Vietnam: the truth

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"We the Peoples of the United Nations . . . reaffirm faith . . . in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small."

Preamble to the United Nations Charter, San Francisco, July, 1945.

"I am sure the great American people, if only they knew *the true facts and the background* towards the development in South Vietnam, will agree with me that further bloodshed is unnecessary. And also that the political and diplomatic method of discussions and negotiations alone can create conditions which will *enable the United States to withdraw gracefully from that part of the world.*

"As you know, *in times of war and hostilities,* the first casualty is truth."

U THANT, at a U.N. Press Conference, New York, February 24, 1965

Introduction

On August 6, 1965, the House of Commons went into recess for three months. Three weeks later the Foreign Secretary, Mr. Michael Stewart, presented to Parliament his Blue Book on Vietnam. I had nearly finished writing this book when the Foreign Secretary belatedly allowed Members of Parliament and the British public to catch a glimpse of what the parties interested in the war in Vietnam were saying and doing during the first eight months of 1965. This compilation of official documents and statements sets some of the record straight. For the first time the Foreign Secretary has officially admitted the existence of the four-point peace negotiation proposal which was made known to me and to others by the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (Hanoi) in the winter of 1964-65, and which was repeated by Prime Minister Pham Van Dong on April 8, 1965, in a speech which the Foreign Office did its best to suppress.

This statement of the peace aims of the D.R.V. is matched by a hitherto unpublished statement of the aims and intentions of the United States Government in Vietnam, which is the first clear, coherent and brutally frank statement of policy to come out of Washington since Lyndon Johnson took over from John Kennedy in November, 1963.

It is sufficient to read these two documents together to find an answer to the main questions which have puzzled Western students of the Vietnam conflict ever since it began to escalate beyond its local confines in the autumn of 1963: What are the Americans trying to do in Vietnam? What do the Vietnamese themselves want? Why do not the main protagonists in the conflict stop fighting and talk peace?

Yet the Blue Book, limited as it is to a short period of six months, out of "more than twenty years of conflict" (to quote the Preface), still offers only glimpses of the real truth about Vietnam. Most of that truth still lies buried in history books, press-cutting files, memoirs, conference documents and secret agreements. Some of it has been forgotten by the Western public, some has never been revealed to them, and some has been blurred, distorted and twisted out of all recognition by the intelligence, propaganda, public relations and psychological warfare agencies of the Ameri-

can State Department and the British Foreign Office. For, ever since Lord Home took charge of the Foreign Office, these agencies have been working closely together in a deliberate campaign to deceive and delude Western public opinion in order to secure popular support for a joint Anglo-American crusade against Communism, especially in its Asian form.

To the Western leaders who control the instruments of military, political and financial power—and still control them in Britain despite the change of government in October 1964—the war in Vietnam is one part, today the major part, of their world-wide anti-Communist crusade. To win that war all moral scruples, all religious and political principles, all regard for decency, honour and truth have to be pushed away into the ice-box until victory is sure.

I am aware that this is a harsh judgment. I do not expect the reader to accept it without considering and analysing the evidence as I have done myself during the twelve months which have passed since President Johnson ordered his first punitive strike against North Vietnam on August 5, 1964. This book is an account of my personal discovery or re-discovery of the truth about Vietnam; it falls into two parts. The first seven chapters summarise and re-state the true historical facts about Vietnam down to the contemporary phase which may be said to begin with the overthrow of the Diem regime in November 1963. The second part brings the historical record up-to-date and includes an account of the abortive peace negotiations as seen from the inside by one who played some personal part in them.

What are the most signficant truths which emerge from the re-examination of past history? The first outstanding fact which overtops all others in significance is that Vietnam, after passing under French colonial rule in the nineteenth century, re-emerged on September 2, 1945, as a single, sovereign independent state with Ho Chi Minh as its President, and with a central Government composed of the leaders of the Patriotic Independence League which, with some American assistance, had risen against the Japanese invaders and the Vichy French collaborators and seized political power all over the country. The state and its President and Government, had as much right and title to full international recognition as those of Burma, Syria, the Lebanon, Poland, Yugoslavia, and the many others which emerged after 1945.

The second fact is that the Western imperialist Great Powers, with the consent—in 1945—of Stalin and Chiang Kai Shek, decided over the heads of the people of Vietnam, to arrange their future in conformity with their own—Great Power—aims. This meant, first partition, then re-entry of French power, then the replacement of fading French power by American power and finally, renewed partition into two states whose existence is purely notional and fictitious, and has no historical, legal or ethnical foundation whatsoever.

The third fact is that partition into two states has never been accepted by any responsible Vietnamese political leader of whatever political complexion, but has been imposed on Vietnam and sustained solely from outside by the United States of America, supported from 1950 to the present day by every Government in Britain.

The second part of the book reveals the logical development of this historical background. It shows that the Americans, since the days of John Foster Dulles, have never wavered from their aim of bringing Southern Vietnam, if not the whole of Vietnam, into their South-East Asia security system. It shows that to achieve this aim they have been prepared to build up, scrap and rebuild a dozen different vassal political regimes in Saigon, without succeeding, in more than eleven years, in creating anything resembling an effective *government*. It shows that they have been—and still are—ready to wage violent, cruel, aggressive war against the whole country, North and South alike, and to accept—perhaps even to welcome—the risk of a full-scale war with China and her allies. It shows that they have been ready to ignore the advice and clear warnings of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, of the majority of the non-aligned nations and of the whole of the Communist bloc. It shows that this particular road to hell has been paved with abandoned good intentions, broken promises, deliberate deceptions, and the rejection of America's own historical contribution to the evolution of political institutions.

Worst of all, from the point of view of a Socialist and a member of the Labour Party, it shows that the responsible members of the Labour Government—the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary—have, throughout the whole period when they were purporting to take independent initiatives for peace in Vietnam, in reality been engaged in an exercise to support American policies and aims

in Vietnam by throwing the whole blame for the continuance of the war on to the Communists of South Vietnam, North Vietnam, China and even the Soviet Union. At the same time they have suppressed or rebuffed all genuine attempts to get negotiations going which were not acceptable to the American Government or in conformity with its policy of Surrender or Die. They have been prepared to take the risk of alienating the entire Communist world and all right-thinking people everywhere. They have done this—one must suppose—because, in the words of Dean Rusk, "America supports the pound, and Britain supports America in Vietnam".

What, then, is the quintessential truth about the conflict that is going on, in and around Vietnam? The real truth is that very few people in the Western industrialised societies have yet begun to understand the true nature of Asian Communism, which is a special product of the essentially rural societies of the East and South. At the heart of this new Asian—or Afro-Asian—society is a new socio-political philosophy which offers a better answer to the needs and aspirations of two-thirds of the human beings in this planet than anything which the mechanised and militarised West has to offer. Because it caters for aspirations as well as needs it inspires ordinary people with the emotional and moral driving force of a religion which cannot be destroyed by bullets or bombs.

The social content of this philosophy is a trenchant challenge to the Americanised way of life which today passes for civilisation in the West. In Vietnam and throughout South-East Asia Lyndon Johnson, Robert Macnamara, Dean Rusk and Cabot Lodge, with the help of Harold Wilson, Michael Stewart, Douglas-Home and a handful of Asian military fanatics, are trying to destroy Asian Communism with mechanised brute force. They will succeed only at the price of destroying all that really matters in Western philosophy, culture and civilisation, including the human beings whose true vocation is to carry the Western torch in the emulative contests of evolution.

Visionary idealists and pragmatic realists alike must hope they will fail. Perhaps, before the moment of apocalyptic choice is reached, they will come to their senses or be replaced by other men who can reach an understanding with the new forces in Asia. My own hope is that this book may help to bring people in the West back to sanity and even to wisdom.

Suffolk, September, 1965.

CHAPTER ONE

Vietnam before 1945: Some Basic Historical Facts

"The general trend of Europe towards nationalism and democracy which had made itself felt ever since 1848 with steadily increasing emphasis seems to culminate in Mr. Wilson's peace".

H. A. L. FISHER: *A History of Modern Europe.*

The modern history of Vietnam begins with three events occurring —in the foreshortened perspective of time—almost simultaneously in three places all far away across the globe from a French dependency washed by the South China Sea.

On November 7, 1917, in Petrograd, capital of the Russian Empire, Lenin declared that the Bolshevik Party had overthrown the Czarist regime and would put an end to imperialism everywhere. He said that the toiling masses would build a new society free from exploitation, and that as a first step the peoples of all countries under foreign domination must exercise their right to self-determination and national independence.

In the spring of 1918, in Washington, capital of the anti-colonialist United States of America, President Wilson incorporated into his Fourteen Points, which were intended to lay the foundations of a new, peaceful, democratic world, the Bolshevik principle of self-determination for small nations and countries under colonial rule.

In the spring of 1919, in Paris, capital of the French Empire, Nguyen Ai Quoc, 29-year-old son of a poor scholar poet of northern Annam, placed a memorandum before the Versailles Peace Conference asking for the application of the Wilsonian principles to his native land.

What is this land, nearly 6,000 miles from Paris, over 9,000 miles from Washington, about which none of the Powers represented at Versailles, except France, knew anything at all in 1919; which was almost equally unknown to the West when the Big Four met at Potsdam in 1945; and which, in 1965, has suddenly become a household word, though still an unknown book, to millions of ordinary folk in America, Britain and Western Europe?

In geographical, historical and cultural-political terms, the country in Europe which Vietnam most resembles is Norway. Like Norway, Vietnam is a long, narrow-waisted country with a bulge in the north and a larger bulge in the south, flanked by the sea on one side and a long mountain range on the other, separating it from powerful neighbours who more than once in its past history have threatened its independence. In the case of Vietnam these neighbours are not the Swedes and the Danes, but the Thais and Laos of the ancient Kingdom of Siam, and the Khmers of the ancient Hindu-founded Kingdom of Cambodia, the memorials of whose past greatness are to be found in the ruined but still majestic temples of Angkor Vat. Like Norway, Vietnam's northern frontiers march with those of a Great Power, communist today, which tried to dominate her in its imperial past; and its southern tip plunges into seas which rival Powers, Great and would-be-Great, seek to dominate with their highly mechanised, aero-naval forces.

The political history of the two countries has also many similarities, determined partly by geo-political and partly by indigenous cultural factors. Like the Norwegians, the Vietnamese have a high-level cultural tradition and distinctive social and political forms which were evolved in the first millenium A.D., and which they have kept untarnished by centuries of foreign domination, to be revived in literature and life when they again became free. Like the Norwegians, the Vietnamese were cheated of their hope of freedom when, after a Great War, the Imperial Powers decided to hand them back to foreign control. Unlike the Norwegians, however, who in 1815 were allowed by the Swedish crown to enjoy internal unity and autonomy under a Constitution of their own making, the Vietnamese, in 1945, were denied both unity and autonomy by the French military leaders, and were faced with no middle course between accepting renewed subordination under the imperialist principle of "divide and rule", or fighting for full independence. As we shall see later, they chose to fight. If they have to wait as long as the Norwegians did to gain full independence, they will not achieve it until the year A.D. 2035. Fortunately for them —and for the rest of us—history moves faster these days.

Ethnographically speaking, the Vietnamese are as different from the Norwegians as one would expect from the fact that the latter are north Europeans who have penetrated from the northern fringe of the North Temperate Zone into the Arctic, while the

former are South Asians who have penetrated from the southern fringe of the North Temperate Zone into the Tropics. Yet, just as southern Norway enjoys the climatic benefits of the North Temperate Zone in the summer months, so does northern Vietnam enjoy similar benefits during the winter months and early spring months, after the summer and autumn monsoon rains are over. These conditions produce a hardy and energetic people who, however, are able to enjoy periods of relaxation from the battle with climate and environment and engage in a variety of cultural pursuits, ranging from cunning basket-weaving, silk embroidery and lacquer-work to community dancing, singing, minstrelsy, poetry-reading and folk opera. Some of them, too, in the Buddhist and Taoist tradition, spend their leisure in the quiet contemplation of nature, human life and the destiny of man. Such a one, in his early youth, was Nguyen Ai Quoc, born on May 19, 1890,[1] into a rather poor peasant family in the Nghe An province of north-central Vietnam.

The boy who was to become Ho Chi Minh, the socialist Churchill of Vietnam, was the son of a peasant scholar poet who belonged to the poor but well-educated Sinh branch of the extremely numerous Nguyen clan. There are Nguyens everywhere in Vietnam, from the extreme north to the far south, some today occupying high positions in Hanoi and Saigon, or in Embassies in Prague, Moscow and Pekin, others still humbly ploughing the paddy fields in their native villages. Unlike the Ngos, they have never kept themselves apart from the common people. They have remained always closely bound to the peasants and rural workers, who still today make up four-fifths of the population of Vietnam.

The total population, despite 24 years' of severe losses in war and civil conflict, is today about 31 millions, of whom 16½ millions at present live north of the 17th parallel, and 14½ millions south of the parallel. Of these, some 26 million are ethnically homogeneous Vietnamese (the French called them Annamese), speaking a common language with the usual dialectic variations. Those born in the north, centre or south can understand one another just as well as a Londoner can understand a Liverpudlian, or a Northumbrian can understand a man of Wessex. The other 5 millions are made up of the aboriginal "montagnards" of the Central Highlands, and of various minority tribes, clans and settlers, some of them highly cultured, others forming a kind of slum or jungle proletariat. The most important of these are the mountain tribes, mainly of Chinese

origin, in the far north; the Thais, Laos, Miaos and others living in the highland Thai-Miao Minority Region on the frontier with northern Laos; the early indigenous Champas who sprawl over the disputed frontier area between southern Vietnam (Cochin-China as the French called it) and Cambodia; and the 1½ million or so Chinese settlers who live in the southern Mekong delta area, but mainly in Saigon and its teeming slum suburb of Cholon. To complete the ethnographic picture it must be added that a few of the northern Vietnamese are of mixed Vietnamese and Chinese origin, just as many Englishmen are of mixed Saxon-French origin. Perhaps this explains why one of the lecturers in the South-East Asia Department of the London School of Oriental Studies is "unable to tell the difference between a Vietnamese and a Chinese until he opens his mouth"!

Vietnam is not, under normal conditions, a poor, a hungry or a backward country. The country can grow more than enough food, of varied kinds, to satisfy its own people. The peasants and townspeople can make perfectly adequate, as well as beautiful, clothes from home-produced materials. They can build dry, cool and comfortable houses and cottages from home-produced timber, thatch, cement and bricks. They can provide for their own education and the broadening of their inherited culture. The main things they need from the "civilised" world are not well-meaning but ill-informed planners, bevies of patronising officials, bankers and moneylenders, Western-style luxury goods, office machinery or sophisticated military weapons and machines. Their main needs are simpler and more precise: Western medical teams, equipped with the ample resources of modern medical science (W.H.O. has already nearly eliminated the main killing and debilitating disease, malaria), farm vehicles and water-pumps for the countryside, heavy equipment for the construction of reservoirs and flood dykes, and specialised industrial machinery. To pay for these they can export rice, rubber, coffee, tea, minerals, china and lacquer-ware, and high-quality art and craft products. In addition, they want, like other people, cultural contact, understanding and friendship. All this, and more, they can have when the militarists, the financiers, the greedy merchants, middlemen and landlords, have been pushed from off their backs, and they can settle down to live—in peace.

This they cannot do until they have freed themselves completely from thralldom to imperialistic great powers. In pre-Christian cen-

turies they fought against the Siamese Empire, which once extended right across Laos and Tonkin (northern Vietnam) into South China. Later they fought for centuries against the Chinese and enjoyed long periods of independence until Tonkin was incorporated in the Chinese Empire in 1406. While an independent Kingdom of Laos was being established in the buffer land between Siam and Tonkin, the Annamese pushed south from the central area around their "Emperor's" capital at Hue, into the southern delta area, from which they expelled the Khmers (or Khymers) of the Kingdom of Cambodia. By the mid-nineteenth century the Emperor of Annam had established his rule over most of the country, although the Chinese still claimed suzerainty over Tonkin, and the Cambodians disputed the Emperor's claim in the far south. Then came the French, playing their part in the general drive of the Western imperialist powers to divide up Asia and Africa between them. The French colonial forces, making the usual pretext that peaceful traders and missionaries had been persecuted by the natives, gradually over-ran the whole of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, and converted what they called "Indo-China" into a series of colonies and protectorates. By 1892 the sparsely populated Kingdom of Laos had become a Protectorate, the more substantial Kingdom of Cambodia had become first a Protectorate and then simply a colony, and Vietnam had been divided into three parts: Cochin-China (the French name) as a colony, Annam (central Vietnam), still with its King or Emperor, as a Protectorate, and Tonkin, recognised at first as a Protectorate administered by the King of Annam but later directly administered by the French through a Resident Governor.

By the year 1910, when Japan occupied Korea, the movement of revolt against both capitalism and imperialism was beginning to spread from Russia, Germany, France, Great Britain, America and Japan to the imperial possessions in Asia and Africa. Carried and led at first by liberal nationalists and intellectuals, who were able to travel about the world, it began to penetrate amongst the peasants, and sporadic revolts began, in Vietnam as elsewhere, which were ruthlessly and often brutally, suppressed. Nguyen Tat Thanh, as the budding leader was then called, was drawn into contact with this movement when his father, who had obtained a post as a senior district official, was dismissed on suspicion of being too friendly with the rebel leaders. Thanh, who had already done some quiet thinking, came to the conclusion that a successful revolt against

the colonial power could only be led by people who had studied what was happening in other parts of their Empire and who had made contact with those who, in the capitals of the Imperial Powers, were beginning to organise for political action.

On a bright January morning in 1911, Nguyen Tat Thanh slipped quietly out of Saigon and into the cook's galley of the French steamship *Amiral Latouche Tréville*. He waved good-bye to his native land, unaware then that his revolutionary odyssey would last for thirty-five years. He spent those years in travelling, observing, studying, dreaming, thinking, talking, writing, planning—taking any odd job that would keep him alive or carry him where he wanted to go—until the moment when he crossed the frontier again to organise the revolt of the Vietnamese people against the Japanese invaders and their French and native quislings.

During this time he travelled through the French Empire in North Africa, France, England, North America, Russia, China, Siam, Hong Kong and finally China again. Everywhere he went he made contact with industrial workers, peasants, intellectuals and representatives of oppressed countries. In the United States he made contact with Daniel DeLeon's anarcho-syndicalist movement, but did not find that it had much to offer for his main objective, freedom for Vietnam. In Liverpool, where he shovelled up snow, and in London, where he worked at the Carlton Hotel as a pastry-cook, he met Irish revolutionary nationalists, and found an immediate bond of sympathy. It was not, however, until he went to Paris when the First World War ended in November, 1918, that he made his first contact with socialist political ideas.

It was his memorandum to the Versailles Peace Conference, presented over the name of Nguyen Ai Quoc and other Vietnamese patriots in Paris, which first attracted the attention of leading members of the French Socialist Party. Charles Longuet, grandson of Karl Marx, persuaded him to write an article about life in the French colonies of Indo-China for *Le Peuple*. Other articles followed, and then meetings at the politico-literary clubs with Leon Blum, Paul Faure, Vaillant-Couturier, Marcel Cachin, Marceau Pivert and many others. The French Socialists were at that time Marxists almost to a man. From them Nguyen Ai Quoc gradually learned that nationalist anti-colonialism was not enough, that the sustaining force behind imperialism was the capitalist society of the industrial West and that both capitalism and imperialism must be

defeated together by the common struggle of "the toiling people of all lands". At that time, though he had read no Marxist literature, he reached the conclusion that this simple gospel was good enough as a unifying political philosophy, and that the French Empire, through co-operation between the militant socialists in the home country and the patriotic peasants and intellectuals in the colonies, might be the first of the Empires to heed the call which Lenin had sent out from the new Socialist Workers' Republic in Russia. Yet even then, at the age of 29, Nguyen was far from being what, in modern political jargon, is called "a class-conscious Marxist", and he was still quite uninterested in Marxist-Leninist theories of the revolutionary seizure of power by the organised vanguard of the proletarian masses.

He joined the French Socialist Party in 1920 because, as he said at the time: "This is the only organisation in France which defends my country, the only organisation pursuing the noble ideology of the French Revolution: 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity.' " Through all his life, even after he *had* closely studied the theory and practice of Marxism and Leninism, and later of Stalinism and of Maoism, he was to cling to the belief that modern Socialism had its origins in the French Revolution, and that France, of all the countries in the West, has most clearly pointed the way towards a synthesis of patriotism, democracy and social justice. This is why today he expects France to be the first country to break away from the Western Imperialist Front and to stretch out a hand of friendship to the emergent peoples of Asia.

It was in 1920, however, that he had the first of his many disappointments. Soon after he joined the French Socialist Party the great split occurred in the working-class parties of Europe. The Bolsheviks had re-named their Party the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, reviving Marx's terminology, and Lenin and Trotsky had called upon the workers of all countries to follow their example and throw off the capitalist and imperialist yoke. There were indeed strong revolutionary movements throughout Central Europe at that time, following the collapse of the German, Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires, and there were many occasions during the period from 1918 to 1922 when it looked as though the pre-war social order had gone for good. Many of the pre-war socialist leaders, especially those who had supported their own nation during the War, in defiance of the decision of the Second

International in July, 1914, shrank back from the prospect of "revolutionary chaos", and advocated gradual reform from within the existing system. These "social reformists" as they came to be called, favoured the reconstitution of the Second International, while the Russian Communists and their supporters in Europe decided to found a new, revolutionary Third International. There were also some, like the I.L.P. in Britain, and the Norwegian Labour Party, who said "a plague on both your houses" and formed what was quickly dubbed the Two-and-a-half-International.

All these currents were represented in the French Socialist Party, and the critical moment of decision, watched by all the countries of Western Europe, came at the 1920 Congress of Tours. Blum and Faure came out for the Second International, Cachin and Vaillant-Couturier for the Third, and Pivert for the Two-and-a-Half. Most of the industrial workers of France and some of the small peasants were in a revolutionary mood and their numerical strength carried the day in the Congress against the representatives of the professional middle-classes and the "fonctionnaires".

To his own astonishment as well as that of the delegates, Nguyen Ai Quoc found himself making an impassioned speech in support of the Third International. But his argument was a simple one. Figures, like 2, 2½ or 3, were unimportant. Names, like "socialist" or "communist", were unimportant. What mattered was that the workers and peasants of the Soviet Union really had overthrown their imperial rulers and started to found a new society; so naturally the exploited workers and peasants of the colonial and the capitalist countries must join hands with them if they meant business and were not just talking for talking's sake.

Inevitably, after that speech, Nguyen went with the majority of the Congress in deciding to change the Party's name and link up with the Communist International. So, in name, Nguyen became a "Communist", although for him this meant no more than that, as a Vietnamese patriot, he wanted to see his own country freed from all forms of exploitation, whether by foreigners or by their native agents and accomplices. He could see no incompatibility between working for national independence and striving for social revolution: inevitably the two aims must intertwine if genuine freedom was the goal.

As a result of the split between the revolutionaries and the reformists, the revolutionary wave gradually subsided. Nguyen was to

spend the next 25 years in planning and organising for the day when liberation could be achieved without the massacre of the common people by their rulers. He evolved a firm principle of action: individuals might sacrifice themselves in the struggle, but the masses of the people must not be involved until victory was certain. Later, when he became affectionately known as Uncle Ho to all his younger country folk, his nephews and nieces were to thank him for his wisdom and caution on their behalf. But his party colleagues, after he founded the Indo-China Communist Party, were often to criticise him, as both Russian and Chinese Communists have in their turn criticised him for excessive caution, for "under-estimating the sacrificial zeal of the masses", and for seeking to avoid violent confrontations by co-operating with "bourgeois" patriots and even by trying to negotiate a peaceful settlement with the imperialists themselves.

During those 25 years Nguyen Ai Quoc, if he spared his countrymen unnecessary sacrifices, did not spare himself or the few trusted colleagues whom he gathered together as he travelled the world in search of help for his people. Wherever he went—in the Soviet Union, China, Siam, Malaya, Hong Kong—he travelled light, ate and drank little, mastered the language of the country, made contact with Vietnamese residents, organised revolutionary cells and propaganda groups, disguised his name and appearance to avoid the police and secret agents, searched out sympathisers with the anti-colonialist struggle, made plans, scrapped and revised them, lived in prisons, pagodas and villas, wrote poems, playlets, articles, essays and pamphlets.

In the early twenties he was in Moscow, where he met Stalin, whom he found helpful and friendly. Stalin, a Georgian, had made a special study of the Nationality Problem in the Soviet Union, and had worked out a solution based on regional cultural and administrative autonomy, with central control only of foreign policy, defence, economic planning, secret police (defence against "enemy agents") and, of course, the Communist Party machine. Stalin's addiction to dictatorial centralisation was later to destroy his own work, but when Nguyen Ai Quoc first met him he was full of genuine sympathy for small national communities which were seeking self-determination and self-rule. Even to this day Stalin's portrait has an honoured place, alongside those of Ho Chi Minh, Marx, Lenin and Mao Tse Tung, in the Party headquarters and the

factory or co-operative farm chairman's room in northern Vietnam.

With Stalin's help, Nguyen got himself a job as press aide to the Borodin Mission which went to China in 1925 to assist Dr. Sun Yat Sen's Kuomintang. He did not stay long with the Mission, or bother to make contact with the Chinese Communist Party, but made his way to South China, thence to Siam, and finally back to Canton and Hong Kong. Here, in 1930, he founded the Indo-China Communist Party, which was from the first primarily Vietnamese. French police agents were now getting on his track, and he was arrested by the British authorities and charged with being a Soviet agent seeking to overthrow the Hong Kong government. A friendly British lawyer, Mr. Loseby, defended him, and when the Hong Kong Supreme Court voided the prosecution but ordered his expulsion from the colony, he appealed, with the help of Sir Stafford Cripps in London, to the House of Lords. The latter ordered his unconditional release and Nguyen went to Singapore. Here he was arrested, sent back to Hong Kong and put in prison. This time Mr. Loseby, convinced that the British and French police were acting in collusion, and that his client's life was in danger whatever happened in court, resolved to get him away to a safe place on the Chinese mainland. He smuggled Nguyen out of prison and away to a Chinese friend's villa, where for a short time he lived the life of a Chinese mandarin.

The respite was short. Japan, from her base in Korea, had invaded Manchuria, and was starting on her Great Asian War, which was to last for 14 years. Neither the League of Nations nor the Western Powers did anything to stop her until she bombed Pearl Harbour in 1941. During those first ten years, when nobody opposed her but the Chinese, she swept right through eastern China to South-East Asia, which she over-ran in co-operation with Thailand. The French forces in Indo-China, taking their cue from the Vichy Government in France, accepted all the demands of both the Japanese and the Thais. To the latter they ceded three provinces of Cambodia and two provinces of Laos in the Mekong Valley.[2] To the former they had to concede an occupation army in Vietnam, and a right of passage to the Gulf of Siam and the South China Sea.

Ho Chi Minh—we will now call him by the name which he assumed in order to persuade Chiang Kai Shek's police that he was a Chinese born in Vietnam—saw that the moment for revolt was

coming. The French were discredited and the Japanese were overextended, and one day the authority of both would collapse and the Vietnamese, the Laotians and the Cambodians would only have to rise up and take over power, as the Russian revolutionaries did in 1917.

In May, 1941, he called a conference of Vietnamese exiles at Tsintsi, in the southern Chinese province of Kwangsi. Here the Communists joined with other left-wing and nationalist organisations to form the famous "Viet Minh". Its full name was Viet Nan Doc Lap Dong Minh Hoi (Patriotic League for the Independence of Vietnam), and its aim was to organise all patriotic Vietnamese for the seizure of political power when the Franco-Japanese regime collapsed. The closely knit Communist group were from the first the leaders, inspirers, organisers and pace-setters of the whole Viet Minh movement. One of the leading Communists, Vo Nguyen Giap, was given the task of organising the military side of the resistance and the revolt; and to prepare himself for this he went off to study the methods of revolutionary warfare perfected by Mao Tse Tung.

Ho Chi Minh, after a short visit across the frontier into Vietnam—his first for thirty years—tried to organise political and military assistance from Chiang Kai Shek, and through him from the Americans, who were now in the war. He never got to see Chiang, who was thinking of the coming struggle with his own Communists, and instead spent over a year in South Chinese jails, where he spent his time thinking, planning and writing poems in Chinese. (See Bibliography.) The first of these quatrains runs:

"Your body is in prison,
but not your spirit.
You must keep up your morale
because you have great work to do."

When the anti-Japanese coalition began to get the upper hand Chiang Kai Shek promoted the formation of an Indo-China Nationalist grouping known as Dong Minh Hoi, which was supposed to form a "Government in Exile" which would be acceptable to China's allies. The Viet Minh were kept out of this, but Ho Chi Minh had by now become so powerful a personality that he was invited to become a member of the Provisional Government. He accepted, to find out what was going on, and to try to get Viet Minh accepted as the main driving force of the resistance movement.

In the upshot it was the pusillanimity of the other members of the Provisional Government which destroyed it and paved the way for the victory of Viet Minh. In the late summer of 1944, twelve months before the Japanese surrender, it was the Viet Minh guerrillas, organised by Giap, who went into action and took over complete control of the northern province of Cao Bang. And in October of that year it was Ho Chi Minh, alone of all the members of the Provisional Government, who dared to cross the frontier and establish his political headquarters in the province of Thai Nguyen. From that moment on nothing more was heard of the Provisional Government, and Viet Minh became the acknowledged leader of the people's growing struggle for independence.

So it came about that when, on August 16, 1945, two days after the Japanese surrender, Ho Chi Minh called upon the people to rise up and take power in the name of an independent Vietnam, they answered the call, under the leadership of Viet Minh, in almost every city, town and village from the far north to the deep south.

Within 17 days, by September 2, 1945, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam had been proclaimed, with Ho Chi Minh as its President, the Emperor Bao Dai had abdicated, recognised the Republic and transferred his powers to the President, and Ho Chi Minh had broadcast a proclamation to the world, inviting all the United Nations to recognise Vietnam as an independent state, entitled to equal sovereignty with all other states, in accordance with the San Francisco Charter.

Ho Chi Minh's triumph was short-lived. Unlike Cyrankiewicz in Poland and Tito in Yugoslavia, he and his followers were not to be allowed to enjoy their reward for helping the Allied Powers, known now as the United Nations, to defeat the combined might of Germany and Japan. Instead of being permitted to enter into the rightful heritage of small nations—self-determination, with all the implications of that term for both external and internal policy —Vietnam was destined to become the victim of post-war rivalries of the Great Powers, and of the new ideological and economic conflicts between East and West, and North and South.

Ho Chi Minh's youthful dream, half-fulfilled after thirty years of political struggle, was to live on in the minds and hearts of his fellow-countrymen for another twenty, or maybe thirty, years before blood and toil inspired by faith and hope could transform it at long last into full reality.

CHAPTER TWO

Re-Entry of the Imperialists

"I was welcomed on arrival (in Saigon) by Viet Minh . . . I promptly kicked them out."
GEN. GRACEY, Commander of the British Occupation Forces in Indo-China.[1]

The first independent Democratic Republic of Vietnam, as a political entity governing the whole country from the Chinese frontier in the North to the Camau Point in the South, was shortlived. In Saigon its power lasted only three weeks. To understand how and why, we must look at the actions and policies of the Great Powers who were winding up the second world war in Europe and Asia.

The Soviet Union had emerged as the great new continental land power in Europe and, through Siberia, in Northern Asia. The United States was the supreme master of the air and the seas of the whole globe, including the coastal fringes of the great Eurasian-African land-mass. Britain had shrunk to the status of a secondary power.

At the Big Three Conferences at Teheran (1943) and Yalta (1944), it was Roosevelt and Stalin, the representatives of the two super powers, who dominated the discussions. Roosevelt thought that there was no need for their interests to clash, and he suggested to Stalin that they should divide the world into three spheres: a social-democratic capitalist sphere; a communist and revolutionary socialist sphere; and a Third World in which America and the Soviet Union would engage in friendly rivalry for influence. The proposed division went this way. The United States, as a sea-air power basing its policy on a modified Monroe Doctrine, was to have a free hand in both the Americas, the Atlantic Ocean with the "fringe" states of Norway, Holland, Belgium, France, Spain and Portugal, and the Pacific Ocean, including Japan, the Japanese Island bases in the Central and southern Pacific, and the fringe states bordering the South China Sea, including Indo-China, Siam, the Malay States and the Dutch East Indies. Germany would be divided up, kept disarmed and its future settled by agreement between Western and

Eastern Europe, including the Soviet Union. Roosevelt agreed to Stalin's demands for control over a "cordon sanitaire" of East European states stretching from Finland to the Baltic, with a Russian sphere of influence in the Balkans. He also accepted Russian influence in North Asia, including Manchuria and both Inner and Outer Mongolia. Russia and America were to have an equal share of influence in an independent Korea. The Soviet Union was to have bases at Hangö in Finland, and at Dairen and Port Arthur on the Yellow Sea. Russia was thus to keep control of the Trans-Siberian rail routes to Port Arthur and Vladivostok. India, Burma and most of the Middle East and African states were to achieve independence and become a Third World, with open doors for both America and Russia.

Roosevelt did his best to keep his bargain with Stalin, even to the point of forbidding American tanks to enter Prague in the closing stages of the war in Europe, but his plans were defeated in turn by Churchill, Chiang Kai Shek, De Gaulle and his own successor, Truman.

Churchill, with the full backing of the War Cabinet, including Attlee and Bevin, protested vehemently against the plot to "dismember the British Empire". Roosevelt had to give way to insistent British pressure and conceded that Britain alone should have the right to determine if and when the British colonial territories, including India, Burma and the Malay States, should become independent. The War Cabinet also successfully demanded a British sphere of influence in Greece and in the Middle East, Egypt and Libya. There was no agreement about Poland, and Roosevelt left the British to fight it out with the Russians.

Meanwhile Chiang Kai Shek, at the 1943 Cairo Summit, obtained an assurance that China's territorial integrity would be respected, with Manchuria, Inner Mongolia and Tibet recognised as parts of China or under Chinese suzerainty; that Formosa would be returned to China when Japan was defeated, and that Korea should become completely independent under the watchful eye of China as well as the Soviet Union and the United States.

There was also a secret agreement recognising a Chinese sphere of influence in Tonkin, the northern province of French Indo-China. This was based on China's historic claims to sovereignty, or at least, suzerainty over this territory, which was later to become known as "Vietnam north of the 20th parallel".

De Gaulle, not being a party to any of these agreements, refused to accept them and proclaimed his own policy of a French Union (or Commonwealth), with France's colonial possessions being granted nominal independence within the Union at a time of his choosing. This imitation of Churchillism did not suit Churchill, who was anxious to get the French out of the Middle East. The British War Cabinet therefore decided on a compromise, by which France would grant full independence to Syria and the Lebanon, in return for which Britain would support France's claim to re-establish her authority over the whole of Indo-China, including Tonkin, leaving her to decide if and when any part of Indo-China was to achieve independence. Ernest Bevin, who was already being groomed for the post-war Foreign Secretaryship, concurred fully in this arrangement. As for the rest of South-East Asia, the War Cabinet decided to re-establish British authority in the Malay States and Singapore as soon as the Japanese pulled out and to try to persuade the Dutch to come to terms with the non-communist Indonesian nationalists.

Churchill and Bevin became increasingly concerned towards the end of the war at the prospect that a decisive Russian victory over the German Army would be the signal for the seizure of power by communist-dominated, popular-front resistance movements all over Eastern, Southern and Central Europe, in North Africa and the Middle East, and in large parts of Asia. As Roosevelt was quite prepared to recognise genuine independence movements, even if they were under communist or revolutionary socialist leadership, Churchill saw to it that his arguments were impressed upon Roosevelt's advisers, especially the military ones, so that they were at least forewarned of what the British would do when German, and later, Japanese, resistance collapsed.

The death of Roosevelt between these two events altered the whole situation, both in Europe and Asia. The new President, Harry S. Truman, was a hard-headed, self-made middle-western business man turned pragmatic politician. Unlike Roosevelt, he was no statesman, and had no vision of a new post-war world. His main concern was to use American power in order to promote what he regarded as American national interests. He was readily persuaded by Churchill and Bevin, whom he met at the Potsdam Conference, that the main immediate danger to be faced in Europe, now that German military power had been utterly destroyed, was a revolutionary left-wing seizure of power. He was, however, anxious to

pull American military forces out of Europe as soon as possible so as to concentrate them in the Pacific. Both Churchill and Bevin were later to describe this as the danger of a reversion to "isolationism" but Truman and his advisers were thinking not of isolationism but of a resumption of the advance of American power *westwards* across the Pacific towards Asia, rather than eastwards across the Atlantic towards Europe. The perpetual conflict between the educated European-minded "Atlantic Seaboard" Americans and those who thought in terms of the Open Frontiers and Open Doors towards the West was for the time being settled in favour of the Westwardists.

Truman could not, however, entirely disregard the pleadings of his British allies. Since they were obviously incapable of dealing with Stalin unaided, he promised to keep some American divisions in Europe and to back them, if necessary, with the atom bomb, which was now ready to be exploded. The British had no desire to see the bomb actually used in Europe, however, but preferred that it should be kept as a deterrent. If the deterrent was to be credible, however, if, that is to say, the Russians were to be made to understand that the bomb really existed and was an effective weapon of war, then it was necessary to explode at least one or two of them in places where they could do no harm to Europeans or Americans, but where they would have a shattering and decisive military effect. Japan was the obvious place, and the fact that hundreds of thousands of Asian men, women and children could be crushed, incinerated, poisoned or maimed for life would be offset, in the scales of military justice, by the saving of the lives of scores of thousands of young American soldiers. If morality entered into the question at all, it could comfortably be argued that the civilians of Hiroshima and Nagasaki had given full support and encouragement to the infamous "Yellow Bellies".

Churchill had handed over to the United States all the British know-how about nuclear fission in return for an undertaking from Roosevelt that any use of the atom bomb would require the joint approval of the two leaders. Roosevelt had wanted to use the bomb only as a demonstration, and had proposed that one or two should be dropped on one of the thinly populated Japanese islands, accompanied by radio warnings and calls for surrender. Truman changed this decision, and when the announcement was made to the world that the first atom bomb in history had been exploded with devasta-

ting effect Attlee, now Prime Minister after the July General Election, issued a statement supporting the President's action.

The post-war Anglo-American alliance against Communism and revolutionary-socialism thus had its genesis in an agreement regarding the use of the atom bomb. The whole of post-war history in Europe and Asia has been dominated, as far as the Western Powers are concerned, by the varying fortunes of this alliance which Gordon Walker, when he became Labour's third post-war Foreign Secretary in October, 1964, described as "the sheet-anchor of our policy".

In 1945, however, the alliance did not extend to Asia and the Pacific. As we have seen, Britain had her own views about the future of imperial possessions in this vast region of the world, and at that time they were very different from those of the Americans who had always resented the way in which the European imperialist powers had tried to squeeze them out of China.

When it came to dealing with Indo-China, and especially with the newly-emerged country of Vietnam which had had the temerity to proclaim its independence and appeal to President Wilson's famous principle of self-determination for small nations, there was no agreement between the war-time allies, with the exception of the secret agreement between Britain and France to support the restoration of each other's power in Indo-China and Malaya respectively.

Stalin, who was interested only in Northern Asia, kept to his bargain with Britain and France not to intervene in their spheres of influence in South-East Asia. The Viet Minh received no help from the Russians during the war or indeed for several years afterwards, and it was not until January 31, 1950, that the Soviet Union recognised the Democratic Republic of Vietnam—twelve days after the newly-formed Government of the People's Republic of China had set the example.

The American leaders were caught off balance by the events in Indo-China. Under Roosevelt the O.S.S. had given help to anyone who was actively resisting the Japanese, and had denied it to collaborators. In China they helped both Chiang Kai Shek and the Communist partisans, and in Vietnam they helped the Viet Minh, since no other Vietnamese party or group was prepared to take any risks. If Roosevelt had lived there is little doubt that he would have responded to Ho Chi Minh's appeal to Wilsonian principles (enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations in July,

1945), and would have recognised the independent Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

Truman, made of different metal, listened readily to the anti-communist "information" which was fed into his ears by the newly-formed Bureau of Intelligence and Research and the Central Intelligence Group (forerunner of the C.I.A.), controlled by the Army and Navy Secretaries and by Admiral Leahy and Secretary of State James Byrnes. (*The Invisible Government*, see Bibliography.) He authorised these new agencies to switch their assistance to Chiang Kai Shek in China and to right-wing military nationalist groups in Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam. In the states of Indo-China, however, they were ordered merely to keep a watching brief, as Truman had no desire to provide Britain, France and China with a collective grievance against the Americans.

In July, 1945, the Potsdam Conference decided that the Japanese troops in Indo-China should be called upon to surrender to Lord Mountbatten south of the 16th parallel and to Chiang Kai Shek north of the parallel. The race to re-occupy the areas of Indo-China vacated by the Japanese therefore became a race between the military forces of Britain, the Free French and Chiang Kai Shek. The British got there first, landing an advance party of Indian (Ghurka) troops in Saigon, under the Command of General Gracey, on the very day (September 2, 1945) on which the independent Democratic Republic of Vietnam was proclaimed in Hanoi.

What followed in Saigon and the former Cochin-China was described laconically by Ernest Bevin in the House of Commons on October 24. "There has been sporadic fighting involving British forces in the outskirts of Saigon"[2]—and more vividly by Tom Driberg in despatches to *Reynolds' News*. A more detailed personal account of the events has recently been given by R. Denton Williams, who was serving as an officer under General Gracey's command at the time.

No one has contradicted the essential facts reported by Mr. Denton Williams, and they must therefore be accepted as accurate. The essence of the matter is that General Gracey permitted the Free French forces to land, enter Saigon and shoot the Viet Minh out of the City Hall and other public buildings which they had occupied. Meanwhile he re-armed the interned Japanese prisoners and employed them, alongside the British forces, to suppress the "disorders" which broke out following the re-entry of the French.

General Gracey acted without authority from his C-in-C, Admiral Mountbatten, whose signalled instructions were: "Sole mission: disarm the Japanese. Do not get involved in keeping order". In the light of what is now known of the agreement between the British Government and De Gaulle's "Free French" Government, it is evident that General Gracey must have received his *political* instructions direct from London.

Britain must therefore be held responsible for re-admitting the French into Vietnam, just as she was responsible for assisting the French to re-conquer Phnom Penh, the capital of the ancient kingdom of Cambodia. Here too Indian troops under British command were used to "restore order". An angry protest was made by Pandit Nehru, who said in a speech to the All-India People's Conference on January 1, 1946:

"We have watched British intervention there with growing anger, shame and helplessness that Indian troops should thus be used for doing Britain's dirty work against our friends who are fighting the same fight as we are . . ."

Since then India has become independent and Britain's imperialist crimes have been forgiven and forgotten by the Indians. Not, however, by the Khmer people, proud still of their ancient Hindu civilisation. When Gordon Walker visited Phnom Penh on his South-East Asia "Peace Mission", Prince Sihanouk refused to see him because he was coming "on an errand from the imperialists".

For all the peoples of Indo-China Britain's record as an imperialist power has yet to be wiped out by acts of genuine recompense. There have been times during the last twenty years when the Vietnamese were able to think that Britain was acting as a friend of their friends, but there have been other times—and the past three years have been amongst them, when the Vietnamese have had forcible reminders of those September days in 1945 when Britain acted as the friends of their enemies.

A considered judgment on Britain's role at that time has been given by Dr. B. S. N. Murti, who was Deputy-Secretary-General of the International Control Commission for Vietnam from 1954 to 1957. He writes: "It is surprising to find a Labour Government, at a time when they were already committed to freeing India and Burma, signing an agreement with the French on October 9, recognising French civil administration as the only one entitled to direct non-military forces south of the 16th parallel. However, it was the

British who reinstalled the discredited French authority south of the 16th parallel, thereby making themselves responsible for the war which followed in Vietnam. (*Vietnam Divided*, see Bibliography.)

Dr. Murti expresses surprise that it should have been a *Labour* Government which acted in this way, but as recent events have proved once again, Labour Governments have a habit of carrying on the foreign and imperial policies laid down by their Conservative predecessors. It was not for nothing that Winston Churchill welcomed the appointment of Ernest Bevin as Labour's Foreign Secretary, in place of Hugh Dalton, who had hoped to get the post.

Whoever was primarily responsible, however, war certainly did follow the re-entry of the French (and the Nationalist Chinese) into Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. It did not begin in the way described in a background paper issued by the Foreign Office in May, 1965, for the information of Members of Parliament—presumably with the authority of Mr. Michael Stewart. According to this paper, "a convenient date" from which to commence the narrative of the war is a "massacre" of French forces and civilians by the Viet Minh forces (People's Army of Vietnam) in December 1945. More authoritative accounts, for example the one given by Major O'Ballance in *The Indo-China War, 1945-54* (*V. Bib.*) mark the landing of General Leclerc in Saigon, early in October 1945, with a substantial French force consisting of one armoured and two infantry regiments and a commando battalion, as the effective beginning of the French bid to re-assert their authority in Vietnam by military force.

General Leclerc ruthlessly swept through the cities and towns south of the 16th parallel, ousting the political representatives of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the small armed units of the National Unity Party, the Viet Minh and the Buddhist sects from Saigon, the towns of "Cochin China", and the coastal towns of Annam south of the 16th parallel.

In the meantime Chiang Kai Shek had sent in small forces to garrison Hanoi, Haiphong, Hué and the other towns north of the 16th parallel. The Chinese made no attempt to interfere with Ho Chi Minh's Government, apart from suggesting one or two changes in personnel to satisfy the non-Communists.

Finding Ho Chi Minh virtually protected by Chiang, the French had to resort to political manoeuvring, conducted partly by their

High Commissioner in Saigon, Admiral d'Argenlieu, and partly by the Government in Paris. D'Argenlieu tried to persuade Chiang to admit General Leclerc's forces into northern Vietnam and then withdraw his own. While these negotiations were going on De Gaulle resigned (in January, 1946) and the leftist popular-front government which followed took up negotiations with Ho Chi Minh for Vietnamese independence within the French Union. On March 6, 1946, General Sainteny, on behalf of the French Government, signed an agreement with Ho Chi Minh, granting independence within the Union, subject to the retention of small French forces in Vietnam for a period of five years. At the same time the French signed an agreement with Chiang, providing for the withdrawal of all Chinese troops by March 31.

All looked now well set for a peaceful settlement of the Vietnam question, but Ho Chi Minh was to be cheated of political victory for the second time. Admiral d'Argenlieu took advantage of the agreement between the French Government and Chiang Kai Shek to send Leclerc's military forces over the 16th parallel towards Hanoi and Haiphong. On the other hand he refused to admit the political representatives of the D.R.V. back into Saigon and the other cities south of the parallel. After some fruitless conferences at Dalat with Vo Nguyen Giap, d'Argenlieu set up a "free republic" in Cochin China, with a government in Saigon headed by pro-French Vietnamese merchants and professional people. Ho Chi Minh went to Fontainebleau in July and tried for three months to persuade the French Government to honour the agreement signed by Sainteny and to call d'Argenlieu to order. The French tried to argue that they had never intended the agreement to include Cochin-China, which the right-wing and the military leaders persisted in regarding as a colony.

The best Ho Chi Minh could get at Fontainebleau was a *modus vivendi* on economic and cultural affairs, a cease-fire agreement and a nominal re-affirmation of the Sainteny Agreement. Within days of his return to Hanoi, however, French troops began to occupy towns in the North, and on October 15, 1946, they tried to take over the Haiphong Customs buildings. This direct infringement of the sovereignty of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam was the real *casus belli* and within a few weeks the long war of liberation was on again. It ended, after nearly eight years of fierce and cruel fighting, with the surrender of General de Castries to General Giap at Dien Bien Phu.

CHAPTER THREE

The Americans Take Over

"The Communist victory in China started a chain of reactions which pushed the French from one position to another, from colonialism to anti-communism."

B. S. N. MURTI, *Vietnam Divided.*

Legend has it that when General de Castries surrendered, with the bulk of the French High Command, to the Commander-in-Chief of the Vietnam People's Army, he asked: "Which military academy were you trained at?" General Vo Nguyen Giap replied: "At the Law School in the French University of Hanoi".

Like his colleagues in the D.R.V. Government Giap was first and all the time a political leader. He had no formal military training, but he had an acute, fast-working analytical brain, which his French tutors had trained him to use for the gathering and assimilation of accurate factual information, for the swift appreciation of a situation, and the planning of campaigns to outwit and defeat an opponent. He would have made a brilliantly successful advocate, but he chose instead to associate himself with his people's struggle to overthrow the French colonialists. He became a school teacher, using the opportunity to acquaint himself with the way of life and thought of the Vietnamese peasants, and helping them towards literacy and political understanding. Meanwhile he continued his studies of the French Revolution, noting that the decisive element in the overthrow of the Ancien Régime was the mobilisation of the common people to drown the Army and the militia in "a sea of humanity".[1] He quickly realised that revolutionary war, civil war, guerrilla war and even full-scale military campaigns of the Napoleonic type were all incidental elements of an essentially political struggle. The overriding purpose was not to assert the supremacy of military power, but to conquer, maintain and use political power for the benefit of the people. He saw too, or learned later from his closest colleagues, Ho Chi Minh, Pham Van Dong and Troong Chinh, that Napoleon's fatal mistake was to lose contact with the masses of the French people, and to substitute his own personal aims and ambitions for their collective ones. Waterloo was the end product of paranoia and exclusive concentration on "gloire militaire".

Major O'Ballance, who describes Giap as "one of the Great Captains of history", attributes the Diem Bien Phu victory to seven factors:

"Communist mass-indoctrination.
Singleness of purpose.
United and continuous leadership.
Ruthlessness.
Good intelligence.
Good planning.
Support from Red China". (See Bibliography.)

Three words ("indoctrination", "ruthlessness", "Red") reveal the author's political prejudices, but if less highly-coloured words are substituted for them, we can get near to a true appreciation. Obviously the key factor is the second, "singleness of purpose", because it is this which makes possible enthusiastic and intelligent mass-support, united collective leadership, accurate intelligence about the movements of the enemy, soundly-based planning and the thorough and determined pursuit of politico-military campaigns.

We saw in Chapter I how this singleness of purpose was achieved and what were its essential elements. It has dominated the whole of the internal aspect of the struggle of the peoples of Indo-China for the past fifty years and still dominates it today. The period between 1946 and the 1954 Conference on Indo-China must be seen as one phase of that struggle, providing a model for the subsequent phases which developed out of the breakdown of the Geneva Settlement.

Before we arrive at the Geneva Conference table, however, we must briefly survey the events which brought to it the representatives of five Great Powers, of Laos and Cambodia and two rival regimes in Vietnam, with Indians, Canadians, Poles, Laotian princes and the Free Khmers hovering in the background or haunting the corridors.

From the moment that the French decided to destroy the D.R.V. and to suppress the Viet Minh with armed force they worked on a combined political-military strategy of their own devising, without heeding the well-meaning advice of their American and British allies. Their military forces drove the D.R.V. out of the principal cities and towns of the former Cochin-China colony, including Saigon, the central coastal strip, including the former imperial

capital Hué, and the Red River Delta Area, including Haiphong and Hanoi. They then set about establishing a rival political regime, based at first on Saigon and Hué. For some time the French High Commissioners tried to preserve Cochin-China as a colony, or at least as an area in which France would continue to enjoy special military and commercial privileges. This manoeuvre alarmed the Americans, who were still hoping to establish a reputation in Asia as the champions of freedom from colonial rule. Under American pressure the French agreed in principle to concede independence within the French Union to the whole of Vietnam, though still with the special privileges which they were seeking to retain in other parts of the former French Empire, including Laos, Cambodia, Tunisia and Morocco. (The British Conservative Commonwealth Secretary, Mr. Duncan Sandys, was later to copy the French model in Malaysia and Southern Arabia, with equally disastrous results.)

Having found some right-wing Vietnamese protégés to form a "National Union Front" and set up a rival government in Saigon, the French had now to face the problem of getting it legitimised and recognised by their allies. Both the British and the American governments pointed out that the only person who could make an honest woman of the French protégé was the "Emperor" Bao Dai, who after serving for a few months as Political Counsellor to Ho Chi Minh, had returned to Hong Kong to enjoy a long rest from wearisome politics. He must be persuaded to revoke his abdication, proclaim himself Emperor again, denounce his agreement with Ho Chi Minh, and then transfer his "authority" to a new "Government of Vietnam".

Bao Dai, however, proved awkward, and decided that he was in a strong position to bargain for a high price. He transferred his "court" to the French Riviera, whither Truman's special envoy, William Bullitt, pursued him from Hong Kong. Complicated negotiations went on for nearly two years, and the D.R.V. took advantage of the political rivalries between its enemies to seek international recognition by becoming a member of the United Nations. Although no other political regime in Vietnam had any claim to independence, legitimacy or effective authority, the application of the D.R.V. was blocked by the Western Powers, who at that time (November, 1948) could always command an obedient majority in the United Nations.

Eventually, on June 14, 1949, Bao Dai double-crossed everybody

by proclaiming himself Emperor again and announcing that, at some unspecified date, there would be a referendum in Vietnam at which the people would decide whether they wanted a monarchy or a republic. Pham Van Dong, trained like Giap as a lawyer, was quick to see the political advantage to be gained from the blundering diplomacy of the Americans. Elected as Vice-President of the D.R.V. on August 7, 1949, he announced to the whole world that Vietnam became a Republic on September 2, 1945, and that Bao Dai's unilateral reversal of his abdication had no validity in international law. Moreover the only legitimate republican government of Vietnam was the one proclaimed on that date and subsequently endorsed as such by the people in free elections. On this firm basis in law and fact, Pham Van Dong asked for international recognition of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

This political stroke was well-timed, because vast reinforcements of political support were now on their way from the Communist bloc (or Socialist camp). Mao Tse Tung's Long March had reached its goal, and Chiang Kai Shek's armies were melting away or pouring over China's frontiers as demoralised refugees. On October 1, 1949, the Chinese People's Republic was proclaimed in Pekin, and on January 19, 1950, Mao Tse Tung recognised the D.R.V. as an independent sovereign state. A fortnight later the U.S.S.R. followed suit, and within a few more days the other Communist countries joined in. The D.R.V. suddenly found itself enjoying open recognition and support from countries representing two-fifths of the population of the world.

The Western Powers, caught on the wrong foot, were compelled to react quickly by recognising some alternative or other in Vietnam. On February 7, four days after the last Communist country had thrown its weight into the scales on the side of the D.R.V., Britain and America recognised something which, for the want of a better term, they called "the State of Vietnam". The term was an intentionally ambiguous one, because there was at that moment no Government which Britain, America and France could all agree on recognising, and certainly none which could have any claim to international recognition on the grounds that it exercised political authority over a substantial proportion of the country. In fact, at this time, the D.R.V. had not only established a clear claim to legitimacy, but it was also in practice exercising political authority over three-quarters of the territory and more than half of the population of Vietnam.

It was the Americans who came to the rescue in this dilemma, by reviving the old concept of *state* authority which had prevailed throughout most of Europe until the French Revolution. Prior to 1789, and for some time afterwards, the European chancelleries recognised only states and dynastic rulers who owned them as their personal property; governments were merely the ruler's advisers (the King's Ministers) and the idea of recognising a government simply did not exist. After the successful American and French Revolutions, however, it became a matter of practical necessity to recognise republican governments elected or thrown up by the people of a country as the qualified corporate bodies with which international negotiations could be conducted and treaties and agreements signed.

At first sight it seems surprising that the Americans, who pioneered democratic republican government in the Western world, should now seek to shift the basis of the international recognition of sovereign independent nationhood back to the autocratic principles of eighteenth century Europe. The explanation is that they had a very pragmatic reason for doing so. Chiang Kai Shek, driven out of the Chinese mainland, had set himself up in Taiwan (Formosa), and was claiming continued recognition as the ruler of China. His claim was backed in the United States by the powerful China Lobby, who had done well out of supplying munitions of war to Chiang, and hoped to do even better if he could be induced to keep up the fight with the new Communist Government. On all currently accepted international practice, which was followed by the British Labour Government a fortnight *before* the Chinese People's Republic recognised the D.R.V., recognition should have been transferred from Chiang to the C.P.R. The State Department, now headed by John Foster Dulles in place of the liberal-minded Lincoln White, solved the dilemma by recognising Chiang as the Head of the State of China—a standpoint to which they have stubbornly held ever since with disastrous consequences for world peace.

This convenient unilateral revision of international law was promptly applied to Vietnam, where the United States managed to induce Britain and Australia to fall into line and recognise the temporarily-restored Emperor Bao Dai as the Head of the State of Vietnam.

A few months later, on June 25, 1950, the Korean War broke out. It was to lead to a complete upheaval in power relationships in Asia

and the Western Pacific.

The repercussions in Vietnam revealed themselves almost simultaneously with the opening of Macarthur's drive to the Yalu River. On July 15, 1950, an American military mission arrived in Saigon and within a month American war material began to arrive in a constantly expanding stream, to support the French war effort in Vietnam and Laos. It was not long before the Americans were attempting to advise the French on both military and political strategy. The French were, however, already suspicious of American intentions and preferred to accept American military aid while ignoring their advice. As American intentions in the Pacific became clearer with their open backing of Chiang Kai Shek and the movements of the Seventh Fleet along the China coast, the French tried more and more to pursue a line of their own. Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam were all offered independence within the French Union, although in each country the French bargained with those sections of the nationalist parties which were willing to make special military and economic concessions to France which amounted to restrictions on their internal sovereignty. By the end of 1953 they had reached an agreement with King Norodom in Cambodia and established a right-wing Royalist Government in Laos.

The political authority of the Royal Laotian Government extended, however, only over the Mekong Valley area adjacent to the frontier with Thailand, i.e., from Luang Prabang, through Vientiane to Savannakhet. The Province of Sam Neua adjoining northern Vietnam and the upland strip running right down the frontier with Vietnam as far as Cambodia, remained obstinately under the control of the left-wing Pathet Lao forces.

In Vietnam itself the French endeavoured, without success, to establish a stable political regime in Saigon, to which they hoped the Emperor Bao Dai could be persuaded to hand over his powers. Bao Dai preferred to nominate a succession of "Prime Ministers" while continuing to bargain with the French for the substance of Vietnamese independence.

Meanwhile, on the military front, the French set in motion the Navarre Plan[2] The military aspect of this plan consisted of consolidating the coastal and delta areas around Hanoi-Haiphong in the north, Hué and Danang in the centre, and Saigon-Go Cong in the south, building up large bodies of troops and massive stocks of war material in these areas, and then making massive drives into the

rural areas in which the Viet Minh had taken refuge. Simultaneously the French planned to send a substantial force from Luang Prabang into northern Laos and then into northern Vietnam in order to seal off the frontier with Communist China and make an out-flanking move against the Viet Minh forces in that area. It was this plan which met its doom at the battle of Dien Bien Phu. The strategy worked out by General Giap and his colleagues during the autumn of 1953 was essentially a simple one. The enemy were to be allowed to concentrate their forces at Dien Bien Phu, a key junction of the mountain roads between China, Laos and north Vietnam, and were then to be surrounded and sealed off from reinforcements. At the same time Viet Minh forces around the Hanoi Delta area, in the central uplands and in the southern delta around Saigon, were to make harrassing attacks towards the French bases in order to keep them pinned down. A vital part of the plan involved the co-operation of the Pathet Lao forces in making drives towards the French positions at Luang Prabang and Savannakhet. The whole plan was so successful that by the time the Geneva Conference on Indo-China opened on May 4, 1954, the balance of military power throughout the north and centre, and in the rural areas of the south, was decisively in favour of the People's Army of Vietnam.

CHAPTER FOUR

The 1954 Geneva Conference

"The Chinese, and to a lesser extent the Russians, have all along suspected that the Americans intend to intervene in Indo-China whatever arrangements we try to arrive at here [at Geneva]. The Chinese also believe that the Americans plan hostilities against them. These reports [of U.S. military plans] could help to convince them that they are right, and I do not accept the United States argument that the threat of intervention will incline them to compromise."

SIR ANTHONY EDEN, in a report to Winston Churchill, May 15, 1954, quoted in *Memoirs, 1951-57.*

The first initiative for the 1954 Geneva Conference came from an Asian country—India. Nehru had never been happy about the involvement of the United Nations in the American War in Korea, and it was indeed he who prompted Attlee to fly to Washington when General Macarthur was trying to force a show-down with Communist China. At the same time he withdrew Indian support for the "United Nations" war effort in Korea and formed a Committee of Non-Aligned Nations which negotiated with both sides for a cease fire and eventually an Armistice. This left the two Korean parties back where they were before the war started: facing each other on opposite sides of the 38th parallel. This was a solution which satisfied no one but the Americans, and possibly the Russians, so Nehru then proposed a Peace Conference of the interested parties with the aim of reaching a definitive and durable political settlement.

This idea was taken up by the Foreign Ministers of the "Big Four" (U.S.A., U.S.S.R., Britain and France) when they met in Berlin on January 25, 1954, to try to compose their acute differences over Germany. Meeting under the shadow of Dulles' famous "massive retaliation" speech (January 12, 1954) they agreed to call a 14-nation Conference on Korea at Geneva and, following a suggestion made by Anthony Eden, to find an opportunity to have informal discussions about the situation in Indo-China. Dulles was incensed by this proposal and retorted by making a statement on March 29, in which he specifically applied his "massive re-

taliation" threat to the situation in South-East Asia. He declared that the imposition of the political system of Russia and its Chinese Communist allies on South-East Asia would be a major threat to the whole free world. "The U.S.A. feels," he said, "that the possibility should not be passively accepted but should be met by united action".

This menacing statement was followed up by discussions with France, Britain and America's Anzus partners (Australia and New Zealand), with the publicly declared objective of creating an organisation in South-East Asia for collective action against the Communist threat. These discussions were eventually to crystallise in the creation of the South-East Asia Treaty Organisation, formed on the basis of the Treaty signed at Manila on September 21, 1954.

Signature of the Treaty came too late, however, for Dulles to implement his full plan, which was to secure the collective backing of the Western and Australasian Powers for his proposal to demonstrate American power in Asia by dropping atom bombs, and possibly a hydrogen bomb or two, on selected Chinese cities. Public justification for this monstrous action was to be founded on the dressing up of some very modest Chinese military aid to the Viet Minh into an allegation that the latter's successful counter-offensive against the French was wholly sustained, directed and instigated by the Chinese Communists.

The British Government, which knew from its own intelligence sources that U.S. aid to the French was nine times greater than Chinese aid to the Viet Minh (see Bibliography), took sharp issue with Dulles' whole reading of the South-East Asian situation, and proposed, as an alternative to the Dulles' Plan, what Eden called "an Asian Locarno". This would accept the Eurasian Communist Bloc, comprising Soviet Asia and Communist China, as impregnable, with a buffer area comprising India, Burma, Indo-China, Siam, Malaya and Indonesia separating the Communist Asian bloc from the outer Pacific circle based on the U.S.A., the Philippines, Australasia and Britain's possessions East of Suez. In this scheme Vietnam and Laos, bordering China, would be accepted as pro-Communist neutrals, Siam and Malaya as pro-Western neutrals, and the others as non-aligned neutrals.

The Eden Plan was acceptable to India, who promised to recommend it to China, with whom she then enjoyed close and friendly relations. It was not, at first, acceptable to France, who saw in it

a typical British scheme to oust them from their spheres of influence, while Britain retained hers. Dulles played on these French fears, and made a direct offer to rescue them from their now hopeless position at Dien Bien Phu by dropping nuclear weapons on South China. But for this last desperate throw it was now too late. French public opinion had grown weary of the "sale guerre" in Indo-China, and there was a sudden revulsion in favour of cutting losses and pulling out. French Prime Ministers rose and fell in quick succession until one was found—Mendès-France—who was prepared to face up to the realities of the situation and get the French out of the mess into which, since 1950, they had been pushed by the Americans with so little result for all their suffering and agonies of conscience.

What finally brought the British and French together against the Americans was the reaction of the non-aligned Asian countries to Dulles' waving of the big nuclear stick. Their feelings were powerfully voiced by Pandit Nehru in a solemn statement to the Indian Parliament on April 24, at a time when the 14 nations were already at Geneva discussing the problem of Korea.

Nehru now insisted that the Indo-China question should be dealt with as a matter of urgency at the Geneva Conference, and put forward specific proposals for a cease fire, to be accompanied by negotiations for a political settlement. To be effective, the negotiations both for the cease fire and the political settlement must take place between representatives of the parties actually in conflict, i.e., France and her Associated States on the one side and Viet Minh on the other.

In the light of later events, and especially in the context of the various attempts made to get peace negotiations going during 1964 and 1965, it is interesting to note that Nehru called upon all five of the interested Great Powers to give specific undertakings as their contribution to a settlement. All five, including France, he said, must undertake to recognise the complete and unqualified independence of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. Britain, China, America and the Soviet Union must enter into a solemn non-intervention agreement, pledging themselves not to supply arms, troops or military aid to any of the parties in conflict within any of the three states of Indo-China.

Nehru's proposals did, in fact, form the basis of the agreements which emerged from the Geneva Conference, just as his proposals

for the composition of the conference were eventually accepted by all the parties, though not without protest on the part of some of them. The essential principles were, however, in the process of bargaining clouded over with compromises which were later to be skilfully used by those who sought to undo what was achieved at Geneva. These compromises, based in the main on a retreat from both principles and political realism into the old world of power politics and political expediency, were the product of a fundamental conflict between the long-term aims of the major powers.

By the time the Conference held its first plenary session on May 8, there was already, thanks to the intervention of Nehru and his envoy Krishna Menon, a large area of agreement between Britain, China and the Soviet Union on the broad lines of a South-East Asia settlement. It was a settlement which neither France nor the United States were prepared to accept.

The French position was a complex one. On the one hand they were bound by their agreement with the United States, embodied in the Navarre Plan, under which they had obtained substantial military aid in return for a pledge to fight the Communists in Indo-China. On the other hand, they were still trying to salvage something out of the wreckage of their military defeat at the hands of the People's Army of the D.R.V. and their Pathet Lao allies in Laos. Unfortunately for them the political situation in Vietnam was as chaotic as the military one. Bao Dai had not succeeded in organising an anti-communist front—indeed he hardly seemed to be trying. When the Geneva Conference opened the only stable political authority was that of the D.R.V., which controlled most of the North and centre and large parts of the rural areas in the south. Bao Dai had nominated a Governor for the north, put the Queen Mother in charge of the centre, and established his own "National Government" at Dalat, 200 miles north-east of Saigon. Saigon itself was a maze of warring political parties and Buddhist private armies, some anti-communist, some anti-colonialist (i.e., anti-French), some neutralist nationalist, and some looking to the Americans to rescue them from the sinking ship.

As the situation worsened, the French, under Prime Minister Laniel, decided to come to terms with Bao Dai, and grant full independence within the French Union to his nominee as Prime Minister, Prince Buu Loc. It was at this point that Dulles decided to act. He saw that if the French were going to pull out of Vietnam

and transfer their political sovereignty to independent Vietnamese nationalists, it would not be long before they came to terms with the much stronger forces under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh. The only way to save the situation was for the Americans to step in with a political protégé of their own, who could be relied upon to fight the Communists with American military backing, as Syngman Rhee had done in Korea.

The American nominee was a northern Catholic of the aristocratic Ngo family, brother of the Bishop of Hué, who had studied the American democratic system at a Catholic college in New Jersey. The French were told that if they wished to retain any influence in Vietnam they must order Bao Dai to dismiss Buu Loc and appoint Ngo Dinh Diem as Prime Minister.

This manoeuvre was carried out during an adjournment of the Geneva Conference—on June 17, one week after what was to be the last Plenary Session before the final Session on July 21. Three weeks later Bao Dai abdicated for the second time and handed over the sovereignty of the "State of Vietnam" to Diem, who thereupon nominated himself President, Prime Minister and Minister of Defence. President Eisenhower had privately assured Diem of full American military and economic backing, and this was confirmed in a letter which was made public after the two conferences—at Geneva and at Manila—were well out of the way.

In pursuing their own policy in Indo-China the Americans were virtually treating the Geneva Conference as though it had no significance. Indeed Dulles had stormed out of the Conference at an early stage, leaving his assistant Bedell Smith to conduct the American case. Faced with this display of American unilateralism, Anthony Eden resolved to hammer out an agreement to which the other Great Powers—France, China and the Soviet Union—would be ready to adhere. In reaching this conclusion he was assisted by Mendès-France, who had accepted the French Premiership on the understanding that he would accept the full consequences of France's military and political defeat in Indo-China. This meant conceding full independence and sovereignty to Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, and leaving them to settle their internal quarrels amongst themselves. The French High Command was instructed to conclude cease-fire agreements direct with the Viet Minh and Pathet Lao, and to ignore the protests of the representative of the State of Vietnam, Tran Van Do.

Tran Van Do was in a weak position, because he was not regarded as the representative of a belligerent party and the two Conference Chairmen—Eden and Molotov—allowed him no voice in the closed discussions which drafted the Agreement for the Ending of Hostilities. In the political discussions which also went on in private and closed sessions he was indeed accepted as the official representative of the State of Vietnam, of which he was Foreign Minister, but the switch of political authority engineered by Dulles left him, by the end of the Conference, in the position of having to look to Bedell Smith for his instructions.

By contrast the Democratic Republic of Vietnam was in a strong position. They were represented in the cease-fire talks by their Vice-Minister of Defence, Ta Quang Buu, acting on behalf of the C.-in-C. of the People's Army of Vietnam (P.A.V.N.), General Giap, and in the political talks by their Vice-President, Pham Van Dong. Moreover, although Britain and France gave nominal recognition to the "State of Vietnam" as the sovereign political authority for the whole country, they could not have any great confidence in American nominees who clearly possessed extremely little *de facto* authority. The Democratic Republic of Vietnam, on the other hand, enjoyed the full recognition and backing of China and the Soviet Union, was clearly an independent Sovereign power, and exercised *de facto* authority over between one-half and two thirds of the country.

Indeed, so popular had Ho Chi Minh and his followers become through their staunch fight for independence that all Western Intelligence sources agreed in forecasting that he would win with a four-to-one majority in any free electoral contest with Ngo Dinh Diem. It was this Western estimate of the political balance of forces in Vietnam which led to the final break at the Geneva Conference between Britain and France on the one side and the United States on the other. With the help of Krishna Menon, acting on Nehru's instructions as mediator and conciliator, the differences between the Franco-British group and the Sino-Soviet group were quickly ironed out, and the United States was left politically isolated in the circle of the Great Powers. It then became a comparatively easy matter to bring the various Cambodian groups together under King Norodom Sihanouk, and to draft an agreement for the unification of the rival military and political forces in Laos, under a neutralist Prime Minister nominated by the Royal Laotian Government.

Vietnam proved less tractable. Pham Van Dong, representing the

Democratic Republic of Vietnam, insisted that his country should be treated in the same way as Cambodia and Laos; that is to say as a fully independent state under a single sovereign government. With Chinese and Russian support, he argued that since September 2, 1945, the D.R.V. had been the only legitimate government of the country, that France had re-imposed her power by military force, and that the defeat and withdrawal of France meant that full power must return to the D.R.V. The argument was unassailable in international law and was reinforced by the *de facto* political situation, which showed that at least four-fifths of the people of the country supported the D.R.V. The practical consequences of this argument were, however, too embarrassing for either Britain or France to be able to accept it without further ado.

Both Britain and France were committed to joint sponsorship, with the Americans and the Australians, of a political entity called "the State of Vietnam". Now that Bao Dai had abdicated again, transferring his powers to Diem, there was every prospect that the State would soon become a Republic, with a Republican Government which the Foreign Office and the Quai d'Orsay could accept as a sovereign authority formed in accordance with contemporary international law and practice. Moreover, in pragmatic terms, neither Britain nor France could afford the complete split with America and Australia which would certainly ensue if the Conference came out for recognition of the D.R.V. as the sole, sovereign authority in Vietnam. It therefore became necessary to devise a compromise which would enable the Americans to make a face-saving gesture while they adjusted themselves to the new political realities in Asia. Thus was born the idea of a temporary partition of Vietnam, on Korean lines, into an Eastern and a Western sphere of influence.

The next problem was where to fix the dividing line. The French, now anxious to contain American influence in Vietnam into as small a space as possible, proposed that Diem's authority should be restricted to the old colonial area of Cochin-China, with Saigon as his capital. The Foreign Office, ever looking for historical precedents, proposed a division much further north, along the occupation line agreed with Chiang Kai Shek in 1945, at the 16th parallel. This would have the political and strategic advantage of separating the strong communist areas of northern Vietnam and northern Laos from Cambodia which, under the influence of King Norodom Siha-

nouk, was showing too much sympathy with Asian Socialism for the liking of the British traditionalists. At this point, however, Tran Van Do, prompted by the Americans, suddenly asserted himself and demanded that, if there was to be any temporary division at all, it should be at the 19th or better still, the 20th parallel, so confining the Vietnamese communists to the area of eighteenth century Chinese influence in Tonkin.

It was now the turn of Pham Van Dong to revolt against a settlement which was being concocted over the heads of the Vietnamese. He roundly declared that the imperialists were engaged in a plot to cheat the Democratic Republic of Vietnam of the rights and powers which it had won by throwing off the French colonial yoke, and that the Vietnamese would fight to the death against any partition solution, however temporary it was represented as being. In this stand he was firmly supported by the Pathet Lao representatives outside the Conference rooms, and by Chou en-Lai inside. It now looked as though the Indo-China section of the Conference might break up, like the Korean section, without finding any solution at all.

France, Britain and the Soviet Union were, however, all determined that this should not happen. The two co-Chairmen, Eden and Molotov, put their heads together in private, and came up with a typically British practical compromise. The dividing line would be neither in the north nor in the south, but at the geographical mid-point of the country, along the narrow waistline of the 17th parallel. It was not to be a political division of the country, but a purely temporary military one, north and south of which the two belligerent parties in Vietnam—the People's Army of Vietnam and the French High Command, would regroup their military forces. While the regrouping was going on Ho Chi Minh and Ngo Dinh Diem would restrict the exercise of political authority to their respective zones, and this temporary division of political sovereignty would be brought to an end within two years at the latest by the holding of nation-wide elections for the establishment of a single government for the whole country. The execution of the political aspects of this plan, including the elections, would be supervised by the International Control Commission which was to supervise the execution of the cease-fire Agreements in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam and which had already agreed to supervise the political aspects of the Agreements on Laos and Cambodia. Chou en-Lai

suggested to Eden that this supervisory commission should consist of India, Canada and Poland. The proposal met with general approval.[1]

Pham Van Dong at first objected that the proposed settlement would put the D.R.V. at a disadvantage, since they would be compelled to withdraw something like 100,000 Viet Minh troops and guerrillas, the overwhelming majority of them southerners, into the north, while the slender Vietnamese forces supporting Diem or the French, would have to make no withdrawal at all. He was, however, reconciled by personal undertakings from Eden and Molotov that they would insist on the holding of the elections, and that both Britain and the Soviet Union would recognise the Government which emerged from them as the sole legitimate government of the whole country.

Having at last got the agreement of all the parties, with the exception of Tran Van Do, who carried no political weight, and Bedell Smith, who was merely acting as an observer for Dulles and Eisenhower, Eden decided to call it a day. Together with Molotov, he summoned the Conference members to meet on July 20, in private session and placed before them the completed texts of the three Agreements for the Ending of Hostilities and the proposed Final Declaration of the Conference. He announced that the belligerent parties had already reached full agreement on the texts of the Agreements and the text of the Final Declaration. The other parties, i.e., Britain, Russia, China, America and Tran Van Do, would study the Final Declaration overnight and announce their attitude towards it at the final Public Plenary Session, to be held next day. This is why July 20 has ever since 1954 been celebrated as a Day of Liberation and Rejoicing in the north, and as a Day of National Shame by Ngo Dinh Diem and his many successors in the south.

What took place next day is of such importance for the historical record that I have reproduced in Appendix A the full text of the individual statements made by the members of the Conference, together with all 13 clauses of the Final Declaration and the more important Articles of the Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities in Vietnam. They are taken from the Foreign Office White Paper (Cmd. No. 9239) issued at the end of July, 1954, with an Introductory Note which even at that early date began the process of belittling the importance of the Final Declaration of the Conference.

The Note says:

> "These negotiations (between June 10 and July 20) resulted in the signature of Agreements on the Cessation of Hostilities by the Belligerents. At its final meeting on July 21, 1954, the Conference took note of these Agreements and of various individual declarations."

The Conference did not merely "take note" of the Agreements. A reference to the text of the Final Declaration shows that while seven of its Clauses "take note of" or "express satisfaction at" Agreements entered into or declarations made by the belligerents, the other six clauses are *decisions* of the Conference as a collective international agency, acting in accordance with the procedure for regional agencies laid down in Article 52 of the United Nations Charter. It was precisely on this legal basis that U Thant, as Secretary-General of the United Nations, advised in 1964 that the Vietnam problem should be dealt with by "the appropriate regional agency for the pacific settlement of this local dispute"—the 1954 Geneva Conference.

These decisions of the Conference are recorded in Clauses 6, 7, 8, 9, 12 and 13, the language of which is not permissive but mandatory, and involves all the members of the Conference adhering to them. Under Article 12 each member of the Conference undertook to respect the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of the three States of Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, and to refrain from any interference in their internal affairs. For Vietnam this was the key clause of the Declaration. It defined Vietnam as one State, not two. It was already a single political entity (unity), not politically divided. As one State it was recognised as possessing the full attributes of sovereignty, including the right to be treated as an equal by all other sovereign states, and the right to settle its internal affairs without outside intervention.

There was, however, in July, 1954, a *de facto* situation in which, while the *State* of Vietnam was not divided, there were in existence two rival political authorities, each claiming sovereign political power over the whole country. Clauses 8 and 9 of the Declaration were therefore concerned with the transitional provisions which "must" be observed pending the establishment of internal political unity, including an amnesty for political opponents of the respective zonal authorities and free choice of residence for "everyone in Vietnam".

Finally, Clauses 6 and 7 laid down the conditions to be observed for the achievement "in the near future" of an internal political

settlement. The military demarcation line at the 17th parallel was explicitly declared to be provisional and it "should not in any way be interpreted as constituting a political or territorial boundary". The Conference then declared that "in order to ensure . . . that all the necessary conditions obtain for the free expression of *the national will*, general elections *shall be held* in July, 1956 . . ." under the supervision of the International Control Commission.

What was the attitude of the members of the Conference towards these mandatory clauses of the Geneva Declaration? The answer is clearly on the record. Every member of the Conference, with the exception only of Bedell-Smith and Tran Van Do, accepted the Declaration *in toto*. Anthony Eden, who was in the Chair on July 21, said: "On behalf of Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, I associate myself with the final Declaration of this Conference". Other members in turn made similar statements, a minor reservation on the delimitation of the Cambodian-Vietnam frontier being made by the Cambodian delegate, to which Pham Van Dong successfully objected. After hearing the separate declarations made by Bedell-Smith and Tran Van Do, Eden, from the Chair, declared that the Declaration could not now be amended and that it was *"the final act"* of the Conference as a whole. It was as such that it was published to the world and registered with the United Nations.

"Final act" is a recognised legal term for a collective decision binding on the participants. At various times the Foreign Office and the Quai d'Orsay have tried to evade the commitments entered into by Anthony Eden and Mendès-France, but in the end, when pressed, they have had to admit their validity in international law, while at the same time they have sought by various pretexts to wash their hands of responsibility for their implementation.

Bedell-Smith and Tran Van Do, by refusing to adhere to the Final Act, could not destroy its validity in international law, but they could and did obstruct and frustrate its execution. It is true that Bedell-Smith's carefully worded unilateral Declaration on behalf of the United States gave the appearance of accepting some of the basic principles of the collective Declaration, such as the integrity, independence and sovereignty of the State of Vietnam, but he qualified this, on Dulles' instructions, by referring to Vietnam as a "divided nation", whose unity was still to be sought at some future time through free elections held, like the Korean elections, under the

supervision of the United Nations. It had, indeed, been the policy of the United States all through the Vietnamese crisis to get the problem settled by the United Nations, which they then completely dominated, rather than by a Conference which included the representatives of governments which they did not recognise and with which they were in a state of war, such as the Chinese People's Republic and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.[2]

Bedell-Smith therefore simply "took note" of the Agreements and Clauses 1-12 of the Final Declaration, and pledged the United States merely not to try to upset them by force or the threat of force—that is to say, only by political and diplomatic means. He refused so much as to take note of Clause 13, since this would have bound the United States to take part in the Conference again if it were re-called to consider violations of the Agreements reported by the I.C.C. Dulles had no intention of using the Geneva Conference machinery again if the French or the People's Army of Vietnam violated the Agreements. He was already busy assembling a new apparatus to deal with the Communists of Indo-China; the South-East Treaty Organisation.

Bedell-Smith was therefore instructed to inform the Conference that the Americans would act as they saw fit if the belligerent parties (meaning the P.A.V.N. and the Pathet Lao) violated the Armistice Agreements, and Dulles went off to Manila to draft the Treaty which he planned to invoke when, as he fully anticipated, the Communists broke the Agreements and could be dubbed as aggressors.

The Manila Treaty was drafted and signed by the United States, Britain, France, Australia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Thailand and the Philippines. It pledged them to take action against aggression or subversion in South-East Asia.[3] Dulles wanted the Treaty to apply only to *Communist* aggression or subversion, but his allies pointed out that this would bring the Treaty into conflict with the United Nations Charter, so he had to content himself with adding a unilateral American "Understanding" to this effect. Dulles had also hoped that Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam (Saigon) could be persuaded to adhere to the Treaty, but Cambodia refused outright, saying that this would violate her neutral status, and the others followed Cambodia's example, as they had no great desire to be dragged into America's conflict with China.

Dulles was determined, however, to be able to invoke a *casus*

foederis in Indo-China, since this was precisely the area in which he had decided to build up American security positions against what he had publicly diagnosed as "Communist China's expansionist aims". As Bedell-Smith had pledged the word of the United States not to upset the Geneva Settlement by force, a pretext for American military intervention in Indo-China must be found somewhere. Dulles' solution of the dilemma was to build into the South-East Asia Treaty a Protocol extending the protective umbrella of the Treaty, and of the collective military organisation subsequently to be established, to Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam. The countries concerned were not asked if they wanted this protection, it was simply imposed on them.

Eden was compelled to swallow this because, as he revealed in his Memoirs (see Bibliography), Britain and the United States had entered *into a secret seven-point agreement* (arranged at meetings in Washington and Paris while the Geneva Conference was in progress), *to partition Vietnam for an indefinite period.* Dulles—so says Eden—had only reluctantly agreed to partition, as he was not prepared to leave the northern half of Vietnam under Communist domination. This was the real reason why the United States refused to adhere to the Final Declaration, providing for re-unification within two years.

But Eden *had* given Britain's adherence to the Declaration. He was caught, as has happened before in Britain's history, between two contradictory pledges. Dulles was therefore able to outwit Eden with a simple device: the careful choice of words which could be interpreted by each Treaty signatory to suit its own convenience. The words which finally appeared in this section of the Protocol were "the free territory under the jurisdiction of the State of Vietnam." (Foreign Office White Paper Cmd. 9282.) Eden was able to tell Parliament with a clear conscience that these words meant Vietnam south of the 17th parallel, but the United States, uncommitted to the Geneva Agreements and recognising no dividing line at the 17th parallel or anywhere else, was free to interpret them to cover any part of Vietnam which might be subsequently "liberated" from communism by the government of Ngo Dinh Diem or his successors.

Dulles was thus able to lay the foundations for the application of the Korean solution to Vietnam. From the American point of view—although from theirs alone—Vietnam was temporarily

partitioned into two halves at the 17th parallel, and the door was wide open for any subsequent extension of the authority of the anti-communist government northward until it had won back the whole country from the communists. This was in strict conformity with the Dulles Plan, which was to be applied to Vietnam, Laos, Korea, China and Germany: "Contain the Communists today; drive them back when we and our allies are stronger".

In Indo-China, however, Dulles' European allies were bound for the time being to pursue a different course, and it was the United States which had to go it alone. It was not until Eden was discredited by the disastrous Suez adventure that the American Government was ablt to begin the process of pulling Britain back into line with her anti-communist policy in Asia. Once this was fully accomplished, however, under the Presidency of Lyndon Johnson, the full advantages of Dulles' skilful drafting of the Manila Treaty were to make themselves apparent.

Meanwhile, in Britain, the signing of the Manila Treaty revived the split in the Labour Party which had been provoked by the staggering increase in defence expenditure in 1951. Aneurin Bevan, with his intuitive political sense, saw at once that the Manila Treaty would line Britain up with America against the new social forces emerging in Asia. Voicing the feelings of most of the Left, he publicly repudiated Attlee's support for the Treaty, and then resigned from the Shadow Cabinet.[4] On this occasion, however, Harold Wilson did not follow his lead as he had done in 1951. On the contrary, he stepped into the position which Aneurin Bevan had vacated, thus putting himself in line for the eventual succession to the Leadership of the Party.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Execution of the Geneva Settlement

In May, 1957, a small group of Labour M.P.s—Harold Davies, Lena Jeger, Ian Mikardo, the late John Baird and myself, paid a visit to Vietnam. In the light of later events this might well be described as the first Davies Mission to Vietnam. Most of us belonged to the left wing of the Labour Party and had co-operated in the Peace with China Campaign which developed out of the attempt made by the Americans to convert the Korean War into a war with the People's Republic of China. Harold Davies made an ideal leader because he had done a considerable amount of research work on the evolution of American Pacific strategy under Truman and John Foster Dulles. He was one of the first members of the Labour Party to detect the imperialist character of American intervention in Korea and bring to light evidence which was buried at the time under the general chorus of approval for what was officially described in Britain and the United States as "the United Nations action to deter communist aggression". When the Americans switched their war-like activities to Indo-China and the South China Sea, Harold Davies followed closely this new form of American intervention on the Asian mainland and assiduously studied the proceedings of the Geneva Conference and the early reports of the International Control Commission for Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. One or two of us began to follow his example and were therefore well prepared to take advantage of the invitation which came to us in April 1957 from the Fatherland Front, the popular-front governing party of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

We travelled both ways via Moscow and Pekin and on the return journey two or three of us had the opportunity to see a little of the new China in and around the Pekin area, and also to have a long talk with the Chinese Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary, Chou en-Lai. I put three or four leading questions to Chou en-Lai myself and some of his answers are relevant to the theme of this book.

When I asked the Chinese leader what were the obstacles to the establishment of closer relations between China and Britain, he mentioned Taiwan and Hong Kong. On Taiwan he said that Britain appeared to be moving towards support of what was later to become known as the "two Chinas policy"—i.e., recognition of the People's Republic of China and Taiwan as two sovereign independent states both entitled to international recognition and representation in the United Nations. Of this policy Chou en-Lai said: "We can never accept it. Taiwan is an integral part of China, as even Chiang Kai Shek has always maintained. We cannot allow it to be separated from us and used as a permanent American base." It is worth recalling that the Americans had recently let it be known that they had installed rocket missiles in Taiwan with nuclear warheads.

On Hong Kong Chou en-Lai's objection was not to British retention of control over Hong Kong, but to our permitting the Americans to establish a vast Consulate there with swarms of officials who, he said, "are engaged in spreading anti-Chinese propaganda and collecting intelligence information for use against us". Neither Chou en-Lai nor his interlocutors foresaw at that time that by 1964 the Americans would be using Hong Kong as a staging base for warships of the Seventh Fleet *en route* for military operations against Vietnam.

Chou en-Lai's only specific reference to Indo-China during this discussion was when he came to develop his general view of the current international scene. He suggested that since the 1954 Geneva Conference British policy in the Far East had moved away from independence in the direction of conformity with the policies of the United States. He dated the change from the collapse of the Suez venture. His view was that the Americans had been quite content to let Britain and France go it alone in Egypt because they knew that the adventure would fail and the Americans could then step in and take over Britain's position in the Middle East. He could not understand why Sir Anthony Eden had fallen into this trap. "At the Geneva Conference," he said, "Sir Anthony was wise and farsighted. He seemed to show a genuine recognition that the peoples of Asia and Africa are on the march towards full independence and self-development and that it is better to try to understand them and come to terms with them than to seek to hold them back with the methods of old-fashioned imperialism." He added in a genuinely puzzled tone, "I don't know what happened to Sir

Anthony last autumn."

As I write this book during the summer of 1965 I recall the appropriate words with which he ended our discussion. "If Britain stands up to the Americans, when the Americans are wrong, I am quite sure that many other countries will follow your example. You will gain many friends amongst the emergent peoples of Asia and Africa. In the end the Americans will be isolated, and they will not be able to resist the pressure of world opinion. They will then be compelled to change their wrong policies."

At the time these words certainly seemed highly relevant to the situation in Vietnam as we had observed it during our four-and-a-half week stay. During this time we visited Hanoi and Saigon and parts of the countryside, and the industrial and commercial areas both in the north and the south. We talked with political leaders and foreign representatives in both capitals, with the representatives of the International Control Commission and with the ordinary people of the country.

We found that the biggest problem was the delay in the re-unification of the country. As I noted in my Diary at the time:

> The refusal of the Diem government to implement the agreement had meant that tens of thousands of families had been split up. The younger people who were in the armed forces on one side or the other and who were regrouped to the north or the south in accordance with the cease fire provisions had been separated from their parents or from their wives and children. As the years go by without re-unification, they begin to despair. In Vietnam the problem of delayed re-unification is not merely a political one, it is an intensely human one with a background of thousands of tragic family separations.

We were invited by President Ho Chi Minh to 7 a.m. breakfast in the grounds of the Palace. Here is my diary note:

> The President wastes no time with formalities or with historical or political exposition. He knows that we are friends of Vietnam and takes for granted that we know the background story. He answers questions freely. I ask him what is the top priority problem for his government.
> Ho: "The re-unification of Vietnam through free elections, in accordance with the Geneva Declaration. The north and south cannot live properly without each other. We are one people, with a common language, customs, outlook. From the human and the economic point of view unity is vital.
> W: It is now nearly a year since the date (July 20, 1956) on which the General Elections should have taken place. Do you propose to take any fresh initiative to bring about the fulfilment of the Geneva Declaration?
> Ho: Last May, in response to the request of the co-Chairmen who met in London, we stated that we were ready at any time to meet representatives of the south, to discuss arrangements for the elections. We have reiterated this several times since then. We have also proposed a meeting

with the representatives of the south to discuss the normalisation of relations (personal, economic, communications) between north and south. The south have refused every time. We are ready at any moment for such discussions. I think a new initiative can come in two ways: internally, by pressure from the people of the south who want re-unification; externally, through a recall of the Geneva Conference. We shall not use force. We can afford to be patient. Time is on our side. The ordinary people in the south are with us. In the meantime we shall consolidate our economy in the north. We are still very backward, because it is only two years since we completed the liberation of the north. (The French handed over the Haiphong-Hongay area in May, 1955.) Before that we had 15 years of foreign occupation, anti-colonial war and civil war, which ravaged our country, destroyed our agriculture and our industry. We shall no doubt make many mistakes, and we are very ready to accept advice and suggestions."

The President spoke rather wistfully about the engagements entered into by Britain at Geneva. He spoke highly of the part played by Eden at the Conference. He was hoping—perhaps against hope?—that Britain could still find some way of bringing about the fulfilment of the Geneva Declaration.

W: "What can be done towards establishing friendly relations between Britain and north Vietnam?

Ho: Trade between north Vietnam and Britain would be an important step towards the normalisation of relations. At present there are no proper relations. You have a Consul here, I think his name is Mr. Simpson. We like him personally; he is a good fellow. But we cannot recognise him officially because we do not have a Consul to represent us in London. The first step forward would be to establish proper reciprocal consular relationships. Then trade could develop and after that we could try to develop cultural relations. Our people are anxious to learn the English language, to be able to read English books, especially scientific and technical books. A knowledge of French is not enough for us; it confines us within too narrow a circle. English will introduce us to a much wider world of economic, cultural and human relations."

Later we had talks with the Indian, Polish and Canadian members of the International Control Commission, both together and separately. The I.C.C. at that time still had its headquarters in Hanoi, although they were now preparing to move to Saigon. Diem, after refusing for two years to have anything to do with the Geneva Agreements had recently given them a qualified approval and had agreed that the Commission could establish some Teams in the south.

Our talks with the I.C.C. leaders confirmed in the main the impression which we had gained from our discussions with the political leaders of the D.R.V. and our own observations in Hanoi and the north generally. The D.R.V. had complied with the terms of the Geneva Agreements on the cessation of hostilities and so had the Russians and the Chinese. The D.R.V. had co-operated

with the I.C.C. and provided full facilities for the operation of their Fixed and Mobile Teams. This had been confirmed in the first five Interim Reports made by the I.C.C. to the Russian and British co-Chairman and passed on by them to the other members of the Geneva Conference. The D.R.V. had complained to the I.C.C. that the Diem Government was persecuting and imprisoning the Viet Minh followers in the south. The I.C.C. had investigated some of these complaints and (as their reports show) had found the Diem Government guilty in some cases of the violation of the relevant articles of the Agreement. Diem had declared that the D.R.V. had persecuted the Catholics in the north and obstructed their transfer to the south. The I.C.C. members thought that there was some evidence of truth in these allegations, but that the whole thing had been vastly exaggerated by Diem for propaganda purposes. On the whole, the transfer of some 800,000 Catholics to the south had been carried out fairly smoothly. Many thousands of Catholics had apparently stayed in the north and (as we had observed ourselves) were able to worship in Catholic churches without difficulty.[1]

The main complaint of the D.R.V. was that the essential clauses of the Final Declaration providing for political re-unification under one government had not been carried out. The I.C.C. had reported on this to the co-Chairmen and had strongly urged them to take steps to ensure that this vital decision of the Geneva Conference was put into effect. We already knew that in the autumn of 1956 the Soviet Government, urged on by the D.R.V., had formally proposed a re-call of the Geneva Conference under Clause 13, to take the necessary measures to give effect to this section of the Declaration. The British Government, after consulting with President Diem and the Americans, had rejected the Soviet request on the ground that Diem had objected that his government had not accepted the Final Declaration, and that in any case free elections were not possible so long as there was a communist-dominated government in the north. The Indian and Canadian members of the Commission were hopeful that after they had moved to Saigon they would be able gradually to induce Diem to accept the Final Declaration and at last begin serious negotiations for re-unification. The Polish member was more sceptical and, as we now know, he turned out to be right. For the rest, the I.C.C. members confirmed our impression that the northern government was beginning to reconcile itself to the prospect of a few more years of separation

from the south and was beginning to prepare new economic plans based on further industrialisation of the north coupled with the achievement of self-sufficiency in food supplies including rice which in the past had been made up by the surplus rice production of the south.

After spending nearly three weeks in the north, Harold Davies, Lena Jeger and I went to the south to find out what was happening there and especially to discover what was their view of the reasons for the delay in re-unification. As the 17th parallel had already become an impassable barrier, our only way to get from Hanoi to Saigon was by flying in the I.C.C. plane over what the Americans were later to call the "Ho Chi Minh Trail"—i.e., via Vientiane, the capital of Laos, and across Cambodia into southern Vietnam.

The British Ambassador in Saigon was on leave at the time, but the Chargé d'Affaires, Mr. Etherington Smith, had arranged a good programme for us. He had not been able to persuade President Diem to receive us but Harold Davies and I had a long talk with Diem's Foreign Secretary, Mr. Vu Van Mau.

We also met the Head of the U.S. Operations Mission, Mr. Leland Burrows who, in his quiet American way, gave us the American view of what they were doing in Vietnam. Like Pyle in Graham Green's book, he was earnest, sincere and idealistic in his own way, fully convinced of the virtue of the American cause. I do not for one moment suppose, however, that he had anything to do with the rather more unpleasant activities of the C.I.A. and their contact men. He was perfectly frank about American objectives. Here are some notes of the conversation taken from my diary.

"Our object here is to hold back the communists in the north, to enable the government of the south to stabilise its position politically and economically, and to help build up a free society.

"The north is completely in the grip of the Chinese, with the Russians behind them". We told him that we had been travelling about north Vietnam for three weeks and the only Chinese or Russians we had seen were engineers and technicians working on the railway lines or helping to develop modern industries. We had certainly seen none in military uniform.

LB "I expect the military people are well concealed and even it they aren't there now, the Chinese army is only just over the frontier, ready to strike the south at any time as the Russians did in Hungary last year."

I mentioned that at Saigon airport and in Saigon itself we had seen a number of American military jeeps and U.S. officers in military uniform.

LB "That's quite different. We are here to help to maintain a free society, not to impose a communist one."

Mr. Burrows then want on to explain how in practice the Americans were helping to build up a free society in South Vietnam.

When President Diem took over in 1955 the south was in a state of anarchy and economic chaos, with peasants unable to grow rice in peace. This explained why the great rice-growing area of the south which used to feed itself, feed half of the north and still export 1 to 2 million tons of rice annually, had been unable (although no longer supplying the north) to grow enough for export until now.

U.S. aid had enabled Diem to build up an army, wipe out the Buddhist Sects and the Communist guerrillas, extend his authority over most of the country, resettle and get into productive work 300,000 of the 900,000 refugees from the north. (The South Vietnam Ministry of Information put the figure at 800,000).

The U.S. Military Aid totalled 600 million dollars in the three years 1955-57. Economic aid in the same period, including refugee resettlement, totalled only 250 millions.

We questioned Mr. Burrows about the way in which American economic aid was being used. He explained that while the American Government was anxious to make available for import American manufactures which would be of value in rebuilding the economy of the country, such as farm equipment, trucks, cars, medical supplies, etc., the private importers (Chinese and Vietnamese) preferred to buy whatever they could resell at a handsome profit. How handsome the profit was we were to discover later when we were taken on an unofficial tour of Saigon by the so-called "Socialist" Deputy, Dr. Tran Van Trai. Dr. Trai, who showed us some of his own warehouses packed to the roof with American imports, explained that he bought them from the Americans at the official exchange rate of 35 piastres to the dollar and resold them at the free market rate of 75 p. and, more often, at the black market rate of 105 p., showing a clear profit, without very much effort, of 200 per cent.

Mr. Burrows himself admitted that most of the imports were either luxury goods, non-essentials or materials unsuitable for use in a tropical country, such as corrugated iron. When I asked him why the Americans allowed their aid to be abused in this way, his reply was "You see, we are trying to build up a free society here and therefore we have to promote private enterprise and avoid state interference."

CHAPTER SIX

Revolt in Southern Vietnam

"When President Diem took over in 1955 his authority did not extend beyond the Presidential Palace".

LELAND BURROWS, Head of U.S.O.M., Saigon, May, 1957.

In Saigon we discovered why the Americans went into south Vietnam. They had six main objectives: (1) to contain the expansion of Communism at the 17th parallel; (2) to fill the military power vacuum left by the withdrawal of the French; (3) to protect the interests of the SEATO Treaty Powers in Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and "the free territory of the State of Vietnam"; (4) to prevent the execution of that part of the Geneva Agreements and Final Declaration which would have resulted in the creation of a unified government under the Presidency of Ho Chi Minh; (5) to build up in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia what they called "a free society"; (6) to establish in these countries stable political regimes on the Western model.

They succeeded in accomplishing only the second, third and fourth of these objectives. In the first, fifth and sixth they failed, as they are still failing to this day. They failed because their objectives were inherently contradictory and were based, not on international law, but on the assertion of American military power in defiance of the law.

Their "free society" was a mockery. "Freedom", as that noble Anglo-Saxon word has been re-interpreted in contemporary Americanese, means assertive individualism: the right of the individual to use his talents, money and property to win a leading place for himself and his family in the race for wealth and power. It means allowing full scope to free private enterprise, regardless of the costs and consequences to society as a whole. The only restraints are those which are necessary to maintain "law and order" and to keep political power in the hands of safe non-revolutionaries.

The task of the American Embassy and the United States Operations Mission in Saigon was to build a free society on these lines in Vietnam. Some of the social consequences of this approach were shown to us by Dr. Tran Van Trai, one-time Financial Counsellor to Bao Dai, now flourishing heartily under the joint U.S.-Diem regime. He was a "Socialist" deputy in the Saigon "National Assembly", but he explained to us that his Socialism was really "Personalism", i.e., the full, uninhibited development of the individual personality. How his own personality had benefited from American encouragement of private enterprise I have described in the previous chapter. He had laughed heartily when he showed us his over-flowing warehouses. He laughed just as heartily when he showed us the newly-built houses, reserved for government officials. His laughter was only a shade less hearty when he showed us the vast slum areas of Saigon's twin city—Cholon. I described it in my diary at the time:

> Down on the mud flats of the Saigon River there is a packed mass of "paillottes": miserable, ancient thatched huts tightly jammed together. Here there are not only no gardens, no courtyards; there is hardly space between each hut for the inhabitants to get from one to another. There are open, stinking garbage heaps at every corner. Of course, as is common in Asia, there is one standing water tap for perhaps a hundred families. But now, at 11 o'clock at night, we notice that every pipe is surrounded with a huddle of 30 or 40 children, each waiting with his kerosene tin to take home water for the family's needs for the night and next morning. "What are they waiting for?", I asked. "For the water to flow again", explained Dr. Tran. "There are a million more people in Saigon than before the war and we are near the end of the dry season. So the water is only turned on at certain hours in order to economise the supply." Half-an-hour later we saw that the taps were flowing and the gaunt-faced, heavy-eyed children were filling up for the night.
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> We saw hundreds of families sleeping in barges, go-downs and sampans. One family was sleeping, without mosquito nets, in an open home-made trailer fixed to two bicycles, while some of their children lay sleeping on the river bank uncovered, exposed to mosquitoes, flies and vermin. Everywhere people were sleeping in the streets, some with small mosquito nets over them, but many with no covering at all.

The Catholic "refugee" settlements which we visited were rather better, as the Americans had supplied special funds for them. They were in country areas, so there was more room to move. The medical care was, however, extremely primitive. The "nurses", clad in grubby habits flopping over their wrists, treated sores and dispensed medicines in a so-called hospital which was in fact a shabby, ill-equipped First Aid Centre.

It was here that one refugee whom I spoke to through an inter-

preter told me that he hoped one day to go back to the north "when it is liberated". I asked him how he thought the "Liberation" would take place. He replied: "When we have built up a National Army here in the south we shall march north and chase out the Communists."

This was not the only source from which we gained the impression that Diem's purpose in encouraging the northern Catholics to take refuge in the south was to build up his shaky political support and then stage a "liberation" drive to the north with his American-financed army. Buddhists and members of the I.C.C. to whom we talked confirmed this impression. So did Diem's new Foreign Minister, Vu Van Mau (now Ambassador of the "Republic of Vietnam" in London).

When we talked to Vu Van Mau he occupied most of the time with an immoderate tirade against the Communist north and their subversive adherents in the south. I asked him how they dealt with the subversive elements. "Under Ordonnance 6," he replied. I knew that the I.C.C. had complained that the use of Ordonnance 6 to imprison Viet Minh supporters without trial was a breach of Article 14(*c*) of the Geneva Agreement. (See Appendix A.) I asked him how he squared this with his affirmation that the Diem Government was building up a free, democratic society in the south. "Our democratic society is based on the 'droit juridique'," he explained. "For those who don't accept it we use the 'droit administratif', which does not operate through the courts of law."

An English resident in Saigon described this as sheer hypocrisy. "As far as democratic liberties are concerned the south is certainly no better than the north, but in the north they at least do something for the ordinary people, whereas here there is nothing but profiteering, speculation, corruption and gross inequality." Nor was it of any use to make scapegoats of the half million "alien Chinese" (as they were called), most of whom are not merchants but slum proletarians. Those who were getting rich quick were mainly Vietnamese.

Other political and trade union personalities to whom we talked confirmed our view that President Diem was still virtually isolated in his Presidential Palace, despite his victory in the 1956 referendum.

(The electors were asked to say "Yes" or "No" to the statement: "I depose Bao Dai and recognise Diem as Head of State." No alternative was offered.) Dr. Phan Quang Dan, leader of the Democratic Party, told us: "We have all the external trappings of a democracy, but in reality this is a nepotistic dictatorship of Diem and his brothers: the Bishop of Hué and the Head of Police and Internal Security, Ngo Dinh Nhu."

The former Foreign Secretary, Mr. Tran Van Do, who represented the "State of Vietnam" at the Geneva Conference, said: "I resigned in 1956 because Diem wanted to decide everything himself, down to the smallest details. He trusts nobody." Tran Van Do had wanted to have discussions with the northern Government in accordance with the Geneva Agreements. "Even Dulles said to me in 1955: 'There's no harm in talking. The talks could go on for years.' "

Tran Van Do is now (August, 1965) Foreign Secretary in Saigon again, but he probably understands better than he did in 1957—or 1955—who are the real masters in Saigon. The fact is that in 1955 Dulles still had to play for time because at that time hardly anyone in any part of Vietnam accepted or recognised Diem's authority. Between 1954 and 1956 southern Vietnam was in a state of complete anarchy. The militant buddhist sects—Hoa Hao, Cao Dai and Binh Xuyen—had taken control of some of the towns and parts of the countryside when the French and the Viet Minh forces pulled out. Half-a-dozen political parties sprang up—some pro-Bao Dai and some anti-Bao Dai, but none pro-Diem. Congresses and revolutionary assemblies met, debated and passed resolutions.

On October 18, 1955 Bao Dai, from Cannes, revoked the full powers which he had given to "the Roman Catholic Premier". In a proclamation to the people of Vietnam, he said: "I could no longer lend my name and my law to someone who will lure you into ruin, famine and war."

The Western Powers, who still only recognised the "State of Vietnam" were highly embarrassed when they found that there was no Head of State for their Ambassadors to be accredited to. They decided to treat Bao Dai's fourth *volte face* as an "essentially internal affair", making no difference to Vietnam's external relations with Foreign Powers. In any case, their embarrassment only lasted five days, as on October 23 the referendum was held, and on the following day the United States was able to announce that they recognised Ngo Dinh Diem as Head of State. France immediately followed suit, and so—after a decent interval to allow the results of the referendum to be officially announced—did the British

Foreign Office. On October 26 Diem declared that the "State of Vietnam" had become the "Republic of Vietnam" with himself as its President. John Foster Dulles commented that "the people of Vietnam have made their choice unmistakably clear". After ten years the Democratic Republic of Vietnam had ceased to exist in the eyes of the West, and the Republic of Vietnam had taken its place. Ten years later, in 1965, the Western Governments, including Britain, still recognise whatever regime pops up in Saigon with American blessing, as the "sole legitimate government of the Republic of Vietnam".

The Diem administration was never a real government either in law or in fact. As Mr. Murti convincingly argues in *Vietnam Divided* (see Bibliography) the only government in Vietnam which has ever had any claim to international recognition as a sovereign political authority is that of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. The "State" or "Republic" of Vietnam was from the first—and always—a fiction invented by the U.S. State Department to provide them with an agency which could invoke the Manila Treaty and invite American military protection against the Communists. The fact that America's Seato allies were forced also to recognise this legal fiction does not give it any more substance in law—although it might have been assumed that the solid support afforded to Diem by America's European, Asian and Australasian allies would in time have enabled him to acquire *de facto* authority, at least south of the 17th parallel if not north of it.

British and French influence did succeed in persuading Diem to drop his ambition of reconquering the North and to concentrate, for the time being at least, on establishing himself in the South. Dulles, too, was compelled to acknowledge the practical wisdom of this policy, especially as the adoption of a unification policy would have played into the hands of Ho Chi Minh, who was still, up to 1959 and even beyond, relying upon the execution of the Geneva Agreements by peaceful means.

From now on Western propagandists sedulously fostered the notion that there was a *de facto* partition of Vietnam. This was later to become the basis of the whole Western argument (in which all British Foreign Secretaries joined, whatever their party allegiance) that North Vietnam was an "aggressor" against South Vietnam. The legal basis of this argument is as shoddy as the evasions, prevarications and deceptions to which it was to give rise.

Even south of the 17th parallel, however, Diem never succeeded, during his nine years of personal rule, in making his political authority effective. There was, indeed, only a short period of two years, from mid-1957 to mid-1959, when his ruthless "pacification policy" did enable his writ to run effectively in most of the towns and cities of the central coastal area and of the old colony of Cochin-China including Saigon itself. During this period parts of the Mekong delta area and the plantations of the Ca Mau peninsula also came under the control of his army, militia, police and district officials. The remnants of the militant Buddhist Sects were eliminated; political opponents of the left, right and centre were put in the dungeon jails of Nhu's police headquarters or into concentration camps;[1] the main body of pacifist Buddhists were cowed into submission; and the supporters of Ho Chi Minh who were not rounded up waited patiently for the Great Powers to keep their promise and enforce the execution of the Geneva Agreements.

In large areas of the southern jungles and the central uplands, however, Diem never made any headway at all. Here the peasants who had supported the forces of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam during the fight against the French remained faithful to their allegiance and to their relatives who had been regrouped to the north in 1954. Diem's militiamen and district officials received short shrift when they tried to penetrate into these areas and bully the peasants into paying taxes to the Saigon "government". Diem also committed an act of incredible folly in trying to use his officials to collect the rents and share-cropping dues of the landlords who had fled to Saigon to escape from the Viet Minh. This was the last straw, which provoked something like a spontaneous peasants' revolt. Local Viet Minh irregulars, who had escaped the net of the Control Commission and of Diem's police, now began to bring out buried arms and help to defend villages threatened by the "pacification" drive.

Well on into the late summer of 1959 the Government in Hanoi was still counselling patience and trying to restrain its southern adherents from rash action. The Government of the D.R.V. had earned full marks from the International Control Commission for strict observance of the Geneva Agreements, as their first Interim Reports clearly testify. (See Appendix B.) Diem had violated them again and again, even after he had grudgingly allowed a few I.C.C. teams to operate in the south. There still appeared to be a

faint chance that British fair play and French realism might lead them to join with the Russians and the Chinese in enforcing the terms of the Geneva Settlement on the reluctant Americans. The Indians, Canadians, and Poles were also still advising the D.R.V. that their case was so strong that re-unification was only a matter of time.

But when in August, 1959, five years had passed with hopes constantly deferred, with scores of thousands of families still separated, with the 17th parallel a more impassable barrier each year, with the Diem regime becoming more ruthless and repressive, and with the Western Powers more solidly aligned than ever behind their all-powerful ally—patience broke at last. The revolt against Diem and his American masters could no longer be restrained, and the National Front for the Liberation of Southern Vietnam came into being to lead a general uprising of the people.

From the very outset the revolt in the South was a movement of southerners, organised and led by southerners, with its own political administrative, propaganda and military apparatus. During the years 1958 to 1960 prominent members of a number of anti-Diemist groups, mainly intellectuals, Buddhists and professional workers who had taken an active part in opposition to the French, slipped out of Saigon and other towns in the centre and south, and made their way into jungle areas close to the Cambodian frontier. Most of them had spent the years 1954 to 1958 in organising the Peace Movement, the Movement for the Implementation of the Geneva Agreements, the Popular Revolutionary Party of the Central Area, or the Saigon Democratic Party, of which Dr. Dan and Mr. Tran Van Do were—as we have seen—leading members.

In the jungles they joined forces with the Viet Minh leaders and worked out a plan of campaign for the overthrow of the Diem regime, the establishment of a democratic coalition government in Saigon, the expulsion of the American military units, and the implementation of the Geneva Settlement. In December, 1959, with approval at length given from Hanoi, but with no more than an assurance of political and moral support, they decided to found the National (or "Patriotic") Front for the Liberation of the South, and to initiate political activities supplemented by revolutionary warfare. As the first step in their campaign they drew up a Ten-Point Programme and an Appeal to the People (see Appendix C) and broadcast it throughout the south.

At first a clandestine movement, their campaign was so successful that within little more than a year the leaders were able to declare themselves publicly. At the same time they announced that the well-known Saigon lawyer, Nguyen Huu Tho, who had recently escaped from confinement in Central Vietnam, had been appointed President of their Central Committee. During 1960-61 the revolt against Diem developed on such a scale that large areas of the south, including many small towns and hundreds of villages, came completely under the control of the Liberation Front. The movement grew in strength, gaining massive support from the peasants, for whom the N.F.L. now began to organise land reform and civil administration. Despite increasing activity of American military "advisers", and the use of mobile military units and air bombardment with napalm bombs, quick-firing shells and chemical crop destroyers, the area of the "liberated" territory increased month by month. Diem was driven back on the defensive, able to hold on with certainty only to Saigon and the main towns in the coastal areas, with even the connecting highways constantly under threat from the now sizeable and well-organised Liberation Army.

By the end of 1961 the position was so serious that President Kennedy was compelled to order a review of the situation by the National Security Council. His political advisers, the State Department, the Joint Chiefs of Staffs and the Central Intelligence Agency were all brought into consultation. Their verdict was unanimous: "If we pull out, or if we do no more than we are now doing, Diem will fall, and the Communists will take over. If we want to save Diem, we must step up our military aid and send in more of our own men."

Before reaching his decision Kennedy reviewed the past record of American intervention in Vietnam. He now knew a good deal more than he did when he was campaigning for the Presidency. He knew that between 1950 and 1961 the United States had put more than three billion dollars into fighting Communism in Vietnam—with precious little to show for it. He had available to him—or to those like Arthur Schlesinger Jnr. who prepared memoranda for him—the reports and comments of the International Control Commission on the conduct of Diem's administration and on the military aid which he had already received in violation of the Geneva Agreements.

Diem's "Republic of Vietnam" had persistently ignored the

requests, advice and recommendations of the I.C.C. Time and time again the Commission had to record, in its official reports, a refusal to co-operate on the part of the South Vietnam authorities. This contrasted with the attitude of the D.R.V. which, according to the official records, gave every possible assistance to the Commission in the execution of the tasks assigned to it by the Geneva Conference.

For example, on the vital question of an amnesty for those who took part in the war of liberation [Article 14(*c*) of the Agreements], Par. 15 of the Tenth Interim Report of the I.C.C. states:

> "The Commission reviewed the situation and held that in regard to 64 complaints under Art. 14 (*c*) referred to in par. 12 of the Ninth Interim Report and 27 fresh complaints received from the P.A.V.N. High Command (D.R.V.) between September 1 1958 and March 31 1959, and forwarded for comments to the Government of the Republic of Vietnam (Diem's regime), the Party had not afforded all possible assistance and co-operation in terms of Art. 25 of the Geneva Agreement to enable the Commission to supervise the implementation of Art. 14 (*c*) in these cases."

On the vital question of the introduction of fresh military personnel and arms, and the establishment of foreign military bases, the I.C.C. Reports are even more revealing. In relation to Bien Hoa airfield, for example, the South Vietnam authorities stated that they were "unable to produce the official records required by the Commission since they came within the field of military secrets!" Again the Tenth Report records, in par. 51:

> "There were 86 cases in the Republic of Vietnam where aircraft either arrived without prior notification or in respect of which manifests or other documents were not produced by the Party during the period under report."

In October, 1960, the P.A.V.N. High Command stated that over 100 U.S. military planes had been sent to the South Vietnam Air Forces and that an American Air Force detachment was operating there on a permanent basis. The refusal of the Diem authorities to allow the International Commission to carry out its inspection duties served only to confirm these reports.

Various American military missions were operating in South Vietnam, including the Military Air Advisory Group (M.A.A.G.) and the Temporary Equipment Recovery Mission (T.E.R.M.). In regard to M.A.A.G. the South Vietnam authorities blankly rejected repeated requests from the International Commission to supply in-

formation about this organisation. As for T.E.R.M. the Commission took a decision that the activities of this organisation must be terminated by June 30, 1959. This decision was ignored by the Americans and the Diem authorities, and the Commission decided, against the dissenting vote of the Polish element, to extend the period until the end of 1960. When December 31, 1960, came the Americans wound up T.E.R.M., but instead of repatriating all of its personnel they transferred 89 of them to M.A.A.G. In the two years from January 7, 1956, to December 28, 1957, alone, 759 more American military personnel arrived in South Vietnam than departed from it. (See Appendix B.)

This then was the record. This then was what the I.C.C. thought about it. Yet despite these warnings, Kennedy decided to plunge in deeper rather than write off south Vietnam as a dead loss.

To understand why he took this fateful decision, and what were its consequences, we must look again at the international developments which were taking place far away from the storm centre in Southern Asia.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Vietnam and the Dulles Brothers

"This is war in a very real sense of the word; there will be no withdrawal until victory is won."

ROBERT KENNEDY, Saigon, February 1962.
(Quoted in *The Times*, February 25, 1962.)

Vietnam has been a major matter of concern for four American Presidents: Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson. For the rest of the Western world, apart from France, it has been of no concern at all except when it has disturbed relations between the Great Powers and threatened to change from a local "bush fire" into a general conflagration. It made the headlines in the British press, for example, around the time of the 1954 Geneva Conference. Then it was forgotten until it forced itself upon the notice of the West, together with Laos, in 1962. After the re-called Geneva Conference on Laos was over, it was forgotten again until it astonishingly forced its way into the headlines once more during August Bank Holiday week, 1964. It has stayed there—with intervals for holidays, elections and financial crises—ever since.

In 1954, after the Geneva Conference was safely over, the British Foreign Office reached the firm conclusion that, whatever Anthony Eden might have put his and Britain's name to at Geneva, Indo-China must thenceforth be America's affair. The French were out, the Americans were in. Under the Truman Doctrine, the United States had taken over Britain's sphere of influence in Greece and Turkey. Under the Truman-Dulles Doctrine, she had now taken over France's sphere of influence in Indo-China. She was accepting what Winston Churchill and Ernest Bevin had both described as her "world responsibilities". She would, moreover, be helping to protect not only Thailand, but also the British and Australasian possessions and spheres of influence in Malaya, Borneo, New Guinea and the South Pacific Islands.

Britain's only disagreement with Dulles' Asian policy concerned mainland China. The Foreign Office regarded the revival of China as an independent power as a fact to be faced: provided that its

new energies were directed away from South-East Asia and the Pacific, there was no reason why it should not in time provide a useful counter-weight to the Soviet Union. If it wanted to expand, then there was ample room for expansion *within* the Asian Continent itself, in the areas of central and northern Asia which Czarist Russia had colonised. This was the policy which the British Embassy in Washington urged upon the State Department. In concrete terms the advice was: Let Mainland China have back her offshore islands of Quemoy and Matsu. Recognise the Pekin Government and let them take their place in the United Nations. Then you can settle down in undisturbed occupation of your forward line of containment in the Western Pacific: South Korea, Japan, Okinawa, Formosa, the Philippines, South Vietnam and Thailand. Perhaps one day, when you have consolidated the position of your friends in South Korea and South Vietnam you may be able to concentrate your own security bases in Thailand, Formosa and Japan.

Discussions along these lines had taken place between Eden and Dulles in London just prior to the opening of the Korean section of the Geneva Conference, but—as we saw in an earlier chapter—when Eden went to Manila in September he received a nasty shock. Dulles was determined to teach the British a lesson they would not forget: American policy towards China and her Communist friends was an exclusively American affair, and he would tolerate no interference from Britain or any other European or Commonwealth country. Dulles was, indeed, particularly annoyed at the behaviour of India, which—under the leadership of Pandit Nehru—was being so non-aligned that she was getting on friendly terms with the Asian Communists. Dulles had rather naïvely anticipated that Britain would persuade India and Burma, as well as Pakistan, to join the South-East Asia Treaty Organisation, and their refusal to have anything to do with it was another black mark for Eden in the Dulles' Book of Virtuous Friends and Vicious Enemies.[1]

After the round of treaty-making conferences in 1954 Nehru went off to Hanoi, where he was cordially welcomed by Ho Chi Minh, and then to Bandung in Indonesia, where—together with Ho Chi Minh, Chou en-Lai, Soekarno and the leaders of forty other Asian and African countries—he subscribed to the Ten Principles of National Independence, Peaceful Co-Existence and Constructive Co-operation.

While the emergent nations of Asia and Africa were beginning to organise for the defence of their common interests against the imperialist powers, Eden returned to Europe to try for a détente in co-operation with France and the Soviet Union. This was the moment when the Soviet Union accepted the Anglo-French disarmament plan and it looked as though real peace was in sight aften ten years of Cold War.

This first honeymoon period of peaceful co-existence with the communist countries lasted a bare six months. The right-wing of the British Conservative Party, thoroughly alarmed by the new trend, relieved Eden of the Foreign Secretaryship by the simple device of kicking him upstairs. Churchill resigned the Party Leadership and Eden was allowed to realise his life's ambition of being Leader and Prime Minister. After the 1955 General Election, which confirmed the Tories in power with an increased majority, Macmillan became Foreign Secretary and immediately proceeded to destroy all Eden's good work. He resumed co-operation with Dulles, and together with him revived the Cold War to its former high temperature. The Anglo-French disarmament plan was jettisoned and meetings of the Disarmament Committee became again purely an exercise in propaganda. Then followed the entry of a re-armed West Germany into the Western Alliance, through the Paris Agreements, and full support for American policy in Indo-China and Korea.

Eden retaliated by shifting Macmillan to the Treasury and bringing in a faithful servant—Selwyn Lloyd. He now resumed full co-operation with France, with whose help he hoped to consolidate Britain's position in Africa and the Middle East. Unfortunately for Eden, the French, having given up Indo-China, were now fighting, literally like grim death, to hold on to their own positions in North Africa, to which Algeria was the key. The bulk of the French Expeditionary Force, including the Foreign Legion and the O.A.S., had simply been transferred from Vietnam and Laos to Algeria, to carry on a new "sale guerre" there. Then ensued the disastrous Premiership of the French Socialist Party Secretary, Guy Mollet. Resolved to prove himself a truer nationalist than the French conservatives, he declared a "guerre à l'outrance" against the Arab F.L.N. When Nasser backed the F.L.N., Guy Mollet rounded on him too, sent arms to Israel, and began to look for an opportunity to topple Nasser with British assistance. Dulles obligingly created

the opportunity by cancelling the planned World Bank Loan for the Aswan Dam, almost certainly in collusion with Harold Macmillan at the British Treasury. When Nasser retaliated by nationalising the Suez Canal, there followed the disastrous Suez adventure which, for the time being, completely discredited Britain and France in the eyes of the whole world. Dulles triumphantly brought the whole machinery of the United Nations into play to demonstrate to Britain and France the folly of trying to "go it alone" in an American-dominated Free World. When Britain and France paralysed the Security Council by exercising their veto, the Americans retorted by referring the matter to the General Assembly under the "Uniting for Peace" Resolution which America and Britain had invented in 1950 in order to circumvent the Soviet veto in the Security Council and secure Assembly backing for the "United Nations Force" for Korea. On this occasion, however, the Soviet Union co-operated with the United States and Nationalist China against Britain and France and—for the first and only time in the history of its relations with the United Nations Organisation —voted for the application of the "Uniting for Peace Resolution" to the Suez incident.

To some extent the Soviet Union was trying—though unsuccessfully, as it turned out—to divert attention from its own armed intervention in Hungary, to which Krushchev had given his approval after an internal conflict in the Soviet Communist Party. Subsequent events, and what is now known of the relations between the Soviet and Chinese political leaders at the time, have supplied convincing evidence, however, that the events at the end of 1956 were the first overt signs of the evolution of a new Soviet foreign policy which was to diverge increasingly from that of China.

Krushchev, having rather foolishly banished the pro-Chinese Molotov to Outer Mongolia, revived a long-forgotten dictum of Lenin about "peaceful co-existence with non-socialist societies" and, ignoring the fact that Chou en-Lai had for some time been successfully applying the doctrine in Asia, proudly announced it as a new discovery and began to apply it to Soviet relations with the most powerful of the capitalist societies, the United States of America. Thus "Krushchevism" was born, but its concealed major premise, that the United States, under the Presidency of Roosevelt's and Stalin's favourite Western General, Dwight D. Eisenhower, was ready to drop the Truman Doctrine and revert to peaceful collab-

oration between the two world super-powers, was very wide of the mark indeed.

The fact was, as Kruschev was to discover to his cost at the abortive Summit Meeting in 1960, that President Eisenhower was not master in his own house. As a politician, he never got within striking distance of subduing the "industrial-military complex" of which he warned John Kennedy when the youthful Democrat leader took over the supreme office at the end of 1960. This powerful complex, headed by men who could change overnight from being generals and admirals into directors of formidable corporations geared to the manufacture of armaments, and then again into key positions in the Defence and State Departments and the National Security Council, had—and still has—one sole over-riding and unifying aim: to use American armaments and American military power to make the United States of America the dominant World Power.

Wright Mills, in *The Power Elite* and other books, tried to warn the world of this development. Since then the exhaustive researches and authoritative writings of Professor D. F. Fleming (*The Origins of the Cold War.* Vols. I and II) and of David Wise and Thomas B. Ross (*The U-2 Affair* and *The Invisible Government*), have thrown a flood of new light on the post-war evolution of American defence and foreign policy. The last-mentioned book in particular, which is a detailed and documented history of the origins, organisation and world-wide activities of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, provides convincing evidence that America's impact on the rest of the world and her relations with countries in every part of the globe, have been organised and dominated ever since 1952, and even before, by the personalities of those formidable puritan brothers, Allen and John Foster Dulles.

John Foster formulated the policy and preached sermons about it at international conferences. Allen, through the C.I.A., and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, when they could be persuaded or forced to co-operate, executed it. The principles of this joint policy were quite simple. There was an international communist conspiracy to take control of the whole world by a combination of armed aggression and internal subversion. The United States must build up a mighty armed power and use its nuclear supremacy to deter or smash aggression. The function of diplomacy was to keep hesitant allies in line and to bring non-aligned countries into the American

camp by a mixture of bribes, threats and persuasion. The function of the C.I.A. was to counter communist subversion, to destroy left-wing revolutionary plots, and to expose left socialists and liberals as "fellow-travellers", to sustain safe, right-wing, pro-American governments in power, and to promote right-wing counter-revolutions in countries where leftists, even quite moderate ones, had gained power, Allen Dulles, who had headed the American O.S.S. organisation in Europe during the war from the neutral refuge of Switzerland, was the ideal man for this job of "fighting fire with fire", as he called it himself in a relaxed moment. He took over the post of C.I.A. Chief in 1953 from General Walter Bedell Smith, who became Dulles' stand-in at the Geneva Conference.

The detailed operations of the C.I.A. agents, who spread gradually into every country of the world, enemy, neutral and allied alike, were kept secret from the general public, including the President himself, unless their activities became too obvious, as in the case of Guatemala, or until something went wrong, as in the case of the 1960 U-2 incident and the 1961 "Bays of Pigs" fiasco. Then the President made a fuss, or the Senate ordered an investigation, and a great deal of dirty linen was washed in public. When the fuss had subsided, the C.I.A. quietly went on with its activities in Latin America, Europe, North Africa and the Middle East, in Formosa, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Thailand, in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, as though nothing had happened at all. It mattered little that American Presidents like Eisenhower and Kennedy might honestly try to come to an understanding with the Soviet Union and even with Communist China; the State Department and the C.I.A. continued to work hand and glove on the basis of the policy lines laid down for all time by Allen and John Foster Dulles.

This is the real basis of the famous "dualism" of American foreign policy, which is now giving so much concern to America's allies in Europe and Asia. American liberals, like Senator Fulbright, Senator Mansfield and Walter Lippman, have frequently complained about it, but it still goes on—in Vietnam and Laos and even in neutral Cambodia, as everywhere else. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jnr., in his recently published White House Memoirs, has recently confirmed from his inside knowledge the extent to which Eisenhower and Kennedy were both committed against their will to policies which were in flagrant contradiction with their own international objectives by traps deliberately laid for them by the

C.I.A. How much honest intellectuals like Adlai Stephenson suffered from their activities we may never know. We do know now that the deliberate fabrications and cover-up stories of the C.I.A. forced him into the position of lying to the United Nations Security Council about American policies towards Cuba. He certainly had to lie again when, in August 1964, he had the job of proving to the Security Council that the North Vietnamese had committed an act of aggression against the mighty United States of America. Thereafter he had to go on lying about Vietnam, as the C.I.A. and the State Department produced their intelligence reports and their White Papers to "prove" that ever since 1961, or 1959, or 1954, or even 1945, it was the Communists—Vietnamese or Chinese, or both—who had been the aggressors and the subvertors in Vietnam.

As the necessity to justify the American war in Vietnam has increased, so has the "evidence" that it is the other side who are the aggressors (in their own country!) been progressively backdated. But in the autumn of 1961, when the new President was able to turn from the problems of Berlin and Cuba to those of the American position in Indo-China, there was no need to present him with any evidence of "aggression" at all. He already knew all the answers. He knew that President Eisenhower had given a personal pledge to Diem to back him with whatever American power was necessary to enable him to stabilise his position at least in what the Americans now called "South Vietnam", and he was determined to make the pledge good. He sent Vice-President Johnson and General Maxwell Taylor to Saigon to assess the situation and report back. Their report was that the Liberation Army (or "Viet Cong"—Vietnamese Communist guerrillas, as the C.I.A. had dubbed them) was gaining ground at an alarming rate, and that Diem's army, stiffened by only some 1,500 American base staffs, air pilots and combat "advisers", would not be able to hold back the tide without substantial direct American help. Kennedy consulted his new Defence Chief, Robert Macnamara, who advised an American-directed campaign of counter-guerrilla operations. This was in accordance with the latest version of the Macnamara Doctrine which, in 1961, took the form of a theory that in America's world-wide struggle against Communism three distinct types of warfare must be envisaged: nuclear war, conventional war and "unconventional" counter-subversive guerrilla war. Vietnam, the keypoint in America's South-East Asia strategy, was deliberately chosen for the first experiment

in a type of warfare which might later be applied in suitable situations in Latin America, the Middle East and Africa.

Stage by stage, the doctrine of the "third type of warfare" was applied in South Vietnam. America's military and economic aid to South Vietnam was stepped up to 400 million dollars a year. Diem's own army was to be built up to 270,000 men. Munitions of war were brought in by sea and air. American naval patrols were instituted to bar the sea-route from north Vietnam to the south. On December 11, 1961, an American vessel brought in 33 helicopters, together with their operation and maintenance crews, much to the embarrassment of the International Control Commission, which was not even informed of their arrival, and not allowed to inspect them.

On February 8, 1962, the United States established a new military command in South Vietnam. Replacing the long-established Military Aid Advisory Group, it was to be called the Military Assistance Command. It was headed by a four-star general, Paul Harkins. According to E. W. Kenworthy, Special Correspondent of the *New York Times* (February 9, 1962), the number of uniformed Americans operating under the Command was raised from 685 to between 2,000 and 4,000 in a matter of months. Dennis Bloodworth, cabling to the *Observer* from Saigon on February 17, estimated the number as "nearly 4,000", and added that "by midsummer 3,000 more may have arrived".

Most of these men belonged to the new branch of infantry called "Special Forces", who were being trained in guerrilla tactics at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. *Newsweek* (February 12, 1962) quoted General Herbert B. Powell, Chief of Army Training, as saying that "the army plans not only to increase its Special Forces but to extend guerrilla training to every infantry unit. All eight combat divisions in the U.S.A. will be indoctrinated in guerrilla concepts and tactics." Officially the men sent to Vietnam were not "combat troops", but in addition to training Diem's Army in guerrilla and counter guerrilla warfare, they went on jungle raids with them and directed their operations. Their orders were "shoot back if you are shot at". They often were.

The danger of this kind of war is that there is no end to it, because the political objectives of the intervention are unattainable, except by massive military action. The Americans were fighting an "enemy" who had all the advantages on his side. *Newsweek* (Feb-

ruary 12, 1962) quoted an American official in Saigon as saying: "The guerrilla force has won the allegiance of the people because it identifies itself with the people". It reports the views of a U.S. counter-guerrilla back from a patrol:

> "The guerrillas blend in with the people. They live with them, share the same poverty, tell them they are fighting for the people's future happiness . . . if the Vietnamese (Government) want to keep their country, they'll have to convince the peasantry they can help them. Americans can't do it. Our white faces are a handicap."

The truth is that the Diem regime proved quite incapable of "convincing the peasantry". It earned their hostility by driving them into fortified "agrovilles" (strategic hamlets), by allowing the soldiers to mishandle anyone suspected of aiding the guerrillas, and by doing nothing to curb the rapacity of the landowners, moneylenders and corrupt officials.

Step by step the Americans were forced to play a more active and direct part in the war. On May 9, 1962, a *Guardian* correspondent in Saigon reported that "authoritative United States sources today admitted that the American Air Force pilots had been used to bomb and strafe Communist guerrilla forces in south Vietnam".

This "unconventional" war had entered a new phase in March, 1962, when the south Vietnamese regime, with the assistance of the Americans, initiated the scorched earth policy euphemistically called "Operation Sunrise". This is how the first of these operations carried out in a rubber plantation four miles north of Bencat, was described by Homer Bigart in the *New York Times* of March 29, 1962.

> "In this region, 1,200 families are to be moved voluntarily or forcibly from the forests controlled by the Viet Cong and resettled in new strategic villages. The abandoned villages will be burned to deprive the Viet Cong of shelter and food.
>
> "The first step in Operation Sunrise involved encirclement of half a dozen settlements. Government forces failed to make the manoeuvre a complete surprise: a hundred guerrillas were able to flee to the forest before the ring closed . . .
>
> "The Government was able to persuade only seventy families to volunteer for resettlement. The 135 other families in the half a dozen settlements were herded forcibly from their homes.
>
> "This harsh, desperate measure was approved by the Americans because it worked so well for the British in Malaya . . . The vital features of the Malayan Plan are discernible in Operation Sunrise.
>
> Some families had been allowed to carry away beds, tables and benches before their homes were burned. Others had almost nothing but the clothes on their backs. A young woman stood expressionless as she recounted how the troops had burned the family's two tons of rice . . ."[2]

The reference in this report to the plan carried out by the British forces in Malaya is significant. In September, 1961, the British Government despatched to Saigon a British "Police" Mission to help and advise the Diem regime on internal security. The Mission, which costs the British taxpayer over £100,000 a year, was headed by Mr. Thompson and other former British members of the Malayan Civil Service who planned "Sunrise" Operations in Malaya against Malayan-Chinese communists.

In Malaya, however, the communist guerrillas were primarily Chinese against whom it was possible to stir up the Malayan peasants. In south Vietnam it was south Vietnamese troops who were being urged on by foreigners to attack their own fellow-countrymen. There could be only one end to this, and it would not be pleasant for the foreign intruders in Vietnam, as the French knew to their cost.

The Americans thus found themselves increasingly involved in fighting in a civil war, on the side of dictatorship and reaction. What would the next step be? E. W. Kenworthy in the *New York Times* reported a Pentagon spokesman as saying as far back as February 8, 1962, "this is a war we can't afford to lose". That could only mean that before long they would have to change over to the second type of warfare: all-out conventional war. Joseph Alsop, columnist of the *New York Herald Tribune*, wrote on February 26, 1962:

> "the end of this chancy road can be 'going to Hanoi'. This Pentagon phrase means . . . using United States power to attack the attackers of South Vietnam where it will really hurt them, at home in North Vietnam."

That, of course, could be the road back to Dien Bien Phu, to Dulles' threat of the atom bomb, to Chinese and Russian intervention, to a "general conflagration" in South-East Asia.

The entry of American troops into Thailand in March, 1962, was a further step in the same fateful direction. They did not go in because of any real threat from Laos—Kennedy admitted that he knew of none—but because the allegation that Thailand was endangered by the Pathet Lao advance offered a pretext to introduce American troops "legally" on to the South-East Asia mainland. The 1,000 American infantrymen and the 1,800 marines were placed under the command of General Paul Harkins—the same General Harkins who was the chief of the American Military Assistance Command in South Vietnam. It only needed a further

allegation that the cease-fire in Laos had been broken by Pathet Lao, and those troops could be on their way, over the frontier and across the narrow neck of Laos towards north Vietnam. Backed by the Thais and by the Nationalist Chinese forces which had moved into Thailand and Laos, they could be one arm of a three-pronged drive on Hanoi.

The landing of American forces and the sending of a British Air Squadron to Thailand, coupled with the C.I.A. activities in support of Prince Boun Oum and the right-wing military leaders in Laos, might well even then have provided Ho Chi Minh with complete justification for calling upon Russian and Chinese military assistance against a threat of aggression from the West. The fact that he did not do so showed him to be possessed of far greater wisdom and restraint than those Americans who were clamouring to "go to Hanoi".

Was there no other way out at that time? Sixteen leading American citizens, including Dr. Linus Pauling, Professor Harry Rudin and Professor Ralph Turner, took a half-page in the *New York Times* of April 16, 1962, to address an Open Letter to President Kennedy aganst U.S. military intervention in South Vietnam. They wrote:

> "The American Government through its intervention has clearly violated all the military prohibitions of the Geneva pacts; and it supported President Diem in his illegal refusal to go through with the promised plebiscite . . . Frankly, we believe that the United States intervention in South Vietnam constitutes a violation of international law, of United Nations principles, and of America's own highest ideals. We urge, Mr. President, that you bring this intervention to an immediate end."

This massive appeal to the conscience of the American people was backed by no less a body than the A.D.A. (Americans for Democratic Action), at their Annual Convention on April 27-29. Their resolution (which, like the appeal quoted above, went unreported in the *gleichgeschaltet* British Press) read in part:

> "We view with grave anxiety and concern the military intervention of the United States in South Vietnam . . . The civil war in South Vietnam has been presented to the American people as having been caused primarily by foreign intervention. In truth, that civil war is in the main the result of the decay of the totalitarian Diem regime. This regime has lost popular support, and the people of South Vietnam are actively hostile or indifferent to it.
>
> "We do not oppose, indeed we favour, reasonable military aid to countries which are seeking to maintain their independence from external aggression . . . But we vigorously oppose the unilateral commitment of America's own military power and prestige to sustain governments in Asia or elsewhere against the resistance of their own people."

In the summer of 1962 Kennedy re-assessed the situation again, following further Liberation Front successes. Liberal opinion in the United States was demanding the withdrawal of American military forces from Vietnam; General Harkins, in Saigon, was asking for more. At this moment, surprisingly enough, help came from London. The new British Foreign Secretary, Lord Home, had reached the conclusion that Communist China was now the "main enemy" of the West and advantage should be taken of the Sino-Soviet split to drive a wedge between Russian and Chinese policies in Indo-China. He calculated that if the West now pursued a more active anti-Communist policy in Vietnam and Laos the Russians would not intervene, and if the Chinese did so, the Americans would be free to attack the Chinese without fear of Russian retaliation. Lord Home had already made use of his position as one of the two co-Chairmen of the 1954 Geneva Conference to ask the International Control Commission to make a "Special Report" on alleged Communist infiltration from North Vietnam into the South. The Indian and Canadian members of the Commission had felt bound to respond by producing some kind of endorsement of the documentary evidence submitted to them by the Diem regime. The Polish member of the Commission took exception to the whole procedure and sharply registered his dissent. In order to show that they wanted to be fair to both sides, however, the Indian and Canadian members joined with the Polish member in producing a scathing indictment of American military intervention in support of Diem. (See Appendix B.) They condemned this intervention as a violation of the key clauses of the Armistice Agreement, forbidding the importation of troops and war materials except as replacements, or the entry of any part of Vietnam into a military alliance.

The British Foreign Office ignored this section of the I.C.C. Report, but publicised the section of the Majority Report which cautiously endorsed President Diem's allegations. Having conjured the necessary "evidence" out of the remote jungles of Vietnam, Lord Home was now in a position to assure Mr. Dean Rusk, the U.S. Secretary of State, that Britain would give full public backing to an intensification of the American anti-Communist drive in Vietnam.

Thus urged, President Kennedy plunged again, and during the ensuing year built up the American force in Vietnam from 7,000 to over 23,000 men, most of them belonging to the "Special Forces" branch. But by the summer of 1963 the situation was worse than ever. The N.F.L., by now a highly-organised politico-military force, was moving in to encircle the towns and cities, and was penetrating into the heart of Saigon itself. Ngo Dinh Diem had taken refuge again in the Presidential Palace and his overthrow appeared imminent. He had already survived three attempts by junior officers, some of them working in conjunction with the N.F.L., to capture or blow up his palace refuge. It was not, however, the N.F.L., or even the Army, which finally brought him down, but the pacifist Buddhists, who had been driven to desperation by religious persecution.

In the summer of 1963, when the Catholic-Buddhist conflict reached its height, the Buddhists decided to make a sacrificial appeal to world public opinion. A series of self-immolations by burning took place in the public streets of Saigon and Hué. Dramatic pictures in the American, British and West European press horrified public opinion and called attention to much more than religious persecution which was going on in Vietnam. People everywhere, and not least in the United States, began to ask how such things could happen in a country to which America was trying to bring the blessings of freedom. Kennedy himself, already feeling the impact of Pope John XXIII's appeal for peaceful co-existence with all men, regardless of colour or of political creed, was shaken to the core. He studied again the depressing report of the Senate Investigation Commission, headed by Mike Mansfield, and he began to look round for some way of pulling out of Vietnam without too much loss of face, and without too obviously betraying Eisenhower's pledge. He decided that the time had come to find an alternative to Diem: someone who could really rally the masses of the people behind him—Catholics and Buddhists, peasants and city workers, right-wing and left-wing, perhaps even the N.F.L. and the communist patriots as well. He ordered the State Department to search for such a man, and having found him, to withdraw American support from Diem.

Cabot Lodge, a leading Republican, was sent as the new Ambassador to Saigon, with the mission of organising a smooth transition. Vu Van Mau, Diem's Foreign Secretary, took the hint and

resigned. But then began the revolt against Kennedy's new policy. The American military leaders in South-East Asia, fearful of losing the security position and the bases they had built up in South Vietnam if a genuinely democratic and patriotic government took over in Saigon, decided that they must have a strong man who would continue the war against the Communists after Diem had disappeared. With the help of the C.I.A. organisation in Saigon they combed the list of possible candidates and picked on General "Big" Minh. Early in November Minh and the other leading generals formed a secret "Revolutionary Military Council". They staged a *coup d'état*, seized Diem and his notorious brother Nhu, assassinated them and formed a Revolutionary Military Government. As this was a right-wing revolution the U.S. State Department immediately recognised the new "Government" as the legitimate government of the Republic of Vietnam. Britain and the other Western Powers followed suit. On November 23 President Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, Texas. The new President, Lyndon B. Johnson, endorsed all the actions of the various American representatives in South Vietnam, and the war was on again.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Second Labour Mission to Vietnam:

Part 1: The External Balance Sheet in December 1964

"The moment has arrived for revealing to the American people the truth about Indo-China."

JOHN KENNEDY, in the U.S. Senate, April 6, 1954.

The assassination of President Kennedy marked the end of the third post-war attempt to bring about a détente between the Capitalist and the Communist Worlds. In the autumn of 1963—when the message of *Pacem in Terris* was still ringing around the world—there had seemed every prospect that the Cold War would be brought to an end, and that an era of peaceful co-existence, which would include the Chinese as well as the Russian and East European Communists—was about to begin. In Britain the Labour Party in opposition was still proclaiming the new international policy worked out in the latter days of Hugh Gaitskell's leadership. A compromise between the views of the late Aneurin Bevan and Gaitskell's own, it had reunified the Labour Party around a programme of disarmament, disengagement, the termination of Britain's remaining imperialist commitments, the speedy winding-up of the rival military alliances and the strengthening of the authority of the United Nations as an instrument of world peace and co-operation between all nations, irrespective of race, creed or ideology. In furtherance of this policy the opposition had denounced Lord Home's attack on the United Nations, opposed his plan to form an alliance with West Germany under cover of British entry into the Common Market, criticised American policy in Asia, and called—like De Gaulle in France—for an independent British foreign policy directed towards closer association with the poor and hungry countries of the Southern and Eastern two-thirds of the world.

A policy of this character was a direct challenge to all that Lord Home had been trying to achieve during his three years as British

Foreign Secretary. He attacked the new Gaitskellism in violent terms, and—in the speech which won him the Leadership of the Tory Party—called for the revival of Britain's traditional "civilising mission" in the world in intimate co-operation with the "strong ally"—the United States of America. So anxious was he to destroy this socialist move towards "neutralism" in the Cold War that he publicly revealed the strategy on which he had been working for two years in close co-operation with Dean Rusk, U.S. Secretary of State, and Robert Macnamara, U.S. Defence Secretary. This was—to paraphrase slightly the *simpliste* terms in which it was expressed—to make Anglo-American power paramount throughout the world, in association with Germany in Europe and with Japan in Asia, and to use a combination of bribes and nuclear blackmail to exacerbate the already strained Sino-Soviet and Sino-Indian relations to a point where China would be isolated as "World Public Enemy No. 1".

This view of the world situation fitted in completely with that of Robert Macnamara, who was working out a new Doctrine which would enable the United States to overcome the paralysing nuclear balance of terror and use its colossal military power to assert its will in the world. This new global concept of American politico-military strategy was subsequently explained in a hand-out from the United States Information Service in the following terms:

(1) The United States is building up a nuclear missile stock sufficient to "absorb" a Soviet first strike and then to destroy the entire Communist world, from Warsaw, through Moscow to Pekin.

(2) A nuclear test ban treaty, an agreement on non-proliferation and a disarmament agreement to limit nuclear weapon stocks at the levels reached by the nuclear powers at the end of 1964 would consolidate the U.S. position of absolute supremacy.

(3) Recalcitrant nations would then see the wisdom of coming to terms with the United States, and an era of world peace under American protection, would be established.

President Kennedy, in the months before his assassination, had been moving away from this prescription for a global Pax Americana. Perhaps this was why he was assassinated. Certainly the Vice-President who stepped into his shoes, Lyndon B. Johnson, had quite a different vision of the world from that of the true statesmen who occupied leading positions in the main countries of the world during the early 1960's. Unlike 1963, the year 1964 was to see—

in the United States, Britain, Germany and the Soviet Union—the replacement of statesmen with a world outlook by politicians whose main concern was with traditional national interests and the resolution of internal party rivalries and conflicts. By the end of the year the spirit of John Foster Dulles was again in full control of American defence and foreign policy, and Britain was firmly tied to a "strong ally" which was brashly asserting its unleashed power in continent after continent, from Cyprus to the Congo, from Cuba to the Dominican Republic, from Korea and Okinawa to Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia and Thailand.

During that year Krushchev had been replaced by Kosygin and Brezhnev, Nehru by Shastri, Adenauer by Erhard, Douglas-Home by Harold Wilson and Lyndon Johnson was confirmed in office. The only elder statesmen left in the key world centres were De Gaulle in France, Mao Tse Tung and Chou en-Lai in China, and Ho Chi Minh in Vietnam. The balance of moral authority, as distinct from military power, had shifted from the Washington-London-Bonn-New Delhi-Tokyo axis to the Paris-Karachi-Pekin-Hanoi axis, with the Prague-Moscow axis in a state of transition from one to the other. The great question at the end of 1964 was whether the world was moving again towards a new, grand and, perhaps, fatal confrontation between America and the Communist Powers with Asia now as the focal centre of conflict, or whether it was still possible to hope for the peaceful integration of the emergent Asian nations into a progressive and democratic world community.

Vietnam had now become the main world centre of conflict Here could be found some of the clues which might lead to a solution of the problem. It was to look for these clues, as well as to see if I could help the Vietnamese to find the solution to their own special problems, that I decided, in December, 1964, to accept the invitation to pay a second visit to Vietnam.

In view of the attention, mainly hostile, which was subsequently paid to my visit to Vietnam, I want to begin the story of the Second Labour Mission to Vietnam by answering some of the questions which I put to myself when I was first made aware that an invitation was in the offing. First, from what source did the invitation come and what conditions, if any, were attached to it? About a month after the October General Election I was asked by a North Vietnamese journalist in London, Mr. Cu Dinh Ba, whether I and

one or two of my parliamentary colleagues would welcome an invitation to Hanoi. Mr. Ba was already known to me as one of a succession of North Vietnamese journalists who had come to stay in London as unofficial contacts with the Hanoi Government. They had been coming since 1958, when Harold Davies, following our visit in 1957, had at last succeeded in persuading the Foreign Office to provide some kind of *quid pro quo* for Hanoi's toleration of the presence there of a British Consul-General who, was accredited, through our Embassy in Saigon, to the Hanoi *municipal* authorities. Then, as now, the British Government did not recognise the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and had no diplomatic or other official relations with it. All contacts between Britain and North Vietnam had therefore to be conducted on an entirely unofficial basis. This meant, amongst other things, that invitations to visit Hanoi had to come, not from the Government or the National Assembly, but from the organisation which had invited us in 1957, the Fatherland Front. Mr. Ba told me that, as in 1957, the Fatherland Front would pay the travelling expenses of the delegation and provide hospitality. There would be no conditions attached to the visit, and we would arrange our programme on arrival in Hanoi. Invitations would also be sent to Ian Mikardo and Harold Davies. The latter was unable to accept the invitation as he had just been appointed a Junior Minister in the Labour Government. This left Ian Mikardo and me, and I proposed that our wives should be invited as our secretaries and companions. It was fortunate that I made this proposal—to which the Fatherland Front readily agreed—because Ian Mikardo was taken ill two days before we were due to leave and I might have had to go alone. As it turned out, my wife was able to act not only as a valuable companion and a necessary secretary, but also as a witness.

The second question to be answered was, why did the invitation come to the same, rather left-wing, Labour M.P.s as had gone in 1957? The answer clearly was, because the people and the political leaders in Hanoi knew us already as friends and had noted the way in which some of us—particularly Harold Davies, John Baird and myself—had constantly raised the Vietnam issue in Parliament and had persistently sought to bring back the British policy on Vietnam to the independent mediatory line which Anthony Eden had pursued at the Geneva Conference in 1954. We had repeatedly called attention to the failure of the British Government to exercise its

role as co-Chairman of the Conference and recall the Conference in accordance with Clause 13 of the Final Declaration. We had exposed the mis-use of the I.C.C.'s Special Report of June, 1962, to condemn the North Vietnamese as "aggressors" while ignoring the far greater and more serious condemnation of the American military intervention.

I personally had asked Mr. R. A. Butler, when he became Foreign Secretary in November, 1963, to withdraw British recognition from the Saigon "Government" which, after a second military coup by General Khanh, had become an undemocratic military junta with an official policy of "exterminating all communists and neutralists". In March, 1964, I had attacked the Home-Johnson Washington Agreement, by which the British Prime Minister pledged full support to "American policy in South Vietnam" in return for an American undertaking to support "the peaceful independence of Malaysia". I had pointed out that this was both an unequal bargain and a dangerous one. I had urged Harold Wilson, then Leader of the Opposition, to denounce this agreement, and he did at that time go so far as to ask Home for an assurance that the new British commitment did not extend to American war-like activities north of the 17th parallel. When the Prime Minister replied evasively, saying that he could give no guarantee about what might happen if there were "a general conflagration in South-East Asia", I had written to him asking for a definition of the circumstances in which a general conflagration, involving Britain, might arise. In his reply, Sir Alec called my attention to the terms of the SEATO Treaty under which both Britain and the United States would be bound to go to the aid of "South Vietnam" if it were attacked by "North Vietnam". He also pointed out that the June, 1962, Special Report of the I.C.C. had already provided evidence of the "aggressive designs" of North Vietnam. I replied, saying that in the Declaration of the Geneva Conference Vietnam was recognised as a single, sovereign independent state, and that therefore there could not, in international law, be an act of agression by the north against the south, and that the southerners were not the "neighbours", but the kinsfolk and fellow-countrymen of the northerners. To this letter I had a reply which was so full of ambiguities and falsifications of history that I quote it here in full. It was dated August 7, 1964, the very day on which President Johnson, following the Gulf of Tonkin incident, secured the overwhelming approval of the United States Congress to his

request for unrestricted power to order the use of American military forces in support of the Manila Protocol State of Vietnam against "communist aggression" from the North. Sir Alec wrote:

"Thank you for your further letter of July 21 about Vietnam.

"In the Foreign Secretary's reply of November 20, 1963, which I cited in my letter of July 20, it was made quite clear that Her Majesty's Government considered the then Government of the Republic of Vietnam to be the only legal Government in Vietnam, and to be the successor to the regime of the former Emperor Bao Dai, whose Government was recognised by Her Majesty's Government as long ago as 1950. The Foreign Secretary did not—as you allege—refer to any "claims" made by the Government of the Republic of Vietnam at the time. Our position on recognition has not changed since 1950, and as I pointed out in my letter of July 20, it is shared by many other countries and by the United Nations. Incidentally, you may recall that the Final Communiqué issued at the end of the Conference of Foreign Ministers in Berlin on February 18, 1954, agreeing that Indo-China should be discussed at a Geneva Conference, contained the following paragraph: 'It is understood that neither the invitation to, nor the holding of, the above mentioned Conference shall be deemed to imply diplomatic recognition in any case where it has not already been accorded.' [Comnd.9080 (1954) Page 180.]

"Contrary to your belief, the Foreign Secretary's signature did not appear on any documents signed at Geneva in 1954 alongside that of the 'Prime Minister' of the so-called 'Democratic Republic of Vietnam';—indeed the British representative did not sign anything at all at Geneva. Like other participants, Mr. Eden took note of the Final Declaration of the Conference, and of the various Agreements ending hostilities in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam. The only agreements signed at Geneva were the Agreements on the Cessation of Hostilities between the former combatants, of whom Her Majesty's Government were not one.

"As for your reference to the pledge I gave to President Johnson last March, I repeat what I said in answer to your Question in the House on June 30 that: 'The pledge of support I gave in Washington was for the present United States policy of helping the Republic of Vietnam to defend its independence'.

"I am still not aware of any change of policy by the United States Government.

"I am glad that you are as aware as I am of the death and deprivation to which the people of Vietnam are exposed and I am sure you realise that the fighting could be ended quietly if the Communists in the North were to stop their direction and support for the campaign of subversion and terrorism in the Republic of Vietnam."

Readers who have studied the previous chapters of this book will be able to identify the numerous inaccuracies in this letter. The main point which disturbed me in August, 1964—and which still disturbs me in August, 1965—is that the British Government had clearly decided not only to ignore the transfer of political authority from Bao Dai to Ho Chi Minh in 1945, but also to treat as null

and void Anthony Eden's association of Britain with the decisions of the Geneva Conference. I was also concerned at the re-emphasis of British support for the independence of the "Government of the Republic of Vietnam" as the only legal government of the whole country. I feared then that on the basis of this argument a time might come when Britain and America might be involved in joint military action to assert the claim of the military junta in Saigon to rule over the whole country.

During that pre-election month of August, 1964, a number of my parliamentary colleagues joined in the expression of public concern at President Johnson's escalation of the war to the north. We protested too at the way in which the Americans, with full British support, tried to bulldoze the U.N. Security Council into condemning North Vietnam as the "aggressors" in the Gulf of Tonkin incident. We looked to Harold Wilson to make a public protest at this abuse of the Charter and principles of the United Nations, but, pre-occupied with the domestic aspects of the British General Election, he contented himself with a flying visit to 10 Downing Street, after which he resumed his holiday without a word of public comment.

He was eloquently silent about the Vietnam issue, as about all other issues of foreign policy, until after the Election was over, when he was compelled, together with the new Foreign Secretary, Patrick Gordon Walker, to face the harsh facts of international life.

This brings me to the third question: why did the invitation from Hanoi come at that time? The answer was self-evident. By November, 1964, Johnson was the elected President of the United States, Kosygin had replaced Krushchev, the Chinese had tested their first atom bomb, De Gaulle had established friendly relations with both Russia and China, and a Labour Government ruled Britain for the first time in thirteen years. Major political changes had taken place within all the Big Five Powers; they were re-appraising their relationships with one another and with the rest of the world. They would certainly include Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia in this re-appraisal. They would assess the situation in those countries, draw up a profit and loss account, and perhaps come to new decisions and begin to search for new policies. In Vietnam the war had been going badly for the Americans; despite increased commitment they were still losing both the political and the military battle. Was not this the time for a fresh effort to get the parties around the conference

table to achieve a political settlement on the basis of the Geneva Agreements, as U Thant, De Gaulle, Prince Sihanouk and others had already suggested earlier that year?

Many people thought it was, and I did too. Although no intimation had been given to me from Hanoi, I felt sure that the main purpose of the invitation was to let me know how the leaders of the Government there viewed the prospects of a peaceful settlement, so that I could pass on their views to the new British co-Chairman of the Geneva Conference, and the new Labour Prime Minister.

When Gordon Walker was appointed Foreign Secretary, despite his defeat at Smethwick, I wrote to congratulate him and to suggest that his most important task was to persuade the Americans to accept the Chinese Revolution as a fact of life and come to an understanding with that quarter of the human race which lives in China. I also suggested to Harold Wilson that he should seek an early "Summit Meeting" with Chou en-Lai. The response, by deeds rather than by words, was negative in both cases. Instead there was a great deal of emphasis on the Anglo-American alliance as the "sheet-anchor" of our foreign policy. I still hoped, however, that when the new Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary had got their bearings and re-assessed the international situation, we should get a sharp change from the naïve traditionalism which we had to endure from Douglas-Home.

Shortly before Harold Wilson went to Washington for his first meeting with Johnson, a few Labour back-benchers wrote to him, expressing concern at British involvement in the American policy of "creeping escalation" in Vietnam, asking for the cancellation of the "unsavoury" Malaysia-Vietnam deal which Douglas-Home and Johnson had concocted ten months before, and proposing that, as the *Guardian* had suggested in a leading article that day (December 4), that Britain and Russia should now re-convene the Geneva Conference. On his return from Washington the Prime Minister's only reply to our suggestions was to "nail the lie" that he was proposing to send British combat troops to Vietnam, and to call our attention to the Washington Communique of December 9, which declared, *inter alia,* that the President and the Prime Minister "recognised the particular importance of the military effort which both their countries are making in support of legitimate governments in South-East Asia, particularly in Malaysia and South

Vietnam, which seek to maintain their independence and resist subversion".

This was a discouraging prelude to my visit to Vietnam, but I felt that the journey would be even more worth while as I should be able, on my return, to supply the Prime Minister with some more accurate information than that which he was obviously receiving through official channels and the Anglo-American intelligence services.

I was much encouraged when, just before Christmas, I went to see George Thomson, Minister of State at the Foreign Office, to inform him of the nature and purpose of my visit.

I sensed a welcome change from the attitude which he had displayed in the House on December 14, when replying to questions on Vietnam from briefs supplied by the Foreign Office, he had repeated, in almost identical terms, the answers which we had been getting from his Tory predecessors. He had then said, in answer to a question from me:

> "The policy of Her Majesty's Government remains to support the Government of the Republic of Vietnam in their efforts to put an end to the Communist insurrection which, aided and directed from Hanoi, in constant violation of the Geneva Agreements, threatens the liberty and independence of the South Vietnamese people."

He had also defended the continuance of the British Mission in Saigon, saying that it was playing an important part in helping the South Vietnamese police to combat the "Communist insurrection in Vietnam". Since giving those answers I knew that he had made a personal study of the records and decisions of the Geneva Conference, and of the eleven interim Reports of the International Control Commission, and that he was now aware of the re-writing of history which had been undertaken by the Foreign Office to provide support for the American thesis on the nature and origins of the conflict in Vietnam.

I was therefore not surprised when he now expressed great interest in my visit to Hanoi. He welcomed the prospect of learning something about the "peace terms" of the D.R.V. leaders, and undertook to place the full facilities of the Foreign Service at my disposal throughout the trip. This promise was kept to the full, and in Moscow and Pekin, through which my wife passed on our journey, as well as in Hanoi itself, the British diplomatic and consular representatives were extremely cordial and helpful. On my return journey

the British Embassy in Moscow even succeeded in recovering, within a matter of hours, a document wallet full of notes and memoranda which I had left at the airport!

Leaving London on December 31, we spent most of the first night at a New Year's Eve party in a private apartment in Moscow, and then sped on via Irkutsk and Pekin to Hanoi, which we reached on January 4. At Gia Lam Airport we were welcomed by several old friends, including one of our 1957 guides and interpreters, Xuan Oanh, who on this occasion was promoted to the position of "Programme Organiser". We were driven into Hanoi across the old French-built bridge over the Red River which still carries everything—trains, cars, trucks, waggons, cyclists and pedestrians. We were taken to the "Reunification" Hotel, and our eleven-day visit to North Vietnam had begun.

CHAPTER NINE

Second Labour Mission to Vietnam

Part II: The Internal Balance Sheet in January 1965

"The War in South Vietnam is homegrown".
JOHN STIRLING, New York *Herald Tribune*, April 9, 1963.

The first thing I wanted to find out when I arrived in Vietnam was what was now the situation in the country; how had it changed since 1957; what was the balance sheet—political, economic and military—as the people faced the new year of 1965. I wanted to find out what was the situation in the North and in the South. I had some idea when I arrived in Hanoi that I might be able to get to the South from there, as I did in 1957, but a talk with the British "Consul-General", Mr. Myles Ponsonby, soon convinced me that it would be impossible to do anything useful in the short time I had available before returning to England for the resumption of Parliament. The I.C.C. plane was flying on a rather irregular twice-weekly schedule between Hanoi and Saigon—over the "Ho Chi Minh Trail" via Laos and Cambodia. Moreover, a visit to Saigon alone was now pointless, as the "government" there was changing from week to week. To find my way to the "Liberated Areas" and meet the leaders of the N.F.L. would have taken me another couple of weeks and there would have been a complicated problem of moving from one side to the other of the "battle lines". I decided that this was a job for a war correspondent, not for a Member of Parliament with work to do back home. My consideration of this problem did, however, bring home to me very forcibly the essential difference between Vietnam in May, 1957, and Vietnam in January, 1965. *Then* the whole country was enjoying a brief period of peace: a peace of liberation and hope in the North, and a peace of concentration camps and enforced "pacification" in the South, but still peace of a sort. *Now* the whole country was at war again, a violent, cruel, ugly war in the South, waged with every horror weapon—except the nuclear one—invented by the modern military scientists;

and a hit-and-run war against the coastal towns and frontier villages in the North, with an overhanging threat of massive air bombardment of Hanoi and the other industrial centres. Yet Hanoi was at that time calm and untroubled, with few signs of the impending conflict apart from the rather casual digging of slit-trench air-raid shelters and the desultory training of small "home-guard" units. My wife and I were freely able to take scores of photographs, and only twice did a policeman intervene when he thought we might be including a potential "military target" in the picture. Everywhere we went, we found peasants and fishermen, industrial workers and technicians, men, women and children, cheerfully engaged in their normal avocations of work, play and education, as though there were nothing to worry about at all. If there was any worrying to be done, it would be done by Uncle Ho and the team of political leaders who had brought them successfully through long years of war in the past to liberation and independence.

The essential fact, as I discovered from my talks and observations, was that the Government of the D.R.V. was still concentrating on building up a thriving and self-dependent economy in the North and trying to let the war in the South disturb them as little as possible. They were confident that the Liberation Front would win the struggle against the Americans and the military junta in Saigon, and while they were giving them what help they could, they were determined not to lose the substantial gains which by now they had made in the North.

In the South, when the Diem regime collapsed in November, 1963, there was a race for political power in Saigon, but the Generals, with full support from the American military command and the C.I.A., got in first, and established *their* Revolutionary Government. By January, 1965, they had survived no fewer than seven internal changes of leadership, but the fact that the Americans had made revolution respectable by giving their blessing to it meant that scores of thousands of patriotic democrats, in the armed forces and in civilian occupations, now felt free, and indeed obliged, to join the one revolutionary movement which was prepared to fight for both independence and democracy. By now the N.F.L. had a 50-strong Central Committee, in which democratic, socialist and communist intellectuals, combined with Buddhists, Catholics, peasants, skilled workers, students and junior officers to form an effective and representative administration for the Liberated Areas.

Throughout 1964 it grew rapidly both in military strength and in political authority. In a statement issued on December 11, 1964, President Tho claimed that during the year the balance of forces, both political and military, had changed decisively in favour of the Front, and that it now controlled two-thirds of the land area of the South and was acting as the administrative organ of more than half of the population.

Political contact between the South and the North, by the various routes through Laos and Cambodia known collectively (to the C.I.A. agents) as the "Ho Chi Minh Trail", had by 1964 become a substantial two-way traffic.

Through this two-way channel there could also be an exchange of ideas between North and South about political strategy and tactics. There was obviously close harmony between the Government of the D.R.V. and the Central Committee of the N.F.L. in all political reactions to the fast-moving political developments in the outside world.

How far did this mutual co-operation extend to the military field? The People's Liberation Army in the South had scored some remarkable victories in the past few months. They had knocked out half the American bomber force on Bien Hao airfield, they had penetrated Saigon and blown up the American Officers' Club, the Brink, they had come near to blowing up Robert Macnamara and some of his Generals, they had—while I was in Hanoi—won a full-scale positional battle at Gia Dinh, and they were closely investing the central strategic highway running from the coast, through Kontum and Pleiku, to the Cambodian frontier. Everyone I questioned in Hanoi assured me that these military victories had been won by the Southerners themselves, with men and women of the South, and with war materials captured from the Americans and General Khanh's Army, or manufactured in the southern jungles from unexploded bombs and shells, iron spikes and sharpened bamboo stakes. For confirmation of the substantial truth of this contention I was referred to reports of trustworthy American, British and French press correspondents—some of which I had quoted myself in articles and pamphlets I had written during the previous two years.[1]

The conclusion I reached in Hanoi at the time was that, while a few thousand of the Southern-born men who had been regrouped to the North in 1954 had probably by now gone south to fight

alongside their kinsfolk, their assistance represented only a tiny fraction of the total war effort of the Liberation Army. Of perhaps greater value to the N.F.L., I thought, was the advice on military strategy and tactics which would undoubtedly be given to the commanders of the Liberation Army by the victor of Dien Bien Phu, Vice-Premier and Minister of Defence General Vo Nguyen Giap.

I had no means of verifying this inference, as I did not meet General Giap on this occasion. He was probably busy with other matters! I did, however, discover that the Hanoi Government itself had begun to receive, since the Gulf of Tonkin incident, substantial quantities of highly efficient anti-aircraft and coastal defence equipment, partly from China but to a much greater extent from the Soviet Union. Up to that time, however, no *offensive* weapons had been delivered by any of the D.R.V.'s socialist allies. They, like the D.R.V. itself, were still conforming, to a remarkable extent, with the spirit of the 1954 Geneva Agreements. The reason for this respect for international law and treaty engagements I was to learn when I met the President and the Prime Minister.

CHAPTER TEN

Second Labour Mission to Vietnam

Part III: Prospects for a New Political Settlement

"When you came here in 1957 the country was at peace . . . today we are at war again; once again this is a war of liberation, but this time not against the French, but against the Americans."

Prime Minister PHAM VAN DONG, in an interview with the author, January 11, 1965.

The principal purpose of my visit to Vietnam was to discuss with President Ho Chi Minh and Prime Minister Pham Van Dong the prospects for a new political settlement of the Vietnam question. I met them in the Presidential Palace on January 11. Both greeted me warmly and the President who spoke at first in English, asked by name after the friends who had accompanied me in May, 1957. He was still, at the age of 74, mentally alert, physically agile and in excellent humour. He was anxious to find out whether the new Labour Government was likely to take an independent initiative now that the American elections were safely out of the way. He told me frankly that he was disappointed at the outcome of the Johnson-Wilson conversations in December and asked when we were going to stand up to the Americans as Anthony Eden had done in 1954. I launched into a rather long explanation of the difficulties facing a new government coming into power with a very small majority and a difficult economic situation to face. We were by this time talking in French and when I said that we had a majority of only "cinq voix" he at first thought I had said "cinquante". So I had to repeat "cinq" holding up five fingers for emphasis. "Now I see why you have to get back to England so quickly—to keep the Government in power," he said. I then went on to explain how we had become committed to an Anglo-American Alliance in South-East Asia by our Conservative predecessors and that we had to perform something of a juggling act in trying to pursue a socialist foreign policy without offending the Americans too much. We then discussed American policy and I ventured the

view that as Johnson had safely disposed of the Cold War challenge, he might feel freer to move towards a peaceful settlement. The President reminded me that the Gulf of Tonkin incident was undertaken with the full authority of President Johnson, but when I suggested (as I then thought) that this incident had been staged for internal political reasons in the United States, Ho Chi Minh was inclined to agree with me. "But the trouble is," he added, "that Johnson is not in charge of the situation. It is the military men in the Pentagon who are now dictating American policy."

I accepted this but suggested that even the military leaders might be ready to come to terms since the war was now going so badly for them. I now came to one of the key questions which I had wanted to ask him. "Assuming that the Americans would now like to pull out, can you make some gesture which would enable them to do so without their losing too much face?" To this he replied jokingly, "It is quite simple. All they have to do is to make up their minds to go out. Once they have taken this decision our friends in the south will lay down the red carpet for them and wave them the friendliest of goodbyes." He added more seriously, that the Vietnamese had not asked the Americans to come in; that they had no business to be there at all, and that under the Geneva Agreements they should leave the country without bargaining for conditions.

"We have always regarded the 1954 Geneva Agreements as providing a sound basis for the restoration of peace in Vietnam," he said, but then he added this important statement: "It would be a good thing if the independence, unity, military neutrality and freedom from foreign interference of Vietnam, and of Laos and of Cambodia, were guaranteed by an international treaty drafted and signed by a new Geneva Conference at which all the countries interested in peace in this region would participate."

I was particularly interested to learn that the leaders of the D.R.V. wanted the future of their country guaranteed by an international treaty. When I talked with the Prime Minister after the President had said goodbye and left us alone together, he confirmed that his Government wanted this time something which they did not get in 1954—a treaty signed by all the participants including the Americans, with a binding obligation on each signatory to observe the terms of the new agreement, and to guarantee their execution.

Before outlining his proposals for a peaceful political settlement, however, the Prime Minister explained to me how his Government viewed the present situation in Vietnam.

"When you came here before in 1957," he said, "the whole country was at peace. At the battle of Dien Bien Phu we had finally won our nine-year long struggle against the French imperialists, and the 1954 Geneva Agreements had provided us with the basis for peaceful re-unification and full independence. In 1957 we still hoped that the British and the Russians would be resolute enough to compel Diem and the Americans to abandon their opposition to re-unification through free elections.

"Our hopes were disappointed. Today we are again at war; once again it is a war of liberation, but this time not against the French, but against the Americans. It is a war which the Americans cannot win, because virtually the whole of the Vietnamese people, with the exception of a few military puppets whose antics in Saigon are making them increasingly ridiculous, are against them.

"But," he added with grave emphasis, "the situation is still extremely serious—for us and possibly for you. If the Americans refuse to recognise that they have made a mistake and to withdraw, our people in the south will go on fighting them. They have already come out of the jungles and gone over to open battles, which they are winning. General Khanh's conscripts have no heart for the struggle, and more and more men and weapons will come over to the Liberation Front. If the Americans need another Dien Bien Phu to teach them, they will get it."

When the Prime Minister said this I thought that he had wandered from his main theme, and was relishing the prospect of teaching the Americans a lesson, even at the expense of many more thousand Vietnamese lives. But I soon perceived that he had two purposes in mind: first, to convince me that the Vietnamese would never surrender their aim of total liberation and independence; secondly, to warn me that American desperation might still provoke a world conflict.

"We do not want the war to continue a moment longer than necessary," he continued. "It is our people who are suffering and dying by the thousand, while the American casualties are still comparatively light. But rather than make peace, the Americans could still desperately try to inflate the conflict and make the drive to the North which their military planners have so often proposed. But

we are not afraid. We can defend ourselves, and if the Americans extend the war, our socialist allies—all our socialist allies—will come to our help, and that is where you too could be involved," he warned.

After this introduction Pham Van Dong began to outline his Government's peace terms. His first point was that the military clauses of the 1954 Geneva Agreements must be applied strictly in both North and South Vietnam. The Americans must accept these military clauses and agree to abandon their bases and their military alliance with the South Vietnam regime and withdraw their military forces and weapons. Thereafter the military clauses must be applied strictly in both zones. "This," he said, "is the equivalent of military neutrality and we are prepared to reaffirm our acceptance of these conditions for the North, and we know that the Liberation Front is prepared to do the same for the South. I asked the Prime Minister whether military neutrality would be after political re-unification. He replied: "Yes; with the proviso, of course, which every independent country applies, that we shall have the right to call on our friends to help us if we are the subject of a military attack." His second point concerned the question of a political settlement in the South. "No viable government can be formed in the South now without a substantial participation in it of the National Front for the Liberation of the South. The N.F.L. does already represent the majority of the popular political forces in the south. Khanh, the puppet military junta, is totally discredited. The N.F.L. does not, however, insist that it alone should form the new Government. Its programme is for the formation of a democratic coalition government which will include other genuinely popular forces which are not at present represented in the Front. The external policy of the new government in the South will, if the Front programme is carried out, be based on the principle of both political and military neutrality. We shall not attempt to control the internal policy of this government, provided that it maintains a policy of neutrality and does not seek to retain or readmit foreign military forces. We shall not attempt in any way to dictate its social and economic policy. The conditions in the South are now very different from those here in the North, where we have gone a long way towards the establishment of a socialist society. In the South it will take them many years to advance to the point we have reached. That is one reason why we hope the South will continue

to receive *economic assistance* from the Western countries after their military intervention has ended."

"In that case," I said, "how do you see the process of re-unification taking place?" The Prime Minister replied: "It will have to take place now by gradual stages. It may take longer than was foreseen in the 1954 Agreements to achieve full political unification under a single government. The first steps will be the restoration of normal human and commercial communication between the two zones. Divided families must be reunited, roads and railways rebuilt and some kind of economic balance achieved between the two parts. Then, when it is possible to plan the economic development of the country as a whole, it will be possible to have a single government. The time factor is not so important; what is important is first, that the new government in the South should be one with which we can co-operate on a basis of friendship and equality; and, secondly, that all internal developments, including the process of political re-unification, shall take place as a result of the negotiations between the Northern and the Southern governments *without any external interference of any kind.*"

It was quite clear to me from this last statement that the D.R.V. had now firmly decided to claim for itself the right of every sovereign independent state, to settle its internal affairs without foreign interference. I knew that this condition would be likely to prove an obstacle to a new negotiated settlement, but I did not argue the matter because I realised that the political leaders of the D.R.V. were now quite determined not to be cheated again as they were cheated by some of the Great Powers after the 1954 settlement.

I realised that the Prime Minister had given me a very important statement of the views of his Government and that he would expect me to pass on his proposals to the new Labour Co-Chairman of the Geneva Conference. It occurred to me to make a suggestion of procedure. I said: "For some years your Government has been saying that the problems of your country should be settled by recalling the 1954 Geneva Conference but nobody has taken any notice of your requests. Why do you not now, as a member of the 1954 Conference, make a formal request to the two Co-Chairmen asking them to summon all the nations and parties which took part in the Conference to assemble again in order to discuss measures for the proper implementation of the Geneva

Agreements and Final Declaration?" The Prime Minister replied that this was an extremely interesting suggestion which he would like to think over in consultation with his colleagues. "If we were to make such a specific proposal," he said, "I think there would be three conditions which we would require to see fulfilled: (1) a definite assurance that the Americans would respond to the invitation and attend the Conference; (2) that the Americans in agreeing to attend would accept the principle that they must observe the Geneva Agreements and withdraw their forces; (3) that the National Front for Liberation should be accepted as an equal party with the others in the Conference negotiations. "We do not mind," he added, "if the Khanh group or whoever replaces them in Saigon, is there as well."

I undertook to convey the Prime Minister's proposals and suggestions to the Labour Foreign Secretary and Prime Minister on my return to England. I promised to let him know whether his proposals were acceptable, what the Labour Ministers thought about them and what likelihood there was of a Conference actually taking place if agreement was reached on the terms of reference.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

I Report Back

"In view of the great issues at stake, no one, no person, no Government ought to stand on punctilio to reject the first chance of contact that offers."
MICHAEL STEWART, at Hull, JULY 11, 1965.

We arrived back in London on the day of the Leyton by-election, I issued a short statement for the news agencies, saying that I had found President Ho Chi Minh and Prime Minister Pham Van Dong "very forthcoming in their ideas about how the war in Vietnam might be ended by a political settlement based on a modified version of the 1954 Geneva Agreements." And added that I should be making a full report to Mr. Gordon Walker as Co-Chairman of the Geneva Conference as soon as he was in a position to give me an interview.

Unfortunately he never was, and although I gave a brief interim report to George Thomson, I was not able to see the new Foreign Secretary, Mr. Michael Stewart, until Tuesday, February 9. The date is important, because by then the whole situation in Vietnam had completely changed. In the course of a few days, what had been to the European world a purely local war which might soon be brought to an end at the conference table, had suddenly blown up into a tempestuous conflict which could have the most dangerous consequences for world peace.

We now know (see Chapter XII) that this was the beginning of an escalation of the war which had been planned in the White House and the Pentagon two months earlier. Very few people in Britain knew this at the time, and only those who carefully studied the exact chronology of the events and public statements could deduce what was really taking place. What happened was this.

In the middle of January the U.S. Air Force commenced its heavy jet bomber raids, from its bases in Thailand and at Danang in South Vietnam, against the Pathet Lao positions along the northern frontiers of Laos. A visit by the President's special adviser, Mr. McGeorge Bundy, to Saigon was arranged for the beginning of

February. In the last week of January it was announced that the Soviet Prime Minister, Mr. Kosygin, would visit Hanoi, together with the chief of the Soviet Air Staff, on Saturday, February 6.

On the previous day, February 5, Mr. Bundy, having completed a round of discussions with South Vietnamese (Saigon) military and political leaders, told a Press Conference that he had not found that any of them were interested "in neutralism or in peace talks". (*Observer*, February 7). At the same time President Johnson's roving Ambassador, Mr. Cabot Lodge (formerly, and now again, U.S. Ambassador in Saigon), issued a warning to the Western allies, "not to recognise any government formed in Saigon which wanted to engage in peace negotiations". He added that the United States would not itself recognise such a government.

On the following day, Saturday, February 6, the South Veitnam People's Liberation Army, after a few days' lull for the celebrations of the Lunar New Year, resumed the attacks which they had been carrying out for some weeks past against the American military positions at Pleiku and Kontum on Highway 19.

A few Americans were killed in these attacks: about 2 per cent. of the total number killed in the Vietnam war up to then. Using this as a pretext, the U.S. Air Force launched "retaliation" raids against Vinh and other towns in the southern part of North Vietnam. Other raids followed on the Sunday, and, in order to dramatise this new phase in the Vietnam war, the U.S. Embassy in Saigon announced that the families of U.S. Servicemen were being flown back to the States.

On Monday, February 8, the Western press and the British House of Commons swallowed the U.S.I.S. story that these were purely "limited retaliation raids" to punish the North for being accessories to the killing of American Servicemen. However, when —after a lull—the raids were resumed and intensified into a general bombing offensive against the North, this story was quietly dropped, and it was admitted that February 6 was the starting date of a military campaign designed to "bring Hanoi to its senses" and to compel the northern Communists to "leave their neighbours alone".

Indeed, by the time Michael Stewart came to answer questions in the House on the afternoon of Monday, February 8, he was already sufficiently apprised of American intentions to be able to say, in agreement with Sir Alec Douglas-Home, that "South Vietnam has a right to live at peace and undisturbed, and I believe

that if the Viet Cong operations, which are aided and directed from the North, came to an end, we should then be much nearer to a . . . conference, settlement and agreement". (Hansard, February 8, 1965, Col. 39.)

I had tried, as the situation was now urgent, to see Michael Stewart that morning, but as he was not able to arrange an interview until next day, I had to content myself with reminding the House that at the 1954 Conference it had been agreed that Vietnam should be one country, not two. I suggested that the Foreign Secretary was now in a position "to launch the dove of peace on the troubled waters" and asked him to consult the Soviet Co-Chairman with a view to the re-call of the Geneva Conference. His reply was discouraging: he recalled an earlier statement of his that the Soviet Government had "recently" said that the Co-Chairmen had no continuing responsibilities in respect of the 1954 Conference. I knew that this was the view expressed by the Soviet Government when Krushchev was in power, and I doubted very much whether the new Soviet Government had "recently" confirmed this view.

However, I went to see Michael Stewart the following afternoon still believing that, with his logical mind and sense of fair play, he would be prepared to take a fresh view of the Vietnam question when he was fully acquainted with the contemporary facts and the historical background. I had written to him on February 2, congratulating him on his appointment and expressing the conviction that he would review the international situation "with a mind open to the rapidly changing realities of a world whose horizons are not bounded by Washington and Bonn". He now listened to what I had to report with an apparently open mind. I gave him a detailed account of my conversations with the two political leaders of the D.R.V. and summed up the outcome of my "Mission to Hanoi" in words similar to those I had used in my letter:

"From Ho Chi Minh and Pham Van Dong I got their terms for a peaceful political settlement of the Vietnamese problem. To my mind their proposals are reasonable and in accordance with the present political realities in South-East Asia. They are looking to the British (as well as to the Russian) Co-Chairman of the 1954 Geneva Conference to take an initiative to bring the war to an end, and I undertook to convey their views and suggestions to the British Co-Chairman, whose position you have now taken over".

I added finally that the Vietnamese leaders, before making any

formal request to the Co-Chairmen for the recall of the Geneva Conference, would want some assurance that their request would receive a favourable response and that the British Co-Chairman, in particular, would be able to persuade the Americans to take a full part in the Conference. I said that I had promised to inform Pham Van Dong of the British Co-Chairman's reactions.

Michael Stewart said that my report was "extremely interesting" and that he would be prepared to give consideration to a formal request coming either from the Soviet Government or the Government in Hanoi. He raised only two objections to the proposals made by Pham Van Dong. First, he said, the "Viet Cong guerrillas" would have to stop their attacks. Secondly, he thought that the Americans would require guarantees that "if they pulled out there would be no Communist take-over in the South".

To the first point I replied that if there were to be any effective cease-fire in Vietnam it would have to be an all-round one, i.e., all four parties to the conflict—the Liberation Front, the Khanh Revolutionary Military Council, the Americans and the D.R.V.—must agree to a simultaneous cease-fire. He replied; "Yes, of course, there will have to be an all-round cease-fire".

On the second point I said that this had been covered by Pham Van Dong's assurance that the new government to be formed in Saigon as a part of the political settlement would be a "democratic coalition" with a policy of both political and military neutrality, and that the Hanoi Government would not try to control it in any way, so long as it observed this policy and co-operated with the northern government as an equal partner in measures directed towards the eventual reunification of the country.

Michael Stewart then asked what guarantees there could be that a unified government, when it eventually came, would not be "Communist-dominated". I replied frankly that there could be none, that Anthony Eden and Mendès-France had fully accepted in 1954 that this would be the outcome of "free elections", and the West would eventually have to reconcile itself to the fact that in a number of Asian and African countries, just as in European countries like Poland and Yugoslavia, it was the communists and the revolutionary socialists who were the most patriotic and effective leaders of the movements for national independence. I added that the Americans had shown themselves quite willing, in Vietnam, Korea, Formosa and elsewhere, to recognise and support unpopular

anti-democratic military revolutions, and one day they would learn the folly of their ways.

I could see, however, that this trend of the discussion was stirring up Michael Stewart's deep-seated anti-communist prejudices, which I had hoped he would put aside now that he was responsible for reorganising Britain's relations with the outside world, so I told him that I would communicate his specific comments on the Pham Van Dong proposals to the authorities in Hanoi.

I came away from the interview rather depressed by Michael Stewart's exposition of his political philosophy, but still convinced that when it came to serious diplomatic negotiations the new Foreign Secretary would display the same political realism as he had already exhibited so effectively when dealing with domestic policy issues such as housing and education. After reflecting on the positive outcome of the interview I came to the conclusion that the cease-fire proposals presented no difficulty, and that the problem of political guarantees was a subject for negotiation when the parties got round a conference table. I accordingly sent a cable to Pham Van Dong suggesting that he should now send a formal note to the two Co-Chairmen proposing an immediate supervised cease-fire by all parties and the fixing of a date for a re-call of the Geneva Conference. I said in the cable that Michael Stewart thought that the Americans would come to the Conference if there were an all-round cease-fire and a stop on all movement of weapons under I.C.C. observation. With these qualifications specifically stated, I thought it fair to say that the British Foreign Secretary "considered your terms for a political settlement not unreasonable and could form a basis for discussion" at a re-called Conference.

The cable went off that night but, as I have since learned, by the time it reached Hanoi a number of things had happened which completely altered the picture and made it impossible for the Hanoi Government to act as I had suggested.

On the very next day, February 10, Michael Stewart, to my astonishment, made a statement to the Labour Party Foreign Affairs Group, later repeated in public, that the essential first step towards peace negotiations was that there should be a "cease-fire by the Viet Cong guerrillas". Neither at that time, nor subsequently, did he make a call for the all-round cease-fire which he had accepted when I saw him the day before. Almost simultaneously, President Johnson delivered a public ultimatum to the Hanoi Government,

demanding that they should "order" the Viet Cong guerrillas to stop their attacks in the South or else submit to further bombing raids on the North. As I said in a letter to Michael Stewart on February 15, in which I informed him of the text of my cable to Pham Van Dong, these two statements taken in conjunction were bound to convey the impression that "the British and American Governments are agreed on a policy of demanding virtual unconditional surrender from both the D.R.V. and the South Vietnam Liberation Front." I added:

> "I am also personally concerned because the appearance of these public statements subsequent to the receipt of my message in Hanoi will inevitably give the people in Hanoi the impression that my services as a mediator have been abused in order to lay a trap for them."

I have since learned that what I then feared was true: the political leaders in Hanoi were inevitably compelled to pay more attention to the public statements and actions of President Johnson and Foreign Secretary Stewart, followed as they were by the resumption of the bomber raids, than to the message I had sent to their Prime Minister. The personal misunderstanding has been removed by time, but what has not yet been removed by time is the firm conviction then implanted in the minds of the political leaders in Hanoi that the British Government was privy to the Johnson policy of bombing them and the Liberation Front into submission and that any further British "peace initiatives" would only be a cover for the Johnson Doctrine of "unconditional surrender".

This analysis of the position was fully confirmed by later events, but in February I still hoped, despite rebuffs, to get the facts of contemporary political life in Asia over to the British policy-makers. I decided to approach the Prime Minister personally, since he had now seemingly taken over the direction of the principal aspects of British Foreign Policy. The Foreign Secretary had contented himself with sending a rather curt reply to my letter of February 15, in which he avoided answering any of the substantive points I had made and simply said that he had "certainly never intended to give the least impression that I had considered North Vietnamese terms for a political settlement 'not unreasonable'."

At the time I did not associate Michael Stewart's reply with the virulent campaign of personal abuse started by Mr. Patrick Honey, Lecturer in Vietnamese Langauge and Life at the School of Oriental Studies, on commercial television and in the weekly *Spectator*.

It was only much later, when all the members of the Cabinet, with the honourable exception of the Chief Whip, and most of the members (senior and junior) of the Government, failed to support me in my Privilege issue against Mr. Honey, that I came to realise that this was the very person on whom the Foreign Office was relying for information and advice about the situation in Vietnam.

When I came to try to approach Harold Wilson, however, I was soon to discover this poisoning of the wells of information had done its evil work. One of the first letters I found in my post-bag on my return from Hanoi was a letter from Harold Wilson in answer to one sent to him in early January by Fenner Brockway, Benjamin Britten, Bertrand Russell, Donald Soper and some thirty other prominent personalities and M.P.s urging the British Labour Government to intervene on behalf of peace in Vietnam. The reply, which was addressed to me personally and made no reference to the other signatories, consisted of a repetition of the familiar American case on Vietnam as put over by Sir Alec Douglas-Home when he was Prime Minister, and ended with the words: "I do not think the moment has yet come when Her Majesty's Government could take a fruitful initiative in this tragic dispute". (10 Downing Street, January 20, 1965.)

I replied on February 2, saying that I did not intend at that stage to communicate the contents of the Prime Minister's reply to the other signatories (for obvious reasons!), and that I would like to give him a personal report of my talks with the North Vietnamese leaders. I said:

"From all my talks I know that a basis for a peaceful political settlement of the Vietnam problem now exists. Ho Chi Minh's people are now getting the full suport of the Russians and East Europeans as well as the Chinese, and the Americans have got into a morass in which they are quite incapable of defining any clear political, or even military, objectives . . . A British initiative could now transform the whole situation, and that is what Ho Chi Minh and Pham Van Dong are still hoping for."

Next day I received an acknowledgement from the Prime Minister's Personal Secretary saying that my letter would be placed before him. To this day I have received no further written communication from the Prime Minister, nor have I ever been able to have more than five minutes' talk with him, distributed over three separate occasions.

The first occasion was at a reception at No. 10 Downing Street on February 3, for the Norwegian Prime Minister, Mr. Gerhardsen. During formal greetings I managed to say to the Prime Minister that I was hoping to give him a personal report of my visit to Vietnam. His only comment was: "Yes, you caused us a good deal of embarrassment while you were away". At the time I dismissed this remark as an attempt at a friendly joke. It was only later that I discovered that the unspoken phrase after the word "embarrassment" was "with our American friends".

My next—two-minute—encounter with Harold Wilson was in the corridor of the House of Commons on February 11. President Johnson had just announced the resumption of an all-out bombing offensive against the North, and I urged the Prime Minister to do what Attlee had done when Macarthur was asking for nuclear attack on the Chinese Yalu River power stations—"fly to Washington". His answer was that this was not necessary today, because there was now a "hot-line" between London and Washington. He had talked to Johnson on the hot-line that day. The impression which he intended to convey by this information was that he had talked to Johnson as Attlee had talked to Truman in 1951.

Next day's British and American press, however, carried stories that Johnson had quickly told Harold Wilson to mind Britain's business in Malaysia and leave him to mind America's business in Vietnam. There were, in fact, no "hot-line" conversations for some weeks after that. I also learned from Harold Wilson himself, when I bumped into him in the Library Corridor, that President Johnson was having difficulty keeping dissentient Congressmen in Washington quiet, and—he added—"the fuss which some of you are making here is not helping either".

I said that what was wanted now was an outspoken dissociation of Britain from what the Americans were doing in Vietnam. We should suffer a terrible loss of moral prestige in Asia and Africa if we did not take an open stand against their uncivilised and inhuman behaviour. In reply Harold Wilson quoted a phrase of Aneurin Bevan's to the effect that emotional declarations were a form of "public masturbation", in which responsible statesmen and diplomats could not afford to indulge.

I ignored this rather unpleasant abuse of the name of the man into whose shoes Harold Wilson had stepped, and suggested that he might at least take advantage of the request I had made to provide

him with some rather more truthful information about Vietnam than what he was getting from the British Foreign Office and the American Embassy. His reply was: "Send me a memorandum". I said I would do so, but in the meantime he might like to read the two articles which I had written in the *Guardian* (February 8 and 9). He said: "Oh, I have read them. In fact I quoted from one of them the other day".

That was my last conversation with Harold Wilson. I sent him a memorandum, but I presume that it was pigeonholed, as he never, in his subsequent public statements on Vietnam, showed the slightest sign of ever having read it. I did discover, however, a month later which was the passage he had quoted from my *Guardian* article. It was the sentence from Pham Van Dong's conversation with me, quoted at the head of the previous chapter—taken out of its context, and used as supporting evidence of the American contention that North Vietnam was now waging a war of aggression against the South!

On March 9 the Prime Minister astonished the Labour backbenchers by announcing that in the past few weeks the war in Vietnam had completely changed its character.

"A year ago", he said, "the general supposition was that the fighting in South Vietnam was a spontaneous, so-called nationalist rising on the part of the Viet Cong people. But now there is no attempt at all to deny the responsibility of North Vietnam, who have said that they are fighting a war in South Vietnam. That makes a very big difference, I think, in terms of our analysis of the problem." (Hansard, March 9, 1965, Col. 238.)

None of us could recall that Harold Wilson had ever previously referred to the revolt in the South as being a spontaneous, nationalist rising, and the only change in the character of the war in "the past few weeks" had been the full-scale escalation of the American war to the North. I was still more puzzled by the Prime Minister's reference to a public admission that North Vietnam was making war in the South. I knew that this was the American contention (officially stated by Secretary of State Dean Rusk on February 25, (See Appendix C) and "confirmed" by the U.S. White Paper issued two days later), but I wanted to know what the new evidence was that the Prime Minister had referred to in the House. I accordingly telephoned the Prime Minister's Private Secretary and also tabled a question in the House. The reply which I received was that the

principal evidence on which the Prime Minister relied was the quoted sentence from the *Guardian* article.

I was as much staggered by the Prime Minister's duplicity as I was by his apparent inability to distinguish between a war of liberation and a war of aggression. Truth was now being stood on its head with a vengeance!

The real truth was that Harold Wilson's sudden discovery of a change in the character of the war was derived from his reading of the statement made ten days previously by Adlai Stevenson when presenting the U.S. White Paper to the Security Council. Its significant title was Aggression from the North, the Record of North Viet-Nam's Campaign to Conquer South Viet-Nam (see Appendix C). In the course of his summary of the "inescapable conclusions from the evidence", the unhappy U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations was compelled to tell five direct lies and four less-than-half-truths. His conclusions about the character of the conflict in Vietnam was much less equivocal than the watered down version which Harold Wilson thought suitable for the House of Commons:

> "These facts *(sic!)* . . . make it unmistakably clear that the character of that conflict is an aggressive war of conquest waged against a neighbour—and make nonsense of the cynical allegation that this is simply an indigenous insurrection."

From now on the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary were not satisfied with refusing to condemn American policy in Vietnam or to dissociate Britain's name from it. On every occasion when the Vietnam question was discussed in public they firmly defended the American thesis that the North Vietnamese (and, behind them, the Chinese) were the aggressors—in their own country! The Prime Minister himself joined in the campaign to discredit my efforts to demonstrate the falsity of this thesis. He publicly condemned my views as "myopic", by which he meant (so he explicitly said) "one-sided". He was apparently unaware that he himself was monopic, because a few weeks later, in imitation of President Johnson, he was putting his telescope to one eye and saying "I see no signals from Hanoi".

Signals had, indeed, come from Hanoi. I had conveyed them to London at the end of January, but the Prime Minister had refused even to look at them. When Pham Van Dong repeated his offer of negotiations in an official speech on April 8 (see Appendix C) which U Thant referred to as an important "clue to peace in Viet-

nam", the Foreign Office deliberately suppressed it, and the Foreign Secretary rejected my request that it should be published in Hansard. Although Pham Van Dong had specifically stated that the four points which he put forward were to be taken as the basis for negotiations at a reconvened "international conference along the pattern of the 1954 Geneva Conference", Michael Stewart dismissed the speech as "intended primarily for internal consumption in North Vietnam". He also objected that the statement had not been conveyed to him through one of the "official channels"—the British or Soviet Co-Chairman, or the British "Consul General" (unrecognised) in Hanoi. (Hansard, May 3, 1965.)

At a moment when there was the best prospect for peace in Vietnam that there had been for 18 months, the British Foreign Secretary preferred to "stand on punctilio" rather than upset the war plans of the great American ally. It was not until three months later that the Prime Minister was to find himself in the position of defending the "unorthodox" Harold Davies Mission to Hanoi on the two grounds that "we have no diplomatic relations with the Government there", and "this was the first chance of contact which offered".

But that was after he and Michael Stewart had killed the Davies Mission while it was literally still in the air by announcing that Harold Davies was an official emissary of the British Government and of Harold Wilson's "Commonwealth Peace Mission."

CHAPTER TWELVE

Who Sabotaged the Peace Initiatives?

"A cardinal weakness of our diplomatic position today is the President's statement at Baltimore that 'the first reality is that North Viet Nam has attacked the independent nation of South Viet Nam' . . . Our present position is contrary to the indubitable 'essentials' of the Geneva Agreements of 1954, that North and South Viet Nam are not two nations but two zones of one nation."

WALTER LIPPMAN, *New York Herald Tribune*, April 20, 1965.

"The enemies of negotiation are the enemies of peace."

HAROLD WILSON, House of Commons, July 19, 1965.

During the 18 months following the Johnson-Home meeting in Washington in February, 1964, there were a score of attempts to end the war in Vietnam and bring the parties to the conference table in order to reach a political settlement. Yet, all these peace initiatives came to nought. Why did they fail? Who was responsible for the failure? The answer given in most of the Western press was that it was Hanoi and Peking who were to blame. By August, 1965, it was being said by the British Foreign Office and the American State Department, that it was the Chinese and the Chinese alone, who were opposed to peace. The true answer is quite different. It is the American Government, with the backing of the British Foreign Office and the Australian Prime Minister, Sir Robert Menzies, which has sabotaged every attempt to bring about a peaceful political settlement of the Vietnam question.

This conclusion, which I reached only reluctantly, in May, 1965, after the deliberate suppression of Pham Van Dong's renewed statement of the D.R.V. peace terms in his April 8 speech, has now been amply confirmed by an analysis of the reports of the policy decisions taken by the American Government since Lyndon Johnson became President. The key to the matter lies in the simple fact that President Johnson and his National Security Council advisers have always regarded Vietnam as America's business and no one else's. In their view the role of allies and friends is to help and support, not to criticise nor even to give advice. This was the view of John Foster Dulles in 1954, and it is Johnson's view today.

He made this view clear to Harold Wilson in December, 1964, at their first meeting and he repeated it in February, 1965, when Harold Wilson spoke to him over the "hot line"—which thereafter became a very cold line indeed, if not a dead one.

Since Johnson made his first re-assessment of the Vietnam situation, after the assassination of Kennedy, there have been many shifts in American tactics in Vietnam, but always one clear line of policy. In the view of Johnson and his advisers, Vietnam had become by 1964, the principal *place d'armes* in their "quarter-century" war against Communism, especially in its Asian form. The National Security Council had decided that what they chose to regard as "Communist aggression and subversion" must be crushed once for all in Vietnam even if it meant killing every Vietnamese who adhered to or sympathised with communism. This meant that from 1964 onwards military objectives became the primary concern of the American Government, with political objectives playing a purely secondary role. This was in full accordance with the new Macnamara doctrine that American military power must be used to dominate the world and compel the communist two-fifths to come to terms under threat of extinction.

This new attitude was symbolised by the appointment of General Maxwell Taylor as "Ambassador" in Saigon, with a civilian deputy to take care of political matters. Functionally, Maxwell Taylor was to act as supreme co-ordinator of the American war effort in South East Asia, linking together the activities of the 7th Fleet in the South China Sea with those of the strategic airforce in Thailand, South Vietnam and Laos, for a co-ordinated attack on the "Viet Cong" (the N.F.L.) the "Viet Minh" (the D.R.V.) and the Pathet Lao.

Immediately after his re-election in November, 1964, President Johnson reviewed the situation again together with Ambassador Taylor, the Secretaries of State and Defence, the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In a White House statement issued on December 1, it was said that the meeting had reviewed:

> "the accumulating evidence of continuing and increased North Vietnamese forces in, and passing through, the territory of Laos, in violation of the Geneva accords of 1962. The President instructed Ambassador Taylor to consult urgently with the South Vietnamese Government as to measures that should be taken to improve the situation in all its aspects".
>
> "The President re-affirmed the basic U.S. policy of providing all possible and useful assistance to the South Vietnamese people and Government

> in their struggle to defeat the externally supported insurgency and aggression being conducted against them. It was noted that this policy accords with the terms of the Congressional Joint Resolution of August 10, 1964, which remains in full force and effect".

(This was the resolution carried with only two dissentients by a joint sitting of Congress, a few days after the U.S. punitive expedition in the Gulf of Tonkin. It authorised the President, as Commander-in-Chief, to take any action he deemed necessary to give military aid to South Vietnam under the SEATO Treaty.)

It will be noted that this official U.S. statement assumed, contrary to the Geneva Agreements (see Appendix A and C), that there were two separate independent States of North and South Vietnam. From this purely unilateral American view of what happened at the 1954 Geneva Conference, we can assume that the Americans were not then prepared to attend any peace conference which took as its starting point the existence of a single Sovereign independent State of Vietnam. This was to prove to be the real root of all the ambiguities and evasions which arose subsequently over Johnson's phrase about "unconditional negotiations". All that has happened since fully demonstrates that by "unconditional" Johnson meant "without any commitment to accept the categorical terms of the Final Declaration as the basis of a new political settlement".

In the December 1 review, the President's advisers had reported that the military situation was bad, with the N.F.L. winning substantial victories and the internal political situation in Saigon still chaotic. After the review President Johnson therefore issued new military and political directives. The military directives were:

> (1). Substantially to increase the American war effort in the South with the aim of completely crushing the forces of the Liberation Front.
> (2). To find a suitable opportunity to extend the war to the North and attack the Northern Communists on their home ground.
> (3). If the N.F.L. and Hanoi refused to surrender, and sought Chinese and Russian aid, to deter the Russians by offering them a separate settlement, ignoring the Chinese, and to drive the latter into the position of appearing to be the sole supporters and instigators of "Communist aggression".
> (4). To build up and strengthen the U.S. air and naval bases in South Vietnam and to retain them under American control until they could be handed over to the nominal control of a reliable South Vietnamese Government on behalf of the SEATO Alliance.
> (5). To initiate the new military operations with intensive bombing raids on Northern Laos, and at a suitable moment, to extend the raids to North Vietnam.

The political objectives were:

(1). To try to insulate the South from Northern political propaganda.
(2). To build up a "Government" in South Vietnam again with a civilian front which might, in due course, win some popular support.
(3). To isolate the North politically and diplomatically from the Soviet Communist group and drive them into the arms of Peking.

In the execution of this new plan of campaign, various organs of the United States Government were all expected to play their proper part. The Military Command in Saigon, strengthened by additional American marines and Special Forces units, would co-ordinate the air, sea and land war and the military activities of such allies (Thailand, South Korea and Australia) as were willing to provide active military support.

Britain, in view of her commitments in Malaysia, would be asked only to supply increased *indirect* military assistance in such forms as the construction of airfields in Thailand, the training of South Vietnamese Special Forces units in counter-guerrilla warfare, air and naval logistical assistance, and staging and refuelling facilities for U.S. air and naval units at Hong Kong and Singapore.

The British share in this plan was substantially agreed at the meeting between Harold Wilson and Lyndon Johnson in December, 1964. As the well-informed diplomatic correspondent of the *Guardian*, Mr. Terence Prittie, revealed on February 9, 1965.

> "The British Government has been informed, for the past three months, of the military measures which the U.S. are prepared to take against North Vietnam should they consider such steps justified. The American plan for military counter-action against South Vietnam for persistently violating the 1954 Geneva agreement and for organising the Communist Viet Cong (*sic!*) campaign in South Vietnam, was made known to the British Government in November by Mr. Bundy, President Johnson's special adviser".

This Foreign Office statement, which was given at the same time to the other diplomatic correspondents of the principal London dailies, appeared two days after the first American "retaliatory attack" against North Vietnam. That attack, as we now know, was the beginning of the second phase of the new military campaign which had actually begun quietly with heavy bombing raids on northern Laos in the middle of January.[1]

Meanwhile, the C.I.A. had been given the job of preparing material for propaganda use both internally in Vietnam and externally amongst America's allies and friends. The internal propaganda campaign was divided into two parts: (*a*) rapid indoctrination courses for picked men of the South Vietnamese Army and Air Force and for the new American units arriving in the country; (*b*) propaganda leaflets to be dropped on the North to stir up the North Vietnamese people against their "communist masters" who were selling their country and their rice to the Red Chinese.

For external purposes, the main task of the C.I.A. was to collect or manufacture "evidence" of communist aggression from the North. A start on collecting the necessary "evidence" had been made as far back as the previous autumn, when the South Vietnamese Intelligence Officers were instructed to improve their methods of interrogating "Viet Cong" prisoners. Some of the methods which they used to extract the desired information were made known to the Western public through photographs widely published in the Western press in October and November, 1964. These included twisting a knife in the victim's belly, pumping water down his nostrils, and up-ending him in a cauldron of boiling water. To quote from a U.S.I.S. hand-out in mid-February, 1965:

> ". . . as a result of the improved interrogation methods which have recently been used by the South Vietnamese army, it has now been established that certainly 19,000 men and probably 34,000 have passed down from the North over the Ho Chi Minh trail since 1960."

This evidence, extracted by the torturing of a comparatively small number of individual prisoners, formed the main basis of the allegations which were subsequently published as "facts" in the notorious March 1965 White Paper.

Both the conclusions and the supporting evidence of the White Paper have been torn to shreds by such reputable correspondents as James Reston in the *New York Times* and the Washington correspondents of the London *Times* and *Guardian*. All independent observers with some knowledge of the true situation in South Vietnam have agreed in exposing the figures given in the White Paper and its appendices as widely inaccurate. The general view, which confirms my own observations and enquiries, is that in March 1965, 98 per cent. of the men and women fighting in the South were Southerners and 95 per cent. of their war material consisted of captured French and American weapons. In the White Paper itself, there was an admission that the overwhelming majority of those who had come from the North were Southerners, who tired of waiting long years for peaceful reunification had returned to fight side by side with their families in the South. Even this

"infiltration" had begun as a small trickle only in 1961, and by the end of 1964 they contributed—if the high American estimates are to be believed—only one-tenth of the total fighting forces of the N.F.L. As for war materials, the North had apparently supplied only some small arms and ammunition, while the first captured dump of external Communist supplies dated only from 1964.[2]

Yet, shoddy and dishonest as it was, the U.S. White Paper was accepted and publicised as gospel truth by the British Foreign Office and defended in the House of Commons by both Harold Wilson and Michael Stewart. The Labour Government was now firmly committed to the American thesis that the North Vietnamese were the aggressors and that South Vietnam must be converted into a separate, independent anti-Communist State by the extermination of the N.F.L.

This, I now began to realise, was the explanation of the extraordinary attitude which both Harold Wilson and Michael Stewart had adopted towards my own small efforts to bring about peace in Vietnam on the basis of what France, the Soviet Union, Pham Van Dong and U Thant, amongst others, described as "the essential principles of the Geneva Agreements". It explained why Pham Van Dong's renewed peace offer in April was ignored and suppressed. It explained why all the so-called "mediatory" efforts of the British Government from then on, from the Gordon Walker mission, through the Commonwealth Mission, to the Harold Davies mission, were to fail utterly in their presumed objective of bringing the parties to the Conference table. They failed because, with whatever motive they were put forward, they were tolerated by the Americans merely as further exercises in the political war game of putting Hanoi and Peking in the wrong.

Regrettably, a close examination of all the evidence proves conclusively that, at least from May onwards, both the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary were fully aware of the real plans and intentions of the United States Government, and were quite ready to co-operate in the exercise of isolating China, if not North Vietnam, as the principal disturber of the peace in South East Asia. May marked a further turning point in the prosecution of the American war effort. An assessment made by Johnson's advisers at the end of April showed that the war was still going badly. Hanoi had refused to surrender to American bombing and the N.F.L. was about to start its summer offensive. The conscripts

of the South Vietnamese army were showing no eagerness to get killed while protecting their American protectors, and were deserting or going over to the other side in large numbers. Only Air-Marshal Cao Ky's American-equipped Air Force could be relied upon for full co-operation. The Americans decided to concentrate on the war and to hell with politics and peace talks. In a special message to Congress on May 4, President Johnson asked the Congress to appropriate an additional sum of $700,000,000.

> "This is not a routine operation. For each member of the Congress who supports this request is also voting to persist in our effort to halt Communist aggression in South Vietnam.
> ". . . nor can I guarantee this will be the last request. If our need expands, I will turn again to the Congress . . . our commitment to South Vietnam is nourished by a quarter century of history. It rests on solid treaties, the demands of principle and the necessities of American security . . . we fought in Korea so that South Korea might remain free. Now, in Vietnam, we pursue the same principle.
> "In 1954 we signed the South East Asia Collective Defence Treaty. That Treaty committed us to meet aggression against South Vietnam. Less than a year ago the Congress, by an almost unanimous vote, said that the United States was ready to take all necessary steps to meet its obligations under that Treaty . . . We cannot, and will not withdraw or be defeated.
> ". . . I deeply regret the necessity of bombing North Vietnam. However, the bombing is not an end in itself. Its purpose is to bring us closer to the day of peace . . . Let us also remember, when we began the bombings there was little talk of negotiations!"

Unlike the John Hopkin's speech made only four weeks earlier for world public consumption, this message to the U.S. Congress contained not a single reference to the 1954 Geneva Agreements. It was a straightforward call to war in execution of treaties signed by military allies. For the Americans, the immediate consequence was a decision to raise the American commitment to Vietnam from 35,000 to 75,000 men, with further increases later in the year if this should prove necessary. At the same time, the American Government decided that its somewhat reluctant allies must now be brought into full co-operation with their war effort.

While Johnson was sending this message to Congress, the SEATO and NATO Councils were meeting in London. Here the Americans put forward their demands with, as usual, full support from Thailand. France and Pakistan declined to have anything to do with it, but Australia and New Zealand responded by promising to send combat troops. Harold Wilson and Michael Stewart were in a difficulty as they had promised Labour M.P.s not to send British

troops to South Vietnam. Harold Wilson explained to the SEATO Council Meeting that there was a division of Labour between the British and the Americans in South East Asia.

> "In Malaysia, we are doing the fighting and the Americans are doing the negotiating", he said. "In Vietnam, it is the Americans who are doing the fighting and we who are doing the negotiating".

Michael Stewart played his part on behalf of the Foreign Office by telling the Council meeting that the British Government had tried very hard to get negotiations going, but "so far, Peking and North Vietnam have contemptuously spurned all ideas of negotiations". This was quite untrue, since it was Michael Stewart himself who had "spurned" Pham Van Dong's offer of negotiations. As for China, Chou en-Lai had some time previously informed U Thant, through an intermediary, that China was ready to negotiate as soon as the Americans were prepared to accept in principle that their military forces must be withdrawn from Vietnam. A week later, Michael Stewart told the NATO Council meeting (on May 12) that there was "one thing they all had in common—no one wanted the communists to win!" On the same day, in a party political television interview, Harold Wilson found it possible to refer to "our quiet pressure for peace in Vietnam".

For those of us who had followed these events and statements closely it was no surprise that the Commonwealth Vietnam mission proved completely abortive. Harold Wilson killed the mission before ever it got off the ground by first making sure of the support of Sir Robert Menzies and President Johnson, and then seeking to ram it down the throats of his reluctant Asian and African colleagues. Something might, indeed, have come of it had he not insisted on being the Chairman of the Mission himself, even to the point of threatening to break up the Prime Ministers' Conference if his colleagues persisted in their attempt to find another Chairman who might be more acceptable to the Asian countries with which it was proposed to negotiate.[3]

President Johnson showed his real attitude towards the whole affair by initiating a new stage in the escalation of the war—the extension of bombing raids to within a few miles of the Chinese frontier—on the very day following Harold Wilson's announcement that he had formed the Commonwealth Peace Mission. The news of this deliberate provocation of China was, however, kept out of the Western press for four days so as to give Chou en-Lai an

opportunity to reject the new "peace hoax". In this way, the hoax once again proved successful, at least as far as the West was concerned, by providing new confirmation that it was the Chinese who were the obstacle to peace. The Commonwealth Mission died a natural death within two or three weeks, but not before it had served another purpose dear to the hearts of the State Department, the C.I.A. and the Foreign Office, the torpedoing of the Afro-Asian "Bandung" Conference. Here the African and Asian members of the Commonwealth had planned to see what the countries of Asia and Africa, who were not committed to the Western bloc, could do to get the Americans out of Vietnam, resolve the internal political differences inside the country, and restore peace, independence and unity at long last.

A convenient political coup in Algiers was used as an excuse by India not to attend the Afro-Asian Conference and the West African countries, involved in internal African political rivalries, followed suit. Chou en-Lai was kept waiting in the wings in Cairo, where, however, he spent his time to good effect in discussing with President Nasser new moves to secure Afro-Asian mediation in the Vietnam conflict.

Meanwhile President Nkrumah of Ghana, President Ayub Khan of Pakistan, Eric Williams of Trinidad, President Nyerere of Tanzania, Prime Minister Obote of Uganda (in Pekin), Lester Pearson of Canada, Prince Sihanouk of Cambodia and perhaps most important of all—Andre Malraux, French Minister of Culture and De Gaulle's personal envoy to Pekin, all began to make individual efforts to find some way of bridging the gap between the avowed aim of the Americans to drive Hanoi and the Liberation Front into submission and the even greater determination of the Vietnamese not to surrender to American military blackmail.

Harold Wilson, having been repudiated by Julius Nyerere and Eric Williams in public and by several other Commonwealth Premiers in private, had to endure the final snub of being told by the Ghana High Commissioner in London that he would report on his Mission to Hanoi to President Nkrumah and to nobody else.

When Parliament broke up for the Summer Recess, Britain had been reduced to a position of splendid diplomatic isolation, so closely tied to America's financial and military apron strings, that there was hardly a country in all the five continents which regarded her as having any longer an independent voice in world affairs.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Pre-Conditions of a Durable Peace

"Peace, that simple little five-letter word, is the most important word in the English language to us at this time."

LYNDON B. JOHNSON, August 25, 1965.

"Long-range U.S. jet planes to-day bombed dams and power-stations in North Vietnam for the second day running. The dams control the irrigation of the rice-fields."

Press reports, August 25, 1965.

"American all-weather jets, beginning May 1 . . . slowly mounted the pressure (on the Vietcong in South Vietnam) until in August the weekly sorties ran beyond 24,000 . . . B52 strategic bombers . . . have raided the Communists 16 times, usually in flights of about 30 planes."

Christian Science Monitor, September 2, 1965.

"We are going to persist, if persist we must, until death and desolation have led to the same conference table where others could now join us at a much smaller cost."

LYNDON B. JOHNSON, July 28, 1965.

"Peace is always easy to achieve—by surrender."

JOHN FOSTER DULLES, Geneva, April 28, 1954.

During the Commonwealth Prime Minister's Conference I was asked by one of President Nkrumah's advisers what I thought were the principal keys to peace in Vietnam. I said:

"The principal keys to peace are to be found in Vietnam itself —in Hanoi and in the jungle headquarters of the Liberation Front. The Vietnamese are a proud and independent people, just as proud and independent as the English and the Ghanaians. They will not be cowed into submission by Macnamara's bombers; they will respond to Ho Chi Minh's call to fight for freedom and independence as we responded to Churchill's call to defy Goering's bombers and Hitler's armies when we "stood alone" in 1940. They have one important advantage which we did not have in 1940: they do not stand alone; they are supported now by the entire communist group of countries from Prague to Pekin and by the majority of the non-communist countries of Asia and Africa. This is Johnson's gift to Ho Chi Minh. This—and the tough spirit of

his thirty million compatriots is the source of Ho Chi Minh's confidence that this time he will win what he has been fighting for ever since he came to London fifty years ago: full independence, justice, equality of status "of men and women and of nations large and small", and *then* peace. For without these things there can be no enduring peace, as we well know who have fought for them so long."

I had not meant to preach a sermon to my socialist friend, so I added, more pragmatically: "Tell President Nkrumah that, as I see it, President Ho Chi Minh will welcome any Head of State, and Prime Minister Pham Van Dong will welcome any Head of Government, who is prepared to go to Hanoi as Nehru did in 1954, to talk as equal to equal. But after three bitter experiences Ho Chi Minh is wary of the friends of the West. He will not allow himself to be trapped and cheated a fourth time."

I ended by asking my friend to pass on to Nkrumah a copy of the Motion: *Pre-Conditions for Peace in Vietnam*, tabled in the House of Commons by Mrs. Anne Kerr and myself. At a moment when American bombers are destroying the life-lines of the Vietnamese people—their highways and bridges, their power stations, their irrigation reservoirs, their food crops and their homes—while Dean Rusk and Simon Goldberg talk of peace in Washington and New York, the suggestions made in this Motion still have validity. These were its main points, as they have since been amplified in discussions with other interested people.

First, what the people of Vietnam want for themselves and are entitled to receive from other peoples: recognition of their right to enjoy full independence, sovereignty, unity, territorial integrity, and non-interference in their internal affairs, as laid down in the Final Declaration at Geneva.

Second, what the Americans must do if they genuinely want peace and freedom for Vietnam: stop their air terror against the North and the South, stop their invasion of the South, stop trying to spur on Vietnamese to kill Vietnamese, stop trying to split Vietnam into two states, stop trying to shore up fascist-minded military juntas in Saigon; declare publicly that they are now willing to adhere to and carry out the essential conditions of the Geneva Agreements on military neutrality; adhere to the Final Declaration of the Geneva Conference recognising Vietnam as one country and one state; demonstrate their good faith by beginning to reduce

their forces in Vietnam instead of re-inforcing them; *then* say that they are ready to negotiate with both Hanoi and the N.F.L. and to take part in a new Conference based on the essential Geneva principles and to sign an International Treaty embodying the decisions of the Conference.

Third, what the Australians and the New Zealanders should do: stop making a mockery of the Commonwealth ideal by sending white troops into an Asian country to fight alongside other white troops and their Asian mercenaries.

Fourth, what the British Government should do if it wants to restore Britain's good name in the world: stop recognising and supporting the military-fascist regime in Saigon, stop direct or indirect military co-operation with the Saigon regime and the American armed forces in Vietnam and the South China Sea, stop building air bases in Thailand for aggression against Laos; recognise the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and enter into normal diplomatic, cultural and commercial relations with it.

These are, in my view, still the essential pre-conditions of any durable peace in Vietnam. They arise inevitably out of the true facts of the situation as I have described them in the previous twelve chapters of this book. They are in accordance with international law and the principles of the United Nations Charter. They correspond to the aspirations of the people of Vietnam as they have displayed them in action over the past 25 years.

They do not, of course, correspond with the past and present aims of some of the Great Powers. But if the world is to live at peace the Great Powers must learn that not only do they have no right to try to impose their will by force on their small and weaker neighbours, but in the long run it does not pay them to do so, because they too will get hurt.

France has learned this lesson from bitter experience. That is why she, of all the Western Powers, is in the best position to lead the way to an understanding of China, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and the other resurgent nations of Asia. The Soviet Union has learned from equally bitter experience, in Cuba, Korea and Vietnam, that it does not pay a would-be socialist country to enter into deals with capitalist-imperialist powers at the expense of small countries.

China is passing, like the Soviet Union in the 1920s, through its worst period of isolation and introversion, viewed with hostility

and suspicion by some of its friends as well as by its present foes. Yet one-quarter of the human race cannot for long be ignored and isolated, and they certainly cannot be suppressed or exterminated. So long as she is under the leadership of statesmen with a world view and a vast fund of experience, like Chou en-Lai, China will seek peaceful co-existence and the peaceful interpenetration of ideas and ideals, even while preparing to fight the war which the United States has sought to force upon her, without respite, for nearly fifteen years. And China is quite unlikely to make the mistake of trying to impose her rule again on the people of Vietnam. China, like any great nation trying to live in a dangerously armed world, will insist on having friendly neighbours as a *cordon sanitaire*, but she will abide by the decisions of any new Geneva Conference, as she abided—more faithfully than any other country except France—by those of the 1954 Conference, until they were smashed to pieces by the Dulles brothers and their agents in Saigon.

That leaves the Americans. It is up to them, as everybody with a knowledge of world affairs knows that it has been up to them ever since John Foster Dulles decided to treat the Geneva settlement as a scrap of paper. He got the Americans into this physical and moral morass. Who will get them out? All the so-called political realists say that it is just not possible for the American Government and the American war machine to reverse engines, go back to base and make a fresh start in a new direction. The *Times* Washington Correspondent says that the manifest destiny of the American Nation is now in full control of its policy-makers. Dean Rusk says that America's national interest demands that they stand by their commitment to defend freedom in South Vietnam. Cabot Lodge says that they mean to make South Vietnam an independent non-communist country even if they have to take it over and run it as a colony, without even the pretence of an independent native government, for three, five, ten or fifteen years. Alistair Cooke says that the American arms firms are looking for big new orders from the war in Vietnam, and still bigger ones if there is war with China. The Pentagon says that it must keep its new jet air bases in South Vietnam, also for the eventual war with China.

This, indeed, is the grim present reality in South-East Asia. But it is not paying. The Vietnamese are fighting back and American soldiers are getting killed. Their bombers, their troop transports and their pilots are getting badly smashed up, not only by the increasing

Vietnamese air defence but also in crashes, collisions, ground sabotage and accidental explosions. With each new escalation of the war, with increasing use of terror weapons, the Vietnamese get more help from their friends, while world public opinion—in Asia, Africa, Europe, Britain and the United States itself—turns in shame and horror away from leaders who appear to have lost all sense of moral responsibility.

Before long a climax will be reached. The naked choice—a world war against half of Asia or acceptance of the fact that Asia is indomitable—will become apparent to all. At that moment a new face of American policy, or rather the true face which was shown to the world by Woodrow Wilson and Franklin D. Roosevelt, and revealed itself again at moments through Eisenhower and Kennedy, will burst through the hideous mask of militarism which it has worn through these last terrible years, and peace—true peace—will come to Vietnam, to China, to Asia, to the world.

This is the hope and the faith which inspires men like U Thant to go on with their patient, arduous work for peace; because they know, as we all know in our hearts, that if the military machine conquers human life we are finished.

Notes

CHAPTER ONE

[1] There are no precise records of the date, or even of the year. It has been established by inference from a number of personal recollections.

[2] France got them back only in 1946, when—with the backing of Britain and the United States, she re-assumed full power over Indo-China.

CHAPTER TWO

[1] *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society*, July-Oct. 1953, p. 213.

[2] Hansard, Vol. 414, Cols. 2149-2150.

CHAPTER THREE

[1] Mao Tse Tung's famous phrase.

[2] The Navarre Plan was actually a combined political and military plan, agreed between the French and the Americans, in execution of their joint declaration of March 30, 1953. With John Foster Dulles now in the saddle, the U.S.A. persuaded the French to agree that (i) the Indo-Chinese and Korean issues were interdependent, (ii) the aim of France in Indo-China was the total defeat of communism, with no compromises, and (iii) military plans for achieving this aim would be drawn up jointly between France and the U.S.A. Ten years later, in February 1963, Sir Alec Douglas-Home and President Johnson were to enter into a similar agreement linking together Vietnam and Malaysia.

CHAPTER FOUR

[1] Eden, who was very impressed when he met Chou en-Lai for private talks at Geneva, also gives him the credit for persuading the "Viet Minh" to withdraw military support from the left-wing forces in Laos and Cambodia.

[2] No American President has ever had to make a formal declaration of war against either the C.P.R. or the D.R.V., because the United States has never recognised either of them as *governments*, and the hostile acts which the Americans have committed from time to time against both countries have been undertaken indirectly—in support of a government which they do recognise.

[3] The Foreign Offices Introduction to the South-East Asia Collective Defence Treaty (Manila September 8, 1954, Cmd.9282) revealed that the Treaty flowed directly from discussions which had taken place in London on April 12 and 13, 1954, between Anthony Eden and John Foster Dulles, and that informal discussions between "Her Majesty's Government and other Governments concerned" had continued during the period while

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the Geneva Conference was sitting, to culminate on August 14, in the issue of an agreed communiqué to the effect that "H.M. Government in the United Kingdom have agreed with other like-minded governments that the situation in S.E. Asia calls for the establishment of a collective security arrangement".

[4] Attlee's support for the South-East Asia Treaty was reluctant and far from whole-hearted. When the idea was discussed in the House of Commons on June 23, 1954, he said: "I am quite sure that it is vitally important that we should secure the support and approval of our Asian Comrades in the Commonwealth, and I say again that there is the prerequisite of a proper appreciation of the position of China". (*Hansard*, vol. 529, col. 444).

CHAPTER FIVE

[1] At the Oxford Teach-in on June 16, 1965, Mr. Michael Stewart tried to make the point that over a million "refugees" from the North had "voted with their feet" against the Communist regime in North Vietnam. While it is undoubtedly true that most of the anti-communists in the North took advantage of this population movement to take refuge in the South, they represented only a small proportion of the 800,000 people, mainly Catholics, who were transferred from the North to the South in a movement organised by the International Control Commission in accordance with the clause in the Geneva Agreement allowing civilians in both zones a period of 300 days in which to choose their place of residence. Mr. B. S. N. Murti in "Divided Vietnam" *(v. Bib.)* confirms that the Hanoi Government co-operated fully with the Commission in the execution of this operation, even to the point of supplying the migrants with food and money for their journey. A considerable number of Catholics stayed in the North and we were able to see them worshipping in Catholic churches in Hanoi both in 1957 and 1965. Insofar as there was any "panic" movement this was stirred up by a propaganda campaign organised by Ngo Dinh Diem with the assistance of the Americans who at that time still had a consulate in Hanoi. Coral Bell in *Survey of International Affairs, 1954* (published for the Royal Institute of International Affairs in 1957) comments: "A number of English observers were critical of the methods used in the campaign and doubted whether the peasants concerned fully understood the realities of the situation or had indeed wished to move."

CHAPTER SIX

[1] Congress Representatives Pilcher, Johnson and Adair in supplementary conclusions to the House Foreign Affairs Committee: Special Study Mission to the Far East stated: "Since President Diem assumed office in 1955 he has taken dictatorial control, either directly or through a small group of intimates, many of whom are members of his family. It is estimated some 300,000 South Vietnamese nationalists are in concentration camps. The lack of freedom of the press and the presence of close governmental controls, have been reflected in the lack of will in some of the South Vietnamese people to fight for their country." (May 22, 1962).

Philippe Devillers in an article in the *China Quarterly*, January-March, 1962, reached the conclusion that the insurrection in the South began before the southern communists decided to take an organised part in it and that the southerners "were literally driven by Diem to take up arms in self defence."

Just previously, Harold Davies in an adjournment debate in the House of Commons, had secured from the Conservative Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Peter Thomas, an admission that the task of the British Advisory (Thompson) Mission to South Vietnam was "to advise the South Vietnamese Government, when asked, on all administrative matters, including those connected with internal security." (Hansard February 19, 1962 col. 174). The "advice" was presumably given to the notorious Security Police Chief Ngo Dinh Nhu, brother of the dictator.

CHAPTER SEVEN

[1] This may sound like ironical exaggeration, but John Foster Dulles did in fact think like this. A strict Calvinist Protestant, he divided people and nations into good and bad, white and black, sheep and goats. Neutralism, he said, was immoral. His one speech to the Geneva Conference, on April 26, was a moralistic homily on the vices of Communism and the virtues of "freedom".

[2] A report in the *New York Times* January 22, 1962, confirmed that chemicals sprayed from aeroplanes and helicopters were used not only to "defoliate the jungles" but also to destroy the food crops of the peasants in the liberated areas: "a high official personality of the South Vietnamese Government said today that the chemicals would be sprayed over the Viet Cong manioc and sweet potato fields in the High Plateaux. These crops are an essential part of the Viet Cong mountain food supplies, especially manioc from which tapioca is derived. These chemical substances, which destroy all vegetation, are intended to play an important part in the plan to deprive the Viet Cong of their essential food supplies."

CHAPTER NINE

[1]Further verification had come in two on-the-spot reports from David Halberstom, who made an extended visit to Vietnam for the *New York Times* and Dennis Bloodworth, Saigon correspondent of the London *Observer*. David Halberstom wrote:

"The war is largely a conflict of Southerners fought on Southern land. No capture of North Vietnamese in the South has come to light, and it is generally believed that most Viet Cong weapons have been seized from the South Vietnamese forces . . . Some Viet Cong cadres have been trained in the North or have served in the North Vietnamese Army, but they are Southerners. Special teams such as medical or demolition units have also been trained in the North. The regular guerillas are Southerners who have rarely left the South." (*New York Times*: March 6, 1964.)

Mr. Dennis Bloodworth wrote: "according to official Vietnamese figures more than 20,000 Communist insurgents were killed in these swamps and jungles and 12,500 surrendered, but once again estimates of regular Vietcong guerillas have risen from 25,000 to 27,000 and the Hydra-headed enemy now controls up to 70 per cent. of some of the provinces in the marshy Mekong Delta.

"Neutral observers here firmly reject the view that a body-blow at North Vietnam would end the war in the south. About 2,500 Communist cadres and specialist troops are believed to have filtered down from the north, and some Chinese weapons—notably mortars—have been shipped by junk into the maze of delta waters in which the guerillas operate, but the Vietcong are largely self-sufficient." (*Observer:* March 8, 1964).

CHAPTER TWELVE

LAOS AND CAMBODIA

[1] Laos is a country about the size of the British Isles with a population of only two million people of various clans, the largest of which are closely related to the Thais. For two centuries before the French came in and revived the ancient kingdom of Laos under their protection, the country had been fought over by Siam and Vietnam. In the 18th century Siam divided the country into three kingdoms, one of which, covering the Mekong Valley, was a Siamese Protectorate. In 1940 Thailand partitioned the country again in conjunction with the Japanese, but had to return it to the French in 1946. Since then rival Princes with their small private armies have fought one another almost continuously. At the two Geneva Conferences in 1954 and 1962, attempts were made to create a unified central government embracing the three political factions of right, left and centre, and their respective armed forces. The Americans have never in practice accepted the idea of a unified government and army with a policy of political and military neutrality. Every time the neutralist leader Prince Souphanna Phouma has attempted to bring the left-wing Pathet Lao forces into the Government and the military headquarters in Vientiane, various right-wing Princes and Generals have staged coups with American and Thai backing.

The Thais appear determined, with American help, to get control of Vientiane and of both banks of the Mekong River. Their aim is a new partition of Laos which would leave the northern provinces, close to the Chinese and North Vietnamese frontiers, as an independent principality allied to North Vietnam with the rest of the country down to the Cambodian frontier under their control.

The C.I.A. have stimulated contact between the Thai military dictators, the Laotian right-wing militarists and the South Vietnamese Generals in Saigon. Prince Sihanouk, the democratic-socialist leader of the genuinely neutral kingdom of Cambodia, has reacted sharply to these manoeuvres which threaten the territorial integrity of his country. He has several times requested a re-called Geneva Conference to guarantee the neutrality and territorial integrity of Cambodia, but his insistence that South Vietnam should be represented at the conference by the National Front for Liberation has annoyed the Americans, who are now treating him as virtually an enemy in their war in South-East Asia.

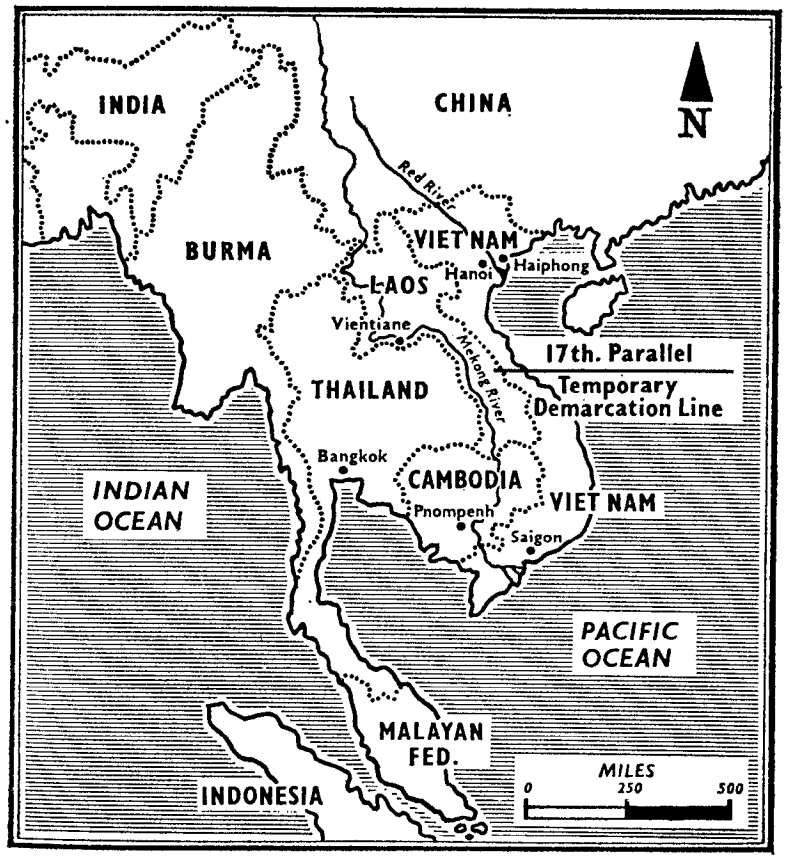
[2] The Washington Correspondent of the London *Times* (May 20, 1965) summed up the "devastating" criticism of American policy in Vietnam published by Mr. John Mecklin, former head of the U.S. Information Service in Saigon, in his book *Mission in Torment* in the following terms: "Mr. Mecklin says that American policy is a failure. He dismisses the evidence of the Government White Paper and insists that most of the Viet-cong is equipped with captured American weapons.

"He accepts that several thousand men have been infiltrated from the north, but says that the overwhelming majority are recruited locally. The Vietcong would be weakened if this help were stopped, but probably not much more than the efficiency of the Pentagon would be reduced if the air conditioning were shut off.

"The effectiveness of bombing supply routes is questioned and the idea of stopping infiltration is dismissed as irrelevant. The Vietcong is gradually capturing the countryside, infiltrating the strategic hamlets, intimidating local officials, and fighting off the local armed forces."

[3] A detailed account of the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' discussions on the Vietnam question, both inside and outside the Conference Room, can be found in the excellent reports published at the time in the *Guardian* by their Commonwealth Correspondent, Patrick Keatley.

See also my article in the *Spectator* for July 9, 1965, entitled "Failure of a Mission".



Appendix A

Extracts from Verbatim Record of Eighth Plenary Session of the Geneva Conference on Indo-China, July 21, 1954 (H.M.S.O. Cmd.9329)

The Chairman (Mr. Eden): As I think my colleagues are aware, agreement has now been reached on certain documents. It is proposed that this Conference should take note of these agreements. I accordingly propose to begin by reading out a list of the subjects covered by the documents, which I understand every delegation has in front of them.

First, agreement on the cessation of hostilities in Vietnam; second, agreement on the cessation of hostilities in Laos; third, agreement on the cessation of hostilities in Cambodia. I would draw particular attention to the fact that these three agreements now incorporate the texts which were negotiated separately concerning the supervision of the Armistice in the three countries by the International Commission and the joint committees.

I should also like to draw the attention of all delegations to a point of some importance in connection with the Armistice Agreements and the related maps and documents on supervision. It has been agreed among the parties to each of these Agreements that none of them shall be made public for the present, pending further agreement among the parties. The reason for this, I must explain to my colleagues, is that these Armistice terms come into force at different dates. And it is desired that they should not be made public until they have come into force.

The further documents to which I must draw attention, which are in your possession, are: fourth, declaration by the Government of Laos on elections; fifth, declaration by the Governments of Cambodia on elections and integration of all citizens into the national community; sixth, declaration by the Government of Laos on the military status of the country; seventh, declaration by the Government of Cambodia on the military status of the country; eighth, declaration by the Government of the French Republic on the withdrawal of troops from the three countries of Indochina.

Finally, gentlemen, there is the Draft Declaration by the Conference, which takes note of all these documents. I think all my colleagues have copies of this Draft Declaration before them. I will ask my colleagues in turn to express themselves upon this Declaration.
The Representative of France.
M. Mendès-France (France): Mr. Chairman, the French Delegation approves the terms of this Declaration.
The Chairman: The Representative of Laos.
Mr. Phoui Sananikone (Laos): The Delegation of Laos has no observations to make on this text.

The Chairman: The Representative of the People's Republic of China.
Mr. Chou En-lai (People's Republic of China): We agree.
The Chairman: On behalf of Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, I associate myself with the final Declaration of this Conference.
The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.
M. Molotov (U.S.S.R.): The Soviet Delegation agrees.
The Chairman: The Representative of Cambodia.
Mr. Tep Phan (Cambodia): The Delegation of Cambodia wishes to state that, among the documents just listed, one is missing. This is a Cambodian Declaration which we have already circulated to all delegations. Its purport is as follows: Paragraphs 7, 11 and 12 of the final Declaration, stipulate respect for the territorial integrity of Vietnam. The Cambodian Delegation asks the Conference to consider that this provision does not imply the abandonment of such legitimate rights and interests as Cambodia might assert with regard to certain regions of South Vietnam, about which Cambodia has made express reservations, in particular at the time of the signature of the Franco-Khmer Treaty of November 8, 1949, on relations between Cambodia and France and at the time the French Law which linked Cochin-China to Vietnam was passed. Faithful to the ideal of peace, and to the international principle of non-interference, Cambodia has no intention of interfering in the internal affairs of the State of Vietnam and associates herself fully with the principle of respect for its integrity, provided certain adjustments and regularisations be arrived at with regard to the borders between this State and Cambodia, borders which so far have been fixed by a mere unilateral act of France.

In support of this Declaration, the Cambodian Delegation communicates to all members of this Conference a note on Cambodian lands in South Vietnam.
The Chairman: If this Declaration was not inscribed on the agenda on the list of documents I have read out, it is because it has only at this instant reached me. I do not think it is any part of the task of this Conference to deal with any past controversies in respect of the frontiers between Cambodia and Vietnam.
The Representative of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.
Mr. Pham Van Dong (Democratic Republic of Vietnam): Mr. Chairman, I agree completely with the words pronounced by you. In the name of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam we make the most express reservations regarding the statement made by the Delegation of Cambodia just now. I do this in the interests of good relations and understanding between our two countries.
The Chairman: I think the Conference can take note of the statements of the Delegation of Cambodia just circulated and of the statement of the Representative of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

I will continue calling upon countries to speak on the subject of the Declaration. I call upon the United States of America.
Mr. Bedell Smith (United States): Mr. Chairman, Fellow Delegates, as

I stated to my colleagues during our meeting on July 18, my Government is not prepared to join in a Declaration by the Conference such as is submitted. However, the United States makes this unilateral declaration of its position in these matters:

Declaration

The Government of the United States being resolved to devote its efforts to the strengthening of peace in accordance with the principles and purposes of the United Nations

Takes Note

of the Agreements concluded at Geneva on July 20 and 21, 1954, between (*a*) the Franco-Laotian Command and the Command of the people's Army of Vietnam; (*b*) the Royal Khmer Army Command and the Command of the People's Army of Vietnam; (*c*) Franco-Vietnamese Command and the Command of the People's Army of Vietnam, and of paragraphs 1 to 12 of the Declaration presented to the Geneva Conference of July 21, 1954.

The Government of the United States of America

Declares with regard to the aforesaid Agreements and paragraphs that (i) it will refrain from the threat or the use of force to disturb them, in accordance with Article 2 (Section 4) of the Charter of the United Nations dealing with the obligation of Members to refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force; and (ii) it would view any renewal of the aggression in violation of the aforesaid Agreements with grave concern and as seriously threatening international peace and security.

In connection with the statement in the Declaration concerning free elections in Vietnam, my Government wishes to make clear its position which it has expressed in a Declaration made in Washington on June 29, 1954, as follows:

> "In the case of nations now divided against their will, we shall continue to seek to achieve unity through free elections, supervised by the United Nations to ensure that they are conducted fairly."

With respect to the statement made by the Representative of the State of Vietnam, the United States reiterates its traditional position that peoples are entitled to determine their own future and that it will not join in an arrangement which would hinder this. Nothing in its declaration just made is intended to or does indicate any departure from this traditional position.

We share the hope that the agreement will permit Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam to play their part in full independence and sovereignty, in the peaceful community of nations, and will enable the peoples of that area to determine their own future.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman: The Conference will, I think, wish to take note of the statement of the Representative of the United States of America.

I call on the Representative of the State of Vietnam.

Mr. Tran Van Do (State of Vietnam): Mr. Chairman, as regards the final Declaration of the Conference, the Vietnamese Delegation requests the Conference to incorporate in this Declaration after Article 10, the following text:

> "The Conference takes note of the Declaration of the Government of the State of Vietnam undertaking:
> "to make and support every effort to re-establish a real and lasting peace in Vietnam;
> "not to use force to resist the procedures for carrying the cease-fire into effect, in spite of the objections and reservations that the State of Vietnam has expressed, especially in its final statement."

The Chairman: I shall be glad to hear any views that my colleagues may wish to express. But, as I understand the position, the final Declaration has already been drafted and this additional paragraph has only just now been received; indeed, it has been amended since I received the text a few minutes ago. In all the circumstances, I suggest that the best course we can take is that the Conference should take note of the Declaration of the State of Vietnam in this respect. If any of my colleagues has a contrary view, perhaps they would be good enough to say so. *(None.)* If none of my colleagues wishes to make any other observations, may I pass to certain other points which have to be settled before this Conference can conclude its labours?

The first is that, if it is agreeable to our colleagues, it is suggested that the two Chairmen should at the conclusion of this meeting address telegrams to the Governments of India, Poland and Canada to ask them if they will undertake the duties of supervision which the Conference has invited them to discharge. Is that agreeable? *(Agreed.)* Thank you.

The last is perhaps the least agreeable chapter of all our work. Certain costs arise from the decisions which the Conference has taken. It is suggested that it should be left here to your Chairmen as their parting gift to try to put before you some proposal in respect of those costs. I only wish to add in that connection that, as this Conference is peculiar in not having any Secretariat in the usual sense of the term, the two Chairmen with considerable reluctance are prepared to undertake this highly invidious task. The costs to which I refer are not our own but those of the International Commission.

Does any delegate wish to make any further observation? *(None.)*

Gentlemen, perhaps I may say a final word as your Chairman for this day. We have now come to the end of our work. For a number of reasons it has been prolonged and intricate. The co-operation which all delegates have given to your two Chairmen has enabled us to overcome many procedural difficulties. Without that co-operation, we could not have succeeded in our task. The Agreements concluded today could not, in the nature of things, give complete satisfaction to everyone. But they have made it possible to stop a war which has lasted for eight

years and brought suffering and hardship to millions of people. They have also, we hope, reduced international tension at a point of instant danger to world peace. These results are surely worth our many weeks of toil. In order to bring about a cease-fire, we have drawn up a series of agreements. They are the best that our hands could devise. All will now depend upon the spirit in which those agreements are observed and carried out.

Gentlemen, before we leave this hospitable town of Geneva I'm sure you would wish your Chairmen to give a message of gratitude to the United Nations and its able staff who have housed and helped us in our work.

And lastly let me express our cordial thanks to the Swiss Government and to the people and authorities of Geneva who have done so much to make our stay here pleasant as well as of service to the cause of peace. The Representative of the United States of America.

Mr. Bedell Smith (U.S.A.): If I presume to speak for my fellow delegates, it is because I know that they all feel as I do. I hope that they join me in expressing our thanks to the two Chairmen of this Conference. Their patience, their tireless efforts, and their goodwill have done a great deal to make this settlement possible. We owe them our sincere thanks.

The Chairman: The Representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

M. Molotov (U.S.S.R.): Mr. Chairman, as one of the Chairmen at the Geneva Conference, I would like to reply to the remarks just made by Mr. Bedell Smith, who spoke highly of the work done by the Chairmen. Naturally I must stress the outstanding services and the outstanding role played by our Chairman of today, Mr. Eden, whose role in the Geneva Conference cannot be exaggerated. And I would also like to reply and thank Mr. Bedell Smith for his warm words of today.

The Chairman: Has any other delegate anything else they want to say? The Representative of Vietnam.

Mr. Tran Van Do (State of Vietnam): Mr. Chairman, I expressed the view of the Delegation of the State of Vietnam in my statement and I would have this Conference take note of it in its final act.

The Chairman: As I think I explained, we cannot now amend our final act, which is the statement of the Conference as a whole, but the Declaration of the Representative of the State of Vietnam will be taken note of.

Any other observations? *(None.)*

I would like to be allowed to add my thanks for what General Bedell Smith has said and also to thank M. Molotov for his words. Both were undeserved, but even if things are not true, if they are nice things it's pleasant to hear them said.

But I do want to close this Conference with this one sentence: I'm quite sure that each one of us here hopes that the work which we have done will help to strengthen the forces working for peace.

Final Declaration of the Geneva Conference on the Problem of Restoring Peace in Indo-China, in which the Representatives of Cambodia, The Democratic Republic of Vietnam, France, Laos, The People's Republic of China, The State of Vietnam, The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, The United Kingdom and the United States of America took part July 21, 1954

1. The Conference takes note of the agreements ending hostilities in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam and organising international control and the supervision of the execution of the provisions of these agreements.

2. The Conference expresses satisfaction at the ending of hostilities in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam; the Conference expresses its conviction that the execution of the provisions set out in the present declaration and in the agreements on cessation of hostilities will permit Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam henceforth to play their part, in full independence and sovereignty in the peaceful community of nations.

3. The Conference takes note of the declarations made by the Governments of Cambodia and of Laos of their intention to adopt measures permitting all citizens to take their place in the national community, in particular by participating in the next general elections, which, in conformity with the constitution of each of these countries, shall take place in the course of the year 1955, by secret ballot and in conditions of respect for fundamental freedoms.

4. The Conference takes note of the clauses in the agreement on the cessation of hostilities in Vietnam prohibiting the introduction into Vietnam of foreign troops and military personnel as well as of all kinds of arms and munitions. The Conference also takes note of the declarations made by the Governments of Cambodia and Laos of their resolution not to request foreign aid, whether in war material, in personnel or in instructors except for the purpose of the effective defence of their territory and, in the case of Laos, to the extent defined by the agreements on the cessation of hostilities in Laos.

5. The Conference takes note of the clauses in the agreement on the cessation of hostilities in Vietnam to the effect that no military base under the control of a foreign State may be established in the regrouping zones of the two parties, the latter having the obligation to see that the zones allotted to them shall not constitute part of any military alliance and shall not be utilised for the resumption of hostilities or in the service of an aggressive policy. The Conference also takes note of the declarations of the Governments of Cambodia and Laos to the effect that they will not join in any agreement with other States if this agreement includes the obligation to participate in a military alliance not in conformity with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations or, in the case of Laos, with the principles of the agreement on the cessation of hostilities in Laos or, so long as their security is not threatened, the obligation to establish bases on Cambodian or Laotian territory for the military forces of foreign Powers.

6. The Conference recognises that the essential purpose of the agreement relating to Vietnam is to settle military questions with a view to

ending hostilities and that the military demarcation line is provisional and should not in any way be interpreted as constituting a political or territorial boundary. The Conference expresses its conviction that the execution of the provisions set out in the present declaration and in the agreement on the cessation of hostilities creates the necessary basis for the achievement in the near future of a political settlement in Vietnam.

7. The Conference declares that, so far as Vietnam is concerned, the settlement of political problems, effected on the basis of respect for the principles of independence, unity and territorial integrity, shall permit the Vietnamese people to enjoy the fundamental freedoms, guaranteed by democratic institutions established as a result of free general elections by secret ballot. In order to ensure that sufficient progress in the restoration of peace has been made, and that all the necessary conditions obtain for free expression of the national will, general elections shall be held in July, 1956, under the supervision of an international commission composed of representatives of the Member States of the International Supervisory Commission, referred to in the agreement on the cessation of hostilities. Consultations will be held on this subject between the competent representative authorities of the two zones from July 20, 1955, onwards.

8. The provisions of the agreements on the cessation of hostilities intended to ensure the protection of individuals and of property must be most strictly applied and must, in particular, allow everyone in Vietnam to decide freely in which zone he wishes to live.

9. The competent representative authorities of the Northern and Southern zones of Vietnam, as well as the authorities of Laos and Cambodia, must not permit any individual or collective reprisals against persons who have collaborated in any way with one of the parties during the war, or against members of such persons' families.

10. The Conference takes note of the declaration of the Government of the French Republic to the effect that it is ready to withdraw its troops from the territory of Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, at the request of the Governments concerned and within periods which shall be fixed by agreement between the parties except in the cases where, by agreement between the two parties, a certain number of French troops shall remain at specified points and for a specified time.

11. The Conference takes note of the declaration of the French Government to the effect that for the settlement of all the problems connected with the re-establishment and consolidation of peace in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, the French Government will proceed from the principle of respect for the independence and sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam.

12. In their relations with Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, each member of the Geneva Conference undertakes to respect the sovereignty, the independence, the unity and the territorial integrity of the above-mentioned States and to refrain from an interference in their internal affairs.

13. The members of the Conference agree to consult one another on any question which may be referred to them by the International Supervisory Commission, in order to study such measures as may prove necessary to ensure that the agreements on the cessation of hostilities in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam are respected.

Extracts from the Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities in Vietnam—July 20, 1954.

Provisional Military Demarcation Line and Demilitarised Zone

Article 1

A provisional military demarcation line shall be fixed, on either side of which the forces of the two parties shall be regrouped after their withdrawal, the forces of the People's Army of Vietnam to the north of the line and the forces of the French Union to the south.

The provisional demarcation line is fixed as shown on the map attached.

It is also agreed that a demilitarised zone shall be established on either side of the demarcation line, to a width of not more than 5 kms. from it, to act as a buffer zone and avoid any incidents which might result in the resumption of hostilities.

Article 2

The period within which the movement of all forces of either party into its regrouping zone on either side of the provisional military line shall be completed shall not exceed three hundred (300) days from the date of the present Agreement's entry into force.

Article 6

No person, military or civilian, shall be permitted to cross the provisional military demarcation line unless specifically authorised to do so by the Joint Commission.

Article 9

Nothing contained in this chapter shall be construed as limiting the complete freedom of movement, into, out of or within the demilitarised zone, of the Joint Commission, its joint groups, the International Commission to be set up as indicated below, its inspection teams and any other persons, supplies or equipment specifically authorised to enter the demilitarised zone by the Joint Commission. . . .

Principles and Procedure Governing Implementation of the Present Agreement

Article 10

The Commanders of the Forces on each side, on the one side the Commander-in-Chief of the French Union forces in Indo-China and on the other side the Commander-in-Chief of the People's Army of Vietnam, shall order and enforce the complete cessation of all hostilities in Vietnam by all armed forces under their control, including all units and personnel of the ground, naval and air forces.

Article 11

In accordance with the principle of a simultaneous cease-fire throughout Indo-China, the cessation of hostilities shall be simultaneous throughout all parts of Vietnam, in all areas of hostilities and for all the forces of the two parties.

Article 14

Political and administrative measures in the two regrouping zones, on either side of the provisional military demarcation line:

(*a*) Pending the general elections which will bring about the unification of Vietnam, the conduct of civil administration in each regrouping zone shall be in the hands of the party whose forces are to be regrouped there in virtue of the present Agreement.

(*b*) Any territory controlled by one party which is transferred to the other party by the regrouping plan shall continue to be administered by the former party until such date as all the troops who are to be transferred have completely left that territory so as to free the zone assigned to the party in question. From then on, such territory shall be regarded as transferred to the other party, who shall assume responsibility for it.

Steps shall be taken to ensure that there is no break in the transfer of responsibilities. For this purpose, adequate notice shall be given by the withdrawing party to the other party, which shall make the necessary arrangements, in particular by sending administrative and police detachments to prepare for the assumption of administrative responsibility. The length of such notice shall be determined by the Trung Gia Military Commission. The transfer shall be effected in successive stages for the various territorial sectors.

The transfer of the civil administration of Hanoi and Haiphong to the authorities of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam shall be completed within the respective time-limits laid down in Article 15 for military movements.

(*c*) Each party undertakes to refrain from any reprisals or discrimination against persons or organisations on account of their activities during the hostilities and to guarantee their democratic liberties.

(*d*) From the date of entry into force of the present Agreement until the movement of troops is completed, any civilians residing in a district controlled by one party who wish to go and live in the zone assigned to the other party shall be permitted and helped to do so by the authorities in that district.

Ban on the Introduction of French Troops, Military Personnel, Arms and Munitions. Military Bases

Article 16

With effect from the date of entry into force of the present Agreement the introduction into Vietnam of any troop reinforcements and additional military personnel is prohibited.

It is understood, however, that the rotation of units and groups of personnel, the arrival in Vietnam of individual personnel on a temporary duty basis and the return to Vietnam of the individual personnel after short periods of leave or temporary duty outside Vietnam shall be permitted under the conditions laid down below . . .

(*b*) "Rotation" is defined as the replacement of units or groups of personnel by other units of the same échelon or by personnel who are arriving in Vietnam territory to do their overseas service there.

(*e*) Rotation units [defined in paragraph (*c*) of this Article] and groups of personnel, and the individual personnel mentioned in this Article, shall enter and leave Vietnam only through the entry points enumerated in Article 20 below . . .

(*g*) The International Commission, through its Inspection Teams, shall supervise and inspect the rotation of units and groups of personnel and the arrival and departure of individual personnel as authorised above, at the points of entry enumerated in Article 20 below.

Article 17

(*a*) With effect from the date of entry into force of the present Agreement, the introduction into Vietnam of any reinforcements in the form of all types of arms, munitions and other war material, such as combat aircraft, naval craft, pieces of ordnance, jet engines and jet weapons and armoured vehicles, is prohibited.

(*b*) It is understood, however, that war material, arms and munitions which have been destroyed, damaged, worn out or used up after the cessation of hostilities may be replaced on the basis of piece-for-piece of the same type and with similar characteristics . . .

(*c*) The war material, arms and munitions for replacement purposes provided for in paragraph (*b*) of this Article, shall be introduced into Vietnam only through the points of entry enumerated in Article 20 below. War material, arms and munitions to be replaced shall be shipped from Vietnam only through the points of entry enumerated in Article 20 below.

(*d*) Apart from the replacements permitted within the limits laid down in paragraph (*b*) of this Article, the introduction of war material, arms and munitions of all types in the form of unassembled parts for subsequent assembly is prohibited.

(*e*) Each party shall notify the Joint Commission and the International Commission at least two days in advance of any arrivals or departures which may take place of war material, arms and munitions of all types.

In order to justify the requests for the introduction into Vietnam of arms, munitions and other war material [as defined in paragraph

(*a*) of this Article] for replacement purposes, a report concerning each incoming shipment shall be submitted to the Joint Commission and the International Commission. Such reports shall indicate the use of the items so replaced.
(*f*) The International Commission, through its Inspection Teams, shall supervise and inspect the replacements permitted in the circumstances laid down in this Article, at the points of entry enumerated in Article 20 below.

Article 18
With effect from the date of entry into force of the present Agreement, the establishment of new military bases is prohibited throughout Vietnam territory.

Article 19
With effect from the date of entry into force of the present Agreement, no military base under the control of a foreign State may be established in the re-grouping zone of either party; the two parties shall ensure that the zones assigned to them do not adhere to any military alliance and are not used for the resumption of hostilities or to further an aggressive policy.

Article 20
The points of entry into Vietnam for rotation personnel and replacements of material are fixed as follows:
Zones to the north of the provisional military demarcation line: Laokay, Langson, Tien-Yen, Haiphong, Vinh, Dong-Hoi, Muong-Sen; Zones to the south of the provisional military demarcation line: Tourane, Quinhon, Nhatrang, Bangoi, Saigon, Cap St. Jacques, Tanchau.

Prisoners of War and Civilian Internees

Article 21
The liberation and repatriation of all prisoners of war and civilian internees detained by each of the two parties at the coming into force of the present Agreement shall be carried out under the following conditions:
(*a*) All prisoners of war and civilian internees of Vietnam, French and other nationalities captured since the beginning of hostilities in Vietnam during military operations or in any other circumstances of war and in any part of the territory of Vietnam shall be liberated within a period of thirty (30) days after the date when the cease-fire becomes effective in each theatre.
(*b*) The term "civilian internees" is understood to mean all persons who, having in any way contributed to the political and armed struggle between the two parties, have been arrested for that reason and have been kept in detention by either party during the period of hostilities.

(*c*) All prisoners of war and civilian internees held by either party shall be surrendered to the appropriate authorities of the other party, who shall give them all possible assistance in proceeding to their country of origin, place of habitual residence or the zone of their choice.

Article 25
The Commanders of the Forces of the two parties shall afford full protection and all possible assistance and co-operation to the Joint Commission and its joint groups and to the International Commission and its inspection teams in the performance of the functions and tasks assigned to them by the present Agreement.

Article 26
The costs involved in the operations of the Joint Commission and joint groups and of the International Commission and its Inspection Teams shall be shared equally between the two parties.

Article 27
The signatories of the present Agreement and their successors in their functions shall be responsible for ensuring the observance and enforcement of the terms and provisions thereof. The Commanders of the Forces of the two parties shall, within their respective commands, take all steps and make all arrangements necessary to ensure full compliance with all the provisions of the present Agreement by all elements and military personnel under their command. . . .

Joint Commission and International Commission for Supervision and Control in Vietnam

Article 28
Responsibility for the execution of the agreement on the cessation of hostilities shall rest with the parties.

Article 29
An International Commission shall ensure the control and supervision of this execution.

Article 30
In order to facilitate, under the conditions shown below, the execution of provisions concerning joint actions by the two parties, a Joint Commission shall be set up in Vietnam.

Article 31
The Joint Commission shall be composed of an equal number of representatives of the Commanders of the two parties.

Article 33
The Joint Commission shall ensure the execution of the following

provisions of the Agreement on the cessation of hostilities:

(*a*) A simultaneous and general cease-fire in Vietnam for all regular and irregular armed forces of the two parties.

(*b*) A re-groupment of the armed forces of the two parties.

(*c*) Observance of the demarcation lines between the re-grouping zones and of the demilitarised sectors.

Within the limits of its competence it shall help the parties to execute the said provisions, shall ensure liaison between them for the purpose of preparing and carrying out plans for the application of these provisions, and shall endeavour to solve such disputed questions as may arise between the parties in the course of executing these provisions.

Article 34

An International Commission shall be set up for the control and supervision over the application of the provisions of the agreement on the cessation of hostilities in Vietnam. It shall be composed of representatives of the following States: Canada, India and Poland.

It shall be presided over by the Representative of India.

Article 35

The International Commission shall set up fixed and mobile inspection teams composed of an equal number of officers appointed by each of the above-mentioned States. The mixed teams shall be located at the following points: Laokay, Langson, Tien-Yen, Haiphong, Vinh, Dong-Hoi, Muong-Sen, Tourane, Quinhon, Nhatrang, Bangoi, Saigon, Cap St. Jacques, Tranchau. These points of location may, at a later date, be altered at the request of the Joint Commission, or of one of the parties, or of the International Commission itself, by agreement between the International Commission and the command of the party concerned. The zones of action of the mobile teams shall be the regions bordering the land and sea frontiers of Vietnam, the demarcation lines between the re-grouping zones and the demilitarised zones. Within the limits of these zones they shall have the right to move freely and shall receive from the local civil and military authorities all facilities they may require for the fulfilment of their tasks (provision of personnel, placing at their disposal documents needed for supervision, summoning witnesses necessary for holding enquiries, ensuring the security and freedom of movement of the inspection teams, etc.). They shall have at their disposal such modern means of transport, observation and communication as they may require. Beyond the zones of action as defined above, the mobile teams may, by agreement with the command of the party concerned, carry out other movements within the limits of the tasks given them by the present agreement.

Article 36

The International Commission shall be responsible for supervising the proper execution by the parties of the provisions of the agreement.

For this purpose it shall fulfil the tasks of control, observation, inspection and investigation connected with the application of the provisions of the agreement on the cessation of hostilities, and it shall in particular:

(*a*) Control the movement of the armed forces of the two parties, effected within the framework of the re-groupment plan.

(*b*) Supervise the demarcation lines between the re-grouping areas, and also the demilitarised zones.

(*c*) Control the operations of releasing prisoners of war and civilian internees.

(*d*) Supervise at ports and airfields as well as along all frontiers of Vietnam the execution of the provisions of the agreement on the cessation of hostilities, regulating the introduction into the country of armed forces, military personnel and of all kinds of arms, munitions and war material.

Article 37

The International Commission shall, through the medium of the inspection teams mentioned above, and as soon as possible either on its own initiative, or at the request of the Joint Commission, or of one of the parties, undertake the necessary investigations both documentary and on the ground.

Article 38

The inspection teams shall submit to the International Commission the results of their supervision, their investigation and their observations, furthermore they shall draw up such special reports as they may consider necessary or as may be requested from them by the Commission. In the case of a disagreement within the teams, the conclusions of each member shall be submitted to the Commission.

Article 39

If any one inspection team is unable to settle an incident or considers that there is a violation or a threat of a serious violation, the International Commission shall be informed; the latter shall study the reports and the conclusions of the inspection teams and shall inform the parties of the measures which should be taken for the settlement of the incident, ending of the violation or removal of the threat of violation.

Article 41

The recommendations of the International Commission shall be adopted by majority vote, subject to the provisions contained in Article 42. If the votes are divided, the chairman's vote shall be decisive.

The International Commission may formulate recommendations concerning amendments and additions which should be made to the provisions of the agreement on cessation of hostilities in Vietnam, in order to ensure a more effective execution of that agreement. These recommendations shall be adopted unanimously.

Article 42

When dealing with questions concerning violations, or threats of violations, which might lead to a resumption of hostilities, namely:

(*a*) Refusal by the armed forces of one party to effect the movements provided for in the re-groupment plan;

(*b*) Violation by the armed forces of one of the parties of the re-grouping zones, territorial waters, or air space of the other party;

the decisions of the International Commission must be unanimous.

Article 43

If one of the parties refuses to put into effect a recommendation of the International Commission, the parties concerned or the Commission itself shall inform the members of the Geneva Conference.

If the International Commission does not reach unanimity in the cases provided for in Article 42, it shall submit a majority report and one or more minority reports to the members of the Conference.

The International Commission shall inform the members of the Conference in all cases where its activity is being hindered.

Article 44

The International Commission shall be set up at the time of the cessation of hostilities in Indo-China in order that it should be able to fulfil the tasks provided for in Article 36.

Article 45

The International Commission for Supervision and Control in Vietnam shall act in close co-operation with the International Commissions for Supervision and Control in Cambodia and Laos.

The Secretaries-General of these three Commissions shall be responsible for co-ordinating their work and for relations between them.

Article 46

The International Commission for Supervision and Control in Vietnam may, after consultation with the International Commissions for Supervision and Control in Cambodia and Laos, and having regard to the development of the situation in Cambodia and Laos, progressively reduce its activities. Such a decision must be adopted unanimously.

For the Commander-in-Chief of the French Union Forces in Indo-China:

DELTIEL,
Brigadier-General.

For the Commander-in-Chief of the People's Army of Vietnam:

TA-QUANG-BUU,
Vice-Minister of National Defence
of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

Appendix B

Reports of the International Commission for Supervision and Control in Vietnam

Extracts from the Tenth Interim Report — February 1, 1959 to January 31, 1960 (H.M.S.O. Cmd.1040)

38. In reply to the Commission's request for documents concerning the Bien Hoa airfield, referred to in paragraph 28 of the Ninth Interim Report, the Government of the Republic of Vietnam stated that in view of the military character of this airfield it was unable to produce the official records required by the Commission since these come within the field of military secrets. The Party, however, offered to furnish a certificate to the effect that this airfield was used only for the training of pilots and was not open for external traffic. The Commission, having considered the Party's reply, reverted to its original decision of 1956 and recommended that the Party permit the control of the Bien Hoa airfield by the Commission's Fixed Team Saigon in accordance with the Commission's "Instructions for Fixed Teams and their Mobile Elements". The Party, however, did not comply with the Commission's recommendation but reiterated its previous stand and in support of it furnished a certificate signed by the Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Vietnam stating that this airfield was reserved exclusively for the training of pilots, and had neither control tower nor movement register, and was not used for the landing or the taking off of any foreign aircraft. The Commission after due consideration informed the Government of the Republic of Vietnam, Canadian Delegation dissenting, that it had not afforded all possible assistance and co-operation to the Commission in terms of Article 25 and that the Commission would take action under Article 43 of the Geneva Agreement.

48. In regard to the American Military Mission called the Military Assistance Advisory Group (M.A.A.G.), referred to in paragraph 32 of the Ninth Interim Report, the Commission, having considered the reply received from the Government of the Republic of Vietnam, reiterated its concern and informed the Party that it had not furnished full information and specific answers to the queries raised by the Commission and, to this extent, therefore, had still not afforded all possible assistance and co-operation in terms of Article 25 of the Geneva Agreement. The Commission recommended that full information and specific replies to the Commission's queries be furnished. The reply of the Government of the Republic of Vietnam has been received and is under consideration.

During the period under report, the Commission considered the question of import of War material by M.A.A.G. The Commission also considered the alleged setting-up of the organisation called the United States Air Force Detachment and the alleged creation of the organisation called the Controller Division and the Direct Aid Division, all claimed by the Government of the Republic of Vietnam to be sections of M.A.A.G. These matters are being pursued.

49. During the period under report, the Commission recorded 12 procedural contraventions by the Government of the Republic of Vietnam under Article 16(*f*) and 20 procedural contraventions under Article 17(*e*) of the Geneva Agreement.

During the period under report, the Commission received a few notifications under Articles 16 and 17 from the P.A.V.N. High Command. The Commission did not record any violation under these Articles against the P.A.V.N. High Command.

During the period under report, the Commission received from the Government of the Republic of Vietnam a number of complaints alleging in 4 and 15 cases violation of Articles 16 and 17 respectively by the P.A.V.N. High Command.

During the period under report, the Commission received from the P.A.V.N. High Command a number of complaints alleging in 147 and 132 cases of violation of Articles 16 and 17 respectively by the Government of the Republic of Vietnam.

50. The Commission continued to receive complaints from the P.A.V.N. High Command, during the period under report, in regard to the alleged increase in the strength of American military personnel in the Republic of Vietnam. The Government of the Republic of Vietnam furnished its explanation for the excess figure of 759 of arrivals over departures of American military personnel in the Republic of Vietnam for the period January 7, 1956, to December 28, 1957, referred to in paragraph 34 of the Ninth Interim Report. The Commission, having considered this reply, informed the Party that it had not shown cause why violation of Article 16 of the Geneva Agreement should not be recorded. The Commission also informed the Party that it had not furnished documentary proof that the figures arrived at by the Commission did not correspond to the facts. In regard to the Party's contention that the Commission's teams did not carry out control continuously for 24 hours and that most American military personnel attached to M.A.A.G. and T.E.R.M. enter Vietnam in military planes and after one year's duty leave Vietnam in civilian clothes by commercial planes which are not controlled by the Commission's teams, the Commission pointed out that Article 16(*f*) of the Geneva Agreement imposes upon the Party the responsibility to notify to the Commission all entries and exits of military personnel into and out of Vietnam irrespective of whether such personnel travel by commercial aircraft or wear civilian clothes. In support of its claim the Government of the Republic of Vietnam forwarded to the Commission photostat copies of slips of reservation of seats (U.S.A. Transportation Requests)

and extracts of commercial airlines manifests in respect of movement of a certain number of American military personnel who, the Party maintained, had departed by commercial aircraft from Saigon and were not controlled by the Commission's teams. These documents are under consideration.

The Government of the Republic of Vietnam was also informed that the Commission was making similar investigations in regard to the movement of American military personnel into and out of South Vietnam for the period subsequent to December 28, 1957.

51. During the period under report, a few instances of the difficulties experienced by the Fixed Team Saigon, referred to in paragraph 35 of the Ninth Interim Report, were reported. The Commission is pursuing the matter.

There were 86 cases in the Republic of Vietnam wherein aircraft either arrived without prior notification or in respect of which manifests or other documents were not produced by the Party during the period under report. The Commission is examining these cases and will take appropriate action in the matter.

62. It will be observed that while in North Vietnam the Commission continued to receive, in general, the necessary co-operation, it did not, as mentioned in paragraph 41, receive the required co-operation in regard to its decision to carry out a reconnaissance of the Bach Mai airfield.

63. The Commission did not receive the required co-operation from the Government of the Republic of Vietnam in the matter of removal of "Time Notice Restrictions" on the movement of the Mobile Elements of the Commission's Fixed Teams, as mentioned in paragraph 45. The Commission, therefore, continues to be forced to restrict its supervision and control in South Vietnam to the extent permitted by the Party.

Another difficulty experienced by the Commission in South Vietnam, during the period under report, concerns the reconnaissance and control of airfields. The Government of the Republic of Vietnam afforded facilities to the Commission to carry out the reconnaissance of the airfields at Ban Me Thuot and Tourane but in all other cases raised the question of parity as mentioned in paragraphs 36 and 37. The Commission has, therefore, been unable to carry out the reconnaissance in these cases so far. The Government of the Republic of Vietnam did not implement the Commission's recommendation in respect of the control of Bien Hoa airfield as mentioned in paragraph 38.

There was no change, in principle, in the stand taken by the Government of the Republic of Vietnam in regard to Article 14(*c*), although the Party sent replies to the Commission's communications in several cases under this Article. However, the Commission was unable to investigate the complaints mentioned in paragraph 15 since it did not receive the necessary assistance and co-operation from the Party. During the period under review, the Government of the Republic of Vietnam maintained its position as regards the interpretation of Article

21 and did not implement the Commission's recommendations in regard to the two cases referred to in paragraphs 30 and 31 respectively.

68. During the period under report, there has been no progress in regard to the political settlement envisaged in the Final Declaration. The Parties have not held consultations with a view to holding free nation-wide elections leading to the reunification of Vietnam and thereby facilitating early fulfilment of the tasks assigned to this Commission and the termination of its activities. The Commission is confident that this important problem is engaging the attention of the Co-Chairmen and the Geneva Powers and that they will take whatever measures they deem necessary to resolve it.

Extracts from the
Eleventh Interim Report—February 1, 1960 to February 28, 1961
(H.M.S.O. Cmd.1551)

48. In paragraph 46 of the Tenth Interim Report, reference was made to complaints from the P.A.V.N. High Command alleging the association of the Republic of Vietnam with S.E.A.T.O. During the period of the report further complaints in this respect were received. The subject matter of these letters is under consideration.

49. In paragraph 47 of the Tenth Interim Report, it was stated that the Commission recommended to the Government of the Republic of Vietnam that the Temporary Equipment Recovery Mission (T.E.R.M.) complete its work and all its personnel be withdrawn from Vietnam by December 31, 1960. During December, 1960 and January/February, 1961, the Commission received three communications from the P.A.V.N. High Command alleging that T.E.R.M. has not ceased to exist in South Vietnam and instead was extending the scope of its activity under the assumed name of the Logistics Section of the Military Assistance Advisory Group (M.A.A.G.). Meanwhile, the Government of the Republic of Vietnam informed the Commission in January, 1961, that T.E.R.M. had ceased its activities and was disbanded on December 31, 1960. The Party further stated that out of the total strength of 350 personnel, 261 had left South Vietnam during the course of 1960 and the remaining 89 were transferred on the spot to M.A.A.G. on account of their technical ability. They also stated that this transfer of 89 personnel to M.A.A.G. was within the authorised quota of M.A.A.G. The Commission considered the communications from the Government of the Republic of Vietnam and the P.A.V.N. Liaison Mission and asked the Government of the Republic of Vietnam to furnish more detailed information regarding the evacuation of T.E.R.M. personnel from Vietnam and distribution by numbers of officers and enlisted men within M.A.A.G.; the Party's reply is awaited.

Reference is made to Appendix "B" to the Tenth Interim Report in which the stand of the Polish Delegation regarding the existence and activity of T.E.R.M. was expressed.

The Polish Delegation holds the view that the communication of the Government of the Republic of Vietnam dated January 11, 1961,

informing the Commission, among other things, that 89 personnel of T.E.R.M. have been transferred on the spot to M.A.A.G. amounts to non-implementation of the Commission's decision under which this Mission had to cease its activities and its entire personnel had to leave Vietnam by December 31, 1960.

The concern of the Polish Delegation is all the stronger in the light of an allegation made by the P.A.V.N. High Command that not 89 but—in fact—the whole T.E.R.M. continues to operate in the Republic of Vietnam incorporated into M.A.A.G. Mission under an assumed name of the Logistics Section of M.A.A.G. In this connection the Polish Delegation holds the view that this fact amounts to a violation of Articles 16 and 25 of the Geneva Agreement.

With regard to the above sub-paragraph the Indian and Canadian Delegations consider that as this matter is still under consideration and no decision has been taken, any conclusions are not justified.

50. A reference was made in paragraph 48 of the Tenth Interim Report to the activities of M.A.A.G. During the period under report, the Government of the Republic of Vietnam informed the Commission that it had made approaches to the Government of the United States of America with a view to bringing the strength of United States military instructors of M.A.A.G. from the figure as it then stood. 342, to 685. The Party further pointed out that this increase in strength would still be well below the combined strength of 888 M.A.A.G. and French instructors present in Vietnam at the time of the Armistice. The Commission considered this matter and, Polish Delegation dissenting, informed the Government of the Republic of Vietnam that the Commission had noted the contents of the Party's letter pertaining to the subject and that the Commission understood that additional United States military instructors will not be introduced except in conformity with the procedure stipulated in Article 16(*f*) and (*g*) of the Geneva Agreement.

A communication was received from General Vo Nguyen Giap, Commander-in-Chief of the P.A.V.N. High Command, emphasising the seriousness of the position and also alleging that the Republic of Vietnam had "requested the Commission to let the United States of America introduce United States armaments and military personnel into South Vietnam to replace the French Expeditionary Corps which had invaded Vietnam". The Commission informed General Giap that the Republic of Vietnam had made no such request.

Several communications were received from the Democratic Republic of Vietnam on this subject. In his communication of May, 1960, General Giap alleged that the decision of the Commission in respect of M.A.A.G. was in complete contradiction with the spirit and letter of the Geneva Agreement and requested the Commission to cancel it. In June, 1960, His Excellency Mr. Pham Van Dong, Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, sent to the Commission a copy of his letter addressed to the Co-Chairmen of the Geneva Conference requesting them to issue instructions to the International Com-

mission to reconsider and repeal the decision authorising the American military personnel from entering South Vietnam in replacement of French military personnel. The Commission informed the P.A.V.N. High Command that their views had been considered and re-affirmed that the decision taken was fully within its competence. The Commission also reiterated once again that while any communication may be addressed to the Co-Chairmen by any Party, it found no provision in the Agreement for an appeal by the Parties to the Co-Chairmen against its decision. The Polish Delegation dissented from sending this communication to the Party.

During the period under report, the Commission received communications from the P.A.V.N. High Command alleging increase in the activities of M.A.A.G., and in November, 1960, the Commission requested the Government of the Republic of Vietnam to furnish details regarding the composition and activities of the organisations called United States Air Force Detachment, the Controller Division and the Direct Aid Division, which were all stated by the Republic of Vietnam to be sections of M.A.A.G. The reply of the Party has been received and is under consideration. Further, as mentioned in paragraph 49 above, the Party has been asked to intimate the distribution of the number of officers and enlisted men within M.A.A.G.

During the period under report, the Commission considered the question of war materials imported by M.A.A.G. between June, 1956, and April, 1960, such as heavy artillery equipment, modern radar equipment, aircraft and other kinds of armaments, and requested the Government of the Republic of Vietnam to offer clarification as to whether this equipment has been brought in legally or otherwise. Its reply is awaited. In reply to an earlier query concerning the importation of war material in the name of M.A.A.G., the Government of the Republic of Vietnam informed the Commission that all war materials though imported in the name of M.A.A.G. and which were subject to Proforma "B" forwarded to the International Commission, were actually destined for the Army of the Republic of Vietnam. This letter is under consideration.

In the view of the Polish Delegation the existence and activity of M.A.A.G. in the Republic of Vietnam after the signing of the Geneva Agreement are inconsistent with its provisions and they contravene Articles 16 and 19 of the Agreement as well as paragraphs 4, 5 and 10 of the Final Declaration.

The M.A.A.G. Mission, whose activities have never been subjected to the Commission's control despite the Commission's efforts, should have been withdrawn from this country along with the French Expeditionary Corps.

In the opinion of the Polish Delegation the Commission's decision allowing the Party to double the strength of the personnel of M.A.A.G. is contradictory with the letter and spirit of the Geneva Agreement and particularly with its Article 16 and paragraph 4 of the Final Declaration. For these reasons the Polish Delegation voted against this decision.

In this light the request of the South Vietnamese authorities to increase the personnel of M.A.A.G. cannot be construed otherwise than as an attempt at taking advantage of the Commission's authority in order to attain certain definite targets of internal policy which have nothing to do either with the Geneva Agreement or with the tasks entrusted under this Agreement to the Commission.

The Indian and Canadian Delegations point out that the question of the numbers of M.A.A.G. military personnel, the composition and activities of certain organisations within M.A.A.G., as outlined above, are still under consideration by the Commission and no decision has been taken. Therefore the views expressed by the Polish Delegation are not justified.

In November, 1960, the Commission requested the Government of the Republic of Vietnam to explain why a procedural contravention of Article 17(*e*) and Protocol 23 should not be recorded in regard to 225 foreign military aircraft which landed at the airfield of Tan Son Nhut in Saigon during the period from January 1, 1956, to March 31, 1959, without prior notification and for which no documents were produced when requested by the Team. The reply from the Party has been received in December, 1960, and is under consideration.

65. During the latter part of the period covered by the Report, communications were received from the P.A.V.N. High Command alleging introduction into South Vietnam of considerable quantities of war material from the Federation of Malaya in violation of Article 17 of the Geneva Agreement. A communication was received from the Government of the Republic of Vietnam stating that they were receiving certain consignments of arms and vehicles from the Federation of Malaya for use by the security forces. They further stated that they would notify the arrivals of this equipment as required under the Geneva Agreement. The Commission has communicated the allegations of the P.A.V.N. High Command to the Government of the Republic of Vietnam for their comments as early as possible. The Party's reply is awaited.

66. During the period covered by the Report, the Commission recorded three contraventions of the procedure contained in point (*f*) of Article 16 and 34 contraventions of the procedure contained in point (*e*) of Article 17 of the Geneva Agreement by the Government of the Republic of Vietnam. No contravention of Articles 16 and 17 of the Geneva Agreement was recorded in the period under report against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

Extracts from the
Special Report to the Co-Chairmen of the Geneva Conference on Indo-China, June 2, 1962 (H.M.S.O. Cmd.1755)

4. Since the presentation of the 11th Interim Report, the situation in Vietnam has shown signs of rapid deterioration. The Commission is obliged to make this Special Report to the Co-Chairmen with regard to the serious allegations of aggression and subversion on the part of

the Democratic Republic of Vietnam against the Republic of Vietnam and the serious charges of violation of Articles 16, 17 and 19 of the Geneva Agreement by the Republic of Vietnam, in receiving military aid from the United States of America.

The Polish Delegation dissents from the views expressed in this Special Report. The Statement of the Polish Delegation is forwarded herewith.

9. The Legal Committee has made a careful examination of the various allegations and the evidence produced to support them, in the form of documents and other material evidence, and has made the following report, with the Polish Member dissenting:

"We have studied the Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities in Vietnam, the South Vietnamese Mission's letter No. 4660/PDVN/CT/TD/2, dated October 24, 1961, and No. 5078/PDVN/CT/TD/2, dated November 16, 1961, and related references from the Commission together with the evidentiary material made available by the South Vietnamese Mission in connection therewith, and reached the following conclusions:

(2) Having examined the complaints and the supporting material sent by the South Vietnamese Mission, the Committee has come to the conclusion that in specific instances there is evidence to show that armed and unarmed personnel, arms, munitions and other supplies have been sent from the Zone in the North to the Zone in the South with the object of supporting, organising and carrying out hostile activities, including armed attacks, directed against the Armed Forces and Administration of the Zone in the South. These acts are in violation of Articles 10, 19, 24 and 27 of the Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities in Vietnam.

(3) In examining the complaints and the supporting material, in particular documentary material sent by the South Vietnamese Mission, the Committee has come to the further conclusion that there is evidence to show that the P.A.V.N. has allowed the Zone in the North to be used for inciting, encouraging and supporting hostile activities in the Zone in the South, aimed at the overthrow of the Administration in the South. The use of the Zone in the North for such activities is in violation of Articles 19, 24 and 27 of the Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities in Vietnam. . . .

10. The Commission accepts the conclusions reached by the Legal Committee that there is sufficient evidence to show beyond reasonable doubt that the P.A.V.N. has violated Articles 10, 19, 24 and 27 in specific instances. The Polish Delegation dissents from these conclusions. On the basis of the fuller report, that is being prepared by the Legal Committee covering all the allegations and incidents, the Commission will take action as appropriate in each individual case.

11. Concurrently with the developments referred to in paragraphs 7 and 8 above, and subsequently, the Commission received communications from the P.A.V.N. High Command and its Liaison Mission alleging direct military intervention in South Vietnam by the Government of the United States of America, and ever-increasing import of war material and introduction of military personnel in violation of the Geneva Agreement. The allegations, amongst others, were:

(*a*) the conclusion of a bilateral military Agreement between President Ngo Dinh Diem and United States Ambassador Nolting;

(*b*) the gradual introduction of about 5,000 United States military personnel into South Vietnam, "which will soon be increased to 8,000";

(*c*) the arrival of four aircraft carriers—*Core, Breton, Princeton* and *Croaton*—on different occasions, bringing in helicopters, other aircraft, military equipment and military personnel;

(*d*) the introduction by the United States of America of approximately four companies of helicopters, many jet fighters, fighters/fighter bombers and transport planes, along with military vehicles and other stores;

(*e*) the visits of a large number of high United States military experts and dignitaries to Saigon for inspection and guidance, particularly those of General Maxwell Taylor, Admiral H. Felt and General Lemnitzer;

(*f*) the establishment of a United States Military Assistance Command, with a four-star General, Paul D. Harkins, as its Chief.

12. Since December, 1961, the Commission's Teams in South Vietnam have been persistently denied the right to control and inspect, which are part of their mandatory task. Thus, these Teams, though they were able to observe the steady and continuous arrival of war material, including aircraft carriers with helicopters on board, were unable, in view of the denial of controls, to determine precisely the quantum and nature of war material unloaded and introduced into South Vietnam.

13. On the other hand, the Commission received a communication from Liaison Mission of the Republic of Vietnam dated December 9, 1961, stating that: "In the face of aggression, directed by the so-called 'Democratic Republic of Vietnam' against the Republic of Vietnam, in flagrant violation of the Geneva Agreement, the Government of the Republic of Vietnam has requested the Government of the United States of America to intensify the aid in personnel and material which the latter was already granting to Vietnam. The right of 'self-defence' being a legitimate and inherent attribute of sovereignty, the Government of the Republic of Vietnam found itself constrained to exercise this right and request for increased aid, since North Vietnam continues to violate the Geneva Agreement and to do injury to life and property of the free people of Vietnam.

"These measures can end as soon as the North Vietnam authorities will have ceased the acts of aggression and will have begun to respect the Geneva Agreement."

14. The Commission considered this communication from the Government of the Republic of Vietnam and drew the attention of the South Vietnamese Mission to the Provisions of Articles 16 and 17 of the Geneva Agreement and the procedures laid down thereunder by the

International Commission for the import of war material and the introduction of military personnel, and to the obligations resulting therefrom. The Commission also informed the Mission that its complaints regarding allegations of subversion and aggression by the North were under active examination of the Commission separately.

15. In the light of the stand of the Commission as stated in paragraph 14 above, the numerous allegations received from the P.A.V.N. High Command have been receiving the attention of the Commission with a view to the strict implementation of Articles 16 and 17 of the Agreement and the procedures laid down thereunder.

16. A Summary of the allegations made by the P.A.V.N. High Command, from December, 1961, up to May 5, 1962, would place the number of military personnel and the quantum of important war materials introduced into South Vietnam at approximately 5,000 personnel ("which are likely to increase to 8,000 shortly"), 157 helicopters, 10 reconnaissance aircraft, 34 jet aircraft, 34 fighters/fighter bombers, 21 transport aircraft, 35 unspecified aircraft, 40 armoured and 20 scout cars, "numerous" armoured boats and amphibious craft, 3,000 tons and 1,350 cases of war material, and 7 warships (exclusive of 5 destroyers of the United States Seventh Fleet alleged to have come for training). Most of the letters containing the allegations, referred to in this paragraph and paragraph 11 above, were sent to the Liaison Mission of the Republic of Vietnam for its early comments; but no satisfactory replies have been received. Also, in some cases the Southern Party has been asked to state reasons, if any, why violations of Article 17(*e*) relating to prior notification, as well as violations of Articles 16 and 17 governing the introduction of military personnel and war material themselves, should not be recorded against it.

17. As the Commission has been denied mandatory controls, as pointed out earlier in paragraph 12 above, it has not been able to make a precise assessment of the number of military personnel and the quantum of war material brought in. However, from December 3, 1961, up to May 5, 1962, the Commission's Teams have controlled the entry of 72 military personnel, and observed but not controlled 173 military personnel, 62 helicopters, 6 reconnaissance aircraft, 5 jet aircraft, 57 fighters/fighter bombers, 25 transport aircraft, 26 unspecified types of aircraft, 102 jeeps, 8 tractors, 8 105-mm. howitzers, 3 armoured carriers (tracked), 29 armoured fighting vehicle trailers, 404 other trailers, and radar equipment and crates, 5 warships, 9 L.S.T.s (including 4 visiting L.S.T.s), 5 L.C.T.s, 5 visiting aircraft carriers and spares of various kinds. In respect of some of the instances of import of war materials between December 3, 1961, and January 16, 1962, violations under Article 17(*e*) as well as violation of Article 25, have been recorded against the Republic of Vietnam for its failure to notify arrivals and imports as required by the Geneva Agreement, and for not affording all possible assistance to the Commission's Teams in the performance of their tasks.

20. Taking all the facts into consideration, and basing itself on its

own observations and authorised statements made in the United States of America and the Republic of Vietnam, the Commission concludes that the Republic of Vietnam has violated Articles 16 and 17 of the Geneva Agreement in receiving the increased military aid from the United States of America in the absence of any established credit in its favour. The Commission is also of the view that, though there they may not be any formal military alliance between the Governments of the United States of America and the Republic of Vietnam, the establishment of a U.S. Military Assistance Command in South Vietnam, as well as the introduction of a large number of U.S. military personnel beyond the stated strength of the M.A.A.G. (Military Assistance Advisory Group), amounts to a factual military alliance, which is prohibited under Article 19 of the Geneva Agreement.

Statement Addressed to the Co-Chairmen of the Geneva Conference by the Polish Delegation to the International Commission for Supervision and Control in Vietnam

The Polish Delegation to the International Commission for Supervision and Control in Vietnam presents its compliments to the Co-Chairmen of the Geneva Conference on Indo-China and has the honour to state the following in connection with the special report submitted to them herewith by the Indian and Canadian Delegations which the Polish Delegation declines to sign:

2. In their special report the Indian and Canadian Delegations have presented a picture of the situation in South Vietnam which in the opinion of the Polish Delegation does not correspond with the real state of affairs. It places on the same level doubtful and legally unfounded allegations of one of the Parties, on the one hand, and grave and undeniable violations of the Geneva Agreement substantiated by records and findings of the International Commission on the other. The majority report wrongly admitted unfounded allegations of aggression and subversion brought by the Republic of Vietnam against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in spite of the fact that they do not find any legal justification in the stipulations of the Geneva Agreement and furthermore are not substantiated and based on any evidence. These artificial allegations have been advanced in the report as a most important item before a problem described in insignificant terms of receiving military aid from the United States of America. This formulation hides serious and important allegations which have been brought out by the Democratic Republic of Vietnam namely the conclusion by the Government of the Republic of Vietnam of a military alliance with the Government of the United States of America, the introduction into South Vietnam of a great number of the United States military personnel, weapons and war material, the direct participation of this personnel in hostile activities against the population of South Vietnam as well as the establishing in South Vietnam of a special operational Military Command of the United States of America to direct the Vietnamese and American armed forces. These allegations have been

substantiated by the findings of the Commission in previous reports as well as finding expression in the current special report of the majority. In the opinion of the Polish Delegation this development of the situation constitutes a flagrant violation of the Geneva Agreement, threatens peace in this area and as such should be urgently considered by the International Commission for Supervision and Control and brought to the immediate attention of the Co-Chairmen with a request for action.

3. Furthermore, the majority has ignored in its special report violation of Article 14(*c*) of the Geneva Agreement by the authorities of the Republic of Vietnam by persecutions of former resistance members followed by the persecutions of all democratic elements which is certainly one of the most important causes of the widespread movement against the Government of the Republic of Vietnam, which recently has taken various forms of dissatisfaction and struggle.

4. In the opinion of the Polish Delegation another cause of this movement is the refusal of the Government of the Republic of Vietnam to act towards the reunification of Vietnam as foreseen in the Geneva Agreement in spite of the repeated proposals made by the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, and efforts of the International Commission in the past towards facilitating negotiations by the Parties.

5. In order to cope with this widespread national movement the Government of the Republic of Vietnam has asked for military assistance of the United States of America which has of late reached a dangerous stage of direct participation of the American Armed forces in military operations in South Vietnam. The Commission, being a serious obstacle in this development, has been put by the South Vietnamese Party under a constant and growing pressure which made it impossible for the Commission to discharge its duties effectively in accordance with the mandate given to it under the Geneva Agreement. The Commission had to express to the Co-Chairmen in its letter from November 9, 1961, to grave concern for the future activities of the Commission in Vietnam if attempts are made to coerce it and requested the Co-Chairmen to impress on the Republic of Vietnam its solemn responsibilities towards the International Commission in Vietnam.

6. The Polish Delegation is compelled to draw the attention of the Co-Chairmen to the gravity of the situation that has developed in South Vietnam and to the danger to peace in South-East Asia resulting therefrom. Fundamental provisions of the Geneva Agreement have been violated by the South Vietnamese Party, resulting in an ever-increasing tension, bloodshed and threat of the resumption of hostilities. This tension grows as a result of the operation in South Vietnam and neighbouring countries of a steadily increasing number of the armed forces of the United States of America. This danger has been recently highlighted by the landing of the American troops on the Thai territory along the frontier of Indo-China. In this situation therefore the Polish Delegation requests the Co-Chairmen to take adequate and immediate measures with the view to reducing tension and preserving peace in South Vietnam by the withdrawal of the United States armed personnel and war material, dissolution of the United States military assistance Command in South Vietnam as well as the observance by the Government of the Republic of Vietnam of Article 14(*c*) and of all other provisions of the Geneva Agreement. This in the opinion of the Polish Delegation is the only means which shall enable the Commission to perform its mandatory tasks in full accordance with the Geneva Agreement and in the large interest of the Vietnamese people and of peace in South-East Asia.

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Appendix C

Official Statements U.S. Embassy in London: Step-by-Step Account of Events Leading to Present Vietnamese Situation (London, February 12, 1965)

Following is a chronology of Communist activities in South Vietnam and related events from 1954 to early 1965.

1954

May 8—July 21: Geneva Conference on Indo-China agrees that Vietnam is to be partitioned along the 17th parallel into North and South Vietnam; an International Control Commission (I.C.C.) composed of Canada, India and Poland is set up to supervise implementation of the Agreements.

1955

February 12: The U.S. Military Assistance Advisory Group (M.A.A.G.) takes over the training of the South Vietnamese army at Vietnam's request.
April 17: South Vietnamese Government appeals to the United Nations against the North Vietnamese Communists, who, in violation of the Geneva Agreements, prevent Northerners from migrating to South Vietnam.
July: Communists initiate first overt propaganda move in South Vietnam by distributing literature signed by North Vietnam's "National United Front".

1956

April 6: South Vietnam Government announces it will continue to co-operate with the I.C.C.

1957

October 22: Bombing of U.S. M.A.A.G. and U.S.I.S. installations in Saigon; U.S. personnel injured.

1958

January 4: Large Communist guerrilla band attacks plantation north of Saigon.

1959

July 8: Communist guerrillas attack Vietnamese military base at Bien Hoa, killing and wounding several U.S. M.A.A.G. personnel.
July 10: In Belgian Communist publication *Red Flag*, Mo Chi Minh, head of the North Vietnamese Communist regime, states, "We are building socialism in Vietnam, but we are building it in only one part of the country, while in the other part we still have to direct and bring to a close the middle-class democratic and anti-imperialist revolution".

1960

June-October: Communist guerrilla activities in South Vietnam increase.
October 26: President Eisenhower assures Republic of Vietnam on its fifth anniversary, that the United States "will continue to assist Vietnam in the difficult yet hopeful struggle ahead".
November 10: South Vietnam charges, in letter to I.C.C., that Communist attacks in October in the Kontum-Pleiku area: (1) involved regular army forces from Communist North Vietnam through Laos; (2) constituted open aggression which was well prepared, commanded by high-ranking officers, and conducted by regular forces trained in North Vietnam; and (3) employed weapons made in North Vietnam and other Communist countries.

1961

January 29: Radio Hanoi praises establishment of the "National Front for Liberation of South Vietnam". Its "sacred historical task", according to January 30, Radio Hanoi broadcast, is "to liberate the South".
March 10: The Communist-led newly formed National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam announces that a guerrilla offensive will be started to prevent holding April 9 elections.
April 4: South Vietnam appeals to I.C.C. to make an "immediate and energetic investigation of growing Communist terrorism and subversion throughout South Vietnam".
September 1-4: Series of attacks by 1,000 Communist guerrillas in Kontum province. Army Command communique states that in August there were 41 engagements between Government forces and Communist rebels in South Vietnam.
September 18: Communist forces estimated at 1,500 men attack and seize the capital of Phuoc Thanh province, only 60 miles from Saigon.
September 25: President Kennedy, addressing U.N. General Assembly, declares that a threat to peace is "the smouldering coals of war in South-East Asia".

1962

June 2: Canadian and Indian members of the I.C.C. find North Vietnam guilty of subversion and covert aggression against South Vietnam.
December 6: South Vietnamese Government protests to the I.C.C. against introduction of Chinese Communist-made weapons and ammunition; a large cache was discovered in the Central Highlands.

1963

April 22: U.S. Secretary of State Dean Rusk calls the situation in South Vietnam "difficult and dangerous", and says that the United States "cannot repeat cannot promise or expect a quick victory" and that its role is "limited and supporting".
October 2: Secretary of Defence Robert S. McNamara and Maxwell

D. Taylor, Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, report to President Kennedy on their fact-finding trip to Vietnam. White House statement says United States will continue its "policy of working with the people and Government of South Vietnam to deny this country to Communism and to suppress the externally stimulated and supported insurgency of the Viet Cong as promptly as possible".

November 15: U.S. military spokesman in Saigon reports that 1,000 U.S. servicemen will be withdrawn from South Vietnam, beginning December 3.

December 14: U.S. military spokesman in Saigon reports on stepped up guerrilla attacks on hamlets, outposts and patrols in November, estimating Government casualties at 2,800 and Viet Cong losses at 2,900.

1964

January 2: Secretary Rusk announces that a Vietnamese army group siezed in the Delta area of Vietnam "some 300,000 rounds of small arms ammunition, weapons like mortars, recoilless ammunition, made in (Communist) China" and that almost certainly Hanoi was primarily responsible for their infiltration into South Vietnam.

January 27: Secretary of Defence McNamara states that the situation in South Vietnam continues grave, but that "the survival of an independent Government in South Vietnam is so important to the security of South-East Asia and to the free world that I can conceive of no repeat no alternative other than to take all necessary measures with our capability to prevent a Communist victory".

August 2: Destroyer U.S.S. *Maddox* is attacked in international waters off the coast of North Vietnam by North Vietnamese torpedo boats.

August 4: Destroyers *C. Turner Joy* and *Maddox* are attacked by North Vietnamese P.T. boats.

August 4: President Johnson orders U.S. air action against gunboats and certain supporting facilities in North Vietnam.

August 5: President Johnson sends message to Congress. Joint resolution is introduced in Congress "to promote the maintenance of international peace and security in South-East Asia".

August 7: Congress approves the resolution (Senate vote 88-2; House 416-0.)

December 24: Terrorist bombing in Saigon kills two Americans and wounds 52 Americans and 13 Vietnamese.

1965

January 4: In State of the Union message, President Johnson says: "In Asia, Communism wears a more aggressive face. We see that in Vietnam. Why are we there? We are there, first, because a friendly nation has asked us for help against Communist aggression. Ten years ago we pledged our help. Three Presidents have supported that pledge. We will not repeat not break it. Second, our own security is tied to the peace of Asia. Twice in one generation we have had to fight against aggression in the Far East. To ignore aggression would only increase

the danger of a larger war. Our goal is peace in South-East Asia. That will come only when aggressors leave their neighbours in peace. What is at stake is the cause of freedom, and in that cause America will never be found wanting."

Dean Rusk Statement on Vietnam (Washington, February 25, 1965)

1. The nations of South-East Asia have a right to live in peace, free from aggression directed against them from outside their borders. This is not an empty theory, it is a point of vital importance to the safety and, indeed, the very existence of more than a hundred smaller nations all over the world.

2. North Vietnam, in callous disregard of the agreements of 1954 and 1962, has directed and supplied the essential military personnel and arms for a systematic campaign of terror and guerrilla action aimed at the overthrow of the Government of South Vietnam and at the imposition by force of a Communist regime. The evidence of North Vietnam's direct responsibility for this aggression has been repeatedly presented by the Government of Vietnam, the United States Government and the International Control Commission. A full and up-to-date summary of the evidence establishing this responsibility will be available within a very few days.

3. The attitude of the United States toward threats to the peace in South-East Asia has been made clear many times and in the most serious and formal ways:

(*a*) By the ratification of the Manila Pact in February, 1955, which includes South Vietnam as a protocol state (this treaty was approved by the Senate by a vote of 62 to 1);

(*b*) By a decision of President Eisenhower in 1954, set forth in a letter to the President of South Vietnam: "The implications of the agreement concerning Vietnam have caused grave concern regarding the future of a country temporarily divided by an artificial military grouping, weakened by a long and exhausting war and faced with enemies without and by their subversive collaborators within. The purpose of this offer is to assist the Government of Vietnam in developing and maintaining a strong, viable state, capable of resisting attempted subversion or aggression through military means."

(*c*) By the joint resolution of the Congress of the United States, passed in August, 1964, by a combined vote of 502 to 2, which stated, among other things: "That the Congress approves and supports the determination of the President, as Commander-in-Chief, to take all necessary measures to repel any armed attack against the forces of the United States and to prevent further aggression. The United States regards as vital to its national interest and to world peace the maintenance of international peace and security in South-East Asia.

". . . The United States is, therefore, prepared as the President determines, to take all necessary steps, including the use of armed force, to assist any member or protocol state of the South-East Asia Collective Defence Treaty requesting assistance in defence of its freedom."

Statement by U Thant (New York, April 11, 1965)

"There appears to be a consensus at least on the need to return to the essentials of the 1954 Geneva Agreements. President Johnson on March 25 stated his willingness, and Premier Pham Van Dong indicated on April 8 that his Government would be in favour of this procedure. . . . I think this is a clue to the settlement of the Vietnamese problem." (In his March 25 speech, President Johnson said that the U.S. seeks "no more than a return to the essentials of the agreements of 1954".)

Extract from Speech by President Johnson (John Hopkins University, April 7, 1965)

"Our objective is the independence of South Vietnam and its freedom from attack. We want nothing for ourselves—only that the people of South Vietnam be allowed to guide their own country in their own way. We hope that peace will come swiftly but it is in the hands of others besides ourselves. . . . Such peace demands an independent South Vietnam securely guaranteed and able to shape its own relationships to all others, free from outside interference, tied to no alliances, a military base for no other country. These are the essentials of any final settlement. We remain ready—with this purpose—for unconditional discussions."

From a Statement by South Vietnam National Front for Liberation (March 22, 1965)

"The international agreement in Geneva in 1954, solemnly recognised the sovereignty of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, restored peace in those areas and laid the basis for the reunification of Vietnam by peaceful means. . . . The Vietnamese people deeply understand the value of these agreements. Now, as in the past, they are correctly implementing these agreements and are resolved to see that these agreements are implemented in accordance with the spirit and the letter of an international agreement of full legality."

Letter dated February 27, 1965, from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America addressed to The President of the Security Council

For the information of the members of the Security Council, I am transmitting a special report entitled *Aggression from the North, the Record of North Viet-Nam's Campaign to Conquer South Viet-Nam* which my Government is making public today. It presents evidence from which the following conclusions are inescapable.

First, the subjugation by force of the Republic of Viet-Nam by the regime in Northern Viet-Nam is the formal, official policy of that regime; this has been stated and confirmed publicly over the past five years.

Second, the war in Viet-Nam is directed by the Central Committee of the Lao Dong Party (Communist) which controls the Government in Northern Viet-Nam.

Third, the so-called People's Revolutionary Party in the Republic of Viet-Nam is an integral part of the Lao Dong Party in North Viet-Nam.

Fourth, the so-called Liberation Front for South Viet-Nam is a subordinate unit of the Central Office for South Viet-Nam, an integral part of the governmental machinery in Hanoi.

Fifth, the key leadership of the Viet Cong—officers, specialists, technicians, intelligence agents, political organisers and propagandists—has been trained, equipped and supplied in the north and sent into the Republic of Viet-Nam under Hanoi's military orders.

Sixth, most of the weapons, including new types recently introduced, and most of the ammunition and other supplies used by the Viet Cong, have been sent from North to South Viet-Nam.

Seventh, the scale of infiltration of men and arms, including regular units of the armed forces of North Viet-Nam, has increased appreciably in recent months.

Eighth, this entire pattern of activity by the regime in Hanoi is in violation of general principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, and is in direct violation of the Geneva Accords of 1954. Such a pattern of violation of the treaty obligations undertaken at Geneva was confirmed by a special report of the International Control Commission in 1962 and it has been greatly intensified since then.

These facts about the situation in Vietnam make it unmistakably clear that the character of that conflict is an aggressive war of conquest waged against a neighbour—and make nonsense of the cynical allegation that this is simply an indigenous insurrection.

I request that you circulate copies of the report, together with copies of this letter, to the delegations of all Member states as a Security Council document.

In making this information available to the Security Council, my Government wishes to say once more that peace can be restored quickly to Viet-Nam by a prompt and assured cessation of aggression by Hanoi against the Republic of Viet-Nam. In that event, my Government—as it has said many times before—would be happy to withdraw its military forces from the Republic of Viet-Nam and turn promptly to an international effort to assist the economic and social development of South-East Asia.

In the meantime, my Government awaits the first indication of any intent by the Government in Hanoi to return to the ways of peace and peaceful resolution of this international conflict.

Accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) ADLAI E. STEVENSON.

(I offer no prizes to readers of this book for spotting the five lies and the four less-than-half-truths. The sweetener in this poisonous mixture—the offer of withdrawal of U.S. military forces—was removed by Johnson and Macnamara nine weeks late.—W.W.)

Extract from Premier Pham Van Dong's Policy Statement to the National Assembly of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (Hanoi, April 8, 1965)

The unswerving policy of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam to strictly respect the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Vietnam, and to correctly implement their basic provisions is embodied in the following points:

1. Recognition of the basic national rights of the Vietnamese people: peace, independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity. According to the Geneva Agreements, the U.S. Government must withdraw from South Vietnam all U.S. troops, military personnel and weapons of all kinds, dismantle all U.S. military bases there, cancel its "military alliance" with South Vietnam. It must end its policy of intervention and aggression in South Vietnam. According to the Geneva Agreements, the U.S. Government must stop its acts of war against North Vietnam, completely cease all encroachments on the territory and sovereignty of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.
2. Pending the peaceful reunification of Vietnam, while Vietnam is still temporarily divided into two zones the military provision of the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Vietnam must be strictly respected: the two zones must refrain from joining any military alliance with foreign countries, there must be no foreign military bases, troops and military personnel in their respective territory.
3. The internal affairs of South Vietnam must be settled by the South Vietnamese people themselves, in accordance with the programme of the South Vietnam National Front for Liberation, without any foreign interference.
4. The peaceful reunification of Vietnam is to be settled by the Vietnamese people in both zones, without any foreign interference.

This stand unquestionably enjoys the approval and support of all peace and justice-loving governments and people in the world.

The Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam is of the view that the above-expounded stand is the basis for the soundest political settlement of the Vietnam problem. If this basis is recognised, favourable conditions will be created for the peaceful settlement of the Vietnam problem and it will be possible to consider the reconvening of an international conference along the pattern of the 1954 Geneva Conference on Vietnam.

Telegram from M. Tran Van Do, Foreign Minister of the Republic of Vietnam (Saigon, March 21, 1965)

To William Warbey, M.P., Member of the Preparatory Committee of the Symposium on Vietnam, Florence.

The Prime Minister of the Vietnam Government, Dr. Phan Huy Quat asked me to pass on to you his cordial thanks for the invitation contained in your letter of April 2, to participate in the Symposium on Vietnam at Fort Belvedere from April 22-26. Unfortunately your invitation reached us too late and did not give sufficient time to prepare

to participate in your conference as we should have liked to do. We regret it all the more since your invitation is evidence of a sincere desire to help Vietnam in its struggle against the so-called war of liberation which is nothing but an armed aggression destined to place our people under the yoke of communist imperialism. Faced by the aggression of North Vietnam supported by Peking and the entire Communist Bloc, proofs of which have been fully demonstrated before international opinion, the Government of South Vietnam has found itself obliged to appeal for the assistance of the countries of the Free World. In so acting it has only made use of the right of legitimate self-defence recognised in the Charter of the United Nations itself. The fact that many countries of the world have responded to this appeal shows that the cause of the Vietnamese people is just. Indeed it is not only its own liberty and independence which it is defending but the very destiny of all the under-developed countries of Asia, Africa and America faced by the growing menace of the expansion of international communism. We express to you and the other members of the Preparatory Committee our profound gratitude for the interest which you are showing concerning our country. I trust that you will be kind enough to bring the contents of this message to the attention of the Conference. Please accept our sincere good wishes for the success of your Symposium. Assuring you of our highest considerations.

TRAN VAN DO,
Minister of Foreign Affairs.

(Translation from the French)

Appendix D

Programme of the National Front for the Liberation of Southern Vietnam (December 20, 1960)

At the Geneva Conference in July, 1954, the French imperialists had to undertake to withdraw their troops from Vietnam. The participating countries to the Conference solemnly declared their recognition of the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Vietnam.

Since then we should have been able to enjoy peace, and join the people throughout the country together in building a Vietnam independent, democratic, unified, prosperous and strong.

However, the American imperialists, who had in the past helped the French colonialists to massacre our people, have now plotted to partition our country for a long time, to enslave the southern part through a disguised colonial regime and turn it into a military base in preparation for aggressive war in South-East Asia. They have brought the Ngo Dinh Diem clique—their stooges—to power under the label of a faked independent state, and they use their "aid" policy and their machinery of advisers to hold in their hands all the military, economic, political and cultural branches in South Vietnam.

The aggressors and traitors have set up the most cruel and dictatorial rule in the history of Vietnam. They repress and persecute all democratic and patriotic movements, abolish all human liberties. . . .

In view of the supreme interests of our Fatherland, with determination to struggle to the end for the people's legitimate aspirations, and in accordance with the progressive trends in the world, the National Front for the Liberation of Southern Vietnam comes into being.

The National Front for the Liberation of Southern Vietnam undertakes to unite people of all walks of life, all social classes, nationalities, political parties, organisations, religious communities, and patriotic personalities in Southern Vietnam, without distinction of political tendencies, in order to struggle to overthrow the rule of the U.S. imperialists and their henchmen in South Vietnam and realise independence, democracy, social progress, peace and neutrality in South Vietnam, and advance towards the peaceful reunification of the fatherland.

The programme of the National Front for the Liberation of Southern Vietnam includes the following ten points:

I. To overthrow the disguised Colonial regime of the U.S. imperialists and the Dictatorial Ngo Dinh Diem Administration—Puppet of the U.S.—and to form a National Democratic Coalition Administration.

The present regime in South Vietnam is a disguised colonial regime of the U.S. imperialists. . . . This regime and administration must be overthrown, and a broad national democratic coalition administration

must be formed, including representatives of all strata of people, nationalities, political parties, religious communities, and patriotic personalities. We must wrest back the people's economic, political, social and cultural rights, achieve independence and democracy, improve the people's living conditions, carry out a policy of peace and neutrality and advance toward the peaceful reunification of the fatherland.

II. To Bring into Being a Broad and Progressive Democracy.

1. To abolish the current constitution of the dictatorial Ngo Dinh Diem administration. To elect a new National Assembly through universal suffrage.
2. To promulgate all democratic freedoms: freedom of expression, of the press, of assembly, of association, of movement. . . . To guarantee freedom of belief: no state discrimination against any religion. To grant freedom of action to the patriotic political parties and mass organisations, irrespective of political tendencies.
3. To grant a general amnesty to all political detainees; dissolve all concentration camps; abolish the fascist law 10-59 and other anti-democratic laws. . . .
4. To strictly ban all illegal arrests and imprisonments, tortures and corporal punishment. To punish unrepentant murderers of the people.

III. To Build an Independent and Sovereign Economy and Improve the People's Living Conditions.

1. To abolish the economic monopoly of the U.S. and its agents. To build an independent and sovereign economy and finance, beneficial to the nation and people. To confiscate and nationalise the property of the U.S. imperialists and the ruling clique, their stooges.
2. To help industrialists and tradespeople rehabilitate and develop industry both large and small, and to encourage industrial development. . . .
3. To rehabilitate agriculture, and to modernise farming, fishing and animal husbandry. To help peasants reclaim waste land and develop production. . . .

IV. To Carry Out Land Rent Reduction and Ensure Land to the Tillers.

1. To carry out land rent reductions. To guarantee the peasants' right to till their present plots of land and ensure the right of ownership for those who have reclaimed waste land. To protect the legitimate right of ownership by peasants of the plots of land distributed to them. . . .
3. To confiscate the land filched by the U.S. imperialists and their agents, and distribute it to landless and land-poor peasants. To redistribute communal land in an equitable and rational way. . . .

V. To Build a National and Democratic Education and Culture.

1. To eliminate the enslaving gangster-style American culture and education; to build a national, progressive culture and education serving the fatherland and the people.

2. To wipe out illiteracy. To build sufficient general education schools for the children and young people. To expand universities, vocational and professional schools. To use the Vietnamese language in teaching. . . .
3. To develop science and technology and national literature and art. . . .
4. To develop medical services to care for the people's health. . . .

VI. To Build an Army to Defend the Fatherland and the People.
1. To build a national army to defend the fatherland and the people. To abolish the system of U.S. military advisers.
2. To abolish the pressgang system. To improve the material life of the soldiers and ensure their political rights. . . .
4. To abolish all the military bases of foreign countries in South Vietnam.

VII. To Guarantee the Right of Equality Between Nationalities, and Between Men and Women; to Protect the Legitimate Rights of Foreign Residents in Vietnam and Vietnamese Living Abroad.

VIII. To carry out a Foreign Policy of Peace and neutrality.
1. To cancel all unequal treaties signed with foreign countries by the U.S. puppets, which violate national sovereignty.
2. To establish diplomatic relations with all countries irrespective of political regime, in accordance with the principles of peaceful co-existence as laid down at the Bandung Conference.
3. To unite closely with the peace-loving and neutral countries. To expand friendly relations with Asian and African countries; first of all, with neighbouring Cambodia and Laos.
4. To refrain from joining any bloc or military alliance or forming a military alliance with any country.
5. To receive economic aid from any country ready to assist Vietnam without conditions attached.

IX. To Establish Normal Relations between the Two Zones and Advance Toward Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland.

The urgent demand of our people throughout the country is to reunify the Fatherland by peaceful means. The N.F.L. undertakes the gradual reunification of the country by peaceful means, through negotiations and discussions between the two zones on all forms and measures beneficial to the Vietnamese people and their country.

Pending national reunification, the governments of the two zones will negotiate and undertake not to spread propaganda to divide the peoples or in favour of war, not to use military forces against each other; to carry out economic and cultural exchanges between the two zones; to ensure for the people of both zones freedom of movement and trade, and the right of mutual visits and correspondence.

X. To Oppose Aggressive War, Actively Defend World Peace.
1. To oppose aggressive war and all forms of enslavement by the imperialists. To support the national liberation struggles of peoples in various countries. . . .
3. To support the movements for peace, democracy and social progress in the world. To contribute actively to the safeguarding of peace in South-East Asia and the world.

Relative Population Figures

(Millions)

The World	3,000
Asia	1,650
The "Communist Sector"	1,250
The "Western Sector"	575
Vietnam	31
Cambodia	6
Laos	2

The first four figures are rough estimates.

"Infiltration" of Armed Personnel, 1955-65

A. INTO SOUTHERN VIETNAM

(Cumulative Totals from U.S. Official Sources)

	Americans and their Allies (nearest 500)	*Vietnamese (mostly Southerners returning South)*
1955-57	1,000	Nil
1958	1,500	Nil
1959	2,000	A trickle
1960	3,000	1,000
1961	7,000	3,000
1962	8,000	5,500
1963	23,000	12,000
1964	30,000	19,000
1965 (Aug.)	140,000	40,000

Note: U.S. estimates of Southerners returning South, and of Northern armed units entering the South (in 1965) are based on information obtained (usually by torture) from individual prisoners captured mostly in 1964 and 1965.

B. INTO NORTHERN VIETNAM

	Chinese, Russians, other Communists	*Anti-Communist Raiders from the South*
1955-59	Nil	Nil
1960-65	Nil	Approx. 400

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