

The Red World's Double-Take

By Donald R. Shanor

VIENNA — (CDN) — The Communist world has reacted to the disclosures of the secret Pentagon documents on Vietnam with a mixture of pleasure and discomfiture.

Pleasure is the predominant tone in the press of the Soviet Union and its loyal allies in Eastern Europe. Pravda, the Soviet party daily, sees the publication of the

bloody crimes of U.S. imperialism, as proof of "the alism," although this is really no change from the accusations it has been making all along.

The East German and Czechoslovak press, which hit particularly hard at faults in Western society, have given the affair major play.

Romania is friendlier to the United States, since it

seeks closer trade and diplomatic contacts, and has handled the sory objectively in its press.

Communist diplomats here show the same division of opinion. Those following the Moscow line contend that the documents prove to the world that everything the Soviets have been saying about the Americans as imperialists is true.

Those of more liberal persuasion see the publication and court arguments as one of the strengths of the American system, and some compare it privately to the lack of freedom of the press in the Communist world.

One big problem for the propaganda departments of the Soviet bloc is how to explain this contradiction.

If the United States is in

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the hands of the military-industrial complex, as their editorials often say, how can newspapers that are supposedly under this complex's control take such anti-war actions, and then receive such wide support among the public and even in court?

Lightfoot's Answer

The problem of explaining this was solved by Neues Deutschland, the East Ger-

man Communist Party daily, by asking someone considered an expert on the system, the American Communist Party politburo member, Claude Lightfoot.

Lightfoot was in East Berlin to attend the party congress earlier this month.

His comments, which were also broadcast over the East German radio, provided the following explanation:

It is true that the disclosures prove the continuity of the policy of aggression pursued by the Americans. But at the same time, the fact that the papers have been published shows "tactical contradictions within the ruling circles of the U.S.A."

The contradictions come about because of the repeated defeats the United States has had in Vietnam.

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