CHINESE AGGRESSION
AGAINST
VIETNAM
THE ROOT OF THE PROBLEM
HANOI – 1979
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EDITOR'S NOTE

On 17 February 1979 Chinese forces started their attacks on Vietnam all along the 1200 km-long frontier between the two countries, from Phong Tho in the westernmost Vietnamese province of Lai Chau to the town of Mong Cai on the coast. Artillery poundings were unleashed on many Vietnamese towns and villages, followed by infantry assaults, spearheaded by tanks. The serious losses suffered by the Chinese attackers — over 27,000 soldiers put out of action, 320 military vehicles (including 200 tanks and armoured cars) destroyed (up to 28 February 1979) — testify to the scale of the aggression.

A brutal policy was thus laid bare, of which the fundamental components are as follows:

— A will of expansion and hegemony directed at Southeast Asia, which continues the imperial tradition of old China. (Let us recall that the last Chinese invasion, quickly checked by Vietnam, took place in 1789. It is the sad privilege of the present Peking leaders to wreck a peace lasting two centuries.) Vietnam is the first country to be subdued, and the first obstacle to be destroyed on the road of this expansion.
Open collusion with the imperialist forces, especially American imperialism. The Washington-Peking axis finds expression in a joint policy in Chile as well as in Vietnam, in Iran as well as in Angola and Ethiopia.

— Outright betrayal of the world revolutionary movement: this betrayal, which a few years ago tried to take cover behind an ultrarevolutionary rhetoric, now does not trouble to justify itself any longer.

This policy is not evidently born overnight. A historical account of Vietnamese-Chinese relations over the last twenty years or so will shed useful light on the very nature of this policy. Such is our aim in publishing this booklet.
Fidel Castro declared in an interview with the review *Africa-Asia* in May 1977: “For a long time I was convinced that the Chinese leaders were guilty of serious errors... Now I am absolutely certain that these were not errors but a policy of deliberate betrayal of internationalism and of alliance with imperialism.” The correctness of this observation has been borne out by events. That exacerbated nationalism, that great-power chauvinism from which derives the ambition to dominate South-east Asia and the world, is not an accident but has its root in an old social, historical, and ideological context.

Ancient China was one of the more important cradles of world civilization. From the 3rd century B.C. to the 19th century, China was the most powerful country in Asia, far ahead of its neighbours in both might and culture. Successive Chinese dynasties strove to expand their empire, conquering several neighbouring countries and absorbing many ethnic minorities into the Han socio-cultural system. This empire took the name of Middle Empire and thought itself
to be the centre of the world. The other non-Han nations were deemed to be barbarians.

Sprung from a tiny working class, submerged by hundreds of millions of peasants, moreover driven and confined to the countryside over a long period (1927-1949) in which it was cut off from the cities and the outside world, how could the Chinese Communist Party have escaped encirclement by traditionalist ideas?

And indeed, at regular intervals, its ranks were torn by bitter struggles between upholders of Marxism-Leninism and ultra-nationalist, Great-Han chauvinist, elements.

For a long period of time the imperative requirements of the revolution did not allow the chauvinistic forces within the ruling circles to carry out their designs. In the first years following the foundation of the People's Republic of China, facing as they did Chiang Kai-shek and especially American encirclement — the American policy of setting up a whole series of military bases and signing bilateral or multi-lateral military treaties with many Asian countries — and also because of China's still very backward economy, the Peking leaders turned to the Soviet Union for assistance in the building of socialism. In this context Marxist Leninist forces within the Party played a positive role.

Thanks to all-sided assistance from the Soviet Union and the socialist camp, China was able to carry through its first five-year plan successfully and record remarkable achievements in all fields. During that same period, in order to
break American encirclement, it engaged in multiple diplomatic activities with a view to winning the sympathy of the countries of Southeast Asia and Southern Asia. Declarations on peaceful coexistence were signed with Burma, India, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Indonesia... with the aim of establishing a zone of peace protecting the southern flank of China. In those days, this strategy was in accordance with the common trend followed by the revolutionary forces: to uphold peace and to bring about solidarity and union against colonialism and imperialism. And so China won great prestige for itself, particularly after the 1955 Bandung Conference, among the Afro-Asian countries and in the world at large.

This prestige and the initial economic achievements, however, went to the head of the Great-Han chauvinistic forces within the Chinese ruling circles. They sought to subordinate the development of socialism in China to their super-power ambitions, and this in spite of warnings inserted in the resolutions adopted at the 8th Party Congress: “Great-power chauvinistic tendencies remain undoubtedly a serious danger if unchecked.” (People’s Daily, 29 December 1956).

At the Central Committee plenum held in May 1958, chauvinistic elements deliberately called the resolutions of the 8th Party Congress in question. On the strength of the successes of the first five-year plan, they defined a new line, that of the notorious “great leap forward” and the “people’s communes”, while continuing to call for help from the socialist countries and
invoking their experience, this being in their eyes still indispensable for some time. "This line of socialist building which is specifically ours", as stressed by Mao Tse-tung personally, was to lead to the realization of the utopian dreams he had unveiled at the Central Committee plenum of 20 January 1956: "We must become a country that stands in the van of cultural, scientific and industrial development [...] It is beyond all doubt that a few decades from now we shall have grown into the mightiest country on earth [...] China must become not only the political, but also the military and technical, centre of the world."

But before one year had gone by, that voluntarist "line" where peasant ideology showed and which defied the laws of the building of scientific socialism had led the Chinese economy to the brink of bankruptcy. This sparked off a bitter struggle within the Party concerning the line to be adopted, as evidenced by the Lu Shan conference (1959). In the years that followed, chaos prevailed on the Chinese political scene. Looking for a way out of their internecine conflict the Peking leaders tried to recreate unanimity around a foreign policy inspired by great-power chauvinism but wrapped in "revolutionary" rhetoric. To carry out their design of winning leadership of the world revolutionary movement, they started criticizing the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. It was precisely a period in which that movement was developing powerfully, especially the national liberation movement in Asia, Africa and Latin America. It was also a time when the United
States, as a result of the successes recorded by the Cuban revolution (1959) and the general uprising in southern Vietnam (1959-1960), was running into a strategic crisis and, on account of the nuclear parity with the USSR, had to resign itself to détente.

In late 1962, the 10th plenum of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party adopted a “particular orientation” concerning the role of the national liberation movement, which openly claimed Chinese leadership of this movement. Using the double signboard of anti-US imperialism and anti-revisionism and resorting to a variety of expedients, Peking rushed headlong into a frenzied campaign aimed at communist parties and mass organizations in the developing countries, especially in Asia, which should result in rallying the revolutionary forces around China, held up as their centre of gravity, and in dividing the socialist camp.

On 14 June 1963, Peking made public its “suggestions concerning the General Line of the International Communist Movement” which denied the decisive impact of the socialist system upon the evolution of mankind — the unanimous conclusion reached at the 1960 Conference of the World’s Communist and Workers’ Parties. By extending to the whole world the Chinese concept of “encirclement of the cities from the countryside” these suggestions emphasized: “The immense regions of Asia, Africa and Latin America are the zone where converge the contradictions of our time. They constitute the weakest link in the system of imperialist domination, the area in the world where the
revolutionary storm is hitting directly at imperialism." That is why “in a certain sense, the world proletarian movement will eventually focus entirely on the revolutionary struggle of the peoples of those regions, who represent the majority of the world population.” (Suggestions concerning the General Line of the International Communist Movement, Vietnamese edition, published by the Chinese Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1963)

Also from that period, the Peking leaders started carrying out their expansionist ambitions by claiming territories “belonging to China by virtue of historical documents”. As is widely known, as early as 1954, barely five years after the foundation of the People’s Republic of China, a school textbook was circulated in China which claimed that in former times Chinese territory included nearly half of the area of Asia, from Soviet Kazakhstan, Kirghiz and Tadzhikistan to Mongolia, Korea, Vietnam and several other countries, including the Japanese Ryukyu Islands. Beginning in 1962, China was involved in border conflicts with several of its neighbours: India, Burma, the Soviet Union.

From 1966 to 1968 China was shaken by the “proletarian cultural revolution” which gave rise to savage internal purges. On the external plane, it manifested itself by machinations designed to wreck the unity of the international communist movement and openly implement an ultra-nationalistic, great-power chauvinistic policy. Anti-Sovietism then became the keynote of Chinese international policy. The Peking leaders did not confine themselves to fanning
up ultra-nationalistic feelings in the countries of Asia, Africa and the Middle East, but also advocated anti-government rebellions in several countries of Southeast Asia, whose sovereignty they brazenly violated by exporting there such activities as those of "Red Guards" and flooding them with Chinese publications attacking the Soviet Union and the international communist movement with torrents of "leftist" rhetoric.

A great hullabaloo was raised about the "successes of the cultural revolution" while in fact the prestige of the Peking leaders plummeted inside as well as outside the country. Anarchy set in. Chinese agricultural and industrial production fell to the level of 1957, its worst year, while the population increased by ten million each year and national defence spending swallowed up to 40% of the national budget.

It was against that historical background that the 9th Congress of the Chinese Communist Party was convened (April 1969). The Peking leaders were to officially proclaim the Soviet Union as the enemy of China in the Party Constitution adopted at this Congress, thus for the first time excluding the USSR from the socialist camp. In several waves, 400 million people were mobilized in demonstrations against the Soviet Union. At a time when China so radically changed its foreign policy as to provoke an incident on the Sino-Soviet border in March 1969, Nixon became president of the United States. The Nixon-Kissinger tandem perfectly realized that China was ready for talks with
them and for an entente with imperialism directed against the Soviet Union and the world revolutionary movement. For its part, Peking uninhibitedly expanded its “anti-hegemonist” (i.e. anti-Soviet) front in the Third World and began feverish activities in Africa, the Middle East and developing countries in general. Within the framework of this new strategy they broadened their diplomatic representation abroad and increased their economic, cultural and even military aid as a tool in the service of their political objectives.

The United States being still involved in the war in Vietnam, the Chinese leaders continued to give lip service to anti-American slogans in order to win the sympathy of progressive forces in the world. But as an observer pertinently remarked: “By 1970 there was no compelling political or ideological reason for China to maintain militant stand against the United States and deny itself... the opportunity to achieve objectives vis-à-vis the United States in regard to Taiwan, Japan, the United Nations, and the US containment policy.”

After a whole series of goodwill gestures in 1969-1970 Sino-American rapprochement was to follow in the wake of “pingpong diplomacy”

manifested in the visit to Peking by a team of American table-tennis players in the spring of 1971. Then came Kissinger's secret visit to Peking in 1971 which paved the way for Nixon's visit ending in the signing with the supreme leaders of the Chinese People's Republic of the "Shanghai Joint Communiqué" in February 1972. This communiqué and, later, the handing over to a Peking representative of a permanent seat in the UNO Security Council officially inaugurated a new era in Sino—American relations in which the counter-revolutionary strategies of the men in Peking and Washington converged against the socialist camp and the peoples' struggle movement.

As a direct result of that radical change in its strategic line, following the 9th Congress, Peking, while openly negating the world socialist system was to advocate its theory of the "three worlds". The aim was to condition public opinion for its collusion with American imperialism. It began by lumping together the two "superpowers" and opposing to them the rest of the world, especially the Third World. Several birds were to be killed with that stone: to attack the Soviet Union, to control the Third World, and gradually soft-pedal the role of "international gendarme" played by the United States.

It was not by accident that Mao Tse-tung declared to a visiting foreign statesman in February 1974: "In my opinion, the United States and the Soviet Union represent the first world; the intermediate camp is constituted by Japan, Western Europe and Canada — the second
world; the third world is very populous: Asia, with the exception of Japan, belongs to it together with Africa and Latin America.” (People’s Daily, 1st November 1977) Two months later, at the UNO General Assembly, Deng Xiao-ping declared: “China belongs to the Third World.” In the ensuing period, this collusion with imperialism found extremely clear and concrete expression in rabid anti-Sovietism and opposition to the national liberation revolution. Thus Peking tried to hamper the birth of Bangla Desh (1971) and strengthened its alliance not only with the United States, Japan and the member countries of NATO but also the most reactionary forces on all continents, from South African and Rhodesian racists to the leaders of such movements as UNITA and FNLA in Angola, who were agents of the CIA, and to criminal elements such as Mobutu in Zaire and Pinochet in Chile, etc.

A most important step was made when the Chinese leaders openly declared that the United States was no longer a dangerous imperialism. Following the total liberation of southern Vietnam, using the anti-hegemony signboard [directed at the Soviet Union] and arguing that “in the First World, the USSR is acting on the offensive while the United States is on the defensive” (Declaration made at the 11th Congress of the Chinese Communist Party, August 1977) China came forward, as became clear to public opinion in the world, to play the role of NATO in the East. It signed a “peace and friendship” treaty with Japan with a view to establishing a para-military
USA-Japan-China alliance while stepping up its "long march to the West". US President Carter was to observe on 21 August 1978 that the improvement in US-China relations was due to an appreciation of China's greater understanding of the USA and countries of the West. Thus began the honeymoon between Washington and Peking. China looked forward to US financial and technical aid while the United States planned to rely on China to carry out its global strategy; both were at one to attack the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries as well as the national liberation movement.

China, in particular, viewed Southeast Asia as a choice target for its expansion. In this connection, the recent Chinese diplomatic campaign in this region cannot fail to attract our attention. Chinese loud-mouthed bigwigs, from Deng Xiao-ping to Li Hsien-nien, have visited the region one after the other, spouting honeyed words and vowing "indestructible eternal friendship" between China and the host countries without evidently forgetting to hold up threats supposedly coming from the "world hegemonists" and the "regional hegemonists", these phrases designating, as everyone knows, the USSR and Vietnam.

In an August 1965 session of the Chinese Political Bureau, Mao Tse-tung declared: "We must gain possession of Southeast Asia, including South Vietnam, Thailand, Burma, Malaysia and Singapore... Such a region as Southeast Asia is very rich. There are very many natural resources there. It is well worth the
expense involved in gaining possession of it" ¹

At present, in view of their "four-modernization" programme, the Peking leaders have reserved a key role for Southeast Asia in their strategic designs. This region is not only rich in natural and human resources but also occupies an important strategic position commanding the sea routes linking two oceans. Besides, here American presence is declining. In addition, in the eyes of the Peking strategists, the region would afford China favourable geographical conditions for direct and broad contact with many countries while it has not yet a modern and powerful navy at its disposal. Peking hopes to turn to account the 20 million Hoa [overseas Chinese] living in the region. They constitute an important political and economic force² since long used as a means of pressure on the governments of Southeast Asian countries and a fifth column which could join with other reactionary forces in serving Chinese aggressive and expansionist designs. No wonder the head of the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office of the PRC State Council loudly proclaimed: "Wherever they are, the overseas Chinese are our friends, our comrades," and "The overseas Chinese and our friends who hold foreign citizenships but have kinship ties with us are not to be

2. According to foreign estimates, the overseas Chinese living in Southeast Asia sent a total of 3.5 billion US dollars to China in the period from 1950 to 1970.
kept away from the united anti-hegemonist front," etc. Let us add that in order to serve their expansionist schemes the Chinese leaders are trying harder than ever to sow discord among the countries of Southeast Asia, and in particular to draw the ASEAN member countries into the Chinese orbit.

Thus, as soon as the Great-Han chauvinistic tendency prevailed within the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, the Peking leaders went through two stages:

— the first, a still covert one, saw the execution of a great-power policy wrapped in revolutionary rhetoric;

— the second was one of pure and simple collusion with imperialism and brazen opposition to the revolution.

In the light of the strategic line described above, the reasons for the Peking leaders' about-turn in their relations with Vietnam appear quite clearly.
Side by Side in the Common Struggle

In the Chinese leaders' foreign policy, Vietnam, strategically, is by no means a negligible factor. For 2,000 years the Vietnamese people on repeated occasions had to resist aggressions and attempts at conquest by successive Chinese dynasties. On the other hand, each uprising staged by the Chinese peasantry against the imperial court created favourable conditions for the national liberation struggle of our people.

When Western capitalist countries in their search for new markets started to impose their domination on the East, the two peoples fought side by side against the common enemy: imperialism. Following the occupation of our country by the French colonialists, the latter at first succeeded in turning the Vietnamese feudal class away from its Chinese counterpart. But their efforts to divide the two peoples were of no avail.

In the first days of our anti-French resistance, Liu Yong-fu and his Black Flags fought on
the side of the troops of the Court of Hue and distinguished themselves on many occasions. Leaders of the Vietnamese royalist movement for independence (Can Vuong) like Ton That Thuyet, Nguyen Thien Thuat, Tran Xuan Soan and others, took refuge in China after being defeated. Conversely, Sun Yat-sen, leader of the national democratic bourgeois revolutionary movement in China, was later to establish bases in Vietnam with a view to armed uprisings in the area along the border between the two countries. In defiance of the collusion between the Chinese warlords and the French colonialists, Vietnamese patriots sought assistance from Chinese patriotic political parties and broad popular masses in order to make revolution in Vietnam and some of them shed their blood for the Chinese revolution.

With the Russian October Revolution, Marxism-Leninism penetrated into China and through the workers’ and anti-imperialist movement in this country made its influence felt on the Vietnamese revolution. That period saw the tightening of relations between the revolutions in the two countries. In particular, following the foundation of the Vietnamese Communist Party (3 February 1930) the Vietnamese and Chinese Communists struggled side by side against aggressive imperialism and feudal landlords in their respective countries in order to accomplish the national democratic revolution and advance to socialism. In their hard, protracted struggle, they gave each other
mutual encouragement and went from success to success. In Vietnam, in spite of savage colonialist repression, such internationalist slogans as “Support the Chinese Revolution” appeared in political demonstrations. Meetings were held to observe the anniversary of the Chinese Canton Commune in defiance of bombings.

The Vietnamese people, guided and educated by their Party, regarded the successes or failures of the Chinese revolution as their own. Witness this letter sent by the First Congress of our Party to the Chinese Party: “The victory of the Chinese revolution will exert considerable influence on the unfolding of the Indochinese revolution, and so to support the Chinese revolution means to support the Indochinese revolution. We are bending every effort to call on the Indochinese toiling masses to use all methods of struggle to back the Chinese revolution.” (Party Documents, Vol. I, Hanoi, 1962, p. 176, in Vietnamese)

When the Japanese fascists extended their aggression against China, our Party, inspired by proletarian internationalism, expressed this opinion: “Although the war in China appears at first sight as an aggression perpetrated against a country by brigands coming from another, it corresponds in the international arena to an attack by fascism on the toiling masses [...] In face of this situation, mankind cannot sit with folded arms. It must support the anti-Japanese popular front in China, assist the Chinese masses, check the Japanese fascists’ attacks and massacres.” (from Which Will Win, China or Japan?, published by Dan
Publications of the Party and the Indochinese Democratic Front constantly extolled the Chinese people's protracted resistance. The journal Dan Chung (The Masses), organ of the Political Bureau of the Indochinese Communist Party, wrote in its issue No. 28 of 29 October 1938: “To assist China is the duty of all freedom-and peace-loving people. To assist China is part and parcel of the defence of Indochina. In the face of disaster mutual aid is more urgent than ever.” Answering the call of the Party the Vietnamese people in every part of the country raised funds and collected tools and medicines to send to China's anti-Japanese troops. Vietnamese revolutionaries active in China worked not only for the Vietnamese revolution but also directly participated in the Chinese revolution, regarding such participation as a mission for their own people. It was this fraternity in struggle of the Chinese and Vietnamese peoples and the unshakable resolve shown by the Vietnamese people in their opposition to imperialism which compelled the Japanese fascists — to whom the French colonialists had sold out Vietnam so that they could turn it into a base for aggression against China and Southeast Asia — to use relatively important forces to occupy Vietnam, thus wrecking their design to attack China from Viet Bac (the northernmost part of Vietnam). On the other hand, the heroic protracted resistance of the Chinese people was to galvanize the Vietnamese people's faith in their own victory against the
Japanese and French occupiers and the regaining of their national independence. The second contingent of our National Salvation Troops had to withdraw temporarily to the Chinese side of the border. It was able to preserve and build up its forces thanks to the protection and assistance of the Chinese population and was soon to merge with the Brigade of Armed Propaganda for the Liberation of Vietnam into a military force which was to play an important role in the uprisings leading to the conquest of power in August 1945.

With the birth of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the southern flank of China was protected. But the French colonialists soon staged a comeback, and the young State had to wage a war of resistance against them. In 1949 the liberation revolution triumphed in China. This victory was not only a powerful stimulus to our people but led to a veritable union of the Vietnamese and Chinese revolutions on the basis of the proletarian internationalism binding two fraternal socialist countries. China became the "rear base" for the Vietnamese "frontline" fighting to defend the forward post of the socialist camp in Southeast Asia. Support and assistance from China and the other socialist countries contributed to pushing forward the anti-French resistance of our people to final victory. In his book People's War, People's Army, General Vo Nguyen Giap wrote: "If the Vietnamese people's liberation struggle was crowned with glorious success, it was because we did not fight in isolation but on the contrary benefited from the support of progressive nations throughout
the world and especially of the peoples of the socialist countries, above all the Soviet Union. The Vietnamese people’s victory cannot be dissociated from this support.”

In the period that followed, one of struggle against the common enemy—American imperialism—and of socialist construction, the Vietnamese and Chinese peoples again supported and helped each other. The considerable and effective assistance of the Chinese people appreciably contributed to the great victory of our resistance against American aggression, for national salvation. This victory was also a common victory for the two peoples. It not only benefited the work of national defence and socialist building in Vietnam but also contributed appreciably to the revolutionary cause of the Chinese people, the working class, and all oppressed nations in the world. The Chinese leaders themselves recognized this. Witness this declaration of Premier Chou En-lai welcoming our Party and Government delegation on 24 April 1971: “That the Vietnamese people waged a war of resistance, shed their blood and endured sacrifices on the frontline of the struggle against American imperialism was a mighty help to the Chinese people engaged in socialist revolution and construction. Comrades, the Chinese people must thank you. As for Chinese aid to your struggle against American aggression, for national salvation, and your building of socialism, it is a proletarian internationalist obligation that we cannot shirk and must fulfil.”
Never will the Vietnamese people forget the assistance extended by the Chinese people as well as that given by the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries and by all their friends far and near. At the same time, all along their three decades of struggle for self-liberation, guided and educated by the Communist Party of Vietnam, our people have acquired a very clear consciousness of their internationalist duties. How could one ever forget the blood shed and the sacrifices undergone by so many of our fighters and compatriots in the struggle against the ringleader of international imperialism, the enemy of the world's peoples, including the Chinese people, for our own independence and freedom but also for the independence and freedom of other nations, including China? Thus at the beginning, truly fraternal ties bound the Vietnamese people to the authentic Chinese revolutionaries.

The First Differences and Their Exacerbation

In the early 1960's chauvinistic Great-Han elements who ruled the roost within the Chinese Communist Party schemed to control the international communist movement. To this end, in 1963, they put forward a 25-point anti-Soviet programme and plotted to gather the Asian communist parties into a new international communist organization under Chinese control and opposed to the European communist parties. But the Vietnam Workers' Party (now the Communist Party of Vietnam) held that to go from ideological divergencies
to opposition on the organizational plane would result only in dividing the international communist movement and the international anti-imperialist movement. The common enemy, imperialism, headed by the United States, would be the main beneficiary. Moreover, according to the Vietnamese viewpoint, the determining factor in the development of human society in our time is precisely, and necessarily, the world socialist system to which belongs the Soviet Union, the country which inaugurated a new era for the whole of mankind. Opposition by Vietnam drove the Chinese designs to bankruptcy and was to aggravate the divergencies of line and viewpoint between the Vietnamese and the Chinese Parties.

In late 1964, after the “Tonkin Gulf Incident” was fabricated by American imperialism, signalling the latter’s intention to expand its war of aggression, Deng Xiao-ping, then Secretary-General of the Chinese Communist Party, hurriedly made a secret visit to Hanoi. He thought this was a good occasion for pressuring Vietnam into entering the Chinese orbit. In honeyed words, he promised that China would shoulder all war expenditures on condition that Vietnam would refuse Soviet assistance (!) Naturally Vietnam refused. The bait could not divert it from its independent and sovereign line. One easily understands why in those days Peking refused to go along with a Soviet proposal that a unified front of solidarity with Vietnam, against American imperialism, be set up. As American air and naval forces stepped up their war of destruction against
North Vietnam, Edgar Snow, an American writer who was a friend of Mao Tse-tung ever since 1936, and Li Zong-ren, former vice-president in the Chiang Kai-shek government and a refugee in the United States for 17 years, were sent to Peking on a mission by the White House. According to Edgar Snow's account printed in the British journal *Sunday Times* of May 1971 Mao had told him that the Chinese would fight only if attacked by the United States, having too many things on their hands at present. It was a clear indication to the Americans that they were free to strike at Vietnam and that the Chinese would not intervene. An observer had this remark: "China is determined to fight the United States to the last Vietnamese." China did not stop there. It also hampered aid to Vietnam from the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries. Soviet weapons which came via China arrived in Vietnam only after long delays, and cases of theft were not rare.

Ignoring Chinese "advice" to the effect that a "protracted people's war" involving only small guerilla units, not concentrations of regulars, should be conducted, the popular armed forces of South Vietnam recorded repeated successes as early as the latter half of 1965. The general offensive and simultaneous uprisings in 64 cities, provincial towns, and rural districts surrounding urban areas, staged in the spring of 1968, shook not only Washington but also the ruling circles in Peking. The victories reaped by Vietnam, which sprang from its independent line, proved that the dogmas and
strategic line recommended by China for every time and place were not always correct. In the eyes of the Chinese, this could not fail to harm their prestige among the insurrectional forces in Southeast Asia which took their inspiration from the Chinese model. Hoping to create difficulties for Vietnam and counter the Vietnamese line, Peking sought to develop its influence among the Hoa community (people of Chinese extraction) in Vietnam during the period of the “great proletarian cultural revolution” through its diplomatic organs in the country. A network of propagandists was set up, who proselytized for the Chinese line and positions and defamed Vietnamese policies, accused of “revisionism.” Hoa chauvinism was exacerbated by means of such slogans as: “Although the Hoa live in Vietnam their hearts are with China.” In Hanoi and other places Hoa elements were encouraged to oppose leadership by the Vietnamese Party, each Hoa living in Vietnam being entrusted with the “historical mission” of “propagating Mac’s thought” in this country. At the very time when our anti-American resistance was going through a stage that was both critical and decisive, the Peking authorities, while mouthing support for Vietnam, persisted in infiltrating agents and spies into our country, manipulating bad Hoa elements, and grouping them into secret organizations which would later be called upon to engage in sabotage activities.

The general offensive and simultaneous uprisings of Tet (Lunar New Year) 1968 and subsequent successes of the popular armed
forces of South Vietnam thoroughly upset the enemy’s strategy. Nixon had hardly taken his seat in the White House when he was forced to begin official talks with representatives of the South Vietnam National Front for Liberation at the four-party conference in Paris. Chinese displeasure with Vietnam worsened. The correspondents of the New China (Hsinhua) News Agency in Paris were recalled and for a long time the Chinese people were denied all information about the opening of the negotiation. Chinese mass media devoted less and less time and space to our anti-American resistance, concentrating essentially on news about revolts by Maoist groups in Thailand and other Southeast Asian countries. In a long editorial broadcast in April 1969 concerning revolution in Asia, Radio Peking even failed to mention Vietnam as one of the centres of the revolutionary movement. The Chinese leaders did not wish for a rapid end to the Vietnam war for this would mean losing one of their cards in their bargaining with the Americans. Besides such a solution would be at variance with their theories.

Meanwhile, in order to harm Vietnam, they strove to foster forces devoted to them in Southeast Asia, especially in Kampuchea. Extremist elements like Pol Pot were invited to Peking as early as 1965 to that purpose.

At Peking’s instigation the extremists in Kampuchea organized a series of demonstrations against the regime of Sihanouk and thus exposed themselves to pitiless repression. Many fled and took to the jungle to fight the Khmer government arms in hand. While
Sihanouk incontestibly represented the feudal forces he none the less pursued an anti-American line of positive neutrality. So to oppose him at the time meant in fact to aid and abet the Americans. Furthermore Sihanouk supported the South Vietnam National Front for Liberation. Pro-Peking elements within the Khmer Rouge forces started trying to disrupt the logistic bases and supply lines of the liberation troops of South Vietnam in the border region between Vietnam and Kampuchea. It was a time when because it refused to endorse Peking's rabid anti-Sovietism, which aimed at blurring the peril represented by American imperialism, Vietnam was labelled as a "revisionist country," one that was "in the pay of the Soviet Union," etc.

March 1970 saw the coup d'état staged by Lon Nol, the CIA's agent, in Phnom Penh. On the 23rd of that month Sihanouk made public the 5-point manifesto of the "Royal Government of National Union of Kampuchea" and called upon the people to resist and overthrow the Lon Nol clique. The Peking press did not publish this declaration before 5 April 1970. What had happened in Kampuchea during those two weeks? Pol Pot was then in Peking. Within ten days the resistance forces in Kampuchea, thanks to the many-sided assistance of the Vietnamese revolutionaries, liberated four provinces. Conscious of the precarious position of Lon Nol, China made a show of support to Sihanouk while slurring over a fundamental point of his manifesto: the call to overthrow Lon Nol. The
hidden thought was to use the latter as a card in bargaining with the Americans.

At the Summit Conference of the Peoples of Indochina held in April 1970 with a view to uniting the three countries of Indochina in the struggle against the common enemy, China sought to pull the strings and even expressed the wish of participating in it, but Vietnam opposed the move.

In early 1971 the resounding victories scored by the South Vietnamese and Lao popular forces along Highway 9 in southern Laos shattered the American dream of a military victory. Sihanouk proposed that a second summit conference of the peoples of Indochina be held to step up the mobilization of the forces of the three countries and to switch over to the offensive. But Pol Pot and Ieng Sary, Peking's flunkies, were instructed to prevent the convening of such a conference at all costs. Instead, Peking proposed that a “conference of five countries and six parties” (China, Korea, Laos, Kampuchea as well as South and North Vietnam) be summoned to oppose... Japan (!) Again Peking schemed to make use of the revolutionary struggle waged by the peoples locked in battle with the American imperialists and their agents, of the blood they shed and the sacrifices they endured, in order to strengthen its hand in bargaining with the Americans; but again its schemes failed. Vietnam was not so easily taken in. By diverting the struggle of the three peoples whose very existence was being threatened by American imperialism and directing it toward Japan, Peking sought to create a
means of pressure on Japan in anticipation of a future Sino-Japanese "friendship" treaty, which was to be a part of its hegemonist strategy.

In a conversation held in late 1971, Mao Tsetung declared to Premier Pham Van Dong in his customary graphic style: "One cannot sweep very far if the handle of the broom is too short. Taiwan is too far away for our broom to reach. Thieu in South Vietnam is also out of reach of your broom, comrades. We must resign ourselves to this situation."

After the signing by Washington and Peking of the Shanghai joint communiqué, the United States unleashed its B.52 strategic bombers on North Vietnam while Peking tried to pressure our country into accepting the maintenance of Thieu in the South, in exchange for American withdrawal from Taiwan. After the signing of the 1973 Paris accord, the Chinese authorities with American consent militarily seized the Vietnamese Hoang Sa (Paracel) Islands in 1974, thus strengthening their control over the East Sea. And in April 1975, Peking tried to pressure Vietnam into renouncing its effort to liberate Saigon.

The great victories of our resistance to American aggression thoroughly upset Peking's strategy. "The Vietnamese broom has a very long handle," Premier Pham Van Dong had answered Mao. This broom was to sweep away not only the Americans and their puppets from South Vietnam but also Peking's machinations.