

# Sino-Soviet Influence on Hanoi

By ROBERT KLEIMAN

WASHINGTON—President Podgorny's visit to Hanoi and Henry Kissinger's trip to Peking may have been coincidental, rather than pre-arranged to virtually coincide, but both may contribute to a new effort to negotiate peace in Vietnam. The return to Hanoi of North Vietnam's chief Paris negotiator, Le Duc Tho, suggests that new decisions are being taken there.

Hanoi clearly has been put under pressure by the policies toward the United States of the two Communist superpowers and their antagonism toward each other. The North Vietnamese people have not been told by Hanoi that Chinese and Soviet leaders in turn have welcomed President Nixon to their capitals for summit meetings and have signed important agreements improving relations with Washington.

Meanwhile, six weeks after the mining of Haiphong and other North Vietnamese harbors, Moscow and Peking evidently have been unable as yet to agree on increased land shipment across China of Soviet aid to compensate for the halt in sea supply. Before the blockade, 85 per cent of North Vietnam's imports came by sea.

Of all the Soviet ships en route to North Vietnam when the blockade was imposed, only one tanker has put into a Chinese port, and that briefly for emergency reasons. It now is reported to have left without unloading. Three or four Soviet ships have put into Hong Kong and Singapore. Some are back in Vladivostok. Others are still at sea, apparently awaiting instructions.

Two Polish and two East German ships headed for North Vietnam, carrying civilian rather than military supplies for the most part, have been permitted to unload in the Chinese port of Canton. But the Central Intelligence Agency has not detected any significant increase in the volume of supplies being shipped by land from China to North Vietnam.

On the contrary, the volume may even have fallen off as a result of the bombing of road and rail routes north of Hanoi. There has been one report that supplies are piling up on the

China side of the North Vietnam border. There is no sign as yet of Chinese transport troops and repair crews in North Vietnam—50,000 came in during the 1965-68 bombing—to help keep roads and railways open.

The Russians are said to be blaming the Chinese privately for refusing to transship increased supplies to North Vietnam by land. The Chinese, in conversations with other Communist and neutral diplomats, are blaming the Russians for failing to sweep the American mines. There is speculation that Peking sees an opportunity to increase its influence in Hanoi at Moscow's expense by taking over from the Soviet Union the role of primary supplier of North Vietnam's needs.

But Peking is likely to put North Vietnam on more austere rations than Moscow imposed. The Chinese have indicated disapproval of North Vietnam's shift from the guerrilla strategy of protracted war to open invasion of the South and conventional battles employing tanks and heavy arms.

Meanwhile, over the past eighteen months, Peking evidently has dropped its opposition to a negotiated settlement in Vietnam. The Chinese may see a possibility now of achieving their two major purposes in Vietnam, reducing Soviet influence and getting the Americans out.

Troubled as the North Vietnamese may be by the Chinese attitude, they evidently are even more disturbed by the Nixon-Brezhnev summit, which saw extensive discussion of the Vietnam problem and American peace proposals. Without revealing that the American President was in Moscow, Hanoi radio and press attacks on Mr. Nixon and his alleged efforts to split the world Communist movement have also contained thinly veiled attacks on Moscow. The Russians have been accused indirectly of setting their "national interests against the interests of the world revolution," of "showing weakness" and of "ignoring and tolerating the U.S. imperialists' crimes."

Soviet commentaries have defended the Kremlin's decision to go ahead with the Nixon summit despite the mining of Haiphong. Hanoi indirectly

has been charged with "primitiveness" and copying imperialist methods by relying completely on armed force. "The war of aggression in Vietnam can be ended only through negotiations," a Moscow radio commentary recently said, adding that "practical experience clearly shows that the Vietnam problem cannot be solved by military means." This appears to be Moscow's advice both to Washington and Hanoi.

While President Podgorny has been informing Hanoi of Mr. Nixon's Vietnam comments in Moscow and his latest peace proposals, Mr. Kissinger undoubtedly will now put similar views before Chinese Premier Chou En-lai, briefing him on the Moscow summit and urging his intercession with Hanoi as well.

In press comments, North Vietnam is emphasizing that it remains "firm" and "resolute" after "reassessing the new situation." Neither Peking nor Moscow is likely to impose a settlement on North Vietnam. Nor is mediation probable.

But Moscow clearly is embarrassed by its inability to supply North Vietnam as a result of an American blockade and Chinese obstruction. And there is reason to believe that the Soviet Union and China both may be urging Hanoi to be more conciliatory when the Paris peace talks resume, as appears likely in the coming weeks.

Hanoi may gamble on a McGovern victory in November, followed by American withdrawal and a settlement on Communist terms in 1973. But Moscow and Peking have preferred to make their deal with President Nixon in 1972. They have found Mr. Nixon, running for re-election, willing to make concessions on Taiwan and strategic arms this year that he probably would not have made a year or two ago.

The lesson is there for Hanoi to ponder, along with the knowledge that the pressures on Mr. Nixon to make peace, if re-elected, will be much reduced, while his military reactions then will be unpredictable.

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