

Altogether there are 17 radio stations operating against us. The Bangkok station "Free Asia," which continues to beam programs in our region is equivalent to Radio Free Europe in Munich. Even Radio Vatican has its counterpart in Manila in the shape of Radio Veritas.

[Question] What is the purpose of that "small war?"

[Answer] It is, of course, the same purpose of years ago: to destroy us. However, the methods have changed greatly. The French and the Americans used to declare open war on communism, but the tune is now different: That the struggle is for socialism, but against communism, or that Ho Chi Minh deserves support, but Le Duan should be fought. At least that was what I read in one of the brochures smuggled into our country from China.

[Question] What does the awareness of that state of affairs mean for Vietnam?

[Answer] We must possess a defense potential to match the threat, but such a potential is bound to affect living standards. But if even the United States is faced with the dilemma of weapons of rice?

[Question] What is now most important for the VCP? What determines the success of party policy?

[Answer] Our present chief task, which was proclaimed by the Fifth VCP Congress, is improving our people's conditions. This task presents us with the problems similar to your problems in the forties. The people not so long ago went through the hell of a 30-year war. Our economy was destroyed, and we are troubled by unemployment, especially in the south. The social situation is complicated. There are over 1 million persons among us who were at one time connected with the Saigon regime. We have liquidated the bourgeoisie as a class to a great extent, but former property owners live among us and they even have a sense of power. The capitalists in the south hail mostly from the Hoa Chinese minority. In the course of 100 years they were able not only to create a network of trade links and contacts all over Vietnam, but also to integrate it into a worldwide system. And this system, as I have said, is waging an economic war against us.

[Question] United Vietnam is a strong country with a large population and extensive development possibilities....

[Answer] We have a large population, which is our opportunity and a source of certain difficulties. Each year some 1.2 million new citizens are born and 1 million people reach productive age. We have to give them jobs, but our resources are rather limited. We continue to achieve much, but this is still not consistent and not resolute enough. Our production potential is too weak. Our economic policy to date has been marked by both subjectivism of appraisals and excessive haste in implementing certain organizational solutions and in launching new investments. That is why the Fifth VCP Congress was a self-critical congress.

Vietnam's social and economic situation is difficult, but we have a real potential to improve it. We are a rich country: We have anthracite, iron ore, lignite and enormous deposits of bauxite. We have great hopes in oil and gas prospecting, which we are continuing together with the help of Soviet specialists. However, exploiting those natural riches requires not only large funds, but also time, and yet time is what we lack most. For example: It takes about 10 years to build a hydroelectric plant, but we are short of energy right now.

Since we cannot afford to solve all our problems at once, we must be selective and focus our efforts on specific spheres. For example, we are very short of cement, and that is why we are constructing three cement plants at the same time, although they should be built one after the another.

[Question] What is life in Vietnam like?

[Answer] There are many serious difficulties in day-to-day life. As I have already said, improving the people's standard of living is our main aim for the eighties. We will achieve this by making use of all possibilities, including local possibilities