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 North Vietnam Says People of the South Want Reunification

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HONG KONG, July 15—In what appeared to be a major statement on the case for reunification of North and South Vietnam, the official North Vietnamese press agency said today that "almost all" the people in the South wanted to join the North and that historic ties between the two halves of the country outweighed any differences.

The article gave no timetable for bringing the North and South together. But it said that "the process can be considerably shortened" if "classical methods" are avoided and reliance placed instead on the people. The article did not define what it meant by classical methods.

Previous statements by Communist leaders in Hanoi and Saigon on their plans for unification have been vague, though they have indicated that South Vietnam would probably be allowed to continue its separate existence for an undetermined period before merging with the North.

The Vietnamese have also

reportedly made preliminary moves to apply for separate membership for the two halves of the country in the United Nations this fall.

The article broadcast today, which appears in the current issue of the Hanoi monthly publication Vietnam Courier, is the frankest and fullest discussion yet in the Vietnamese Communist press on unification. It was written by Nguyen Khac Vien, who was identified only as a Vietnamese sociologist.

Vietnam Courier is an English-language publication designed for distribution abroad. But analysts here suggested that dissemination of the article in full by the official Vietnam press agency indicated it was a significant statement.

The article took the unusual form of a mock debate between "an African friend returning from Saigon" and Mr. Vien, with the friend asking some pointed questions about how Saigon, with its much higher standard of living, could be united with Hanoi. It is a question posed by many Vietnamese

as well as foreigners who have seen the two capitals.

According to Mr. Vien, "for many it will certainly be hard to give up riding in their cars or on their Hondas, to return to bicycles." But, Mr. Vien added, "if they have to make a choice between those conditions, they will choose the Communist one."

On reunification, the author continued, "we feel certain that almost all of the population in the South are in agreement." As for the traditional cultural, linguistic and political differences between Northerners and Southerners, Mr. Vien insisted, "there is certainly less difference between a Hanoi and a Saigonese than between a Breton and a Provencal."

North Vietnamese are usually considered more disciplined, hard working and suspicious. Southerners are said to be more open, individualistic and easy-going.

In the view of the author,

"a unified Vietnam can be proud of joining together very different, very diverse provinces within the same community, like a bouquet with all kinds of flowers in it."

According to the article, there is no real middle class in Saigon to oppose reunification with the North. The people who look like the middle class in Saigon, the author argues, are only the ones "who have benefited greatly from the war" and got their cars and television sets courtesy of American aid.

Now that the war is over, "this social stratum will come to see its influence, even its revolutionary war existence as a class, disappear."

To achieve this, and to hasten unification, the article asserts, "the most important task now, therefore, is to wipe out, to liquidate, the deep innumerable consequences of a powerful and brutal colonialist intervention."

The article also takes issue with the view, which it says was shared widely among Western journalists in Saigon, that the Communists won through the use of their large-scale conventional armed forces rather than through a popular uprising or political agitation, as called for in classical