

# 1964: Exhilaration 1968: Frustration

## 1970: Hopelessness

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By A. J. LANGGUTH

SAIGON - BECAUSE VIETNAM HOLDS NO SENTIMENTAL ATTRACTION FOR ME, I WAS LOOKING FOR CHANGES DURING THIS THIRD TRIP OF MINE AND NOT HOPING TO FIND THINGS AS THEY WERE WHEN I FIRST SAW THE COUNTRY SIX YEARS AGO. I DISLIKED BEING HERE IN 1964, THOUGH THE MOOD OF THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY, DIPLOMATS AND REPORTERS, WAS BUOYANT THEN. MEN WHO WERE OTHERWISE COMPETENT AND RATIONAL SEEMED TO REGARD THE WAR AS AN EXALTED GAME IN WHICH ONE SIDE - CALLED THE VIETCONG - MADE FURTIVE MOVES WE TRIED TO PARRY. THAT MEN OCCASIONALLY GOT KILLED HEIGHTENED THE SENSE OF ADVENTURE. BUT IF ONE WERE NOT EXHILARATED BY TRAMPING THROUGH RICE FIELDS OR SURVEYING THE RAIN FOREST FROM THE OPEN DOOR OF A HELICOPTER GUNSHIP, THEN THE WAR COULD ONLY BE STUPID AND SAD.

I LEFT AFTER 14 MONTHS, AND WHEN I RETURNED IN 1968, THE EBULLIENCE WAS GONE. BY THAT TIME THE ENEMY HAD BECOME CHARLEY, AND HE HAD SHAKEN OUR SELF-ESTEEM WITH THE DARING AND FORCE OF HIS TET OFFENSIVE. TO DRIVE HIS FEW LAST SNIPERS FROM THEIR PERCHES IN SCHOOLS AND PAGODAS, WE WERE BOMBING WHOLE CITIES TO RUBBLE, AND IT MAY HAVE BEEN THEN THAT THE FEAR AND CONTEMPT OUR SOLDIERS FELT FOR THE VIETNAMESE MERGED WITH A DEEP FRUSTRATION AND PRODUCED THE FURY THAT MADE PINKVILLE POSSIBLE. PINKVILLE AND THE OTHER

atrocities that took only two or three lives and went unreported.

Now I am here again, and all I find on all sides is hopelessness. I almost said despair, but that suggests a measure of energy. This is a listless and somnambulant absence of hope. Our men, when they fight at all, are fighting dinks now, and nearly all Vietnamese qualify as dinks. Mostly we are trying to keep American casualties low, and that may be the only goal on which the high command and the infantryman can still agree. And that infantryman is not Special Forces any more; he doesn't claim that anything about him is special. He is a grunt. As a grunt he revenges himself on his situation with pot or a peace symbol or by absenting himself from the war altogether.

"One of my men went AWOL to Saigon for 90 days," an American field commander complained. "When he came back, the court-martial board gave him a sentence of two months, suspended. That's not such a bad trade, is it? Three months in Saigon for two months suspended. It's the same with marijuana cases. I don't even try to punish them any more. You get a lot of young captains and majors on the board, and they identify with the defendant, not the Army."

Men of the commander's age take this change in values as a threat to them and to their country. But if ever an institution needed challenge and self-criticism it is the Army. The disturbing aspect to Vietnam, after all, has not been the occasional small mutiny but the regular obedience to murderous orders.

As for changes in the individual soldier, that same commander admitted that while he was home on leave last Christmas he had trouble getting through to his own children. And I remembered a few days ago something David Halberstam once wrote—that a senior officer in the

U.S. mission who wanted to discredit him put out a story that Halberstam had wept at the sight of dead bodies. Seven years pass, and a man like Ronald Ridenhour, whose courage forced the Mylai investigation, can say without embarrassment that he has wept in the presence of death. It is one difference in attitude that I find no reason to regret.

In fact, by this time we seem to be realizing that the villains responsible for America's mistakes in Vietnam are not individuals but traits of character, and that often our own best qualities have turned against us on foreign soil. Our national optimism, celebrated from Ellis Island to Cape Kennedy, betrayed us here. Our impatience gave us every convenience of American life and guaranteed that we would lose. Even hard work, the noblest expression in our lexicon, has failed us in Vietnam.

I think of General Westmoreland's responding to every setback by adding to the duty hours of his men until finally the Americans were sitting at empty desks next to silent telephones while their Vietnamese counterparts went home to eat and sleep and try to live normally. In "Animal Farm," Orwell dealt affectionately with Horse and his conviction that success must come if only he worked harder. There was gallantry to Horse, along with his blind spots. But of course he went to the knacker's in the end.

**I**F the Americans are somber and tired, I find fewer changes among the Vietnamese, who were sick of the war when it was still a novelty for us. In the spring of 1965, I watched while a tribe of hill people near Kontum trudged away from their village to escape the American bombing. They arrived at a refugee camp to be handed a blanket and given a lecture by a Vietnamese officer on the evils of Communism. Their faces were impassive then, and over the countryside they are no more animated now. Farmers and fishermen scarcely look at

army trucks force them off the road. The children wail and shout; they beggar the French for candy right up to Dienbienphu.

Many villages have communal television sets now or receive propaganda broadcasts from the Government on their radios, so it may be that the old woman hunched over in the rice paddy appreciates today the difference between the Communist and the free worlds. She may now be able to tell—as six years ago she could not—the hated white soldiers of colonial France from self-sacrificing white allies sent by the United States.

In 1964, I saw American pilots brandishing pistols to keep Vietnamese troops from swamping their helicopters as they tried to escape from a remote jungle camp. That same year the commander of a South Vietnamese Army training center told me he wanted to schedule night maneuvers for his recruits but could not; they used the darkness as cover to run away. Talking with South Vietnamese officers this time, I find it is no better. The young men themselves told about their plans for deserting with a lack of discretion that surprised me.

It may be a part of the psychology of war that the sense of futility should be so strong just now, when there has been little fighting for several months. Only a few senior American officials are taking heart from the lull. They quote President Nguyen Van Thieu as predicting that Vietnam is due for an extended period that will be neither peace nor war. Gradually the Communist troops will end their attacks and wither away. It is a theory favored by Henry Cabot Lodge, and it will be more plausible on the day the fighting withers further away than Cambodia.

Perhaps President Thieu believes his reassurances. He remains an enigma to me, though I think he understands the American mentality very well and plays adroitly on our pride and

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guilt. He heads the 12th or 13th government I have seen installed in Saigon, and is not the worst of chief executives, a distinction held by Nguyen Khanh. On the other hand, the Vietnamese are still waiting for a Premier or President they can call their best.

At the U.S. Embassy, Thieu enjoys the complete confidence of Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker, and for the last three years that support has been worth \$750-million annually in aid to the South Vietnamese Government. On his recent trip to Saigon, Vice President Agnew reportedly promised to raise that amount by \$150-million. With each new withdrawal of U.S. troops, Thieu can be expected to request still more aid, and the inclination at the embassy is to recommend giving it to him.

**B**UT democracy as exemplified by Thieu's Government has shortcomings that are hard to disguise, a circumstance that leads ranking American officials here to unusual lengths in their attempts at justification. The embassy has become the best place in Vietnam these days to hear about lapses in the American system, apparently on the theory that they make Thieu's regime more acceptable.

The mention of past election irregularities brings a reminder from an American diplomat of the egregious frauds in southern Illinois. Street demonstrations against Thieu? Certainly, but consider how smoothly the Saigon police have dispersed the crowds with nightsticks and tear gas. No Kent State tragedy, the implication runs, in the Republic of Vietnam. And it was briefings by the embassy that produced those baffling stories you read a few weeks ago in which a large vote in the senatorial elections for Thieu's most virulent political enemies became a triumph for him.

A man leaving the embassy could be forgiven for believing that the war was won and a golden age under way in Vietnam. But perhaps even President Thieu does not en-

tirely subscribe to that bright assessment. There is a rumor, for example, that he has bought a million-dollar villa in Switzerland, a charge which Thieu attributes to the malice of his Vice President and denies with perfect blandness. "How could I afford a villa like that on my salary?" he asked an interviewer. "I would have to be taking Government money."

"Is it true that Thieu has bought a villa?" I asked a knowledgeable Vietnamese friend.

"It doesn't matter if it's true," he answered. "Everyone believes it. That's what matters."

His allies would say it is only the unpredictability of the Americans that causes President Thieu to plan ahead. Since the election of 1964, the Vietnamese have learned to measure time by the four-year terms of U.S. Presidents. Lyndon Johnson reinforced the tendency two years ago when he removed himself as a candidate for re-election and changed all the equations here. Now the Vietnamese politicians fix their eyes on 1972. If Vietnamization appears to be faltering, they expect a hasty settlement in Paris that will see Mr. Nixon through his re-election campaign.

"We do not expect him to sacrifice his political future for Vietnam as President Johnson did," a Vietnamese said. "There will be a deal."

For reasons I will come to, I don't agree, but I wish I did. The Vietnamese are splendid at intrigue, an art denied to most Americans, and if they are predicting betrayal by the United States, it means they have calculated what they would do were they us. Over the years I have heard many Vietnamese warn about this, and invariably it would have been smart at the time to do so.

**M**ISTRUST of our intentions has contributed to the feeling against America that is rising here. The antagonism will almost certainly get worse, since it gives South

Vietnam its one semblance of political unity: the left can blame the Americans for getting Vietnam into this mess while the right castigates us for trying to get ourselves out.

This is a change, this identifying of the United States as the principal enemy. In 1964, socialists and liberals in Saigon knew differently. The Communist bloodlettings of 1954, the retribution against tens of thousands of North Vietnamese who had opposed the revolution, was fresher in their minds. Now even the Hue massacres two years ago have not revived the fear of Communism that prevailed six years ago. The people are tired; in the name of peace they are willing to take great risks.

Also a factor is the whole generation of young people who have come of age uninitiated by their elders' mistakes. "What are the Communists going to do, kill 100,000, 200,000 people? Impossible." That was the reply of Mien Duc Thang, a 24-year-old song writer, when I tried to find out if the prospect of a victory by Hanoi alarmed him. "Roman Catholics in South Vietnam are oppressed by Communism," he added. "It is their nightmare."

Among Catholics themselves there is less unity than ever before. Ngo Cong Duc is a Deputy in the National Assembly and the publisher of Tin Sang, or Morning News. Duc is one of the strongest voices for complete withdrawal of U.S. troops and bilateral talks between Saigon and the Victorians. He is a Catholic in his mid-30's.

On his office wall Duc has tacked a poster given to him by Congressman Augustus Hawkins of California. It contrasts the millions of tons of bombs dropped on Vietnam by American planes with the far smaller amount of ammunition fired by the Communists. "The bloodbath is now," the poster says.

The link between peace groups in the United States and those in Saigon is new to me, and given the indiffer-

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ence to Vietnam's future that underlies much of the antiwar sentiment in America, it strikes me as strange. Five years ago, there was no cooperation at all. An aide to an antiwar Senator in Washington did ask a few American reporters to pass on information about the war that was not getting into their papers. But I doubt he had any takers. At the time, his suggestion seemed vaguely underhanded. And editorial censorship in the United States has never been a problem in this war.

Now the reverberations that a New York peace group can set off among dissident factions in Saigon have alarmed the Thieu Government enough that visa procedures have been changed to permit stricter control over tourists. If Thieu can help it, there will be no more participation by American clergymen in Saigon street demonstrations.

Exactly how repressive Thieu's Government has become surprised me, I think because reporters now take for granted the arbitrary arrests and minor injustices. There is no longer the sense of outrage, either here or in the United States, that preceded the overthrow of Diem. To be fair, blatant as they are, the provocations are not so widespread, either.

**I** SPENT much of this trip talking with Thieu's political opposition. I suppose I was hoping again to find evidence of that elusive third force, and I decided once more, reluctantly as ever, that no effective liberal center exists between Thieu and Ky and the Communists.

Thieu may have no popular following; neither do his opponents. United, perhaps, these ragtags and remnants could form a majority, but they are content to remain a collection of minorities. All the same, I found something admirable in the Tran Ngoc Liengs, the Vu Van Maus, the Madames Ngo Ba Thanh and Kieu Mong Thu.

They are all trying to believe that Vietnam can stake out a middle ground between Communism and the Govern-

ment, and in their dark and ugly villas, hunched forward on red plastic couches, ignoring the weak tea cold in their cups, they talk by the hour of social justice and true democracy in a future as remote to me as an opium dream.

Many of them have gone to prison for that dream. Mrs. Thanh was jailed twice by Nguyen Cao Ky, the second time serving 26 months on a charge that never had to be specified since she was never given a trial. The young song writer, Thang, was jailed this year by a military court for his antiwar sentiments. "If I did not take a humorous view of life," he told me, "I could be bitter."

Huyen Tan Man, head of the student union at Saigon University, served five and a half months before political pressures got him freed, at least temporarily. "All presidents of the student union are sent to jail," he said. "It's a tradition." But, lacking Thang's humor, he promises to be bitter for a long time.

Perhaps it was the days spent with these idealists and malcontents that brought me at last to correct my feelings about the Vietnamese. They are not a people who make themselves easy to like, for they can be aloof, stiff-necked, pretentious. Their culture, on which the Vietnamese set great store, has been inaccessible to me from the start. The glissando to their music strikes my ear like the worrying of a loose tooth. The literature, at least in translation, is the gossamer that used to be called shop-girl fare before Western girls moved on to the hard stuff. Traditional Vietnamese painting derives heavily from China and India; modern art is fake Buffet. Or so it seemed to me.

But 50-year-old politicians still signing petitions and writing monographs reminded me of the resilience at the base of this society so apparently drained and vulnerable. Two years ago I saw the same trait in the residents of Hue as they rose at dawn to rebuild their stores and homes. I would have under-

stood lethargy or days given to complaints and rage.

The army officers also gained my respect as never before, but the answer for that was not hard to find. Always before I seemed to find myself talking with men who had first joined the army during the French rule. They had made a conscious decision to ally themselves with the colonialists against the liberation movement of their own people. Such men are Thieu and Ky and most others of their age. For every one who saw the dangers of the Vietminh, who sensed that Communism would not provide the future they wanted, there were many more who went along with France because it seemed the easier way. Who can presume to judge those men, acting as they did from a variety of motives and family responsibilities? But it has been hard to feel much admiration for them.

This time I met captains, majors and colonels who graduated from officers' candidate school after 1954, after the partition of the country. These are career soldiers who are not thinking of desertion, though an occasional member of their ranks will wonder aloud whether he, too, hasn't allied himself against the interests of his people. But the others still speak of patriotism and love of country, and when they do, their words do not echo with the ring of a cash register.

**I** ALSO respond to the growing realization, at least among the university students, that, whatever the future of Vietnam, they must bear the responsibility. Six years ago, during the continual shuffling of governments, a Vietnamese journalist could say to me: "The United States must take us over. You must establish a leader and insist we follow him. We can never do it ourselves."

"No," I assured him, "that is not the American way." And besides, I said, we have only 20,000 troops in Viet-

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nam, which is not enough to enforce our will if we wished to try.

Six months later, 100,000 American soldiers had landed in Vietnam and Marshal Ky was firmly in command.

Few of the younger generation, boys and girls who were 14 and 15 during my first stay, would make that plea today. Now they ask that we rid them of the Thieu Government and let them arrive at their own "Vietnamese solution." This new confidence may be misplaced, but it appeals to me.

Though the students of 21 and 22 were railing against U.S. policy, I fully expected them to have succumbed by now to our American pop culture. Surely a country exposed to a couple of million emissaries from America would have capitulated to cheeseburgers and James Brown. But the same Vietnamese culture I found insubstantial has kept them safe.

They listen to rock on occasion, but they prefer the ballads of their own composers. A girl may experiment with miniskirts, but as the time nears for her to marry she reverts to the ao dai. On the subject of American films, the young students are downright puritanical. They think spy stories like Matt Helm, James Bond or Flint are obscene. If they could ban Playboy from the newsstands they would.

Prudery like theirs could be irritating if it weren't bound up with their presentiment that soon they shall be called upon to shape their society. That does not mean they are trying with their elders to formulate a coherent political philosophy. These young Vietnamese are not at all doctrinaire, and Marxism is only an exotic word to most of them. Rather, they seem to be looking for strength in the traditional values, the respected ways. Students begin their meetings with one of Thang's songs, "Singing from the Deserted Rice Fields." If they have gathered outdoors, the boys and girls sit on the ground and beat the earth with their fists as they sing:  
*Deserted land, we plow.*

*Dry land, we nurse.*

*Land brings gorgeous flowers.*

*Our future is full.*

I hear that fervor—already blotting out Thieu, Ky and the entire American experience—and I wonder if this new nationalism won't make rapprochement with the Communists easier for them. They see at close hand the future exemplified by America, and it proves to have little allure for them. Should revolution from the North overtake them, they have nothing to lose but their Hondas.

Those motorbikes and cycles are everywhere now, reminders of the economic policy two and three years ago, when luxury goods were dumped on Vietnam as a hedge against inflation. Refrigerators, television sets, sewing machines, Japanese and American made, were imported and sold cheaply to soak up the money American soldiers and contractors were injecting into the economy. Prices have gone up all the same—300 per cent or more in five years—and the rise has led to new taxes to cut spending. Now a Honda that sold in 1969 for 30,000 piasters (\$75 at a realistic rate of exchange) costs four or five times that amount. With American spending inside the country continuing to drop, the economy wobbles with painful result, leading one U.S. official to comment: "The problem here isn't military any more, it's financial."

Saigon itself has never looked worse. It has surpassed Milan and Chicago to challenge Calcutta as the worst city on earth. Downtown the streets are jammed with refugees trying to eke out a living from the black market. Block after block they lay out rows of stolen shoes and Samsonite luggage and squat down to watch the feet try to step around them.

Painting a house or an apartment would be a gesture of confidence in the future that no one seems prepared to make. Walls rot and peel, everything is gray that is not black with soot. Saigon's last virtue, the leafy trees, are dying from traffic fumes. One by one they are sawed down, leaving behind stumps as raw

as those the crippled beggars wave from their doorways. In all weather, rain and dirty sun, the Hondas dart, weave and blow their horns. "They want you to hit them," a Vietnamese girl assured me as we edged through the streets in her small car. "They think they can collect money if you dent their fender or graze their leg."

There is a minor blessing: Along Tudu Street business at the G.I. bars has begun to flag. The upstairs rooms are empty—not enough American soldiers getting to town on pass—and in the afternoon gloom the bar girls brood about their futures. One girl close to 30 told me she planned to move to a town where no one knew her and hope the size of her dowry would compensate for her past and her silicone breasts.

**A**S the time comes to leave, I resolve to make no more predictions about Vietnam's future. My record should discourage me, for when I left in 1965 I thought the United States must necessarily win the war. Despite misgivings about American methods and a price to the Vietnamese people that seemed too high, I could not believe that an impoverished country of 35 million people, North and South, could withstand the bludgeoning of a nation so much greater in size and money. The lessons of the London Blitz had been lost on me, and Israel's Six-Day War was still two years distant. With confidence, if no great enthusiasm, I looked to Goliath.

Then there was the day Lyndon Johnson announced his retirement. I was back in Vietnam and waiting in the anteroom of Vice President Ky's office; since I could not hear the broadcast, I had no

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idea why Ky's bodyguards should begin gesticulating or why the Premier should arrive unannounced and preempt my appointment. "You understand," Ky's secretary said, showing me out. "This is not a good morning for interviews."

On the street I heard what had happened. A little later, when Hanoi agreed to negotiate, I believed the war had ended. By refusing General Westmoreland's request for more troops, Mr. Johnson had dug in his heels at last and was not going to be pushed deeper. Reaching an agreement might take a disheartening length of time, and men would go on dying futilely, but a settlement would come.

The following November, Richard Nixon was elected President. The common sense of concluding a pact quickly was so apparent to me that I felt no man would throw away the inheritance Johnson had left: experienced negotiators at work in Paris, South Vietnam's leaders coerced into participating, an American opinion braced for any compromise that would end the war.

On each of those three occasions I could not have been more wrong. I misjudged the importance of military power when it is not in service of an idea, and I overestimated the foresight of America's leaders, two mistakes I don't expect to make again.

Yet hope persists. Late as it is, I believe the wisest path for the United States is to negotiate an immediate cease-fire and a coalition government. Undoubtedly it would be better, as Buddhist strategists and the Catholic left suggest, to leave this agreement to the Government of Saigon and delegates from the provisional representative government set up by the Vietcong. But Thieu will not willingly agree to such talks. Only the United States, with the potent threat of cutting off his money, can force him to do so.

Why bother? Because at some point after American troops leave Vietnam the military situation will deteriorate until a negotiated settlement

is the only solution. If, as I believe, that is inevitable, then we had better settle now and get the cease-fire that will stop the killing. But that is hope, not expectation. I no longer look for the Nixon Administration to risk action when rhetoric and prayers and extra dollars permit hard decisions to be deferred. That is why I don't agree with the Vietnamese who believe that Nixon will sell them out for the 1972 election. Drift becomes first a habit, then a policy.

**S**O I think we are not to have peace this year. The next best prospect is that in elections next autumn the South Vietnamese will choose Duong Van Minh as President, with a mandate to sue for an immediate cease-fire. The victory of Vu Van Mau and his Senatorial slate has brought that prospect a little nearer, but I cannot envision, try as I will, Nguyen Van Thieu voluntarily surrendering power as long as he thinks South Vietnam can stay afloat another year or two.

If I seem to be ruling out peace for the Vietnamese this year and the next and the next, I am sorry to say that astrologists in Saigon agree with me. Peace will not come, they predict, until 1973. And even without the authority of the heavens, an argument presents itself for that date. In 1973, the United States presence should be minimal. A collapse of the economy, the army or both would then force the Saigon Government to accept whatever peace terms it could get, some unwieldy sharing of power that would stop the shooting.

For a time. Student leaders, the newspaper Tin Sang, the Buddhists, they proclaim their faith in the ability of the South Vietnamese to manipulate postwar events until they achieve social reform without Communism. The young people trust to nationalism as their amulet against this foreign ideology. The Buddhists believe they are more cunning than the Communists, that they understand better the aspirations of the people. I neither share nor comprehend

their confidence.

After a period of political maneuver, I see the Communists consolidating their position and taking control in Saigon, with force if necessary. I remind myself that I have often been wrong, but never before have I had the stars to reckon with.

Yes, the astrologists say, the fighting will end in 1973 just as we told you. And begin again in 1976. ■

New York Times Magazine  
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# Hanoi Setting Up 'Task Forces' In Bid to Spur Lagging Industry

By TAD SZULC

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Oct. 7 — Despite increased warnings of hardships and sacrifices ahead, Washington officials say North Vietnam appears determined to pursue the war in South Vietnam indefinitely, at least until a peace settlement can be reached on Hanoi's terms.

This is the conclusion drawn by specialists on North Vietnamese affairs from the latest pronouncements by Government, military and Communist party figures in Hanoi as well as from internal party debates in North Vietnam.

The most significant new trend observed in the North Vietnamese conduct of the war and management of the battered economy is the effort to create so-called "local military task forces." These are to serve both as army reserves and as civilian labor units working to spur what Hanoi acknowledges publicly is lagging industrial production.

## 'Enormous Efforts' Asked

This latest North Vietnamese approach to the problem of sustaining militarily and economically the strategy of the "protracted war" — defined by Hanoi's Defense Minister, Gen. Vo Nguyen Giap, as a persistent struggle on a low level of activity designed to outlast the United States with a minimum of North Vietnamese losses — was described in detail Aug. 15 in *Quan Doi Nhan Dan*, North Vietnam's army newspaper.

In an editorial, the paper said that North Vietnam must make "enormous efforts" to accelerate production and "stabilize the people's livelihood step by step."

Discussing the responsibilities of the "local military task forces," the newspaper said they must strive "to increase the economic and national defense potential" of North Vietnam, to "fulfill their duty as the great rear area of the great frontline."

In what American analysts considered an unusually frank admission by Hanoi of its mounting problems of manpower allocation between defense and the economy *Quan Doi Nhan Dan* said that the

new regional forces must quickly develop "quantitatively and qualitatively" to "replenish the main-force army" and to "combine economic development with the considerations of national defense in their localities."

The complaints about inadequacy of production—and the rarely sounded theme that the civilian population hungers for consumer goods—was sounded more recently in *Nhan Dan*, the Communist party's newspaper, in an editorial Sept. 19.

## People's Needs Are Noted

"The rate of development is low," the newspaper said, "compared to our manpower capacity and to our supply of raw materials, the needs of our people and the export demands."

"During the first half of this year, the output of a number of handicraft [industry] branches and professions in many localities was at a standstill or even declined," *Nhan Dan* said. "The present level of handicraft production is lower than that of 1964," it asserted.

In a comment on the results of the dispersion of North Vietnamese industry during the 1965-68 bombings by the United States, the newspaper said that "along with actively restoring and building state-owned industrial factories, it is necessary urgently to restore and develop various small industry and handicraft branches and professions and to pursue the socialist transformation."

The theme of further sacrifices was significantly sounded for the first time in the official slogans for the celebrations last month of the anniversary of the 1945 proclamation of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. In past years, sacrifices were not mentioned, but this year the third of the 17 slogans said:

"For the independence and freedom of the fatherland, we are resolved to overcome all the difficulties and hardships, persist and step up resistance against United States aggression and work for national salvation until total victory."

# Peking, Hanoi Sign New Pact For Economic, Technical Aid

By EDWARD K. WU

[Hong Kong Bureau of The Sun]

Hong Kong, Oct. 7—Communist China has signed a new agreement with North Vietnam to provide it with much-needed economic and technical aid as Hanoi's leaders revamp the country's stagnating industry and agriculture.

A military assistance protocol was signed at the same time.

The official New China News Agency said today the accords were aimed at strengthening Hanoi's economic power and national defense and to help defeat completely the United States in the Vietnam war.

The documents were signed in Peking yesterday at the end of a three-week visit by a North Vietnamese delegation led by Vice Premier Nguyen Con.

## Special Significance

Non-refundable military and economic aid protocols are usually renewed yearly and sometimes augmented by supplementary agreements, but the new economic and technical aid accord signed yesterday appeared to bear a special significance.

The Chinese leaders, now confident that they are again in a position to revive their foreign aid programs, are anxious to convince North Vietnam that they can be depended upon to help its economic development which, according to recent reports, is not progressing satisfactorily.

Judging from the activities of the North Vietnamese delegation during its stay in Peking, the new economic and technical aid China has committed is likely to be wide-ranging and sizable.

This will be in keeping with the enhanced Chinese posture in Indo China since the Cambodian

coup last March and there is every indication that Peking wishes to exploit this situation to its own advantage.

Both the Chinese and North Vietnamese press have underscored Mr. Con's mission to Peking and the official Hanoi paper *Nhan Dan*, splashed on its front page the news and photos of Chairman Mao Tse-tung and Vice Chairman Lin Biao receiving the North Vietnamese vice premier.

Details of the Chinese aid offer were not disclosed. But the items of assistance the North Vietnamese have sought may be inferred from the places Mr. Con visited and in which he had shown special interest.

They included a synthetic fabric plant, an organic chemical factory and an iron and steel mill, all near Peking. They are all medium-size complexes which are best suited to North Vietnam needs and China is in a position to supply.

Recent speeches by senior Hanoi officials have emphasized the need to expand consumer goods production by stepping up metal and light industries.

Mr. Con also visited Tsunhua county north of Peking—showcase for China's development of decentralized local industry. There, he saw a hardware co-operative, iron and steel plant, mechanical and power equipment factory, cotton mill and chemical fertilizer plant. All are small or medium-size projects run by the county.

He probably was seeing for himself the Chinese experience which Hanoi could apply to its development efforts. North Vietnam has copied China's agrarian reform and the co-operative movement of the 1950's.