



A Likely Political Upheaval in Hanoi

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THERE IS a good chance that the great change of policy in Hanoi was preceded by a great political upheaval, including the severe down-grading of North Vietnam's crucially important first party secretary, Le Duan. This is not certain as yet, but the wisest American analysts consider that it is highly probable.

As usual in such cases, the evidence will appear trifling to anyone who is not a close student of North Vietnamese affairs. Perhaps the most impressive item is a recent photograph showing the party leadership at a public reception.

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PRIME MINISTER Pham Van Dong, General Vo Nguyen Giap, and Le Duan's bitter enemy and rival, Truong Chinh — these and all other leaders of consequence were conspicuously present, while Le Duan alone was conspicuously absent. The first party secretary's absence was significant because the line-up of personages on public occasions is always a message telling who is who.

The photography, in turn, underlined the further fact that Le Duan, usually most active, has not been publicly seen or heard from since September 3. This is not surprising, either, since the North Vietnamese policy change undoubtedly dates from mid-September. And when a great mistake is acknowledged by a great change of policy, the principal author of the mistake is usually made to suffer for it.

In the case of Le Duan, there is no room for doubt about his role. The documents have consistently shown the first

party secretary as the leading advocate of using North Vietnam's manpower and resources with an unsparing hand, in order to aid the Viet Cong in the South.

With equal consistency, the evidence has shown Truong Chinh on the opposite side of the argument, in favor of putting the home front first, in fact.

If Truong Chinh is up and Le Duan is down (or even out), the fact has immense meaning.

It has direct bearing on the most vital question raised by Dr. Henry A. Kissinger's negotiations. That question is whether the North Vietnamese mean to cheat again this time, as they cheated so flagrantly and promptly after their Laos agreement with Governor Averell Harriman in 1962.

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TRUONG CHINH being up and Le Duan down further fits neatly with the course of the Kissinger negotiations, since the North Vietnamese began to get down to business in late September. On the one hand, Le Duan bears the heaviest responsibility for the sacrifice in war of at least a million of North Vietnam's young men — the equivalent of 11 million Americans. Yet if Hanoi does not cheat, this dire sacrifice will be in vain.

On the other hand, as above-noted, Truong Chinh has always been an advocate of priority for the home front. And as soon as they got down to business in the talks, the theme of American aid to help reconstruct the home front became very important indeed.