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LIN PIAO ON "PEOPLE'S WAR": CHINA TAKES A SECOND LOOK AT VIETNAM

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PREFACE

This Memorandum presents an interpretation of a recent major Chinese Communist policy statement, Marshal Lin Piao's editorial article, "Long Live the Victory of People's War," published in People's Daily, September 3, 1965. The main message of the article, expressed somewhat indirectly in the manner of Communist "esoteric communications," concerns China's latest policies and attitudes toward the North Vietnamese state and the war in Vietnam.


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SUMMARY

The widely discussed article of September 3, 1965, by China's Minister of Defense, Marshal Lin Piao, entitled "Long Live the Victory of People's War," is in effect a major Peking policy statement on the war in Vietnam. Others have stressed that Lin's article represents in the main a claim by the Chinese leaders that their strategic revolutionary philosophy of nearly thirty years ago is applicable to the entire contemporary "countryside of the world"--Asia, Africa, Latin America--in its inevitable struggle to surround and defeat the "cities of the world"--the imperialist strongholds of North America and Western Europe. In fact, this part of Peking's message is manifest and explicit. It merely explicates what has been implicit in Chinese pronouncements for several years. The crucial point suggested by the editorial, however, is that by September 1965 China's leaders had completed their appraisal of the massive U.S. intervention in Vietnam. "Long Live the Victory of People's War" should be interpreted as China's considered advice to Hanoi and the Viet Cong on how its war in Vietnam should be conducted in the light of this new situation.

Peking, it appears from a careful analysis, has come to the following conclusions about the nature of the war in Vietnam, and about what the Vietnamese Communists should now do:

1. The war has now developed a fundamentally new character. Since the massive U.S. intervention, it is no longer essentially a civil war between non-Communists
and insurgents, but must now be treated as a full-fledged national war of resistance against U.S. "imperialist" invasion.

2. The present Viet Cong tactics are wrong from both the military and the political standpoint. Now that the United States is the major enemy the Viet Cong, for political reasons, should abandon terrorism, conscription, assassination, and confiscation. For their policy of no alliances with non-Communists the VC should substitute a united front strategy. On the military side, the Viet Cong should abandon mobile warfare and go over to the strategic defense by retreating into revolutionary bases in the countryside and carrying on smaller-scale but protracted guerrilla warfare.

3. The Viet Cong can win this struggle only if they rely primarily on their own resources and their own revolutionary spirit. Help from the socialist countries is important (and Peking pledges to give more assistance), but the decisive factor must be the strength and determination of the Vietnamese Communists. They, not China, must win this revolutionary war.

According to the Chinese, the Viet Cong are not applying the seven basic rules of "people's war" which Peking's leaders believe are essential for victory in this struggle. They are departing from approved revolutionary doctrine with respect to 1) united front tactics; 2) reliance on the leading role of the party; 3) formation and defense of base or "liberated" areas; 4) inducing worker-peasant support for the party and its army; 5) guerrilla war strategy; 6) stressing self-reliance; and 7) appreciation of the necessarily marginal
role of external socialist allies.

In the Lin Piao article, the Chinese also appear to reveal the following assessments: 1) the successful outcome of the struggle in Vietnam will ultimately turn on the more distant global defeat of the United States; 2) the United States intends to turn South Vietnam into a colony and by winning a decisive victory over the VC to prove that China's doctrine of revolutionary war can be invalidated by U.S. action any place in the world; 3) Peking prefers a war by proxy against the United States, through the medium of the Vietnamese nation, than a direct confrontation of American forces.

There is a striking absence of threats of possible intervention, such as those Peking made on several occasions in the months preceding publication of Lin's article. Such an omission—which can only have been deliberate—is consistent with what the authors believe to be China's understanding that the United States wants to confine the war primarily to South Vietnam, just where Peking also wants it to be fought. China's preference for a proxy war between the United States and the Vietnamese, however, does not mean she would refrain from intervening, even at great risk to herself, if the North Vietnamese state was on the verge of collapse as a result of U.S. military attack. The authors believe that North Vietnam's security is so important to China that its defense would be a far more compelling reason for Peking's intervention than the revolutionary issue Hanoi has raised in South Vietnam.

The positions expressed so openly (if somewhat obliquely) in the Lin Piao article indicate the existence
of sharp differences of view between Peking and Hanoi. The implied Chinese criticism of the way the revolution in South Vietnam has been conducted so far reveals the lack, rather than the extent, of Peking's past and present control over Hanoi's actions. Hanoi would appear to be caught between two contradictory lines of advice, one from Moscow perhaps urging a quiet subsidence of the insurgency in favor of exploiting longer-range prospects, and one from Peking urging North Vietnam's duty to continue the revolutionary effort through more correct tactics—-for as long as is necessary to win a revolution that is essentially Hanoi's own responsibility.
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I. INTRODUCTION

On September 3, 1965, People's Daily, the official organ of the Chinese regime, published a major article expounding the strategic principles of the Chinese revolution. Entitled "Long Live the Victory of People's War," this 17,000-word article by Marshal Lin Piao, China's Minister of Defense, was issued to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the defeat of Japan in World War II. It followed the publication earlier this year of important articles by top Chinese Communist military leaders, including Lo Jui-ching, Ho Lung, and Liu Ya-lou. In these earlier articles, China's military leaders attempted to draw parallels between the present world situation and that prevailing in former years when China and the Soviet Union won historic victories over the imperialist enemy. These articles reiterated a major theme in Peking's pronouncements of the past several years: that the military-political strategy formulated nearly thirty years ago by Mao Tse-tung is still applicable to many revolutionary situations today. The Lin Piao editorial is the most recent and important instance of this habitual application of past Chinese Communist revolutionary experience to the contemporary world scene.1

It has long been recognized that, in the politics of Communist states, where insistence on secrecy and

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1A table of parallels drawn in the Lin Piao article between the Chinese civil war, the Vietnamese conflict, and the world revolutionary scene is provided in Appendix A.
rigid controls over public pronouncements is an elemental facet of political life, esoteric communications serve a special function. When rigorously analyzed, the timing, content, style, and ideological character of statements by Communist leaders often suggest insights into their problems and attitudes--insights more significant than the superficial content of a particular speech or article. On the surface the Lin Piao article is an exposition of the Chinese leaders' strategic revolutionary doctrine directed primarily to the contemporary Communist-led revolutionary movements in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. This interpretation is self-evident, for "Long Live the Victory of People's War" is a definitive summation of the accumulated strategic and tactical doctrines the Chinese Communists formulated in the "Second Revolutionary Civil War" (1927-1936), "The War of Resistance Against Japan" (1937-1945), and the "Third Revolutionary Civil War" (1946-1949), that Peking now related to that of the underdeveloped world as a whole against "United States imperialism." Lin Piao asserts that the basic political-military doctrines successfully applied by the Chinese Communists against "Japanese imperialism" can in the present international situation be the basic guidelines for the people of Asia, Africa, and Latin America in their struggle against "U.S. imperialism." Thus, just as the Chinese Communists encircled and defeated the Japanese invaders from their revolutionary bases in the Chinese countryside, so the contemporary world revolution in Asia, Africa, and Latin America occupies the "rural base areas" from which it will ultimately encircle and defeat "the cities of the world," the imperialist
strongholds of North America and Western Europe. This surface content of the Lin Piao article merely explicates what has been implicit in Chinese pronouncements for some time.

Whereas the more obvious content of Communist pronouncements is designed primarily to inform or influence non-Communist audiences, the esoteric meaning or latent content is directed at Communists trained to recognize Marxist-Leninist messages and signals. The authors believe that the central message in Lin's article is addressed to the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong leadership. We think that Peking has utilized the occasion to lecture Hanoi and the VC on the nature and conduct of the war in Vietnam. The analysis that follows is an attempt to decipher what Peking is saying to the Vietnamese Communists and what advice it is giving on how the struggle should be conducted.

The Lin Piao article, it seems to us, is a major statement of Peking's views on the war in Vietnam. Not only the content of the article but also its timing leads us to the conclusion that this should be the main interpretation. By September 1965, the Communist world had had an opportunity to estimate the effects of the U.S. bombardment of North Vietnam and the U.S. commitment of approximately one hundred and fifty thousand troops to South Vietnam. "Long Live the Victory of People's War" constitutes Peking's judgment on what should now be done by Hanoi and the Viet Cong in the light of these U.S. actions. The following basic conclusions about Peking's view of the war in Vietnam emerge from close analysis of the Lin Piao article:
1. The war has now developed a fundamentally new character. Since the massive U.S. intervention it is no longer essentially a civil war between non-Communists and insurgents but must now be treated as a full-fledged national war of resistance against U.S. imperialist invasion. The Communists' main enemy is now the United States, not the Saigon government.

2. The Viet Cong's present tactics are wrong from both the military and political standpoint. Now that the United States is the major enemy, Peking argues, the Viet Cong for political reasons should abandon such practices as terrorism, forced conscription, assassination, and confiscation in favor of the same multi-class appeals and united front tactics that the Chinese Communists themselves adopted in the war against Japan. On the military side, the Viet Cong should abandon mobile warfare and go over to the strategic defense, retreat to revolutionary bases in the countryside, and carry on smaller-scale but protracted guerrilla warfare.

3. The Viet Cong can win this struggle only if they rely primarily on their own resources and their own revolutionary spirit. Help from the socialist countries is important (and Peking pledges more assistance to revolutionaries in the future as China becomes stronger) but the decisive factor must be the strength and determination of the Vietnamese Communists themselves.
II. THE CHINESE DOCTRINE OF PEOPLE'S WAR:
THE CASE OF VIETNAM

If our reading of the article is correct, its importance can be demonstrated best by commenting at length on those major points of the Chinese experience with the Japanese which the Chinese leaders deem applicable to Vietnam. Lin Piao enumerates seven techniques or rules to be followed in waging people's war: 1) united front tactics; 2) reliance on the leading role of the party; 3) formation and defense of base, or "liberated," areas; 4) an army grounded on mass support and a peasantry solidly behind the party and the army; 5) a guerrilla war strategy; 6) self-reliance as a prerequisite of success; and 7) a modicum of assistance from other socialist states. Let us discuss the implications of these points:

1. The united front is a *sine qua non* of a people's war. But two things must be assured: first, the Communist party must retain its independence within the front; and second, the front must be made up of two parts--the worker-peasant alliance and the worker-bourgeoisie intellectual alliance--and the former must be more important than and indispensable to the latter. The stress Lin places on this point strongly implies that in Peking's view the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam does not now have a genuine proletarian-peasant character, that the peasants are not rushing to join the NLF or even supporting it to the degree necessary for ultimate success. In other words, the Chinese evidently feel that the Front is not a true united front, is
divorced from the masses, and hence stands little chance of winning the war with its present strategy.  

2. The article stresses the leading role of the party within the front, for the Communist party is thought to be the only completely dependable element in a people's war. Practical experience plus correct application of Marxism-Leninism and of the "Thought of Mao Tse-tung" are guarantees that a people's war will result in victory, even in the face of imperialist intervention. But throughout the article there are warnings that the correct path is a narrow one and that the party must beware of the various sins of the left and of the right. Several times Lin warns of the need to keep the party intact within the united front and to guard against the enemy outside the party but within the front. This seems to imply that the northern Lao Dong Party (or its southern branch, the People's Revolutionary Party) does not have firm control of the NLFSV. We gain the impression that in Chinese eyes the Lao Dong Party up to now has not even pursued a genuine united front policy. There is, for instance, the implication that the party will have to make some needed adjustments such as changing its name and the name of the areas under its control, and toning down its land policy. Further, there is in the article a startling reference to the Sian incident of 1936, in which the Chinese Communists cooperated with nationalist elements to effectuate a domestic cease-fire in the face of foreign invasion. If applied to Vietnam, this parallel would suggest that the Chinese are in favor of Viet Cong overtures to "all those forces that can be united," such as the Buddhists, the intellectuals, and the national
bourgeoisie, and even nationalistic elements of the government of South Vietnam, in order to unite with them in a holy War of Resistance against the American "invaders." The inducement held out to these groups would be an abandonment of the domestic class struggle and of Hanoi's attack on the South Vietnamese state, at least until the Americans had left. In the Chinese view, such overtures are necessary for the creation of a successful united front; therefore, the Viet Cong must make them, however distasteful, for the sake of the long-term revolutionary goal.

It would seem that Peking believes the American intervention must force the Vietnamese Communists to go over to the defensive and to adopt political and military policies appropriate to that posture. Lin says, in effect, that the Vietnamese must now do what the Chinese Communists did after the Japanese aggression in 1937. Although this course of action is a retreat, it is only a temporary one and, according to Lin, contains within itself the seeds of ultimate success. For only by means of a genuine, nationwide united front encompassing almost all classes will the Americans be driven out, and only through such a united front will the Communists themselves gain the support eventually to come to power. The American presence, paradoxically, will make possible the creation of a successful and victorious front.

The Chinese have their own name for the refusal to pursue such a policy--"left extremism" (over-stressing the domestic left-right struggle despite foreign invasion, "all struggle and no alliance")--and their own scapegoat, Wang Ming (who allegedly held back the Party, at great
cost to it, from engaging in the united front). The amount of space devoted to Wang Ming in the Lin article implies that latter-day Wang Mings exist in the upper reaches of the Lao Dong Party and, perhaps for fear of losing control, continue to block the establishment of a genuine united front. It would seem that, in the Chinese view, left extremism explains why the Viet Cong are not winning the political and military struggle. This impression is sharpened by Lin's surprising extension of Wang Ming's alleged errors into the domain of "right extremism," that is to say, opportunism ("all alliance and no struggle") and capitulationism. Perhaps the Chinese have reason to believe that some North Vietnamese Party authorities are advocating not only negotiations with the government of South Vietnam, (i.e., trading too many domestic concessions for a commitment to invite the Americans to leave) but even negotiations with the United States to end the war. In other words, the Chinese may fear betrayal by the North Vietnamese. There is no other way, in the writers' opinion, to explain the excessive space devoted to the Wang Ming parallel.

3. The article stresses the importance of establishing and defending "liberated" base areas. But it also cautions that, as the Chinese themselves found, there will be ups and downs in the size of each area and in the number of such areas. The struggle will be a long one and to assure success each area should become a self-sufficient miniature state complete with its own local government, industry, agricultural program, and schools. The implication for Vietnamese Communists seems to be that, under pressure of American intervention, the area
under Viet Cong control in the short run must be expected to shrink, but that the NLFSV should be prepared to accept this since in the long run success will be theirs. Lin also stresses that within such "liberated" base areas social policy should be moderate and should be founded on a political policy of anti-imperialism and of the united front. The national-democratic revolution must be carried out before the socialist revolution.

Judging from other reports, the establishment of such a moderate, first-things-first policy would be a turn in the direction opposite to that presently being followed by the Viet Cong. That is to say, the Chinese seem to be saying that the Viet Cong ought now to abandon the terrorism, confiscation, forced military induction, forced requisitions, and forced taxation that have characterized their approach since 1959. Lin Piao's article implies very strong criticism of the present Viet Cong line, and says in effect that the Viet Cong are guilty of left opportunism, that they lack broad national support, and that this is one of the root causes of high Viet Cong losses. There is no clear indication in the article, however, that the Chinese expect the North Vietnamese regime to revert to a base-areas strategy and to evacuate its cities. In the event of United States invasion or massive destruction of the North, we cannot exclude the possibility that Peking might prefer Hanoi to adopt this strategy too.

4. Just as liberated areas are necessary elements in a people's war, so is the existence of a mass-based and mass-supported "people's" army. To achieve final victory against the "imperialists," the "people's" army must be
greatly expanded but its size will vary according to the requirements of correct tactics and the enemy's strength. Although the enemy's strength in the long run can only decline, in the short run it may be very great, as it is now in Vietnam. Survival now depends upon adoption of the correct tactics. These are four: 1) follow Mao's teachings, especially on political matters; 2) win the support of the masses by respecting and appealing to their interests; 3) organize a large local militia; 4) enforce a lenient POW policy. Only then will the army be able to grow to a size sufficient to defeat the aggressor. Lin implies that the Viet Cong are being and will continue to be beaten unless they change their ways.

5. This brings up the question of the correct military tactics. The war must be fought and won in stages--guerrilla warfare first and mobile warfare second. But the shift from the first to the second must not be made prematurely. Lin again mentions sins of the left (adventurism: fighting with no hope of winning) and of the right (opportunism: not fighting when one can win). His stress on certain guerrilla warfare tactics applied in China may have relevance to Vietnam. One tactic is that of "moving away," dispersing, and hiding in the face of superior force--perhaps an admission that the introduction of American ground combat units has adversely affected VC operations and therefore requires new tactics. Another, expressed with emphasis, is restraint in warfare and conduct of the struggle on "just" grounds, evidently Peking's advice to the Viet Cong to dispense with terrorism. A third tactic is the annihilation of an isolated group of the enemy through local
superiority and encirclement, instead of by attacking in many places with inconclusive results. The message here seems to be that the Viet Cong should abandon indecisive and costly frontal engagements in favor of fighting only when the ratio of forces is so favorable that the enemy unit will be completely annihilated. Fourth, the Chinese caution against "recklessness"—left opportunistic adventurism—as a sin greater than not doing battle at all. Lin's article implies here that the Viet Cong are losing too many people needlessly and that they have moved prematurely from guerrilla to mobile warfare. The time for that, the Chinese seem to be saying, is not during a period of increasingly massive American involvement.

6. Lin's rendering of China's doctrine of "people's war" stresses the virtues of self-reliance. This has fundamental implications for Peking's view of the Vietnam war. A people's war is a war of annihilation, and self-reliance is therefore mandatory: the alternative is death. Aside from this, however, Lin sees self-reliance as basic in relation to the question of aid from other socialist countries. Although such aid in a "people's war" is helpful, it is much less important than self-reliance and therefore should not be counted on to any great degree. Lin's article gives two reasons for this judgment. One is that the decisive factor in such wars is the vitality and resourcefulness of the domestic revolutionaries. Aid from the outside will do no good whatsoever if the native insurgents do not provide the "spark" necessary to ignite the tinder-dry "plain" of pre-revolutionary social conditions. To be sure, the
Chinese stand ready to provide the training and supplies necessary to help strike that spark and they assume that throughout Asia, Africa, and Latin America such social conditions exist. But once lit, the domestic insurgent fire should depend for fuel on inflammable social resentments and anti-imperialist nationalism. Self-reliance in the face of the expected but fierce domestic reactionary and imperialist opposition is the best proof of the quality of the spark. But if the spark is dim, it will not do for socialist countries elsewhere to render continuous and mounting aid in a vain attempt to keep it lit. Such countries—China in particular—can tell the native insurgents how to reform themselves by taking into account previous Chinese experience. As long as the path of China's "people's war" is followed, Peking can make the going a little less rough by rendering as much aid as possible. Judging from the Lin article, the Chinese see no use in pouring aid into revolutionary organizations abroad which refuse to take their advice.

Second, insurgents must be self-reliant because at any time China's aid may be cut off, either by imperialist-reactionary counteraction, by Chinese domestic needs, or by the exigencies of international politics. The safest policy for insurgents—either in the face of fierce opposition on their own soil or in the circumstance of enforced isolation from socialist countries, or both—is domestic self-reliance. Applied to Vietnam, Lin's article implies that 1) the NLFSV is not now as self-reliant as it should be and may even be overdependent on weapons and leadership from abroad; 2) China cannot unequivocally guarantee a continuous flow of aid to the
Viet Cong in the face of bombed supply lines, American threats to extend the war to China, and Chinese unwillingness to become further involved in Vietnam; 3) the North Vietnamese-NLFSV leadership in the past has not taken Chinese advice to heart and had better do so if it wishes Chinese aid to continue on the present scale, or to increase. The Chinese are not stating that they will cut off assistance to North Vietnam: their policy remains to render "as much foreign assistance as possible" in as many forms as possible and in increasing quantities. But the Chinese are hinting that for various reasons assistance may not be possible to the degree desired by the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong.
III. THE BROADER CONTEXT: CHANGES IN CHINA'S POLICY

The authors believe that the extent to which the Lin Piao article openly expounds the Chinese Communist strategic doctrine in the war with Japan strongly suggests that Peking for a long time has had serious disagreements with Hanoi about the proper way the Vietnam revolution should have been conducted. In the past, Western observers have frequently asserted that Communist tactics in Vietnam have been modeled after those of the Chinese Communists. But that is not true, particularly with respect to political tactics, which were always the fundamental and distinctive part of the Maoist revolutionary weapon. The VC's policies of terrorism, forced conscription, assassination, confiscation, and no alliances with non-Communist elements contradict the entire political line of Chinese revolutionary doctrine.

While the revolution in South Vietnam was developing favorably, Hanoi was evidently reluctant to yield to Chinese claims that their revolutionary techniques were more appropriate than those devised by Ho Chi Minh. Now that the situation in South Vietnam has changed radically for the worse, the Chinese, through Lin Piao's article, seem to be saying to Hanoi: "Your tactics are wrong and you had better come around to our way of thinking if you expect to win." If the VC's military and political tactics both change in the months ahead to conform more closely with the classic Chinese model, this would suggest Peking has won the argument on revolutionary strategy. If the VC does not change, this would indicate the existence of a major difference between Hanoi and Peking that could
have very significant effects on their relations. If the Chinese feel the issue to be critical they may attempt to exert pressure on and inside the North Vietnamese Party, and if that has no effect they may feel compelled to reappraise their entire commitment to Hanoi's war in the South.

While the authors have stressed the importance of the Lin Piao article as a key to the Chinese view of the nature of the war in Vietnam and how it should be treated, they believe this significant document also reveals a great deal about Peking's perception of how this war is related to some of its basic international problems. Although in the Lin Piao article the Chinese do not conceal either their pessimism about the present stage of the war or their insistence that the VC adopt new tactics, they are confident about the long-range prospects of revolution both in Vietnam and elsewhere. The article tells the Vietnamese Communists that they must expect setbacks, ups and downs, and yet heavier blows from the U.S. "imperialists." But the Communists will win if they adopt the correct strategy, remain determined, and rally the entire population behind a war of national resistance. Drawing lessons from their war against Japan, the Chinese assert that the United States cannot successfully stamp out the Communist revolutionary bases because its limited ground forces, with worldwide commitments, will not be able to augment the thinly spread forces already in Vietnam and hence will not be able to accomplish their mission. Like the anti-Japanese war in China, the war in Vietnam is linked to a broader world struggle that will weaken the United States and therefore aid the Vietnamese. By tying
down U.S. forces over a long period, says China, the Vietnamese are making a major contribution (and it is their duty to make it) to the defeat of the United States everywhere. Similarly the revolutionary struggle in other countries aids the Vietnamese.

It is no doubt very discouraging to Hanoi to learn that Peking now sees the successful outcome of the struggle in Vietnam ultimately turning on the more distant global defeat of the United States. In the meantime the Chinese contend it is the Vietnamese Communists' duty to keep up their end of the struggle indefinitely.

"Long Live the Victory of People's War" also provides insights into Peking's estimate of the U.S. purpose in Vietnam. Many in the United States have reasoned that their government's actions in Vietnam have been designed to strengthen a negotiating position so that it would be possible to reach a solution enabling the United States to withdraw without suffering an unacceptable political defeat. The estimate of U.S. intentions contained in the Lin Piao article is altogether different. Lin shows clearly that Peking regards the United States as having entered Vietnam to stay, to turn it into an American colony, and to prove by a decisive victory over the Viet Cong that the United States, if necessary acting alone, can invalidate China's doctrine of revolutionary war anywhere in the world.

Peking's estimate does not indicate that the Vietnamese will be able to win a quick victory over the United States; on the contrary, victory will be a long time coming. In effect, the Lin Piao article expresses China's acceptance of a contest with the United States on these
terms. More important, it recognizes that China, since she is not able to defeat the United States frontally, should wage war with the United States by proxy. The contest must be between other revolutionary peoples and the United States, not between America and China directly. The Chinese leaders realize that American strategic superiority and China's relative industrial weakness preclude an early frontal challenge. Therefore they prefer the lower risk policy of indirect conflict, at least in those areas where China's vital national interests are not directly and seriously threatened. Revolutionary war-by-proxy on the tactical level and military caution on the strategic level are thus mutually reinforcing features of China's political-military philosophy.

Before the large build-up of U.S. ground forces in South Vietnam began, Peking's public statements, it is true, did threaten the possibility of direct Chinese intervention in support of the revolutionaries, and offered "volunteers" if the VC requested them. But the key message that also came with these statements was that China would willingly fight the United States directly only if the latter attacked China. In the authors' view such threats are primarily intended to deter the United States from further escalation of the war in Vietnam. They are not simply bluff or propaganda, but serious efforts to restrain the United States from further enlarging the scope of the war. They can be interpreted as efforts to limit the war rather than as signals of China's intention to intervene. Had the Chinese wanted to emphasize the threat of their intervention, the Lin Piao editorial was the place to do it. But a striking feature of this major policy statement
is precisely the absence of those threats of possible intervention that Peking had alluded to on several occasions in the preceding months. The reason for this significant omission—which can only have been deliberate—must be that by choosing to concentrate its main efforts in the South, the United States itself has helped to confine the war just where China wants it to be fought—in South Vietnam. After telling the VC how to win their war, Peking's main aim is to make sure the war remains limited as far as possible to South Vietnam. The best way to accomplish both these objectives is to tie down American ground forces in South Vietnam and then beat them with "people's revolutionary war" tactics.

"Long Live the Victory of People's War" should not be interpreted as meaning China would not intervene in Vietnam under any circumstances. We have already mentioned the existence of areas in which China has a vital interest. Her strongest threats to intervene have come in response to the U.S. bombing of North Vietnam. If bombing should ever reach a level at which the North Vietnamese regime was in danger of collapse or unable to assist the revolutionaries in the South, China might feel forced to intervene. Her interest in North Vietnam's security is probably stronger than her desire to see an early and successful conclusion to the revolutionary issue in South Vietnam. Although China prefers war-by-proxy with the United States in the South, this does not mean she would remain passive in the event of a serious threat to an allied state on her own borders, whatever the superiority of American power that could be brought to bear there.
Finally, the positions expressed in the Lin Piao article provide some insights into the political relationship between Peking and Hanoi. The implied Chinese criticism of the way the war in South Vietnam has been run so far tends to support those who have argued that Peking is not really the off-stage director of a Hanoi-VC cast of puppets. If anything, Lin Piao's article reveals the lack rather than the extent of China's control over the Vietnamese. In arguing that Hanoi and the VC must continue the war no matter what the costs, and primarily on a self-reliant basis, Peking betrays a doubt as to its own ability to prevent the Vietnamese Communists from considering the possibility of terminating the war at some point. There are no hints of Chinese commitments or guarantees sufficient to induce the Vietnamese to continue the struggle if at some future time they should view the revolutionary effort as no longer in their own interests.

North Vietnam would seem to be in a position where she will soon be forced to choose between two lines of action, neither of which can be completely to her liking. It seems clear that the Chinese have offered the following advice: The war must be continued but it must also be confined if possible principally to yourselves and the Americans. The war will be painful and it will go on indefinitely but as revolutionary war breaks out in other countries you will move closer to victory. China, in addition to supplying aid directly, is making her major contribution to the Vietnamese struggle by energizing revolutionary war in other countries where prospects for an anti-"U.S. imperialist" struggle look promising. The less candid Russians have said nothing to contradict
the Chinese views, but we may suppose they would offer a
different analysis. It seems logical to infer that
Moscow's advice to Hanoi would be essentially the following:
The Americans will continue to invade the South and pound
you to pieces by air. Moreover, neither we nor the Chinese
are likely to go to war with them over your revolutionary
ambitions in the South. Why don't you call off the revolu-
tion for the time being. You can no longer win at an
acceptable price anyway. If you call off the insurgency--
and you don't have to negotiate this--the Americans in
the absence of a war will be very hard pressed by their
own and other people to withdraw their army of occupation
from Vietnam. The South Vietnamese, furthermore, are so
divided that after the Americans leave they will again
fight among themselves and you will then be able to exploit
the turmoil by violence or political means. North Vietnam
will be stronger, the socialist camp will be stronger,
and the Americans, once out, are not likely to come back
again.

To the Vietnamese, Russian advice of this kind comes
too close to the position both Russia and China took at
Geneva in 1954. These two powers forced Ho Chi Minh to
settle for half of Vietnam when all of the country could
well have been in his grasp had the struggle continued.
The expected internal collapse of South Vietnam, predicted
by Moscow and Peking, did not materialize and therefore,
in 1959, Hanoi reactivated the revolution. If the Soviet
Union offers basically the same advice today as it did a
decade ago, the Vietnamese would be profoundly suspicious.
On the other hand, in addition to having a revolution to
win, Ho Chi Minh now has the North Vietnamese state to
preserve. The Soviet advice would make better sense in terms of protecting a decade of socialist progress. The Chinese advice no doubt appeals to Hanoi's aspirations to reunify North and South. In the Soviet-Chinese contest for influence in Vietnam, the decisive factor may be the extent of Hanoi's nationalistic dedication to unifying the country by revolution. That is clearly the question Peking has put to Hanoi in the Lin Piao article: How much are you willing to give to win your revolution?
## APPENDIX: PARALLELS IN THE LIN PIAO ARTICLE BETWEEN CHINESE COMMUNIST HISTORY AND TODAY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>China, 1925-45</th>
<th>Vietnam, 1965-</th>
<th>The World, 1965-</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Imperialist Aggressor</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Imperialist Lackey</td>
<td>Kuomintang</td>
<td>Government of Vietnam</td>
<td>All govs. not controlled by CPR-oriented CPs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leader of the People's War</td>
<td>Chinese Communist Party</td>
<td>Lao Dong Party</td>
<td>All local CPs in Asia, Africa and Latin America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-imperialist Struggle</td>
<td>Anti-fascist</td>
<td>National struggle against U.S. invaders</td>
<td>World struggle against U.S. imperialism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aid-rendering Socialist State</td>
<td>USSR</td>
<td>CPR (not USSR)</td>
<td>CPR (not USSR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compromisers with the Imperialists</td>
<td>British-U.S. imperialism</td>
<td>USSR-Khrushchev modern revisionists, compromising with the U.S., and all CPs under USSR control</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Front</td>
<td>Mao's New Democracy</td>
<td>National Liberation Front</td>
<td>World united front against U.S., led by CPR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP in the Imperialist State</td>
<td>Japanese CP</td>
<td>Progressive Labor Movement (?)</td>
<td>All local CPs in Europe &amp; North America subscribing to CCP philosophy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Liberated,&quot; base areas, countryside</td>
<td>14 bases under Yenan's leadership</td>
<td>VC areas</td>
<td>All of Asia, Africa, and Latin America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cities</td>
<td>Chinese cities under KMT</td>
<td>Saigon, coastal cities</td>
<td>All of Europe and North America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intra-party Deviationists</td>
<td>Wang Ming</td>
<td>Apparently some high personages in Lao Dong Party advocating negotiations with U.S.</td>
<td>All local deviationists so defined by CPR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>