

## July 1965

# Unofficial Translation of a Letter of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Central Committee to the Socialist Unity Party Central Committee

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### Summary:

Letter from the Soviet Central Committee which breaks down and lists the aid given to the Vietnamese by the Soviet Union.

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German

### Contents:

Translation - English

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Soviet government in recent times have undertaken a series of steps [aimed] at the intensification of aid to the Vietnamese people for the struggle against the imperialist aggressors of the US. We deem it necessary to inform you about them.

The Soviet Union has provided great economic and military aid to Vietnam already in the past. From 1955 to 1964 the Soviet Union has provided economic aid of 317 million rubles altogether, including 95.4 million rubles at no cost and the rest as long-term credits under preferential conditions. Approximately 70% of the Soviet aid was used for the development of principal industrial branches in the DRV—energy, coal mining, chemical plants, machine construction, etc. The plants constructed with aid of the Soviet Union play an important role in the creation of the material-technological basis of socialism in the DRV. These plants have produced, relative to the overall industrial production of the DRV: 92.6% of black coal, 80% of metal-utilizing machines, 100% of tin, apatite, and super phosphate. The capacity of the power plants put in service through the aid of the Soviet Union consists of 40% of all power plants in the DRV. During the last 10 years, the Soviet Union has sent to Vietnam over 2 thousand specialists in several economic fields. 3 thousand Vietnamese students, doctoral candidates and young scientists studied at Soviet universities and institutes in 1963-1964.[2] During a stay of the Soviet governmental delegation headed by Comrade Kosygin in February in the DRV, an agreement on technical aid by the Soviet Union for the enlargement of existing power plants, of coal pits, for the construction of pumping stations, of a diesel engine factory, of state farms, and of other industrial and agricultural objects was signed. The Soviet Union has forgiven the interest on the loans given to Vietnam, and has declared its readiness to postpone the deadlines for repayment of the DRV's main debt on Soviet loans.

The Soviet Union has also supplied significant aid to the DRV to strengthen its defense readiness. From 1953 to 1964, weapons and military equipment worth 200 million rubles were delivered at no cost. Aircraft, helicopters, small arms, anti-aircraft guns, field weapons, ammunition, tanks, armored personnel carriers, small anti-submarine vessels, torpedo boats, communication equipment, engineering and other military equipment has been delivered. The USSR provides aid at no cost for the construction of many military schools in the DRV, and for the training of officers as well as of maintenance personnel for the equipment delivered.

In the face of the increasing US aggression against the DRV, the CPSU CC and the Soviet government have undertaken measures to enlarge the overall aid, especially the military aid to the DRV to strengthen its defense readiness.

Following the incident in the Gulf of Tonkin (August 1964), the government of the DRV has turned to the Soviet Union with the request to supply additional military aid for the strengthening of the battle equipment of the Vietnamese People's Army. The Soviet Union has discussed these requests and supplied the DRV with military aid worth 32 million rubles (artillery and small weapons) in October 1964.

In December 1964, the decision was taken to supply the DRV with additional aid at no cost in the form of SA-75 anti-aircraft missiles. Soviet military specialists were sent to the DRV to assemble these weapons and to train the Vietnamese personnel.

With the aim of aiding the government of the DRV in the defense against American aerial strikes, the CPSU CC has undertaken a series of measures. Following a request of the Vietnamese comrades, the proposal was put forward to them to cover the region of Hanoi and Haiphong with Soviet troops against aerial attacks. For that reason the Soviet government intended to send an anti-aircraft brigade and a squadron of interceptors of the type MiG-21. Around four thousand men of the Soviet armed forces were scheduled to come to the DRV for the handling of these modern aerial defense systems.

In the context of this aid to the DRV, the Soviet government turned to the government of the PRC on 25 February 1965, with the request to permit transports of goods and personnel through the territory of the PRC as well as to organize a speedy transit to the Vietnamese border.

Also, the request was made to provide an aerial corridor for the transport by airplane of the MiG-21 PF interceptor and other weapons, as well as [to provide] one or two airports near the Sino-Vietnamese border, in order to assemble the MiG-21 PF there and possibly to station Soviet fighter airplanes. Moreover the request was made to take up measures to keep strict secrecy, so that these deliveries would not be discovered by the Americans.

Replying to the request of Comrade Pham Van Dong to supply urgently anti-aircraft guns by air, the Soviet government asked the PRC government on 27 February to allow the over-flight across the territory of the PRC of 45 [Antonov] AN-12 aircraft in order to transport the cargo.

The Chinese side has refused to implement these measures, which have been undertaken by the Soviet Union with the aim of [rendering] speedy and effective aid to the DRV for the struggle against aggression. We received a reply note from the PRC MFA, which consisted of a brusque refusal of the Soviet proposal. In order to justify somehow their position, the Chinese comrade claimed that the Soviet Union, through their aid deliveries to the DRV and the proposal to transport some of the equipment by air across China, tried to establish "Soviet control over the territory of China and Vietnam." Since the Chinese authorities have refused to agree to the transport of weapons via air, the military goods destined for the DRV had to be transported by rail, which, given the distance between the USSR and Vietnam, took a lot of time. The Vietnamese people could have certainly been spared superfluous sacrifices, if the Soviet military equipment had arrived more quickly in the DRV.

The Politburo of the VWP CC and the DRV government welcomed the decision of the CPSU CC and the Soviet government to deliver additional air planes, tanks, anti-aircraft guns and machine guns, field guns, naval vessels, radio transmitters, tractors and other military equipment. At the same time, the Vietnamese leadership requested that [we] should send a small number of instructors, who could teach the use of Soviet military equipment to Vietnamese personnel on the spot within a certain time period (3 to 6 months), as well as quantitatively small crews instead of complete Soviet crews for the handling of anti-aircraft missiles.

With regard to the dispatch of a squadron of MiG-21 PF to the DRV, the Vietnamese comrades expressed that it would be better if these air planes would be handed over to the Vietnamese side. The DRV intends to have pilots of the Vietnamese People's Army, who [already] fly the MiG-17, be trained in the USSR. Afterwards they could return together with the air planes. The Soviet Union has approved the request of the Vietnamese comrades.

Following the decision of the CPSU CC on 27 March 1965, the Soviet Union supplied military aid worth 150 million rubles at no cost to the DRV for the strengthening of its defense readiness. A special Soviet military delegation was in the DRV for concrete negotiations on the equipment to be delivered to the DRV, on dates of delivery, etc.

Since the CPSU CC and the Soviet government took into account the further intensification of the situation in Vietnam and proceeded from the attempt to aid the Vietnamese people in the defense of their country, they made the proposal on 3 April of this year to carry out a meeting of representatives of the VWP, the CPSU, and the CCP on the highest level, assuming that one could coordinate joint actions and determine further measures to aid the DRV in its struggle against the aggression of the American imperialists.[3] The leaders of the PRC have rejected our proposal. The

Chinese leaders replied on 11 April to the letter on this question by Comrade [Leonid I.] Brezhnev and [Alexei N.] Kosygin.[4] Their letter included general statements [such as] China is "already prepared" and would "fulfill its duty of proletarian internationalism under all circumstances, without any wavering from its duty," it was ready "to render military, economic, and political aid, according to the events, needs, and requests of the Vietnamese comrades."

The letter also said that the PRC and the DRV had already negotiated on "how universal aid and support must be granted to the Vietnamese people," and thus "there is no need to negotiate again." On the aid of the Soviet Union to Vietnam, the letter said also that "the aid rendered by the Soviet Union had been too insignificant," and that "the question, of how the Soviet Union should help Vietnam, had to be decided by both sides, the Soviet Union and Vietnam, it had to be discussed by the Soviet Union and Vietnam in a bilateral meetings, and we have no reason to participate."

While the Chinese leaders refused to participate in a joint meeting, the VWP CC and the government of the DRV sent a delegation headed by Cde. Le Duan to Moscow. The CPSU considers the Soviet-Vietnamese negotiations, which happened on 11-17 April of this year, to be an important step on the path of a further coordination of the positions of the USSR and the DRV in the struggle against American imperialism, as a new, real contribution to the strengthening of the defense readiness of socialist Vietnam, [and] as aid for the people of South Vietnam.

The Vietnamese comrades asked for an increase of Soviet military aid during the negotiations in Moscow. Taking into account this request, the CPSU CC and the Soviet government decided to render new military aid to the DRV worth 145 [million] rubles at no cost. Various equipment of modern military technology has been assigned to the DRV, including engineering equipment for the construction of airports.

All in all the military aid of the Soviet Union for the DRV has reached at the current moment 486.5 mill. rubles, of which 300 mill. rubles have been provided in the last 3 to 4 months.

During the negotiations of the delegations of the CPSU CC and the VWP CC in April of this year in Moscow, the Vietnamese comrades were told that the Soviet Union will provide the DRV with larger quantities of materials and railroad technology, including 120 km of tracks, special scaffolds for the repair of bridges, necessary equipment for the repair of automated and semi-automated railroad equipment, track-laying machines, lifts, 300 cars, 40 movable power plants, etc., in case of the destruction of railroads. The value of this equipment is not included in the amounts mentioned in the negotiations in April this year.

At the moment, deliveries of Soviet military technology, equipment, and engineering goods to the DRV are made according to the agreements with the Chinese side in accordance with the agreements signed by the USSR and the DRV.

Apart from the aid supplies to the DRV, the Soviet Union also provides military aid to the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam. Following a decision by the Soviet government, weapons worth 2.5 million rubles have been handed over to the South Vietnamese patriots.

Last fall, the DRV received aid at no cost in the form of special technologies destined for the Vietnamese People's Army with the aim that the Soviet fire-arms that have become available as a result of the modernization [Umrüstung] [of the Vietnamese People's Army] should be handed over to the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam.

It is well-known that the Soviet Union has expressed readiness to send Soviet volunteers to Vietnam.

The question of dispatching Soviet volunteers to Vietnam was discussed with the delegation of the DRV during the negotiations in Moscow. The Vietnamese comrades thanked the CPSU CC for the readiness to send Soviet people to the joint struggle of the Vietnamese against the American aggressors, but explained that at the moment there is no necessity to send volunteers to Vietnam.

The equipment for anti-aircraft defense and other weapons and military equipment, which the Soviet Union has provided to the DRV for the strengthening of its defense readiness and for the strengthening of the armed forces of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam, have partially arrived in Vietnam. They have not yet entered action in full, because it will take some time until the Vietnamese troops have acquainted themselves with the special military equipment delivered and until they can use them successfully for the defense against attacks by the aggressors. The anti-aircraft missiles and other means of anti-aircraft defense as well as means of coastal defense are supposed to enter service according to the state of training of the crews of the Vietnamese People's Army.

A necessary number of Soviet military specialists, which was determined by the Vietnamese themselves, has been sent to the DRV, and they do everything to train the Vietnamese armed forces personnel as quickly as possible. Training centers have been established with the help of Soviet instructors, and the training of Vietnamese cadres has already started there.

The CPSU CC and the Soviet government still have a resolutely firm attitude with regard to the general aid and moral-political support for the struggle of the Vietnamese people. This position has been displayed in the declarations of leading persons of the CPSU and the Soviet government, in the joint Soviet-Vietnamese communiques of February and April of this year, and in other documents. Within its own country as well as in its foreign relations, the Soviet Union implements a series of measures aimed at the broad moral-political support of the Vietnamese people in its struggle against the American aggressors. The Soviet Union informs its allies about these measures constantly. We are striving to undertake everything to increase aid to Vietnam and for the moral-political isolation of the American aggressors. This is where we see our international duty before the Vietnamese people.

[1] The document is undated, but probably from early July 1965.

[2] As a comparison, the Soviet Union sent ca. 11,000 specialists from 1949 to 1960 to China, a country almost 20 times bigger in population. See: T.G. Zazerskaia. Soviet Specialists and the Formation of the Military-Industrial Complex of China (1949-1960) [Sovetskie spetsialisty i formirovanie voenno-promyshlennogo kompleksa Kitaia (1949-1960 goda)] (St. Petersburg: St. Petersburg State University, 2000), 60, 67. From 1949-1959, China sent 11,000 students to the Soviet Union, see: Dmitrii Shepilov, Not Having Sided [Nepriimknuvshii] (Moscow: Vagryus, 2001), 378. Afterwards, due to the ideological differences, the number of students sent to the Soviet Union dropped off dramatically.

[3] "To the Chairman of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, Comrade Mao Zedong, to the Chairman of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, Comrade Zhou Enlai," 3 April 1965, AVP RF, fond 100, opis 52, delo 13, papka 220, 18-19.

[4] "Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and State Council of the People's Republic of China to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the

Soviet Union and the USSR Council of Ministers," 11 April 1965, SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/3610, 5-8.