Nixon, for his part, began a phased withdrawal of U.S. troops and a simultaneous effort to increase the fighting ability of the South Vietnamese army--Vietnamization.[46] The ARVN would be built-up to be able to engage North Vietnamese forces on an equal basis.

In addition to Vietnamization, Mr. Nixon attempted to strategically isolate the battlefield. After the fall of Prince Sihanouk ended the Soviet-Cambodian access route, Mr. Nixon ordered the U.S.-Vietnamese incursion into Cambodia to destroy massive North Vietnamese supply depots there in May 1970.[47] Given the Chinese railway restriction, virtually all supplies now had to go into Haiphong harbor. Logistics difficulties began to hamper North Vietnamese operations, as a result, especially in the southern provinces of South Vietnam.

The Soviets were not oblivious to the Nixon initiatives and changed the thrust of their Asian strategy. The Soviet Union began an effort to increase their influence in Asian countries around China's borders. The intent was an Asian collective security system to isolate China--a sort of "containment policy." Thus, the Soviet Union increased aid and military support for India in 1969 and 1970, signed a Soviet-Indian treaty of friendship in 1971, gave diplomatic support to India during the 1971 war with Pakistan, increased Soviet naval strength in the Indian Ocean and attempted to improve relations with Burma, Malaysia, Indonesia and Taiwan.[48]

In conjuction with these efforts, the Soviet Union decided in 1971 to supply North Vietnam with the weaponry to conquer South Vietnam. The Soviets altered the types of arms being shipped to Haiphong and delivered large numbers of tanks and heavy artillery pieces. At the same time, they initiated the policy of detente to undermine developing Sino-American rapprochement.[49] Detente, coupled with U.S. defeat in Southeast Asia, would seriously damage China's view of the U.S. as a reliable ally. Additionally, it would establish a powerful pro-Soviet regime on China's border, thus contributing to China's isolation in Asia.

Shortly after Mr. Nixon's visit to Peking in 1972, a strong North Vietnamese armored "blitzkrieg" rolled into South Vietnam. Although the ARVN did a surprisingly credible job against the onslaught,[50] the offensive pressed them hard. In response, President Nixon surprised the Russians on the eve of his departure for the Moscow summit and closed Haiphong harbor with mines and bombs. This act, as clearly stated by Mr. Nixon, was directed primarily and directly at the Soviet Union.[51] Thereafter, the offensive literally ran out of gas.

After Mr. Nixon's overwhelming victory at the polls in November 1972 and his Christmas bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong, the North Vietnamese agreed to sign a peace treaty to end the conflict.

The Fall of Vietnam

There has been much discussion in the United States over which side was more guilty of violating the Paris Peace Accords. These discussions usually miss the point. If the term "violator" is taken to mean the party that altered the balance of power, thus violating the basic intent of the accords, then the guilt must be shared between the United States and a non-signatory, the Soviet Union. Unfortunately, the key clause in the agreement limited U.S. resupply except for a one-for-one replacement of military equipment worn-out or destroyed after the ceasefire, and placed a similar restriction on the North Vietnamese.[52] North Vietnam, however, was not the source of the enemy's logistics effort. Any improvement of North Vietnam's fighting strength by outside powers, regardless of whether the troops in question were located in the north or in the south, would alter the basic military balance in Vietnam. Thus, when the Soviets began to introduce great quantities of tanks and other military equipment into North Vietnam after the ceasefire, they were not in technical violation of the accords; but, they were making the accords meaningless by altering the military balance of power.

On the other hand, the United States helped to alter the fundamental military balance through inaction. The

United States not only failed to take action against gross and massive violations by the North Vietnamese, but failed to supply the agreed upon level of spare parts, ammunition, fuel, and replacement equipment for existing stocks. United States passivity combined with Soviet action to make defeat inevitable for the South Vietnamese.

On this point there can be no debate, as a brief summary of the events from the ceasefire in January 1973 till April 1975 will show. On the eve of the ceasefire, the North Vietnamese launched what may be termed a general land-grabbing offensive. The South Vietnamese counterattacked and regained most of the terrain seized in the attack.[53] Thus, it can be demonstrated that the South Vietnamese in January 1973 could meet and defeat North Vietnamese forces in large battles. A military balance existed in Vietnam.

This situation changed with time as U.S. appropriations for military aid to Vietnam steadily decreased. In fiscal 1972-73 U.S. expenditures totaled $2.168 billion for military aid to Vietnam. This was reduced to $964 million in fiscal 1973-74 and to $700 million in fiscal 1974-75.[54] Even disregarding inflation, this represents a tremendous reduction. This reduction resulted in a 60% decrease in ARVN firepower and a 50% reduction in mobility.[55] By 1975 ARVN infantrymen were rationed 85 rounds of ammunition and one grenade per month.[56] At least 20% of all ARVN aircraft were down for lack of spare parts.[57] The effect of these restrictions curtailed ARVN capability to launch large scale operations and helicopter and tank mounted attacks. It forced them to resort to "small scale blocking, nibbling and searching operations."[58] Thieu had to fight a poor man's war--on starvation rations.[59]

At the same time the North Vietnamese, with Soviet encouragement and assistance, constructed or improved a road network from North to South Vietnam that included 20,000 kilometers of finished roadway. Supplies for North Vietnamese troops moved south on 10,000 transportation vehicles and through 5,000 kilometers of pipeline. As a result of Soviet resupply, the 316 Division moved into its attack position for the final assault on Ban Me Thuot on 500 trucks. At that battle, the North Vietnamese achieved an advantage over the ARVN of 5.5:1 in infantry, 1.2:1 in armor and 2.1:1 in heavy artillery.[60]

Based on recent testimony by Graham Martin, former U.S. ambassador to South Vietnam, and a newly published book by General Van Tien Dung, Chief of Staff of the North Vietnamese Army, it can be demonstrated that it was precisely this declining U.S. support and lack of U.S. military action that caused the Soviet Union in mid-1974 to encourage Hanoi to exert maximum military pressure against the south.[61] It was the same set of facts that spurred the North Vietnamese to accept Soviet advice and plan the 1975 offensive.[62]

As Thieu's supply problem became more severe, the North Vietnamese mounted an offensive that threatened Saigon's control in the Central Highlands. President Thieu, in order to shorten his supply lines and reduce the risk of losing his troops in the North, ordered a general strategic withdrawal from the northern provinces. While a sound decision in theory, it is one of the most difficult of military maneuvers and the poor execution of it resulted in the now well-known debacle.[63] It should be noted, however, that Thieu had to consider in his decision the bleak facts that the United States had not delivered one item of military equipment since the beginning of 1975 and for several months had met only 40% of ammunition and fuel requirements for existing equipment.[64] An 8-inch howitzer worth $200,000 with ammunition is worthless without ammunition.

For the purpose of this article, it has been necessary to describe the fall of South Vietnam. While it is fairly easy to explain the Soviets' behavior in terms of their strategic objectives in Asia, it is not as easy to explain U.S. behavior. There are two fundamental questions that arise from the foregoing events, the answers to which provide the basis for further discussion. Firstly, why did the United States follow a policy that brought destruction to its ally, after apparently achieving a brilliant success in bringing the war to a conclusion? Secondly, how did the Soviet Union and China react to U.S. policy or lack thereof?

United States Strategy in Disarray

It was evident, literally before the ink was dry on the peace agreement, that the North Vietnamese intended to violate the fundamental spirit of the accords. Given the importance of the new relationship with China, China's interest in a "balkanized" Indochina and the necessity for the United States to appear as a reliable ally, the United States had to discourage the North Vietnamese from this course of action.[65] From available evidence, it appears that the Nixon administration initially developed a "carrot and stick policy" in conjunction with the Chinese to exert leverage on North Vietnam. Amid administration suggestions that it would press for $2 billion in aid to help reconstruct North Vietnam, Henry Kissinger flew to Hanoi in February 1973, and from Hanoi flew to Peking.[66] Dr. Kissinger apparently emphasized two themes in Hanoi. Firstly, he pointed to the new Chinese-American cooperation and to the geographical location of Vietnam. At this point, the United States could threaten military pressure against

North Vietnam while the capability of the Soviet Union to meet North Vietnam's logistics requirements was in question. Secondly, Dr. Kissinger suggested that significant amounts of U.S. economic aid could be available to Vietnam if she curtailed military efforts to conquer the South. In other words, the goal of both the United States and China lay in maintenance of the military balance, and not in the destruction of North Vietnam. The United States was prepared to assist North Vietnam on the road to economic recovery and, as a result of the discussions in Hanoi, a joint U.S.-North Vietnamese economic commission was established to assess reconstruction needs.[67]

Dr. Kissinger flew directly from Hanoi to Peking and from all external signs, relations between the United States and China reached a new high level. Kissinger's explanation of U.S. intentions in Indochina met a positive reception in Peking, as the U.S.-China consular exchange agreement was signed and Dr. Kissinger was given an extraordinary two-hour interview with Mao. This "frank and wide-ranging conversation in an unconstrained atmosphere" was the first time that Mao had received someone below cabinet rank and ended with a request to convey Mao's regards to President Nixon.[68]

The evidence that the United States and China joined in cooperation to reduce Soviet influence and stabilize the Indochina situation can best be seen from the Soviet reaction. The Soviet press first attacked Kissinger's Hanoi visit, warning that the U.S. had no business in a country the Soviet Union wanted to transform into a powerful and flourishing socialist state. In addition, the Soviets warned Hanoi against monopolists who offer aid but only want to achieve economic domination. Soviet propaganda also predicted an increasingly important international role for Vietnam against Maoist propaganda "which slanders the Soviet Union."[69] In conjunction with comment on Kissinger's Hanoi trip, the Soviets blasted the U.S.-China relationship, alleging that the U.S. and China had cooperated over Vietnam from the beginning.[70]

While openly criticizing the U.S.-Chinese strategy to squeeze the Soviet Union out of Indochina, the Soviets made clear their intentions to continue military assistance to Vietnam. At a February 1973 banquet in honor of Le Duc Tho, Brezhnev promised that Soviet military, political and diplomatic aid, as in the past, would continue during peacetime.[71] The physical expression of this policy came in early February as the first ship to arrive in Haiphong after the ceasefire was from the Soviet Merchant Marine. The ship landed despite the presence of mines, as yet not cleared from the harbor.[72]

Despite the U.S.-Chinese advantage, however, it quickly became apparent that the North Vietnamese intended to strengthen their offensive capability in South Vietnam. They began a process of transferring supplies, antiaircraft missiles and other equipment to the south. In addition, they began work on the strategically important road network that would permit rapid transfer of military power then being retrained and reequipped from north to south.[73] The North Vietnamese intended to test U.S. resolve one more time.

President Nixon responded by planning an all-out bombing campaign, a campaign that was to be more intensive than the 1972 Christmas bombing.[74] Such a course of action, of course, entailed certain political risks. If the bombing occurred without Nixon having publicly established the necessary justification, a rebellious congress, already upset over the continued Cambodian bombing, could be provoked into cutting off all funds for the Vietnamese. Therefore, Mr. Nixon needed to build a case before launching the air offensive.

The U.S. remained generally silent until the return of U.S. POW's was completed in February, but began in March a gradual public campaign of escalated warnings to the North Vietnamese to cease and desist. Administration spokesmen confirmed South Vietnamese accusations of a

North Vietnamese build-up and the President personally suggested ominous consequences would result. The campaign reached a crescendo in mid-April and the President prepared to give the order to execute the offensive.[75] At this very time, however, he received word that Presidential Counsel, John Dean, was negotiating with the Federal prosecutor on the Watergate affair. Realizing that he would face a political struggle on two fronts, the President postponed the offensive.[76]

Unfortunately, the postponement became permanent as the rapidly developing Watergate crisis literally paralyzed the President. Thereafter, it became increasingly evident, as a result of the congressionally imposed Indochina bombing halt, the war powers act and steadily declining U.S. allocations for Vietnam, that the United States could not and would not play a decisive role in Vietnam.

Resurgent Debate in China

The Chinese, in addition to cooperating with the United States over Vietnam, had reacted vigorously to the Soviet "containment" strategy. They countered Soviet initiatives with their own efforts to improve relations with Japan, Malaysia and other Asian countries. In addition, they made strong bids for influence in Laos and Cambodia. From 1970, the Chinese became the main source of logistics for the Khmer Rouge and provided a headquarters for the government-in-exile of Prince Sihanouk. In Laos, Chinese laborers constructed a road network leading from the Chinese border across northern Laos. While the Chinese never achieved a dominate role in Laos, their strong influence in Cambodia is highlighted by the Soviet maintenance of relations with the Lon Nol regime until the defeat in 1975.[77]

The key to a balkanized Indochina, however, remained Vietnam. Vietnam is the most populous country in Indochina and a unified Vietnam, supported by Soviet power, could pave the way to Vietnamese and Soviet domination of the region. Chinese interests, as we have seen, were apparently served by the Paris accords, which ensured a divided Vietnam. Thus, when the probability of a united Vietnam loomed as a result of U.S. inaction, it provided a major shock to the Chinese leadership. As it turned out, the realization that the U.S. would not act in Vietnam impacted on the Chinese leadership precisely at a time when conditions were ripe for a resurgent power struggle.

Mao and his supporters failed to capture the provincial party apparatus during the Cultural Revolution. Instead, the party apparatus had been destroyed and the new system, a system of party committees, had become increasingly staffed by professional military men. Great numbers of administrative cadres had been purged and the youthful activists of the Cultural Revolution had not yet developed the necessary maturity, expertise, and cohesion to effectively administer the provinces. Mao had relied on the military to restore order and ensure the continued administrative functioning of Chinese society. This reliance on the military, however, had placed Defense Minister Lin Piao in a position to achieve a dominant role in the Chinese power structure. In a suddenly fierce struggle, Mao managed to physically exterminate Lin and some of his associates in late 1971, but the problem of administration still remained. That is, if the military continued to occupy the vast majority of leading civil administrative positions, whoever controlled the military would be in a position to capture personal power. Mao, therefore, turned to the group with the necessary administrative expertise--the purged party cadres. Thus, 1972 and 1973 were years of rehabilitation for many former members of the provincial administration.[78]

The rehabilitation process began at a time when the success of Chinese foreign policy with regard to the United States and Indochina apparently made the issue of China's strategic orientation a dead issue. Teng Hsiao-ping, "China's number two Khrushchev" and the most important figure to be rehabilitated, reappeared in public life in

April 1973.[79] Shortly thereafter, the Watergate paralysis in the United States began to set in, thus again raising the possibility of manipulating the related issues of Sino-Soviet and Sino-American relations in a new struggle for power.

The United States, through Dr. Kissinger, attempted to assure the Chinese that despite U.S. inaction in Indochina and the rapidly developing internal crisis that threatened to oust President Nixon, U.S. "friendship with the People's Republic of China is one of the constant factors of American foreign policy."[80]

The various factions in the Chinese leadership worked out a compromise response to Kissinger's assurances that was based on two fundamental points. Firstly, the Chinese adopted a "wait and see" attitude toward U.S. reliability. That is, they agreed to let the U.S. power struggle reach its conclusion while maintaining the U.S.-China rapprochement as a plank of their foreign policy. They would temporarily accept the argument that the U.S. internal struggle was unrelated to China, but would expect signs of continued adherence to the Shanghai Communique after resolution of the crisis. Secondly, the Chinese stepped up efforts to gain influence in Cambodia and Laos and made limited efforts to regain influence in North Vietnam. This effort included a deal to compensate communist forces in South Vietnam for military equipment they in turn would give to the Cambodians.[81]

The Soviet Union exploited U.S. weakness by increasing its military logistics effort to provide North Vietnam with an ever expanding arsenal of modern military equipment. As stated, in mid-1974, Soviet analysts decided that the shifting correlation of forces in Vietnam and the nadir of U.S. resolve provided excellent military opportunities for the North Vietnamese. As a result, the new U.S. administration was faced with an increasingly serious military situation coupled with a U.S. political climate that would prevent action to redress the growing imbalance. Thus, sometime during the first months of the Ford administration, the decision was made to "write-off" Vietnam. Henry Kissinger probably carried this message to Peking in November 1974, as a flurry of Asian diplomatic activity following his departure would indicate.[82] Several months later, Soviet-made tanks rolled into Saigon.

Results and Prospects

The Soviet Union achieved its policy goals in Vietnam. The Vietnamese, with a powerful military machine, are clearly the most powerful force in the region. They cannot, however, support the large military establishment without Soviet support and are thus tied to the Soviet Union for the foreseeable future.

There have been clear signs of Soviet influence at the expense of China in Vietnam. Le Duan visited Moscow in October 1975 and amid great fanfare signed both long and short term aid and trade agreements. In addition, he and Brezhnev signed a joint statement indicating identical outlooks on foreign policy and Le endorsed positions openly opposed by China.[83] In January 1976 it was revealed that the Soviet Union would build more than 40 projects in Vietnam, including a hydroelectric station.[84] There have been continuing reports of Soviet ships in Vietnamese harbors and large numbers of Russian advisors and visitors present in Saigon and Hanoi.[85]

On the other hand, Le Duan's stop in Peking in September 1975 en route to Moscow did not produce a joint communique.[86] Additionally, Chinese and Vietnamese contention over ownership of islands in the South China Sea developed into open hostility in early 1976.[87]

Soviet strategic goals have not been achieved, as the Chinese retain considerable influence in Cambodia and Cambodia remains independent, to the point of hostility, from Vietnam.[88] Although the Soviets exert considerable influence in Laos, the Chinese continue to compete as a new agreement for economic and technical cooperation between Laos and China was signed in March 1976.[89] In addition, the Chinese have cautioned Thailand not to be too quick to evict the U.S. presence. It may be presumed that the Chinese attitude is at least partly responsible for the fact that there is still an American presence in Thailand, and the new Thai regime is openly pro U.S.. Thus, the Soviet policy success in Vietnam has not led to Soviet/ Vietnamese domination of Southeast Asia.

The United States, for its part, has emphasized its intention to remain an Asian power. Administration statements and the rather violent "Mayaguez" incident underscore this determination. Recently Dr. Kissinger, presumably in response to threats of increased Soviet military pressure on China during the power scuffle following Mao's death, stated, "We believe the territorial integrity and sovereignty of China is very important to the world equilibrium, and we would consider it a grave matter if this were threatened by an outside power...it would not be taken lightly if there were a massive assault on China."[90] Additionally, perhaps in an effort to win the peace after losing the war, the U.S. has kept open the possibility of negotiation with Vietnam. Recent news that talks will begin between Vietnam and the United States indicates the possibility of establishing some leverage for the U.S. in Vietnam and some measure of independent action for Vietnam.[91] The Vietnamese are not likely, however, to give up lightly Soviet military and economic assistance. Any deal with the United States would necessarily involve a considerable allocation of funds and might thus be politically unacceptable to the United States.

The key to Asia remains the Chinese power struggle. That China's strategic orientation was and is an issue can be seen from various discussions in the press and specific criticisms of Teng Hsiao-ping following his demise. Specifically, a Renmin Ribao editorial in April 1976 indicated, "This time the Soviet revisionist renegade clique was indeed beside itself with joy for awhile, thinking that its so-called 'healthy forces' would pull off something big. However, it never expected that Teng Hsiao-ping would meet his defeat so quickly..."[92]

Hua Kuo-feng has captured the ascendant position in China for the time being and is in the process of trying to consolidate his personal position. At a time when the politburo and politburo standing committee were rather evenly divided, Hua was selected as a compromise to succeed Chou En-lai as acting premier. Hua belonged to that group of cadres that survived the Cultural Revolution and thus had some ties with opposing groups.[93] Evidently, Hua decided to become more than a temporary compromise and immediately cast his lot with Teng Hsiao-ping's opponents, thereby eliminating his single most powerful rival. Recently, in the wake of Mao's death, he turned on Chang Ch'un-ch'ao and Wang Hung-wen, figures who came to prominence during the Cultural Revolution, and who may be considered "pro-U.S."[94] In view of the fact that Hua did not purge great numbers of rehabilitated cadres other than Teng, serious consequences could arise for the United States. The rehabilitated cadres represent a faction in the Chinese leadership that is currently influential and potentially pro-Soviet.

The key factor in favor of continued good Sino-American relations remains that both the U.S. and China should consider it in their national interests to have in existence a strong, independent China. Hua has demonstrated an awareness of the importance of China's relationship throughout his struggle for power.[95] Chinese signals through the visits of former President Nixon and former Defense Secretary James Schlesinger, however, indicate that the relationship is still open to question and that it is vital that the U.S. appear as a strong, reliable ally. United States failure in this regard could result in strategic disaster.

The Soviets, of course, have attempted to pressure China during the transition from Chou and Mao to Hua. They can be expected to try to undermine Chinese influence in Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Malaysia and Japan and to continue to strengthen ties with India while pushing for an Asian collective security system that excludes China. It is still unlikely, however, that China will move toward a fundamental rapprochement with the Soviet Union. More likely, the Chinese will make some attempt to reduce tensions with the Soviet Union on a state-to-state level. This would reduce some pressure on them and give them greater leverage in the Sino-American relationship--that is, they can be expected to "play both ends against the middle." But the Chinese will not abandon the relationship with the United States, and anything less than a fundamental rapprochement will be unacceptable to the Soviet Union. As long as the Chinese maintain good relations with the U.S., especially in light of an improving Chinese nuclear capability, the Soviet Union faces a classic two-front security problem, with NATO in the west and a potential Chinese-American coalition in the east. For the Soviet Union, the strategic problem remains.

Footnotes

[1] Adam Ulam, The Rivals (New York: Viking Press, 1971), p. 356.

[2] F. Charles Parker, "Soviet Strategy and Vietnam, July 1963-April 1965," unpublished M.A. thesis, Georgetown University, July 1975, p. 3. (Hereafter referred to as "Soviet Strategy.")

[3] Richard C. Thornton, "Soviet Strategy and the Vietnam War," Asian Affairs, No. 4, (March/April 1974), pp. 205-206. (Hereafter referred to as "Vietnam War.")

[4] See "Peking is Fighting Pro-Soviet Clique," New York Times, Jan. 17, 1965, p. 5 and Maury Lisann, "Moscow and the Chinese Power Struggle." Problems of Communism, (Nov.-Dec., 1969), pp. 32-41. For a more comprehensive discussion of the Chinese power struggle see Richard C. Thornton, China, the Struggle for Power, 1917-1972 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973), pp. 244-268. (Hereafter referred to as China.)

[5] Thornton, "Vietnam War," pp. 210-213.

[6] United States-Vietnam Relations, 1945-1967 (Washington: Department of Defense, 1971), Book 12, "Memorandum for the President, Oct. 2, 1963," p. 559. United States-Vietnam Relations will hereafter be referred to as Pentagon Papers. See also Ibid., "State Department Bureau of Intelligence and Research Memorandum, Oct. 22, 1963," pp. 579-582. Additionally see U.S. Department of State, Aggression from the North, Department of State Publication 7839, February 1965, Appendix D.

[7] The Pentagon Papers, The Secret History of the Vietnam War (New York: Bantam Books, 1971), p. 79. (Hereafter referred to as Secret History.) See also Pentagon Papers, Book 12, "Memorandum for the President, Oct. 2, 1963," p. 559.

[8] Ibid., Book 3, "Military Pressures Against NVN, February - June 1964," pp. x-xi. (Hereafter referred to as "Military Pressures, Feb.-June.") Also "Johnson Meets Mexican Leader: Defines U.S. Aims," New York Times, Feb. 22, 1964, p. 1.

[9] Max Frankel, "Washington Hints at Saigon Raids on North Vietnam," Ibid., Feb. 23, 1964, p. 1. It should be noted that Soviet propaganda helped provoke the Chinese debate. The Soviets suggested they would support Vietnam,

emphasized the U.S. threat to China and underscored the value of past Soviet aid to China. See: "Sovietsko-Kitaiskomu Dogovoru--Chetirnadtsat Let" (The Soviet-Chinese Treaty is Fourteen Years Old), Pravda, Feb. 14, 1964, p. 5; "Vystuplenie Tovarishcha N. S. Khrushcheva" (Speech by Comrade N. S. Khrushchev), Ibid., April 13, 1964, p. 1; "Rech Tovarishcha N. S. Khrushcheva," (Speech by Comrade N. S. Khrushchev), Ibid., April 10, 1964, p. 2; "Vernost Principam Marksisma-Leninisma" (Loyalty to the Principles of Marxism-Leninism), Ibid., April 3, 1964, p. 1; "Doklad Tovarishcha M. A. Suslova na Plenume TsK KPSS" (Report of Comrade M. A. Suslov at the Plenum of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U.), Ibid., April 3, 1964, p. 1; "Narod Vietnama Dolzhen Sam Reshat Svoyu Sudbu" (The People of Vietnam Must Decide Their fate for Themselves), Ibid., Feb. 26, 1964, p. 3; "Koordinatory Griaznoi Voiny" (Coordinators of a Dirty War), Izvestiia, Feb. 26, 1964, p. 1.

[10]Parker, "Soviet Strategy," pp. 56-67. Soviet propaganda intensified as the Chinese debate developed. The Soviets continued to emphasize the U.S. threat, especially after the Tonkin Gulf incident, talked of the value of past Soviet Aid and stressed that future aid might not be available, given the current state of Sino-Soviet relations. See Yuri Zhukov, "Kitaiskaia Stena" (The Chinese Wall), Pravda, June 21, 1964, p. 5; "Slova i Dela Rukovoditelei KPK" (The Words and Deeds of the Leaders of the C.P.C.), Izvestiia, June 19, p. 2; "Aggressivnye Deistviia SShA v Tonkinskom Zalive" (The Aggressive Actions of the U.S.A. in the Tonkin Gulf), Pravda Aug. 6, 1964, p. 1; "Mezhdunarodnoe Soveshchanie--Put'k Splocheniiu Kommunisticheskovo Dvizheniya" (An International Conference Is the Path to the solidarity of the Communist Movement), Ibid., Aug. 10, pp. 1,3.

[11]Thornton, China, pp. 263-265.

[12]Ibid., and Parker, "Soviet Strategy," pp.88-98. For evidence of an internal Soviet debate over Vietnam see "Vishe Znamya Borbi! Tverzhe Shag, Tesnee Riady!" (Raise Higher the Banner of Struggle! March With a Firmer Step, in Closer Order!), Pravda, Sept. 22, 1964, p. 1. For evidence that Khrushchev's overthrow was tied to the question of Sino-Soviet unity over Vietnam see especially "Sovietskaia Delegatsiia v Koreiskoi Narodno-Demokraticheskoi Respublike" (Soviet Delegation in the Korean People's Democratic Republic), Pravda, Feb. 13, 1965, pp. 1-2.

[13] U.S.G. Sharp and W.C. Westmoreland, Report on the War in Vietnam (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1968), Section II, p. 95. (Hereafter referred to as Report.)

[14] Pentagon Papers, Book 4, "Rolling Thunder Program Begins," pp. 9-25. Ibid., "Marine Combat Units Go to Danang, March 1964," pp. xiv-xv.

[15] Henry Tanner, "Hanoi Gets Arms," New York Times, April 8, 1965, p. 1.

[16] Sharp and Westmoreland, Report, Section I, p. 4. For a clear explanation that Soviet strategy was precisely to fuel the fire in Vietnam with arms while refraining from anti-U.S. foreign policy initiatives see "A New and Great Anti-U.S. Revolutionary Storm Is Approaching," Peking Review, Vol. 9, No. 2, (Jan. 7, 1966), pp. 5-9. This is an interview with Chinese Foreign Minister Chen Yi.

[17] Thornton, "Vietnam War," p. 218.

[18] Lo Jui-ching, "Commemorate the Victory Over German Fascism! Carry the Struggle Against U.S. Imperialism Through to the End!" Peking Review, Vol. 8, No. 20, (May 14, 1965), pp. 7-15. See Thornton, China, pp.269-273 for the first steps in the Cultural Revolution.

[19] Ibid., p. 276.

[20] "Premier Chou En-lai Reports on the Work of the Government," Peking Review, Vol. 8, No. 1, (Jan. 1, 1965), pp. 6-20. "Peking is Fighting Pro-Soviet Clique," New York Times, Jan. 17, 1965, p. 5.

[21] Thornton, China, pp. 276-288.

[22] For example see "Po Povodu Sobytii v Kitaye" (Regarding Events In China), Pravda, Nov. 27, 1966, pp. 2-4. As a related item of interest it should be noted that from 1966 D.F. Ustinov began to appear at most negotiations with Le Than Nghi, Hanoi's primary aid negotiator. Mr. Ustinov apparently played the role of Politburo action officer for the Vietnam War. That is, he is the one man placed high enough politically to understand Soviet political goals who also possessed the extensive military-technical background needed to transform political guidance into concrete action.

[23] Thornton, "Vietnam War," p. 218.

[24]For example see "Ob Antisovetskoi Politike Mao Tsze-Duna i ego Gruppy" (On the Anti-Soviet Policy of Mao Tse-tung and His Group), Pravda, Feb. 16, 1967, p. 3.

[25]Thornton, China, pp. 288-296.

[26]Sharp and Westmoreland, Report, Section II, pp. 113-136.

[27]Thornton, "Vietnam War," p. 219.

[28]Don Oberdorfer, TET! (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1971), pp. 42-54.

[29]"Vopreki Interesam Kitaiskogo Naroda" (Contrary to the Interests of the Chinese People), Pravda, Aug. 16, 1967, pp. 4-6.

[30]In light of the actual U.S. response, it may be difficult to accept this Soviet Analysis. It must be remembered that we are discussing the situation in mid-1967, before the TET offensive jolted U.S. public opinion and when the Johnson administration had an open-ended commitment to Vietnam.

[31]"Podpisanie Soglasheniia" (Signing of the Agreement), Pravda, Sept. 24, 1967, p. 1; "Razvivaetsya i Krepnet Boevaia Druzhba SSSR i DRV" (Militant Friendship of the U.S.S.R. and the D.R.V. is Developing and being Strengthened), Ibid., Sept. 24, 1967, p. 1.

[32]Paul Wohl, "Red Bloc Steps Up Hanoi Aid," Christian Science Monitor, London Edition, Jan. 25, 1968, p. 2. All Christian Science Monitor citations are from the London edition. Mr. Wohl cites, among other things, a broadcast from Radio Odessa on Nov. 14, 1967 which revealed increased shipping from Black Sea Ports to Hanoi. In addition he quotes General Vsyevolod Leniyev on Radio Moscow Dec. 19, 1967 saying that supplies to Vietnam had increased in accord with the September agreement. On Jan. 5, 1968, domestic broadcasters announced that 10 new ships departed Black Sea ports and would complete the trip to Vietnam ahead of schedule. See also A. Vasilev and Yu. Semyenov, "Trassa Zhizni" (Life Line), Pravda, Dec. 25, 1967, p. 5; Vo Nguyen Giap, "Po Slavnomu Puti Oktiabria" (On the Glorious Path of October), Krasnaia Zvezda, Oct. 21, 1967, p. 5.

[33]Secret History, pp. 589-607 and Saville R. Davis, "Johnson Opts for Vietnam Buildup," Christian Science Monitor, Feb. 29, 1968, p. 1. See also "Westmoreland

Requests 206,000 More Men, Stirring Debate in Administration," New York Times, March 10, 1968, p. 1.

[34] "Sobitiia v Kitae" (Events in China), Pravda, March 31, 1968, p. 5. See also Thornton, China, p. 319.

[35] Oberdorfer, TET!, pp. 380-427. Mr. Oberdorfer traces the rising swell of opinion against the war, including Eugene McCarthy's strong showing against President Johnson in the New Hampshire primary election.

[36] Secret History, pp. 610-611.

[37] Richard Nixon, U.S. Foreign Policy for the 1970's, A Report to the Congress (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, May 3, 1973), p. 43. (Hereafter referred to as Foreign Policy.)

[38] Thornton, "Vietnam War," p. 225. An interesting comparison can be made between the rhetoric used against the Czechs prior to the 1968 invasion and the rhetoric used against the Chinese. Read, for example, "K Polozheniiu v Chekhoslovakii" (Toward the Situation in Czechoslovakia), Pravda, Oct. 2, 1968, p. 4. This article attacks moral terror against "honest communists" (a misnomer) and attempts to discredit those who support the Soviet Union. This should be compared with "Deviatnadtsat' Let Spustia" (Fourteen Years Later), Izvestiia, Oct. 1, 1968, p. 3. This article attacks Chinese anti-Sovietism, and condemns the Chinese leadership for purging many members of the Chinese communist party who resisted the anti-Soviet policy of Mao Tse-tung. See also International Institute for Strategic Studies, The Military Balance 1968-1969, p. 6 and The Military Balance 1969-1970, p. 6. Between 1968 and 1969 the Soviets added seven Divisions on the Chinese border. These seven divisions were the first in a buildup that saw the 1968 strength in the Far East increase from 15 Divisions to 45 Divisions in 1973. See Thomas W. Robinson "U.S. Security Interests on Sino-Soviet Periphery," Report prepared for the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, International Security Affairs, Table 2, p. 23.

[39] Thornton, China, p. 323.

[40] "China Rejects Offer," Christian Science Monitor, Sept. 30, 1966, p. 2.

[41] "China-U.S. Agree to Meet in Warsaw," Ibid., Dec.28, 1968, p. 2.

[42]Nixon, Foreign Policy, p. 42.

[43]Ibid., pp. 2-10.

[44]Ibid., pp. 16-25, and Thornton, "Vietnam War," p. 224.

[45]Ibid.

[46]Nixon, Foreign Policy, pp. 43-45.

[47]Ibid., p. 45.

[48]Thornton, "Vietnam War," p. 226, and Thornton, "South Asia: Imbalance on the Subcontinent," Orbis, Vol. XIX, No. 3, (Fall 1975), pp. 866-869. See also "V Obshchikh Interesakh" (In the Common Interests). Pravda, July 30, 1970, p. 4; "Konflikty ili Bezopasnost?" (Conflicts or Security), Izvestiia, Aug. 9, 1970, p. 2.

[49]Thornton, "Vietnam War," p. 226.

[50]For example, the defense of An Loc by the ARVN 5th Division--a unit not considered to be one of the ARVN best.

[51]Nixon, Foreign Policy, p. 47.

[52]Ibid., p. 61.

[53]Joseph C. Harsch, "Thieu's Strength Holds Hanoi," Christian Science Monitor, March 10, 1973, p. 1.

[54]"Excerpts From General's Account of the Offensive," New York Times, April 26, 1976, p. 16. (Hereafter referred to as "Excerpts.") These excerpts are from a book by General Van Tien Dung, Chief of Staff of the North Vietnamese Army.

[55]Ibid.

[56]William C. Westmoreland, "The Demise of South Vietnam," Ibid., May 17, 1975, editorial page.

[57]Ibid.

[58]"Excerpts," Ibid., April 26, 1976, p. 16.

[59]Ibid., and James R. Schlesinger's comments in Annual Defense Department Report, FY 1976 and FY 1977 (Washington, 1975), p. III-37. Quoted in Richard C. Thornton, "Toward a New Equilibrium: Tripolar Politics, 1964-1976," paper presented at National Security Affairs Conference

III, 12-14 July 1976 in Washington, D.C. (Hereafter referred to as "Toward.")

[60]"Excerpts," New York Times, April 26, 1976, p. 16.

[61]"Ex-Envoy Testifies on Saigon's Fall," Stars and Stripes, Oct. 12, 1976, p. 7. See Skvortsov Valerian, "Podopleka Provokatsii" (The Real Reason for the Provocations), Pravda, Aug. 15, 1974, p. 5. Ambassador Martin testified that in mid-1974, as a result of declining U.S. aid, the Soviets encouraged the Vietnamese to launch an offensive. He cited intelligence reports as his source of information. The North Vietnamese Chief of Staff, in his book on the offensive, cites figures concerning declining U.S. aid and its results as leading to a shift in the correlation of forces that led to the decision to plan the offensive. The Pravda article noted above cites precisely the same figures noted by the NVA Chief of Staff, and argues that this has resulted in a shift in the correlation of forces in favor of the North Vietnamese. The article was written in mid-1974, and would tend to support Ambassador Martin's testimony.

[62]"Excerpts," New York Times, April 26, 1976, p. 16.

[63]W. Scott Thompson, "The Indochinese Debacle and the United States," Orbis, Vol. XIX, No. 3, (Fall 1975), pp. 990-1011. This excellent article covers the events surrounding the disaster.

[64]"Nessen Cites Viet Shortages," Christian Science Monitor, March 24, 1975, p. 4.

[65]Courtney R. Sheldon, "Kissinger Back: China Package Promising," Ibid., Feb. 21, 1973, p. 1.

[66]Courtney R. Sheldon, "Kissinger's Hanoi Visit: Aid Ahead?," Ibid., Feb. 1, 1973, p. 1, and Charlotte Saikowski, "Kissinger's Fifth China Trip: Beefing Up Trade," Ibid., Feb. 5, 1973, p. 1.

[67]Courtney R. Sheldon, "Hanoi and Washington Tackle Reconstruction," Ibid., Feb. 15, 1973, p. 1.

[68]John Burns, "Extraordinary Kissinger-Mao Chat," Ibid., Feb. 20, 1973, p. 3, and Courtney R. Sheldon, "Nixon Tries to Pin Down Elusive Indo-China Peace," Ibid., Feb. 24, 1973, p. 1. Kissinger made it clear that the importance of "tranquility" in Indochina was one of the subjects discussed in Peking and that he was encouraged by the discussions.

[69]Paul Wohl, "Kissinger's Hanoi Exploring Irks Kremlin," Ibid., Feb. 14, 1973, p. 1. See also V. Kudriavtsev (Political Observer for Izvestiia), "Blagopriiatnye Vozmozhnosti" (Favorable Opportunities), Izvestiia, Feb. 6, 1973, p. 3.

[70]Paul Wohl, "Soviets Blast Kissinger's China Visit," Ibid., Feb. 20, 1973, p. 2.

[71]Leo Gruilow, "Brezhnev Urges Vietnams to Honor Cease-Fire Pact," Ibid., Feb. 1, 1973, p. 6. See also "V Obstanovke Serdechnoi Druzhba" (In Surroundings of Heart Warming Friendship), Pravda, Jan. 31, 1973, p. 1.

[72]"First Ship to Haiphong," Christian Science Monitor, Feb. 14, 1973, p. 6.

[73]Henry S. Hayward, "Saigon Charges Communists Shift Missiles," Ibid., Feb. 27, 1973, p. 4.

[74]See "The Watergate Connection," Time, May 5, 1975, p. 14. I would not make an allegation like this without further substantiation. I give credence to the Time version because it has also been advanced by the noted columnist William F. Buckley, Jr. For example, see William F. Buckley, Jr., "If Kissinger Were Free to Tell It All," International Herald Tribune, April 28, 1975, p. 8. Mr. Buckley has an apparently good relationship with former Chief of Naval Operations Elmo Zumwalt. Admiral Zumwalt would have been in a position to know of the planned offensive, as naval aircraft would have conducted a large part of the assault. In an interview with Mr. Buckley in July 1974, Admiral Zumwalt strongly stated that the Watergate paralysis had adversely affected foreign policy for more than a year. Thus, I take Mr. Buckley at his word that he has sources that were in a position to know, and I suspect that his source is Zumwalt.

[75]Ibid.

[76]Ibid.

[77]Ellen J. Hammer, "Indochina: Communist but Nonaligned," Problems of Communism, (May-June 1976), Vol. XXV, No. 3, pp. 1-17. (Hereafter referred to as "Indochina.")

[78]Richard C. Thornton, "Teng Hsiao-p'ing and Peking's Current Political Crisis: A Structural

Interpretation," paper presented at the Fifth Sino-American Conference on Mainland China, Taiwan, June 8-11, 1976, pp. 29-34. (Hereafter referred to as "Teng Hsiao-p'ing.") See also Robert A. Scalapino, "The CCP's Provincial Secretaries," Problems of Communism, (July-August 1976), Vol XXV, No. 4, pp. 18-35. (Hereafter referred to as "CCP Secretaries.")

79 Thornton, "Teng Hsiao-p'ing," pp. 29-34.

80 John Burns, "Talks Strengthen China-U.S. Rapport," Christian Science Monitor, Nov. 14, 1973, p. 1.

81 John Burns, "Cambodian Rebuts Nixon," Ibid., Aug. 24, 1973, p. 6.

82 For example, it is no accident that Le Duc Tho and Xuan Thuy visited Peking less than two weeks after Kissinger. Presumably they came to hear information concerning the U.S. position. See "Comrade Chou En-lai Meets Comrades Le Duc Tho and Xuan Thuy," Peking Review, Vol. 17, No. 50 (Dec. 13, 1974), pp. 3-4. It is true that the administration requested additional funds for Vietnam. It is also true that the President did not exercise all leverage available to obtain the additional funds.

83 Vizit v Sovetski Soyuz Partiino-Pravitelstvennoi Delegatsii Demokraticheskoi Respubliki Vietnama (Visit to the Soviet Union by A Party-Government Delegation of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam) (Moscow: Publishers of Political Literature, 1975). See especially "Rech Tovarishcha Le Zuana" (Speech by Comrade Le Duan), pp. 21-30. See also Hammer, "Indochina."

84 Ibid., and "Vazhnyi Vklad" (Important Contribution), Sotsialisticheskaia Industriia, Jan. 28, 1976, p. 3.

85 See Ronnie Wei, "Letters From Saigon Report Soviet Influence Wins Out," International Herald Tribune, March 15, 1976 and Richard Halloran "Soviet Influence Is Noted in Saigon," New York Times, Feb. 15, 1976, p. 11.

86 Hammer, "Indochina."

87 Ibid. See also Leslie H. Gelb, "Vietnam Reds Seize Islands Claimed by Chinese, Others," International Herald Tribune, May 7, 1975, p. 1, and "Peking vs. Hanoi," Newsweek, April 12, 1976, p. 7.

[88] Hammer, "Indochina."

[89] Ibid.

[90] "Policy Shift," Stars and Stripes, Oct. 20, 1976, p. 5.

[91] "Vietnam Accepts U.S. Bid," Stars and Stripes, Oct. 25, 1976, p. 1.

[92] "What Does the Incident at Tien An Men Square Show?" Peking Review, Vol. 19, No. 17 (April 23, 1976), pp. 12-13.

[93] Scalapino, "CCP Secretaries."

[94] Hua's move may have been a pre-emptive purge, as there are indications that the four-pests were planning a powerplay of their own. One consistent criticism is that Hua Kuo-feng's criticism of Teng was correct while the gang of four "sang their own tune in the criticism of Teng Hsiao-p'ing" and attempted to exploit it to attack large numbers of responsible comrades in the Party. See especially "Comrade Chen Yung-Kuei's Report," Peking Review, Vol. 20, No. 2 (Jan. 7, 1977), pp. 5-17.

[95] "Acting Premier Hua Kuo-feng's Toast, Excerpts," Peking Review, Vol. 19, No. 9 (Feb. 27, 1976), p. 5. Mr. Hua, in his toast to Mr. Nixon, noted that the two countries have different ideologies, "however, our two countries have many points in common in the world today. The Chinese Government has always pursued and will consistently pursue the line, principles and policies laid down by Chairman Mao in the field of foreign affairs."

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