

July 9, 1966

**Note on a Conversation with the First Secretary of
the Soviet Embassy, Comrade Sverev, on 8 July 1966
from 11:00 a.m. to 12:40 p.m. at the Soviet Embassy
in Hanoi**

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Summary:

Conversation with First Secretary of the Soviet Embassy, Sverev, describing the Vietnamese attitude toward China as becoming colder. At the same time, printing of China's anti-Soviet propaganda has become more limited and the Vietnamese appear grateful for Soviet aid. Sverev also estimates that there are over 200,000 Chinese troops stationed in North Vietnam.

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The conversation occurred on our initiative and took place in an extraordinarily open and comradely atmosphere [and] without any interpreter.

We first discussed questions which were related to the impending flooding and the possible bombardment of dams by the US imperialists. [...]

With regard to the question of the continuous change in the attitude of the party and the government of the DRV, Comrade Sverev made the following statements:

The great and constantly increasing aid of the Soviet Union has contributed to the positive changes in the attitude of the DRV. Unfortunately, one is unable to perceive this in daily life, because the propaganda apparatus of the DRV, important ministries, or rather their most important departments (defense, security), are still permeated by pro-Chinese forces. Nevertheless, one cannot overlook positive trends.

For example, the polemics against the USSR and the CPSU have ceased following the CPSU October plenum in 1964. The book sellers in the DRV have not carried any new Chinese literature published after 1965. Only those pieces that have been published before 1965 are still being sold. The splittist policy of the Chinese comrades does not fall any longer on fertile ground in the DRV, but meets growing incomprehension and increasing refutation. The Vietnamese comrades start to turn around their propaganda, stressing more and more the unity of all communist parties.

While the VWP CC has commented unanimously on "modern revisionism" during the 9th plenum of the VWP in November of 1963, a significant change has taken place in the VWP CC as a result of the difficulties of the war, Soviet aid, and the peculiar attitude of the PR China-that means as a result of the hard realities of life. The bloc of the opponents of "modern revisionism" does not exist any longer. Pro-Chinese forces in this bloc have taken up centrist positions, at any rate (Comrade Sverev did not mention any names).

With its unselfish solidarity aid, the USSR has contributed much to the changes in the positions of the Vietnamese comrades. They [the Vietnamese] regard the support of several 100 million rubles (500 million rubles/year) highly. In contrast, the policy of the PRC appears suspicious in the eyes of the Vietnamese comrades. Before the bombing of the DRV [started], the PRC boisterously claimed that it would consider each attack on the DRV as an attack against itself, [now] it has become more and more restrained while the escalation of American bombardments increases. Conversely, it pressures the DRV to continue the war.

During the 23rd CPSU Congress, the PRC reduced its aid to the DRV and supplied only food.

The Vietnamese comrades hinted to Soviet representatives that they consider the Chinese attitude as reprisal for their political flirtation with the SU, and that they [now] were in a position similar to the [one of the] Cuban comrades at the beginning of the year (when the Chinese stopped rice [deliveries]). Comrade Sverev emphasized the incomprehensible diffidence of the government of the PR China following the bombardments of Hanoi's and Haiphong's suburbs.[1] While the SU and other fraternal countries protested already on 30 June and 1 July the PR China only came out against it on 5 July 1966.[2]

The contradictions between the DRV and the PR China on principled questions are mounting. The PR China for example increasingly pressures the DRV not only to continue the war but also to expand it. It is well known that the DRV does everything to prevent the war of aggression from spilling over to its neighboring countries.

On the basis of realistic conditions, one has to state that the position of the DRV toward "Mao Zedong ideology" in the most recent "Cultural Revolution" must be judged to be negative. Contradictions on such principled questions like the attitude toward the international communist movement, the SU, the polemics, aid, and tactics in South Vietnam are obvious.

Of course, the comrades of the DRV do not think about severing their close contacts with the Chinese, but they want to document that they like to decide those questions that concern Vietnam by themselves. They want to protect their independence in all principled questions.

The Vietnamese greetings to the CC on the occasion of the 45th anniversary of the CCP can be judged as an interesting reaction to Chinese attempts at blackmail. Whereas exuberant greetings, signed by Ho Chi Minh, Le Duan, and Pham Van Dong, were sent to Mao and the corresponding persons [in the CCP] in the previous year, the greetings this year were only from CC to CC, without signatures. Furthermore, neither members of the Politburo nor of the CC took part in the celebrations in Beijing or Hanoi.

Moreover, it is also illuminating that the Vietnamese comrades view Chinese propaganda with astonishment, [such as, for example, the claim that] Mao is a second Lenin.

The Vietnamese reaction to the Chinese "Cultural Revolution" is also reserved. In talks, Vietnamese comrades dismissed it as the internal affair of the PR China. Chinese demands that the DRV support the "Cultural Revolution" were not adhered to.

Comrade Sverev stated that according to their [Soviet] information more than 200,000 Chinese soldiers are stationed between Hanoi and the Chinese border. Their task is to repair damaged thoroughfares, to construct military bases, and to assume anti-aircraft defense [tasks] in some of the aerial corridors.

Schumann

Seen: Bergold 1st Secretary

Ambassador

[1] Refers to US bombing raids on 28 June 1966 and after.

[2] China actually published its protest on 3 July. See: New York Times, 4 July 1966, A1, 2.