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Out of the Rubble, A New Era?

By Victor Zorza

A longtime analyst of international affairs, Zorza writes an independently syndicated column that appears weekly in The Washington Post. His last Outlook article, anticipating a settlement of the Vietnam war, appeared Oct. 15.

VIETNAM may yet repay the blood and the treasure it has soaked up all these years and yield a new age of peace and concord for a world that has had its fill of wars. This may seem an almost blasphemous suggestion in the face of all the evil and misery this war has produced, and few people may be ready for it with the tragedy still so close to us. But we should not shut our eyes to it just because it is so startling.

The argument that a bright future may arise from the ashes of war rests on two premises. The first is that the United States, Russia and other powers will join in an unprecedented international program of aid and reconstruction that will prove to be the beginning of a new spirit of cooperation between the advanced nations, and will sow the first real seeds of progress among the developing nations.

The second premise is that the world has long been ready for the transition from the cold war to a global arrangement among nations to live and let live, and that this has been delayed by the poison which the war in Vietnam introduced into the international bloodstream. The opening between the United States and China, and the United States and Russia, as well as the start toward nuclear disarmament made in the missile limitations agreements, would have come long before this year's beginnings if it had not been for Vietnam. With the war over, progress will be far more rapid than it would otherwise have been.

Every big war has been hailed by dreamers and visionaries as the war to end wars. But the men in the Kremlin and in the White House, as well as the men in Peking, who have come together to put an end to the war in Vietnam are hard-headed realists. They acted in their own interests, in the interests of their nations, deciding with the cynicism—or wisdom—typical of great powers that the private interests of the immediate combatants can go hang. They know that "there is a tide in the affairs of men which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune"—and they decided that the present opportunity is too rare to miss. So they have resolved to stop the war. What next?

Haves and Have-Nots

THE \$7.5 BILLION which President Nixon promised last January to contribute toward the rehabilitation of the war-torn nations is a huge sum, much greater than any fund ever made available for a comparable purpose and



By Vint Lawrence

population. The North Vietnamese government has stressed repeatedly in recent days that it expects a large contribution from the United States, and the White House has confirmed that this will be forthcoming.

The United States, according to Hanoi's version of the provisional agreement, "will contribute to healing the wounds of war" in North Vietnam and Indochina as a whole. So will the Soviet Union and China. Although no announcements have yet been made, there is every reason to believe that the joint aid program will marry capitalist money with Communist planning, Western technology with Oriental patience and wisdom, to produce an experiment that may combine the best efforts and talents of both worlds for the benefit not just of Vietnam, but of the Third World as a whole.

Some aspects of the joint aid program have already been discussed privately between the United States and some of the other nations. It bids fair to become a model of development aid by the rich to the poor which, if it succeeds, may provide the solution to the greatest problem facing mankind: how to bridge the growing gap between the advanced and the underdeveloped nations.

Technology and Money

THE diminishing hostility between the established great powers is being increasingly replaced by the embittered confrontation between the have and the have-not nations in a way

which threatens the stability of the world more dangerously than any weapon now in the military arsenals. The halting, faltering attempts of the richer nations to stave off the revolt of the dispossessed have often done more harm than good by appearing to buy them off. In Indochina, American blood-money—let's face it, that is what it will be—will be taken not as alms, but as a debt repayment, and will be applied to a regional development plan that combines some of the most advanced ideas on the subject.

The Mekong basin development plan, already on the drawing boards, calls for harnessing the region's rivers to produce electric power, and channeling the waters to irrigate the land and to provide the waterways that will carry the raw materials to keep new industries going. South Vietnam, long the rice granary of Indochina, and North Vietnam, much better endowed with industrial resources, are clearly complementary. No development plan for the area would make sense if it failed to combine the resources of the North and South, and indeed of neighboring countries, into the kind of system pioneered by the Tennessee Valley Authority.

Although some of the blueprints are already on the drawing boards, the best laid economic plans go awry when poor nations, starved of resources, try to pull themselves up by their bootstraps. This has been the curse of Russia, and of India, and now of Chile, as their attempts to jump from feudal

backwardness into modern efficiency produced political and communal strains that stretched the social fabric to the breaking point.

In recent years, however, the rapid progress of technology in industry as well as in agriculture, the new automated mass-production techniques as well as the miracle strains that make ten grains grow where once there was one, have laid the basis for a more dramatic breakthrough than any in mankind's history.

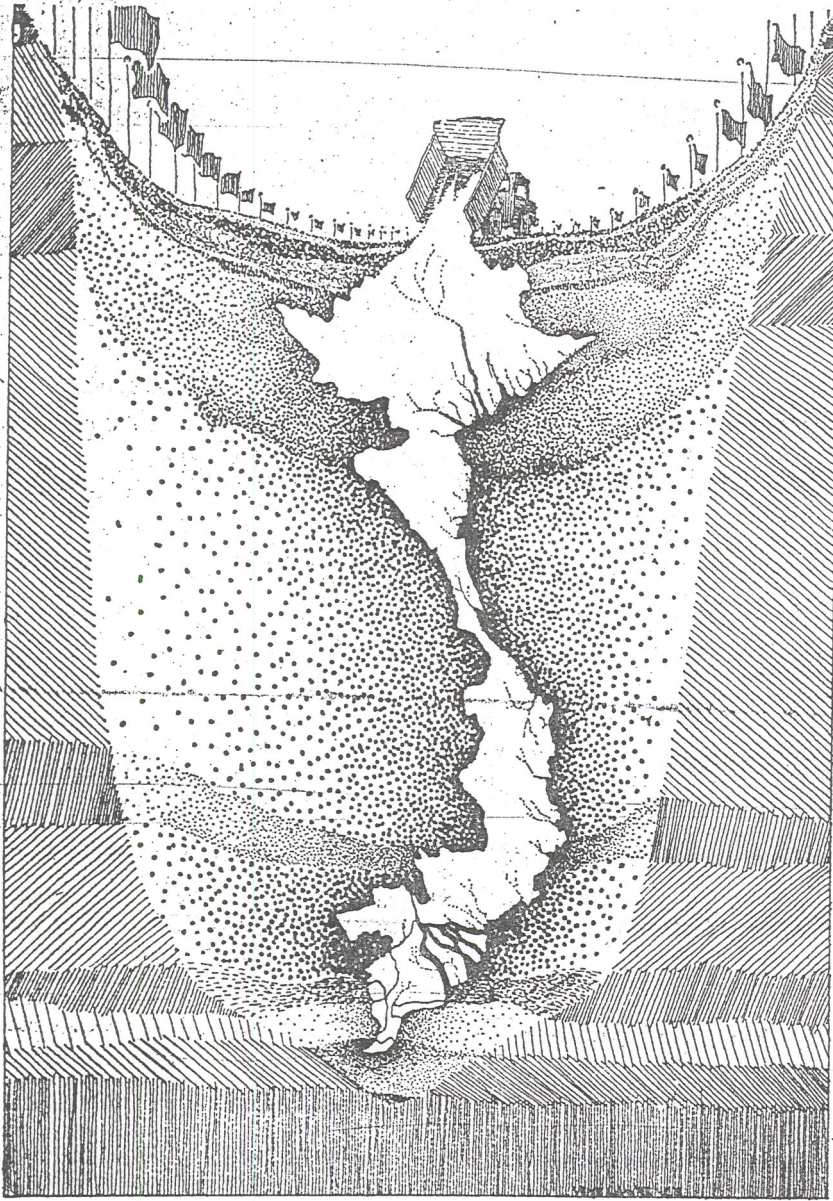
Interacting Economies

BUT NEITHER technology nor money will do the trick if the political and social skill is lacking. The developed West, led by the United States, has not been prepared to admit that socialist management devices have something to offer to the poor nations, while the doctrinaire socialists have looked with distrust and suspicion at capitalist advice. But now, with the United States and Russia and China beginning to shed their blinders, with huge trade deals between America and the Soviet Union in the offing, the capitalist and socialist economies of the major powers are going to interact, slowly at first, but at a pace that will grow faster as time goes on.

What is good for the United States and Russia will prove even better for North and South Vietnam and for the underdeveloped countries generally, where the needs and the pressures are so much greater.

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Both Washington and Hanoi have made it clear that they are looking forward to "a new period of reconciliation" (to quote Henry Kissinger) and that, "together, we must inaugurate a new era" (in the words of North Vietnamese Premier Pham Van Dong). Both countries "will develop their relations on a basis of mutual respect," moving from past hostility to a new "mutually beneficial relationship." What is this relationship that could benefit two such countries as the United States and North Vietnam?

Vietnam offers, in the words of its premier, to "establish friendship between our two peoples." Friendship? Has the man taken leave of his senses? After all the slaughter, the lies, the torture, the children burned to death? Is he prepared to sell his people's friendship to the United States in return for dollars? That may be one way of looking at it. But there is another. A little history goes a long way. Think back to two world wars. Not only did the United States finance the recovery of Germany, and of Japan—a fiercer enemy, more hated and distrusted in the United States than North Vietnam ever was. It made Japan into the American showpiece in Asia, the inheritor of democratic traditions, and, for a time, its best friend. In Europe, it was the German enemy, not the French ally, that became the closest associate of the United States. American money poured into Germany and Japan. Could something like this happen in Vietnam? It could—and will.

The pattern of the Mekong development plan could—and will—be duplicated in the many other areas that are ripe for development, where peoples considered as "backward" by the West as the Vietnamese will be fired by the

example of Indochina. In Latin America, in Africa, in other parts of Asia, similar projects and dreams, long shelved for lack of money and political willpower, will be revived.

One example must suffice: The Eisenhower administration's Middle East development proposal that was to harness the Tigris and the Euphrates Rivers so that the Jews and the Arabs might once again, together, make those ancient lands flow with milk and honey will not lie dormant much longer. With the departure of the Russians from Egypt, the Middle East has been ready for a political settlement for some time, and the ice will start moving as soon as the American election is out of the way. A Middle East settlement which, I believe, will be on its way within three to six months, cannot be worked out in isolation from

part with supplies from Russia, under the huge trade deals now being negotiated, and this will form the beginnings of a global fuel policy that must be built on international cooperation rather than competition. The need for the wise husbanding of the world's power resources, including those of the Middle East, Russia and both Americas, will bring the developed and underdeveloped countries together at yet another level, imposing new patterns of cooperation in the interests of all—but primarily, in each case, in their own self-interest.

A Cold Assessment

A PERSONAL DISCLAIMER is in order here. The messianic vision which might seem to underlie this article, the prophetic promise, is not part of my intellectual equipment, and

the White House and the Kremlin. More often than not, my analysis has led me to forecasts of conflict and discord—as, for instance, when the professional optimists were denying that Russia would invade Czechoslovakia, and, many years ago, when the professional cold warriors were claiming that there could be no such thing as a Sino-Soviet split.

This analysis, then, does not derive from an inherently optimistic frame of mind, but from a cold assessment of the facts of international life, from a judgment that the self-interest of the great powers imposes on them patterns of cooperation that none can evade. It is not all that original an analysis, for the patterns have become more and more clearly discernible in the movement of ideas and in the flows of power across the continents.

Nor is President Nixon's "generation of peace"—a goal he raised on Thursday to two generations—an invention of the Nixon administration. It would have come, in one way or another, whoever was in power in the White House and in the Kremlin—perhaps sooner with some incumbents, later

with others. Many building blocks of the new structure of peace are already in place, too many to discuss them all here, and so are many barriers to progress. Setbacks are still possible, and an informed public opinion will have to watch the political leaders to make sure that they do not make a mess of things, as they have done so often in the past.

There have been golden ages in the past, so historically the notion is not as outlandish as the skeptics will, inevitably, make it out to be. But let the skeptics scoff. Ten years from now, they will be convinced.

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great power interests in the area. That means that the navies of the United States and Russia, much to the distress of some admirals in both countries, will have to restrain their enthusiasm for Mediterranean competition, as perhaps the first step in limiting the naval race that is just getting under way.

The Middle East's oil, too, could bring the great powers together rather than push them apart. The energy crisis that is beginning to worry the United States will be solved at least in

never has been. I have spent too many years observing in the closest detail the often criminal policies of the Kremlin, and the equally self-serving policies of the Western powers, as well as the greed and cupidity of some of the smaller nations, to base my analysis on an idealistic reading of their motives.

For many years I have watched the competition and conflict between the great powers of East and West, and have learned to recognize the self-perpetuating patterns of hostility as they spread in ever-widening circles from