

Conclusion: History in Retrospect

We have seen how, by applying Leninist/Bolshevik strategy, and especially Leninist/Bolshevik tactics, Ho Chi Minh and the CPV leaders obtained uneven results depending on whether they were dealing with Western and democratic nations, or with Asian and/or Communist countries.

With the Western nations, the CPV could exploit the naiveté, wishful thinking, or ignorance of certain key officials and of ill-informed public opinion, by generating the belief that its members were Asian nationalists fighting for the emancipation of colonial people, while knowing perfectly well that independence was only a stage on the road to world revolution, which was the strategic, that is, the real, aim. They thus received widespread sympathy and support, and were able to divide the public opinion of those nations. This, no doubt, was one of the major reasons for their spectacular successes.

With Asian and/or Communist nations, the situation was different. Leninist/Bolshevik strategy and tactics were not very effective because the local conditions were not favorable. In the case of the Chinese, the CPV had to cope with people who were also Asian and/or Communist. They were just as subtle, if not more so, than the Vietnamese.

With regard to the nationalist Chinese, the Chungking government, as well as the Yunnan warlords, used Vietnam for their own purposes. The CPV cannot be said to have been successful in exploiting them for its own ends. When the Chinese troops left, Vietnam was handed over to France. Of course, the CPV emerged as the party wielding government power in North Vietnam, but this was thanks essentially to the Japanese and the Americans rather than to the Kuomintang Chinese.

With regard to the Chinese Communists, they were just as subtle as their nationalist compatriots. In addition, they had much more experience than the CPV in the use of Leninist/Bolshevik strategy and tactics in

fighting external enemies, experience dating back to the early 1920s, whereas the CPV dated only to 1945. They were also the inventors of protracted war and masters of this technique. Finally, being a state under dictatorship, Communist China was not open to CPV infiltration, subversion, or divisive action. Its government was not subject to the pressure of domestic or international public opinion. Externally, instead of being isolated by the CPV, it was on the contrary successful in isolating the latter. For the first time in its history, the CPV was on the defensive. In Leninist theory, this is a deadly weakness.

One of the main reasons for the international isolation of the SRV was its obviously expansionist policy after 1975 at the expense of its immediate neighbors, Laos and Cambodia, and the threat represented for Southeast Asian countries by its Communist messianism. From 1975 and especially from 1978 onward, the Vietnamese Communists were considered by international public opinion no longer as nationalists fighting for the independence of Vietnam, but as expansionists. Whether this expansionism was motivated by nationalism or communism, or both, was irrelevant. It was fiercely denounced by current or potential victims alike, and universally condemned by international public opinion. One of the major ingredients of Leninism/Bolshevism—an outwardly just cause—was thus missing. The CPV could not apply Leninism/Bolshevism with full success because mass support in the opponent camp was lacking.

Another important condition for the successful application of Leninist/Bolshevik strategy and tactics was also missing. The Cambodian and the Southeast Asian countries were not Western-Style parliamentary democracies; public opinion in those lands could not be easily infiltrated and manipulated. The CPV could not freely use agit-prop techniques against their governments. This, combined with the fact that these governments were much more alert and more capable of reacting promptly than Western governments, made it impossible, or extremely difficult, for the CPV to apply Leninist/Bolshevik strategy and tactics with great success. Thus, instead of successfully isolating its adversaries internationally, the CPV became the victim of international isolation. Again, it was on the defensive.

With regard to the Soviet Union, the situation was rather different. The Soviets were not tactical but strategic allies of the CPV, that is, the CPSU-CPV alliance was not temporary and conditional but stable and unconditional. To them, proletarian internationalism applied, although perfect mutual confidence and candidness did not always prevail. Ho Chi Minh, for example, could not refrain from the urge to use everything and every-

one—including Stalin—for his purposes, and Stalin responded with his usual mistrust of everyone. An example (noted in an earlier chapter) was given by Khrushchev in his memoirs.

During a secret visit to Moscow some time between 1950 and 1954, Ho tried the autographed photograph technique with Stalin. But unlike the innocent American General Chennault, Stalin was not so unsuspecting. As Khrushchev told it:

I first met [Ho] when Stalin was still alive. . . . During our conversation, Ho Chi Minh kept watching Stalin with his unusual eyes. . . . I remember once he reached into his briefcase and took out a copy of a Soviet magazine—I think it was *The USSR Under Construction*—and asked Stalin to autograph it. . . . He liked the idea of being able to show people Stalin's autograph back in Vietnam. Stalin gave Ho the autograph but shortly afterward had the magazine stolen back from him because he was worried how [Ho] might use it.¹

Obviously it takes a Communist to understand the hidden motives of another Communist, and Stalin was too experienced for Ho Chi Minh to outwit him!

In the same memoirs, speaking of the CPV fight against the French in 1954, Khrushchev said that "An important war is going on, and the Vietnamese are putting up a good fight. The French are taking heavy losses."² And of the CPV's war against the United States, he said: "There is more at stake in this war than just the future of the Vietnamese people. The Vietnamese are shedding their blood and laying down their lives for the sake of the world Communist movement."³ If one modifies this sentence to read: "The CPV is making the Vietnamese people shed their blood and lay down their lives for the world Communist movement," then, in retrospect, this is the stark truth about Vietnam, not just between 1945 and 1975, but also since then. After making the Vietnamese people fight two bloody and devastating wars, against France, then against the United States, from 1975 onward the CPV made the Vietnamese people fight a third war, apparently against Cambodia, but in fact against China. This was the third permanent member of the United Nations' Security Council against which the CPV had led Vietnam to war.

In the light of what has been happening since 1975, and of what we know now about the policies, motivations, and basic thinking of the leaders of the CPV, as set against the background of their unreserved adoption of Leninism/Bolshevism and what that means, it is possible to look back

at the history of Vietnam over the past fifty-five years and ask some pertinent questions concerning the CPV's foreign politics, in particular from the point of view of the interests of Vietnam and of the Vietnamese people, as opposed to those of the CPV and of the world communist movement.

WHAT WAS GAINED?

What has been gained by Vietnam and the Vietnamese people from their CPV-led wars? If one is to judge by the fate of the Vietnamese people since 1975, the answer is nothing, or even less. Vietnam in 1984 was among the poorest countries of the world; in terms of income per capita it occupied the 162nd rank among 170 countries;⁴ according to *Le Monde*, this income was only 100 dollars per year.⁵ According to *Newsweek*, in 1983 a civil servant in Vietnam earned only the equivalent of 3 dollars per month, or 36 dollars per year, and 10 cents per day.⁶ It is highly significant, not to say tragic, that in 1976 at the IV National Congress of the CPV, Le Duan deplored the fact that "the war has practically destroyed everything the people have built at the cost of immense efforts, thereby delaying by a few five-year plans the progression towards large-scale production and upsetting established methods of economic management."⁷ And when he made statistical comparisons, he used 1960 as a base year.⁸ More significant and more tragic still, in August 1985 the Voice of Vietnam broadcast an article with the title "Forty Years of Victory of Vietnamese Revolution"; it used prewar 1939 as the base year for its statistical comparisons to show that great progress had been achieved.⁹

Comparison with Southeast Asian countries would show how different political choices by their leaders produced different economic results for their peoples. None of the Southeast Asian countries had chosen the road selected by Ho Chi Minh and his disciples: they all rejected Leninism/Bolshevism with its accent on violence, and total and immediate break with the former colonial power. As a result, the economic lot of the peoples of these countries was immeasurably better than that of the Vietnamese, as reflected in the differences in incomes per head shown in Table 3.

All reports on Vietnam since 1975 concur on one point: the economic situation in Vietnam deteriorated dramatically after 1975, and there was no sign as of 1985 that the economy was on an upward course. If anything, the war in Cambodia and the interruption of economic aid from

Table 3

Per Capita Incomes of Southeast Asian Countries (in US \$)

Countries	1977	1982
Singapore	2700	5302
Malaysia	860	1800
Philippines	410	731
Thailand	240	609
Vietnam	190	160

Source: *Far Eastern Economic Review, Asia Year Book* 1977 and 1984. In 1960, all Southeast Asian countries had roughly the same per capita income: US \$100.

non-Communist countries following Vietnam's occupation of that country, made considerably worse a situation that was already almost hopeless.

Another major cause of the economic plight was the destructions wrought by practically uninterrupted warfare since 1945. Under Communist leadership, Vietnam was a country ravaged by war for a longer time than any other country in the twentieth century. And as of 1985 there seemed to be no end. War, whatever the reason, means loss of lives and property, and more particularly disinvestment in terms of human and physical capital.

There are no precise authoritative figures concerning the loss of human lives in Vietnam's wars against France and the United States. A few figures, taken from various estimates, however, give an idea of the extent of the losses. According to Azau, the first Vietnam war cost one million lives. The French side (France plus associated states) accounted for 300,000 deaths. The Vietnamese side (DRV) thus lost 700,000 lives. These figures do not include civilian losses.¹⁰

With regard to the second Vietnam war, according to Pike, the Vietnamese Communist side lost one million men. In proportion to the total population, if compared to the United States, that would be equivalent to a loss of 15 millions Americans if North Vietnam alone was taken into account.¹¹ In Table 4, South Vietnam Allan Goodman has given the following figures (from January 1, 1961 to March 29, 1973 alone).

Physical losses are more difficult to estimate. But it is obvious that there would be little left in any country that is at war almost continuously for half a century. According to Pike, material losses resulting from U.S. air strikes against North Vietnam were 400 million dollars, against a GNP of 1.7 billion dollars—by Vietnamese standards—a quarter of physical property. A rough idea of the loss of physical assets by Vietnam is given

Table 4

Human Costs of War to South Vietnam

ARVN killed in action	166,429
ARVN wounded in action	453,039
Civilians killed	415,000
Civilians wounded	935,000
Civilian refugees	8,819,700

Source: Allan G. Goodman, *The Lost Peace* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1978), Appendix A.

by the U.S. pledge of 5 billion dollars (in 1973) in aid for postwar reconstruction. By Vietnamese standards, that was an imposing sum, but it surely does not represent real losses, considering the country's almost total economic paralysis since 1975 due to extensive destruction of the already very inadequate infrastructures.

More important than the loss of physical capital was the loss of human capital resulting from forty years of practically uninterrupted warfare, and almost total concentration on war to the exclusion of training experts in fields other than military combat, a task that is essential to any nation that wishes to improve its living conditions. The results of these years of neglect were obvious, even to the war-obsessed and war-hardened leaders of the CPV, especially after the spectacular failure of the third five-year plan in 1980.¹²

By the time certain CPV leaders became really aware of the economic consequences of long wars, it was, however, too late. The destruction they had wrought on the country, physically, politically, socially, and economically, was too extensive to be easily repaired. In revolutionary terms, the Leninist/Bolshevik revolution had been really successful. But the momentum was too great for it to be stopped, let alone reversed—if one could imagine that the first generation of Ho Chi Minh's disciples, "the grandsons of the Comintern," would ever think of renouncing pure Marxism-Leninism.

WAS WAR NECESSARY?

The second question one could and should ask now is: Was it necessary for the Vietnamese people to resort to war to achieve national independence and improve their living conditions? To give a firm answer, again one would have to look at Vietnam's Southeast Asian neighbors. All these

countries achieved national independence and improved their living conditions without war. Indeed, they were able to do so sooner and faster than Vietnam precisely because they had achieved independence *with* rather than *against* the colonial nations, and had not followed the Communist road.

As Brimmell has pointed out, the real, though unwitting, liberator of Southeast Asia was Japan. It had demonstrated the mythical nature of European superiority and removed Europe from the Asian scene in 1942, and in the process made any return of Europe impossible. After having performed its historical mission, Japan was itself removed from the scene. The final stage of the resurgence of Southeast Asia began in 1943 and was over in essence by 1948. "The battle had been won by then, and with no assistance from communism. In fact, communism was irrelevant, save as a complicating and delaying factor, in the achievement of independence."¹³

That view expressed by Brimmell applies in the case of Vietnam in the light of what we know now about General de Gaulle's plans in December 1945, that is, a full year before the outbreak of the war. From the revelations of General de Boissieu and others at a workshop on Indochina at the Institut Charles de Gaulle in February 1981, and from those made by Admiral D'Argenlieu in his memoirs,¹⁴ it is clear that what Ho Chi Minh found necessary to fight a war to obtain, namely national independence and reunification, de Gaulle was already prepared to concede to Prince Vinh Sang, ex-Emperor Duy Tan, in the autumn of 1945. Indeed, there was an agreement between the prince and the general, and the agreement was firm enough for the ex-emperor to draw up a program,¹⁵ which he expected to carry out after his return to Vietnam in the company of de Gaulle himself some time in early 1946.

But if de Gaulle was prepared to give ex-Emperor Duy Tan what he steadfastly refused to concede to Ho Chi Minh for many years, it was because the ex-emperor, like Sihanouk of Cambodia, wanted to achieve his nation's independence *with* France and *not against* France. We noted earlier how warmly de Gaulle had received Sihanouk in the summer of 1946 while firmly refusing to see Ho Chi Minh. De Gaulle's attitude was summed up in a sentence that he constantly repeated to Henri Laurentie, director of political affairs at the Ministry of Overseas France, in August 1946: "Laurentie, do not give Cochinchina to Ho Chi Minh."¹⁶

In addition to the sentimentalism of de Gaulle, which was shared by many of his compatriots, there was another and still greater obstacle to an agreement between France and Vietnam; in a French union led by a

capitalist and bourgeois France for which the Soviet Union was a potential enemy, there was no room for a Communist member state, whatever Ho Chi Minh might say to Sainteny and whatever the latter might think, believe, or hope at the time. Alfred Georges put this very well in *Charles de Gaulle et la guerre d'Indochine*:

Let us look squarely at the truth: a Communist system could not conciliate the total planning of its economy with the respect of the private property of the colonists. Between a Communist state which subordinates individual freedom to the reason of state and a western nation where individual had primacy over all the rest, the opposition is irreducible. The one could not prosper if it had not eliminated the other from its field of action.¹⁷

On the other hand, "a Communist government could not accept to leave its diplomacy in the hands of a non-Marxist nation, or accept to see its army and its diplomacy teleguided by a so-called capitalist state."¹⁸ And conversely, of course.

Indeed, in addition to Cochinchina, the negotiations between Ho Chi Minh's government and the French government in 1946 at Dalat and at Fontainebleau broke down essentially on the question of Vietnam's diplomacy and defense. It was natural for Ho, in the light of the Leninist conception of self-determination—to secede from the colonial nation, then join the world Soviet republic—to insist on total independence in matters of defense and diplomacy, just as it was natural for Georges Bidault, then France's prime minister and foreign minister, to instruct the French delegation, verbally through Max Andre, chief delegate, to "secure all necessary guarantees so that in external matters Vietnam could not become a pawn in the Soviet hand, a satellite of Moscow."¹⁹

If in the first Vietnam war the CPV made the Vietnamese shed their blood and lay down their lives primarily not for national independence but in the interests of the world Communist movement, so in the second Vietnam war, they again made the Vietnamese shed their blood and lay down their lives to prove that imperialism headed by the United States could be attacked and defeated without the risks of a general war, that is, of involving the Soviet Union in a direct military confrontation with the United States. This was the CPV's interpretation of the reference to peaceful coexistence in the resolutions adopted by the world congresses of Communist parties in 1957 and 1960.

Khrushchev was not quite convinced that the CPV's interpretation was right, but his dispute with the Chinese prevented him from firmly block-

ing the CPV forward policy from the end of 1959 onward. On the other hand, President Kennedy's policy of acceptance of a coalition government for Laos, and his sounding out of Hanoi on agreeing to the same for South Vietnam encouraged the CPV leaders in their conviction that the United States was not really determined to go all the way to prevent a Communist takeover of South Vietnam. Moreover, at the Vienna Soviet-American summit in 1961, Kennedy's failure to make the status quo in Vietnam a major condition of detente between the Soviet Union and the United States strengthened Hanoi's position in resisting Khrushchev's pressure against the taking of South Vietnam by escalating military action.

The first two Vietnam wars were fought according to Leninist principles: tactically in the name of nationalism, but strategically in the interests of the international Communist movement. The third war, outwardly against Cambodia but in fact against China, also followed the same principles. To the Vietnamese people it was presented as a war for the defense of their fatherland against a traditional national enemy. But, at the same time, for the CPV leaders it was a war against "the reactionary elements in the Chinese ruling circles" who acted in collusion with international imperialists and had betrayed the cause of socialism. Whatever the motives, it promised to be a protracted and, for the Vietnamese people, a very costly war. In contrast to the wars against France and the United States, the prospects of a decisive victory in this war against China were slim. Vietnamese lives and treasury were being thrown down a seemingly bottomless pit, and Vietnam's development was again delayed, this time one does not know by how many five-year plans.

In retrospect, in view of the militancy of the CPV leaders, and of their determination to accelerate the world revolution, one could look at the three wars in a different light, from the viewpoint of the peoples of Vietnam and of Southeast Asia. Considering that not only the CPV leaders were determined to impose Leninism/Bolshevism on all Vietnam and Indochina, but also planned to set up a Federation of Soviet Republics of Southeast Asia by the year 2000 (see chapter 7), it is pertinent to ask the question: What would have happened if France, the United States, and China had not intervened in Indochina?

Regardless of how one would judge French and American motives, the answer to the question is obvious. The CPV leaders would have achieved their aims thirty years sooner, and in much better condition. With regard to Vietnam, they would have imposed communism on Vietnam thirty years sooner, and more easily—without encountering any resistance.

Millions of Vietnamese would have lived under Communist rule, accepted communism, and served international Communist purposes instead of enjoying economic well-being and relative freedom for thirty years.

As regards Southeast Asia, the CPV leaders would have a unified Vietnam, with all its resources intact at their disposal, free access from Vietnam's southern coast to all Southeast Asian countries, in particular Malaysia, and free access by land to Thailand. They would have started their "revolutionary mission" for the establishment of the Federation of Soviet Republics of Southeast Asia sooner, at a time when none of the Southeast Asian governments could offer the national independence, the necessary political freedom, and especially the economic well-being and social reforms that would divert their people from revolutionary thoughts and save them from becoming easy preys of Communist propaganda and agitation. Popular discontent resulting from insecurity, poverty, social inequality, and stringent limitations of personal freedom necessitated by the need for governments to maintain public order would have produced political and social unrest, which would have made rapid political, economic, and social progress, and hence effective resistance to communism, impossible.

Whatever one may think about the three wars, then, one must admit that one of their major results was that the peoples of Vietnam, and especially those of Southeast Asia, had been given a very precious breathing space. The stark contrast between the growing economic prosperity of non-Communist Southeast Asia and the increasing economic decline of Communist Vietnam is the most eloquent demonstration of the truth that communism is not a cure but a cause of poverty.

WERE THE GOALS REACHED?

One last question, and in the light of the views held by many about Vietnam for nearly half a century, the most important one: Has Vietnam achieved what so many Vietnamese had given their lives for, and what so many generous people in the world had wished that they would obtain—national independence? The answer is a clear no. Whoever one may think is responsible for it, Vietnam is today in fact a dependency of the Soviet Union.

To say that Vietnam has become a Soviet dependency is simply to describe a reality. It does not imply that this dependency has been imposed on the CPV. In fact, the CPV leaders' unreserved adoption of Leninism/Bolshevism resulted from a perfectly independent and free choice,

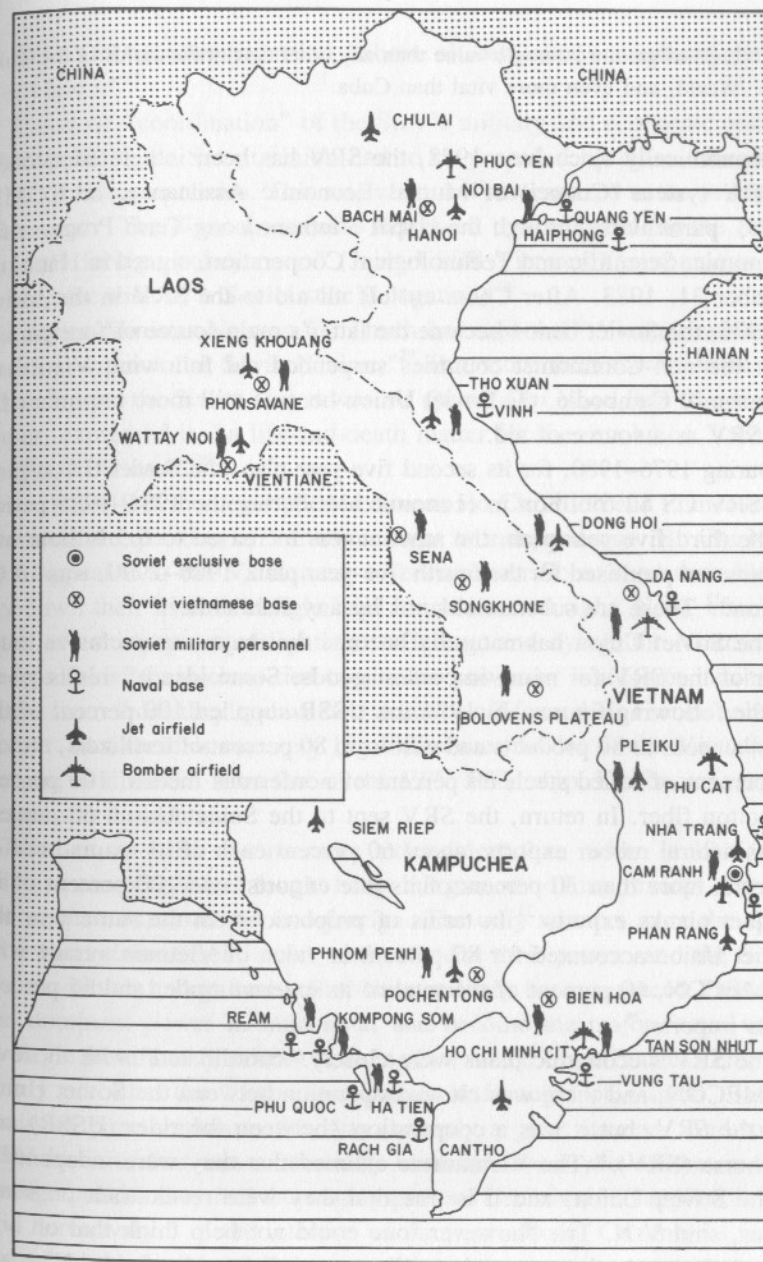
made out of very deep convictions, but deep convictions based disastrous illusions. However, once the choice had been made, certain constraints, strategic as well as tactical, became inevitable. The CPV, as a party, lost its strategic freedom, whereas the individual member of the CPV lost both strategic and tactical freedom in relation to the CPSU.

The situation prevailing since 1975 has been rather paradoxical. Now that the war was over and there was no more compelling need to rely on foreign powers, one would expect Vietnam to exercise the right for which it had fought so hard for many years. But, instead, Vietnam has become more dependent on a foreign power than ever. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to deal with Vietnam's foreign relations since 1975 in general, and with the Soviet Union in particular. We mention only a few major facts, especially in the military and economic fields, that highlight this dependency and that are drawn from two remarkable studies by Thai Quang Trung and Vo Nhan Tri in *Indochina Report*, published by the Information and Resource Center of Singapore.²⁰

Militarily since 1975 and especially since 1978, the SRV has been integrated more and more tightly into the Soviet defense system. Many features of this integration recall the pattern of dependence of South Vietnam on the United States between 1954, and especially between 1965 and 1973. Reports about the Soviet military presence in Vietnam have centered on the use of Cam Ranh Bay as a major Soviet forward naval base. But, in fact, the whole of Vietnam, and indeed Indochina, has become a Soviet military base ominously flanking China, casting a huge shadow over Southeast Asia and the southwestern Pacific, and threatening the sea lanes of the whole area (see map 6).

Since November 3, 1978 the SRV was bound to the Soviet Union by a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation, which was in fact a treaty of military alliance. The treaty, originally directed at China, has, however, become the instrument of greater Soviet strategic designs. As Thai Quang Trung puts it neatly:

As Cam Ranh Bay has become the largest Soviet forward base outside the Soviet Union, Socialist Vietnam has been smoothly integrated as a bulwark State in the encirclement security policy against China, as well as a kind of relay-State in the Soviet global system, the major objective of which is to acquire supremacy upon the seas. Furthermore, as "a reliable impregnable outpost of socialism in Southeast Asia," Vietnam is assigned today to play the role of a guardian-State of the Soviet system in the region as well as a legionnaire-State, carrying out a policy of selective regional destabilization. In sum, because of its multiple functions, Socialist Vietnam is per-



Map 6. Soviet military facilities in Indochina. (Source: Thai-Quang-Trung, The Moscow-Hanoi Axis and the Soviet Military Build-up in Southeast Asia, *Indochina Report*, No.8, October 1986, Singapore. Courtesy of Information and Resource Center)

haps of greater strategic value than any other Soviet footholds in the Third World, and even more vital than Cuba.²¹

Economically since June 1978, the SRV has been integrated into the CMEA system (Council of Mutual Economic Assistance, or COMECON), particularly through the USSR-Vietnam Long-Term Program for Economic, Scientific and Technological Cooperation, signed in Hanoi on October 31, 1983. After China cut off all aid to the SRV in the spring of 1978, the Soviet Union became the latter's main source of foreign aid; after the non-Communist countries suspended aid following Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia, the Soviet Union became still more important for the SRV as a source of aid.

During 1976–1980, for its second five-year plan, the Soviet Union gave the SRV US \$2.6 billion in economic aid; during the 1981–1985 period of the third five-year plan, the amount was increased to 6.5 billion; and the amount promised for the fourth five-year plan, 1986–1990, was 13.05 billion.²² These are substantial sums by any standards.

The Soviet Union has naturally become the major, or exclusive, supplier of the SRV for many important goods. Some idea of this is given by the following figures. In 1984 the USSR supplied 100 percent of the SRV's needs in oil products and cast iron, 80 percent of fertilizers, almost 80 percent of rolled steel, 80 percent of nonferrous metals, 100 percent of cotton fiber. In return, the SRV sent to the Soviet Union 60 percent of its natural rubber exports, about 60 percent each of its tea and coffee exports, more than 30 percent of its jute exports, and 100 percent of its parquet planks exports.²³ In terms of proportions, in the same year the Soviet Union accounted for 80 percent in value of Vietnam's trade with COMECON, 60 percent of the total of its external trade, and 65 percent of its imports.²⁴

The SRV's economic plans were closely "coordinated" with those of COMECON, and there was close cooperation between the Soviet Union and the SRV, but it was a cooperation "between the rider (USSR) and the horse (SRV)." The Vietnamese claimed that they were independent of the Soviet Union, and it is true that they were recalcitrant on some issues, said V.N. Tri; "however, one could not help think that on significant issues in the economic, military and diplomatic fields, Vietnam could not adopt an independent position of the Soviet Union," especially since its membership of COMECON and the signing of the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation, and the resulting setting up of a whole institutional mechanism of cooperation between Vietnam and other

COMECON member countries, "above all between Vietnam and the Soviet Union."²⁵

The close "coordination" of the SRV's military and economic policies with those of the Soviet Union had to be preceded by close "coordination" of foreign policies. This was very well summarized in the following statement: "The Vietnamese side expressed total support for the Soviet Union's foreign policy . . ." (Joint USSR-Vietnam Communiqué following the visit of a Soviet state delegation).²⁶

Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach has said that "Vietnam would be nothing without the Soviet Union."²⁷ But more than for Vietnam, the alliance with the Soviet Union was, as *Quand Doi Nhan Dan*, the army's paper, expressed it, "a life-and-death matter for the revolution," that is, for the CPV itself.²⁸

In 1945–1947 the negotiations between Ho Chi Minh and France broke down on the question of Vietnam's right to independence. Ho Chi Minh then appealed to the Vietnamese to endure sacrifices, shed their blood, lay down their lives, and fight hard for this sacred right. Now, after two wars and thirty years of fighting, suffering, and dying, the Vietnamese people found themselves tied to another power by bonds not much different from those they had wanted to shake off from their French colonial master. But there is one very big difference: the lot of the Vietnamese people, as different from that of the CPV leadership, had become worse than under French rule.

Vietnam in 1985 was no more independent than it was in 1945. The Vietnamese people had fought hard, but gained nothing, except new and worse masters, domestic and foreign. The only winners were the CPV, who had retained, reinforced, and extended their power, and the Soviet Union, which had gained a first-class military base, replaced France as the dominant power in Indochina, and become the major factor in the strategic picture of Southeast Asia in place of the United States. This was surely not what the Vietnamese people had sought or wanted. But, in terms of pure Leninism, this was certainly a great success. And to the CPV leaders, that was what really mattered, for it proved that in their foreign politics they had thoroughly grasped Leninism and applied it fully and "creatively," in the interests of the international Communist movement and the world revolution.