COMMUNISM IN NORTH VIETNAM: ITS ROLE IN THE SINO-SOVIET DISPUTE

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July 1 1963
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Chapter 5

THE SOVIET-CUBAN AND SINO-INeIAN CR1SES AND AFTHER

The Chinese Attack on India and the Cuban Crisis

With the launching of a Chinese attack against India, Chinese press and radio engaged in a bitter denunciation of India and the Indian leaders. China was wholeheartedly supported by Albania and North Korea. Moscow maintained a cautious and embarrassed silence. The North Vietnam attitude was expressed in a Nhan Dan editorial which expressed anxiety over the blow which the clash had dealt to Asian solidarity, but censured the perennial villain, United States imperialism, stating that:

The United States imperialists and their satellites have tried to draw to their side certain circles in India, slandered China, and distorted its policy of peace and international cooperation in an attempt to drive a wedge between China, India, and other countries.¹

Referring to Chinese demands for joint discussions of the border problem, it said:

This is a correct and unswerving stand of the Chinese government, which conforms both to sense and sentiment. The

Vietnamese people approve the Chinese government's proposals to the Indian government to hold further negotiations.

Altogether it was a weak stand but probably contained just enough support for the Chinese to refute any charge that North Vietnam had failed to support another socialist state.

The visit to North Vietnam of a delegation of the NLFNV offered a welcome opportunity to avoid comment on Chinese actions in India, and for a whole week North Vietnam newspapers and Hanoi Radio devoted almost all available space and time to reporting the rallies for the NLFNV, the speeches made at them, the visits made by the delegation, and so on. All comment was reserved for the internal Vietnamese situation, with denunciations of President Ngo Dinh Diem and the United States. It was very natural and entirely safe. A week passed, and it was Nhan Dan which again published DRV comment, but on this occasion support for China was more strongly expressed: "The Vietnamese people support the legitimate measures taken by the government and brotherly people of China to defend their national sovereignty."

"The Indian government," it continued, "falsely accused China of invading its territory..." But the solution proposed was still "friendly negotiations." Reporting to the National Assembly on foreign affairs, Ung Van Khiem had nothing to add but simply observed that the Vietnamese government and people "support the correct stand of China and eagerly hope that the Sino-Indian border question will be solved by negotiations between the two countries."
Cuba was easier at the outset, and North Vietnam began in its customary fashion to fire broadside at United States "aggression," "provocation," "foolishness," and all the usual windmills. The pattern was familiar to the Vietnamese, and the pronouncements demanded neither thought nor ingenuity—merely clichés. A government statement of October 26 protested against the United States blockade of Cuba, and Truong Chinh on the following day pledged National Assembly support for "the correct stand of the Soviet government expounded in its statement of October 23, 1962 on the Cuban question." Perhaps the Vietnamese might have carried the affair off successfully if they had restricted comment to Vietnamese spokesmen, but they rashly invited the Cuban ambassador to comment, and he, in Hanoi, bluntly declared that United States allegations about Soviet rockets in Cuba were:

... a fabrication to justify its policy of aggression in our country. The only military base on our territory at present is the United States base of Guantanamo. ... The Soviet Union needs no bases other than those on its own territory.  

This was later to embarrass North Vietnam when the Soviet Union agreed to withdraw the rocket bases.

Timid endorsement of the stand of the Chinese government on the question of settling the border dispute with India was given by several DRV newspapers, which expressed hopes for successful negotiations.

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5 Nhuoi Moi, Quan Doi Nhan Dan, and Bao Tan Viet Hoa all published articles, couched in similar terms, on Oct. 25, 1962.
Once more setting the pace for the others to follow, Nhan Dan changed its ground a week later and claimed to have identified an "Indian expansionist group clamoring for war, trying to instigate the masses to blame China, and sowing chauvinism." The United States and Britain were of course blamed for supporting this group, but North Vietnam's pique over the Soviet attitude to the dispute was expressed for the first time. The Soviet Union was not mentioned by name, but the following extract leaves little doubt about the identity of the real target: "For their part, the revisionists in Yugoslavia also voiced support for this expansionist group in India and slandered China."

The dispute, it said "must be solved quickly by means of negotiations in the Bandung spirit."

Differences between the Soviet Union and China had meanwhile been further exacerbated by the Chinese attack on India, as was apparent from several public announcements made in Moscow and Peking. Moscow editorials on October 25 counseled a negotiated settlement on the basis of the Chinese proposals of the previous day, but they committed the unpardonable offense of failing to blame India for the fighting and, on the contrary, praised India for the part she had played in the "peace struggle," China's righteous indignation over the Soviet Union's failure to support her was expressed with no little bitterness in a People's Daily article, which went on to attack the Soviet attitude toward national liberation movements in general. The article was followed by a whole spate of comment, both written and broadcast.

explaining the correct behavior of socialist states in disputes affecting other socialist countries and by reports that the Soviet Union intended to continue aiding India. Moscow comment reflected an even chillier attitude in the Soviet Union than hitherto, and less patience with China, but Chinese action was not condemned. These exchanges left little room for doubt about the mutual exasperation felt in the Soviet Union and China over the attack on India and the Soviet failure to support it. Any faint hopes that the Sino-Soviet dispute might still be resolved must surely have vanished in the unconcealed and growing hostility of the two Communist giants.

Developments in Cuba, which had at first appeared so straightforward, were suddenly complicated for the North Vietnamese by Khrushchev's agreement to withdraw Soviet rockets from that country. China was infuriated by his climb-down and lost little time in airing her feelings publicly, which meant that North Vietnam commentators had once more to measure every word so as to avoid causing offense to the Soviet Union or China. A balance was achieved by according praise to the Soviet Union for safeguarding peace: "This attitude of the Soviet Union has upset the war provocations of the United States and makes its slander and distortion against the Soviet Union untenable. . . . These efforts of the Soviet Union have created a relaxed atmosphere,"7 and for pledging support for Fidel Castro's five points: "The Vietnamese people unreservedly support the five proposals of Premier Fidel Castro. . . ."8 The stand was repeated and elaborated day after day,

7 Ibid., Oct. 31, 1962.
8 Ibid.
and even the senile Vice-President, Ton Duc Thang, was placed on a
public platform to give it his blessing: "Everybody knows the good
will of the Soviet Union to settle the Cuban affair by peaceful
negotiations." The Vietnamese people "will, together with the Soviet
Union, China, and other brother countries of the socialist camp and
the world's people, resolutely support Premier Fidel Castro's five
point statement of October 28. . ." If North Vietnam had failed
to condemn Soviet faintheartedness, at least it was at pains to
show—for the benefit of Peking—that it did not trust the United
States, and its declarations of support for Castro's five points
grew more and more emphatic and were backed by large numbers of mass
demonstrations in favor of Cuba. Once more the North Vietnamese
position was one which could scarcely have pleased either the Soviet
Union or China but which provided neither country for any solid
grounds for objecting to it.

China's several offers to the Indian government to negotiate
a solution to the border conflict, even if they were hedged about
with conditions unacceptable to the Indians, at least gladdened the
hearts of the North Vietnamese because they offered a completely safe
subject for comment. Without examining the rights and wrongs of the
Chinese armed attack, North Vietnam could castigate the Indians for
refusing to accede to Chinese offers of peace, and they did so with
a will. "In opposition to China's policy for peace are the policies
of the Indian authorities to seize Chinese territories by force and

9Speech made on the forty-fifth anniversary of the October Revo-
lution, VNA, Nov. 6, 1962.
their attitude of obstinately rejecting China's reasonable propo-
sition.10 The newspaper Bao Tan Viet Hoa "warmly endorses Premier Chou
En-lai's reasonable proposals and his warm efforts to end the con-
flict . . . and to resume peaceful negotiations,"11 and the Vietnamese
People's Army newspaper opined that the only "correct" way was to
"stop the armed conflict" and "hold talks on the basis of the reason-
able proposals of Premier Chou En-lai."12 Most touching of all was
the weekly paper Thong Nhat, which argued that the Indian behavior
must be bad because it had won the approval of the imperialists. The
unilateral cease-fire imposed by China, subsequently followed by the
withdrawal of the Chinese attackers, gave rise to profound relief in
North Vietnam which showed itself in the torrents of praise for this
"unselfish action." Ho Chi Minh himself sent letters to Liu Shao-chi
and to the Indian President and Premier Nehru in which he congratulated
the former and urged the two Indians to cooperate with China in finding
a peaceful solution,13 while the whole North Vietnam press voiced simi-
lar sentiments at much greater length.

Great caution and circumspection had enabled North Vietnam to
survive the crises of India and Cuba and emerge with her relations
with the Soviet Union and China more or less intact, but the same
cannot be said of these two leading Communist states. Chinese

10 Nhan Dan, Nov. 9, 1962.
11 Bao Tan Viet Hoa, Nov. 9, 1962.
12 Quan Doi Nhan Dan, Nov. 8, 1962.
indignation over Soviet behavior was too great to be contained, and a fast swelling flood of propaganda was directed against the Soviet Union from Peking, culminating in mid-November with declarations which revealed that the organizational break between the two parties was complete in every respect except that it had not been formally pronounced. Indeed, the People's Daily went so far as to publish a guide for distinguishing Marxist-Leninists from revisionists and implied clearly that the Soviet Union passed all the tests for classification as revisionist. The following is a synopsis of the criteria:

1) Attitude toward imperialism: Revisionists "submit to imperialist pressure."

2) Ability to distinguish between anti-imperialist progressive nationalism and reactionary nationalism: Revisionists "support the reactionary nationalists."

3) Response to the national liberation movement: "The modern revisionists, represented by the Tito clique, are trying their utmost to benumb and undermine the national liberation movement."

4) Stand on the methods to be used in the transition to socialism: "The modern revisionists, represented by the Tito clique, preach the preposterous theory of so-called peaceful growth into socialism."

Prior to her announcement of the unilateral cease-fire China engaged in a concentrated propaganda campaign, which she has never equaled in sheer intensity either before or after, designed to convince the whole world, but particularly the unaligned neutralist countries,
that the responsibility for the outbreak of hostilities was entirely India's and that China had no interest other than achieving a solution to the problem by peaceful negotiation. When, as a climax to this campaign, the cease-fire was proclaimed, Moscow immediately reported it but refrained from making any comment about it. Instead the Soviets published Nehru's statements, to which they accorded the same prominence as those issued by China. The breach between China and the Soviet Union was by then virtually open and complete.

Communist Party Congresses

During the series of Communist party congresses which took place in November and December 1962 there was further evidence of the extent of the gap separating the Soviet Union and China. Attacks were made on Albania, and on December 10 Pravda published direct criticisms of the Chinese made by Togliatti and Novotný. But it is generally true to say that the proceedings at the congresses simply confirmed the view of relationships within the Communist bloc which had already been formed on the basis of evidence gleaned from other sources. By the time the Czechoslovak Congress ended on December 8 it was generally accepted that the antagonisms between the Soviet Union and China had reached such a stage of bitterness as to make any rapprochement between the two countries seem to be out of the question, and the matter of primary interest concerned the identification of parties supporting China or the Soviet Union or neither, and the future of the Communist bloc now that its leaders were divided.
In the past North Vietnam had shown that her principal objectives in the context of the Sino-Soviet dispute were twofold, the avoidance of irrevocable committal to the side of either of the two main contestants and the ending of differences between them. By December 1962 even the most optimistic of the Vietnamese leaders must have been convinced that the latter objective was unattainable, but North Vietnam nevertheless clung grimly to the former. Throughout the polemics of the different congresses the North Vietnamese delegation doggedly pursued a middle course and affected not to notice the dispute. The still incomplete information concerning these congresses indicated that the Vietnamese speakers refused to voice any criticism of Albania, which is precisely what informed observers would have expected.

The Sino-Soviet dispute was intensified by a speech made to the Supreme Soviet by Khrushchev on December 12 in which he stated "We equally absolutely do not entertain the thought that India wanted to start a war with China," and by the further improvement of relations between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. During President Tito's visit to Moscow in December, China, Albania, and North Korea maintained a nonstop barrage of vituperation against him and his country. The Soviet Union continued to lay heavy stress upon the need for settling East-West disputes by means of negotiations and never tired of citing the example of Cuba as proof of the success which could be achieved by mutual concessions and compromise.

A sidelight on the state of bloc relations was provided by the fiftieth anniversary of Albanian independence, which was celebrated in Hanoi at a reception given by the Albanian Ambassador to North Vietnam,
Vasil Skorovoti. No doubt the citizens of Hanoi derived much useful information about the current state of play in the game of bloc relations by observing the attendance at this celebration, or rather the abstentions from it. North Vietnam was represented by a moderately strong delegation led by Vice-Premier Nguyen Duy Trinh and including Foreign Minister Ung Van Khiem, but the absence of President Ho Chi Minh, Premier Pham Van Dong, and other top leaders such as Le Duan, Vo Nguyen Giap, and Pham Hung was not without significance. Breaking with normal custom, the VNA report of the proceedings failed to mention the foreign ambassadors who attended but contented itself with a noncommittal "Diplomatic envoys of various countries also attended,"14 which lent credence to the reports emanating from Hanoi that only the Chinese and North Korean ambassadors attended. The remaining embassies from bloc countries are said to have boycotted the affair altogether or else to have been represented by their most junior officials. In making the principal speech Nguyen Duy Trinh avoided all reference to the Albanian leadership and spoke only of the Albanian people.

Still more revealing was an incident which took place at the beginning of January 1963. Because the December meeting of the Supreme Soviet had discussed matters bearing on Sino-Soviet differences, it was virtually ignored by the North Vietnam press and radio. Only the briefest mention was made of the meeting, and no indication was given that it had dealt with such controversial questions. In an effort to force the DRV authorities into giving it greater publicity Soviet

\[14\] Ibid., Nov. 29, 1962.
Ambassador Suren Tovmasyan held a press conference at Hanoi on the subject of the Supreme Soviet meeting at the beginning of January. In addition to the customary press correspondents, the heads of the Indian and Indonesian diplomatic missions in North Vietnam were also invited to attend.

The Soviet Ambassador spoke about his country's economic development and foreign policy, making particular mention of Albania and Cuba, and then invited questions from those present. A few North Vietnamese asked about economic matters, after which the Chinese representative of NCNA made a lengthy statement disagreeing with the Ambassador's remarks about Albania. He went on to advise Tovmasyan that it was useless to try to explain away the events in Cuba because everyone was well aware that the Soviet Union had surrendered completely to the United States. Smiling, the Ambassador reminded the meeting that he had asked for questions, not statements, and conceded that the Chinese journalist was entitled to hold what views he liked. He himself, he went on, did not try to impose his views on anybody, and he would be grateful if the Chinese would do the same. Nettled, the Chinese correspondent sprang to his feet and tried to continue his attack, whereupon Tovmasyan refused to discuss the matter further and declared the press conference over. The Chinese journalist loudly protested that he was not being treated as an equal, but the Ambassador and the embarrassed North Vietnamese hurriedly left the room while the Chinese continued to expostulate. Reports of the press conference, which appeared the following day, made no mention of the incident. Members of the Soviet Embassy later called on the Indian and Indonesian Consuls.
General to explain what had happened because their terrified Vietnamese interpreter had stopped translating when the argument became heated.

The National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam

The second anniversary of the founding of the NFLSV was the occasion of a double attempt at exploitation. While Moscow marked the occasion with no more than routine mentions in the Soviet press, China availed herself of the opportunity to exploit the war in South Vietnam in her polemics against the Soviet Union. Her many comments at the time of the anniversary all viewed the war being waged in South Vietnam as positive proof of the correctness of Mao Tse-tung's contention that revolutionary ardor will always prevail against imperialists and reactionaries with "superior weapons." The shining example of the South Vietnamese was contrasted with the precipitate withdrawal of the Soviets from Cuba. It is probable that the North Vietnam leaders had anticipated this Chinese exploitation of the anniversary and themselves decided to exploit the Chinese in order to obtain at least some foreign recognition of the NFLSV as the rightful government of South Vietnam. Hanoi Radio broadcast a lengthy appeal from the NFLSV in which the following passage occurred:

In the past two years, and especially in recent days, the Front has scored many great diplomatic successes. Many governments and international organizations consider the Front the legal representative of the 14 million people in South Vietnam.15

This is a curious assertion because it is so patently untrue. No country, Communist or neutralist, has extended recognition to the Front as either the legal or de facto representative of the Southern people, and pains have always been taken on the occasion of a visit by one of the Front's representatives to make it clear that he is a guest of a nongovernmental organization—the World Peace Movement, the WFTU, the Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee, or some such body—and not of the government. The claim was repeated two days later, albeit in a weaker form, in a message of greeting to the NFLSV from the DRV Fatherland Front, which claimed that Communist countries and "peace-loving peoples" have "in practice recognized the NFLSV as the legal representative" of the Southern people.  

The DRV attempt to secure recognition for the NFLSV proved unsuccessful. Summaries of the NFLSV appeal published in Peking and Moscow omitted the passage which alleged that the body was a legal representative. The version of the Fatherland Front greeting which was published in Peking made no mention of the representative function of the NFLSV, and Moscow ignored the greeting altogether.

Visiting Delegations

Although it is the almost invariable custom of North Vietnam to balance Chinese visits to North Vietnam by Soviet visits, the scale was tipped in favor of the Soviet Union during December and January.

Two important Soviet delegations offset the two Chinese delegations which had come earlier, but these were followed by a state visit from President Novotný, one of Khrushchev's staunchest supporters. The first delegation to arrive was a surprisingly high ranking military one under the leadership of General Batov, and the fact that its coming was announced only two days before it reached Hanoi gave it the appearance of having been arranged at very short notice.\textsuperscript{17} Although some of its members made some of the usual well-publicized visits to places of interest, it became clear that the greater part of the delegation spent most of its time in North Vietnam working. General Batov himself passed almost the whole period of his stay working in the political office of the Vietnamese People's Army, while others appeared to be equally occupied. The length of the delegation's stay was two weeks, which is very much longer than that of a normal courtesy delegation. All of these factors combine to create the impression that the Soviet military men came to North Vietnam to resolve some crisis or difficulty, probably a political one, in the Vietnamese People's Army, and it is probably significant that the DRV Commander in Chief, Vo Nguyen Giap, was not seen in public for a period of three months following the departure of the delegation. It is true that newspaper articles and letters bearing his name were published, but he himself did not appear. It is impossible, however, to reach any firm conclusions about what the reasons for his disappearance on the evidence at present available.

\textsuperscript{17}VNA, Dec. 12, 1962.
Vo Nguyen Giap's major speech, delivered at an Army Day reception in Hanoi, was unexceptionable. It praised the Soviet Union for resolving the Cuban crisis and the Chinese for settling the Indian border crisis. A nice equilibrium was maintained when Giap said, "The Vietnamese people and People's Army value highly the great contributions of the Soviet Union, China, and the other socialist countries to the struggle for peace..." and he voiced a plea for bloc unity:

At the present time the Vietnamese people and the Vietnamese People's Army more than ever must hold high the banner of solidarity and unity of mind, the victorious banner of the international Communist movement, that is, the 1957 declaration of the conference of representatives of the Communist and workers' parties and the 1960 Moscow statement of 81 Communist and workers' parties, and uphold our solidarity of proletarian internationalism with the peoples and armies of the Soviet Union, China, and other brother countries of the socialist camp.¹⁹

The visit of the Supreme Soviet delegation in Mid-January was more routine and relatively uneventful, both sides making polite speeches and the Vietnamese making the expected concessions to the position of the Soviet Union. Only one speech appeared capable of causing any worry at all, and that was made by the leader of the delegation, Andropov. In it he accorded high praise to the Soviet Union and Khrushchev for solving the Cuban crisis, ignored the Indian fighting completely, and then went on to speak of peaceful coexistence.

¹⁹Ibid.
Underlining the correctness of the policy, he said, "The people who are devoting their energies to creative labor and turning their thoughts to a brighter future do not and cannot want war." He then expressed his happiness that "the North Vietnam government supports the Soviet proposals" on a wide range of subjects. The content of this and other speeches made during the visit suggests that the delegation was bringing pressure to bear upon the DRV leaders to accept the Soviet rather than the Chinese position.

President Novotný, who visited North Vietnam later in January, undoubtedly argued the Soviet case, but it is far from certain that he achieved anything like the success credited to him in the Western press after the joint communiqué on his visit was published. Once again this was an instance of the DRV leaders going more than half way to meet the wishes of a foreign visitor to their country. Novotný's hand is discernible in the drafting of the document, but Ho Chi Minh's influence is strong, even if it was overlooked by many readers. The importance of unity in the socialist camp is something which has never been underestimated by the North Vietnam regime, and the fact that the joint statement demands that an identity of views be achieved "through consultations" but adds that such consultations need "careful preparation" should cause no surprise to those familiar with DRV pronouncements. The statement endorsed the "proposals made by Comrade Khrushchev on behalf of the Central Committee of the CPSU, as well as of many brother parties, for the cessation of open polemics

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with a view to creating a favorable atmosphere for such a conference," but Chou En-lai had made just such an appeal for the avoidance of open polemics himself. There is a distinctly pro-Soviet flavor in the passages which state that "in the present international conjuncture, the most correct policy is the one of peaceful coexistence between countries with different social regimes," and that, "thanks to the persistent efforts and firm and correct measures of the Soviet Union . . . it was possible recently to stay the invasion of Cuba by the United States imperialist forces, to safeguard the fruits of the Cuban revolution, and to discard the imminent danger of a devastating nuclear war." Again the Soviet Union was called "the center of the socialist camp" and the CPSU "the tested and experienced vanguard of the international Communist movement." If, however, due allowance is made for the customary DRV concessions to foreign visitors for the sake of politeness, it will be seen that these remarks were carefully counterbalanced by reference to China as "recording big achievements in building socialism" and the recording of joint "satisfaction at the Chinese government's decision of November 21, 1962 on the withdrawal of troops in the Sino-Indian border areas and its readiness to negotiate with the Indian side." In addition both presidents declared their full support for "the just stand of the Chinese people on the liberation of Taiwan and the expulsion of the Chiang Kai-shek clique from that historical part of Chinese territory."21

21 The text of the joint communiqué was issued by VNA on Jan. 29, 1963.
Evidence that the joint communiqué was pro-Soviet in tone was mistakenly seen in the publicity given to the document in the Soviet Union and China's failure to make any mention of it. It seems more probable that this Chinese display of pique was occasioned by Novotný's visit to North Vietnam and his transparent intention of canvassing the Soviet case rather than by the text of the communiqué itself. The Soviet Union followed up her temporary advantage by devoting many times more publicity than in the previous year to the thirteenth anniversary of the establishment of North Vietnam-Soviet diplomatic relations on January 30 and eulogizing the Lao Dong Party on the occasion of its thirty-third anniversary on February 3. China, which had devoted much time and space to the thirty-second anniversary, ignored the occasion completely. Obviously apprehensive over such a show of Chinese displeasure, North Vietnam hastened to placate her with an editorial which described both the Soviet Union and China as the "first" among countries supplying "disinterested assistance" to North Vietnam, and then went on to lay particular emphasis on Chinese aid which, it said, was the outcome of their "historic and geographical relations." 22

The East German Party Congress and After

The East German Party Congress in January 1963 provided evidence that a new and possibly critical stage had been reached in the Sino-Soviet dispute when the leader of the Chinese delegation to the

Congress was subjected to the humiliation of catcalls and shouted abuse from the other delegates. This unprecedented happening seemed to indicate that Khrushchev was offering China a choice between cessation from open polemics, which he demanded in his speech to the Congress, and de facto exclusion from the bloc. That an attempt was made to weight the proceedings heavily in favor of the Soviet Union was made apparent in Yugoslavia's TANJUG, which stated that the delegates from North Korea, North Vietnam, Burma, Thailand, and Indonesia were not permitted to address the Congress for "technical" reasons, all of them countries which would have been unlikely to espouse the Soviet cause. North Vietnam displeasure over the Congress is reflected in the very scant references made to it in the DRV press and the lack of prominence given to these few reports. The speech of the Chinese delegate made it patently obvious that China had no intention of yielding one inch to Soviet pressures.

Later in January China demanded that the CPSU abandon her policy of rapprochement with Yugoslavia and made this a condition for the restoration of bloc unity.\textsuperscript{23} An editorial in Pravda not only rejected this demand out of hand but also heaped scorn and ridicule on it.\textsuperscript{24} Probably as a result of the happenings at the East German Party Congress and of the implied determination of both the Soviet Union and China never to yield but to continue the dispute to the end, regardless of the consequences, North Vietnam nerve cracked. For the first time

\textsuperscript{23}Editorial, People's Daily, Jan. 27, 1963.

\textsuperscript{24}Pravda, Feb. 10, 1963.
the Politburo of the Lao Dong Party admitted to the people of North Vietnam that the socialist bloc had been split by disagreements, and it appealed to the Soviet Union and China to restore unity in the interests of world communism. This action alone shows beyond any possibility of doubt that the Sino-Soviet dispute had reached a pitch of intensity never before known, and that the danger of a complete rupture of state and party relations between the Soviet Union and China was very great indeed. Throughout all the earlier wrangling the North Vietnamese leaders had taken considerable pains to conceal the differences from the people.

The Politburo statement is a document of such major importance that the full text has been included as an appendix to this study. The document bears the stamp of having been hammered out at meetings of the Politburo in which the wide divergences of view between individual members of that body were overcome under the strong pressure for unity imposed by Ho Chi Minh himself and by the danger of the disintegration of the international communist movement. It is more revealing than any document hitherto published in the DRV and its sense of urgency is unmistakable.

After a brief review of the world situation the statement admits frankly that Communist successes would have been greater if they had not been hampered by discords within the bloc. As long ago as January 1962, the document reveals, the Central Committee of the Lao Dong Party had dispatched secret letters to a number of other parties

expressing its disquiet over the disagreements, urging that open polemics be abandoned and requesting that a meeting of Communist and workers' parties be convened to end the dispute. Despite subsequent temporary improvements, the situation had further deteriorated and was causing widespread concern. Understandable as the differences might be, they were detrimental to the cause of world communism and must be ended at a meeting of parties which would reach unanimous conclusions. With unaccustomed frankness the document then asserts that unity between the Soviet Union and China is the mainstay of bloc unity, mentioning these two countries by name, and it reiterates the same assertion in a subsequent passage. Following roughly parallel passages of praise for the Soviet Union and China, the statement reaffirms that the Central Committee of the Lao Dong Party has never ceased to strive for Sino-Soviet concord and bloc unity and concludes with three concrete proposals for remedying the existing unsatisfactory situation. These are an end of open polemics, a meeting of party delegates, and that the major responsibility for preparing such a meeting should devolve on China and the Soviet Union. Shades of the customary North Vietnam ambiguity and prevarication are apparent in the final paragraphs, where the document states that the international meeting should be carefully prepared--the Soviet view--and that it should take place speedily--the Chinese view. Nevertheless the authors of the statement plainly made every effort to be impartial, and evidence of bias is apparent in only one part. They demand that the international meeting of party delegates should reach unanimous, not majority decisions. In this they run counter to Soviet wishes--the
Soviet Union would have little difficulty in securing a majority to support its viewpoint at such a conference—and support Chinese demands.

It is not without significance that Pravda, which published a full translation of the statement on February 12, altered the text in only one place, the passage demanding unanimity. The Vietnamese "unanimous view" was translated as "single view," which implied that this could be reached by a majority decision and ruled out the possibility of factionalism. Nhan Dan published an editorial on the day following the appearance of the statement in which full support was expressed for the Politburo document, but it made an even stronger affirmation that the Lao Dong Party had always worked hard for bloc unity:

"... our party has on several occasions expressed its opinions and proposed concrete measures for settling the divergences of views and strengthening unity within the international Communist movement. Our party's attitude, sincere and full of responsibility, has been welcomed by many brother parties."

Once the Politburo statement had been published by VNA and supported by a Nhan Dan editorial, it might have been expected that the matter would have been allowed to rest there. Copies of the statement were doubtless widely distributed and studied endlessly at political meetings. That is the normal method of introducing new party policies to the people of North Vietnam, but only the published and broadcast...

materials reach the outside world. The local study groups work on unsung and almost unnoticed. However, on this occasion it would seem that the admissions contained in the statement caused serious shock inside North Vietnam even though most of the people must already have been aware of the differences within the bloc, for it is one thing to entertain one's own unconfirmed theories but quite another to have them officially confirmed and in such a way as to leave no doubt of the seriousness of the situation. The standpoint of the Lao Dong Party had been clearly defined, and little was to be gained, at least from the point of view of clarity, from publishing fresh articles or commentaries which might only confuse or blur the already sharp outlines. Curiously enough, a lengthy article was published in support of the Politburo statement more than two weeks later, and its author was Vo Nguyen Giap, the most notoriously pro-Soviet of all the North Vietnam leaders. The reasons for publishing such an article, as well as some of its more revealing passages, are worthy of closer study.

In his article Vo Nguyen Giap disclosed for the first time that the unity of the Lao Dong Party had been threatened in the past. He wrote:

Our party has been struggling on two fronts against occasional irresoluteness, as well as from internal leftism and rightism, when adopting and carrying out the lines, strategy, and policy during each phase of the revolution and also when modifying the lines, policy, and form of the struggle.

Later in the article he admitted, "the base of the party seemed to be on the point of disintegrating"; and again,

During the land reform our party encountered a number of difficulties. However, it adopted a Leninist attitude, affirming success and criticizing mistakes. It asked its members to show a responsible attitude, to be conscious of organization and discipline, and to place the interests of the party and people above all else. This correct attitude united the ranks of our party and the difficulties experienced in this serious trial were surmounted.

These are very important revelations and made at what might appear to be the worst possible time, at a moment when the world Communist movement was split in two. The point of greatest significance, however, is that all references allude to the past and are followed by assurances of present unity. The most convincing reason for such disclosures is that the Politburo statement was not universally accepted in North Vietnam as representing the unified views of the whole leadership but only those of a faction. Justification for such a view is to be found in the unexplained and inexplicable absence from public view of Vo Nguyen Giap following the departure of the Soviet military delegation led by General Batov, for it was well known that Giap opposed the views of a powerful faction in the leadership. Since the better informed and more senior party members are more likely to be aware of the disputes within the Politburo than outsiders, the principal doubters were probably from among their ranks. To demonstrate that on this occasion the sentiments expressed were entirely genuine and represented the views of the whole Politburo, the most effective method would be to reveal hitherto undisclosed truths concerning the party, of which the senior party members were likely to be aware. Giap appears to have done just that and for the reason given.
Another important feature of the article is the exact balance maintained between the sections praising the Soviet Union and those praising China. So obvious is the parallelism between the two that in several places the wording is almost identical. Even the most obtuse reader could scarcely avoid being struck by it, as the following extracts illustrate.

Praise for the Soviet Union

"Our party always maintains its unshakable unity with the great CPSU. . . . Even during the twenties of this century the Vietnamese Communists turned toward the cradle of the revolution. . . ."

"Since then the Soviet Union has always helped the Vietnamese revolution in all aspects in a generous, disinterested, fraternal, and internationalist spirit."

"The Soviet Union is wholeheartedly helping our party and people in the building of socialism in North Vietnam, supporting the valiant struggle of our compatriots in South Vietnam, and our entire people’s just struggle for the peaceful reunification of the country,"

Praise for China

"Our party is deeply indebted to the great CCP. Both from the historical and the geographical points of view, the Vietnamese revolution and the Chinese revolution were always closely related."

"Since the first days of the founding of our party . . . the Vietnamese Communists have enjoyed the wholehearted assistance, full of proletarian internationalist spirit, of the brotherly CCP and Chinese people."

"Since the restoration of peace, the Communist Party, government, and people of great China have wholeheartedly helped our people in the building of socialism in the North, fully supported the valiant struggle of our compatriots in the South and our entire people’s just struggle for
and approving and supporting our struggle for the correct implementation of the Geneva agreements to safeguard peace in Indochina and South East Asia."

The objective of this nice balance is to demonstrate to all readers that Vo Nguyen Giap, well known for his sympathies with the Soviet Union, considers the danger to world communism so great that he is prepared to overcome his own personal inclinations and to regard China and the Soviet Union as entirely equal for the sake of achieving Communist bloc unity.

Much of the Politburo statement was reiterated in the rest of the article, and its three concrete proposals were repeated verbatim, but the question which remains to be answered is, "Did Vo Nguyen Giap write the article himself, or was it written by somebody else and published over his signature?" Even if the answer is that Giap did write it, it must still be decided whether he wrote it of his own free will or under compulsion. No evidence has yet emerged which would point to the truth, so the matter will have to remain a mystery. It is perfectly possible that Giap, aware of the very great danger to the movement to which he has devoted his life, wrote it freely, but, on the other hand, doubts on the part of senior party members, whose judgements are based upon personal experience of party affairs, are not to be lightly dismissed.

North Vietnam used the anniversary of Karl Marx's death on March 14, which it had virtually ignored in past years, as a peg on
which to hang several important speeches and published articles concerning the Sino-Soviet dispute. The form of all of these was the same, commencing with a brief history of communism from the time of Marx to the present day, and following that with praise for the Soviet Union and China. Next came remarks about differences in the Communist bloc and the urgent need for resolving these and cementing unity. A feature common to all of them is the omission of any mention of Stalin, which produced an unfamiliar imbalance in the historical accounts of communism. Yet another common feature is the attack on revisionism, described as the "main danger," on reformism, and on rightist tendencies, with leftist deviations and dogmatism receiving considerably less censure. Surprisingly outspoken about these latter questions, in view of the recent attempts at impartiality, was a Nhan Dan editorial which said:

Those who propagate revisionism are seeking by all means to make people recognize the necessity or possibility of realizing a "class concord" between the working masses and the magnate capitalists, between the oppressed peoples and the imperialists. The path of revisionism is but one that aims to divert the Communist and workers' movement from the orbit of scientific socialism. . . . Their [Yugoslav] activities have done much harm to the solidarity and unity of the international Communist movement. 28

The clue to the reasons for this spate of comment is almost certainly to be found in the more outspoken criticism of revisionism.

Since the visit of President Novotný to North Vietnam China had showed her displeasure with the Vietnamese by omitting to publish or comment upon the major happenings in North Vietnam. It may be that this displeasure was occasioned by the unusually lengthy visit of the Soviet military delegation or by that of Novotný, or it may have arisen from secret exchanges within the bloc which have never been made public. Whatever its cause, there can be no doubt that during the early months of 1963 the Chinese were displeased with the North Vietnamese. Suddenly, without any prior warning or any indication that relations between the two had improved, the People's Daily devoted one and a half pages to the full texts of the following four documents:29

1) The February 10 statement on the solidarity of the international Communist movement issued by the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Lao Dong Party.

2) The joint statement made by Ho Chi Minh and Novotný, which had been published by VNA on January 29.

3) The February 11 Nhan Dan editorial entitled "Solidarity Is the Guarantee of All Our Victories."

4) An article appearing in the March issue of Hoc Tap to commemorate the anniversary of Karl Marx's death and entitled "Reinforce the

Solidarity and Unity of the International Communist Movement and the Socialist Camp.™

The abrupt change in the Chinese attitude strongly suggests that a secret bargain had been struck between the leaders of the two countries, and subsequent happenings make it possible to guess the nature of this bargain. China's annoyance with North Vietnam was evidenced by the protracted Chinese failure to publish Vietnamese documents, which commenced during the visit of Czechoslovak President Novotný to North Vietnam. Thus it is a reasonable assumption that the cause of Chinese displeasure was the presence of that protagonist of Khrushchev in a neighboring Asian Communist state and, to a lesser degree, the pro-Soviet tone of Vietnamese statements made during his visit. In order to placate the Chinese, North Vietnam utilized the anniversary of Marx's death as an occasion to publish a number of pronouncements with a character more favorable to the Chinese standpoint, but this action redressed no more than part of the balance. The main Chinese grievance still remained. Only when the North Vietnam leaders agreed to invite the Chinese Head of State, Liu Shao-chi, to pay a formal visit to

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30 Major DRV pronouncements to mark the anniversary of Marx's death include: a speech by Le Duan, First Secretary of the Party, on Mar. 13 at Hanoi, reported by VNA on Mar. 14, 1963; a speech by Nguyen Chi Thanh, Politburo member and former Head of the Political Department of the Vietnamese People's Army, at Hanoi on Mar. 13, reported by VNA on Mar. 14, 1963; editorial, "The Name and Work of Karl Marx Live Forever," Nhan Dan, Mar. 13, 1963; editorial, Hoc Tap, Mar. 1963.
North Vietnam did Chinese anger abate. It appears probable therefore that North Vietnam issued an invitation to Liu Shao-chi to pay a state visit to North Vietnam and that normal relations between the two countries were restored on or immediately before March 12, 1963.

The invitation to Novotný to visit North Vietnam was regarded in the Soviet Union and China as an important Soviet advantage in the Sino-Soviet dispute, for it provided an opportunity to state the Soviet case in that uncommitted Communist country and might be expected to suggest to the non-Communist world that the Vietnamese Communists were favorably disposed toward the Soviet Union. Viewed in that context, Chinese annoyance over the affair was not unreasonable. A visit to North Vietnam by the Chinese Head of State offered the double advantage of permitting him to undo the effects of Novotný's trip and at the same time of reminding the Soviet Union that Chinese influence in North Vietnam remained strong and could not be ignored. The Chinese, well aware of the Vietnamese habit of making statements favorable to their current foreign visitors, felt that they could be sure of some distinctly pro-Chinese pronouncements by Vietnamese leaders. The Vietnamese themselves must have regarded the visits of both Novotný and Liu Shao-chi as great embarrassments which it was impossible for them to escape, and occasions on which they would have need of all the political skill at the command of Ho Chi Minh.
The State Visit of Liu Shao-chi

News of Liu Shao-chi's impending visit was not made public in North Vietnam for some weeks, being finally released by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on April 27. The delay was presumably intended to conceal the reason underlying the sudden resumption of cordial relations by the Chinese. Meanwhile the North Vietnamese concentrated upon the acute difficulties facing them in their internal affairs, particularly in the sphere of agriculture. The war in South Vietnam was also a matter of great concern, for the tide had turned against the Communist insurgents and new measures would have to be adopted if the deterioration in the situation was not to accelerate. For that reason pressures were increased in Laos, where the Pathet Lao began a series of attacks against neutralist positions and received considerable DRV assistance in these operations.

After the spate of speeches bearing on the Sino-Soviet dispute which marked the anniversary of Marx's death very little mention was made of the subject. Early in April, however, a major speech given by Le Duan, First Secretary of the Lao Dong Party, on March 13 was published. Only a brief and uninformative reference to this speech had previously been made by VNA, but the text now published proved so much

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31 Ministry of Foreign Affairs communiqué, VNA, Apr. 27, 1963.

32 Le Duan, "Let Us Hold High the Revolutionary Banner of Creative Marxism to Lead Our Revolutionary Cause to Complete Victory," Hoc Tap, Apr. 1963.
to the liking of the Chinese that it was printed in full by the
People's Daily, in which it filled two whole pages, and broadcast
by NCNA. 33

Rejecting Khrushchev's emphasis on economics as opposed to poli­
tics, Le Duan argued that "the proletariat has no alternative but to
use violence to demolish the bourgeois state apparatus and to estab­
lish one of its own"; hence the political struggle "is of cardinal
and decisive significance. Economic and ideological struggles must
serve the purpose of helping to bring about the victory of the
political struggle." Peaceful evolution into socialism, a theory
which had won some favor in the Soviet Union, was given no more than
lip service by Le Duan when he wrote, "That is why the working class
and Marxist-Leninist parties, while seeking to make revolution by
peaceful means, must make active preparations for the seizure of
power by violence." He also condemned aid of the kind supplied by
the Soviet Union to bourgeois nationalist regimes such as those of
India or Egypt: "Experience has proved that to advance along the
noncapitalist road a nationalist country internally must depend in
the first place on a strong Marxist-Leninist party." Yugoslavia and
the Yugoslav revisionists were the targets of an outspoken attack
which concluded that "a thorough exposure of the Yugoslav revisionists
is a requirement essential to the smooth progress of the people's revo­
lationary cause in nationalist countries." The most curious feature
of this speech was not, however, its content (a secret DRV directive

in early March appears to have ordered that speeches and articles adhere closely to the Chinese line) but its timing. Possibly the publication was delayed until April so as to provide the Chinese with an earnest of continuing North Vietnam good faith and to eliminate any doubts they may have had on that score.

A report made by Pham Van Dong to the DRV National Assembly at the end of April\(^3\) dealt with a wide range of subjects, but the section concerned with foreign policy seemed specifically designed to sound the keynote for Vietnamese utterances during the forthcoming visit of Liu Shao-chi, which had been announced at the time when the report was made. Unity of the Communist bloc and good relations between North Vietnam and both the Soviet Union and China were themes which occupied the opening part of the report, and Dong was "happy to note that the CPSU and CCP had exchanged letters with a view to advancing toward talks between the two parties." After stressing the political importance of Liu Shao-chi's visit he indicated the three issues on which North Vietnam support for China could be expressed. China, he declared, was assured of full North Vietnam support in the struggle for the liberation of Taiwan, in her demand for a seat in the United Nations organization, and in her border dispute with India. It is interesting, if not entirely surprising, to note that these three matters were subsequently included in almost every North Vietnam utterance made during the Chinese visit. Cuba, it seemed, had no longer been saved from the United States aggressors by timely Soviet

\(^3\) VNA, May 2, 1963.
action. The Cuban people were now "standing beside the Soviet Union, China, and other socialist countries." No comment was offered on Soviet behavior, but North Vietnam declared her support for the five points enunciated by Fidel Castro. A number of other matters were similarly dealt with, and several references were made to the nationalist countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America in anticipation of possible Chinese mention of her proposed conference of three continents.

Preparations for the Chinese visit were on a scale never before witnessed in North Vietnam; they had about them a feeling reminiscent of Vietnamese preparations for the visit of a Chinese viceroy in the old days of Imperial China. In addition to all the flags, the streamers, the triumphal arches, the speeches on Chinese achievements, the performances of a Chinese circus, and the rest the DRV Minister of Culture, Hoang Minh Giam, and the Ambassador to China, Tran Tu Binh, traveled to Kunming in order to accompany the visitor on his journey to Hanoi. Press and radio poured out volumes of the most obsequious flattery of China, and doubtless the DRV leaders waited in trepidation hoping that Liu Shao-chi would exercise some restraint so as to avoid compromising them too badly.

At the banquet on the first evening Ho Chi Minh indicated how far North Vietnam was prepared to go to meet Chinese requirements when he offered support for China over Taiwan, the Indian frontier dispute, and the United Nations issue and ended with a strong plea for bloc unity. For his part, Liu made a polite and innocuous reply. There were no references to matters in dispute between the Soviet Union and
China. Calm prevailed throughout the second day, but it was the tense, expectant calm which precedes a storm; and the storm broke dramatically when Liu Shao-chi spoke at a mass rally in Ba Dinh Square, Hanoi, on the morning of May 12.

Soviet attitudes and policies came under heavy attack from the Chinese leader, who, after attributing the favorable world situation to "long and repeated trials of strength and struggles on a world scale between the socialist camp and the people of the world on the one hand and imperialism headed by the United States and its lackeys on the other," went on to belabor the policy of peaceful coexistence. He said:

The foreign policy of socialist countries must not be reduced to the single aspect of peaceful coexistence. Peaceful coexistence refers to relations between socialist countries and capitalist countries. It must not be reinterpreted at will or stretched to apply to relations between the oppressed and oppressor nations or between oppressed and oppressor classes. Peaceful coexistence must not be used to abolish the socialist countries duty to support the revolutionary struggle of oppressed nations and people. The foreign policy of socialist countries, moreover, must not be used to supersede the revolutionary line of the proletariat of various countries and their parties.

There was much more on this subject, but all of it followed similar lines. Liu also hinted strongly at one of the principal causes of

\[35^{NCNA, May 12, 1963.}\]

\[36^{Ibid.}\]
Chinese resentment against the Soviet Union when he said:

The 1957 declaration and 1960 statement specifically stipulate that the socialist countries must respect each others' independence and sovereignty, treat each other with equality, refrain from interfering in each others' internal affairs, and cooperate on the basis of mutual benefit and help each other. If these principles are strictly observed instead of being violated, the unity of the socialist camp can certainly be strengthened.\(^{37}\)

The whole speech was provocative and hard hitting, auguring ill for the outcome of the proposed discussions between the Soviet Union and China. The reactions of the North Vietnam leaders to this Chinese polemic are not difficult to imagine. It is interesting to speculate why Tran Duy Hung, the Mayor of Hanoi, who spoke immediately before Liu Shao-chi at the mass rally, took the unusual step of omitting the CCP from the following passage of flattery for China:

As a powerful member of the socialist camp, the Chinese government and people have always indefatigably worked for the development of relations of friendship and fraternal cooperation with the other socialist countries in accordance with the principles of proletarian internationalism.\(^{38}\)

Several possible explanations suggest themselves, but it is fruitless to seek to explain the omission without more evidence.

\(^{37}\text{Ibid.}\)

\(^{38}\text{Ibid.}\)
warmly welcome Chairman Liu Shao-chi on a visit to Vietnam" and "May Vietnamese-Chinese solidarity last forever" spanning its front page, printed in scarlet type and written in both Vietnamese and Chinese. Two days later it published articles about the visit written by Vice-Premier Nguyen Duy Trinh, Vice-Minister of Culture Ha Huy Giap, and Ambassador to China Tran Tu Bihn. The last named may have permitted his desire to carry out his directive to outstrip his respect for truth when he wrote:

... the Communist Party and government of China, which are always loyal to Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism, are working energetically now, as in the past, for increased unity of the socialist camp and of the international Communist movement.\textsuperscript{40}

Later it published an article commending Liu Shao-chi's "How to be a Good Communist" to its readers and reminded them that the revised edition had now been published by the Su That Publishing House.

The second of Liu's two major speeches in North Vietnam was delivered to a meeting at the Nguyen Ai Quoc Party School, and on that occasion he appeared to cast restraint to the wind when voicing what must surely be considered one of his bitterest attacks against the Soviet Union. Few could have entertained any doubts about the identity of the "certain people" when he said: "Now there are certain people who always stress their assistance to others and disown others.'

\textsuperscript{39} Nhan Dan, May 10, 1963.
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., May 12, 1963.
\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., May 14, 1963.
assistance to them. This is flying in the face of facts. This is not a Marxist-Leninist attitude. His strongest words, however, were reserved for the "modern revisionists," a term which he was certainly not applying solely to the Yugoslavs. He said:

The international Communist movement is now in a crucial period of the utmost importance. An acute struggle between the Marxist-Leninists and the modern revisionists is proceeding on a world-wide scale over a series of important problems of principle. The polemics are centered on whether the people of the world should carry out revolutions or not, and whether proletarian parties should lead the world's people in revolutions or not. The course of this struggle has a bearing on whether the entire cause of the proletariat and working people throughout the world will succeed or fail, and on the destiny of the whole of mankind. On questions of such an important struggle of principle, we cannot act as onlookers or follow a middle course.

The modern revisionists, donning a cloak of Marxism-Leninism, are actually wantonly adulterating Marxism-Leninism, emasculating Marxism-Leninism of its revolutionary soul, repudiating the historic necessity for proletarian revolution and proletarian dictatorship in the period of transition from capitalism to communism, negating the leading role of the proletarian party, substituting hypocritical bourgeois "supra-class" viewpoints for Marxist-Leninist viewpoints of class analysis, and substituting bourgeois pragmatism for dialectical materialism. They are trying their utmost to benumb the revolutionary will of the working class and tamper with the essential contents of socialism and communism as strictly defined by Marxism-Leninism in an attempt to

preserve or restore capitalism in reality. Under such circumstances, the militant task of all Marxist-Leninists is not to evade the challenge of modern revisionism, but to unite to smash its attack completely. In defense of the purity of Marxism-Leninism, hold aloft the red banner of revolution, and show the proletariat and working people the correct direction for struggle and the road to victory. ⁴³

The above passage is self-explanatory, needing no commentary, but Liu's attack went even further. Following a scathing passage describing "how modern revisionists distort and tamper with Marxism-Leninism," he went on:

The many propositions advanced by the modern revisionists are not "creative developments" of Marxism-Leninism as alleged but a repetition and development under new conditions of the revisionist viewpoint of Bernstein, Kautsky, and other old-line revisionists. Most of their arguments were repudiated long ago by Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin. ⁴⁴

Lest any member of his audience should be endowed with such quantities of natural optimism as still to hope for agreement between the Chinese and Soviet representatives at their forthcoming meeting in Moscow despite what he had already heard, Liu Shao-chi ended his speech by demolishing all hopes for a speedy settlement. He said:

It is our firm belief that although the present struggle against revisionism will be protracted and complicated

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⁴³Tbid.
⁴⁴Tbid.
one involving twists and turns, the all-conquering Marxism-Leninism will surely overcome revisionism and develop in the course of the struggle.\footnote{45}{Ibid.} 

Vice-Premier Chen I, who accompanied Liu Shao-chi to North Vietnam, made fewer pronouncements than is his wont, but he too hurled jibes at "certain people" who "publicize the view that one cannot oppose the United States and that opposition to the United States would lead to a great catastrophe."\footnote{46}{Ibid.} He had no original contributions to make, however, and such statements as he did make simply parroted those already made by Liu.

Throughout the whole visit the North Vietnam leaders exercised a guarded restraint in all they said and wrote, and even the most notoriously pro-Chinese of them remained within the boundaries already defined by Pham Van Dong in his report to the National Assembly. There is of course no way of knowing what transpired in the sessions of closed talks which they held with the Chinese visitors, but in their public behavior at least they presented a picture of party unity. The six days of Liu's visit may have seemed to them as though they would never end, but when they did, Ho Chi Minh was found at Gia-lam airport to be still eulogizing bloc unity:

The friendship between our two countries and parties, just as is the solidarity and unity among all the countries of the socialist camp and all the fraternal Communist parties,
is our most valuable asset and constitutes the firmest guarantee for all victories of the revolution.\textsuperscript{47}

All of them could feel that they had emerged with some credit from a difficult and embarrassing situation and in the face of no little provocation.

The tone of the joint statement of Liu Shao-chi and Ho Chi Minh issued at the conclusion of the visit was distinctly favorable to China on a number of issues. It described revisionism as the main danger to the international Communist movement and attacked Yugoslav revisionism as the concentrated expression of modern revisionist theories, going so far as to declare "The Yugoslav revisionist clique has betrayed Marxism-Leninism and has led Yugoslavia out of the socialist camp."

The principle of attaining "unanimity" within the bloc instead of a "single view," with all its implications such as the right to indulge in factionalism and the rest, was endorsed by both signatories. Ho Chi Minh would appear to have expressed North Vietnam approval for the Chinese development of nuclear weapons when he subscribed to the view that:

\begin{quote}
In the circumstances in which imperialism rejects disarmament and continues preparations for a nuclear war it is highly necessary to strengthen the national defense might of the countries in the socialist camp, including the development of nuclear superiority of the socialist countries.
\end{quote}

China was described as having adopted a correct stand in her border dispute with India, and there was much else besides. Nevertheless,

\textsuperscript{47}VNA, May 16, 1963.
despite all the apparent North Vietnam approval for Chinese actions and policies, the joint statement provides evidence that Ho stubbornly resisted some Chinese pressures and agreed to express North Vietnam support only up to a certain point. It is probable that there were disagreements between the two heads of state during the private discussions.

In view of the attacks upon peaceful coexistence made by Liu Shao-chi in the course of speeches made in North Vietnam it is curious that the joint statement fails to express any condemnation of that policy. Again, although both Liu and Ho declared their wish to see bloc unity attained and opined that meetings offered the best way of achieving it, Ho Chi Minh alone expressed the opinion that the meetings would prove successful. He was again alone in stating that the CPSU and the Soviet Union bore the greatest responsibility for reestablishing bloc unity. Liu Shao-chi, it would seem, deliberately disassociated himself from these views. Once again North Vietnam inclined heavily toward the side of the distinguished foreign visitor but had refused to go the whole way or to commit itself irrevocably to one side in the dispute. (A comparison between the joint statements issued at the conclusion of the Novotný visit and the Liu Shao-chi visit has been made in Appendix B in order to provide concrete examples of the extent to which the North Vietnam leaders will accede to the wishes of a visitor without finally abandoning its own uncommitted position.)

Comments made by the two countries about the visit shed additional light upon their respective attitudes. Chinese satisfaction with the outcome is apparent from the publication of the joint statement
together with the text of Liu Shao-chi's two major speeches in pamphlet form by the People's Publishing House on May 24. An assessment of the statement made by a People's Daily editorial\(^\text{48}\) concluded that peace and final victory over imperialism could best be achieved by supporting the national liberation movements in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, thereby suggesting that the statement had condemned peaceful coexistence, which it had not. Indeed, the same editorial indulged in some journalistic sleight of hand by departing from the statement text and quoting Liu's outspoken attacks on peaceful coexistence as though they had formed part of the text. The final impression left with the reader of this article was that Liu's visit had secured an identity of views between China and North Vietnam on a number of questions in dispute within the Communist bloc.

For its part North Vietnam interpreted the statement as a step forward toward bloc unity. The conclusion of the lengthy Nhan Dan editorial devoted to the joint statement ran as follows:

> We are convinced that the strengthening of the solidarity and unity of mind between the two parties and governments will contribute to the vigorous development of the forces of the Vietnamese and Chinese peoples to build socialism successfully, thus actively contributing to the consolidation and strengthening of the solidarity and unity of mind within the socialist camp and the international Communist movement, of which the solidarity of the CPSU and the CCP and between the Soviet Union and China is the mainstay.\(^\text{49}\)


\(^{49}\)Nhan Dan, May 17, 1963.
The statement's bitter and uncompromising attack on Yugoslavia made it clear that on the issue of Yugoslav revisionism at least North Vietnam was at one with China and at variance with the Soviet Union. Indeed, Drago Kunc, a spokesman of the Yugoslav Foreign Secretariat, described the attack as an "extremely hostile act by the two responsible officials of the Chinese People's Republic and North Vietnam," and his government sent a formal note of protest to China. Yet this represented no major policy change on the part of North Vietnam, which had consistently criticized the Yugoslavs since the announcement of the Yugoslav Draft Program in May 1958. The only difference between this and earlier DRV pronouncements on Yugoslavia lay in the degree of severity in the wording of the criticism. A subsequent attack on that country, couched in language no less strong, was published in Hanoi a week after the departure of Liu Shao-chi.50

Nevertheless North Vietnam lost no time before readjusting the balance of her relationships within the bloc by assuring the Soviet Union of her undying friendship. The occasion was the thirteenth anniversary of the Vietnam-Soviet Friendship Association, and the Chairman of that body, Vice-President Ton Duc Thang, wrote a newspaper article in which he proclaimed: "The Soviet Union and Vietnam are brother countries in the great socialist family." The greater part of the article was made up of variations on that theme, but the concluding paragraph stated once again the position of North Vietnam.

The stand of the Lao Dong Party and the DRV government is to strengthen unceasingly the unity with the Soviet Union, China, and other socialist countries, with neighbors, and with the forces of national independence, democracy, and peace in the world.\textsuperscript{51}

The process of returning to neutral territory between the Soviet Union and China while retaining good relations with both was once more under way.

\textsuperscript{51}Ibid., May 23, 1963.