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The Truth About Vietnam- China Relations Over the Last 30 Years

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Socialist Republic of Viet Nam

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**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIET NAM**

1979

Part One

VIET NAM IN CHINA'S STRATEGY

The Chinese leaders' acts of open hostility against Viet Nam, culminating in their war of aggression started on February 17, 1979, have astonished world public opinion by the sudden shift of China's policy towards Viet Nam. Yet, this policy shift was to be expected. It was in fact, a logical development of the big nation expansionist and great power hegemonist strategy pursued by the Chinese leaders over the past three decades.

The world has offered no other example of leaders of a country, claiming to be "ultra-revolutionary" rhetoric, while carrying out a counter-revolutionary, extremely reactionary strategy, as the Chinese leaders have been doing.

No other leaders in the world have, on the strategic plane, reversed their policy of alliances, turning friends into foes and reversely, so quickly and thoroughly as has been the case in China.

The Soviet Union which was considered by the Chinese leaders their major ally is now regarded as their most dangerous enemy.

U.S. imperialism, formerly considered as the most dangerous enemy "whose character would never

change", is now regarded as a reliable ally, and the Chinese who are colluding with it have brazenly declared that China is an "Eastern NATO". Those who formerly called the national liberation movement in Asia, Africa and Latin America a "revolutionary storm" striking directly at imperialism, and affirmed that the revolutionary cause of the international proletariat in the end depended on the revolutionary struggle of the peoples in these regions¹, have now joined hands with the imperialists in trying to oppose and wreck the national liberation movement, supporting reactionary forces, such as dictator Pinochet of Chile, the CIA-backed FNLA and UNITA in Angola, Shah Pahlevi of Iran, fostering the genocidal Pol Pot-Ieng Sary clique, etc. . . They have brazenly distorted the origin and character of the national liberation struggle in the world today, presenting them as the results of the struggles among the major powers for world hegemony and not as the results of the revolutionary undertaking of nations.

Parallel to the reversal of China's international alliances were ruthless and bloody purges at home, repression of the opposition which caused repeated upheavals in the ranks of China's leaders. Those who are considered today as genuine revolutionary leaders, tomorrow may be treated as enemies and traitors to the Chinese revolution. Some have been overthrown and reinstated two or three times within a few years.

The strategy of the Chinese leaders has changed greatly. One thing, however, remains unchanged:

¹ It is worth recalling that at the Conference of Representatives of Communist and Workers' Parties in Moscow in November 1960, the Delegation of the Chinese Communist Party also agreed that the world socialist system was a determining factor in the development of human society.

the strategic objective of quickly making China a first-rate world power and carrying out big nation expansionist and greatpower hegemonist designs. At the Congress of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee in 1956, Chairman Mao Zedong said:

"China must become the most highly developed country in the cultural, scientific, technologic and industrial fields. It is unacceptable that after a few decades China will not become the number one power in the world."

Later, in September 1959, Chairman Mao Zedong also said at the Conference of the Army Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party.

"We must conquer the earth, this is our objective."

Immediately after the founding of the People's Republic of China on October 1, 1949, the Peking rulers have stepped up the realization of their strategic objective. Though China's economy was still backward, they have done their utmost to build a strategic nuclear force since the late 1950's, and are now speeding up the "modernization" of the armed forces, the manufacturing and stockpiling of nuclear weapons. In the economic field, both the "Great Leap Forward" of 1958 and the recently announced "Four Modernizations" pursue the same strategic objective of expansion and hegemony.

I-VIET NAM IN CHINA'S GLOBAL STRATEGY

If the Chinese leaders in their global strategy consider the Soviet Union and the U.S. as major rivals to be defeated, they regard Viet Nam as an important opponent to be subdued and conquered so that their strategic interest may be secured.

In the early 1950's, when the Chinese leaders started reconstruction to rapidly transform China into a world power, they had to cope with the U.S. war of aggression against Korea in the North, and the threat to China's security in the South by the French colonialist war of aggression in Viet Nam. At the same time, the United States, the ring-leader of the imperialist forces, acting as an international gendarme, was pursuing a hostile policy towards China, making great efforts to encircle and isolate that country.

The victorious resistance war waged by the peoples of Viet Nam, Laos and Kampuchea against the French colonialists led to the 1954 Geneva Conference on Indochina. The French were afraid that a total victory of the Vietnamese people could lead to the collapse of their colonial empire. China was the main supplier of arms to Viet Nam by the end of the resistance war against the French colonialists. And it took advantage of this situation to act as the principal negotiator with the French imperialists, and colluding with the latter, to work out a solution advantageous to China and France, but not to the peoples of Viet Nam, Laos and Kampuchea. They sacrificed the interests of the Indochinese peoples to ensure China's security in the South, to carry out the design of controlling Viet Nam and Indochina, and at the same time to secure the role of a great power in settling international affairs, particularly in Asia. At the Geneva Conference, the first part of which dealt with the Korean problem, the People's Republic of China for the first time was on an equal footing with the four big powers which are permanent members of the U.N. Security Council.

This was a good opportunity for the Chinese leaders to expand their influence in Asia and Africa.

At the same time, they sought contact with the U.S. imperialists through the direct negotiations begun in Geneva and later continued in Warsaw.

After the 1954 Geneva Agreements were signed, the U.S. imperialists sought to interfere more and more in Viet Nam in an attempt to turn South Viet Nam into a new-type colony and a U.S. military base in South-East Asia. The Chinese rulers wanted a prolonged partition of Viet Nam. But the Vietnamese people heroically stood up to fight against U.S. imperialism, for national salvation and gained more and more victories.

In the late 1960's the U.S. imperialists got bogged down in their war of aggression against Viet Nam, a war which aggravated the economic, political and social crisis in the United States and weakened the position of U.S. imperialism in the world. This brought about favourable conditions for a powerful development of the socialist countries and of the world revolutionary movement and made it possible for West European countries and Japan to become strong economic rivals of the United States. In face of a desperate situation, President Nixon had to resort to "Vietnamization of the war", and learning from the experience of the French imperialists in 1954, used the Chinese in an attempt to settle the Viet Nam problem to the advantage of U.S. imperialism, that is, by withdrawing U.S. troops from Viet Nam while maintaining the puppet regime of Nguyen Van Thieu. The Nixon administration also played the Chinese card to exert pressure on the Soviet Union and to oppose the world revolutionary movement.

The Chinese leaders took advantage of the weakening of the United States and the trend of Nixon's policy to pursue an anti-Soviet policy, compromise with the Americans and help them settle

the Viet Nam problem, with a view to creating a world with three major powers as envisaged in Kissinger's formula of a "multipolar world", one of the three poles being China, and to abolishing the "bi-polar" world, with the United States and the Soviet Union, which came into being after World War II. At the same time, the Chinese leaders used the Viet Nam problem to obtain U.S. withdrawal from Taiwan. Thus reversing their policy of alliance, they, in the first place, came to consider the Soviet Union as the main enemy, provoked a border conflict with the Soviet Union in March 1969, and subsequently betrayed Viet Nam a second time in making a deal with the U.S. to prevent a total victory of the Vietnamese people. In 1971, they practised "pingpong diplomacy", then received Kissinger in Peking. This was followed by the restoration of China's status in the United Nations and the People's Republic of China becoming one of the five permanent members of the Security Council. This process culminated in U.S. President Nixon's visit to China and the Shanghai communiqué in February, 1972. For the Peking rulers, collusion with the U.S. imperialists was a crucial step in carrying out their global strategy.

As after the signing of the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Indochina, the Chinese leaders, after the January 1973 Paris Agreement on Viet Nam was signed, wanted to maintain the status quo in South Viet Nam. Therefore, the Vietnamese people's victory in 1975, which completely destroyed the U.S. puppet regime, liberated South Viet Nam and reunified the country, was a heavy defeat not only of the U.S. imperialists but also of the Peking rulers in the implementation of their global strategy and their expansionist and hegemonist designs. Since then they have practised a policy of open hostility

towards Viet Nam, even resorting to armed attacks.

Thus, over the past 30 years, Viet Nam has been one of the most important factors in China's global strategy. Because Viet Nam held a crucial position in French strategy in the mid-1950's and U.S. strategy in the early 1970's, the Chinese leaders have been playing the Vietnamese "card", colluding with the imperialists in order to realize their big nation expansionist and hegemonist designs. At the same time, they wanted to secure for China sole control of Viet Nam's resistance war against U.S. imperialism, then the focus of international political life, so as to be able to hold high the "anti-imperialism" signboard, assume "the leadership of world revolution", and diminish the influence of the Soviet Union.

II-VIET NAM IN CHINA'S POLICY TOWARDS SOUTH-EAST ASIA

South-East Asia, which has been a traditional target for Chinese expansionism through the centuries, is a region which the leaders of the People's Republic of China for a long time have dreamt of conquering.

In 1936, speaking of his youth to American journalist Edgar Snow in Yen-an, Mao Zedong told him how he felt after reading a pamphlet about Japan's conquest of Korea and Taiwan, and the loss of Chinese sovereignty over Indochina, Burma and many other places.

"After I read this, I felt depressed about the future of my country and began to realize that it was the duty of all the people to help save it¹."

¹ E. Snow, *Red Star Over China*, Penguin Books, London, 1972, p. 159.

A document of the Chinese Communist Party entitled: "The Chinese Revolution and the Communist Party of China", published in 1939 reads: *"Having defeated China, the imperialist powers occupied Korea, Taiwan, Ryukyu, Pescadores islands and Port Arthur; Britain occupied Burma, Bhutan and Hongkong; and France occupied Annam..."*

A handbook, "Sketch of Modern Chinese History" published in Peking in 1954, included a map showing Chinese territory to comprise several surrounding countries including those in South-East Asia and the Eastern (South China) Sea area.

The expansionist designs of Chinese leaders are particularly clearly expressed by Chairman Mao Zedong during the 1963 talks with the Vietnamese Workers' Party delegation in Wu Han:

"I will be the Chairman of 500 million poor peasants sending the troops to South-East Asia."

Also on this occasion, making a comparison between Thailand and Szechuan province of China, Chairman Mao Zedong said that they were of the same size but the Thai population was only half of Szechuan's. So Chinese must be sent to Thailand to settle there. With regard to Laos, a large but thinly-populated country, Mao Zedong also thought China should do the same thing. He reaffirmed in a meeting of the Political Bureau of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee in August 1965:

"We must by all means seize South-East Asia including South Viet Nam, Thailand, Burma, Malaysia and Singapore... This region is rich in raw materials: it is worth the costs involved. After seizing South-East Asia, we can increase our strength in this region. And we shall be strong enough to confront the Soviet-East European bloc, the East wind will prevail over the West wind."

In comparison with other parts of the world, South-East Asia is a region where China enjoys the most favourable objective conditions and have the most means and facilities (over 20 million oversea Chinese, political parties dependent on the Chinese Communist Party, roads leading from China to many South-East Asian countries...) to carry out her expansionist and hegemonist policies. It is for this reason that over the past 30 years, the leaders of the People's Republic of China have resorted to numerous manoeuvres to achieve expansion in this region and create conditions for carrying out their counter-revolutionary global strategy.

They have built up a strategic nuclear force, developed their economic might, and from a big-nation position, will try to use military threats or promises of economic aid, to exert pressure on or buy over countries in this region and drag them into their orbit. They have encroached on the territories of other countries, provoked border conflicts, used their agents or directly sent their troops in an attempt to weaken and subdue countries in the region. Ready to apply most barbarous methods, they used the Pol Pot-Ieng Sary clique to carry out a genocidal policy in Kampuchea. To further their expansionist and hegemonist policy, they have made use of their numerous tools in South-East Asia, including the "fifth column" constituted by the overseas Chinese, the so-called "communist" organizations under Peking's orders and the ethnic minorities some of whom are of Chinese descent.

Regarding the use of the overseas Chinese, Peking's intention was most clearly shown in these words of Foreign Minister Chen Yi:

"More than 90 per cent of Singapore population are Chinese; there are more than 900,000 Chinese in a population of over one million. So Singapore

*is a nation built up by the Chinese in the region*¹."

The Chinese leaders have been exploiting contradictions among various South-East Asian nations ; they have sought to drive a wedge between the ASEAN countries and the three countries of the Indochinese peninsula, to sow division between Malaysia and Indonesia, between Burma and Thailand, etc. . . In particular, they have tried to use for their own expansionist ends the fact that South-East Asia is one of those regions in the world seething with revolution, where the movement of national liberation is developing and colonialism and imperialism are fast declining. When the French were defeated in Viet Nam in 1954, the Chinese leaders still hoped to maintain the presence of France, a weakened colonialist power, in South Viet Nam, Laos and Kampuchea, in order to prevent the United States, ringleader of world imperialism, from setting foot on Indochina, and to prevent a total victory of the three Indochinese countries. When the Americans have been weakened and defeated in this region, Peking wanted the U.S. presence to be maintained in order to establish a Sino-American condominium over the countries of this area. In so doing, they were banking on the imperialists to check the progress of revolution, to gradually fill the so-called "power vacuum" in South-East Asia and, later on, to remove their imperialist allies and secure sole control of the region. To cover their dark designs, they deceitfully alleged that Soviet influence had to be contained.

¹ In a talk with representatives of the Hoa in Viet Nam who came to present greetings to the Party and Government Delegation of the People's Republic of China headed by Premier Zhou Enlai on a visit to Viet Nam in May, 1960.

Viet Nam occupies a strategic position in South-East Asia. The Chinese feudal expansionists have repeatedly invaded Viet Nam, seeking to annex this country and use it as a springboard for aggression against other South-East Asian countries. After World War II, the Communist Party of Viet Nam was the only Communist Party in this region which succeeded in seizing political power and establishing a worker-peasant state, the first one in this region. The Vietnamese Revolution exerted great influence in this area by its victory over the French colonialists and the U.S. imperialists. The Chinese leaders attempted to get hold of Viet Nam and then of the whole Indochinese peninsula to open the way to South-East Asia. In the September 1963 meeting, in Canton, between the four Communist Parties of Viet Nam, China, Indonesia and Laos, Premier Zhou Enlai said :

"Our country is a big one, but we have no way out. Therefore we hope that the Viet Nam Workers' Party will help blaze the trail to South-East Asia."

In order to weaken and get hold of Viet Nam, the Chinese leaders try their best to undermine the solidarity between the three countries on the Indochinese peninsula, to sow division among them, particularly between Laos and Kampuchea on the one hand and Viet Nam on the other. At the same time, they try to set other South-East Asian countries against Viet Nam, to slander and vilify Viet Nam in an attempt to isolate it. The Peking rulers have been clamouring about their "sovereignty" over Hoang Sa (Paracels) and Truong Sa (Spratley) archipelagoes. Early in 1974, with U.S. approval, China attacked and occupied Hoang Sa (Paracels) archipelago, which is part of Viet Nam's territory, in order to gradually establish control over the Eastern (South China) Sea, to subjugate Viet Nam

and the whole of South-East Asia, and exploit the abundant natural resources in the Eastern Sea region.

The Chinese leaders hope to rally forces, first in South-East Asia and eventually all over the world, in order to further their global strategy. In the 1960's, they made great efforts to rally forces in Asia, Africa and Latin America in order to seize "leadership of the world revolution" and to oppose the Soviet Union. To these ends, from 1963, they did their utmost to convene a conference of eleven Communist Parties (including eight from South-East Asia) in an attempt to establish a "Communist International" controlled by them and to create a "Peking-Jakarta-Phnom Penh-Pyongyang-Hanoi axis". Together with Indonesia, they tried to convene a "Conference of Newly Emerging Forces" (CONEFO) with a view to setting up an organization in opposition to the United Nations. At the same time, they worked for the holding of a second Asian-African conference (to be held in Algiers in 1965). But the Chinese leaders failed to achieve their dark schemes because these ran counter to the interests of the peoples of the world, which consist in uniting the anti-imperialist forces, and to the interests of the world revolution, which consist in strengthening the socialist system and the movement of national independence and democracy. They failed also because they tumbled against Viet Nam's unswerving line of independence and sovereignty.

Over the past 30 years, the Chinese leaders have considered Viet Nam one of the most important factors in their strategy. They have sought by all possible means to gain control over Viet Nam. This required that Viet Nam should not be allowed to become strong; it should be divided, not independ-

ent, but it should be dependent on China. On the contrary, an independent, unified, prosperous and strong Viet Nam, with a political line of independence and sovereignty and a correct line in international politics would constitute a major obstacle to the Chinese leaders' global strategy, first of all, to their expansionist policy towards South-East Asia. That is the reason why the Chinese leadership has pursued a double policy of helping, but also hampering the Vietnamese revolution. Each time Viet Nam won victory over the imperialists, they dealt and compromised with the latter against the interests of Viet Nam. It is also the reason why they have shifted from covert opposition to open hostility to Viet Nam, then brazenly launched a war of aggression against Viet Nam.

The Chinese leaders' policy aimed at conquering Viet Nam first into the general framework of Chinese policy towards other countries in South-East Asia and other neighbouring countries. They want to occupy part of Indian territory, and in fact have done it in the Sino-Indian war of 1962. They do not like the prospect of a strong India capable of disputing with them a "leading role" in Asia and Africa. They are still seeking to seize Mongolia, though they have recognized the Mongolian People's Republic as an independent state. They want to occupy a part of U.S.S.R. territory; they do not want a powerful Soviet Union at China's side. They have tried to lower the prestige of the Soviet Union, even to incite imperialist countries to wage war against the Soviet Union, and to set countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America against her. The Chinese leaders have made great efforts to organize an international anti-Soviet "crusade" with the participation of imperialist and reactionary forces under the banner of "opposing hegemonism", in ac-

cordance with Mao Zedong's formula of *"sitting on the top of the mountain to watch tigers fight"*.

As many West European politicians and journalists have remarked, China is resolved "to fight the Soviet Union to the last West European", as she had been ready "to fight the United States to the last Vietnamese".

The present international strategy of the Chinese leaders, though well disguised, has revealed its thoroughly counter-revolutionary character. The Chinese leaders have appeared in their true colors as big-nation chauvinists and bourgeois nationalists!

The Chinese rulers' present policy towards Viet Nam, although well camouflaged, remains the same as that pursued by rulers of the "Celestial Empire" during the past milleniums—a policy aimed at annexing Viet Nam, subduing the Vietnamese people and turning Viet Nam into a satellite of China.

Part Two

CHINA AND THE TERMINATION OF THE INDOCHINA WAR IN 1954

I-AFTER DIEN BIEN PHU, THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE WERE CAPABLE OF LIBERATING THE ENTIRE COUNTRY

In 1945, the Vietnamese people, guided by the spirit of undaunted struggle and self-reliance, successfully carried out their August Revolution and founded the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam. Some months later, the French colonialists reoccupied the Southern provinces, and from December 1946 the Vietnamese people had to wage a protracted nation-wide resistance war against the French aggressors to safeguard the independence, unity and territorial integrity of their country.

The Vietnamese people's resistance war, which was extremely arduous and valiant, gained greater and greater victories. The victories won by the peoples of Viet Nam, of Laos (under the leadership of the Lao Resistance Government) and of Kampuchea (under the leadership of the Kampuchean Resistance Government), especially the historic Dien

Bien Phu victory won by the Vietnamese army and people, greatly changed the balance of force on the battlefield in favour of the resistance forces of Viet Nam, Laos and Kampuchea, placing the French imperialists in an extremely difficult situation.

French Defence Minister R. Pleven, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General P. Ely, Chief of Staff of the Army, General Blanc, Chief of Staff of the Air Force General Fay, after inspecting the Indochina battlefield in February 1954, came to a pessimistic conclusion:

*"A reinforcement of the Expeditionary Corps, however strong, cannot bring about any change. Moreover, the military efforts by the Metropolitan country have reached the last limit. All that we can hope for now is to create the most favourable military conditions for a political solution to the conflict."*¹

Anticipating a general offensive of the Viet Nam People's Army in the Northern delta, French Premier Laniel on May 18, 1954, sent General Ely to Indochina to convey instructions to General Navarre, commander-in-chief of the French Expeditionary Corps: At present, the foremost objective is to save the Expeditionary Corps.

Ambassador Chauvel, deputy head of the French delegation at the 1954 Geneva Conference on Indochina, wrote in one of his reports to the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

*"We can hardly defend Ha Noi. The command has informed us that even with the dispatch of two more divisions it would not be possible to keep the capital of Tonkin..."*²

¹ J. Lacouture et Ph. Devillers, *La Fin d'une guerre*, Editions du Seuil, 1960, p. 62.

² Pierre Rouanet, *Mendes France au pouvoir*, Editions Laffont, Paris, 1965, p. 146.

The Laniel Government had previously sought to negotiate from a position of military strength so as to keep Laos and Kampuchea intact and to preserve whatever interests they could in Viet Nam, considering this an "honourable" solution for France. After the Dien Bien Phu defeat, that Government was eager to start negotiations in order, first of all, to save the French Expeditionary Corps from the danger of annihilation.

The French people's movement, the core of which was the French Communist Party, against "the dirty war" in Indochina was growing vigorously. The French administration, already divided over many questions, became more divided in face of serious economic, political and social difficulties. It was expected that France's defeat in Indochina would lead to the collapse of the entire colonial system of the French imperialists, particularly in North Africa. In such a situation France entered the 1954 Geneva conference on Indochina with the participation of the Soviet Union, China, the United States, the United Kingdom, and the belligerent parties in Indochina.

II-CHINA'S POSITION IN GENEVA WAS TOTALLY DIFFERENT FROM VIET NAM'S, BUT CONCORDANT WITH FRANCE'S

The People's Republic of China came into being in 1949 when the world was divided into two politically, economically and militarily opposing systems.

In Europe, the cold war was expanding and in Asia there were two hot wars in Korea and in Indochina. The leadership of the new China wanted to take advantage of peaceful conditions to rehabi-

litate and develop rapidly their economy, strengthen their military potential and rapidly turn China into a world power, in order to realize their ambition of big-nation expansionism and big-power hegemonism, directed mainly towards South-East Asia.

Though the Chinese army had suffered about a million casualties in the Korean war, the Chinese leadership, to secure a buffer zone in the North-East, in 1953 accepted a cease-fire in Korea: to maintain the status quo, and prolong the partition of Korea.

Viet Nam and China are two immediate neighbours. The two peoples had always supported, inspired and helped each other, since an independent Viet Nam meant that China would not be threatened by imperialism from the South and, in turn, a liberated China meant that Viet Nam would not be threatened by imperialism from the North. In 1950 the People's Republic of China recognized and established diplomatic relations with the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam.

China was the main supplier of military hardware to Viet Nam in the last years of the latter's resistance war against France.

At the 1954 Geneva Conference, Viet Nam proposed a comprehensive solution: cessation of hostilities in the whole Indochina peninsula, along with a political solution to the questions of Viet Nam, Laos and Kampuchea on the basis of respect for the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of each country.

For the Chinese leaders, the 1954 Geneva Conference on Korea and Indochina was an opportunity to discuss and settle with the big powers important international issues, in spite of the fact that the United States was then hostile to China and the latter had no diplomatic relations with France, while

the Chiang Kai Shek regime remained one of the five permanent members of the U. N. Security Council.

The Chinese leaders advocated a Korean-type solution to bring the Indochina war to an end, i.e., cessation of hostilities without any political solution. It was Premier Zhou Enlai who stated on August 24, 1953 that the Korean truce could be taken as a model for other conflicts. With such a solution they hoped to create a buffer zone in South-East Asia, prevent a replacement of the French by the Americans in Indochina, avoid a direct confrontation with the Americans, ensure security for their southern border, and at the same time to limit Viet Nam's victory and to divide the peoples of the three Indochinese countries in an attempt to weaken and eventually annex these countries and turn them into a springboard for expansion to South-East Asia.

At the Geneva Conference, the French also advocated a Korean-type truce to save their expeditionary corps in Indochina, to partition Viet Nam and maintain French colonialism in Indochina.

Clearly China's stand was entirely different from Viet Nam's, but in concordance with that of France.

III-THE 1954 GENEVA AGREEMENTS ON INDOCHINA AND THE CHINESE LEADERS' BETRAYAL

At a meeting of the Vietnamese, Soviet and Chinese delegations in April 1954 in preparation for the Geneva Conference on Indochina the Chinese delegate said: "The People's Republic of China cannot openly assist Viet Nam in case of expansion of the conflict there".

Taking advantage of their position as the main military supplier and the country in control of the only aid supply route to Viet Nam, and of French reluctance to talk with Viet Nam from a weak position, the Chinese leaders allowed themselves to negotiate directly with the French on fundamental points in a solution to the Indochina question.

The negotiations at the Geneva Conference were, in effect, conducted in two phases.

The first phase: From May 8 to June 23, 1954, the head of the French delegation, while avoiding meeting with the Vietnamese, conducted direct negotiations with the head of the Chinese delegation on four occasions. They reached agreement on fundamental points of a cease-fire accord for Indochina.

It should be noted that at the third meeting on June 17, 1954 between the French and the Chinese, Premier Zhou Enlai met G. Bidault, head of the French delegation, and made fundamental political concessions which were detrimental to the interests of the peoples of Viet Nam, Laos and Kampuchea: China would accept the existence of two administrations in Viet Nam (the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam and the Bao Dai puppet government), recognize the Royal Lao Government and the Royal Government of Kampuchea, withdraw their demand for the participation of the delegations of the Lao Resistance Government and the Kampuchea Resistance Government in the Geneva Conference and raise the question of withdrawal of foreign troops, including the Vietnamese volunteers, from Laos and Kampuchea.

At the fourth meeting on June 23, 1954 Premier Zhou Enlai saw the new French Premier Mendès France and made further concessions: partition of Viet Nam into two zones co-existing peacefully, the military questions to be settled first, separate solu-

tions for the questions of Viet Nam, Laos and Kampuchea; China would recognize these three countries as members of the French Union and wanted to see Laos and Kampuchea with a new face in South-East Asia, like India and Indonesia; in return China only required the absence of U.S. military bases in Indochina. Consequently, China and France reached agreement on the framework of a solution to the Indochinese question.

The understanding between the Chinese and the French was in full agreement with the 7-point solution proposed by the U.S.A. and Britain on June 29, 1954, six days after the meeting between Zhou Enlai and Mendès France.

The second phase: Between June 23 and July 20, 1954 the French delegation directly negotiated with the Vietnamese delegation to solve concrete problems. For her part, China kept on urging Viet Nam to make concessions. By July 10, 1954 Viet Nam still persistently held on to its views regarding the questions of Viet Nam, Laos and Kampuchea, demanding that representatives of the Lao Resistance Government and those of the Kampuchean Resistance Government participate in the conference on an equal footing with other parties and proposing the establishment of a temporary military demarcation line in Viet Nam at the 13th parallel and the holding of free elections within six months for national reunification. In Viet Nam's view, solution to the Lao and Kampuchean questions should include the creation of two regrouping zones for the resistance forces, one in the North near the Chinese and Vietnamese borders and the other in Central and Southern Laos; and in Kampuchea, of two regrouping zones for the Resistance forces: one situated East and North-East of the Mekong River, and the other, South-West of this river, and there would

be free general elections within six months in Laos and Kampuchea.

As early as May 1954, the Chinese delegation proposed the 16th parallel as the demarcation line between the two zones of Viet Nam, and even wanted Viet Nam to make further concessions to the extent of abandoning Ha Noi, Hai Phong and National Highway No. 5 (connecting Ha Noi with Hai Phong):

*"As the plan (of the 16th parallel) is not likely to be accepted, it should be envisaged that Hai Phong can be made a free port with a fixed number of French troops stationed nearby. If this, too, is not accepted, Highway No. 5, Ha Noi and Hai Phong can be made a demilitarized zone under joint control. . ."*¹

Later on, especially from July 10, 1954—ten days before the conclusion of the Geneva Conference, China exerted even greater pressure to obtain concessions from Viet Nam: *"There should be fair and reasonable conditions acceptable to the French Government, so that an agreement may be reached within ten days. The conditions must be plain and clear to facilitate negotiations. We should avoid complicating matters and engaging in time-consuming discussions and prolonged negotiations, so as not to allow the U.S. to sabotage the Conference."*²

China was then worried about the possibility of an American military intervention in Indochina, which would threaten China's security. But it should be pointed out that China did make use of the U.S.

¹ Zhou Enlai's message dated May 30, 1954 to the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party (a copy of which was forwarded to the Central Committee of the Viet Nam Workers' Party).

² Zhou Enlai's message dated July 10, 1954 to the Central Committee of Viet Nam Workers' Party.

threat of an expanded war of aggression to exert pressure on Viet Nam.

As a matter of fact, after the Korean war, the United States was not capable of making a direct military intervention in Indochina. The hard line adopted by the U.S. at the Geneva Conference reflected its suspicion that the French, defeated on the battlefield and confronted with difficulties on the political, economic and financial planes, might accept a settlement unfavourable to an eventual American intervention in Indochina. After France and China had agreed on a framework for a solution to the Indochina question and the U.S. stooge Ngo Dinh Diem had become Prime Minister of the Sai Gon puppet government (June 13, 1954) the United States decided it could accept an agreement as worked out by France and China to settle the three questions of Viet Nam, Laos and Kampuchea. Nevertheless, the United States did not sign the final communique of the conference, because it wanted to have a free hand to violate the Geneva Agreements later on, through the Ngo Dinh Diem administration, and to compel the French to leave Indochina and make place for the Americans.

It is obvious that after Dien Bien Phu, with the assistance of the socialist camp, especially of China, the army and people of Viet Nam were capable of liberating their entire country, but the solution agreed upon by the delegations of China and France in Geneva neither reflected the balance of force on the battlefield, nor did it fully meet the political requirement put forth by the Vietnamese delegation.

In keeping with its peace-loving tradition, and the general trend of settling disputes through negotiations, and under Chinese pressure, Viet Nam accepted a solution with the following points: respect for the fundamental national rights of the peoples of

Viet Nam, Laos and Kampuchea; ceasefire in Viet Nam and on the whole Indochinese battlefield; withdrawal of French troops; creation of a temporary military demarcation line at the 17th parallel partitioning Viet Nam into two zones; nation-wide free general elections within two years for national reunification.

In Laos was created a regrouping zone for the Lao resistance forces. In Kampuchea resistance forces were demobilized on the spot without any regrouping zone being created for them.

The Dien Bien Phu victory and the 1954 Geneva Agreements marked a great victory of the revolutionary forces in Indochina and greatly contributed to bringing about the disintegration of the French colonial empire and announced the irreversible process of collapse of colonialism and world imperialism. On the other hand, the Geneva solution, prevented the peoples of Viet Nam, Laos and Kampuchea from winning complete victory in their war of resistance against French colonialism which was clearly a practical possibility, considering the balance of force on the battlefield.

All that, the Chinese leaders knew better than anyone else.

That was the first time the Chinese leaders betrayed the revolutionary struggle of the peoples of Viet Nam, Laos and Kampuchea.

Part Three

CHINA AND THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE'S STRUGGLE FOR THE LIBERATION OF SOUTH VIET NAM AND THE REUNIFICATION OF THE COUNTRY (1954-1975)

Disregarding the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Viet Nam, the U.S. imperialists entered South Viet Nam with the design of liquidating the Vietnamese people's patriotic movement, annexing South Viet Nam, perpetually dividing Viet Nam, thus turning South Viet Nam into a U.S. new-type colony and military base and setting up a defence line to prevent socialism from advancing to South-East Asia, at the same time using South Viet Nam as a base to attack North Viet Nam, an outpost of the socialist system in South-East Asia, repressing and staving off socialism in this region in order to encircle and intimidate other socialist countries. Failing in their attempt to use the Ngo Dinh Diem administration as an instrument, and defeated in their "special war" in South Viet Nam, the U.S. imperialists embarked on a military adventure, the biggest, longest, fiercest and most brutal war of aggression since

the Second World War against the Vietnamese people.

Responding to the sacred appeal of President Ho Chi Minh: *"Nothing is more precious than independence and freedom"*, the Vietnamese people rose up, like a single man, against the U.S. imperialists. In this fight they held high the banner of national independence and socialism, combined the strength of our nation with that of our era, the strength of our own country with that of the world, in so doing they were able to create a great general strength to fight and defeat the aggressor. In this war, the Vietnamese people adopted an offensive strategy and conducted a vigorous struggle on three fronts—military, political, and diplomatic; at the same time they succeeded in compelling the enemy to de-escalate the war step by step, won partial victories, then total victory.

For 20 years and more, even as the Vietnamese people were fighting the U.S. policy of interference and aggression, they had to carry out a persevering and extremely complex struggle against the designs and acts, overt and covert, of the Chinese rulers who compromised and colluded with the U.S. imperialists to contain and to undermine the Vietnamese revolution, to subdue Viet Nam and realize step by step their expansionist policy in Indochina and South-East Asia.

I-1954-1964 PERIOD: THE CHINESE RULERS HAMPERED THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE'S STRUGGLE FOR NATIONAL REUNIFICATION

After reaching a compromise with the imperialists in the 1954 Geneva settlement and creating a safe buffer zone south of their country, the Chinese

leaders could devote themselves to speeding up the fulfilment of their first 5-year plan (1953-1957) and from 1958 they started their "great leap forward" plan, in an attempt to catch up with and overtake economic super-powers within a short time, and they strove to build a nuclear force.

In foreign affairs, they sought detente with the U.S. imperialists, holding talks with the U.S.A. in Geneva as early as August 1955 and at the same time, tried to expand their influence in Asia, especially in South-East Asia and South Asia.

Proceeding from these domestic and foreign policies, the Peking rulers acted contrary to the interests of the Vietnamese people and in accordance with those of the U.S. imperialists in Indochina, and particularly in Viet Nam.

1. Exerting pressure to force Viet Nam to accept the policy of "prolonged ambush".

The U.S. imperialists and their henchmen obdurately rejected the holding of general elections for the reunification of Viet Nam within 2 years as provided for in the 1954 Geneva Agreements; at the same time they repressed the patriotic movement in South Viet Nam with extreme barbarity.

The Chinese rulers kept trying to convince Viet Nam that the reunification of the country was a "long struggle" and could not be achieved by using armed forces.

In November, 1956, Chairman Mao Zedong told Vietnamese leaders:

"The partition of Viet Nam cannot be solved in a short time, it may take a long time. . . If 10 years is not enough, we should be prepared for 100 years."

The resistance waged by the Vietnamese people against U.S. aggression was long indeed, but not indefinitely long as Chairman Mao Zedong had anticipated.

In July 1955, Deng Xiaoping, Secretary General of the Chinese Communist Party, warned:

"Two possibilities will ensue from the use of armed forces to reunify the country: either victory or loss of North Viet Nam itself."

In July 1957, Chairman Mao Zedong again said: *"The question is to defend the existing frontier, to defend the 17th parallel... It may take a long time, but I hope a long time will bring good results."*

This statement was at variance with the Geneva Agreements which stipulated that the 17th parallel was not a frontier between two states, but a *provisional military demarcation line* between the two zones of Viet Nam. The Chinese leaders repeatedly preached that for South Viet Nam *"the only appropriate line is a prolonged ambush to muster strength, to keep close contact with the people and to wait for an opportunity"*. What does it really mean?

In a talk with Vietnamese leaders, a member of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Tchang Wentian said that a guerrilla war could be carried out in South Viet Nam. But later on, the Chinese ambassador in Ha Noi, on Peking's order, informed the Viet Nam side that the idea was not of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee, but only an individual's.

Thus, "prolonged ambush", in fact, meant that the Vietnamese people should give up their revolutionary struggle, let the U.S.-Diem clique freely repress the South Vietnamese people.

"To defend the 17th parallel", "prolonged ambush", "to muster strength" and "to wait for an opportunity" . . . were nothing but a devious way of covering up Peking's design of maintaining the political status quo in Viet Nam, recognizing both the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam and the Saigon puppet administration. On July 22, 1954, in Geneva, at a dinner with Ngo Dinh Luyen, Ngo Dinh Diem's younger brother, Premier Zhou Enlai suggested the establishment of a Saigon legation in Peking. Though Ngo Dinh Diem rejected the idea, this was an irrefutable evidence that the Chinese leaders, only 24 hours after the signing of the Geneva Agreements, revealed their desire to perpetuate the partition of Viet Nam.

During the 1954-1959 period, with their policy of fascist repression, the U.S.-Diem clique massacred hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese patriots, drove hundreds of thousands of others into disguised concentration camps, causing unprecedented losses to the Vietnamese people in their struggle for national salvation. If we let them continue the slaughtering of Vietnamese patriots at this rate, how could we "muster" our strength, have enough people left "to remain in close contact with", and what "opportunity" could we expect? If this state of things had been allowed to go on, Viet Nam would have lost its independence and would be permanently divided.

A matter of strategic significance to the South Vietnamese revolution was to decide whether to continue the political struggle or to combine political struggle with armed struggle.

The Vietnamese people were resolved to follow the line of independence and sovereignty. In late 1959 and early 1960, the people in large areas of

the Southern delta and the South of Central Viet Nam simultaneously rose up, combining political and armed struggle and shaking the puppet Ngo Dinh Diem regime by its roots.

2. Preventing the Vietnamese people from stepping up armed struggle in South Viet Nam.

The "simultaneous uprisings" which were, in fact, partial insurrections, quickly developed into a revolutionary war, combining political and armed struggle, against the "special war" of the U.S. imperialists. But the Chinese rulers did not agree with such a policy of Viet Nam.

In May 1960, during talks with the Vietnamese side, they said:

"We should not try to decide which is essential, political struggle or armed struggle. Neither form of struggle means an immediate seizure of power; anyway, the struggle remains a long one... Even with the collapse of the Diem regime, the reunification of the country cannot be achieved at once, because the U.S. imperialists would not allow it."

"... North Viet Nam may give South Viet Nam political support, helping it to work out policies, but the most important thing is to encourage the spirit of self-reliance of the South Vietnamese... When it is sure of success, the North may give the South military aid; that is, when it is quite certain that nothing bad can happen, a quantity of weapons may be supplied secretly. But, in general, no aid should be given."

Thus, failing in their attempt to prevent the South Vietnamese people's "simultaneous uprisings", the Chinese leaders wanted the North Vietnamese people to forsake their obligation to their

South Vietnamese compatriots, leaving the latter alone in the struggle.

They refused to help the Vietnamese people to build their regular army, and only agreed to give Viet Nam some light weapons and logistical supplies. When they failed to prevent the simultaneous uprising of the South Vietnamese people, they said that South Viet Nam should conduct only guerrilla warfare, fighting small battles, using small units like platoons and companies.

Being master of their own destiny, the Vietnamese people intensified their revolutionary struggle in South Viet Nam. Late in 1963, the fascist dictatorial Ngo Dinh Diem regime was overthrown and the U.S. "special war" went bankrupt.

3. To induce Viet Nam to oppose the Soviet Union.

In the early 1960s, while preventing the Vietnamese people from stepping up the struggle against the U.S. imperialists, the Peking leaders held high both the anti-U.S. and anti-Soviet signboards, but in fact they continued the policy of detente with the U.S. imperialists in Asia, to side-track the world people's struggle against the U.S. imperialists in order to carry out their scheme of opposing the Soviet Union, wrecking the socialist camp, taking over the "leadership of world revolution" and actively making preparations for detente and collusion with U.S. imperialism.

In their talks with the Vietnamese side in 1963, they tried to persuade Viet Nam to accept their view-points, that is to deny the existence of the socialist camp, and "blaze a trail" for Chinese expansion in South-East Asia. Also in 1963, the Chinese leaders put forward the so-called 25-point programme on the general line of the world commun-

ist movement and proposed to convene a conference of eleven Communist Parties in an attempt to seize "the leadership of world revolution" and to form a new Communist International dominated by Peking. They were eager to get Viet Nam's support to the idea, trying to use Viet Nam's prestige and role in the world communist and national liberation movements. To this end, they even sought to buy over Viet Nam by offering massive aid. Deng Xiaoping, Secretary General of the Chinese Communist Party, informed the Vietnamese leaders of the Chinese leaders' intention to give Viet Nam one billion Chinese Yuan in aid if Viet Nam refused all aid from the Soviet Union.

The Viet Nam side reaffirmed its determination to safeguard the socialist camp, disapproved the idea of convening an 11-party conference and did not allow the Chinese leaders to use Viet Nam as a spring-board for their expansionist designs. Due to the resolute attitude of the Vietnamese side, the 25-point programme did not have any repercussions and the design of forming a new Communist International did not materialize.

During this period, as regards the revolution of Laos, the Chinese rulers applied the same policies as towards Viet Nam. They exerted pressure on the Lao revolutionary forces to compel them to practice "prolonged ambush". When the U.S. imperialists and their henchmen overthrew the coalition government and waged a "special war", they prevented the Lao revolution from staging armed struggle combined with political struggle, and attempted to pressure the Revolutionary People's Party of Laos into "reestablishing the coalition government soon", lest the fire started by the spark in Samnua, Phong

Saly, should spread to Viet Nam and Southern China.

In a talk on the question of Laos with the Vietnamese side in August 1961, the Chinese side said:

"The greatest care must be taken to avoid getting directly involved in the war. If the U.S. jumps into Laos, what will happen to the North Viet Nam, Yunnan and Kwang Si? We should think of the possibility of a U.S. adventure."

Concerning a solution to the Laos question at the Geneva conference in 1961-1962, the Chinese leaders advocated partitioning Laos horizontally into two zones: one controlled by the liberation forces in the North and the other controlled by the puppet Vientian administration in the South. This was a wicked design aimed at securing Lao revolutionary forces' dependence on China and isolating the South Vietnamese revolution.

However, the leaders of the Laos revolution were determined to pursue their own line, the Lao resistance forces won one victory after another, thus forcing the U.S. imperialists and their henchmen to sign the 1962 Geneva Agreements which recognized the neutrality of Laos and accepted the presence of Lao patriotic front's representatives in the second coalition government of Laos.

II-1965-1969 PERIOD: UNDERMINING AND PROLONGING THE RESISTANCE WAR OF THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE

During this period, the so-called "great proletarian cultural revolution" took place in China. It was, in fact, a ferocious, bloody internal struggle, which ripped up the whole Chinese society. Its aim was to do away with Marxism-Leninism, to break up the Chinese Communist Party and the State appa-

ratus, to restore in the country the undivided leadership of Chairman Mao Zedong and the Maoist policy, to oppose the Soviet Union, to undermine the world revolution, to collude with the U.S. imperialists in external affairs, and to step up the implementation of the policy of great power hegemonism and big-nation expansionism. The Chinese leaders, for their strategic interests, during this period committed themselves to a course of betraying the Vietnamese people.

1. Turning on the green light for the U.S. to directly invade Viet Nam.

With the Korean war, the U.S. imperialists learnt the lesson that they should not wage a war on the Asian continent, especially in the countries adjacent to China, lest a direct military confrontation with China should take place. But over ten years later, the U.S. imperialists recklessly embarked on a military venture in Viet Nam after causing the so-called "Tonkin Gulf incident" in August 1964. One of the main reasons was that the U.S. imperialists were no longer worried about the Chinese rulers' reaction. In January 1965, through U.S. journalist E. Snow, Chairman Mao Zedong informed Washington:

*"China's armies will not go beyond her border to fight. That was clear enough. Only if the United States attacked China, would the Chinese fight. Wasn't that clear? The Chinese are very busy with their internal affairs. Fighting beyond one's own border was criminal. Why should the Chinese do so? The South Vietnamese could cope with their situation".*¹

¹ E. Snow, *The Long Revolution*, Hutchinson Ed., London, 1973, p. 216.

Subsequently, in various ways, including the ambassadorial-level Sino-American talks in Warsaw, the Chinese side made Mao's words clear to the U.S., reassuring the latter that *"If you do no harm to us, we will do no harm to you"*.

Thus, from February 1965, the Johnson administration freely deployed its huge military machine on the Viet Nam battle-field, sending U.S. troops to South Viet Nam to fight a regional war, at the same time, waging an air war of destruction against the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, causing untold sufferings and losses to the entire Vietnamese people.

The Chinese rulers thus revealed their wily calculations and evil designs. They caused the U.S. to get bogged down in the war of aggression against Viet Nam so that they may devote themselves to their "cultural revolution" unworried. With the U.S. involved in a military venture in Viet Nam, they hoped both the U.S. and Viet Nam would be weakened.

The following words of Premier Zhou Enlai in his talk with Egyptian President A. Nasser on June 23, 1965 and retold by Mohammed Hassanein Heikal, Nasser's close friend and personal adviser, constituted an eloquent evidence:

*"The more troops the U.S. sends to Viet Nam, the more delighted we are, for we know that we have them in our hands and we can bleed them. If you want to help Viet Nam, you should encourage the U.S. to send more troops to that country, the more the better."*¹

With the Vietnamese people, the Chinese rulers kept insisting: protracted war, guerrilla warfare,

¹ Mohammed H. Heikal, *Documents du Caire*, Flammarion Ed., Paris, 1972, p. 238.

small battles. They helped the Vietnamese people mainly with light weapons, ammunition and logistic supplies. They did not want an early end to the Viet Nam war, because they wanted not only to weaken the Vietnamese revolutionary forces, but also to avail, the longer the better, of the publicity obtained by "aiding Viet Nam" to hold high the banner of "thorough revolution", to muster forces in Asia, Africa and Latin America and to intensify their anti-Soviet campaign.

No wonder they refused to implement a secret military agreement between Viet Nam and China. According to the agreement, the Chinese side, in principle, had to send pilots to Viet Nam by June, 1965. But on July 16, 1965, the General Staff of the Chinese Liberation Army sent a message to the General Staff of the Viet Nam People's Army, saying that the Chinese side could not send pilots to Viet Nam because *"the time is not appropriate"* and *"by doing so we could not prevent the enemy from intensifying their air raids"*. During talks with the Vietnamese side in August 1966, they also said: *"China has not enough air power to help defend Ha Noi."*

2. Undermining every united action in support of Viet Nam's struggle against U.S. aggression.

In order to make Viet Nam dependent on China, the Chinese rulers did their utmost to prevent every united action by revolutionary and progressive forces in the world in support of Viet Nam's struggle against U.S. aggression.

On February 28, 1965, they rejected the Vietnamese draft of February 22, 1965 for a joint statement by the socialist countries condemning the United States for intensifying its war of aggression

in South Viet Nam and for unleashing a war against the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam.

In March 1965, they rejected the Soviet proposal that the Parties of the Soviet Union, China and Viet Nam meet to discuss joint action in support of the Vietnamese people's struggle against the U.S. aggressors.

In April 1965, on two occasions, they rejected the Soviet proposal for united action to ensure the security of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam. This explained why they rejected the Soviet proposal to set up an airlift via China and build airfields on Chinese territory to defend the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam.

In February 1966, Chairman Mao Zedong rejected the idea of creating a united international front in support of Viet Nam as suggested in the course of the high-level Sino-Vietnamese talk.

In March 1966, Chairman Mao Zedong again rejected the suggestion for the founding of a united international front in support of Viet Nam against the U.S. imperialists made by the Japanese Communist Party at a high-level talk with the Chinese Communist Party. Later Peking's agents brazenly manhandled the Japanese Communist Party's representative in China.

Instead, the Chinese authorities wanted to set up what they called the World People's Front under their control.

*"It is necessary to set up a broad united international front against the U.S. imperialists and their henchmen. . . Of course such a front should not include them (the Soviet Union)."*¹

Along with their sabotage of every united action

¹ Resolution of the 11th plenum (8th session) of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, August 1966.

in support of Viet Nam, they created tremendous difficulties for the transportation of aid supplies from the Soviet Union and other socialist countries via China, and tried by all means to reschedule those supplies in an attempt to limit the Vietnamese people's ability to launch large-scale operations, particularly in the dry season.

In their struggles against the common enemy, namely colonialism and imperialism, the peoples of Viet Nam, Laos and Kampuchea have closely united with one another. That is a fine tradition and a factor determining the victory of the three countries. Following the intensification of the U.S. war against Viet Nam and in face of the threat to the independence, peace, neutrality of Laos and Kampuchea, an Indochinese people's conference was held in Phnom Penh in March 1965, and subsequently the Indochinese Peoples' United Front against U.S. aggression took shape. But, the Chinese rulers, though compelled to welcome the results of the conference in public, made many attempts to sabotage the three Indochinese Peoples' United Front. Applying the traditional "divide and rule" policy of imperialist and reactionary forces, they sowed discord among the three Indochinese countries in an attempt to weaken them and to isolate Viet Nam, so that they could easily subdue these countries one after another.

In 1966, in the liberated areas of Laos controlled by the Lao Patriotic Front, Chinese nationals, implementing a plan of Peking, tried to bring about discord between the Lao and the Vietnamese, carried out a campaign of distortion propaganda and instigated bad elements to oppose the Lao People's Revolutionary Party. On the other hand, Peking tried to win over the Royal Government of Laos by stepping up its aid programme for building a road network in the 5 provinces of Northern Laos leading to

the Yunnan high-plateau in China and branching off to Viet Nam and Thailand. This would facilitate China's interference in the internal affairs of Laos and Chinese preparations for future expansionist plans.

In Kampuchea, before 1965, the Chinese rulers had been slanderously clamouring that Viet Nam had sold out the interests of the Kampuchean revolution at the 1954 Geneva Conference on Indochina, in spite of the obvious fact that it was China who had sold out Kampuchea. In 1965, after securing control over Pol Pot, they enjoined the latter to wage an armed struggle against the Sihanouk administration, then allied with the resistance forces of Viet Nam and Laos. In the second half of 1969 after Lon Nol became Prime Minister, the Chinese rulers supported his demand that the South Vietnamese liberation armed forces withdraw from their Kampuchean bases and refrain from using the port of Sihanoukville as a supply base. During that same period, the Pol Pot - Ieng Sary clique too demanded that the South Vietnamese liberation armed forces withdraw from their Kampuchean bases.

Contrary to Peking's wish, the world people's front in support of Viet Nam became a reality, the solidarity among the Indochinese peoples was increasingly consolidated and the Vietnamese people grew even stronger and won even more victories in their struggle.

3. Preventing Viet Nam from negotiating with the U.S. for a U.S. de-escalation of the war.

Right from the start of its war of resistance against U.S. aggression, Viet Nam decided to wage a struggle on three fronts—military, political and diplomatic.

Early in 1968, when the U.S. war of aggression came to its climax, the Vietnamese people won a great victory in their Mau Than Lunar New Year general offensive and uprising, inflicting on the enemy a decisive blow which upset its strategy, thereby compelling the U.S. administration to de-escalate the war and hold talks with the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam in Paris.

In the course of the talks with the Vietnamese side in April 1968, the Chinese side recognized that the January 28, 1967 statement of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam on negotiations with the United States had a good effect, saying: *"Even allies of the United States, including de Gaulle, also demanded an unconditional end to the bombardment"*. But they also added: *"The time has not come and a favourable position has not been secured for Viet Nam's entering into negotiations with the United States. We have been making concessions too hastily."*

From May 13, 1968, when the Paris conference began, to mid-October, 1968, the Peking media did not carry any report about the negotiations between Viet Nam and the United States, but kept on stressing that the Vietnamese people should decide the outcome of their struggle *"not at the conference table, but on the battlefield"*. They even threatened that *"failure to secure South Viet Nam would ultimately lead to the loss of the whole of Viet Nam"*.

When the possibility of an end to the U.S. bombing of North Viet Nam emerged more clearly, Peking's reaction became stronger.

On October 9, 1968, a Chinese leader met a Vietnamese Vice-Minister of Foreign Trade in Peking and asked him to convey to the Vietnamese leadership a message to the effect that China considered the ending of U.S. bombing of North Viet Nam as

"a Vietnamese compromise with the United States" and "a major setback and a great loss for the Vietnamese people, just like the negotiations for the 1954 Geneva Agreements which were a mistake". He suggested that Viet Nam "should let the U.S. resume bombing and shelling all over North Viet Nam. Thus the United States would be forced to scatter its bombing raids and a lessening of difficulties for the South could be achieved".

Preventing the Vietnamese people from negotiating with the United States and encouraging the latter to intensify bombing of North Viet Nam showed, as U.S. General M. Taylor put it, the determination of the Chinese leadership *"to fight the United States to the last Vietnamese"* so as to weaken Viet Nam in the interest of their expansionist policy.

At the above-mentioned talk with the Vietnamese Vice-Minister of Foreign Trade, the Chinese side made a fallacious statement that in its decision to hold negotiations with the United States Viet Nam had taken *"Soviet advice"* and they asked the Vietnamese to make a choice:

"If Viet Nam wants to defeat the United States, it should cut off relations with the Soviet Union; if Viet Nam wants to reach a compromise with the United States, using Chinese aid for the fight against the Americans with a view to negotiating with them, Chinese aid would then lose all its significance."

On October 17, 1968, Chinese Foreign Minister Chen Yi met a Vietnamese representative to convey the Chinese leadership's view of the negotiations between Viet Nam and the United States:

"Your agreement to hold four-party negotiations will help Johnson and Humphrey to win the elections, leave the South Vietnamese people under the domination of the U.S. imperialists and their puppets. South Viet Nam will not be liberated and its people

may suffer still greater losses. So is there anything for our two Parties and States to talk about?"

The threat to cut off relations between the two Parties was a cynical trick to exert the strongest pressure on Viet Nam.

Threats by coarse words were accompanied with threats by deeds. In 1968, when planning the aid programme for 1969, the Chinese reduced the amount of aid by 20% as compared with 1968. Furthermore, in August 1969, they brazenly said:

"You want to continue fighting or to make peace? China must know the answer when considering the question of aid."

In practice, they reduced the amount of aid for 1970 by more than 50% as compared with 1968.

As a matter of fact, the Peking leadership did not wait until 1968 to use aid to exert pressure on Viet Nam. As early as April, 1966, Deng Xiaoping, Secretary General of the Chinese Communist Party, told a Vietnamese leader: *"In 1964, comrade Mao Zedong criticized us for showing too great a zeal in the Viet Nam question. Now we have clearly seen that he is very far-sighted."*

The Vietnamese side replied:

"The zeal of one socialist country for another is in keeping with proletarian internationalism. We never think that such a zeal could ever do any harm. With your zeal the lives of 2 or 3 million people in our country may be spared."

"The South Vietnamese people will fight the U.S. aggressors to the end, and we will continue to uphold proletarian internationalism."

In an attempt to exert greater pressure on Viet Nam, the Chinese leadership instructed their embassy in Ha Noi to instigate Chinese nationals in Viet Nam to make trouble and oppose the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam. Together

with tens of thousands of people belonging to the Chinese "logistics troops" who came to Viet Nam to help build roads in the Northern provinces from 1965 to 1968, reactionary Chinese nationals propagated "Mao Zedong thought" and "the cultural revolution", distorted the political line of Viet Nam and organized a network of intelligence. "Victims of the cultural revolution" infiltrated into the Northern border provinces of Viet Nam to spy and organize "under-ground armies"¹.

But the Vietnamese people were determined to persist in their immutable line of independence and sovereignty. Peking's crude attempts to exert pressure and its political manoeuvres had been frustrated. The U.S. was compelled to put an unconditional end to the bombing of North Viet Nam early in November 1968 and to take part in the quadripartite talks in Paris, with the participation of the National Front for Liberation of South Viet Nam from early 1969.

III-1969-1973 PERIOD: NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES BEHIND VIET NAM'S BACK

In 1969, as the "cultural revolution" in China had been completed in the main, the Peking rulers, internally, made every effort to consolidate the leadership of Chairman Mao Zedong, stabilize the domestic situation and step up production and, externally, used all possible means to accelerate the

¹ During the Viet Nam-China top-level talks in September 1970 and November 1977, Chairman Mao Zedong and Chairman Hua Guo Feng have admitted China's responsibility for those unfriendly acts.

process of rapprochement with the United States in an attempt to raise China to the rank of a big power, normalize relations with the United States and settle the problem of Taiwan. They attempted to use the Viet Nam problem to achieve such objectives in external affairs.

1969 was Nixon's first year in the White House. He advanced the "Nixon doctrine" with a view to restoring the international position of the United States seriously weakened by the Viet Nam war, and adopted the strategy of "Vietnamization of the war" with a view to withdrawing U.S. troops from South Viet Nam while maintaining the Nguyen Van Thieu puppet administration.

During the period from 1969 to 1973, the Vietnamese people stepped up their offensive on the battlefield as well as at the Paris quadripartite conference and achieved ever greater successes. This was also the period when Peking and Washington increased contacts, openly collaborated with each other and discussed not only bilateral matters, but also matters relating to the sovereignty of the Vietnamese and other Indochinese peoples.

1. Brazenly betraying the Vietnamese People.

Early in November, 1968, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China issued a statement expressing its desire to resume the Sino-U.S. talks in Warsaw and to sign with the United States an agreement of peaceful co-existence. Subsequently, China responded positively to the signals from the U.S. side. After becoming President, Nixon informed the Chinese Government that discussions between the United States and China could be held in China. China replied that "Nixon might come personally

to Peking or send an envoy to discuss the Taiwan problem." ¹

In June 1970, China and the United States agreed that Chinese ambassador Huang Chen and Kissinger would hold secret talks each time Kissinger came to Paris for the negotiations with Viet Nam. ²

On December 10, 1970, through his close friend E. Snow, Chairman Mao Zedong extended an invitation to Nixon to visit China:

"He (the President) should be welcome because at present the problems between China and the U.S.A. must be solved with Nixon." ³

This was Peking's turn-about decisively bearing on Sino-U.S. relations, at the same time it was a turning point on Peking's path of overt betrayal to the Vietnamese revolution, the Indochinese revolution and the world revolution. Peking increased its public contacts with the United States:

In March 1971, China invited a team of U.S. ping-pong players to visit China, starting what public opinion called "ping-pong diplomacy".

In July and in October 1971, Kissinger came to Peking as Nixon's special envoy.

In February 1972, Nixon himself visited China.

Briefing the Vietnamese side on Kissinger's first visit to Peking, a high-level delegation of China on July 13, 1971, said:

"Indochina was the most important question in our meeting with Kissinger. Kissinger said the United States linked the settlement of the Indochina problem with the settlement of the Taiwan problem."

¹ E. Snow, *The Long Revolution*, Hutchinson Ed., London, 1973, pp. 11 and 172.

² V. A. Walters, *Silent Missions*, Doubleday Ed., New York, 1978, pp. 530-531.

³ E. Snow, *The Long Revolution*, Hutchinson Ed., London, 1973, p. 172.

The Americans said they would withdraw their troops from Taiwan only if they could withdraw troops from Indochina. As far as China is concerned, the withdrawal of U.S. troops from South Viet Nam is problem No. 1, and the question of China joining the United Nations comes second".

When Nixon ended his visit to China the two sides signed the Shanghai communiqué which reads in part:

"The United States confirms the ultimate objective of the withdrawal of all U.S. forces and military installations from Taiwan. In the meantime, it will progressively reduce its forces and military installations on Taiwan as the tension in this area diminishes."

Early in March 1972, on a mission to Viet Nam for briefing about the talks with Nixon, the representative of the Chinese leadership elaborated on the above-mentioned part of the communiqué as follows:

"In order to normalize the relations between China and the United States and to ease tension in the Far East, first and foremost, the Viet Nam and Indochina problems must be settled. We do not demand that the Taiwan problem be settled first. Taiwan is for a later stage."

Peking at heart wanted to make use of the Viet Nam question for the settlement of the Taiwan issue first. But Viet Nam was determined to pursue a policy of independence and sovereignty. Consequently, the Chinese leaders and Nixon came to an agreement: *"In the meantime, it will progressively reduce its forces and military installations as tension in this area diminishes."*

That means that if China wanted the withdrawal of U.S. forces and military installations from Taiwan to be accelerated, she had to press Ha Noi