

To the Vietnamese Nationalist Leaders:

A Contribution to a Common Way Out of the Present

DELEMA IN VIETNAM

By

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"For the sake of our families, of our country and of mankind, as leaders, let us wish one another to be equal to our duties and deserving of the Vietnamese people."

--President Ngo Dinh Diem
New Year's Day Speech
1963, Year of the Cat

A CONTRIBUTION TO A WAY OUT OF THE PRESENT

DILEMMA IN VIETNAM

BACKWARDNESS IN REVOLUTION

Backwardness is an ugly word. And the term "backwardness in revolution", at first hearing, may convey a touch of irony unpleasant to the revolutionist. Be that as it may, backwardness in revolution is a real and observable fact for which it is difficult to find a more appropriate name.

Since World War II, with the rapid pace of development in the sciences, political and social orders have been in an inevitably rapid process of alteration. By the same law which makes the caboose of a train shake more strongly than the locomotive, in the process of alteration events are bound to move more swiftly in the underdeveloped world than in the leading countries. As a matter of fact, many Afro-Asian peoples have been driven into a revolutionary situation more by the force of events than by the will of men. Whether they are ready or not, the decline of colonialism has forced them to the task of shaping their own destinies in an international environment created largely by the pressure of Communism seeking world domination. No honest statesman can claim to be fully prepared and totally infallible to carry out such a task under such conditions.

The results are disappointing after more than a decade. For many Afro-Asians, a few years of self-administration have been enough to demonstrate that independence does not necessarily mean the right of a people to dispose of itself. In the social revolution which follows independence, the accomplishment of which is a key condition for resisting Communism, many governments "of the people and by the people" have soon proved not to be effectively "for the people". Save a few exceptions, the Free Underdeveloped World is but a world of neofascism. Despite an initial claim to a democratic regime and the establishment of various democratic institutions, most of the Free World "vanguard strongholds" have become shaky police states in which democracy is praised but only autocracy practiced; and the main efforts against disorder and social problems are directed toward their concealment rather than toward their solution. Discontented populations are controlled by means of force worse than those of colonialist times. They therefore dissociate themselves emotionally from their local governments which increasingly assume the characteristics of a government of occupation, and which continue to govern, thanks only to American aid.

The indifferent or hostile attitude on the part of those for whom one fights is a basic sign of failure whether it be in the accomplishment of a social revolution or in the struggle against Communism. Of course, there are many causes, intrinsic and extrinsic, for the failure of a revolution. But when the failure derives from a hostile attitude on the part of the population, the main cause relates to the way in which the leaders understand and carry out their revolution.

Under the same general conditions as the other Afro-Asian countries, the Vietnamese have been for twenty straight years involved in a war of emancipation. How has our revolution been conducted for the results to be so disastrous? Why is it that a state of emergency had to be proclaimed in South-Vietnam, seven years after half of our country had fallen under Communist control? And why is it that, in front of the present danger, the Vietnamese non-government Nationalists are caught in a dilemma and are condemned to inaction?

Our purpose in this paper is to show how backwardness in leadership has caused the revolution in Vietnam to go adrift and deteriorate to its present state. It is also to suggest that a better national unity can be achieved, and anti-Communism can be reinforced, by an adequate change in the revolutionary leadership. By "backwardness in revolution", we do not refer to the efficacy of revolutionary activity in Vietnam as compared to the revolutionary movement in another country. Rather, we mean the validity of the relationship between our revolution and its own ecology. It is not a backwardness due to the conditions of underdevelopment in Vietnam. It is a backwardness due to the rapid process of alteration of the political and social order which has repeatedly resulted in situations in which the responsible leaders conceive of a correct solution to a problem only after the problem has long been in existence and after its nature has changed. Perhaps this will become clearer if we suggest certain conditions for a valid revolution, and measure the past and present activity in Vietnam against them.

SOME CONDITIONS FOR A VALID REVOLUTION

Revolution is in that category of fights made on behalf of a group of people with the support of that group as an essential requirement for success. Whether the group is a small union of workers or a whole people, in order to win this support and succeed, such a public cause must fulfill three main conditions.

1) First, the CAUSE for which the fight is undertaken should be defined and made clear so that the group will understand it fully. The cause should be based on a thorough understanding of the psychology and aspirations of the group as well as their actual living conditions. With the best of intentions, one may very well direct the revolutionary spirit and activity toward an impractical or unrealistic goal. In order to illustrate such a possibility, let us ask

what is the basic motivation of the Vietnamese in the present fight against the Communists? The re-unification of the country? Freedom? A better standard of living than that offered by the Communists? How are these various aims related to each other? How strong are these various needs as compared to each other? With an inappropriate answer to such questions, one may be led to work against the aspirations of the Vietnamese and possibly against their interests.

2) The second condition, after the definition of the legitimate cause, is an over-all PLAN for the realization of the cause. The plan must be based on a thorough knowledge of the conditions under which the fight is to take place. Beside the psychology, aspirations, actual living conditions of the group, such a knowledge would chiefly imply an accurate evaluation of one's strength and possibilities, a good understanding of the various internal and international factors to be dealt with, and a clear idea of the various difficulties and problems to be expected in each stage of the fight. Through an inadequate knowledge of these conditions one may well adopt an inadequate policy and lose the legitimate cause of the fight, as was the case with the Vietnamese Nationalists in 1945.

3) The third condition concerns the execution of the plan. On the basis of the plan, one has to:

- select a valid POSITION from which to fight. The position of a political party in a democratic regime, for example, is certainly different from that of a clandestine group fighting for independence.

- have a logical ATTITUDE toward the various human and other conditioning factors of the fight. For example, in confronting the Communists, the Vietnamese government and the Nationalist opposition obviously should unite as allies instead of considering each other as enemies. Yet, before such a logical relationship can be achieved, concrete measures must be taken on both sides in order to reduce the tension which has intensified during these last years.

- adopt the BEHAVIOR, METHODS AND TECHNIQUE most appropriate to the conditions of the fight at each stage. Any change in the conditions would automatically lead to a corresponding change in the position, attitude, methods and technique. Morally, a most painful duty for a revolutionist, one must rise above all wishful thinking and hard feeling on an individual or party basis, so as to be able to think and act uniquely in accordance with the interests of those for whom he fights. Technically, he must strive to increase his ability so as to meet the changing needs of the fight. The need of improving techniques is particularly true in a fight against the Communists whose victories in the last two decades seem to be due to their superiority in techniques rather than to their ideology.

The requirement of winning popular support in a common fight does not change with the times. What changes are the conditions under which the fight takes place.

The proper revolutionary character is prepared to move at full speed in effecting change. Not long ago, just before the second world war when societies were evolving at a more leisurely pace, the political and social order, chiefly in underdeveloped areas, changed

so slowly that it seemed to the individual to stand still in his lifetime. In order to achieve whatever he had in mind, a revolutionist had to resort to every means of violence in his attempt to destroy whatever anti-revolutionist stronghold stood in his way. The job was considered as done after the stronghold had been destroyed.

But evolution now moves at a greater speed. Owing to the force of circumstances, the anti-revolutionist strongholds -- such as capitalist imperialism or colonialist imperialism -- are themselves changing. Colonialism is "dying", and capitalism has changed. A revolutionist, short of reaching his goals, may find that without effort on his part, conditions change, other objectives of even higher priority may emerge. This was the case of Vietnam and the Geneva Accords in 1954. With such sudden shifts in the ground rules, it becomes obvious that the traditional spirit of destruction, typical of the old-school revolutionist, is no longer appropriate to the new conditions of battle. The traditional revolutionary strategy, methods and techniques -- which derive from the spirit of destruction -- must be revised. We still have to move fast, even faster than formerly. But for that to be possible, our main effort now is to catch up with evolution so as to turn it in the direction we wish. Instead of rigid views and attitudes, we need more suppleness in our thought and action, a greater faculty of adaptation so as to confront a situation before it changes and develops into another.

Aside from the frequent and rapid metamorphoses of revolutionary targets, the revolutionist today may also be handicapped by another inevitable consequence of the rapid pace of evolution: the new aspects of the political and social orders. In the brief period of less than twenty years following the second World War, the political and social order has been changing as profoundly as though after centuries. No existing doctrine could have resisted so great a change and no new doctrine could be validated in so short a time. Nationalism, for example, has to adjust itself to interdependence, and chauvinism must give way to the necessity of international co-operation. Democracy also needs further exploration before it can be adapted to the realities of the under-developed countries, groping toward freedom. It even needs readjustment and rejuvenation in Western countries -- like France or Italy -- where the necessary conditions for democracy already exist. As for Communism, how can it explain a number of post-war phenomena, such as: the situation of equilibrium between the capitalist and the proletarian in the world, the harmony of interests between management and labor in the capitalist countries, the appearance of new classes in the Communist society, the law of value surplus within the Communist world, and the struggle between Communist nations?....

In short, at least in revolution, things have become complicated in such a way as to make it harder "to know what should be done than to act", as ascertained by Sun Yat-Sen some 40 years ago. The pre-war revolutionist, unfortunately, is generally characterized by a tendency to doctrinal sectarianism. In dealing with the new situation, the

pre-war revolutionist may thus be brought to distort realities through his old prism, or simply become disoriented and lag behind the events. This, added to his routine revolutionary behavior and methods, contributes to the loss of revolutionary goals.

Referring to the main conditions required for winning popular support and for an effective revolution, and judging from the present prevailing attitudes of apathy and passive hostility of the Vietnamese population, one can say that something is amiss somewhere in our fight, in the execution of the policy, in the policy itself or in the definition of the legitimate cause.

President Ngo Dinh Diem, in the inaugural speech of his second term, showed great honesty in stating: "There is now a grave variance between our policy and our realizations". What else did he mean by that if not that the fight had not been properly handled, at least in the execution of his policy? This, however, takes for granted that the cause of the fight has been well defined and the policy well devised. In a sense, this paper is an echo to his statement and a suggestion for improving the situation and for winning a greater measure of popular support. In order to find the true cause of our failure, let us look back into our history.

A HISTORICAL VIEW OF THE VIETNAMESE NATIONALIST CAUSE

Throughout our history, until a few decades ago, the Vietnamese nationalist cause was as clear as it was simple because our society was organized in such a way as to make it natural for the Vietnamese to think of themselves as a harmonious whole. Under foreign domination, the nationalist cause meant ousting the invader. Under an evil king, it meant overthrowing the rotten men in power. In either case, if an uprising succeeded, the hero who had led the fight automatically began a new dynasty. In so doing he would be satisfying the will of the people. Everybody accepted Confucianism as the philosophy of life, for the individual as well as for the society. The scholars, who were the leading social group, were born of the masses and remained in close contact with them. A scholar could become a mandarin or, if such was his inclination, stay at home and teach. The mandarin administered under the critical eye of the teacher who led public opinion. There was only one right way of governing. Anytime there was a need of a change, it was merely a change of the men in power.

Under such conditions, a revolution had no need to be based on ideas but only on a strong sense of duty to and of sacrifice for the nation. And there were no two ways of carrying out a revolution: the revolutionist magnified and nourished his hatred against his enemy, secretly built up strength by gathering men and means, and when an opportunity came, loomed out of the darkness and killed. Once the enemy was put to death or chased away, the revolution was successful. One returned to the right way with the right man. From the TRUNG SISTERS in 40 A.D. to Phan Dinh Phung toward the end of the XIXth

century, the legitimate cause was the same, the policy the same, and the behavior, methods and technique all the same. This long tradition has deeply impressed the Vietnamese revolutionist mind. Even today, it is still reflected in the thought and action of many, chiefly among those of a certain age. That is our misfortune, because Vietnam has perhaps changed more in the last three decades than in the previous twenty centuries.

With the XXth Century, various social doctrines came to the attention of the revolutionary scholars. But the French were so strong, the colonialist regime so firmly entrenched that any social or political reform could only take place in the remote realm of a dream. With the feeble means available to us, the anti-nationalist stronghold seemed invulnerable. The famous slogan of Nguyen Thai Hoc, the leader of the Viet-Nam Quoc-Dan Dang, expressed the general spirit as well as the general feeling among the Vietnamese Nationalists of the moment. "Even if we shall not succeed, we shall have done our duty". Moved by this same sense of duty and sacrifice, he led a desperate uprising and went to the scaffold (1930), only to show the unconquerable spirit of the Vietnamese.

After Nguyen Thai Hoc, the various Nationalist groups felt the necessity to move with the times, both ideologically and technically. Each group adopted a political and social viewpoint and had a program. But it is only honest to recognize that the program existed only in form but not yet in substance, more as an expediency or an imitation of other countries than through a mature and thoughtful conviction based on an actual study of realities. Anyhow, a Nationalist at that time joined his party in order to fight the French and cared little for the party's doctrine. "Independence first. As for which political and social system to adopt after independence, there would be enough time later to think about that in detail". In comparison with the times of Nguyen-Thai-Hoc, the Nationalists by 1945 were numerically much stronger -- in the form of many clandestine groups -- but they were hardly more advanced in revolutionary thought, knowledge and technique. The conditions of fight, on the contrary, had greatly changed.

THE CRISIS OF THE NATIONALIST CAUSE IN 1945

Given their limitations at the time, the Vietnamese Nationalists were not ready to cope with the situation confronting them in 1945. The opportunity to fight for independence came after the War, but not under the same conditions as existed previously. Before the Nationalist was ready to chase out the invader, another enemy appeared in the form of the Communist. This enemy came from within and was an enemy of the people because of his belief in a social doctrine which divided the people. For the first time, all Vietnamese revolutionists no longer thought of the Vietnamese people as an absolute whole. The problem of emancipation of the individual now became a real factor in

the fight for the emancipation of the people. In order to remain a nationalist, the Nationalist now had to have a clear-cut political and social viewpoint, which he did not have.

On the other hand, the world seemed to become smaller, suddenly bringing antagonistic international factors into the fight. Independence had not been gained before interdependence became a requirement for survival. With interdependence, the notion of friends and foes lost its absolute character, something baffling to the nationalist mind.

The new internal and international factors required that there be brought to the fight, with a definite political and social viewpoint, a knowledge of internal and international conditions, an appropriate long range strategy and appropriate fighting methods and techniques. This was too much to expect of the leaders of the various nationalist groups as well as those of the government at the time. Despite a strong sense of duty, they became disoriented in the face of too complicated a situation. Although numerically and militarily stronger, and although in a better position to negotiate with the international elements (with the defeated Japanese, and with the Allied armies of occupation afterward, and with the Chinese in North-Vietnam), out of sheer irresolution, they let the Communists take power and assume the initiative of the resistance movement. They thus surrendered the legitimate cause of nationalism to the Communists at a time when the whole population was ready to join the fight and actively support whichever leadership took hold. That was the greatest of all mistakes. It had disastrous consequences for the people in general and for the Nationalists in particular.

To my mind, the Communist assumption of the leadership of the Resistance movement is the real cause of the division of Vietnam after a long and murderous war, and explains why half of our country is still under a Communist regime. Vietnam was within the sphere of the anti-Communist world. If the Nationalists had led the fight against the French -- as they logically should have done -- Vietnam would, under any circumstances, have gained its independence and the country would have remained whole, just like the other countries in the Far-East. India, Pakistan, Burma and the Philippines, siding with the victorious allies, became independent in a relatively peaceful way. Indonesia, which had sided with the defeated Japanese, also recovered its independence after a short and easy fight. Cambodia and Laos needed no fight at all to end the colonialist regime and to join the U.N.O. The case of Korea was absolutely different from that of Vietnam. Under Russian occupation after the war, North-Korea had to resign itself to enduring a communist regime like the Eastern and Central European countries. Besides, by merely taking advantage of the Russians for imposing their regime, the Korean Communists could not have as much of a grip on the mass psychology as the Vietnamese Communists did. By taking over the Nationalist legitimate cause, the Vietnamese Communists won their greatest victory before the Resistance began.

The damage caused by the initial mistake went still further. It led to the division of the Vietnamese patriots into two antagonistic

groups actively engaged in killing each other. After the mistake, the Nationalist parties first lost their influence upon the population then their anti-French colonialism unanimity. The great majority of patriots who could have been expected to join the Nationalist parties, had these parties been leading the fight, now had no alternative but go to those who fought: the Viet-Minh. By enrolling them, the Communists won their victory over the French with the blood of their potential enemies in the establishment of a Communist regime after independence. Save a few, those who managed to escape are now an unhappy lot in a false position among the Nationalists.

As for the Nationalist parties, their basic mistake was their death blow. The moment the Communists fired the first shot of the Resistance, all the Nationalists were paralyzed. When the war began between the Colonialists and the Communists, there was no room left anywhere for the Nationalists. Even nationalist thought reached an impasse: to fight against the French would serve the Communists, to fight the Communists would serve the Colonialists. The dilemma of nationalist thought was illustrated by the alternatives which the Nationalists saw open to them. The first was an attitude called "attentisme" adopted throughout the resistance period by a number of nationalist parties and by most of the "intellectuals". It was the negative attitude of doing nothing and waiting for something to happen in the future. Second, some Nationalist parties remained active in allying themselves with the French against the Communists while fighting for independence through political means. There might be some logic in such an attitude: the dying French imperialism was less to be feared than the rising Communist one. But such was not the view of the masses: independence first, the communist problem to be solved afterwards.

Regardless of which of the two attitudes guided his action, the Nationalist felt frustrated because of his false position. Instead of being a moving force as it once was, his traditional sense of duty became a source of discontentment. Discipline rapidly collapsed within the parties. The leaders lost their authority, the cadres their orientation, the members their spirit. Each party was soon to be fragmented into small clans wrangling over petty matters of private interest.

Nationalist thought and behavior was also affected in another way. The Communist superiority in technique was too obvious for the Nationalists not to be aware of it. In order to match it, it became necessary for the Nationalists to develop their own technique. But instead of trying to learn and develop, a number of Nationalists succumbed to the tendency to copy the Communists' behavior, method and technique in dealing, not with the Communists, but with one another. This did little harm to the Communists but caused much damage to the Nationalists themselves. It seriously weakened their traditional scruples and moral strength.

Such was the price the Vietnamese Nationalists had to pay for failing to hold fast to the legitimate cause of their fight. They paid with a division of their country and a division within their

ranks. The mistake was made out of sheer backwardness. The proof of it is that with the knowledge we have today, were we to face the same situation again, we would keep the legitimate cause of the fight well in hand, and events would take a much more favorable course.

Although we cannot change the past, we can and must use the experience and insights we have gained to deal with the present situation. With the Geneva Accords of 1954, the Vietnamese Nationalist fight passed to a new stage in which its legitimate cause as well as its conditions changed. Our task after the Geneva Accords was greater than that in 1954 because we had not only to face a new situation but also to heal the wounds caused by the mistakes of 1945. And, just like our predecessors, we may have fallen into backwardness. Did we? In order to answer the question, let us sum up our revolutionary problem after the Geneva Accords, and measure the Nationalist activity against it.

THE VIETNAMESE NATIONALIST CAUSE AFTER THE GENEVA ACCORDS

What change did the Geneva Accords bring to our fight? Their immediate effect was the suspension of the Communist-led Resistance at the price of the division of the country. As a result, French rule over Vietnam came to an end; so also did the last dynasty of Nguyen. Vietnam became independent but divided into two antagonistic parts with, in each, a ruined economy after a nine-year war and a political vacuum following the fall of both the Colonialist and monarchic systems.

The reunification of the country -- a wound to be healed -- the redressment of the economy, and the building of a political and social order were the main objectives to be reached for the Nationalists in the South as well as for the Communists in the North.

For the Nationalists, the fight is now twofold: for national renovation and against Communism. The two points are intimately intertwined: national renovation being the basic motivation for anti-Communism and anti-Communism conditioning national renovation.

The revolutionary effort, at this stage of the fight, consists not in the destruction of any "anti-revolutionist stronghold" but essentially in a work of construction to be made upon a situation of anarchy and in competition with another revolutionary school: the Communists.

The Nationalist cause in the national renovation is not only the accomplishment of the three objectives but to accomplish them in such a way as to maintain the people as a homogenous whole, and to safeguard the country's independence. To that effect, a harmony of interests would be required from a triple point of view:

-a harmony of interests between the various groups within the population so as to assure the homogeneity of the people, instead of the supremacy of the proletariat or of any other political or social group.

-a harmony of interests between the citizen and the state so as to assure the emancipation of the individual as well as the existence of the nation, instead of either the enslavement of the individual to the state (as is the case with the Communist regime or with any other form of dictatorship), or the enfeeblement of the state for the benefit of the individual (as is the case with a demagogic form of democracy).

-a harmony of interests between the Vietnamese nation and the world on a basis of international cooperation and mutual aid, so as to assure the independence of the country under the conditions of interdependence, instead of either an out-of-date chauvinism or the subjection of Vietnam to Russo-Chinese rule for the sake of the proletariat's world domination (or to the rule of any other foreign power).

In view of this triple harmony in the concepts of nationalism, how are the three objectives related to one another?

The reunification of the country, for which the Communists long as much as the Nationalists, is desirable only with the condition that freedom be assured for the people as a whole as well as for individual citizens. If the Communists ever take over the South, the country would be reunified but then only to the damnation of the whole people. It is thus plain that the primary task for the Nationalists in the fight for reunification of the country is to build and to strengthen a democratic regime in South-Vietnam.

The redressment of the economy, for which the Communists strive as much as the Nationalists, must be achieved through a participation of the whole people and for the benefit of the whole people. For that to be possible, economic policy must be based on a true democratic spirit, no matter what plan for development is adopted from a technical point of view. Otherwise, the development of the economy will inevitably benefit only the political group in power -- in terms of profit as well as participation. In this latter case, the consequence can easily be imagined: a waste of human resources qualitatively and quantitatively, corruption among the men in power, and frustration and discontentment among the population. The economic development will not only be less efficient but also will move in a wrong direction, as in some South-American countries or as in China formerly. The net effect of development would be further enfeebling of the Nationalist cause and the anti-Communist motivation.

Thus, the building of a democratic regime is the most important of the three objectives, and is at the base of the other two. The Vietnamese nationalist cause is basically a democratic one. "What is the Nationalist cause today if it is not that of democracy?", asked President Ngo Dinh Diem himself in one of his very first public speeches in 1954.

The instinctive aspirations of man toward freedom are particularly strong with the Vietnamese because the people in South-Vietnam are perhaps the only ones in the world to have had a long contact

with the Communists (during the Resistance) and have remained free.

Of course, our peasants do not know democratic theory and even have little notion of what their rights and duties should be in a democratic regime. But they do hate the anti-democratic measures now plaguing their daily life; and their aspirations are what democracy would give them. They are no more prepared for democracy now than they were for independence in 1945. But they now want democracy just as much as they wanted independence in 1945. Such are the masses' psychology and aspirations. Such is the legitimate cause. It is the duty of the present national leaders to solve the problem of democracy for them just as the leaders in 1945 had to lead them in the fight for independence. In straying from democracy, the leaders have given up the legitimate cause of the fight. It is a mistake as basic as that in 1945. And the result may be as disastrous.

THE PROBLEM OF DEMOCRATIZATION IN AN UNDERDEVELOPED COUNTRY

The legitimate cause is obvious. Less obvious, unfortunately, is an over-all plan for achieving it.

The problem, under a planned development consists of an under-developed country's need to achieve, in a few decades, what has taken western democracy hundreds of years of natural growth. A democratic regime is like a human being and needs to develop from an embryonic state to maturity. The quick pace of evolution and the powerful new political weapons of Communism have made it necessary to shorten the period of development without in any way denying it. And the necessity to move at full speed in effecting change is precisely what gives a revolutionary character to our present task.

To carry out such a revolutionary task requires a theory, a plan and a leadership for which the responsible men in emergent nations, unlike their Communist opponents, can draw no model from the past democratic international experience. Apart from their forerunners such as Sun Yat-Sen or Mustapha Kemal, whose theories no longer can be adapted to the present situation, the modern Western Democratic theoreticians seem to have given little attention to the problem of the democratization of the under-developed world. All the existing democratic literature, while valid in the case of mature democracies, is not mechanically adaptable to the realities of under-developed countries.

By applying literally this democratic literature, many Afro-Asian governments have denied the necessity for a democracy to develop, and made the mistake of trying to impose a full-blown democracy on their people. The establishment almost overnight of a democratic mechanism of government in full form has helped the men in power assert their position as national leaders but, at the same time, has impeded the real task incumbent upon them. The democratic institutions, created hastily and without adequate preparation, are too advanced to be immediately adaptable to the level of the political, economic, and social development of their countries. To begin with, the lack of

democratic spirit and behavior on the part of the leaders themselves has negated the democratic mechanism at the very beginning of the regime and at the very top of the nation. For survival, many countries have thus been swept, by reflex, to a dictatorship, either by a treacherous shift in the policy of the men in power, or by a coup d'etat.

After the false start, there is now too strong a tendency among the Afro-Asian men presently in power to take it for granted that democracy is impossible in under-developed countries. This is also too often echoed by outstanding Western statesmen. Such defeatism weakens the Free world. If a democratic regime is really impossible in under-developed countries while a Communist one is possible -- as proved in Red China, North-Korea and North-Vietnam -- there is little chance for the Free under-developed world to remain free for long. If a democratic regime is refused them, why should the under-developed peoples fight against the Communists? Of course, almost any form of dictatorship would be more tolerable than a Communist regime. But man is so made that he never wholeheartedly risks his life fighting for just a lesser evil; he may willingly die for an illusion.

This is all the more to be regretted because the leaders who hold democracy as impossible in under-developed countries seem to have given little thought to the problem before erroneously conceding its insolubility. The reasons generally invoked for backing up the thesis of the impossibility of democracy for under-developed countries are the low level of development and the Afro-Asian social characteristics.

Of course, peculiarities in the local social structure may bring about some desirable changes in the democratic system. In Vietnam, for example, social phenomena such as the existence of public-owned lands rented to the most deserving or the most needy (*cong dien cong tho*) serve as a factor in harmonizing interests between various social strata. The existence of big families in each village practically assures a republican regime in each village; the tradition of "the law bowing to the local customs" assures semi-autonomy for the village. These are significant factors for reinforcing the infrastructure of a democratic regime. But what exactly in the Afro-Asian character prevents democracy from developing more easily is something never clearly demonstrated. A feudal society with such things as serfdom or material privileges owing to noble birth is a Western picture of pre-revolutionary times rather than the actual one of a country like Vietnam, even in the times of an absolute monarchy. All through our history, whenever there was excessive corruption and misuse of power, it meant the decline of a dynasty and called for a revolution, overthrowing the rotten regime. In short, our impression is that Westerners are simply too ready to accept as an "Afro-Asian peculiarity" anything apparently contradictory to their logic, without looking to the bottom of things for the right explanation. Local leaders, also, too easily attribute too many of their imperfections and failures to local characteristics.

As for the low level of development, the present line of reasoning seems to be based on a Marxist viewpoint which the Communists themselves

have practically rejected. The Communists establish their regime as soon as they take control of an under-developed country without waiting for "preliminary conditions" such as the development of an industrial capitalism and the class struggle. The low level of a country's development may indeed condition the establishment of democratic regime, but it does not prevent such an establishment. On the contrary, a sound democracy seems to be a basic factor in the harmonious development of the economic and social systems (the United States is a case in point).

In view of the reasons mentioned above, why is it that Israel -- which in 1948 was among the least-developed countries -- could successfully start a democratic regime while Korea and Vietnam could not? And what different social characteristics can explain the different results achieved by India and Pakistan in their respective efforts toward democracy?

Judging from these cases, it appears that the true cause of failure to establish a democratic regime lies in the low quality of the national leadership, rather than the low level of development of the people or the local social characteristics. The primary condition for a democratic system to work seems to be the existence of a political class committed to the democratic way of life. Until every citizen is able to participate in a responsible way in the political life of the nation, the democratic mechanism exists in the upper strata but for the sake of the masses. The mechanism will work if there is good national leadership and if there is enough maturity at every level of the political structure. Otherwise, it will not and a political misadventure begins. In comparison with India, for example, the Vietnamese masses are relatively more homogenous and more advanced. On the other hand, the Vietnamese leadership is qualitatively and quantitatively less developed.

Ignoring, for the moment, our national pride, this is what we should have expected. The political class in an emergent nation comes mainly from the "intellectuals" and from the former revolutionist groups. And there are many factors preventing our intellectuals and our revolutionists from maturing.

Our revolutionist groups were formed essentially to fight the French invader. In view of the goal and the conditions of their fight, they were bound to adopt a clandestine position, an attitude of extremism, intransigent behavior and methods of violence. In passing on suddenly to a new stage, they need a certain time for developing into political parties of a representative character. In order to have an idea of how these revolutionist groups are composed and of what should be done for developing them into political parties, let us take the example of the French FFI or FFL when France was under German occupation. Once Germany was defeated, all these clandestine groups were automatically dissolved to give way to the Fourth Republic's representative parties. Such a transformation was smooth in France because the French are used to democracy. The achievement of this sort of transformation must be a main duty of the national leaders in Vietnam. In view of the Nationalist dilemma throughout the Resistance period and of the state of disorganization which has resulted from it,

this requires quite a metamorphosis.

As for the "intellectuals", despite a relatively great number of highly educated men in Vietnam, the former French colonialist system did not provide our intellectuals with the qualities required for responsible political leadership. A century under foreign dominion has destroyed, in many cases, the traditional sense of duty and of sacrifice toward the country which had characterized the former scholars. In addition, our present intellectuals are handicapped by an historic fact. Our country has been for almost twenty straight years in an ideological war. About twenty years ago, all young men with a sense of duty, in every family from the North to the South, left their schools and joined in the fight. Very few of those valiant citizens could afterward continue with their schooling. On the contrary, today many persons of reputation are former deserters. They may indeed have a certain value from a technical point of view but they may also lack certain moral qualities required of good leaders. A third handicap should also be mentioned, this one rather common to all peoples under foreign domination. The predilection for the Western way of life has further removed the intellectuals from the masses. Our intellectuals need to go back to the national way of life and mix with the common people before they can provide good leadership. Such a coming back may be considered by many as unrealistic, but Gandhi and his benevolent influence upon India are realities. As a matter of fact, during the Resistance movement, many of our intellectuals went back to the countryside to live with the peasants. Unfortunately, under the present social conditions, the same men now in position of command, stand farther apart from the masses than ever.

Thus, we do not yet possess a solid political class. A period of preparation is needed before a fully democratic system can work. This would be a period for the various essential elements of the nation to prepare themselves to the new way of life, for inculcating the legitimacy of democracy as well as for building the infrastructure of a democratic regime and the embryonic forms of democratic institutions. The role of the national leadership is precisely to plan for shortening this period to a few years, instead of waiting for a natural development or of denying the need of a development.

The assertion and propagation of the democratic spirit must begin at the top and go downward to the masses. Since democracy obviously cannot be achieved by anti-democratic leaders, the first efforts for democratization to be made by the national leaders should be on themselves. No matter what their respective positions in politics and no matter how their political viewpoints may conflict, they must share a common devotion to democracy and develop their attitudes, behavior and methods appropriately. There must be agreement among them on a national plan for democratization, within the spirit of which all groups must discipline themselves in their activities. The relationship between groups should be redefined so as to make democratization possible and to encourage the democratic application of "politics". The definition and development of an appropriate behavior, in all branches of activity and in all echelons of each branch, would be of importance because the role to be played by the various elements of the nation in a developing democracy is not quite the same as in

a mature one and remains to be defined. As an example, the army may have a role as a factor of stability and of correction, rather than a role of neutrality as is conceived in a mature democracy or a role of substitution for the political forces as is the case with a military dictatorship. Of course, the behavior of the leaders of the government would be vitally important in this period of transition because the Executive Branch is bound to play a more pervasive role without the checks and balances that experience and maturity will bring. Undemocratic behavior from the chiefs of the government simply means that the revolution for democracy is still without leadership. If such is the case, the revolution is bound to fail even if all other conditions are fulfilled.

While the assertion and propagation of the democratic spirit should begin at the top and go downward to the masses, the building of the democratic system should move from the base upward. How far we can go with our democracy will depend largely upon to what extent realities in our country safely allow it, and how efficiently we work toward overcoming difficulties and creating required conditions. To illustrate, let us take a few examples:

-The embryonic form of a CONSTITUTION is a PROVISIONAL CONSTITUTION. A provisional constitution during the period of transition, drafted through common agreement of the various political, religious, professional leaders and based on the spirit of a common plan for democratization, may keep the people's future constitution from being brutally violated, or even rejected if there were a coup d'etat, as has happened in many countries.

-About the separation of powers, the nation's need of survival or the regime's need of stability in this period of transition may lead the Executive Branch to a position of excessive strength and, to some extent, to encroach upon the Legislative Branch. If such is the case, a body of sensors-advisors of well-defined composition and having limited but real power, may be a healthy embryo for an elected National Assembly. Such a body would exercise a modicum of checks and balances and do more good for the population than a rubber-stamp Assembly composed of incompetent and irresponsible men.

The Judiciary Branch, on the contrary, should be truly independent for a just and universal application of the law.

-About civil rights, a free press could be begun by allowing recognized political, professional or social groups to have their organs of propaganda, for which they would be legally and morally responsible, and by promulgating a press regime which encourages suggestion and criticism within the limits of the true needs of the nation in its fight for survival and development. A safe way to help the former revolutionist groups develop into mature representative parties and to encourage them to group themselves under one platform (if the two-party system is found the most stable form of democracy) would be to permit the liberty of association, taking into account the present Communist subversion.

Our topic in this paper is not democratization exclusively. The examples above are cited only in order to give an idea of the problem.

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Whether or not the ideas expressed have any validity, our purpose in presenting them is to show that, while the starting point in establishing a democratic regime may differ from one country to another, the starting time for it does not depend upon any one condition of development. In Vietnam, the democratization of the regime can by no means be postponed because it is not only a target in itself but also a main motivation and a main weapon in the fight against the Communists. And the Communists have never slackened their activities since 1954. What is expected of the leadership is not necessarily the immediate establishment of democratic institutions in full form, nor the careless and mechanical application of civil rights, but the assertion of the democratic character of the regime and a clear plan for democratization in the execution of which the leaders must always be true to their words.

ANTI-COMMUNISM IN AN EMERGENT NATION

The anti-Communist fight in a country like Vietnam has a distinctly "intranational" aspect along with an international one. In its international aspect, it is a fight to be undertaken by the whole Vietnamese people in co-operation with the Free world, and consists of preventing the Communists from invading the frontiers. But as a fight within a people, it is to be undertaken by the Vietnamese nationalists, and aims chiefly at establishing an anti-Communist barrier in the mind of every citizen. (By Nationalists we mean those among the population who are patriots and political minded and already have a strong anti-Communist motivation, most notably the non-Communist revolutionist groups and the non-Communist former resisters).

The intranational and international aspects differ from each other in the character of the fight, in the conditions of the fight, as well as in the methods and technics to be applied. The two aspects need to be combined and, in the combination, the intranational aspect should, at least in the early stages of the fight, prevail over the international one. The reason being that the people must be anti-Communist before they can realistically and practically share in the common fight. And the common fight will be won only when the local ones are.

Our purpose here is simply to underline a few points in the intranational aspect of our fight which seem to have been overlooked.

By its intranational aspect the anti-Communist fight in Vietnam is intimately intertwined with the national renovation and has a revolutionary character. Of course, by their instinctive aspirations toward freedom, the Vietnamese in 1954 manifested a clear anti-Communist tendency. But the reason was not the same as with Westerners, and the force not the same. A Westerner is anti-Communist because he already has an economic and political regime to his taste which he wants to safeguard. A Vietnamese is anti-Communist only because of his hope for a regime to be constructed in competition with the Communists.

The clearer the democratic cause and the more efficient the democratization, the stronger the anti-Communist motivation. The hazier the democratic cause and the more inefficient the democratization, the weaker the anti-Communist motivation. In the second case, this dissatisfaction works against us -- the nationalists. Suffice to scan the Communist propaganda to be convinced of that: for seven years the Communists have been trying to win the population to their cause, not by a positive program of pro-Communist propaganda, but only by proclaiming that they are for freedom and against "dictator Diem and the American imperialists". By so doing, they did nothing else but try once more to make our legitimate cause theirs. They have not entirely succeeded this time. But their propaganda has, all the same, brought results because, on the plea of Communist pressure, the national leaders have given some substance to the lie by postponing the democratization of the regime.

To keep the legitimate cause well in hand requires that we not only keep the population with us, but also weaken the enemy. To reiterate; during the resistance, millions of men put themselves under the Communist command to fight against the French, not because of their belief in Communism but simply to resist the French. After 1954, a great number of new recruits have come to the Communists in South Vietnam out of a discontent of some sort with the present government or as an effect of some Communist pressure but, again, not because of a strong belief in Communism. All these people have not been thoroughly brainwashed. A truly democratic regime in the South will give them a way out, or at least enfeeble the Communist motivation.

It is rather important, in a fight, to know who is one's enemy. This is no problem in the international aspect of the anti-Communist fight, but it is one in its intranational aspect. Who, among the multitude of toiling peasants, for example, are our enemies and who are not? Although their respective importance cannot be compared, the anti-Communist fight in many aspects is like one against delinquency. Our main problem is not a question of men to be killed but rather changing social and psychological conditions which help Communism develop among our compatriots. We cannot check delinquency merely by killing or putting in jail all delinquents. There is no more logic in resorting solely to military means in dealing with Communism.

In order to keep Communism from developing and to distinguish the Communists among the common people, we have to contend with the enemy's technique. Although we do not claim to be experts in Communist technique, a few examples should be given in order to illustrate the necessity for us to develop our own. In our effort to mobilize the population and to keep the population from being mobilized by the Communists, we cannot ignore what the Communists call their "policy in keeping with the place and the time." (Chinh sach khong gian thoi gian). By this policy, until they get complete control of a region, the Communist systematically base their activities on the local conditions and psychology for motivating the population in their

favor and against their enemy. The ethnic minorities are mobilized in a different way from the population in Saigon, or the Hoa Hao and Cao-Dai masses in a different way from the refugees from the North. Action from Saigon never entirely answers their attacks and often even reinforces them. It would then be desirable that the local anti-Communist elements be allowed to participate more fully. As another example, there is an extensive literature from Western experts about the Communist "mass psychology coercion". Yet, to our best knowledge, no remedy has been proposed. Anyhow, no measure to that effect has been taken in Vietnam. With the present system of political arrest and detention, for example, our jails or "re-education centers" risk being recruiting and training centers for the Communists.

Of course, to develop our technique, we need not imitate the Communist one, as has been the too strong tendency among the anti-Communists. Let us take, as an example, the attitudes to be adopted toward the population. The Vietnamese population has been continuously cheated for seventeen years. As a result they have a thorough knowledge of mendacious propaganda and have become systematically suspicious. At the same time, they still long strongly for a sincerity on the part of the leaders. With the public mind in such a state, the adoption of Communist propaganda techniques will only increase the distrust of the population as well as muddy the ethics of our politics. Instead, there should be a sincere and patient effort for enlightening the population as to the true conditions and needs of the country, so as to create mature public opinion. The Vietnamese Nationalists have been for many years technically hypnotized and morally poisoned by the Communist methods. This is a problem now to be solved by their leaders.

The most important problem of all, to our mind, concerns the Nationalist organizations. The Nationalists as a whole are the motor in the intranational aspect of the anti-Communist fight just as the democratic cause is the moving force. All Nationalist groups should be able to participate actively in the fight on the outcome of which depends the fate of them all. The fight will be misled, and the chances of success seriously jeopardized if, out of sectarianism, the group in power ignores or destroys the others and places the fight in the charge of "fonctionnaires" and professional soldiers. We thus come to a paradoxical situation: those in charge of the fight have no strong motivation and are left out of the fight.

The army is, of course, "the arm of the nation". But the real anti-Communist motor in the revolutionary and intranational aspect of the fight is the Nationalist groups. The army is recruited from the population. Among the present Vietnamese population a fraction is anti-Communist, another is inclining toward Communism, and the great majority in-between has not quite made up its mind. It is not true that, once drafted into the army, everyone from the various factions automatically changes his mind and becomes anti-Communist. With an adequate policy, the Vietnamese Nationalists are in sufficient number to provide the army and the various civil and paramilitary organizations with many times their present effectives. Furthermore, Nation-

alists all over the countryside will be, in each remote village of South Vietnam and even in North Vietnam, a local anti-Communist popular "motor" at the disposal of the Government. They are the counterpart of the local Communists in each region. They can also provide a close link between the Government and the local population. In a nutshell, they are the very anti-Communist energy of the Vietnamese people.

But, owing to their basic mistake of 1945, the Vietnamese Nationalist groups have endured a nine-year crisis and have sunk into decay. And no wonder: an organization which ceases its activities is just like a being which ceases its life. And nine years is a long time.

The Vietnamese Nationalists in 1954 could be compared to a man just recovering from a serious illness and for whom a heavy task is awaiting. Along with that of DEVELOPING the nationalist revolutionist groups into democratic political parties, the nationalist leaders are also faced with the historic duty of INVIGORATING them.

The task of invigorating consists of improving the relationship among the Nationalist groups by erasing, or at least reducing drastically, all past sources of conflict and dissension, and by so doing, establishing a national union based on the new revolutionary targets. The two tasks complement each other. The improvement of their relationship is a sine qua non condition for the Nationalists to develop. On the other hand, the new needs of the revolution must serve as a basis for getting the Nationalists together again. Without this basis, a number of them will assemble, but it would merely be the gathering of militarist groups of the same type as was observed in China around 1930. Such a grouping would lack the legitimate cause of the fight and would only impart a wrong course to the revolution.

In this new stage of the fight, the barrier between the anti-Communist groups will disappear as will the barrier between the anti-Communists and the non-Communist resisters. With the new revolutionary targets, former comrades in the various Nationalist groups may disagree in viewpoints while they remain emotionally tied to one another by the past days of co-operation. On the other hand, former enemies during the Resistance may now share the same ideas and aspirations. The Vietnamese Nationalists would thus logically evolve toward a regrouping based on political and social viewpoints. But we cannot wait passively for such an evolution. The revolutionary leadership must catch up with the evolution so as to turn it in the direction we wish and away from that desired by the Communists. If the leaders do not react adequately and in time, they will be led astray by events. With independence, great new ambitions will come to the various groups and the conflict over matters of interest among them will worsen. With their tradition of using violence to assert their political viewpoints, the conflict would soon develop into one of mutual extermination. By a chain reaction, all parties would come to be dominated by the situation and be led astray from their revolutionary duties. Hatred of each other would make the Nationalists forget their real enemy, the Communists, who would run alone in the competitive race.

As a conclusion of the broad outline above, the Vietnamese Nationalists, in the new situation brought about by the Geneva Accords, are expected to change entirely their concept of fighting. They must abandon their practice of systematic destruction. There must be a re-grouping and a reorganization. The new groups should leave clandestineness behind and go into the open, revise their attitudes, behavior methods and techniques adequately. For that to be possible, leaders of all groups should join their efforts in the double task of reinvigorating and developing the Nationalist organizations in general.

A common plan of democratization as a basis of national renovation is what we believe to be the POLITICAL SOLUTION of our anti-Communist problem.

The Nationalist group in power should not be held exclusively responsible for the achievement of such a solution. A backward and extremist opposition is the main obstacle to the development of a democratic government; a backward and autocratic government is the main obstacle to the development of a democratic opposition. The effect being reciprocal, the effort must be bilateral. Thus, despite the fact that the men in power are in a position of control and hold in their hands all the national resources, those opposed to them still have to play an active role in the fight for national union and development and share a part of the responsibility in case of failure. Of course, the greatest part of responsibility rests with the leaders. Vietnam, under the present revolutionary conditions and in the present stormy international situation could be compared to a small junk caught in a typhoon: its destiny depends more on the skill of those at the wheel than in the strength of those at the oars.

THE MAIN INTERNAL CAUSES LEADING TO THE PRESENT SITUATION OF EMERGENCY..

NO MAIN CAUSE OF FAILURE IN THE CONDITIONS OF FIGHT

Too much of our failure has been imputed to the conditions of fight. Of course, the Geneva Accords have divided Vietnam into two parts. But after that accomplished fact, under the new conditions of fight, the Nationalists in South-Vietnam have been in a rather advantageous position. In a sense one might say that the Geneva Accords have come to the rescue of the Nationalists by releasing them from their dilemma.

As a result of the Accords the Communist military supremacy became ineffective for a number of years and thus gave us a respite for reorganizing ourselves and building up our strength. In the new situation of competition, we undoubtedly have the economic and the political advantages.

In actively working for the Geneva Accords, the Ho-Chi-Minh government clearly betrayed the Resistants by dividing the country and the people for the benefit of Communism. In so doing, Communism has lost most of its former influence on the population, chiefly in South-Vietnam. The action also aroused discontent and resentment among the Resistants under their command. The Communist party has had great trouble with their leadership. In regions where the Communist campaign for agrarian reforms had been the most advanced and a first shape of a Communist regime had started -- such as Quang Ngai in South Vietnam or Nghe-An in the North --, the population has spontaneously taken advantage of diminishing Communist pressure to react and manifest violent anti-Communism.

About a million refugees from the North apparently preferred South-Vietnam to the solving of a huge social problem. In fact, with the amount of foreign aid that we received, if we had had an adequate policy for their resettlement, the refugees would have been a huge human resource for national renovation as well as for national defense. South-Vietnam has many unexploited resources. South-Vietnam also was less devastated by the war than North-Vietnam and is in a better position to co-operate with international capitalism. Foreign aid provides us with the means and equipment in an amount far beyond that given to North-Vietnam by the international Communists. Having resources, capital, equipment and labor, there would have been no obstacle to our economic development if we could have avoided those caused by an inadequate political policy. On the political side, the spontaneous anti-Communist reactions and the unanimously favorable response from the population when a democratic regime was proclaimed has shown clearly enough the psychology and aspirations of the people. The revolutionary targets are obvious. There only remains to be found a good way to get at them: an over-all plan in accordance with the legitimate cause as well as with the actual conditions of fight.

Our sore point in the South is the state of decadence of the Nationalist groups. The double task of re-organizing and of developing them is incumbent on a man in the best position for doing it. President Ngo-Dinh-Diem lived in retirement throughout the 1946-1953 resistance period, half of the time abroad; he has thereby stayed out of all the quarrels among the Nationalists and placed himself in the most privileged position of peace-maker. With his personal prestige, and as the head of the nation, he has all the moral conditions and all the means required for the historical task of re-organizing and developing the Nationalists. He could be an arbitrator and induce the antagonistic leaders to bury the hatchet, to join their efforts for national renovation, and to combine against their common enemy, the Communists. Rather paradoxically, such a task would encounter no major difficulty from the rank and file of the various groups. It would only require that peace be established among the leaders for the union movement to filter down through the rank-and-file membership.

THE MAIN CAUSE: BACKWARDNESS IN THE VIETNAMESE REVOLUTIONARY LEADERSHIP

We have come to the present dilemma not because of the conditions of fight, however difficult they may be, but because our revolutionary policy has not been in keeping with them. Faced with a sudden change in the conditions of fight, the leaders reacted neither properly nor in time. It appears that they have fallen into the same kind of backwardness as had their predecessors in 1945.

A cause for this anachronism derives from the character of the new tasks. The quick pace of evolution has put before our generation

tasks for which we are not fully prepared. The establishment of a democratic regime in an under-developed country is a new problem; the Western powers, as much as we, seem to be at a loss for a solution. We have little to guide us. A few countries have preceded us on the way toward democracy but the experience they give is rather negative in the sense that it shows a few wrong ways but not the right one. Under such conditions the leaders, in their task of solving the revolutionary problem, are like research scientists. However advanced and clear-sighted they may be, there need be some groping. Even with a perfect plan of development, in the process of application, there will be errors to be detected and corrected.

But a far greater cause of the anachronism is the traditional spirit of destruction and militaristic concept of the fight which the leaders have brought into the performance of their new tasks. While the conditions of the fight have totally changed, the leaders have not changed their old ways to meet the new situation. To come back to the analogy of a junk caught in a typhoon, if the wheel is blocked while the wind changes its direction, the junk is bound to upset or go astray. The spirit of destruction and the militaristic concept of the fight have no effect in reducing the obstacles to the achievement of the new revolutionary targets. Instead, they lead to errors in viewpoints, attitude, behavior, methods and techniques.

According to government literature, our revolution for democracy is defined as a fight "to eliminate the Feudalists, beat the Colonialists and exterminate the Communists". But after the departure of the French rulers and the end of the monarchy, Vietnam no longer has organized Feudalist and Colonialist forces to be destroyed by military means. There only are social and psychological conditions which the former regimes have bequeathed to the various classes of our society, each class being influenced in a different way from the others. In its positive aspect, the anti-feudalist and anti-colonialist fight consists chiefly in developing the thought and behavior of the various social strata, and improving the relationship among them within the framework of democratic thought. In other words, it is to inculcate the legitimacy by asserting and propagating the democratic spirit and behavior from the top of the nation to the bottom. In order "to eliminate the Feudalists and to beat the Colonialist", in what way should the present deputy behave differently from the "representants du peuple" of colonialist times? What should be avoided and what should be emphasized in the new attitudes of behavior with the public, as well as among (the bureaucrats and politicians) themselves? How should the peasant or the landlord behave now, and what should be the new relationship between them -- different from that of the past or from what the Communists are working for? Until the people get used to a democratic way of life, a national effort should be made to define in detail and put into practice appropriate behavior for the various elements composing the nation, so as to wipe out all Feudalist or Colonialist traces without falling into either demagoguery or dictatorship. Our anti-Feudalist and anti-Colonialist revolutionary efforts should first be directed toward ourselves, beginning

with the leaders, rather than by killing anybody. Yet, our anti-Feudalist and anti-Colonialist slogans, as observed in the newspapers or all along the national roads, incite people to kill rather than to construct. And in the daily activities of the various branches of the Government, there can be observed no effort whatsoever for concretely imparting the democratic spirit and for developing an appropriate behavior.

It is the same with anti-Communism. As we said before, our anti-Communist fight in its intranational and revolutionary character, is political before it is military. Too militarist a concept of fight has limited our weapons to only military means while the enemy has extended his influence in all fields. Such a concept has given the enemy a free hand to develop into militarily organized forces before any serious action can be undertaken against them. The country will be plunged into mourning and ruin before the Communist military forces can be destroyed. And even then, if the social and psychological conditions remain unchanged, Communism will keep on developing underground for another attempt to take over the country.

The leaders' spirit of destruction and militarist concept of fight have also impeded their task of invigorating and developing the Nationalist organizations. With such a spirit and such a concept, a definite human enemy is needed as an essential condition for keeping an organization active. During all the years when the Communists had not yet come into the open as a militarily organized contender, the Nationalist groups were alone in our politics. They have turned against one another. With the militarist methods of fight, any quarrel among leaders could degenerate into a struggle to death among groups. The relationship among the Vietnamese Nationalists since 1954 has been marked by a series of violent movements of dissidence. All the movements have been explained as made on behalf of the revolutionist cause but have been actually motivated by matters of individual or group private interests. Finally, each coup was a stab at the Nationalists as a whole. After a coup, a great many who had not participated in it were systematically repressed by the Government simply because of their past ties with the involved leaders. Unjustly driven to the wall and disoriented, many groups who had been prepared to co-operate with the Government have been brought to turn against it out of anger and resentment. Some even have come to terms with the Communists for self-protection. Most of those who have managed to keep a cool head fell back into "attentisme". And the few who keep on fighting for democracy find themselves under the crossfire of both the Government and the extremist opposition. Thus, instead of improving the relationship among them and among their groups, the leaders have by their own doing greatly worsened the division which paralyzes the Nationalists. Instead of initiating development, they have blocked the way to it.

The spirit of destruction and the militarist concept of fight are at variance with the new revolutionary needs. Therefore one expects to find a lack of development in the nationalist policy.

All groups claim to be for democracy but none has proposed a positive and coherent plan for achieving it.

No such plan has emerged from the Government, seven years in office. Despite an official doctrine called "personalism" no positive program has been created to pin-point the obstacles to be encountered and successive steps to be taken to overcome them.

One fails to see why, for example, the National Economic Board (Hoi Dong kinh te) and the Constitution Board (Hoi Dong Bao Hien) were created, six long years after the Constitution had been promulgated and the National Assembly and the President elected. Why were they not created at the same time as the other institutions? What are the special conditions required for their establishment? What has been done during those six years in order to meet the requirements? And which government office has been in charge of doing it? As another example, why are the village "administrative councils" formed only now, eight years after a National Assembly in full form was elected? What prevented the Government from permitting village council elections a few years ago when it had better control over the countryside? A third example can be offered in the various formulae for popular concentration -- either for reasons of security or for economic or political purposes. We sincerely believe that the Government was waited too long to establish the "Strategic Hamlets". Why were the strategic hamlets not established at the same time as the resettlement of the refugees, when we had a mass ready to co-operate and a great amount of aid for it, when the army was free and could help more efficiently, and when we had time enough for the newly created hamlets to get a solid foothold before the Communists were able to attack them?

A number of slogans have been given by the Government as summing up its policy. Some of them are negative, as is the case of the "anti-Feudalist, anti-Colonialist and anti-Communist" definition of our revolution. Some others are positive and, to our mind, in accordance with the revolutionary needs. But the latter need a definition in detail and are rarely put into practice.

Such is the case, for example, of NATIONAL DISCIPLINE upon which President Ngo-Dinh-Diem laid stress at the beginning of his second term. National discipline, in order to assure STABILITY to the regime in its development, is certainly as important to a sound democracy as the insemination of its LEGITIMACY. An accurate balance of interests between the citizen and the state should be defined and attained at each stage of our evolution toward realizing a democratic government in full form. Democratic duties as well as democratic rights should be considered. Vietnam now has imperative needs for survival as well as for development. On the behalf of independence and democracy, the Vietnamese citizen for the time being is expected to forgo many of his rights and to do his duty toward the community. Any mature democratic people would behave the same

way had they been in our shoes. Since we have, as yet, little experience with democratic ethics it becomes necessary to lay emphasis upon discipline and to define the various duties so that our democracy should not be nipped in the bud by an exaggerated "tendency solely to enjoy" on the part of the citizen.

National discipline should be defined in order to avoid not only demagoguery but also dictatorship. National discipline differs from dictatorship in that it is defined with an undeniable democratic spirit to be applied to every citizen, including the men in power. Civil rights cannot be limited without being first recognized. On the other hand, a democratic national discipline must function within democratic institutions. Otherwise it is bound to degenerate into dictatorship. In our case the need for a national discipline makes it more urgent that we create the several democratic institutions which are still missing, especially a legal opposition. Implicit in President Diem's request for a national discipline was the promise of certain democratic privileges. But a year has elapsed without any effort from the Government to make good the promise. National discipline has never been mentioned again.

Another example of the lack of definition and of application is a slogan on our economic and political policy. "Elevation of the working classes for a harmonious development of the society", the slogan says. Such a slogan certainly answers the aspirations of the masses and is in accordance with the nationalist cause. It states that there is a harmony of interests between the various social strata. It points out the necessity of a judicious distribution of resources among the people in the course of our economic development. A revolutionary target is thus made quite clear, but the problem is how to achieve it. How faithfully is the slogan applied in the economic development program, especially in the utilization of foreign aid? How widespread is its application, particularly in the distribution of resources under programs such as Agrarian reform? With such a slogan, how can an essentially social agency such as the Housing Office (Kien oc Cuc) exist primarily for the benefit of high-ranking bureaucrats? Anyhow, the results seem to be at variance with the beautiful slogan. Vietnamese society, these last seven years, has been developing most noticeably in the sense of an "elevation of the political group in power".

Because of a widespread lack of ideological harmony, many orders from the central government require detailed instructions for their execution. Many revolutionary tasks are thus transmitted, undefined, from one echelon to the next down to the local authorities in the countryside. The last to hold the buck, the local authorities, are often at a loss in carrying out their instructions. Many have been brought to the point of pleasing their superiors rather than working for the public good because the higher echelon can praise and punish while the population has few means of protesting. The farther from

the central government the greater the risk of estranging the population; this is chiefly because the government consistently resorts to authoritarian measures and gives too much unchecked power to the local authorities. This is why "there is a grave variance between policy and realizations", as the President said. After eight years, with a lack of efficient supervision and control, the wrong behavior and methods have developed into deep-rooted habits for too many civil servants. It would be a big problem should the government want to cleanse the administrative machine.

Our society today needs some energetic cleansing indeed. And the National Assembly seems to have made this its main work. But judging from the promulgated laws, the Legislative Branch has gone too far into the private field of morals and, as it were, done the job of a Salvation Army. On the contrary, it seems to have ignored the question of civic duties, where the cleansing is most needed, and which is more properly the moral duty of the state.

The examples above have all been taken from government platform and activity. Little can be said of the non-Communist opposition, not because little can be said against its platform but simply because it has never made public its platform. Eight years after our democratic regime was proclaimed, the non-Communist opposition is still shrouded in secrecy. Forced to the underground, the non-government Nationalist groups have had no opportunity to develop. The progressive elements who fight for democracy are forced into virtual inactivity. The spirit of destruction and the militarist concept of fight, on the contrary, have every reason to persist and develop, not against the Communist but against the government. For some Nationalists, the revolutionary effort does not consist in solving the revolutionary problem, but simply aims at either sharing or taking over the power for the sake of power. This line of reasoning is quite simple: "If we are in power, everything will be all right". Unfortunately, that is not the truth. Confronted with a grave disease, there is little use in changing doctors if such a change will not bring about a cure. Should the situation change and such people come to power, we shall simply be involved in another political misadventure, not necessarily any better for the population. In the meantime such a concept and methods of fight are bound to have a negative effect on the existing unity among the anti-Communist Nationalist groups and will seriously jeopardize their chances of realizing a meaningful union and development.

Thrust aside ^{from} our politics, the non-Communist opposition has little contact with reality. A number of outstanding personalities in the opposition today still hold that all it takes to establish a democratic regime is to unreservedly apply every democratic tool extant. Yet John Chang's recent experience in Korea demonstrates that the problem of democratization in an under-developed country is more complicated than that. So incomplete and unrealistic a viewpoint leads to extreme and negative attitudes. Many leaders

ask for democracy without doing anything for it by themselves. While asking for democracy, they fail to develop their own behavior and methods of fight so as to meet the requirements of a democratic opposition. All that simply because it is believed that democratization can be easily accomplished and, significantly, that it is the sole responsibility of the government. By being unrealistic, those leaders actually stand in the way of democracy. It is unrealistic to ask for a democratic government while the opposition remains anti-democratic. It is also unrealistic to wait for the government to expressly invite a democratic opposition to be formed and function. To our mind, it is a fight to be undertaken by the non-government Nationalists against the government as well as against themselves or, more exactly, against all points of backwardness from both sides. The spirit of destruction and the militarist concept do not meet the requirement of such a fight.

From this brief survey of our revolutionary tasks and how we have dealt with them, certain facts evolve. As the present writer said in a press conference as a spokesman for the FRONT FOR DEMOCRATIZATION, in a nutshell, most of the unsatisfactory results which we have obtained can be explained by two false starts: our way of establishing democracy and our way of dealing with Nationalist groups.

First, concerning our way of establishing our democracy, as in most other Afro-Asian countries "our democratic institutions" were created hastily and without preparation and are too advanced to be immediately adaptable to the level of the political, economic and social development of our country. If applied, such a system would quickly lead to demagoguery and disorder as in many newly independent countries. Vietnam, in the face of an imminent Communist danger, could not afford to follow this pattern. But instead of beginning on a more realistic basis, the government chose to act expediently while paying lip service to democratic principles. It permits itself to be swept by events, more and more toward a dictatorship. It has put itself, therefore, in the false position of saying one thing and doing another and of justifying itself either by tendentious propaganda or simply by stifling criticism. This false position and this equivocating attitude has created suspicion on the part of the population at a time when one of the principle objectives of the government should be to gain confidence.

In so doing, the government is gradually dissociating itself from the nation. Obsessed by its concern for survival and desperately clinging to power, the government has arrived at a position where its interests are in opposition to those of the people. From this derives the grievances of the people, grievances which include: a democracy in appearance only, a monopolistic and partisan political party which creates obstacles to the renovation of the country, and a lack of managerial skill because appointment and promotion is based on loyalty toward the leaders instead of individual merit.

The second false start concerns the government's way of dealing with the Nationalist groups. The need for national unity is common to most emergent countries after they achieve independence. Military means, as a solution to the problem, should be the last resort instead of being the first. The attempt to achieve South-Vietnamese internal unity by means of force has pushed the Nationalist groups underground. "Some of them resumed their former methods of fighting. This time, their objective was to destroy the government instead of the Communists. Thus began a vicious circle. As long as the extremist opposition used anti-democratic methods to overthrow the government, it was natural for the government, in its defense, to employ similar means to neutralize them. And the more the government resorted to totalitarian measures, the more it increased the number of discontented extremists. Even though these nationalist groups have been reduced to impotency by military and police forces, their extremist ideas persist and spread among the people."

Such is, we believe, the genesis of the impasse in which the Vietnamese nationalists find themselves while the government becomes increasingly isolated in the face of the Communist danger.

A POWERFUL ACCESSORY CAUSE: BACKWARDNESS IN AMERICAN AID

Without being a revolution in itself, American aid to an emergent country like Vietnam is no less to be administered under revolutionary conditions. As a fight on behalf of the local population, it also needs popular support for success. The requirements for winning popular support are the same as those of a revolutionary movement and one must consider the cause, the policy, and the execution of the policy. The cause of the Aid must be legitimate. The policy must be based on the local conditions of fight. Conditions differ from one recipient country to another and a thorough knowledge of local problems is required before devising an Aid policy, just as a diagnosis must be made by any doctor before he prescribes medicine. In the execution of its policy, the US should also adopt a valid position toward the recipient nation, have a logical attitude toward the various salient factors, and adopt the most appropriate behavior, methods and techniques. If the cause is well defined and the policy is well devised and properly executed, American aid is bound to win the gratitude of the local population. On the contrary, their discontent and indifference mean that something is amiss in the American aid program and that it works against their interests and aspirations. Instead of blaming it on social characteristics and saying that ingratitude is just another feature of the Asians, a more rational effort to identify the problem and its causes should be made.

With this object in view, let us compare the American aid program with the needs of an emergent country. The basic reason for American aid to a country is to keep it from going Communist by helping to develop its economy and by increasing its military

potential. Except for the cases of defeated Germany and Japan -- in which the US, by its right as victor, managed to impose on both of them a democratic regime -- the basic policy of the foreign aid program is one of "non-intervention in the internal affairs of the recipient country".

With such a cause and such a policy, the Marshall Plan was a success in Europe, but a failure in China. A comparison between the outcome of American aid to China and that to Japan -- each being carried out from an opposite position -- shows that the US paradoxically did much more good for its former enemy than for its long time friend. While no ill intent was present, there was an obvious lack of efficiency in US aid to China. In dealing with the Afro-Asian under-developed world, in the implementation of Truman's Point Four, the US has stuck to the same basic policy underlying the Marshall Plan. The result is not much better than that obtained in China. An increasingly heavy responsibility rests upon the US for keeping the many recipient countries from falling apart by themselves, with or without Communist pressure. There seems to be no immediate good way of ending the aid without an inglorious abandonment to Communism of the recipient countries.

Why is this policy, successful in Europe, a failure in under-developed countries? The reason, to our mind, is not so much the conditions of under-development of the recipient countries as the lack of preparedness on the part of the US for meeting a new situation. The problem is more complicated with emergent Afro-Asian countries than with Europe. The main element of complication is not the local conditions of under-development but the local situation of revolution. The European countries already had an established political and social order. Ruined by World War II, they only needed help from the US for a complete recovery. The Marshall Plan perfectly answered their needs. On the other hand, emergent nations like Vietnam are in the midst of a political revolution. They are groping toward a new political and social order. In the process, many ideological schools may be fighting against one another. On the one side are the Communists; on the other side are grouped the Nationalists of various tendencies, each of which is still in need of development. Whether the US likes it or not, the aid program has to take the local revolution into account because American aid is bound to affect the revolutionary course and direction in one way or another, for the benefit or the damnation of the recipient people. This gives rise to a new responsibility which, while not propounded in the implementation of the Marshall Plan, must be dealt with realistically. Within the framework of American foreign policy, anti-Communism now has a revolutionary context. The American respect for the recipient people's "self-determination" can no longer be guaranteed by a negative policy of "non-intervention" which, practically speaking, may lead to just the contrary. In order to make sure that an emergent people really control their own destiny, the US is expected to make positive efforts helping them develop control

of themselves. In other words, American aid ought to be devised so as to help their legitimate aspirations come true through the achievement of their political revolution. This cannot be done without getting to the bottom of the revolutionary situation and taking sides in it, not only for anti-Communism but also for democracy. The US, to be sure, should not impose itself, but it should demand democracy. National renovation based on democracy should be a basic condition of the aid just as is anti-Communism, and this even for the sake of anti-Communism itself.

Apart from the need for a conceptual change in the aid program, there may also be a need for increased American understanding of the situation in the recipient countries. The various governmental institutions of an embryonic regime are somewhat artificial and transitory, are liable to abrupt change and, anyhow, do not have the same representative character as in a mature democracy. The various manifestations of popularity may be initiated at will by the local men in power for the sake of appearance and do not always reflect the attitudes of the local population. In such a situation, it would be an error to accept things at face value or to judge the situation by the standards applied to an established political system. The true significance of facts can be found only with a thorough understanding of the local revolution. In any event, the anti-Communist aspect of the aid program, independent of the recipient people's positive revolutionary goals, and the policy of non-intervention as defined in the Marshall Plan, become too negative to meet the new needs. The foreign aid program must be directly related to the needs of the local revolutionary conditions. Otherwise, American aid may well become a blind force and, despite the US' good will, operate against the interests of the recipient people. A great deal of the unsatisfactory results obtained in the implementation of Truman's Point Four program, unfortunately, can be explained by just such a lack. This is backwardness, in the sense defined earlier. It is a backwardness on the part of those who are ahead in the evolution of mankind but fail to heed the movements at the rear.

The right of recipient countries to control their own destinies is certainly to be respected by all means. And the US undeniably makes it a point to respect sovereignty. But the error is in equating "non-intervention" with "respect of self-determination". With such a negative policy, the US pours its powerful means into a revolution with no positive revolutionary viewpoint of its own and no clear idea of how the internal organization of the recipient nation will be affected. By so doing, the US takes sides in the revolution despite themselves, without knowing it and without making a conscious choice. Practically speaking, this demeanor puts AID passively at the free disposal of the local men in power, whoever they are, only provided that they are not Communists. They can do whatever they like, internally as long as an anti-Communist excuse of some sort be given. The effect is like that of a hurricane on a small junk in the open sea. Even though it divorces itself from

the local revolutionary situation, AID nonetheless indiscriminately and irresistably affects the very revolution it ignores. Because of the lack of a positive American viewpoint on the local national situation, through the efforts of the men in power American aid becomes, internally, the greatest force in local politics. It is more often used for controlling rather than developing the nation. That is one of the main elements of disturbance in the local revolutionary leadership. The most powerful political group is that which has the direct American blessing, no matter what it stands for and whether or not it has popular support. In order to remain in power, the main problem facing the local government is to draw more American support by making a loud-mouthed show of anti-Communism, rather than by working for popular support by solving the revolutionary problem. Being remiss in helping correct errors of the revolutionary leadership, the presence of American aid tends to turn the leaders away from their real duties. This is why the local government may become a government of occupation in its own land and among its own people.

Another sore point of the American policy of "non-intervention" is in the relationship between the US and the recipient people. As an inevitable result of the policy, the relationship is limited to that between respective governments. That is normal and all right if the local government represents the recipient people the same way as the US government does the people of the US. But a true representation is not always shown in a revolutionary situation, particularly when the American support by itself can supplant all the usual requirements for a government to be maintained. As a result, the recipient country may, practically speaking, be limited to the local political group in power with which the US is generally identified in the eyes of the local population. With it the US shares the popular love or hatred -- perhaps more hatred than love. Despite that, the relationship between the US and the local group in power is not without its stresses and strains. This is chiefly true when, faced with the local realities, the US sees itself compelled to depart from the official position of non-intervention in order to beg or to threaten for minor changes.

Of course, the main purpose of American aid is to oppose international Communism. But anti-Communism in the Afro-Asian countries is subordinate to their revolution for national renovation. Because anti-Communism is a matter of course in the US, the American leaders in charge of the aid fail to see the necessity of reinforcing an anti-Communist motivation for the local people by helping their aspirations come true.

The anti-Communist fight in Asia and Africa encounters a number of intranational problems peculiar to each country plus an international problem. As the leader of international anti-Communism, the US should not have a common policy to be mechanically applied for all. American aid should adapt itself to the local conditions instead of compelling the recipient countries to adapt themselves to the aid. The USA has an international anti-Communist strategy

but, with respect to each recipient country, there is no strategy for American aid. The US activities in the implementation of the Aid program are all of a tactical character. Based on the appearance of things and motivated only by overt signs, they aim only at short-range targets. The US may change its attitude from one day to the next, to the bafflement of its friends who gradually lose their faith in it. President John F. Kennedy, when a senator, once compared the international role of the US to that of a team of firemen in front of increasingly frequent and violent conflagrations. From the standpoint of a citizen in a recipient country, the US could be compared to a doctor, full of good will and having at his disposal all kinds of medicines, but with no clear idea of the etiology of the disease. He, furthermore, takes no pains to learn it, because he just holds to a treatment of symptoms, year after year, while the disease is increasingly aggravated. With the negative anti-Communist cause and the negative non-intervention position, the US sees no necessity to acquire a thorough knowledge of the local situation beyond its military situation. Nor does it try to win popular support. Moreover, faced with a revolutionary situation which must be dealt with, the American officials in the field are conservative people impervious to revolutionist views. They resist any change in their routinist conduct. They are readily hostile to any bold initiative which goes off the beaten track, afraid as they are, that things, already bad, might go worse. All existing positions must be held, maintaining the status quo until an international extremist reaction or an international antagonistic pressure brings about an abrupt change. In full view of accomplished facts, they cling to the present situation, provided it is not yet in the Communist domain.

A psychological factor seems to have some effect upon the American officials in the emergent countries. The US has felt proud of not having been a colonialist power. This pride, natural and well justified by itself, becomes an insuperable, bureaucratic personality complex characterized by an almost physical fear of being mistaken for imperialists. Combined with the local complex of the "former colonized people" -- the latter increasingly more calculated than true -- prevents an objective and efficient approach to things. Whenever national pride is invoked, the American officials sound the tattoo as if moved by reflex. National pride is invoked too often for too many things which have nothing to do with pride. This phobia also makes the American attitude and behavior in the Afro-Asian countries excessively stiff and unnatural. As an example, the US no doubt has respected the European peoples' right of self-determination, in the implementation of the Marshall Plan, just as much as that of the Afro-Asians now. But the American officials in Europe probably have not avoided the local non-governmental people so carefully as they have in the Afro-Asian countries. Aloof as they are, the American representatives can neither understand the local population nor make themselves understood. Their attitude and behavior are a main source of misunderstanding. Too much sincerity may be taken for machiavellism. A main point of misunderstanding is that, with its monomania of international anti-Communism, the US cares little about the fate of the local population, purposely

picks up a local political group and uses it for establishing a neo-fascist regime to answer the need of international stability. In the eyes of the people, American aid looks like a mandate for the group in power to repress every other group, and to dominate the population. Suffice to scan Communist propaganda to be convinced that such a misunderstanding is fruitfully exploited by the enemy.

In short, in its aid to the under-developed world in the midst of a revolution for emancipation, the US has never yet fought against the Communists with ideas of Freedom and of Justice but, at least until now, only with bombs and dollars. Instead of assuming the role of a leader, it has confined itself to that of a mere purveyor of means. American aid plays a vital role in defending many emergent nations against the Communists. Yet, backwardness in the concept and in the execution of the aid program indirectly causes the local revolution to go astray.

Vietnam is one of the countries most favored by American aid. In recent years, American aid has provided Vietnam with all the means of survival. With the realities of the present emergency situation, American aid and the firm American attitude are the main factors keeping the Communists from taking over. Beside the great amount of aid, the American experts in the various branches of AID are competent and unreservedly devoted to their jobs. But in totalling their efforts and technical achievements, Vietnam is a case example of the aid program not answering many vital local needs.

By emphasizing anti-Communism rather than positive revolutionary goals and from lack of a better adaptation to the local situation, the US has reduced its anti-Communist efforts in Vietnam solely to the maintenance of an administrative machine and of an army. Thanks to American aid, the administrative machine and the army are maintained while the situation keeps on deteriorating because no effort has been made to solve the local revolutionary problem.

The economic aid has a noticeable effect only on the urban economy. Although the Vietnamese urban population has been living directly or indirectly on aid, the effect is not beneficial, as it could be. This is because of two handicaps, both resulting from the American refusal to take a more active part in our revolution.

As is to be expected with an economic aid program, the US provides us with the resources and technical advice, but abstains from direct political involvement. Such an attitude is in accordance with the frequently-held American concept that Communism in the Afro-Asian under-developed countries is a direct result of their poverty. Communism may decline if poverty can be allayed by a developed economy. Such reasoning, however, does not cover an essential aspect of our economic problem concerning the harmonizing of interests among all the people. As a way of motivating the population against Communism, a well-apportioned poverty would be preferable to an ill-distributed development effected through

injustice and corruption. This is particularly true with South Vietnam, which is not considered as a particularly needy region in South-East Asia, especially in comparison with its antagonist North-Vietnam. Economic development favoring a select few, on the contrary, has every reason to be feared. In effect, that is what has been plaguing our economy, because political sectarianism has gone too far into the economic field and made aid a monopoly of the political group in power. This is not only a main source of internal division and of popular discontent but also a tremendous waste of skilled resources of which the country is in need. American economic aid, conceived as an anti-Communist weapon, becomes a source of injustice and corruption and actually becomes an additional genetic cause of local Communism.

Apart from the disharmony of interests and the lack of a general participation, the development of our economy is jeopardized by another fact. AID policy does not consider realistically our economic needs. It is essentially geared to the maintenance of a heavy and expensive administrative machine for anti-Communist activities in accordance with the costly American methods; it is at variance with the needs of an intranational anti-Communism. The military method for achieving South-Vietnamese internal unity is only one of several methods; it is certainly the most costly one in many aspects. By resorting to methods of force instead of those of reason, the Vietnamese Government put itself on a war footing at a time when the Armistice of the Geneva Accords brought times of peace. Thus the Government has been unable to develop its economy and stands in even greater need of money, to consider only the economic consequences. The Government's economic and financial resources are, before anything else, used for a military effort. So also, is the economic aid which is not absorbed as an injection of unusual and transitory means of increasing productivity, but which is regularly used up and must be provided as a regular source of income. Such a misuse has an effect like that of opium; it creates in Vietnam an artificial sense of well-being at the price of a mortgage on our future. With the flow of imported consumer goods and a policy of encouraging expenditure -- this because the Government needs too much immediate money -- the Vietnamese are increasingly accustomed to a material comfort far beyond their real means while their purses go increasingly dry. Instead of a sound regime of respectable austerity for the sake of production, as a good contrast to the Communist regime of "long privation and hardship", we have come to a debauched luxury which reduces to nought our economic advantage over the enemy. Vietnam becomes less and less self-sufficient. It is as if the Vietnamese Government takes for granted that foreign aid is going to last forever or, on the American side, as though the US for some reason has planned to support a free South-Vietnam for just a limited time. What recently happened to the Laotian economy and finance, just a matter of days after the US suspended its aid, makes the informed Vietnamese tremble for the future of his country. Even now, an economic crisis seems to be coming to a head, hidden only by a military situation of emergency.

Thanks to the military aid, we now have an army the size, equipment and technical quality of which is by far superior to that of the local Communists. Yet, the American disassociation of anti-Communism from the positive local revolutionary goals and the lack of its adaptation to the intranational aspect of the fight have some unfavorable effects on the army as well as on the fight in general.

In view of the lack of appropriate adaptation to our needs, our army seems to have patterned itself after the American one. It is organized more in accordance with conditions in the US than with our own. It is too highly specialized and does not adapt to our needs. A highly specialized army has its full efficiency only when the conditions required for the specialization are all fulfilled. First of all, there must be a war. During the time when the Communist pressure had not yet developed into an open military clash and when the actual anti-Communist task consisted entirely in a work of construction, our army was forced into idleness, which, given our situation, was a terrible waste of manpower as well as of money. The waste is all the greater because, as it is organized, our army is too expensive and far beyond our capacity of supply. For its army just as for its economy, Vietnam is made a burden on the US. How long will American aid last, and what after that?

[With regard to the anti-Communist fight in general, the political solution consists of reinvigorating the Vietnamese anti-Communist movement, of a re-organization and a development of the Nationalists, and of reinforcing the anti-Communist motivation by an efficient national renovation based on democracy. By ignoring our revolution and the intranational aspect of our anti-Communist fight, the US has jeopardized such a solution instead of helping work for it. As a high-ranking American official put it, "the anti-Communist fight in Vietnam is seventy-five percent political and twenty-five percent military." Yet, everything American is directed to the twenty-five percent and nothing to the seventy-five percent.] Rather paradoxically, American aid has indirectly contributed to the situation of internal division and to the dilemma among the Vietnamese Nationalists. Not that the US holds with repressing non-government Nationalist groups but, practically speaking, it purveys all the necessary means for so doing. Because of that, the Vietnamese anti-Communist potentialities are seriously jeopardized despite the all-out American efforts for creating a technically efficient army. For all the millions of dollars spent, such a result is bad enough. If it were to obtain in all emergent countries, there may come a day when the US is no longer able to cover all the exigencies. [The way out, to our mind, is not by an abandonment but, on the contrary, by going deep into every local revolutionary problem and helping solve them using principles of justice and freedom, and perhaps in fusing them with the revolutionary spirit of 1776 from which the United States herself was born and developed.] Tremendous human resources could then be mobilized

against Communism in the emergent free countries as well as in many others under Communist dominion.]

This brief survey is made with no intent to criticize a benefactor for the sake of mere criticism. It is motivated by an anxious hope for an improvement of the situation in Vietnam, and in all the under-developed Free World in general. It is also an attempt to examine objectively a most important factor of our revolution, so that we Vietnamese can see our way. With regard to American aid, a contradictory and inefficient attitude has been adopted by many Nationalist leaders opposed to the Government. It is a queer mixing of an unjustified suspicion with an unjustified feeling of dependency. The suspicion could be the result of the pre-war anti-imperialist revolutionist literature, mostly of a Communist origin, which comes to us at a time when capitalism has changed its nature and when the international social revolution is constantly changing. The feeling of dependency suggests that a spirit of independence does not necessarily accompany the fact of independence. As a result of these two points of backwardness, many leaders in the opposition consider the improvement of our internal situation as the sole responsibility of the US. This is as illogical as asking the wind to take charge of the steering, to come back to the example of a small junk in the open sea. As a matter of fact, such an attitude has only contributed to the worsening of the relationships among Vietnamese Nationalists.

THE SITUATION OF EMERGENCY

The situation of emergency was proclaimed only after the local Communists had developed into a military force strong enough to control a great part of the countryside and directly to threaten the regime. Simultaneously, international Communism through North-Vietnam had also taken advantage of the events in Laos for exerting a more direct form of pressure. The situation should have been considered an emergency much sooner, particularly since our anti-Communist revolutionary mechanism was badly paralyzed and our anti-Communist motivation seriously jeopardized. From the Nationalist situation of a dilemma to that of an emergency there is but a little step, in an inexorable process of evolution, just as an abscess is bound to come to a head after a certain time. While the intranational aspect of the fight is taken into little account by the Government or the US, in the Communist strategy of invasion it is carefully combined with the international aspect. The situation of emergency is nothing but the Communist pressure passing from the intranational stage to the international one, and from an underground form of activities to an open one. As such, it comes as no bolt from the blue. On the contrary, it was bound to happen sooner or later, depending on how accurately and how hard South-Vietnam worked at preventing it. Following the Geneva Accords, the Vietnamese Nationalists had almost six years to prepare themselves to meet this

eventuality. Since the preparation was inadequate, the sooner the Communists broke out into the open, the better for us. Although the danger remains pretty much the same, it is now too obvious for anyone to be blind to it. Internationally, any illusion of things being all right in Vietnam is blasted away. The Free World's Powers can no longer persist in an attitude of defeatist appeasement. If this country is to be saved from Communism, a more energetic attitude becomes imperative. Intranationally, the Communist military pressure breaking out at this time is very much of a blessing in disguise. It is the clearest warning and the strongest stimulus for the Nationalists to revise at last their attitudes, overcome their past mutual grievances, and reinforce themselves before it is too late. There is still time for change. With the situation of emergency, our country is shaking with fever, but the bout of fever may well have a salutary effect, because, thanks to it, we at last face the problem more realistically.

How the situation will evolve depends on many elements among which the Nationalists are only one and the local Communists only another. In view of the present intranational and international balances of force, our situation is not dramatic because of any Communist invasion by itself, but more importantly because of our unpreparedness in coping with the situation. The internal causes of the Nationalist dilemma have been the same as the causes of Communist victories in the intranational aspect of the fight. They are the basic Communist advantages in the present stage. Yet there is good reason for optimism. Our main task in dealing with the present situation consists chiefly in putting an end to the Nationalist dilemma. A union, based on positive revolutionary goals as well as on anti-Communism, will greatly increase the Vietnamese anti-Communist potentialities, qualitatively as well as quantitatively, and really improve the conditions of fight, thanks to a more enthusiastic response from the population. Vietnam will thus be able to contribute positively to the Free World's common fight instead of being a burden on it. On the other hand, any form of popular oppression -- for which there may appear to be many plausible tactical reasons -- will give a deceptive appearance of strength pending the hour of death. The anti-Communist fight in an emergent country like Vietnam is not for the survival of a people, but only for that of Freedom and Justice within it. Any form of autocracy in such a fight will be deprived of popular support and will ultimately lead to disaster.

In short, the Vietnamese general line of conduct in the emergency situation remains the same as before. The difference lies, in a higher degree of urgency, as well as in the steps to be taken. The realities today are not quite the same as those immediately after the Geneva Accords. There must be taken into account those additional problems accumulated during the years before the situation of emergency and those that have developed since then.

THE VARIOUS REACTIONS SINCE THE SITUATION OF EMERGENCY

The quickest reactions, and the strongest, are from the US. The first to be registered are in economic aid. Beginning with the Staley Program, besides a subordination of economic aid to the new paramilitary needs, there seems to emerge a sluggish tendency to go to the countryside, directly to the peasants. For the first time, economic aid has not, as a main purpose, the upkeep of the administrative machine. Also for the first time, it is used as providential means of production for the citizen and not as a regular income for the state. Such a use of the aid ought to have a beneficial effect upon our peasants and upon our rural economy although it is not noticeable yet. It also underlines an approach to a main problem which can no longer be postponed by the Government. Drastic efforts toward self-sufficiency now have to be made. Realities will soon prove that such efforts cannot consist uniquely in enacting an automatic tax increase upon a tired population. Instead, the force of events may soon lead the Government to tighten its belt before asking for new taxes, and to loosen the enduring malevolent regime of "dirigisme".

But the most effective reactions are in military aid. They do not consist in merely increased aid to existing elements of the armed forces. A new element has been introduced and consists of a real contribution in manpower. This is illustrated by the arrival of a high-level commander and the creation of the M.A.C., a system of command, in addition to the existing M.A.A.G., an advisory group. Of course, the American soldiers in Vietnam are not directly participating in the war officially. They are only providing logistic support and advice to the Vietnamese units on the battlefields. But by way of understatement, the American intention looks clear enough to the Communists. The US would jump completely should the Communists cross the frontiers. Its firm attitude and increased military aid have reversed the situation. The Communist attempt to assault from the inside is broken, and the North-Vietnamese leaders are licking their wounds. On the contrary, our army, according to official statements, is carrying out a fruitful offensive.

But this is only an immediate effect. How the situation will evolve depends on many factors out of our control: the reactions to come from international Communism, those from Democratic powers other than the US, and also the American attitude in the future. The ultimate result of all those antagonistic international reactions may be a war in Vietnam between the two Blocs, as in Korea. Or, in view of the present situation of international equilibrium and of the universal aversion to general war, it may more probably be a political arrangement of the same type as the Geneva Accords in 1954, or as in the more recent Laotian agreement. Such an arrangement will likely benefit the Communists, and they seem to be already working for it. As a major way of preventing an American military intervention of greater scope, they may well try to shift from an

ever toughening military fight into an easier political field. As a matter of fact, they have already been trying to exploit the internal Nationalist division and the popular estrangement from the Government for a movement of "neutrality" which, in our specific case, is nothing else but a transitory step toward their taking over.

All that, however, is no reason for wanting a general war. It simply underlines the urgency of a political solution for strengthening the internal Vietnamese anti-Communist organization. However efficient the increased military aid may be, it can by no means be relied upon for providing the political solution. For the increased military aid is not an attempt to solve the Vietnamese problem. It is simply an international reaction, in Vietnam just as in Thailand for example, for restoring the equilibrium of forces upset by the international Communist pressure passing into a direct and open form. The true meaning of the military aid increase is that the anti-Communist fight in Vietnam has passed on to its international stage while we internationally are not yet ready. What is its effect if not a greater ability to kill the enemy? And, as a result of the international aspect of anti-Communism being overlooked and of the Nationalist groups being dislocated and paralyzed, the population and the enemy are being intimately mixed with each other, and the population generally pushed to the front to serve as a shelter for the diabolic enemy! How many innocent people are killed in a bombardment; how many of the real enemy? No Vietnamese can be indifferent to so distressing a situation. No ideology can defend it. No party interest or political altercation has a right to prolong it. All the Vietnamese leaders, whoever they are and whatever they are in our politics, are bound to the same duty. No matter whether they are in power, in jail or in exile, and no matter how serious were their grudges against one another, they all have to revise their viewpoints and attitudes and join their efforts for drawing the population out of this fatal plight. Otherwise, they cease to be leaders. And although the problem is an internal one, there should be positive efforts on the part of the Democratic powers for helping the Vietnamese achieve the disassociation of the Communists from the population. Otherwise, the Free World's fight, seen through the eyes of the under-developed peoples, is a massacre of the victim as well as the aggressor. Such a desired disassociation is by now probably the main worry of responsible people, American as well as Vietnamese. Despite the fact that there has been no official hint of the problem, many measures seem to have been taken to that effect. But if such is the target, it has not been attained yet. Because, as we shall see in the following, all the measures are only methods of organization instead of actual efforts to solve our political problem.

The Government's reactions to the situation of emergency, in a nutshell, are of two types. The first is for a more efficient army, concentrating on logistics, anti-guerrilla warfare, intelligence, etc....they are all within the framework of military aid, and are the very results of its increase.

The second kind of measures are of a paramilitary purpose, as a supplement to a too highly specialized army. Among them, some are for mobilizing the population for a more active cooperation with the Government, such as the Republic Youth (Thanh-nien Cong-Hoa) and the United Women (Phu nu Lien Doi). Some others are directed toward a better control over the population and, at least in form, toward withdrawing them from enemy control. Of the latter are the various formulae of popular concentration, each with an additional economic or social purpose, such as the Agricultural Centers (Khu Dinh Dien) or the Prosperity Centers (Khu Tru Mac). The latest, the Strategic Hamlets (Ap Chien Luoc), are proclaimed as the national policy "for the achievement of our revolution on the triple political, economic and military points of view". With the joined effort of American aid, the Strategic Hamlets are being established in an accelerated rhythm all over the country including Saigon, the Capitol.

What effect will those various activities, especially the Strategic Hamlets, have on the situation? All those measures are pure technique, just as propaganda or psychological warfare, for example, are techniques. Instead of being, by themselves, the solution to our revolutionary problem, they are only particular means for solving a problem not yet to be defined. How efficient they are will depend on how they meet the demands of the solution, and how adequate the solution is. As anti-Communist measures, they are fighting techniques but not a "political solution".

As techniques they can be used by anybody. In fact, the Communists have used them before us. It is interesting to remember that during the Resistance, a main cause of the Viet-Minh movement being less developed in the South than in the North was that the South-Vietnamese in the countryside were too scattered for efficient control and mass coercion. It should also be remembered that, during the Resistance in the North, many "controlled" villages, officially considered as trustworthy, turned out overnight to be Communist bastions. Thus, despite immediate results, the barbed wire around the Strategic Hamlets can, in the long run, be really effective only if an anti-Communist barrier can be set in the minds of the people. The Strategic Hamlet concept should be employed in conjunction with a political solution instead of supplanting it. Despite the promise of a triple revolution through the establishment of the Strategic Hamlets and, apart from a project of elected village councils, what is still unknown is how the Government expects to achieve the revolution by such techniques. One thing is quite obvious: given the same population, the same application and the same conditions, unless there is a full and spontaneous participation of all the local Nationalist elements working in a spirit of partnership, instead of being a mere governmental measure often to their detriment, anti-Communism will be increased tenfold.