

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE VWP AND

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST MOVEMENT

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No history of Vietnamese Communism would be complete without a brief discussion of its position within and attitude towards the International Communist movement. Were Ho Chi Minh and his associates "national communists" or "militant internationalists"?<sup>1</sup> What were their views on the major issues of the Sino-Soviet dispute? Were they "pro-Soviet" or "pro-Chinese"? These and similar questions warrant attention.

"Titoists" or Internationalists?

In recent years Ho Chi Minh has frequently been characterized as "a man who tended toward the combination of nationalism and communism associated with Marshal Tito"; it has also been asserted that "the character of Vietnamese communism is inseparable from Vietnamese nationalism."<sup>2</sup> Professor Morgenthau, for example, notes the decline of monolithic Communism and tells us:

We can today distinguish four different types of communism in view of the kind and degree of hostility to the United States they represent: a communism identified with the Soviet Union--e.g., Poland; a communism identified with China--e.g., Albania; a communism that straddles the fence between the Soviet Union and China--e.g., Rumania; and independent communism--e.g.,

Yugoslavia. Each of these communisms must be dealt with in terms of the bearing its foreign policy has upon the interests of the United States in a concrete instance. . . . Ho Chi Minh is a natural candidate to become an Asian Tito.<sup>3</sup>

Most available evidence, however, does not support this analysis of Ho and his associates. The confusion has been caused by Vietnamese Communism's reliance upon nationalistic themes in its propaganda appeals for popular support, a practice which reflects less the Party's attitude toward "nationalism" than the intense and widespread desire of the people for national independence from French colonialism. In 1960 VWP First Secretary Le Duan asserted: "The communist parties must grasp firmly and hold aloft the banner of nationalism, democracy and peace, and should not let the bourgeoisie utilize it to hoodwink the masses."<sup>4</sup> Similarly, a "top secret" Party resolution circulated in South Vietnam in 1966 explained: "To properly accomplish the civilian proselyting task, attention must be paid to the following: . . . (b) A large-scale mass motivation campaign must be opened in the cities and in rural areas as well. Nationalism must be promoted, sufferings pointed out, national and class hatred provoked and aimed at the Americans and traitorous Vietnamese who sell out their country . . ."<sup>5</sup>

As noted earlier, upon attaining full control of North Vietnam the Party redefined various popular terms to conform with Communist objectives. Nationalism was definitely not one of those goals. In the speech in which he called upon Communist parties to "hold aloft the banner of nationalism," Le Duan asserted: "The communist and workers'

parties have the obligation . . . to resolutely struggle against all manifestations of nationalism and chauvinism."<sup>6</sup> In a similar vein, Truong Chinh has written that "we must oppose every manifestation of bourgeois nationalism, the enemy of proletarian internationalism."<sup>7</sup>

Ho Chi Minh has been praised by his Party as "a great internationalist militant,"<sup>8</sup> whose "first tremendous achievement" was to lead the Vietnamese people "from patriotism to Marxism-Leninism." (Emphasis added.)<sup>9</sup> Contrary to popular opinion, Ho Chi Minh did not synthesize patriotism and Marxism-Leninism; he merely re-defined the latter in terms of the former. Even before the formation of the Indochinese Communist Party, Ho Chi Minh viewed the world as being divided into two camps: the "socialist camp" was headed by the Soviet Union, and the "counterrevolutionary camp of international capitalism" had as its "general staff" the League of Nations.<sup>10</sup> In order to be successful in the worldwide struggle, which had as its "ultimate goal" the "establishment of socialism and communism all over the world,"<sup>11</sup> Ho and his colleagues felt that the socialist camp should be "sealed in monolithic solidarity."<sup>12</sup> Certainly there is a valid comparison to be made between Ho Chi Minh and Tito. Prior to 1948 they were two of Stalin's most militant supporters.<sup>13</sup> The comparison ends, however, in 1948.

#### VWP Attitude Toward Titoism

The most effective approach in examining the Vietnamese Communist attitude toward "national communism" or "Titoism" may be to consider events chronologically, and in the context of Soviet-Yugoslav relations.

On 28 June 1948 the Communist Party of Yugoslavia was expelled from the Communist Information Bureau (Cominform) because of Stalin's feud with Tito. Although the Vietnamese Communists took no part in the quarrel, once they learned of the decision they added Tito to their list of propaganda targets.<sup>14</sup> Ho Chi Minh, on 14 January 1950, expressed the DRV's desire to establish diplomatic relations with "all countries,"<sup>15</sup> and his Foreign Minister Hoang Minh Giam promptly sent a copy of Ho's request "to all governments of foreign countries."<sup>16</sup> The Yugoslav government on 21 February announced that it had accepted the Ho Chi Minh offer to establish diplomatic relations, an announcement which was reported as "the most sensational victory over the Soviet Government since Marshal Tito's split with the Communist Information Bureau."<sup>17</sup> There was no immediate response in Hanoi to Belgrade's announcement. This may have been because Ho was embarrassed to learn that his invitation had been sent to the Tito government, or he may have been awaiting instructions from Moscow or Peking on how to respond.<sup>18</sup> Finally, on 27 February, the DRV sent a telegram to Tito stating simply: "We take good note of your answer to our telegram asking recognition by the democratic nations."<sup>19</sup>

The DRV not only refused to return diplomatic recognition, but it immediately began an extensive propaganda attack on the Yugoslav government, among other things describing Tito as "a spy for American imperialism."<sup>20</sup> The attacks continued for several years, following the lead of Soviet propaganda.

With Stalin's death, Soviet-Yugoslav relations began to improve. In June 1955 Khrushchev visited Yugoslavia in an attempt to reconcile differences, and went so far as to agree that "questions of internal organization, or differences in social systems and in forms of socialist development, are solely the concern of the individual countries."<sup>21</sup> Tito responded with a letter to the Twentieth Party Congress of the Soviet Union, praising the "tremendous triumphs" achieved by the CPUSSR;<sup>22</sup> Khrushchev's remarks on Yugoslavia at the Congress were mentioned in Chapter Six. While the Soviet-Yugoslav detente brought a halt to DRV attacks on Tito, in October 1956 Ho Chi Minh was still unwilling to consider Yugoslavia a member of "the great family of the socialist regime."<sup>23</sup>

In early August 1957 Tito and Khrushchev met again, this time in Rumania. The official communiqué of their talks reaffirmed the principles set forth in the "Belgrade Declaration" of June 1955.<sup>24</sup> There still remained significant ideological differences between Yugoslavia and Moscow, but the Rumania meeting cleared the way "for friendly cooperation regardless of conflicts of opinion."<sup>25</sup> At the time Ho Chi Minh was on an extensive friendship tour of Eastern European countries, and soon after the Khrushchev-Tito meeting he visited Yugoslavia. Tito stressed the importance of "coexistence" at a luncheon honoring the DRV president. In his reply, Ho thanked his host for his hospitality, and then proceeded to denounce "American imperialism" in the strongest terms.<sup>26</sup> In their joint communiqué at the conclusion of the visit, both leaders endorsed "peaceful coexistence" between all countries,

"irrespective of existing differences in their social and political systems."<sup>27</sup>

Back in Vietnam, Pham Van Dong hailed the visit as "a firm basis of the strengthening of friendship and the development of relations of cooperation between our two countries." Not only were prospects improved for the opening of "friendly relations between Vietnam and Yugoslavia"; the visit also constituted "an important contribution to the consolidation of the solidarity among socialist countries and to the safeguarding of world peace."<sup>28</sup> Lest there be some misunderstanding that improved relations with Yugoslavia signaled a North Vietnamese endorsement of "national communism," however, a senior member of Ho Chi Minh's friendship delegation announced upon his return: "All frenzied attacks of imperialism in every form, particularly under the signboards 'national communism' or 'revisionism,' aimed at sowing discord among and destroying the forces of socialism will certainly be smashed by the monolithic solidarity of brotherly parties and countries in the socialist camp headed by the Soviet Union."<sup>29</sup>

As a result of improved Soviet-Yugoslav relations, the DRV and other socialist countries established diplomatic relations with the Tito government and exchanged ambassadors. The *détente* continued until April 1958, when Tito was reelected and soon announced a "Yugoslav Draft Program" which was unacceptable to Moscow. This led to the so-called "second dispute" between Yugoslavia and the USSR. Hanoi dutifully denounced the Draft Program as having departed from Marxism-Leninism, and began to denounce the Yugoslav "revisionists"

in very strong terms. In early July the Yugoslav ambassador returned home.<sup>30</sup>

Between then and the end of 1963 the Vietnamese Communists consistently excluded Yugoslavia from lists of members of the "socialist camp."<sup>31</sup> This was, in fact, a stronger position than Khrushchev himself was taking.<sup>32</sup> At the Third Party Congress in September 1960, Party First Secretary Le Duan asserted that "modern revisionism remains the main danger for the international communist movement," explaining:

The characteristic of modern revisionism is that it robs Marxism-Leninism of its revolutionary essence, denies class struggle, upholds peace and co-operation between exploiting classes and exploited classes, alienates itself from the revolutionary standpoint of the working class, negates proletarian revolution and dictatorship, paralyses the revolutionary will and vigilance of the masses, disarms the working class and disrupts their fighting spirit in the face of the class enemy. The modern revisionists represented by the Tito clique in Yugoslavia are trumpeting that the nature of imperialism has changed, the source of war in our time is not imperialism, capitalism is gradually growing into socialism, and that the realization of the so-called "active coexistence" alone can lead to socialism on a world-wide scale. That is why, if we want to lay bare the aggressive and bellicose nature of imperialism . . . the communist and workers' parties must necessarily direct their main blow against revisionism.<sup>33</sup>

Reconciliation between Moscow and Belgrade took place gradually following the fall of Khrushchev, culminating in a joint statement on 1 July 1965 which stressed the "identity and great similarity of views" on international issues between the two countries.<sup>34</sup> Shortly thereafter, the Vietnamese Communists apparently considered Yugoslavia again a member of the "socialist camp," the only member not supporting the Vietnamese revolution.<sup>35</sup> Ambassadors were again exchanged, however, and relations very gradually improved.

The status of these relations in mid-1973 was brought out in an interview with DRV Minister of Foreign Affairs Nguyen Duy Trinh by a Yugoslav correspondent:

[Question] There are strong feelings of friendship and mutual sympathies between the peoples of Vietnam and Yugoslavia. I can say that the Yugoslavs admire the Vietnamese people for their courage and heroic resistance against the foreign aggressors. Despite all this, the cultural and economic exchange between the two countries is still only at an embryonic stage. What should be done to improve this state of affairs?

[Answer] The relations between our two countries have been gradually developing in the last few years. The Yugoslav people have shown an increasingly greater understanding of the struggle of the Vietnamese people and they have expressed their solidarity with and support for our country. . . . As a member of the community of nonaligned countries, Yugoslavia has initiated positive actions

to support the PRGRSV. . . . Our two countries have exchanged journalists and delegations. In peacetime conditions our two countries will be able to further continue to develop their mutual relations in all fields, building international solidarity and cooperation and contributing to the struggle for peace, independence and democracy.<sup>36</sup>

Relations had improved to the point of cordiality, but continued to be considerably cooler than Hanoi's relations with the other "socialist countries."

#### The 1968 Invasion of Czechoslovakia

On the night of 20 August 1968 troops of the Soviet Union, Poland, East Germany, Hungary and Bulgaria invaded Czechoslovakia and seized control of the government. Few, if any, previous moves by Moscow elicited stronger protest from Communists and non-Communists alike around the world. Even among the ruling Communist parties there was dissension on this question. The Central Executive Committee of Yugoslavia's League of Communists unanimously expressed their "full solidarity with the people of Czechoslovakia, the working class of that country, the government, and the leadership of the Czechoslovak Communist Party headed by Alexander Dubček." It spoke of the "deep indignation and bitterness of all the people of Yugoslavia and the members of the League of Communists over the trampling of the sovereignty of an independent socialist country," and termed the intervention "a heavy blow to socialist and all progressive forces in the world."<sup>37</sup>

In Rumania on the morning following the invasion, Nicolae Ceauçescu, secretary-general of the Rumanian Communist Party, appeared on the balcony of the Party headquarters building and announced to a cheering crowd that Party and State leadership had unanimously decided to express their full support for the Czechoslovak regime and people. The Warsaw Pact invasion was termed "illegal" and without the knowledge of the Czech government or Party.<sup>38</sup> Later that day the Executive Committee of the Central Council of the General Union of Rumanian Trade Unions held a special meeting to announce:

The armed intervention in the internal affairs of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic is an action unprecedented in the history of relations between the socialist countries and between the communist and workers' parties, and is a flagrant violation of the national sovereignty of a fraternal, free, and independent socialist state. The brutal and completely unjustified interference by other socialist countries in Czechoslovakia's internal affairs and the preventing of the party and state leaders of that country from carrying out the tasks entrusted to them by the people and the party is an action with very serious consequences for the unity of the socialist world system and an immeasurable blow to the international communist and workers movement, to the prestige of socialism in the world, and to the cause of peace.<sup>39</sup>

For different reasons, both China and Albania criticized the invasion. The New China News Agency (Peking) reported that "Acting

undisguisedly like a pack of robbers, the Brezhnev-Kosygin renegade clique on 20 August blatantly dispatched massive armed forces to savagely occupy the whole of Czechoslovakia, thus committing a monstrous crime against the Czechoslovak people," and termed the move an example of "imperialist power politics."<sup>40</sup> Unlike most of the other critics, however, China and Albania called upon the Czech people not only to resist "the Soviet revisionist invaders" but also to "rise up and fight with all their means against . . . the treacherous revisionist leadership" of the Dubček regime.<sup>41</sup>

More than any other single incident, the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia provided an opportunity for North Vietnam to show its predilection to "national communism" or the concept of national inviolability within the International Communist and workers movement. None were forthcoming. On the contrary, North Vietnam fully endorsed the Warsaw Pact invasion. Both Nhan Dan (Hanoi) and Quan Doi Nhan Dan (Hanoi) devoted much of their front pages to translations of the official Soviet account of the invasion, and both reprinted a "Voice of Vietnam" story which explained: "The increased hostile activities of the counter-revolutionary forces in Czechoslovakia in the recent past . . . compelled the staunch members of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and statesmen of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic to request the armed forces of the Soviet Union and other allies to help defend the socialist regime and state of Czechoslovakia."<sup>42</sup> According to Hanoi radio, it was "for this noble goal" that "the armed forces of the Soviet Union and other allies . . . entered Czechoslovakia's territory."<sup>43</sup>

To explain the invasion to "cadres, Party and group members and soldiers" in South Vietnam, COSVN prepared a "Special Circular Concerning the Situation in Czechoslovakia," which read in part:

On 21 August 1968, the troops of the USSR, Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland and East Germany entered Czechoslovakia while the situation was extremely chaotic, and was threatening the Czechoslovakian Socialist Government, and the security of the whole socialist Bloc as well.

Due to the loose control exercised by the dictatorship of the proletariat, the machinery designed to repress anti-revolutionary individuals, the governmental machinery and the propaganda and educational system, the extremist elements of the bourgeoisie, the backward intellectuals who refused to reform their thoughts, the reactionary socialists, democratic socialists, and religious groups in the country established relations with the imperialists from outside by resorting to the labels of "democratization" and "liberalization." . . .

Due to the loose control over the press, the radio programs, the postal correspondences, the dissemination of poems and pictures, they were able to successfully criticize the Czech Communist Party, the USSR and the Warsaw Pact. They stealthily introduced weapons into Czechoslovakia to carry out subversive actions against this socialist country with the intention to sabotage peace, as planned by the US Imperialists. . . .

To cope with such a situation, the USSR and other countries in the Socialist Bloc made successive struggling efforts against the leaders of the Czech Party and Government. However, the situation became worse.

In response to the call of the Czechoslovakian Communists who wished the Warsaw Pact nations to intervene and stop the conspiracy of the Czech reactionaries, the USSR, Hungary, Bulgaria, Poland and East Germany sent their troops to this country.

The attitude of our Party is to support the action taken by the USSR since it was a legitimate and essential action which symbolized such noble principles as to protect by all means the Socialist Bloc and the Socialist Revolution. The action was taken in conjunction with the Czech people and with the purpose of protecting the Czech socialist regime and the people's achievements.

To fulfill the Warsaw Pact and for the sake of the world revolutionary people, it is very necessary to take such an action.

. . . .

The various Party Committees, Party Chapters and District unit coordination and operations committees should thoroughly explain this to all Party members, personnel, soldiers and the masses, to let them know that the support we are giving to the USSR and other Warsaw Pact nations is a sign of our international proletarian affiliation and our intention to positively stand against all cunning plans of the US Imperialists to protect the Socialist Bloc.<sup>44</sup>

It may be argued that regardless of its true feelings the DRV felt pressured to support the Soviet move in order to ensure continued Soviet assistance to its war effort in South Vietnam. This, however, ignores the equal possibility of endangering Chinese support by siding with the "Brezhnev-Kosygin renegade clique" on the issue, not to mention the danger of losing support in the very critical international arena of public opinion upon which Hanoi was relying heavily to pressure the United States into withdrawal. Unless the VWP actually supported the Soviet invasion, a position consistent with its past record, it can be assumed that the Party would have tried to ignore the events in Czechoslovakia in August of 1968.

#### The VWP and the Sino-Soviet Dispute

Before trying to determine whether the VWP is "pro-Soviet" or "pro-Chinese" in the Sino-Soviet dispute, a few basic facts must be considered.

The first Vietnamese Communists were trained in Moscow in the 1920's and 1930's, and thus trace their ideological lineage to Lenin and Stalin rather than to Mao Tse-tung. They had been educated in Vietnam at a time when it was permissible to study the centuries of Chinese domination. Most of their childhood heroes were famous for exploits in the anti-Chinese struggle for national independence. At least sentimentally, the <sup>older</sup> ~~earlier~~ Communists are apt to be partial to the Soviet Union.

On the other hand, those who joined the Party in the <sup>late</sup> 1930's and 1940's were more likely to have received training in China.

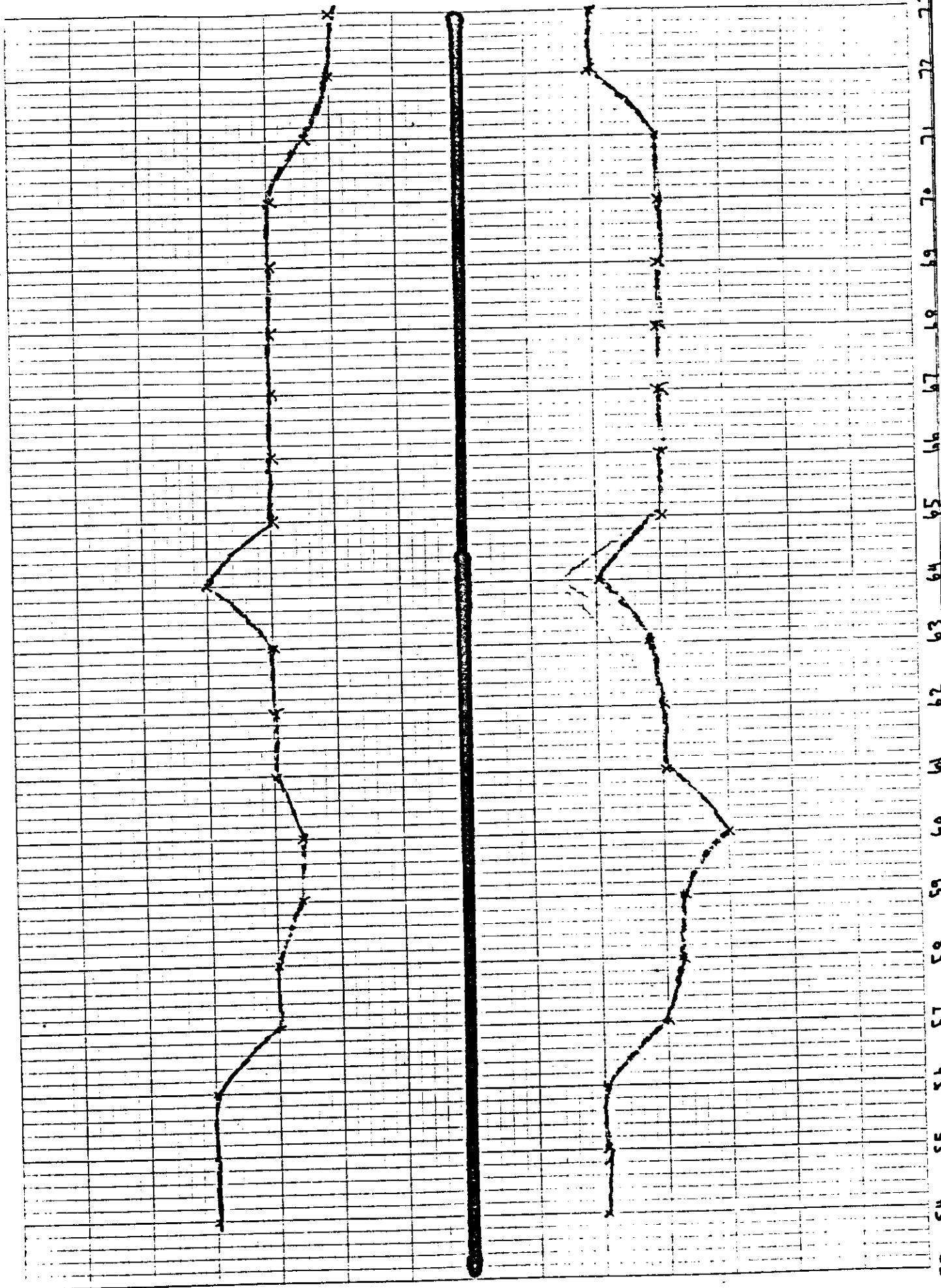
Geographically, culturally and economically, the Chinese experience is considered more relevant to the Vietnamese revolution. During the first crucial decade of its existence the DRV also received considerably more assistance from neighboring China than it did from the USSR.

Vietnam's geographic proximity to China puts the VWP in something of a dilemma: It could prove dangerous to antagonize or provoke the powerful northern neighbor, but a warm relationship with the Soviet Union might offer sufficient protection to guarantee a certain amount of independence.

In the past two decades no international issue has been of greater importance to the Vietnamese Communists than their struggle to gain control of South Vietnam. Differences of opinion within the International Communist movement are certain to have been viewed, at least in part, in terms of that objective. On the other hand, external assistance was considered "indispensable" for success,<sup>45</sup> so the VWP had to balance its ideological position with the necessity of maintaining close relations with whichever disputing faction was capable of supplying the quantity and quality of assistance needed. It is thus conceivable that Hanoi has found it necessary to subordinate ideological questions to practical logistical considerations.

Table 11.1 represents an admittedly imprecise attempt to visually depict the VWP's relationship with Moscow and Peking from 1954 to 1973. At best it shows general trends based upon the limited evidence available. It is useful in that it illustrates an otherwise not apparent fact: North Vietnam's relations with Moscow are not always inversely

TABLE 11.1



CHINA

USSR

dependent upon her relations with Peking, and vice versa. While it is certainly the case that in most instances a cooling of relations with one of the Communist giants was reflected by a warming with the other, it was equally possible for relations to cool or warm with both at the same time. This is precisely what occurred in 1971 and 1972, when President Nixon visited both Peking and Moscow.

Before the Split: the 1950's

Between 1950 and 1956, there is little question but that the Vietnamese Communists were more closely aligned with the fledgling People's Republic of China than with the Soviet Union. Mao Tse-tung not only provided considerably more military and economic assistance, but also technical advisors and advice almost without limit. The Soviet Union was thousands of miles away, and at the time had problems of its own to handle. This is not to suggest that Soviet-Vietnamese relations were bad. Ho Chi Minh continued to speak of the USSR in very favorable terms and as the head of the "monolithic international communist movement."

By 1957 Hanoi had clearly decided to seek closer ties with the Soviet Union. This may have been a result of popular dissatisfaction with the presence of thousands of Chinese technicians and advisors; it may have been due to Hanoi's need for more sophisticated aid than Peking could provide; or it may have been a combination of both. Whatever the reason, the North Vietnamese request for aid was promptly answered by a visit from Soviet President Klement Voroshilov on 20 May 1957, a visit hailed in the Hanoi press as a "most important historical

event."<sup>46</sup> One month later, it was announced that Ho would leave almost immediately on a friendship visit to Eastern Europe. He departed on 6 July, visited Moscow at the time Khrushchev was expelling the "anti-Party" group from the Soviet Party presidium, and then visited all of the East European countries. Clearly a major purpose of the journey was to solicit economic aid.<sup>47</sup>

Although an economic trade agreement was signed between China and Vietnam in Hanoi during Ho's absence, his trip signaled an overall decrease in Chinese assistance and an increase in help from the USSR and Eastern Europe.<sup>48</sup> The lessened Chinese assistance may in part be explained by the simultaneous cut in Soviet aid to Peking, necessitating the allocation of more Chinese resources to the domestic front. At any rate, between 1957 and early 1960 North Vietnam appeared to have taken a balanced position between China and the USSR.

#### The Early Sixties: Oscillation and Mediation

By the time of the VWP's Third Party Congress in September 1960, North Vietnam seemed to have aligned itself with the Soviet Union in the growing rift with China. This was a critical period in the dispute. In early September China sent a message of congratulation on the occasion of the fifteenth anniversary of the DRV, which concluded: "Long live the great solidarity of the socialist camp headed by the Soviet Union."<sup>49</sup> In contrast, less than a month later when China's National Day was celebrated, only Albania sent a delegation, Pravda (Moscow) ignored the event, and the DRV dispatched an unenthusiastic, carefully-worded message acknowledging China's encouragement of the "national democratic movement."<sup>50</sup>

The North Vietnamese press made no reference to the Sino-Soviet conflict until December 1960. In an editorial praising the final declaration of the Moscow meeting of eighty-one Communist and Workers' Parties, a declaration accepted by both the Soviets and the Chinese because of its extreme ambiguity, Nhan Dan (Hanoi) emphasized the need to attach "particular importance" to the "strengthening of the solidarity and unity of mind between the Soviet Union and China."<sup>51</sup>

Khrushchev further endeared himself to the Vietnamese Communists in January 1961 when he announced, without reservations, his full support for "wars of liberation."<sup>52</sup> In late April, Nhan Dan (Hanoi) announced the slogans for the celebration of May Day. Slogan Number 31 read: "Long live the unshakable monolithic unity of the international communist and workers movement!"<sup>53</sup> This theme of mediation continued through the Twenty-second Congress of the Soviet Communist Party in October 1961. Khrushchev had ordered Stalin's body removed from the Kremlin mausoleum before the Congress started. After walking out of the meeting, Chou En-lai made a point of placing flowers on the new grave. The North Vietnamese allowed the large picture of Stalin to hang in Hanoi's International Bookshop for another five months, and then quietly removed it.<sup>54</sup>

En route to Moscow, Ho Chi Minh had stopped in Peking to meet with key Chinese leaders; but once at the Congress, when Khrushchev began a vitriolic attack on Albania and Chou En-lai walked out, Ho was caught in the middle. In an effort to placate both sides to the dispute, his solution was to leave the rest of his delegation at the

Congress while he made a personal tour of the USSR. The North Vietnamese were in the minority of delegates who refused to criticize Albania at the Congress.<sup>55</sup>

North Vietnam's attempt to mediate the Sino-Soviet dispute continued through 1962. In January the WWP sent a letter to other parties calling for a meeting to settle the discord, and suggesting that public attacks be eliminated until such a meeting could be held. This proposal was supported by the parties of New Zealand, Indonesia, Sweden and Great Britain, and in March these five "neutral" parties again called for an international meeting to settle the dispute.<sup>56</sup> Hanoi's May Day slogans included: "13. Long live the unshakable friendship among the socialist countries with the Soviet Union as center."<sup>57</sup>

When the China-India border fighting began in October, and the Soviet Union took a neutral position, Hanoi reversed its previous attitude of friendship with India and supported the Chinese.<sup>58</sup> During the Cuban missile crisis later that month, Khrushchev announced that the Soviet Union would withdraw its missiles from Cuba. Again North Vietnam was placed in a dilemma when China used the incident to commence a new wave of propaganda attacks on the Soviet Union. The DRV had previously been a strong supporter of the Castro regime and was unlikely to welcome such a setback, since both North Vietnam and Cuba were fighting the common enemy of American imperialism. Hanoi still officially supported the Soviet decision, but in terms which suggested less than total satisfaction.<sup>59</sup>

Support for China: 1963-1964

Beginning around March or April 1963, the VWP began ideologically to move away from Moscow and closer to Peking. The Vietnamese still sought to bring unity to the International Communist movement, and the pro-Chinese shift was not total, but it was clearly taking place. In August Hanoi finally made its first public attack on the Soviet Union.

The Vietnamese Communists had supported Soviet proposals for nuclear disarmament as early as February 1951, and they continued to do so for the next decade.<sup>60</sup> Soviet cancellation of assistance to the Chinese nuclear development program caused considerable bitterness in China, however, and the latter was not disposed to accept the 1963 Soviet-American proposal for a test ban treaty. Such an agreement would allow the Americans and the Soviets to retain their nuclear capabilities while prohibiting China from developing such a capability of its own.

Since every nation in the world was invited to sign the treaty, North Vietnam could not avoid taking a position. Under the circumstances she sided with China, endorsing Chou En-lai's advocacy of complete and total nuclear disarmament, and including the DRV's first explicit attack on the Soviet Union:

The nuclear test ban treaty was signed as the result of a deal struck by the leaders of the nuclear powers. . . . It, therefore, runs counter to the peace-loving peoples of the world. . . . Compared with the demand of the people of the world and with the previous stand of the Soviet Government on the prohibition of nuclear weapons, the treaty signed recently is a step backward. . . .

The Chinese Government proposals are fully correct and reasonable, and fully reflect the demand and aspiration of peace-loving people throughout the world.<sup>61</sup>

China's subsequent development and atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons was also welcomed by the DRV, which called the tests "another achievement in strengthening national defense and safeguarding the security of China . . . and defending world peace."<sup>62</sup>

The issue of Hoc Tap (Hanoi) which featured the attack against the Soviet Union's position on the test ban treaty also criticized Khrushchev's repudiation of Lenin's theory of the inevitability of war:

To renounce revolution by violence so as to reduce the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat to empty words --this is the main feature characteristic of the reformists ranging from Kautsky to the modern revisionists. . . .

There are those who are trying to support their argument for the "theory" of "peaceful transition" by citing the fact that certain nations have achieved independence by peaceful means. But this is utterly wrong, because these nations remain within the orbit of capitalism after independence has been achieved, and so it cannot be said that they have reached the "peaceful transition to socialism."

So far, there is not yet a single "precedent" of peaceful transition to socialism in the world working-class history of revolutionary struggle. This "precedent" cannot be found even if one lights a torch in search of it. . . .

Regarding Khrushchev's assertion that the existence of nuclear weapons in the world left no alternative but peace, the editorial commented: "For all their destructive power, nuclear weapons cannot change the law of development of human society. . . . The revolutions of China, Vietnam and Cuba were all revolutions by violence and were all won after the presence of nuclear weapons. It is therefore utterly groundless to assert that the working class should not seize state power by violence following the existence of nuclear weapons." Finally, drawing on the experiences of the Vietnamese revolution, the article concluded: "The process of the long and hard struggle waged by the Vietnamese people under the leadership of our Party has proven that the only road that can be taken by the working class and other working people against the exploiting class . . . is to resort to violence to overthrow them."<sup>63</sup>

Further evidence of VWP support for the Chinese in the Sino-Soviet dispute is found in the speech by Party First Secretary Le Duan to the ninth plenum of the Party's Central Committee in December 1963. He noted the "divergences of views in the international communist movement, especially between the two biggest parties which enjoy the greatest prestige," and continued: "The series of divergences of views existing at present within the international communist movement reflects the two different attitudes towards the question whether or not to make the revolution, whether or not to struggle for the interest of the toiling people and the oppressed and exploited masses, and whether or not to be determined to liquidate imperialism and capitalism." According to Le Duan: "It is precisely the Chinese Communist Party, headed by Comrade

Mao Tse-tung, which has most brilliantly carried into effect the teachings of the great Lenin."

To the suggestions that the International Communist movement rely on economic competition and try to reach a *détente* with the capitalists, Le Duan commented:

Some believe that we must secure a *detente* in which to develop the economy of the socialist camp so as to definitely outstrip the capitalist camp in gross and per capita industrial and agricultural output; then conditions would be ripe for socialist revolution to triumph all over the world. . . .

As a time when the revolutionary storm has risen and is knocking down whole sections of the imperialist system to talk of striving to reach a *detente* with imperialism so as to achieve what is considered the most important requirement--economic construction--willy-nilly leads to checking the growth of the revolution. . . . I think that such an approach to the problem is not correct.

Asserting that "the nature of imperialism has not changed," Le Duan argued that "one should not seek peace through concession, nor consider negotiations as the fundamental means to safeguard peace." He included the ever-present Vietnamese Communist plea for unity within the International Communist movement; but for the first time he asserted that ideological purity was of greater importance than international unity: "In the world people's revolutionary work, the unity of the socialist camp and the international communist movement, first of all the solidarity between the Soviet Union and China, has a very decisive effect. . . .

Therefore, our Party's attitude is: firstly to unambiguously speak the truth, lay bare the viewpoint of modern revisionism; secondly, to strive to strengthen the unity of the socialist camp and the international communist movement, especially the solidarity between the Soviet Union and China." (Emphasis in original.)<sup>64</sup>

#### Return to the Middle: 1964-1965

The ninth plenum of the VWP Central Committee also decided to step up the armed struggle to liberate South Vietnam. There was an increase in both supplies and personnel infiltrated down the Ho Chi Minh Trail to reinforce the insurgents. The Party had gambled that the United States would not respond by becoming directly involved in the conflict, and when that gamble proved wrong North Vietnam was forced to reassess its position. The United States attacked several targets in North Vietnam in early August 1964, following the so-called "Gulf of Tonkin incident." President Johnson asked for and received from the American Congress a joint resolution authorizing him to "take all necessary steps, including the use of armed force," to assist the South Vietnamese government. Johnson made it clear that continued North Vietnamese involvement in the "liberation" struggle would result in increased US involvement.

In spite of Chinese promises to send "volunteers" if the Americans invaded North Vietnam,<sup>65</sup> it was obvious that Hanoi would need Soviet assistance to continue the struggle. The Chinese were unable to supply the sophisticated anti-aircraft weaponry needed to counter American bombing attacks and, in the final analysis, North Vietnam knew that a

guarantee of Soviet assistance would be its best deterrent against an increase in American participation.

The first sign of an improvement of Soviet-Vietnamese relations was the withdrawal, almost immediately after distribution, of the November 1964 issue of Hoc Tap (Hanoi), so that an anti-Soviet article could be removed.<sup>66</sup> A month later the USSR promised to supply all necessary assistance to North Vietnam in the event of an American attack.<sup>67</sup> Escalation of the war in South Vietnam in early 1965 brought with it a significant increase in Soviet military assistance to the DRV, and an apparent decline in Sino-Vietnamese relations. The latter appears to have been less a result of improved relations with the USSR than a strategic argument over the validity of escalating the war in the South. China evidently cautioned against intensifying the conflict, arguing that protracted strategy would be more effective and involve less risk.<sup>68</sup>

#### Neutrality: 1965-1973

During the height of the Vietnam War, Hanoi was particularly careful to maintain close relations with both China and the Soviet Union. Attacks on "revisionism" usually were followed by brief references to the dangers of "dogmatism," although these were never stressed to the same degree. General Giap, who is widely believed to be the strongest critic of China in the Hanoi Politburo, wrote in a 1966 propaganda publication:

Recently, in the ranks of the international communist movement, which is the vanguard force of our time, differences have appeared,

but they have only a temporary character and revolutionary practice will certainly iron them out. In [the] face of imperialism, the common enemy, which more and more clearly reveals its aggressive and bellicose nature, the true communists in the world will close their ranks. The Communist parties will come out stronger than ever in this struggle for the defence of Marxism-Leninism against modern revisionism, the principal threat to the international communist movement.<sup>69</sup>

The idea that the Sino-Soviet split is only temporary is a frequent element in Vietnamese Communist assessments.<sup>70</sup>

Although North Vietnam generally does not criticize the internal policies of either China or the Soviet Union, the Chinese Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution elicited some rather strong remarks on the evils of the "cult of the personality" from Hoc Tap (Hanoi). Mao Tse-tung was not mentioned by name, but it was fairly obvious whom the writer had in mind:

A leader of the working class does not separate the working class from its vanguard, the communist party. . . .

Socialist society is built according to plans. This makes it necessary to strengthen the leadership of the communist party and the state proletarian dictatorship, especially of the leaders. Correct leadership determines the success of the activities of millions of people. The leadership's errors have serious consequences in the revolutionary task.

To insure correct leadership and prevent and restrict errors, the Marxist-Leninist parties set forth the principle of collective leadership. Only by exerting collective leadership can one-sided and erroneous decisions be prevented. . . .

A leader of a Marxist-Leninist party associates himself with the group of the party's leadership organ, obeys this group, fully implements the party's platform and rules, and strictly complies with the party's principles governing its activities. If a leader commits errors, yet refuses to correct them and insistently maintains them, he cannot keep his leadership role forever.<sup>71</sup>

#### Détente at Hanoi's Expense

The announcement on 15 July 1971 that United States President Nixon would visit the People's Republic of China in the near future was hardly welcome in Hanoi. Apparently caught by surprise, with no advance warning from Peking, Hanoi's first reaction was to not mention the trip. Soon, however, Nhan Dan (Hanoi) featured an editorial entitled "The Nixon Doctrine Will Surely Fail," which accused the United States of trying to divide the socialist camp by "winning over one section and pitting it against another." According to Nhan Dan (Hanoi), Nixon was "trying to achieve a compromise between the big powers in an attempt to make smaller countries bow to their arrangements."<sup>72</sup> A similar editorial in Quan Doi Nhan Dan (Hanoi) was branded by some observers as "Hanoi's strongest attack on Peking to date,"<sup>73</sup> and in August Hoc Tap (Hanoi) asserted: "If the Nixon Administration truly wants to find a solution to the Vietnam problem, there is no alternative but to talk directly with the

genuine representatives of the people of South and North Vietnam. Only those who are fighting the Americans can raise a decisive voice about the future of their own country."<sup>74</sup>

By early September, however, the attacks had stopped, presumably because China had assured Hanoi that the discussions with Nixon would not be used to reach any settlement in Vietnam detrimental to Hanoi's interests.<sup>75</sup> Even with such assurance, Hanoi watched the affair with great concern. No mention was made of it in the North Vietnamese press, which took a noticeably pro-Soviet turn.

From Hanoi's perspective, matters went from bad to worse with the announcement of Nixon's pending visit to Moscow. In an interview with a Japanese correspondent, the editor of Nhan Dan (Hanoi) stated: "Nixon is capitalizing on the disunity among the socialist countries in one way or other to be free to act. This affects our war and, thus, our fighting has become very difficult."<sup>76</sup> As the Nixon trip to Moscow approached, DRV-Soviet relations cooled noticeably, with no corresponding improvement in relations with China. Finally, on 17 August, Nhan Dan (Hanoi) featured a 2,000-word "important editorial" which, although it did not mention either China or the Soviet Union by name, was by DRV standards a strong criticism of both. Noting that Nixon had applied "the policy of reconciliation" toward "a number of big powers," the editorial declared: "If out of the narrow interests of one's nation, one tries to help the most reactionary forces avert the dangerous blows, just like throwing a lifebuoy to a drowning pirate, that is a cruel reconciliation beneficial to the enemy and not beneficial to the

revolution. . . . The vitality of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism manifests itself first of all in revolutionary deeds, not in empty words."<sup>77</sup> Similar barely-veiled attacks on China and the USSR due to their policy of detente with the United States continued well into 1973.<sup>78</sup>

One result of the "Nixon Diplomacy" has been to isolate North Vietnam to a great extent from its two major sources of aid. In consequence, VWP leaders have been forced to emphasize the importance of self-reliance. "Relying primarily upon one's own strength," of course, has always been an element of Vietnamese and all other Communist rhetoric, along with acknowledging the "indispensability" of external aid.<sup>79</sup> Self-sufficiency had never been emphasized so much by the Vietnamese, however, prior to the *détente* between the USSR, China and the United States. For example, an article in Tap Chi Tuyen Huan (Hanoi) in early 1972 was entitled "Intensify Teaching of the Sense of Independence and Sovereignty to Our Cadres, Party Members, and People": "To be loyal to Marxism-Leninism does not mean to copy and memorize every sentence and word in the classic works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin but to be thoroughly imbued with the fundamental principles . . . and to creatively apply the Marxist-Leninist methods to the situation in each country in each revolutionary stage. . . . Such a line bears a profound independent and sovereign character and is highly creative." The article noted, however, that "the socialist camp is a unified entity," and stressed the importance of proletarian internationalism in the face of the new Nixon diplomacy:

At present . . . Nixon advocates trying to implement the policy of "establishing half of the bridge"--a policy calling for wooing one socialist country after another, sowing disunity among various countries, putting one component against another and carrying out economic and cultural infiltration in order to promote counter-revolutionary peaceful evolution and, thereby, weaken one socialist country after another and ultimately the entire socialist camp. In this situation, the task of firmly maintaining the stand of proletarian internationalism [is] of particular important significance.<sup>80</sup>

Soon after, another Party journal again stressed the importance of proletarian internationalism and international assistance:

We attach the greatest importance to and regard international assistance as an indispensable condition for successfully carrying out the anti-U. S. national salvation resistance. . . . Our party and our people always . . . do their best to help protect the purity of Marxism-Leninism, restore the solidarity and unity of the socialist system and of the international communist and workers movement, and [particularly] we strive to consolidate and tighten the bond of unalterable friendship between our country and the fraternal socialist countries, especially the Soviet Union and China.<sup>81</sup>

As Table 8.1 indicates, by 1973 North Vietnam was in a position approximately midway between China and the Soviet Union in the Sino-Soviet dispute, experiencing cooler relations with both than had been common

during the previous decade. Perhaps louder than any other ruling Communist party, she was desperately calling for international solidarity and proletarian internationalism.

NOTES TO CHAPTER ELEVEN

1. Communism and nationalism <sup>are</sup> ~~do not seem to be~~ compatible in the long-term view. A Soviet periodical noted, "Nationalism and internationalism are antipodes." International Affairs (Moscow), No. 7, July, 1968, p. 16. In 1916 Lenin wrote: "The aim of socialism is the elimination of the fragmentation of humanity in petty states and the individualism of nations, not only the coming closer of nations to each other, but their merger or fusion." Theses on the Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination, quoted in Bertram D. Wolfe, Marxism: One Hundred Years in the Life of a Doctrine (New York: Dial Press, 1965), p. 292.
2. James M. Gavin, Crisis Now (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), pp. 62-63; George McTurnan Kahin, in Raskin and Fall, eds., The Viet-Nam Reader, p. 294. Upon Ho's death, a lengthy article entitled "Ho Chi Minh was Noted for Success in Blending Nationalism and Communism" appeared in the New York Times, 14 September 1969.
3. Hans J. Morgenthau, in Raskin and Fall, eds., The Viet-Nam Reader, pp. 41-42.
4. Le Duan, On Some Present International Problems, p. 25.
5. Turner Document No. 6, p. 50.
6. Le Duan, On Some Present International Problems, p. 49. See also ibid., pp. 70, 179.

demonstrations and shows which were easily and promptly got up. Some times it was against France, next time it was against Tito." My Four Years with the Viet Minh, p. 11.

15. Vietnam News Agency, 19 January 1950.
16. Ibid., 27 January 1950.
17. New York Times, 22 February 1950, p. 1.
18. Ibid., 26 February 1950, p. 36.
19. Ibid., 19 March 1950, Section IV, p. 2; ibid., 28 February 1950, p. 20.
20. Ibid., 16 March 1950.
21. Quotation is from the "Belgrade Declaration" signed by Khrushchev and Tito on 2 June 1955, quoted by Milorad M. Drachkovitch, "Yugoslavia," in Sworakowski, ed., World Communism, p. 510. Drachkovitch provides an excellent summary of Soviet-Yugoslav relations during this period.
22. Drachkovitch, in Sworakowski, ed., World Communism, p. 510.
23. Ho Chi Minh, Selected Works, 4:200. Ho asserts that the "great family" had risen "from one to 12 countries, including the Democratic Republic of Vietnam," in just ten years. The twelve countries were, of course, Albania, Bulgaria, China, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, Rumania, Czechoslovakia, Mongolia, North Korea, the USSR and North Vietnam.

24. Drachkovitch, in Sworakowski, ed., World Communism, p. 513,  
n. 13.
25. New York Times, 6 August 1957, p. 2. One "well-informed Yugo-  
slav source" is quoted as having said that all that was necessary for  
improved relations was "for Moscow to say the word." This source felt  
that Moscow had "indicated a desire to put relations on a normal basis."  
Ibid., p. 1.
26. Ibid., p. 2.
27. Ibid., 10 August 1957, p. 6. The assertion by this source that  
Ho had "lent support to Yugoslav President Tito's brand of independent  
communism" is not warranted by the content of the joint communique. What  
Ho had done was simply to voice support for Moscow's current position.
28. Vietnam News Agency, 3 September 1957.
29. Ibid., 8 September 1957. The statement was made by Politburo  
member Hoang Van Hoan to a gathering of 700 Party cadres in a report  
on the European visit. The previous day, 7 September 1957, in a speech  
opening the first theoretical course of the Nguyen Ai Quoc school, Ho  
Chi Minh warned that "undue emphasis on the role of national peculiarities  
and negation of the universal value of the great, basic experiences of  
the brother countries will lead to grave revisionist mistakes." Selected  
Works, 4:257.
30. Honey, Communism in North Vietnam, p. 60.

31. For example see DRV, Imperialist Schemes in Vietnam Against Peace and Reunification, p. 82; DRV, Third National Congress of the Viet Nam Workers' Party, 1:167-168. The Resolution of the 9th Conference of the VWP Central Committee (December 1963) asserted: "Now the socialist camp is composed of 13 countries: Albania, Poland, Bulgaria, Cuba, the German Democratic Republic, Hungary, the Soviet Union, Mongolia, Rumania, Czechoslovakia, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Chinese People's Republic, and the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam." JUSPAO, Viet-Nam Documents and Research Notes No. 98, p. 70.
32. Khrushchev acknowledged in December 1962 that "on objective laws, on the teachings of Marxism-Leninism, it is impossible to deny that Yugoslavia appears to be a socialist country." Quoted in Richard F. Staar, The Communist Regimes in Eastern Europe, rev. ed. (Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, 1971), p. 185, n. 7.
33. Le Duan, On Some Present International Problems, pp. 51-52.
34. Quoted by Drachkovitch, in Sworakowski, ed., World Communism, p. 51.
35. Major General <sup>N</sup>guyen Van Vinh, in his Speech to the Fourth COSVN Congress" in April 1966, reportedly said "all countries in the [socialist] camp, except Yugoslavia, are siding with us." This statement appeared in a captured document hereafter referred to as Turner Document No. 14: notebook of a Viet Cong cadre, released by the U. S. Mission in Vietnam as a Press Release, 30 March 1967. By 1973 Yugoslavia was the

only Communist state not having an ambassador with the PRG. It did, however, have a chargé d'affaires.

36. Borba (Belgrade), 3 June 1973, p. 3.

37. Tanyug International Service (Belgrade), 21 August 1968.

38. Bucharest radio, 21 August 1968.

39. Ibid., 22 August 1968.

40. New China News Agency (Peking), 23 August 1968.

41. Tirana radio (Albania), 21 August 1968.

42. Vietnam News Agency, 22 August 1968.

43. "Voice of Vietnam," 21 August 1968.

44. Captured document hereafter referred to as Turner Document No. 15: document dated 2 September 1968 and signed by Hai Vo; released by the U. S. Mission in Vietnam as Press Release No. 222-68, 14 November 1968. The author has a declassified copy of the original translation.

45. "We attach the greatest importance to and regard international assistance as an indispensable condition for successfully carrying out the anti-U. S. national salvation resistance." Nguyen Ngoc Giao, "Study Great Uncle Ho's Teachings and Heighten Patriotism and Proletarian Internalism," Tap Chi Quan Doi Nhan Dan (Hanoi), No. 5, May 1972. "Experience has also proven that support and assistance from the

socialist camp is an indispensable external condition for the advance of the nationalist countries along the non-capitalist road." Le Duan, On Some Present International Problems, p. 107. See also DRV, the resolution of the Third National Congress of the Viet Nam Workers' Party, 1:235.

46. Nhan Dan (Hanoi), 12 May 1957, quoted in Honey, Communism in North Vietnam, p. 50.
47. Honey, Communism in North Vietnam, pp. 50-51.
48. Ibid., pp. 49, 51.
49. Reprinted in DRV, XV Anniversary of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, p. 81.
50. Honey, Communism in North Vietnam, p. 82.
51. Nhan Dan (Hanoi), 7 December 1960, quoted in Honey, Communism in North Vietnam, p. 90.
52. Pravda (Moscow), 25 January 1961.
53. Nhan Dan (Hanoi), 23 April 1961.
54. Fall, The Two Viet-Nams, p. 188.
55. Honey, Communism in North Vietnam, p. 104.
56. King Chen, "North Vietnam in the Sino-Soviet Dispute, 1962-64," Asian Survey, Vol. 55, No. 9, September 1964, pp. 1024-1025. Both China

and the USSR agreed in principle with the proposal for a conference, and their propaganda assaults on each other decreased until October. The Sino-Indian border conflict and Cuban missile crisis renewed the heated polemics which had existed prior to the Hanoi initiative.

57. Vietnam News Agency, 24 April 1962.

58. King Chen, Asian Survey, p. 1025. Had India not broken its traditional "neutrality" by voting with Canada on the International Control Commission to criticize the DRV for its attempt to overthrow the Diem government earlier that same year, it is possible that North Vietnam would have tried to ignore the border conflict.

59. Ibid., p. 1027.

60. Vietnam News Agency, 25 February 1951; ibid., 12 January 1961; Nhan Dan (Hanoi), 18 October 1957; DRV, The Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, p. 159.

61. Hoc Tap (Hanoi), September 1963, quoted in King Chen, Asian Survey, pp. 1030-1031.

62. "Voice of Vietnam," 14 May 1965. See also Vietnam News Agency, 20 May 1965.

63. Hoc Tap (Hanoi), September 1963, reprinted as Peace or Violence (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1963), pp. 7, 19-20, 22, 32.

64. Le Duan, On Some Present International Problems, pp. 125, 128, 137, 145, 147, 169, 181.

65. New York Times, 25 March 1965; ibid., 21 April 1965; New China News Agency (Peking), 25 March 1965.
66. William E. Griffith, Sino-Soviet Relations 1964-1965 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The M. I. T. Press, 1967), p. 68.
67. P. J. Honey, "Enter Kosygin," The Spectator, <sup>(London)</sup> 5 February 1965, p. 156.
68. Ibid.; New York Times, 14 January 1965.
69. Vo Nguyen Giap, "The Liberation War in South Vietnam: Its Essential Characteristics," in DRV, Vietnamese Studies No. 8, p. 31.
70. For example see Nguyen Duy Trinh's remarked quoted in Yearbook on International Communist Affairs 1968, p. 654.
71. Hoc Tap (Hanoi), No. 5, May 1967, quoted in Yearbook on International Communist Affairs 1968, pp. 656-657.
72. Nhan Dan (Hanoi), 19 July 1971.
73. Washington Post, 14 August 1971.
74. Hoc Tap (Hanoi), No. 8, August 1971.
75. P. J. Honey, in China News Analysis, No. 865, 17 December 1971, p. 1.
76. Mainichi (Tokyo), 1 July 1972.

77. Nhan Dan (Hanoi), 17 August 1972.
78. For example see Quan Doi Nhan Dan (Hanoi), 23 October 1973, which criticized the blindness of those who seem to forget that American imperialism "remains the number one enemy of all the peoples."
79. Mao Tse-tung, for example, wrote in January 1940 that "China cannot possibly gain her independence without the assistance of the land of socialism and the international proletariat. That is, she cannot do so without the help of the Soviet Union. . . . Soviet assistance is absolutely indispensable for China's final victory in the War of Resistance. Refuse Soviet assistance, and the revolution will fail." Selected Works, 2:355.
80. Tap Chi Tuyen Huan (Hanoi), January-February 1972.
81. Tap Chi Quan Doi Nhan Dan (Hanoi), May 1972.