

**HENRY KISSINGER
AND THE PARIS PEACE NEGOTIATIONS 1968-1973**

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PREFACE

In the present work, I have tried to analyse how the Paris Peace Agreement on Vietnam was negotiated and the role Henry Kissinger played in it. The Paris peace negotiations that began in 1968 and the Agreement which was subsequently signed in 1973 were events of great importance in the recent history of international relations because they brought the US imperialists aggression in Vietnam to an end.

This study has been divided into three main chapters. The first chapter has been divided into two parts, the first one "Introduction" traces the origin and course of Vietnam war through its various phases. The second part "Quest for Peace in Vietnam" deals with the details of the peace initiatives and responses by the warring nations. It analyses the factors that brought the warring nations to the negotiating table. The second chapter then goes on to discuss the various negotiating positions adopted by the United States, North Vietnam, South Vietnam and the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam and several shifts that took place during the process of secret negotiations between Henry Kissinger and Le Duc Tho. An attempt has been made to find out how and why these shifts took place and the factors causing the shifts have been analysed. The writer believes that the major factor which influenced the peace negotiations was revisionism within the Vietnam Workers' party. These

revisionists supported the Soviet Union which was anxious to have peace in Vietnam by colluding with the US, instead of supporting revolutionary liberation struggle. In the third chapter I have examined altogether two different views of diplomacy. It has been shown how Kissinger's diplomacy was in accordance with one of these two. I have also tried to examine Kissinger's secret diplomacy in the peace negotiations and how it served the interests of the American monopoly bourgeois clique. Finally on the basis of analysis offered in these chapters, I have drawn some general conclusions.

I would like to state here that I have made an effort to seek truth through facts. To some readers the views expressed here may appear to be somewhat different from the usual "run of the mill" explanations. I will only say that I have set my own ideas boldly because I feel them to be correct. I had considerable difficulty in collecting data for this study because many primary or secondary sources on it, either distort or conceal the facts and often give misleading information.

The dissertation was prepared under the supervision of Professor B.K. Shrivastava, American Studies Division of the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University. I am greatly indebted to him for his guidance and help. I may add here that the views stated in this

dissertation are entirely my own and I alone am responsible for the views stated here. I express my gratitude to Professor M.S. Venkataramani for his interest in this study. I am thankful for the help rendered by the staff of Jawaharlal Nehru University Library and the staff of Sapru House Library, and of the United States International Communications Agency, New Delhi.

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A. Mathialagan

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

QUEST FOR PEACE IN VIETNAM

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

QUEST FOR PEACE IN VIETNAM

Introduction

The Paris peace negotiations on Vietnam war were a vital event both in the history of the United States and Vietnam. The peace negotiations started on 10 May 1968 and finally a treaty was signed on 27 January 1973 in Paris. The official title of the text was "Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam". The treaty was signed by Secretary of State William P. Rogers for the United States, Foreign Minister Nguyen Duy Trinh for the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRVN), Foreign Minister Mrs. Nguyen Thi Binh for the Provisional Revolutionary Government (PRG), Foreign Minister Tran Van Lam for the Republic of Vietnam. Henry A. Kissinger, the then National Security Adviser to the President, and Le Due Tho, a member of the Politbureau of the Vietnam Workers' Party, played a major role in the negotiation process. The treaty was signed in two sessions because the Saigon Government had not recognised the Provisional Revolutionary Government of Vietcong. In the morning the participants were the United States, North Vietnam, South Vietnam, and the Provisional Revolutionary Government of Vietcong. In the afternoon, only the United States and North Vietnam participated. All the references to the Provisional

Revolutionary Government were put in separate set of documents signed by the United States and North Vietnam.¹ The signing of the treaty brought to an end the U.S. involvement in Vietnam of twenty-two years.

The Vietnam war caused great misery to the entire population of Vietnam for almost a quarter of a century. If the cost of the war was high for the United States, it was much higher for Vietnam.²

Before going into the details of peace negotiations, it is desirable to trace the origins of the Vietnam war and the US intervention in it. This will help us to understand the problem in proper perspective.

Vietnam is a country in South East Asia, bordering China in the north, Laos in the west, and Kampuchea in the south-west. The rest of the area is surrounded by the Gulf of Tonkin, the South China Sea, and the Gulf of Siam. The coastline of Vietnam describes a mighty 'S' running from the Southern border of China to the tip of the Indo-China³

1. New York Times, 28 January 1973, p. 1.

2. The military toll:

| | <u>Killed</u> | <u>Wounded</u> |
|--------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| United States | 57,000 | 303,616 |
| South Vietnam | 183,528 | 499,026 |
| Vietcong & North Vietnam | 924,048 | Not available |

The United States' expenditure on Vietnam war, according to the US official estimate was \$ 180 to \$ 210 billion.

See New York Times, 28 January 1973, p. 1. And also see Theodore Draper, "Ghosts of Vietnam", Dissent (New York), vol.26, Winter 1979, p. 31.

3. "Indo-China" is the name the French applied to Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. The term has neither ethnic nor geographic precision. See Marvin E. Gettleman (ed.), Vietnam: History, Documents, and Opinions on a Major World Crisis (New York, 1966), p. 6.

peninsula. Stretching for more than 1200 miles, it nearly equals the length of the entire Pacific coast of continental United States. The rich deltas of the Red River in the North and the Mekong River in the South have often been likened to two rice baskets suspended at the ends of a peasant's carrying pole, for along with the generally narrow coastal plains they produce nearly all of Vietnam's⁴ rice.

The total population of Vietnam in the early 1970s was about 40 million, with about 21.2 million living north of the 17th parallel and 18.8 million to the south.

The rich natural resources and high quality grain produced from fertile lands of Vietnam attracted the foreigners to develop trade relations with it. The French established trade relations with Vietnam during the first half of the eighteenth century. In order to further their trade the French decided to invade Vietnam in 1857.⁵

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4. George McT. Kahin and John W. Lewis, The United States in Vietnam (New York, 1967), p.3.
 5. The French came into contact with the Vietnamese in 1664. To establish a profitable trade with Vietnam as the Portuguese, Dutch and English had already done was a difficult task. The continued decline of other Western powers in the Far East, encouraged the French to establish trade relations with Vietnam. The Vietnamese realizing that they were being exploited by the French, began to resist. French thought that only military intervention could force Vietnam to provide a base for French colonial exploitation. The decision to invade Vietnam was made by Napoleon III in July 1857. However, the execution of his order was delayed until the summer of 1858. The French empire like similar other empires grew out of the need for overseas markets. See The New Encyclopaedia Britannica: Macropaedia, Knowledge in Depth (Chicago, 1977), Vol.19, pp.124-25.

Thus, the war in Vietnam started in 1858 with the French effort to impose colonial rule in Vietnam. The Vietnamese had been fighting the French since 1858 till 1954, when the latter finally left the country. Occasionally the war became a full-scale war. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the war was more like a brigandage rather than a war.

The fall of France in 1940 following the German invasion weakened the French colonial hold over Indo-China. The French colonial regime in Vietnam collaborated with Japan, after the former fell in Europe. In Indo-China a powerful freedom movement grew up seeking to overthrow the colonial regime called "Vietminh" under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh.

The French were ousted from power by the Japanese in Vietnam on 9 March 1945 while the Second World War was nearing its end. But the Japanese themselves were forced to surrender Vietnam on 15 August 1945 to the Vietminh forces, in the wake of American bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

6. "Vietminh" is an abbreviation of the Vietnamese for "League for the Independence of Vietnam". It was led from the beginning by Ho Chi Minh who was fighting for the Vietnamese independence since the World War I.

Bao Dai⁷ abdicated and accepted the position of "Supreme Councillor" in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam a new state formed on 2 September 1945 by Vietminh. Four months later, in January 1946, Ho Chi Minh and his colleagues won the general elections with 98.4 per cent of the votes polled.⁸

In July 1945, the Postdam Conference decided to disarm such Japanese forces which still remained in Vietnam. And the Chinese were to occupy Vietnam north of 16th parallel, while the British were to take over the south of it. The plan implied a division of Vietnam into two parts and the elimination of France from the scene. This was because the US did not favour the return of the French colonialism in Vietnam. The Chinese army from Yunnan province which entered Vietnam was actually not a Kuomintang army. The Yunnan province had remained an autonomous province with its own army. Chiang Kai-shek, the KMT leader, wanted to consolidate his control over Yunnan province and considered the 180,000 strong Yunnan army an obstacle. He therefore ordered units of the KMT army into North Vietnam that showed no particular interest in the internal affairs of Vietnam and on the whole helped to consolidate

7. Bao Dai was a French controlled emperor of Annam for a decade prior to 9 March 1945. He became head of the nominal independent Vietnam formed by the Japanese on 11 March 1945, after the Japanese victory over the French. See Kahin, n. 4, p. 18.
8. Paul M. Sweezy, and Leo Huberman (eds.), "What Every American should know About Indo-China", Monthly Review (New York), Vol. 6, June 1954, pp. 50-51.

the power of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.⁹

This was not the case in South Vietnam. Major-General Douglas Gracey, Commander of the British forces in South Vietnam, exceeded both the Potsdam decision and the orders of his superior, Admiral Louis Mountbatten. Gracey took the responsibility of restoring French colonialism in Vietnam once again. He refused to deal with the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. Instead, he signed an agreement with France turning the area again to the French control. Having acquired control over South Vietnam, French High Commissioner, Admiral Thierry d'Argenlieu, tried to extend it over the north also. On 28 February 1946, Chiang Kai-shek agreed to withdraw his forces from north within three months in return for some French concessions.¹⁰

The departure of the British and the Chinese forces brought the Vietminh Government under direct pressure from France. By this time it was evident to Ho Chi Minh that no support would be forthcoming either from the United States or

9. Ibid.

10. The French agreed to give up all extraterritorial rights they had held in China and to transfer to China their concessions in Canton, Hankow and Shanghai. They also agreed to relinquish that part of the Haiphong-Yunnan railroad that was in China and to permit freight to be transported over it duty free in either direction between China and Haiphong. See Kahin, n.4, p. 25.

the Soviet Union. In that situation the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam signed an agreement with the French on 6 March 1946, after enormous concessions¹¹ from the latter.

But the French did not abide by the Agreement. They violated it later by installing a puppet regime in Cochin China and substituting the French for the Vietnamese to control customs at the Haiphong harbour. The French did not stop there, they started encroaching upon the Vietnamese prerogatives. Relations between the two sides worsened rapidly. During the summer of 1946 further attempts at negotiations between France and the Vietninh did not succeed. The mounting tension culminated in the French naval bombardment of Haiphong on 23 November 1946. As a result, atleast 6,000 Vietnamese civilians were killed. As the war continued, Ho Chi Minh made several attempts from 25 April 1947 on to reach a cease-fire agreement with France. But all such attempts ended in failure. Within one year from the recognition of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the French came down to the point of asking for unconditional surrender. Ho Chi Minh refused.

11. Paris recognised Democratic Republic of Vietnam as a "Free State". The DRVN could have its own government, parliament, army, and treasury, forming part of the Indo-China Federation and the French Union. The French also agreed to abide by the results of a referendum in Cochin China, which was to determine whether it should be reunited with Annam and Tonkin. See *Ibid.*, p. 26.

Meanwhile, former US Ambassador to Paris, William C. Bullit, met Bao Dai in Hong Kong. He asked Bao Dai to accept the leadership of anti-Ho Chi Minh forces. The latter accepted it. William Bullit contacted the French High Commissioner in Saigon, M. Ballert, through the French counsel who was in Hong Kong. They made Bao Dai the "Chief of State".

Was Bao Dai Government a legitimate one? According to Gerard Lyon-Caen, Professor of Law at the University of Dijon, legally, it was beyond any doubt that the Democratic Republic of Vietnam was the only legitimate Government. He gives two reasons:

- (a) After his abdication of 1945, Bao Dai, according to his own statements, was nothing but a plain citizen. He was without any mandate to treat on behalf of his country with the French, a fact which renders the Auriol-Bao Dai accords¹² of no juridical value and precludes their binding the Vietnamese nation.
- (b) On the other hand, the government formed by President Ho Chi Minh has authority over the greater part of the country and enjoys the confidence of its inhabitants. In January 1946 - an unprecedented event - there took place elections with universal suffrage from which emerged the present National Assembly ..., and the government of the Republic conserves the legitimacy which the French government itself conceded to it when it signed with it the accords of March 6, 1946. (13)

12. In March 1949, Bao Dai exchanged letters with President Vincent Auriol of France which when ratified would make Vietnam an Associated State.

13. Sweezy and Huberman, n.8, pp.63-64.

The validity of the above argument is obvious and one can therefore conclude that the Government of the Republic of Vietnam, not the Bao Dai regime, was the legitimate government and the French were aggressors in Vietnam.

On 21 June 1949, the United States officially welcomed the forthcoming formation of the Bao Dai's regime. Bao Dai's statement that the people of Vietnam will decide the future constitution was viewed with satisfaction.¹⁴ The United States described Bao Dai as a staunch patriot.

After Bao Dai became the Chief of State, he was being accompanied by US official and unofficial representatives. The Bao Dai regime was legitimized by the US Government. Later President Dwight D. Eisenhower addressed Bao Dai as "Your Majesty", after the fall of Dienbienphu¹⁵ in 1954.

On the other hand the People's Republic of China and the Soviet Union recognized the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. They established formal diplomatic relations with the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam on 18 January and 31 January 1949 respectively.

14. Department of State Bulletin (Washington, D.C.), Vol. 21, 18 July 1949, p. 75.

15. Dienbienphu, a fortress situated in a valley at the western extremity of Tonkin. Here, 517,000 French forces collapsed before the Vietminh forces in 1954.

In late 1940s the French army in Vietnam had exhausted its resources. It was felt that at this stage that either the war must be stopped or the United States should take the responsibility of carrying on the war.

The United States decided to support France through material and financial aid in 1950.¹⁶ This was an open intervention, though the indirect intervention through manipulations had begun as far back as in 1944-45. The American dollar flowed to bolster the French military effort from 1950 and it increased in the following years.¹⁷

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16. On 24 May 1950, US Charge d'affairs, Edmund Guillion, delivered a letter to the Chiefs of State of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. The main content of the letter was that the US had decided to initiate a programme of economic aid to the states of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia in order to restore stability and pursue peaceful and democratic development. See Department of State Bulletin (Washington, D.C.), Vol. 22, 12 June 1950, p. 977. On 27 June 1950, President Harry S. Truman announced that he had directed American military to assist the forces of France and the Associated States in Indo-China. And he also ordered the dispatch of military mission to provide close working relations with those forces. See *ibid.*, Vol. 23, 3 July 1950, p. 5.
 17. The American aid began with the modest sum of 10 million dollars in 1950. The amount reached 1.063 billion dollars in 1954. On 26 April 1954 the US announced that its aid to Indo-China would run to 1.33 billion dollars. This amount equalled one-third of the entire American foreign aid programme. See Kahin, n. 4, p.32. And also see Guenter Lewy, America in Vietnam (New York, 1978), pp. 4-5.

When the situation deteriorated beyond redemption as far as French were concerned, General Paul Ely, French Chief of Staff in Vietnam, demanded on 25 March 1954 American intervention in Vietnam. He stated that only the Americans could save the French from defeat at Dienbienphu. President Dwight Eisenhower and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles held wide-ranging discussions with the officials in the State and Defense departments. The consensus among them appeared to be that unless the French granted complete independence to Vietnam the United States could not enter the war.

Why did the United States insist on independence for Vietnam? Was it out of love for freedom? President Eisenhower answers these questions in his memoirs. According to him the French suffered heavy losses and costs. ¹⁸ Due to these French became weary of the war. So Eisenhower provided an alternative. He wrote:

These losses and costs to the French might be lessened, I believed, if allies could be brought into carry part of the load in defending Indo-China. Such a development would depend, of course, upon a clear appreciation throughout the Free World that the war was in no sense an effort on the part of the French to sustain their former domination over the area, but was in fact a clear case of freedom defending itself from communist aggression.

(contd....)

18. The French, in more than 7 years of heavy fighting to subdue the rebels, suffered some 150,000 casualties and the cost amounted to about \$ 5 billion. See Dwight D. Eisenhower, Mandate for Change: The White House Years: 1953-1956 (London, 1963), pp. 336-7.

To bring about such an appreciation, there would have to be a definite and public pledge on the part of the French to accord independence and the right of self-determination upon the Associated States as soon as military victory should be obtained. (19)

He further added that the French engendered the popular antagonism among the Vietnamese which ultimately helped Ho Chi Minh and his men against the French.²⁰ What it logically meant was that the US would not have insisted on independence of Vietnam; if French would have able to control Vietnam as the former expected. Perhaps, another reason for American insistence on freedom was that the US wanted to take the responsibility of Vietnam directly.

Despite all French efforts and American support Dienbienphu fell on 7 May 1954. In the meantime, the Geneva²¹ Conference was convened on 26 April 1954 to discuss the Vietnam problem. The Conference continued till 21 July 1954. The Vietminh withdrew to the north of 17th Parallel, as provided by the Geneva Agreement. The reason why the Vietminh agreed to withdraw from the south was that they agreed to accept that the firm pledge of nation-wide elections in 1956 and subsequent unification of the country. The Vietminh would have stayed in the south if these two points would not have been included in the Geneva Accord.

19. Ibid., p. 336.

20. Ibid., p. 332ff.

21. See for details Kahin, n. 4, pp. 43 ff.

Neo-Colonialism in South Vietnam

Eventhough the French were defeated in 1954, Americans went to the help of Bao Dai. Ngo Dinh Diem, who was in exile in America, was brought in and made premier in the Government headed by Bao Dai. Diem later became the President of South Vietnam. But one does not get any idea about how Ngo Dinh Diem became premier, immediately after his return from the United States. Bao Dai and Ngo Dinh Diem took the place alongside Syngman Rhee, South Korean President and Chiang Kai-shek in Washington's stable of "Asian fighters against Asians". President Eisenhower's letter to Ngo Dinh Diem on 1 October 1954 marked the beginning of direct intervention of the United States. Eisenhower said in the letter delivered to Diem through US Ambassador Donald R. Heath on 23 October 1953 that, "to assist the Government of Vietnam in developing and maintaining a strong, viable state, capable of resisting attempted subversion or aggression through military means"²² While giving the aid, the United States would expect from the Government of Vietnam to introduce necessary reforms in South Vietnam.

This was a new moment in Vietnam. Jean-Paul Sartre, the well-known French philosopher, calls it as "a new moment in the imperialist process which is usually called neo-colonialism."²³ He also states that the new rulers of the

22. Ibid., pp. 456-7.

23. Neo-Colonialism means the state power is governed solely by imperialism through their puppets who have either no domestic social base or have their social base eroded entirely. See Frontier (Calcutta), Vol. 13, 27 December 1980, p. 4.

neo-colonial state would not represent the interests of the masses, but those of the privileged people and of foreign capital.²⁴

Senator John F. Kennedy called upon, before the election was to be held in Vietnam, the Government of the United States to oppose election in Vietnam in 1956. He argued that neither the United States nor free Vietnam was a party to the Geneva Agreement. Therefore, they would not be a party to an election as well.²⁵ The United States hinted to Ngo Dinh Diem not to hold election which was supposed to be held in 1956 according to the Geneva Agreement. Diem refused to hold election and these ended any possibility of unification of Vietnam.

When Kennedy became the President of the United States on 20 January 1961, he found the situation in Vietnam deteriorating rapidly from the American point of view. His administration started sending American forces to Vietnam. In 1961, 900 American men were in Vietnam. Their number had increased to 16,500 in 1963. Meanwhile, the United States started showing its displeasure at Diem's way of running government. The United States encouraged and shared responsibility a military coup, which took place on 1 November 1963, resulting in the assassination of Diem and his brother Ngo Dinh Nhu.

24. Jean-Paul Sartre, "Genocide", New Left Review (London), No. 48, March-April 1968, p. 18.

25. Lewy, n. 16, p. 13.

Kennedy himself was assassinated on 22 November 1963, and Lyndon B. Johnson became the next President of the United States. In 1967, Nguyen Van Thieu won the presidential election in Vietnam.

An important question remains to be answered. Why did the United States intervene in Vietnam? The answer is simple, that is to "contain communism", especially the Chinese communism. The policy of containment of communism first enunciated by George F. Kennan²⁶ in 1946. Later this policy was adopted by the Truman Administration. The proclamation of the "Truman Doctrine"²⁷ on 12 March 1947 was based on the idea of containment.

26. George Kennan warned the United States that the Soviet "political action is a fluid stream which moves constantly, wherever it is permitted to move toward a given goal". It is expansive in nature. To contain the Soviet expansionism the American policy "must be that of a long term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies". See George F. Kennan, "The sources of Soviet Conduct, in American Diplomacy: 1900-1950 (London, 1952), pp.107ff.

27. Part of Harry S. Truman's speech ran as follows: "... I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures. I believe that we must assist free peoples to work out their own destinies in their own way. I believe that our help should be primarily through economic and financial aid which is essential to economic stability and orderly political progress..." See Department of State Bulletin, vol. 16, 23 March 1947, p. 536.

American intervention in Vietnam could be viewed as the logical extension of the Truman doctrine. The seeds of Communist expansion, which the US wanted to contain, were sown in 1847-48 itself when Karl Marx and Frederick Engels wrote:

The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at a communistic revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win.

WORKING MEN OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE! (28)

Therefore, it would have been better for Kennan and Truman to blame Marx and Engels and the ideology they gave birth to be called "Communism", instead of blaming the Russians in late 1940s. Later Truman and the National Security Council condemned the Chinese on 25 June 1952, in the context of South East Asia. To rationalize its intervention in Vietnam, the United States adopted the "Domino Theory".³⁰ President Eisenhower told a press

28. Karl Marx, and Frederick Engels, Manifesto of the Communist Party (Moscow, 1967), p. 96.

29. Truman and the National Security Council asserted that the loss of any country in South East Asia to the Chinese aggression would have critical psychological, political and economic consequences. See Lewy, n. 16, p. 5.

30. Domino Theory means that if one country, especially in South East Asia, falls to communism, nearby nations will also fall one after another.

conference on 7 April 1954 that "you have a row of dominoes set up, you knock over the first one, and what will happen to the last one is the certainty that it will go over very quickly."³¹

John Foster Dulles, the then Secretary of State, presented an intelligence report on 5 April 1954 before the House Foreign Affairs Committee asserting that the Communist Chinese participated at Dienbienphu. He made various allegations³² against the Chinese in that report. But Charles Favrell, a correspondent for Le Monde, later contradicted Dulles' report. He wrote:

"... Mr. Dulles, who has a poor opinion of the Vietgunners, sticks to his Chinese. He has disposed them on the battlefield and having qualified them as radar operators, telephone specialists, truck drivers, technical advisers, etc., he endows them with a general, a certain Ly Chen-how whose name he discovered in the gallery of faded stars to which were relegated the glories of Chiang Kai-shek's army which occupied Indo-China north of 16th Parallel. (33)

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31. U.S. President, Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1954 (Washington, D.C., 1966), p. 383.
32. Dulles said that a Chinese communist General Li Chen-how was stationed at Dienbienphu headquarters of General Vo Nguyen Giap, the Vietminh Commander. There were many Chinese communist technical military advisers under Li Chen-how at Giap's headquarters. Besides there were numerous other Chinese military advisers at the division level. See New York Times, 6 April 1954, p. 1.
33. Sweezy and Huberman, n. 8, pp. 33-34.

Paul Sweezy and Leo Huberman have argued that the role of the Chinese communists in Indo-China was non-existent before 1950. Only after 1950, the Chinese force reached the Indo-China border and established contact with the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.³⁴

To crush the Chinese Communists Americans gave aid and supported Chiang Kai-shek's regime before 1949. But the Chinese communists under the leadership of Mao Tse-tung succeeded in establishing People's Republic of China in October, 1949. The United States intervened in Greece and Turkey in 1947. In the same manner, it intervened in Korea and Vietnam especially after China became a communist country. From then onwards, the United States wanted secure bases in the Far and South East Asia.

To contain Chinese communism in South East Asia, the United States adopted the neo-colonialist policy. That is, (a) To eliminate French presence and take direct control of South Vietnam. (b) To liquidate the national and revolutionary movement in South Vietnam. (c) To rig up a puppet dictatorship devoted to Washington. (d) And, to embark on a reconquest of North Vietnam.³⁵

34. Ibid., p. 30.

35. Nguyen Khac Vien (ed.), US Neo-Colonialism in South Vietnam (Hanoi, 1971), p. 16.

The United States wanted to contain communism in China by securing bases in Vietnam and in other neighbouring countries of China. "The imperialists encircle China" as Che Guevara said "through South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, South Vietnam and Thailand at least".³⁶ Thousands of Vietnamese soldiers and civilians were killed because they were communists. Jean-Paul Sartre called American bombing and killing of the Vietnamese as "Genocide".³⁷

There has been sharp contradiction in American preaching and practice. They advocate freedom and principle of self-determination but they abandon all these principles when they clash with their national and class interests. A glaring example of this is their aggression in Vietnam. Americans may not like communism, it is their right, but they should not have talked honestly about freedom and denied the right of the Vietnamese to choose their own ideology and way of life.

Should American Presidents be blamed for having committed the United States to exterminate the Vietnamese communists, or should something else be blamed? ^{The} US intervened in Vietnam because it wanted to export its capital to foreign

36. Che Guevara, "Vietnam Must Not Stand Alone", New Left Review (London), No. 43, May-June 1967, p. 84.

37. The term 'Genocide' is defined by the 1948 convention as "the intention to destroy wholly or in part any national ethnic or religious group. This definition could be applied to any form of warfare whatever". See Sartre, n. 22, p. 12.

countries³⁸ for the purpose of increasing profits and to seize foreign territories; and to safeguard the economic interests of "imperialism",³⁹ The United States had to intervene in Vietnam because, apparently Vietnam was becoming a Communist country. Though, the Americans did not have much investment in Vietnam, however, they had control over the monetary and loan institutions.⁴⁰ The United States' intervention in Vietnam was a strategic move in the long-term class interests of the big monopoly capitalists.

38. See the Table giving details of investments by the US Government and by the big monopoly capitalists in 1946 and 1959. The big monopolies invested more than double the amount the government invested abroad. They virtually controlled the government which would obviously serve their interests. Whenever there is a threat to their interests, they would not worry about freedom and self determination. They would try to save their interests at any cost.

39. "Imperialism" is the monopoly stage of capitalism. V.I. Lenin outlined the basic features of imperialism as follows: "(1) the concentration of production and capital has developed to such a high stage that it has created monopolies which play a decisive role in economic life; (2) the merging of bank capital with industrial capital, and the creation, on the basis of this 'finance capital' of a financial oligarchy; (3) the export of capital as distinguished from the export of commodities acquires exceptional importance; (4) the formation of international monopolist capitalist associations which share the world among themselves, and (5) the territorial division of the whole world among the biggest capitalist powers is completed". See V.I. Lenin, Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism (Moscow, 1978), p. 84.

40. See for details, Vien, n. 34, pp. 83-180.

US Investments Abroad: 1964 and 1959
(in millions of Dollars)

| | All areas | | Western Europe | | Canada | | Latin American Republics | | Other foreign countries | | International Instts. & un-allocated | |
|-----------------------------|-----------|--------|----------------|--------|--------|--------|--------------------------|--------|-------------------------|--------|--------------------------------------|-------|
| | 1946 | 1959 | 1946 | 1959 | 1946 | 1959 | 1946 | 1959 | 1946 | 1959 | 1946 | 1959 |
| Total | 18,693 | 64,779 | 6,207 | 18,478 | 5,625 | 15,779 | 4,301 | 12,778 | 2,237 | 10,643 | 323 | 7,101 |
| Private Investment | 13,525 | 44,775 | 2,743 | 9,100 | 5,605 | 15,769 | 4,009 | 10,838 | 1,168 | 6,812 | -- | 2,256 |
| US Govt. Credits and Claims | 5,168 | 20,004 | 3,464 | 9,378 | 20 | 10 | 292 | 1,940 | 1,069 | 3,831 | 323 | 4,845 |

Source: Raymond F. Mikesell (ed.), US Private & Government Investment Abroad (Oregon, 1962), p. 56.

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Vietnam. The National Liberation Front (NLF)⁴² and its military arm Vietcong were well determined to fight the forces of South Vietnam Government and the United States, even under the difficult conditions. After formation of the National Liberation Front in December 1960 the problems for United States increased. Even sophisticated arms and ammunitions of the United States could never bring the Vietcong to their knees. But unfortunately the revisionism⁴³ cropped up in the Vietnam Workers' Party in the late 1950s created enough difficulties for the Vietcong and the North Vietnam Communists, in their confrontation with the American imperialists and their neo-colonial agents in South Vietnam.

The people of South Vietnam, disillusioned with competent administrations in South Vietnam, turned their eyes towards the Vietcong for better life. The United States had to save the dying Government of the Republic of Vietnam and

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42. The National Liberation Front was formed on 20 December 1960, mainly to co-ordinate the struggles of the various social classes and strata. It brought the fight to a higher level by advocating the overthrow of the US-Diem regime in the beginning, later, it fought against the military junta and President Nguyen Van Thieu regime. Its aim was to establish an independent, peaceful, and democratic government. The military arm of the National Liberation Front was Vietcong.
43. "Revisionism" is a trend hostile to Marxism within Marxism itself. This would come out with the most purposeful amendments to Marx, i.e., revision of Marx. See V.I. Lenin, Against Revisionism (Moscow, 1972), p. 11. Since the revisionism in the Vietnam Workers' Party became a decisive factor in the Paris Peace negotiations it will be discussed in detail later. About revisionists in North Vietnam see for details P.J. Honey, Communism in North Vietnam: Its Role in the Sino-Soviet Dispute (Cambridge, Mass., 1966), pp. 1 ff. And also see Chester A. Bain, Vietnam: The Roots of Conflict (New Jersey, 1967), p. 145 ff.

The United States Presidents, irrespective of the parties they belong, are determined to fight the Communists. That is because they are part of the ruling elites who, mainly serve the interests of the big monopoly capitalists. The determinative role of the economy in the context of new sphere of social life is expressed in the fact that the class dominating the economy has the material possibility of imposing will on the whole of society and of subordinating it to its organisation of administration and rule. Politics is nothing but the concentrated expression and the consummation of the economic aspirations of the class which controls the state machine and is able to realize its economic interests with its help.⁴¹

Therefore, not the U.S. Presidents but the big monopoly capitalists of the United States should be blamed. Even, out of the total U.S. investment abroad, the private owners have major investment not government. It is these private owners who influence the government policies and negate democracy, which would go against their interests.

Alternatives for America

From the American point of view, the end of Diem-Nhu regime and military junta regime solved nothing. As the war continued, the situation was increasingly worsened in

41. V. Kelle, and M. Kovalson, Historical Materialism: An Outline of Marxist Theory of Society (Moscow, 1973), p. 180.

at the same time fight the Vietcong. The U.S. imperial design, of containing communism in Vietnam and ultimately to contain Chinese Communism from spreading over South East Asia, was successful to some extent in the 1960s not because of its own effort but because of the rise to power of the revisionist leaders in North Vietnam. They objectively, sabotaged the liberation war by colluding with the Soviet social imperialists. The Tet offensive⁴⁴ of February 1968,⁴⁵ shocked the United States. The Americans came to realize that it would be difficult to win against the Vietcong and the Communists in North Vietnam by military means.

Under these circumstances the Americans were left with two alternatives. One was to establish military control over South Vietnam and assume all responsibilities of war to completely destroy the Vietcong bases. The other was to make peace with the North Vietnamese pro-soviet faction and get out of Vietnam. The first choice would have led to a total war against the North Vietnamese communists and ultimately against China. This would have been more costlier for the US than what it did cost to them. As far as the

44. In 1957, out of twelve Politbureau members there were seven Pro-Soviet members in the Vietnam Workers' Party. See for details Honey, n. 42, pp. 19-38.

45. On 30 January 1968, the Vietcong guerrillas attacked central and northern part of South Vietnam. The main assault in the rest of the country began one day later. This was during the middle of the Tet period, the Vietnamese holiday season during the Lunar New Year.

second alternative was concerned, the revisionists in North Vietnam were not prepared to come out openly against the liberation war and make peace immediately with the United States. The latter also faced a dilemma. To make peace in the 1960s and to leave Vietnam would have meant a loss for them because most of the Vietcongs were communists and pro-Chinese.⁴⁶ The Americans also believed that the Vietcong would run over South Vietnam after they leave Vietnam and it would have made things easier for the Chinese to take over South East Asia. Moreover, making peace and getting out of Vietnam was not so easy for Americans in the 1960s. Sulzberger, a columnist of the New York Times wrote:

The heart of the crisis is not truly in Vietnam. The quintessential problem is how to defeat revolutionary warfare. Elsewhere in Asia and Africa (why leave out Latin America?) We will continue to face the threat of this technique no matter what happens to the Vietnamese. That is inescapable. (47)

He reflected the feelings of many others. Unless and until the revisionist leaders in North Vietnam were able to wean away the Vietcong from the revolutionary path to the revisionist one the Americans could not come out of Vietnam.

Yet, from 1964 onwards several peace initiatives were taken by International Organizations, neutral countries and the warring nations but all in vain. We shall now discuss the quest for peace in Vietnam.

46. New York Times, 11 March 1969, p. 3.

47. Ibid., 3 March 1965, p. 40.

Quest for Peace in Vietnam

A Canadian member of the International Control Commission, name remains unknown, took the first initiative for peace on 8 June 1964, when he tried to find a possible basis for negotiations. He went to Hanoi, but North Vietnam showed no interest because the United States was bombing North Vietnam. Exactly a month later, U Thant, the then Secretary General of the United Nations made the next move when he recommended reconvening the 1954 Geneva Conference for negotiating peace in Vietnam. This time it was turned down by the US, the US State Department spokesman asserting that there was no need for a new political settlement. In the same year, and later years as well, the United Nations and other neutral countries tried on several occasions to bring the belligerents to peace table, but failed.

During the period of bombing halt from 12 February to 2 March 1965, U Thant, Alexei Kosygin, former Premier of the Soviet Union, and Charles De Gaulle, former President of France, tried many times for peace in Vietnam. The North Vietnamese responded positively assuming that during this period of lull possibilities for peace could be explored. But the United States rebuffed all efforts. The North Vietnamese thought that the United States was not interested in an early peace settlement. In the later peace initiatives

48. See Appendix 1.

Hanoi showed little interest.⁴⁹ Instead of responding positively to the earlier peace initiatives, the Johnson Administration announced its own position on 25 February 1965. Secretary of State Dean Rusk stated that any negotiated settlement would be conditional on Hanoi's acceptance of South Vietnam as an independent state. He laid yet another condition when he said that Hanoi should agree to pull out its forces from South.⁵⁰ His implication of these terms was that Vietcong should surrender and pull out all infiltrators to the north before the peace talks would begin.

Responding to the American statements, the National Liberation Front came out with its harsh "Five-Point"⁵¹ manifesto on 22 March 1965. It unequivocally stated that the National Liberation Front would not compromise with the United States, unless and until the American forces were withdrawn from Vietnam. But North Vietnam was not that stringent, regarding its approaches to peace negotiations. Three weeks later, on 8 April 1965, North Vietnam announced its "Four-Point" stand.⁵² After studying the proposal the

49. Kahin, n. 4, p. 207.

50. Department of State Bulletin, Vol. 52, 15 March 1965, pp. 362-72.

51. The aims of the "Five Point" manifesto were: to achieve an independent, democratic, peaceful, and neutral South Vietnam; to reunify the divided Vietnam; to defend North Vietnam; and to defeat the American imperialists and Vietnamese traitors. See Gettleman, n. 3, pp. 409-19.

52. Excerpts of "Four-Point" stand (1) Recognition of the basic national rights of the Vietnamese people, and the United States must withdraw from South Vietnam all of its troops. (2) Pending the peaceful reunification of Vietnam. Geneva Agreements on Vietnam must be strictly respected. (3) The internal affairs of South Vietnam

United States pointed to the fact that the North Vietnamese never specifically said that the former had to accept four-points before negotiations began. But Hanoi declared that the four-points could be the basis of further negotiations. It constituted a specific declaration to enter into negotiations.

The United States more specifically did not accept the third point, because it refused to recognize the programme of the National Liberation Front. But North Vietnam recognized and supported the programme of the National Liberation Front. And also insisted that the National Liberation Front be recognized as the sole and real representative of South Vietnam.

On 7 April 1965 President Johnson stated in Baltimore that the United States would remain ready for unconditional negotiations. But he insisted on the exclusion of the National Liberation Front from the talks. Hanoi did not accept this. In turn Hanoi accused the United States of concealing its warlike acts by calling for peace. The Government of the Republic of South Vietnam issued a leaflet on 11 April 1965 in response to Johnson's Baltimore speech.

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52. (contd....) must be settled by the south Vietnamese people themselves in accordance with the programme of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam. There should not be any foreign interference. (4) The peaceful reunification of Vietnam without any foreign interference. See Nguyen Khac Vien (ed.), South Vietnam: Data and Prospects (Hanoi, 1968), pp. 343-4.

The leaflet asserted that Johnson's speech could lead to "divergent interpretations". The Saigon Government deemed it necessary to emphasize that "negotiations proper can only take place when pre-conditions laid out will have been accepted and carried out". The main pre-condition was the withdrawal of communist troops and cadres from South Vietnam.⁵³

The United States published "Fourteen-Point"⁵⁴ programme on 7 January 1966 clarifying its position. The fourteen-points were elements which the United States believed can go into peace in South East Asia. In a letter to the Communist leaders on 24 January 1966 Ho Chi Minh condemned the United States' fourteen-points. He insisted that if the United States really had any respect for the Geneva Agreements it should have withdrawn all troops including satellite troops from Vietnam. No one could possibly believe that the United States, which encouraged South Vietnam to violate the 1954 Geneva Agreement, could be really interested in genuine peace.

53. See for details Kahin, n. 4, pp. 430-31.

54. The important points from fourteen-points were: The Geneva agreements of 1954 and 1962 were an adequate basis for peace. The United States would welcome negotiations without pre-conditions. Hanoi's four-points could be discussed. The United States did not want American bases in South East Asia. It would support free elections in South Vietnam to give the south Vietnamese a government of their own choice. The question of reunification of Vietnam should be determined by the Vietnamese themselves. The Vietcong would not have difficulty being represented and having their views represented if for a moment Hanoi decided that it wanted to cease aggression. See Department of State Bulletin, Vol. 54, 14 February 1966, p. 225.

On 8 February 1967 Johnson wrote a letter to Ho Chi Minh asserting that he very much wanted the Vietnam conflict to be brought to an end through peaceful means. He contended that he was much worried over the "lives lost, wounds inflicted, property destroyed and human misery caused by the war".

Ho Chi Minh replied on 15 February 1977:

... the United States Government has constantly intervened in Vietnam, has launched and intensified its aggression against South Vietnam for the purpose of prolonging the division of Vietnam and of transforming South Vietnam into an American colony and an American military base ...

... Until they have gained real independence, full liberty and true peace ...

The Vietnamese people will never yield to force nor agree to talks under the menace of bombs. (55)

Ho Chi Minh was very particular about unconditional American bombing halt. Though, he appealed many times to stop the bombing unconditionally, the United States never responded. An identical situation Vietnam faced in 1945 and 1946. In spite of Vietminh's repeated appeals for ceasefire, French reinforced their military forces. The French tried to colonize Vietnam once again. Whether it was France or the United States so long their imperial economic interests were at stake, they could not give up and they did not.

55. Lyndon B. Johnson, The Vantage Point: Perspectives of the Presidency: 1963-1969 (New York, 1971), pp. 592-5.

In June 1967 a group of scientists and intellectuals from France, Great Britain, Soviet Union, and the United States met in Paris. They discussed the problem of Vietnam. It was decided that Herbert Marcovich, a French microbiologist who took part in the talks, should go to Hanoi to discuss possible peace negotiations. On 21 July 1967, Marcovich went to Hanoi with Raymond Aubrac, a friend of Marcovich as well as of Ho Chi Minh. These two Frenchmen had contacts with Henry Kissinger, then professor of Government at Harvard University, who also took part in the Paris discussions. The objective of this peace initiative was to stop the American bombings in Vietnam. In return for Hanoi's agreement to enter "promptly" into "productive" negotiations. The two French men met Pham Van Dong, Premier of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. The French outlined the proposal of the United States emphasising two points; and end to American bombing and a ceiling on North Vietnamese supplies to the Vietcong. Pham Van Dong insisted on his own two points, one that the United States should unconditionally stop bombing Vietnam and second, the United States should pull out its forces from Vietnam.

Later Aubrac met Ho Chi minh along with Pham Van Dong. Ho Chi Minh said that he did not like the phrase "Peace in Vietnam". He did not want to give an impression of moral equivalence between North Vietnam and the United States.

He told Aubrac that the details of negotiations were with
Premier Dong.⁵⁶

After having gone through the Hanoi's reply, the Johnson administration authorized Kissinger to convey another message. In mid-August Kissinger conveyed the message to the same French intermediaries. The proposal conveyed United States' willingness to stop bombing of the North Vietnam if the latter would enter promptly into productive discussions. It was prepared to assume that while discussions were going on, North Vietnam would not "take advantage" of the bombing halt.⁵⁷ Hanoi refused to receive the French team. But the French men passed on the information to Hanoi with the notification of bombing halt around Hanoi. Hanoi sent the same negative reply after two weeks. In reply to Hanoi, the US proposed a direct meeting between Kissinger and a Hanoi representative. Hanoi rejected it again, the Johnson administration sent Kissinger to France for yet another attempt at peace. Kissinger contacted the French men and gave the information. Aubrac contacted the North Vietnamese who replied that there was nothing new to add as far as they were concerned.⁵⁸

56. Marvin Kalb, and Bernard Kalb, Kissinger (London, 1974) pp. 70-72.
57. The same proposal was announced by President Johnson on 29 November 1967, publicly in San Antonio which later came to be known as "San Antonio Formula". See Johnson, n. 55, pp. 266-7.
58. The peace channel through the French intermediaries came to be known by the code name of "Pennsylvania".

On 31 March 1968, Johnson announced four major decisions.⁵⁹ An important decision, regarding Vietnam, was that he stopped most of the bombing of North Vietnam, hoping that this would lead to peace in Vietnam. On the one hand, the United States was seeking peace with North Vietnam and on the other, it was expanding and modernizing the South Vietnamese army. This contradiction can be easily explained. On the one hand, the United States wanted to pose to the world that it was peace and freedom loving nation. On the other, it wanted to secure a base in Vietnam against communism to safeguard its economic interests.

The Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam declared its readiness on 3 April 1968 to appoint its representative to the peace talks with the United States. Its representative had to contact the US representative with a view to end American bombing raids unconditionally.⁶⁰ Following discussions the United States and North Vietnam agreed on 3 May 1968 to begin formal talks on 10 May 1968, in Paris. The American and North Vietnamese delegates met in formal conference on that day. But the substantive talks on Vietnam began only on 13 May 1968.

59. Lyndon Johnson would not accept the party's nomination for 1968 Presidential election, second term. He had decided to expand and modernize the army of South Vietnam. He stopped most of the bombing of North Vietnam. He had decided to increase American forces in Vietnam. See *ibid.*, p. 365.

60. New York Times, 4 April 1968, p. 16.

All the peace moves by the United States and its responses to the initiatives of others would seem highly strategic without hampering its interests in South East Asia. It raises certain questions: Why did the United States try for peace in the late 1960s, instead of going ahead with its war policies? What were the factors that led to the change in America's policy?

External and Internal Factors

Two kinds of factors brought about this change, external and internal.

External Factors

1. The unwavering determination of the National Liberation Front and its military arm Vietcong to liberate South Vietnam from foreign imperialists' clutches convinced the United States that it could not win the war through military means. Their fighting effort and guerrilla war tactics, for example, Tet offensive of February 1968, weakened American will to carry on the struggle.
2. The puppet regime in South Vietnam did not have the domestic social base to consolidate their position against the Vietcong. The Americans realized that there was no prospect for this.
3. This filled in with the general trend of national liberation movements which triumphed among the third world countries. They were able to end the colonial and neo-colonial exploitation. This trend, especially after the

Second World War, had been the dominant trend, for example, in China, Cuba, etc.

4. The world public strongly protested against the American bombing in North Vietnam. The non-aligned countries condemned and demanded the stopping of American bombing in Vietnam and pressed it to move toward peace.

5. The National Liberation Front and Vietcong enjoyed the support of North Vietnam, China and, of course, the Soviet Union for arms and ammunitions.

6. No European allies of the United States helped the United States aggression in Vietnam.

7. The rift within the international communist movement found an echo in the Vietnam Workers' Party. The revisionist policies of peaceful coexistence of countries with different social systems and peaceful transition from capitalism to socialism were emphasised in the "twentieth congress" 1956 by the Soviet Union. China strongly differed on these points. The opportunists in the party started showing their colour in 1950s by colluding with the Soviet Union. Since one major pro-Soviet faction in the Politbureau of the Vietnam Workers' Party favoured peace negotiations, it

61. There were two factions emerged in the Vietnam Workers' Party. One faction was committed to Marxism-Leninism and supported the Chinese communists. The another was committed to opportunism-splittism and supported the Russian revisionists. See for details Honey, n. 42, p. 3 ff. And also see Bain, n. 42, pp. 145 ff.

62. Paul M. Sweezy, and Leo Huberman, "After the Twentieth Congress", Monthly Review (New York), Vol. 7-8, July 1956, pp. 76-79.

became possible for the United States and North Vietnam to change from their warlike activities to peace negotiations.

Internal Factors

Apart from external factors, internal factors also played crucial role in changing America's policy.

1. The United States faced severe financial crisis in 1960s. President Lyndon Johnson himself admitted that in 1967-68, the financial crisis was most serious in the United States. Whenever the Johnson Administration tried to consider whether they would do more in Vietnam they had to take into consideration monetary and budgetary constraints.⁶³ This financial crisis influenced to some extent the reduction in calling up a large number of American troops to Vietnam. The total amount of expenditure on Vietnam war was nearly \$ 210 billion, according to official estimate.

2. American public protest against the killing of people in Vietnam and large expenditure on Vietnam war grew in intensity. Moreover, thousands of American soldiers were dying in the war. Americans wanted money poured into the deteriorating cities and into public improvement programmes, that would improve the lives of suffering under privileged and exploited Americans.

63. Johnson, n. 55, pp. 406-15.

These socio-economic and political factors forced America to come to the peace negotiations. The peace negotiations started in May 1968 in Paris and lasted for nearly five years till January 1973, because they had to take into account many diverse and complicated issues and problems. We shall discuss these in detail in the next chapter.

Chapter II

THE NEGOTIATIONS

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THE NEGOTIATIONS

In the first week of May 1968, the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam named Xuan Thuy¹ and Col. Ha Van Lau as the chief and deputy respectively of the delegation to the Paris Peace negotiations on Vietnam. While, the Government of the United States named Ambassador Averrel W. Harriman² as the head of its delegation to Paris. Ambassador Cyrus R. Vance was named deputy to Harriman. Vance and Lau along with their delegates attended the formal conference of peace negotiations on 10 May 1968 in Paris. They met at the former Majestic Hotel near the Arc de Tromphe in Paris. The sessions following this were also held at the same place, next meeting taking place on 11 May 1968. At this the full delegations representing North Vietnam and the United States were present. Thuy insisted on a complete bombing halt by the United States throughout North Vietnam. Harriman asked to restraint from Hanoi in return for a total halt in American bombing of North Vietnam. He called the North Vietnamese "aggressors".³

1. Xuan Thuy, the then Minister of State, was a former Foreign Minister of North Vietnam. His diplomatic career began in 1953 as the Secretary General of North Vietnam's Peace Committee. Thuy was pro-Soviet in the ideological struggle between the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China. See New York Times, 4 May 1968, p. 14.
2. Averrel W. Harriman was in Paris once before this Conference at the direction of President Harry S. Truman to help organize the United States' "Marshal Plan". He also participated in the Geneva Conference on Laos in 1962.
3. New York Times, 14 May 1968, p. 1.

The second session was held on 15 May 1968. Both sides kept on accusing each other without making any progress. The same issue of bombing came up for debate many sessions later. Le Duc Tho⁴ arrived in Paris on 3 June 1968 and immediately issued a call for an "unconditional halt"⁵ in American bombing of North Vietnam.

The North Vietnamese delegation contended in the seventh negotiating session on 5 June 1968 that they had responded to restriction of American air attacks on the north by entering into official talks in Paris. It asserted that the next move, a total halt in bombing, was upto the United States. Averrel Harriman on the other hand asserted that there was a massive infiltration of troops from North to South Vietnam. Tho did not take part in the seventh session but he participated in the next one.

On 26 June 1968, the United States sought a breakthrough in the deadlocked talks in Paris. It appealed to the North Vietnamese delegates for some indirect sign or unpublicized move of military restraint. Cyrus Vance charged the North Vietnamese that they had intensified the fighting. Xuan Thuy rejected the new suggestion made by the U.S. delegate. But a shift took place in the

4. Le Duc Tho, Politbureau member and also a member of Ho Chi Minh's inner circle, outranked Xuan Thuy. He was described by the North Vietnamese as a special counselor, but Thuy remained a nominal head of the delegation. He was a nationalist and supported the Soviet line. See *ibid.*, 4 June 1968, p. 11. Also see *ibid.*, 11 March 1969, p. 3.

5. *Ibid.*, 4 June 1968, p. 11.

position of North Vietnam. It rephrased the third-point,⁶ which was the main point of its long-standing four-points proposal. The words "must be" were omitted in the statement issued on 18 July 1968 in Paris. Some Western diplomats regarded this change as a potentially important move in the Paris talks.

After the shift in the position of North Vietnam, a relaxed and reconciling attitude can be found in the U.S. moves. The U.S. negotiators apparently urged President Lyndon B. Johnson in the first week of October 1968, to consider bombing halt in Vietnam. Cyrus Vance left for Washington to meet Johnson for the same purpose. But Johnson was not yet ready for halt in bombing.

Meanwhile, secret talks were held between the North Vietnamese and the American negotiators in the months of October 1968.⁷ It was apparently to end the prolonged deadlock in the Paris talks on bombing issue. And also to admit South Vietnam and the National Liberation Front in the peace talks.

General Greighton W. Abrams, the U.S. Commander in South Vietnam, told President Johnson on 29 October 1969 that a complete halt in the bombing of North Vietnam was

6. The statement simply said that point three affirmed the right of self-determination for the South Vietnamese people in the settlement of their internal affairs. See *ibid.*, 19 July 1968, p. 3.

7. *Ibid.*, 17 October 1968, p. 14.

acceptable to the United States. This assurance and the secret deal gave enough basis to Johnson to announce a complete halt to all American air, naval and artillery bombardment of North Vietnam on 31 October 1968. This was in exchange for Hanoi having accepted the participation of the South Vietnamese Government at the Paris peace talks. It was ironical that the North Vietnamese accepted the South Vietnamese, whom they wanted to overthrow, to participate in the Paris peace negotiations. This shows that the leaders and the politbureau members who favoured peace negotiations with the American imperialists were getting an upperhand in North Vietnam. The United States also accepted the participation of the National Liberation Front in the peace talks.⁸ This was part of a package deal which the United States arranged secretly with North Vietnam to move the Paris talks to a more substantive stage.

In the first week of November 1968, President Nguyen Van Thieu of South Vietnam did not accept the proposal of the participation of the National Liberation Front in the Paris talks. Consequently, the plenary session on Vietnam, that was supposed to be held on 6 November 1968 was postponed till 25 January 1969. In the second week of November 1968, Thieu agreed to the participation of the National Liberation Front as a part of North Vietnamese delegation not as a separate entity. It is quite probable that the

8. Ibid., 1 November 1968, pp. 1 and 11.

United States after having itself accepted the participation of the National Liberation Front exerted pressure on Nguyen Van Thieu to accept it. The National Liberation Front decided on 3 November 1968 to participate in the Paris talks. It named Foreign Minister Mrs. Nguyen Thi Binh who was later replaced by Tran Bui Kiem, to lead its delegation in Paris. The National Liberation Front issued a communique on 3 November 1968 stating that its primary objective was to overthrow the Saigon Government and to create a regime friendly to North Vietnam.⁹ It reiterated that it had not given up the objective of the overthrow of the Saigon Government while it had agreed to participate in the peace negotiations. What this author feels is that the National Liberation Front need not have gone to Paris to overthrow the Saigon Government. To overthrow the latter, it should have continued guerrilla war with its military arm Vietcong and not through engaging in peace negotiations with the American imperialists and their neo-colonial agents in South Vietnam.

When the South Vietnamese Government refused to participate in the expanded peace talks on Vietnam in Paris, the United States wanted to go ahead with the peace talks with the delegations of North Vietnam and the National Liberation Front. The New York Times reported that, "some

9. Ibid., 5 November 1968, p. 1.

senior advisers are reliably reported to have urged the President to take a firm stand with President Thieu and make it clear to him that Saigon will not be allowed to veto United States efforts to bring about a settlement in Vietnam". Secretary of State Clark M. Clifford warned the South Vietnamese Government on 12 November 1968 that unless they agreed soon to participate in the Paris talks, the United States might feel compelled to proceed with the delegation of North Vietnam and the National Liberation Front.

On 26 November 1968, the South Vietnamese Government conveyed its readiness to participation in the expanded peace talks.¹¹ Thieu announced on the following day that he had appointed Vice President Ngyuen Cao Ky to "oversee and control" the Saigon delegation. On 7 December 1968, the South Vietnamese national legislature approved the expanded talks which included South Vietnam and the National Liberation Front.¹² Pham Dang Lam, who held many important posts in the Foreign Ministry of South Vietnam Government, was appointed as the head of the Saigon delegation.

11. Ibid., 27 November 1968, p. 1.

12. Ibid., 8 December 1968, p. 1.

The Vietnam Policy of the Nixon Administration

In December 1968, the President-elect Richard M. Nixon named William P. Rogers as Secretary of State, Melvin R. Laird as Secretary of Defense and Henry A. Kissinger as National Security Adviser to the President. These three appointments were related to the national security of the United States.

Before his appointment Kissinger had written an article on "The Viet Nam Negotiations" in Foreign Affairs a journal of US foreign policy establishment. He suggested in it that the peace talks on Vietnam should proceed on two tracks, one involving the US and North Vietnam on military withdrawal from South Vietnam and the other involving South Vietnam and the National Liberation Front on political settlement of South Vietnam.¹³ He envisaged two sets of secret talks based on his two-track approach. He felt that the secret talks between the United States and North Vietnam on troop withdrawals would force South Vietnam and the National Liberation Front to meet on political issues.¹⁴

In March 1969, Melvin Laird returned from a visit to South Vietnam with an optimistic report that the US could train, equip, and inspire the South Vietnamese to

13. Henry A. Kissinger, "The Viet Nam Negotiations", Foreign Affairs (New York), vol. 47, January 1969, pp. 230-31.

14. New York Times, 30 January 1969, p. 34.

fill the gaps created by the departing American forces.¹⁵
This came to be known as "Vietnamization" of the war.

On 5 January 1969, President-elect Nixon named Henry Cabot Lodge, the then Ambassador to Bonn and who had also served twice as Ambassador to Saigon, as the Chief Negotiator to the Paris talks on Vietnam.¹⁶ The first plenary session of the expanded talks started on 25 January 1969, after ten weeks of deadlock on procedural matters. The delegations from North Vietnam, the National Liberation Front, the United States, and South Vietnam participated in the plenary session.

There was a shift in North Vietnam's stand in the plenary sessions of the expanded peace talks on 22 February 1969. Xuan Thuy indirectly accepted the North Vietnamese involvement in South Vietnam but refused to accept the proposal of the mutual troop withdrawals. He asserted that the United States' demand for mutual withdrawals was tantamount to asking for "the departure of Vietnamese from Vietnam".¹⁷

After the change in North Vietnam's stand, there were several corresponding changes in the stand of the

15. Richard M. Nixon, The Memoirs of Richard Nixon (London, 1978), p. 392.

16. New York Times, 6 January 1969, p. 1.

17. Ibid., 23 February 1969, p. 2.

United States and South Vietnam in the Paris talks.

American experts in Paris were ready to concede that the National Liberation Front may be more independent than the United States had previously been willing to admit. ¹⁸

Defense Secretary Laird said some reductions in the American forces ¹⁹ in Vietnam was desirable and possible.

The US officials in Paris noted a subtle shift in North Vietnamese declarations which could be indicating an eventual willingness to enter into secret discussions about the mutual troop withdrawals. ²⁰ The Government of

the Republic of Vietnam reported on 25 March 1969 that it was ready to begin unconditional, private talks in Paris with the National Liberation Front and North Vietnam. ²¹

Reliable and well placed sources reported that there were indirect communications between the negotiators of South Vietnam and the National Liberation Front through North Vietnamese intermediaries and also through diplomatic channels involving the United States, the Soviet Union, and possibly France or other countries. ²²

18. Ibid., 11 March 1969, p. 3.

19. According to the US administration sources, Laird considered a withdrawal of 40,000 to 50,000 American soldiers from Vietnam. See *ibid.*, 12 March 1969, p. 1.

20. *Ibid.*, 13 March 1969, p. 18.

21. *Ibid.*, 26 March 1969, p. 1.

22. *Ibid.*, 29 March 1969, p. 3.

The New York Times reported on 30 March 1969 that some specialists detected signs that North Vietnam and the National Liberation Front were inching toward defacto recognition of the Saigon regime and vice versa.²³

Nixon announced the "Eight Point" programme²⁴ on 14 May 1969 to bring peace in Vietnam. It cleared some of the ambiguities, though it did not represent any advance. Another new development in the US policy towards Vietnam was Nixon's announcement on 8 June 1969 about the withdrawal of 25,000 American soldiers from Vietnam.²⁵ The withdrawal took place before the end of August 1969.

Nixon took this decision after he met with Thieu in the Midway Island, a US naval station located halfway between Washington and Saigon. This was part of Laird's policy of Vietnamization of the war.

In a step that indicated their growing confidence and strength, the National Liberation Front decided to establish the Provisional Revolutionary Government (PRG)

23. Ibid., 31 March 1969, p. 3.

24. The following were the main points: As soon as agreement can be reached, all non-South Vietnamese forces would begin withdrawals from South Vietnam. As soon as possible after international body starts functioning, elections would be held under agreed procedures and under the supervision of an international body. Arrangement would be made for the earliest possible release of prisoners of war on both sides. See for details Department of State Bulletin (Washington, D.C.), vol. 60, 2 June 1969, p. 460.

25. New York Times, 9 June 1969, p. 1.

of South Vietnam²⁶ on 10 June 1969. This was done with the idea of raising the status of their negotiating team. The delegation of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam replaced the delegation of the National Liberation Front in Paris on 11 June 1969. Mrs. Nguyen Thi Binh became the head of the PRG's delegation in place of Tran Buu Kiem, head of the NLF's delegation.

Secret Paris Peace Talks

There were strong indications that informal contacts were established in February 1969 in Paris between the United States and North Vietnam. But no fruitful result came out of it.

In July 1969, Kissinger persuaded Nixon to establish a personal line of communication to Ho Chi Minh by a secret letter proposing serious negotiations or secret talks in Paris between Kissinger and the North Vietnamese representatives. Kissinger proposed that the letter be delivered by Jean Sainteny, a French Banker and former delegate-general in Hanoi who had been on personal terms with Ho Chi Minh. Sainteny delivered Nixon's letter dated 15 July 1969 to Xuan Thuy. Within a week North Vietnamese approved a secret meeting between Kissinger and Xuan Thuy.²⁷

26. The Provisional Revolutionary Government was proclaimed by the National Liberation Front to take over the control of foreign and internal policy from the latter. See *ibid.*, 12 June 1969, p. 1.

27. Marvin Kalb, and Bernard Kalb, Kissinger (London, 1974), p. 138.

The first secret conversation took place in Jean Sainteny's Paris apartment where Kissinger met with Xuan Thuy and Mai Van Bo, the North Vietnamese representative in Paris on 4 August 1969. Xuan Thuy insisted on the complete withdrawal of United States and "satellite" forces²⁸ from Vietnam and also the removal of Thieu, Ky, and²⁹ Huong Government and the establishment of a coalition government of the Provisional Revolutionary Government and remnants of the Saigon administration as long as they stood for "peace, independence and neutrality".³⁰ Kissinger offered the withdrawal of all American forces with no provision whatever for residual forces. He also proposed de-escalation of military operations. These were little more than exchange well known positions.

Between late February and early April 1970, Kissinger met Le Duc Tho four times in a villa near the French capital. At the first meeting on 21 February 1971, Kissinger made two new points: that the United States was prepared to withdraw all its forces and retain no bases in Vietnam, and that in arranging for mutual withdrawal he did not insist

28. "Satellite" forces means the troops contributed by allied countries of the US in support of the South Vietnamese Government.

29. Tran Van Huong was the then Prime Minister in the Government of South Vietnam.

30. Henry A. Kissinger, The White House Years (London, 1979), p. 281.

that North Vietnamese troops be placed on the same legal basis as American forces. But Le Duc Tho insisted on old demands that before any negotiations the United States would have to set a deadline for unilateral withdrawal from Vietnam.³¹ Tho also insisted that military and political problems be dealt with simultaneously -- a position from which he never deviated until October 1972.

At the meeting on 4 April 1971, Xuan Thuy summed up Hanoi's objections to the US position. The sixteen-month deadline for total American withdrawal of the US position was "wrong" because it was longer than the North Vietnamese demand of six months; no settlement was possible unless Thieu, Ky and Khiem³² regime was changed; and the US delegation in Paris lacked a senior replacement for Henry Cabot Lodge, as Chief negotiator.³³

One important secret meeting took place on 13 May³⁴ 1971. Kissinger offered a new "seven-point" proposal to the North Vietnamese that the United States would agree

31. Ibid., p. 443.

32. Tran Thieu Khiem, who had replaced Tran Van Huong as Prime Minister of South Vietnam.

33. Ibid., p. 445.

34. The other important points of the seven-point plan were call for guarantees for the independence, neutrality, and territorial integrity of Laos and Cambodia, with both sides renewing their pledge to respect the 1954 and 1962 Geneva Accords, the political future of South Vietnam was to be left to the South Vietnamese to settle. See for details *ibid.*, pp. 1018 and 1488-9.

to a deadline for the withdrawal of all its forces in exchange for the release of all prisoners of war (POW) and a cease-fire.³⁵ This was the first time that the United States had indicated a willingness to withdraw unilaterally, without insisting on an equivalent assurance of withdrawal from the other side.

Kissinger met Le Duc Tho and Xuan Thuy on 26 June 1971. The North Vietnamese representatives presented "Nine Point" programme which among other things sought a deadline for US withdrawal of 31 December 1971 or six months away. They explicitly agreed for the first time that American prisoners of war would be released simultaneously with US withdrawals.³⁶ They also proposed that a stand-still cease-fire would be instituted in completion of the agreement and would be subject to the international supervision and guarantees. They asked the United States to "stop supporting" Thieu, Ky and Khien Government.³⁷ To "stop supporting" the United States' allies could mean anything from withdrawing the US forces to ending all economic and military aid, or even conniving in their overthrow.

The meeting on 12 July 1971 between Kissinger and Tho-Thuy turned into a real negotiating session. It was

35. New York Times, 26 January 1972, pp. 1 and 10.

36. See for details Kissinger, n. 30, p. 1023.

37. Ibid.,

apparent that agreement was within reach on important points like principle of total US withdrawal, release of prisoners of war, reaffirmation of the Geneva Agreements of 1954 and 1962, and internationally supervised cease-fire.³⁸ There were two basic disputes on the questions of reparations and the Government of South Vietnam. On 26 July 1971, Kissinger and Le Duc Tho had narrowed their differences on all but two of Hanoi's nine points.³⁹

Kissinger proposed on 16 August 1971 to the North Vietnamese that all the US prisoners be released two months before the final US withdrawal; he agreed that it could be simultaneous. The North Vietnamese agreed that all the US prisoners throughout Indo-China would be released and not only those held by them as had been their original position.⁴⁰ This time Kissinger told the North Vietnamese that the United States could withdraw only nine months after an overall settlement had been reached. The North Vietnamese rejected it, saying that it did not meet their objectives on the two unresolved key issues. They complained that the proposed American withdrawal date was too distant. Kissinger believed that the US had to deliver South to

38. Ibid., p. 1028.

39. The two unresolved points were US Troops pull out and the political future of South Vietnam. See Kalb, n. 27, p. 182.

40. Kissinger, n. 30. p. 1035.

North Vietnam before the latter would allow the US to leave South Vietnam. He made his twelfth trip to Paris to meet Xuan Thuy in private on 13 September 1971. The meeting adjourned after two hours, the shortest secret session ever. Since Le Duc Tho was not present Xuan Thuy made no effort to say anything; therefore not much progress could be made. On 25 January 1972 the Nixon administration disclosed to the American public about the secret peace talks in Paris between Kissinger and Tho-Thuy.⁴¹ The negotiations between Kissinger and Tho, with whom Kissinger met seven times, and Xuan Thuy with whom he met five times, ended in September 1971.

After a lapse of nearly seven months Kissinger again met Le Duc Tho secretly in Paris on 2 May 1972. The talks were broken off after a three hour session. No progress could be made. This was one of the most unproductive sessions of Kissinger's secret talks.

Again Kissinger secretly met Le Duc Tho and Xuan Thuy in Paris on 19 July 1972 for six and a half hours. Tho modified Hanoi's standard proposal of a three part provisional coalition Government of National Concord, that once President Thieu resigned, the rest of the government could stay and even receive American help, pending a final negotiation with the Vietcong.⁴² Though, there was not

41. New York Times, 26 January 1972, p. 1.

42. Kissinger, n. 30, p. 1313.

much change in the North Vietnamese position, Kissinger could sense a change in the tone of the discussions. He met Tho and Thuy on 1 August 1972. In this meeting, his feeling that there was a change in Hanoi's approach was further strengthened. Hanoi's demand of the unconditional deadline for the withdrawal of American forces was dropped in that meeting. The North Vietnamese also modified their political demand that the tripartite coalition government in effect the 'definitive' government would not have to engage in additional negotiations with the communists.⁴³ They gave up the veto over the composition of the non-Communist segments of the proposed structure.^u

After the lapse of nearly two weeks Kissinger and Le Duc Tho met again on 14 August 1972. Kissinger gave the North Vietnamese a number of documents: a statement of general principles drawn from the two preceding meetings; a ten-point negotiating document answering Hanoi's ten points.⁴⁴ Neither the North Vietnamese nor Kissinger put forward any political proposal.

Kissinger met privately for the seventeenth time in Paris on 15 September 1972 with the North Vietnamese. In it he brought forward the US over-all plan to the North Vietnamese. Le Duc Tho dismissed it as nothing basically

43. Ibid., p. 1316.

44. The North Vietnamese negotiators had put forward ten points to Kissinger in a secret meeting on 1 August 1971. See for details *ibid.*, pp. 1315-16.

new, instead he tabled a new "ten-point" proposal.⁴⁵ Its main feature was to deprive some of the power of the Government of National Concord. Kissinger met the North Vietnamese again on 26 and 27 September 1972. Le Duc Tho submitted yet another new comprehensive proposal. He called for a Provisional Government of National Concord without President Thieu, but once again he reduced its functions.⁴⁶ The Government of National Concord was to be advisory to the existing governments with a vague responsibility to mediate between the two sides, and with neither enforcement powers nor the right to conduct foreign policy. It was like the US proposed Committee of National Reconciliation which would "operate in accordance with the principle of unanimity" - that is, any member had a veto, guaranteeing its importance even for its limited functions.⁴⁷ In these two days meetings they had in principle settled all military issues like cease-fire, withdrawals, infiltration, release of prisoners, international supervision and the Laos question. Kissinger was very optimistic about the possibility of a breakthrough before 1972 elections in the United States, though there were still some unresolved issues.

45. Ibid., 1332.

46. Ibid., p. 1336.

47. Ibid., p. 1337.

The next private meeting of Kissinger and Tho-Thuy was held on 8 October 1972. There were many unresolved problems in the North Vietnamese proposal, particularly the modalities of a cease-fire, the withdrawal of North Vietnamese forces from Laos and Cambodia, an end of infiltration through Laos and Cambodia into South Vietnam. Le Duc Tho suggested that the United States and North Vietnam sign an agreement settling the military questions between them -- withdrawal, prisoners, and cease-fire. On the political problems of South Vietnam they should only agree on the main principles. For the first time, the North Vietnamese seemed ready to separate the military from the political aspects of the war.⁴⁸ After the signing of the agreement a cease-fire would immediately take place. Tho no longer demanded the formation of a coalition Government of National Concord before the cease-fire.⁴⁹

Le Duc Tho scrapped the proposal of an end of American military aid to South Vietnam as an absolute pre-condition of settlement. He was now willing to permit the United States to continue to supply South Vietnam. Hanoi said noth^{ing} about withdrawing its troops but it accepted the US Proposal of 31 May 1971 that

48. The United States and North Vietnam would settle military aspect of the troop withdrawals. While the competing Vietnamese factions would settle the political matters.

49. Ibid., p. 1344.

infiltration into South Vietnam should cease. Tho was silent about North Vietnamese troops in Laos and Cambodia.

On 9 October 1972 Kissinger handed over the US proposal to Le Duc Tho and Xuan Thuy. Both the sides accepted some provisions of the US proposal, reformulated others, dropped some, and added new ones regarding infiltration, replacement of material and Laos and Cambodia. After two hours break, Le Duc Tho handed Kissinger a lengthy document that he proposed should be signed by the United States and North Vietnam. It set down guidelines for the political negotiations of the two South Vietnamese parties.⁵⁹ This was contrary to the earlier agreed strategy of negotiating political and military issues separately. Perhaps, the change was due to the insistence of the Vietcong in South Vietnam that Tho should put this forward to Kissinger who took note of the document but did not agree with it.

The next day, on 10 October 1972, Kissinger delivered a new message to Le Duc Tho enumerating the US requirements about security and Laos and Cambodia. They compared the two drafts, reconciled on some of the points, temporarily put aside insoluble issues and started negotiating separately on topics such as Laos, that did not fit into a Vietnam peace agreement. The following day, 11 October, Kissinger and Le Duc Tho agreed on a cease-fire, an American withdrawal

50. Ibid., p. 1350.

in two months, and simultaneous release of prisoners.⁵¹
They changed Hanoi's provision that the two South Vietnamese parties had to agree on a political settlement within three months to a weaker formulation, transforming an objective obligation into a subjective promise to make an effort. The "Administration of National Concord" was turned into a "National Council of National Reconciliation and Concord". At every meeting and with various formulations Kissinger kept demanding a North Vietnamese commitment to withdraw their troops from the South. Le Duc Tho resisted as a matter of principle because he did not regard South Vietnam as a foreign country. They finally settled for ban on infiltration and a formulation that after the cease-fire the two South Vietnamese parties would discuss "steps to reduce military numbers on both sides and to demobilize the troops being withdrawn".⁵²

Kissinger and Xuan Thuy met at Choisy-le-Roi in Paris on 17 October 1972. They improved the political provisions further by making explicit that the National Council of National Reconciliation and Concord could supervise the elections; it had no authority to order them. Any new election that might be held would first have to be agreed unanimously by the South Vietnamese parties. The National Council not only gave a veto to

51. Ibid., p. 1353.

52. Ibid., p. 1354.

Saigon; it was deprived of anything to do. With regard to replacement of military equipment Xuan Thuy insisted on the principle of equality, and Kissinger on the principle of a one-for-one replacement for worn-out equipment. Xuan Thuy finally accepted the US formulation but made it contingent on the release of civilian detainees in South Vietnam.⁵³ Kissinger rejected the proposition saying that it was to be settled between the Vietnamese parties. He found Hanoi's assurances regarding a cease-fire in Laos and Cambodia unsatisfactory.

Kissinger left for Saigon on the same day to convince President Thieu that his deal with the North Vietnamese was a good one and should be accepted. The talks between Kissinger and Thieu accompanied by important officials started on 19 October 1972. Kissinger was not able to convince the South Vietnamese, who made twenty-six amendments to the agreed points between the United States and North Vietnam. Kissinger explained and succeeded in bringing the South Vietnamese to six points⁵⁴ with which the latter disagreed. But South Vietnam had to give up in the face of a US that was determined to conclude an agreement with North Vietnam.

53. Ibid., pp. 1364-5.

54. The six points are as follows: (1) the "administrative structure"; (2) the "three Indo-Chinese States"; (3) the omission of any reference to a withdrawal of North Vietnamese forces from the South; (4) the right to self-determination; (5) the use of Cambodia and Laos for routing of troops and supplies; (6) and the re-establishment of a firm demilitarized zone between the two Vietnams. See Kalb, n. 27, p. 369.

The United States, indeed became a mediator between the South Vietnamese and the North Vietnamese and the Vietcong during the early 1970s. Kissinger told the South Vietnamese that the United States might cut off aid to the former, if they did not sign the peace agreement. Kissinger also told them that the US might even sign a separate peace treaty with the North Vietnamese. Thieu hesitated. It was almost like a blackmail.

Kissinger returned from Saigon to Washington on 24 October 1972 to consult President Nixon. After consultations Kissinger announced before the newsmen on 26 October 1972 that the 'peace is at hand' in Indo-China.⁵⁵ He was optimistic that political arrangement could be reached in one more negotiating session with the North Vietnamese.

After Kissinger's 'peace is at hand' statement, Le Duc Tho proposed an early resumption of the Paris private negotiations. Xuan Thuy told Agence France Presse on 10 November 1972 that Tho would be returning to Paris to meet Kissinger again. On the same day General Alexander Haig, Jr, then Kissinger's deputy on the National Security Council staff, and William Bunker, the then US Ambassador in Saigon met President Thieu to narrow the differences between the US and the South Vietnamese Government.

The United States and North Vietnam agreed to renew the private talks in Paris. Kissinger and Le Duc Tho opened
55. New York Times, 27 October 1972, p. 1.

another round of negotiations on 20 November 1972 in Paris for a Vietnam cease-fire. Kissinger presented Thieu's demands and then Nixon's demands⁵⁶ before Le Duc Tho. He also presented Tho with a long list of 'protocols', for the manner in which the principles of agreement were to be implemented. He was determined to eliminate any ambiguities about the National Council of National Reconciliation and Concord. Tho did not answer⁵ immediately to these problems. One day of negotiation ended without any progress.

When they met again in the afternoon on 21 November 1972, Le Duc Tho emphasized that the changes Kissinger was demanding were not just "technical" but substantive, not few but many. Tho rejected most of the changes and accepted a few technical ones. He withdrew important concession that American prisoners would be released without linkage to Saigon's release of Vietcong civilian prisoners.⁵⁷ He added another demand that all American civilian technicians be withdrawn along with U.S. military forces.

The following day, on November 22, Kissinger turned to essentials of clearing up the translation of the phrase

56. Nixon's main demand was that there should be a cease-fire throughout Indo-China along with South Vietnam. He placed his emphasis on "ambiguities", "details" and "central points".

57. Kissinger, n. 30, p. 1418.

"administrative structure" to describe the National Council of National Reconciliation and Concord and strengthening the provisions in respect for the demilitarized zone.⁵⁸ He also wanted to find some solution to the problem of North Vietnamese forces and a cease-fire in Laos closer to the time of the cease-fire in Vietnam. Tho maintained that the Vietcong prisoners be released at the same time as American prisoners of war and that American civilian technicians be withdrawn along with U.S. troops. No problem was solved in this meeting.

On 23 November 1972, Le Duc Tho suddenly revived his discarded demand for the ouster of the Thieu regime. Tho denounced Thieu's "two-Vietnams" theory and demanded "three Vietnamese States".⁵⁹ He charged the United States and the South Vietnamese had changed the basic character of the deal, which was arranged on 8 October 1972, by presenting a new set of proposals. The talks continued till 25 November 1972. Kissinger suggested, on 25 November, that the negotiations could be resumed only on 4 December 1972. Tho agreed for it.

Meanwhile President Thieu sent his close adviser Nguyen Phu Duc to meet President Nixon who refused, at the first instant to meet him. Somehow Nguyen Phu Duc met

58. Ibid.

59. The three Vietnamese states, Tho demanded, were North Vietnam, and South Vietnam was to be divided into two parts. One was for the south Vietnamese under Thieu and another was for the Vietcong. See Kalb, n. 27, p. 367.

Nixon on 29 November 1972 and delivered a personal letter from Thieu asking for an urgent summit before signing of any cease-fire agreement. Nixon categorically ruled out any summit with Thieu before an agreement could be reached in Paris. Nixon told Duc that the United States was going to sign cease-fire agreement with North Vietnam, with or without South Vietnam, as soon as he was convinced that the agreement was right.⁶⁰ The South Vietnamese were told that it had to fight alone with the Vietcong and the North Vietnamese, if the former refused to sign the peace agreement.

On 4 December 1972, Kissinger and Alexander Haig met twice with Le Duc Tho at Croisy-le-Roi in Paris privately. In the morning session Tho emphasised on the political prisoners in the South Vietnam. He told Kissinger that the political prisoners had to be released, otherwise the peace negotiations might be jeopardized. In the Afternoon session Tho withdrew, according to Kissinger, nine of the twelve changes that had been agreed two weeks previously.⁶¹ At the same time he maintained all his demands for changes in the October agreement.

The Finale of the Paris Peace Negotiations on Vietnam

Besides the negotiations in private the semi-public plenary sessions had also been going on in Paris without much important issues being discussed. All significant

60. Kalb, n. 27, p. 404.

61. Kissinger, n. 30, pp. 1428-9. And also see Kalb, n. 27, p. 406.

issues were discussed in private talks between Kissinger and Le Duc Tho. In the meetings which were held on 6 and 7 December 1972, Kissinger and Tho narrowed some differences. Tho dropped the crucial demand for the release of civilian prisoners in South Vietnam.⁶²

On 8 December 1972, Kissinger and Tho agreed finally to drop the whole phrase "administrative structure", translation of which had caused so much anguish. Tho confirmed his willingness to go back to the original text on civilian prisoners. Kissinger states that Le Duc Tho defined the demilitarized zone in such a way that it provided a legal justification for permanent intervention by Hanoi in South Vietnam.⁶³ Tho reiterated his demand for a total withdrawal of American civilian technicians working with South Vietnamese armed forces. The next day Le Duc Tho gave the United States the right to have American civilian service sophisticated South Vietnamese military equipment. But he was firm on the issue of demilitarized zone. He agreed to have the experts meet to begin on the protocols to confirm the language of the existing texts of the agreements.

On 11 December 1972, Le Duc Tho rejected signing procedures that Kissinger had assumed settled.⁶⁴ First, Tho conceded the issue of American civilian technicians assisting

62. The North Vietnamese had conceded this demand in late October and reneged on in November 1972.

63. Kissinger, n. 30, p. 1436.

64. This was a complex arrangement by which Saigon could sign without recognizing the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam. See *ibid.*, p. 1439.

South Vietnamese armed forces, then he insisted that this applied only to the public text of the agreement to avoid embarrassing the United States. So, he asked for a written private understanding that U.S. technicians would be withdrawn. The problems of protocols and demilitarized zone remained untouched.

On December 12, Le Duc Tho received instructions on the demilitarized zone from Hanoi. He had a proposal that omitted the phrase "civilian" from Kissinger's formula⁶⁵ for permitted movement across the demilitarized zone. He also produced protocols for the cease-fire and international control machinery. The U.S. side studied the North Vietnamese drafts of the protocols. Kissinger reported to President Nixon that they were "outrageous".⁶⁶ He writes about the North Vietnamese protocols on international Commission of Control and Supervision that,

The one spelling out the size, composition, and functions of the International Commission of Control and Supervision (ICCS) left the supervisory machinery subject to so many multiple vetos that it was inconceivable how it could possibly inspect anything. The ICCS, which would have two members proposed by the Communists (Hungary and Poland) and two by our side (Canada and Indonesia), would require unanimity to make any investigation or to file any report; no member would have the right to file a minority report. Moreover, the ICCS would have no transport of its own

65. Ibid., p. 1441.

66. Ibid., p. 1442.

but would have to ask the party being inspected for its approval as well as for any jeeps or telephones or other equipment... In case a loophole had been left unintentionally, the number of ICCS inspectors would be limited to 250, including support personnel, to inspect infiltration across seven hundred miles of jungle and an even longer shoreline. (67)

On 13 December 1972, Le Duc Tho introduced seventeen new phrases that in effect reintroduced earlier North Vietnamese demands which had been dropped by him in earlier sessions with Kissinger. He proposed that the National Council of National Reconciliation and Concord should "direct" certain specified activities. Kissinger had rejected this as implying a governmental authority for the Council incompatible with the premise of the agreement.⁶⁸ Tho then tried "Oversee" or "supervise" which had also been rejected by Kissinger. Finally, they agreed on the weaker word "promote". Kissinger felt that he was faced with deadlock because the North Vietnamese were determined not to come to a peace agreement.

The very same day Kissinger returned to the United States from Paris. He had a discussion with President Nixon. Kissinger and Nixon reached a conclusion to dispatch a cable to Hanoi. They sent a warning to Hanoi that "serious negotiations" would have to be resumed within seventy-two hours, otherwise American bombing

67. Ibid.

68. Ibid., p. 1443.

of Vietnam would be resumed.⁶⁹ The American side concluded that they would have no more of this one step forward one step backward strategy.

By mid-afternoon 17 December 1972, the time for an ultimatum had run out. Nixon ordered the resumption of American air war north of 20th parallel. Shortly after the bombing began Haig went to Saigon with an ultimatum from President Nixon; if Thieu did not agree to an agreement on Vietnam, the United States would sign a separate cease-fire agreement with North Vietnam. And all military and economic aid to South Vietnam would be cut off.

The American bombing of North ended on 30 December 1972. The technical talks on the protocols reconvened on 2 January 1973 and were led by Deputy Assistant Secretary for East Asia, William Sullivan, on the American side and vice-Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach for Hanoi. On Kissinger's instructions, Sullivan made clear to the North Vietnamese that the stalling tactics of Hanoi in December 1972 were no longer acceptable, and this led to a business like session. Over the next few days Thach and Sullivan settled nearly half of the issues, leaving rest to Kissinger and Le Duc Tho.

Kissinger and Le Duc Tho resumed private talks on 8 January 1973 in Paris. They discussed issues concerned

69. Kalb, n. 27, p. 412.

with the demilitarized zone and the method of signing. The breakthrough came at the next session on January 9. Le Duc Tho proposed that Thach and Sullivan be assigned to work full-time on the protocols and not participate in the main talks between him and Kissinger. Tho agreed to Kissinger's compromise formulation on the demilitarized zone, which he rejected in December. Kissinger and Tho settled all the outstanding questions in the text of the agreement. And they also made major progress on the method of signing the agreement. After the demilitarised zone issue was settled there remained primarily an issue of how to sign the documents so that Saigon did not have to acknowledge the Provisional Revolutionary Government. After several days Kissinger and Le Duc Tho devised a formula according to which the Provisional Revolutionary Government was not mentioned in the document.

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Kissinger and his colleagues⁷¹ worked fifteen hours a day in negotiating sessions, reviewing drafts, briefing the South Vietnamese, and exchanging cables with Washington. At last on 13 January 1973, the draft agreement was once again complete, together with all understandings and protocols. After "extensive" and "useful" negotiations, Kissinger left Paris on 13 January 1973 for Washington to report to Nixon.

70. Ibid., p. 1464.

71. Kissinger's colleagues were William Sullivan, Winston Lord, John Negroponte, David Engel, and Peter Rodman, joined toward the end by George Aldrich, Deputy Legal Advisor at the State Department.

The following day Kissinger briefed Nixon about the developments in Paris peace negotiations. And President Nixon ordered a halt⁷² to all the U.S. military actions against North Vietnam. The halt included air strikes, shelling, and mining. The United States and North Vietnam jointly announced on 18 January 1973, that Kissinger, Tho, and Thuy would meet on 23 January. The four sided plenary sessions was concluded on the same day after 174 meetings in Paris.

In the meeting Kissinger and Le Duc Tho settled the last few details and initialed the Paris accord. Nixon announced on the same day that an agreement "to end the war and bring peace with honor in Vietnam and South East Asia" was initialed in Paris.⁷³ The accord on Vietnam⁷⁴ was signed by the U.S. Secretary of State and the Foreign Ministers of North Vietnam, South Vietnam, and the Provisional Revolutionary Government.

A Democratic Peace

There can be no peace, as long as the exploitation of man by man exists; as long as the monopoly capitalism exists in the world. Peace is possible only when the exploiting classes (the landlords and capitalists) have been overthrown

72. Kalb, n. 27, p. 420.

73. New York Times, 24 January 1973, p. 1.

74. Highlights of the Paris agreement on Vietnam, as set out in the text, are given in the appendix. See Appendix 2.

and deprived of all powers (political and economical) by the exploited class (the workers and the landless peasants). If, the imperialists say and preach peace at all, it is not a real democratic and honourable peace. That is a peace which would allow the continuation of exploitation. Chairman Mao Tse-Tung spoke about the peace at the Eighth National Congress of the Communist Party of China in 1956, when he said:

Our country and all the other Socialist countries want peace; so do the peoples of all the countries of the world. The only ones who crave war and do not want peace are certain monopoly capitalist groups in a handful of imperialist countries which depend on aggression for their profits. (75)

Only after the exploiting system has been overthrown and systems of oppression of man by man have been abolished, and not before, it will be possible to achieve peace. Imperialism does not stand for peace. It is full of antagonistic social contradictions which would naturally lead to war. As V.I. Lenin said that to urge the imperialist governments, "to conclude a democratic peace is like preaching virtue to brothel keepers"⁷⁶.

So with this understanding of peace we shall analyse the Vietnam Paris peace negotiations.

75. Quotations From Chairman Mao Tse Tung (Peking, 1977), p. 65.

76. V.I. Lenin, Letters from Afar (Moscow, 1977), p. 47.

Soviet Influence on Peace Negotiations

It would thus appear that there can not be any peace negotiations between the Communists and imperialists. Why did then the North Vietnamese and Viet cong, who claim themselves to be communists, undertook to negotiate with the Americans instead of carrying on their relentless struggle? There is a glaring inconsistency about whose cause one can only speculate.

As already mentioned in the first chapter there was a rift within the international Communist movement and it was reflected in the North Vietnam Workers' Party as well. This fact alone can give us a clue to the above question.

The rift between Communist China and the Soviet Union took a serious turn when the latter adopted, at the 22nd Congress in October 1961, the following programmes:

- peaceful co-existence of countries with different social systems,
- disarmament, and
- peaceful transition from capitalism to socialism. ⁷⁷

The Russians thought that the most important question facing the world was war or peace. If thermonuclear war would come, the Russians argued, civilization itself would be destroyed. They wanted to avoid the war, so that the

77. Paul M. Sweezy, and Leo Huberman, "The Split in the Socialist World", Monthly Review (New York), Vol. 15, May 1963, p. 2.

superiority of Socialism over capitalism would be clearly demonstrated. Otherwise, they argued, that the bright future of socialist countries would be ruined.⁷⁸

China not only differed on these points but criticized the Russian ideology as not communism but revisionism. China stressed that a socialist country has no antagonistic social contradictions and it is impermissible for it to embark on wars of expansion. Whereas, an imperialist country is full of antagonistic social contradictions and it is natural that it would embark on wars of expansion. "To believe otherwise", China stressed, "is not Leninism but bourgeois pacifism".⁷⁹

On the question of disarmament the Chinese stressed Lenin's words that,

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Only after the proletariat has disarmed the bourgeoisie (81) will it be able, without betraying its world-historical mission, to throw all armaments on the scrap heap, and the proletariat will undoubtedly do this, but only when this condition has been fulfilled, certainly not before. (82)

78. Ibid., pp. 1-2.

79. Ibid., p. 3.

80. "By proletariat, the class of modern wage-labourers who, having no means of production of their own, are reduced to selling their labour power in order to live". See Karl Marx, and Frederick Engels, Manifesto of the Communist Party (Moscow, 1967), p. 40.

81. "by bourgeoisie is meant the class of modern capitalists, owners of the means of social production and employers of wage labour". See *ibid.*

82. Sweezy, and Huberman, n. 77. p. 5.

The threat of war comes not from armaments but from imperialism. The imperialism has to be fought to the end and the way of countering it is not by disarmament.

On the question of peaceful transition from capitalism to Socialism, the Chinese believed, that capitalism would never get transformed by itself peacefully, unless it is overthrown by the working class through armed revolution. Upto now, history has not witnessed a single example of peaceful transition from capitalism to socialism. "Even when it is possible to secure state power through peaceful means", the Chinese emphasised, "one must be prepared to deal immediately with armed intervention by foreign imperialists and with counter-revolutionary armed rebellions supported by the imperialists."⁸³

This was not a simple difference of opinions but an ideological struggle between the Chinese Communists and the Russian counter-revolutionaries. This resulted in split among the socialist countries of the world, and in and between the Vietnam Workers' party and the Vietcongs' National Liberation Front.⁸⁴ The major faction in the Vietnam Workers' Party supported the Soviet ideology and the minor faction supported the Chinese communist ideology.⁸⁵ Out of the twelve

83. Ibid., p. 9.

84. New York Times, 11 March 1969, p. 3.

85. The Politbureau members who belonged to pro-Soviet faction were Premier Pham Van Dong, Le Duan, first Secretary of the Vietnam Workers' Party, General Vo Nguyen Giap, Pham Hung, a protégé of Pham Van Dong, Xuan Thuy, and Le Duc Tho. Hoang Van Hoan was an indirect supporter of Soviet Union. The Politbureau members who belonged to pro-Chinese were Truong Chinh, former Secretary General of the Vietnam Workers' Party, Nguyen Chi Thanh, head of

Politbureau members seven were pro-Soviet, three were pro-Chinese and two were taking the middle path. President Ho Chi Minh was mediating between these two factions. Most of the North Vietnamese became revisionists. The available sources indicate that the split in the Vietnam Workers' Party started in 1957 and it became very clear in the early 1960s.

The Soviet Union and Communist China started quarreling over transitting the former's military equipment to Vietnam via China in 1966. The Soviet Union accused China that it was obstructing the transit of aid supplies to Vietnam. But China made it clear that the Soviet Union's slander was based on pure invention.⁸⁶ The purpose was, China charged the Soviet Union, "to disrupt the fighting unity between the Chinese and Vietnamese peoples and undermine the Vietnamese people's war to resist U.S. aggression and save their country".⁸⁷ China also said that it was a bounden duty of the international proletariat to help Vietnamese fraternal people in achieving goals in Vietnam.⁸⁸ The Vietnamese had, every right to receive aid from every socialist country to fight against the U.S. imperialists.

contd.../ the Vietnamese People's Army political department, Nguyen Duy Trinh, Foreign Minister. See for details P.J. Honey, Communism in North Vietnam: Its Role in the Sino-Soviet Dispute (Cambridge, Mass., 1963), pp. 27ff. And also see Chester A. Bain, Vietnam: The Roots of Conflict (New Jersey, 1967), pp. 145 ff. And also see Donald S. Zagoria, Vietnam Triangle: Moscow, Peking, Hanoi (New York, 1968), pp. 42 ff. And also see New York Times, 4 May 1968, p. 14. And also see ibid., 11 March 1969, p. 3.

86. U.S. Aggression Has No Bounds and Our Counter to Aggression Has No Bounds (Peking, 1966), p. 13.

87. Ibid.

88. George MeL. Kahin, and John W. Lewis, The United States in Vietnam (New York, 1967), p. 227.

China came out with interesting informations that the Soviet Union colluded with the United States and betrayed the Vietnamese' struggle against the United States. In 1966, China said:

On June 30, the day after the first bombing raid, A. Roschin, the Soviet representative to the disarmament Conference in Geneva, made it clear that the U.S. air attacks would not affect the possibility of the Soviet Union and the United States arriving at an agreement on disarmament. In reply to question put by a journalist, he impudently declared: "If we did not consider there was such a possibility, we would not be here." This lifts the black curtain on the collusion between the United States and the Soviet Union and their exchange of information on Vietnam. One does the bombing and the other does the pulling, and both these actions are intended to achieve the criminal purpose of 'forcing peace talks through bombing'. (89)

China opposed the Paris peace talks on Vietnam and said that it was a conspiracy of the Soviet revisionists and the United States imperialists.⁹⁰ On 20 December 1968, at a reception celebrating the eighth anniversary of the founding of the NLF, in Peking, Deputy Chief of the armed forces of People's Republic of China, Wen Yu Cheng, asserted that the Soviet Union supported the U.S. on the Vietnam question because the latter had supported the Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia.⁹¹

89. Note, ... 86, p. 12.

90. Ibid., p. 13.

91. New York Times, 21 December 1968, p. 3.

The Soviet Union, it seemed, was in a hurry to settle the Vietnam war through peace negotiations. The New York Times wrote on 23 November 1968 that,

One theory is that the Soviet leaders would now like to see a speedy settlement of the Vietnam question and told Mr. Tho that Hanoi should accept a formula permitting the Saigon regime to join the Paris talks. (92)

When the New York Times wrote about the appointment of Lodge as Chief negotiator to the Paris talks, it said: "The aid of Soviet diplomats in Paris almost certainly will be needed to secure Hanoi's agreement - something Mr. Lodge may find more difficult to win than Mr. Harriman."⁹³ Even Harriman himself said, in an interview on a National Broadcasting Company television-radio programme, Meet the Press, that the Russians were helpful in getting the Paris talks moving.⁹⁴

The South Vietnamese specialists on North Vietnam reported in March 1969 that old differences between the pro-Moscow and pro-Peking groups within the North Vietnamese regime and the NLF of South Vietnam had been sharpened by the hostile outbursts following the Soviet-Chinese border clash in early month March 1969.⁹⁵ This tension echoed in

92. Ibid., 24 November, 1968, p. 8.

93. Ibid., 27 January 1969, p. 40.

94. Ibid., 27 January 1969, p. 12.

95. Ibid., 11 March 1969, p. 3.

and between the North Vietnamese and NLF delegations in Paris as well. The South Vietnamese and American experts were of the opinion that the Vietcong guerrillas leaned toward Communist China.⁹⁶

Since pro-Soviet faction was dominant in North Vietnam, it went to the extent of sending back the Chinese labour battallions that were repairing bomb damage.⁹⁷ This was one of the major steps taken by North Vietnam to disengage itself from dependence on Communist China. The Soviet Union might have advised the North Vietnamese to send back the Chinese labour battallions, otherwise there was no reason for the North Vietnamese to do so.

The major faction which supported the Soviet Union became more dominant after Ho Chi Minh's (who was mediating between both the factions to keep them united in the war against the American imperialists) death in September 1969. Under these circumstances, China extended its support for Paris peace negotiations from 1969 onwards. China might have felt that the North Vietnamese would disengage completely from China and would become pro-Soviet, if it did not extend its support for peace negotiations. And, moreover, China might have thought that since most of the Vietcong were Communists and pro-Chinese the peace negotiations could be

96. Ibid.

97. Ibid., 31 August 1969, Section IV, p. 10.

used as a tactic to drive the Americans out and to defeat South Vietnamese forces, so that the two Vietnams could be united. As far as this latter part of the argument is concerned, the present writer is of the view that this too in a way represented a retreat from the principle of continuous struggle till liberation is achieved.

Nikolai Podgorny, President of the Soviet Union, went to Hanoi on 15 June 1972 to convince the North Vietnamese about the necessity of serious peace negotiations in Paris. Marvin Kalb and Bernard Kalb wrote:

The North Vietnamese, feeling betrayed by Russia's hospitality to Nixon, were nevertheless dependent on Moscow as the Chief supplier of their war material and they listened carefully to Podgorny's message. It was simple but fundamental: he suggested it was time to switch tactics, time for serious negotiations with the United States. The risk, he argued, would not be critical; after all, Nixon seemed serious about withdrawing, and the new U.S. position no longer demanded a North Vietnamese troop pull out from the south ... After leaving the Hanoi politburo to ponder his advise, Podgorny flew back to Moscow, where he promised that the Soviet Union would 'do everything possible for a de-escalation of the Vietnam War' and for the success of the talks in Paris that he said would resume shortly. (98)

The North Vietnamese indirectly accused the Russians 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".⁹⁹

98. Kalb, n. 27, pp. 336-7.

99. New York Times, 19 June 1972, p. 33.

Commentators in the Soviet media defended its decision to proceed with the summit on Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT), despite the mining of Haiphong. "The war of aggression in Vietnam can be ended only through negotiations" a Moscow radio commentary said, adding that "practical experience clearly shows that the Vietnam problem can not be solved by military means"¹⁰⁰. This was Moscow's advise to Hanoi.

All these clearly demonstrated the soviet conclusion that the advantages of colluding with the U.S. imperialists on matters like Strategic Arms Limitation Talks, trade and credits would serve more the interests of the soviet state monopoly capitalism than helping the North Vietnamese.

The guerrilla strategy of protracted war was changed by the North Vietnamese after Soviet Union insisted on conventional battles employing tanks and heavy arms. The Chinese had indicated their disapproval of North Vietnam's shift from the guerrilla strategy to conventional battles; eventhough the latter had to some extent ^{disengaged} /itself from the former.

The pro-Soviet Union forces in North Vietnam influenced the decision-making processes. The New York Times wrote on 13 August 1968 that the Soviet Union's role in the dead-locked Paris talks was possible because Hanoi was looking
100. Ibid.

more to the Soviet Union than to China for advise. The North Vietnamese accepted the American peace offer in April 1968. The North Vietnamese rephrased their third point of four-points at the Paris talks in July 1968. They entered into a secret peace negotiation with the United States in 1969. They accepted the continuation of Thieu regime in power in the Paris peace accord. The negotiations became possible only when North Vietnam relented and modified its earlier position.

With all these evidences one can say that the Paris peace agreement was nothing but a logical application of peaceful co-existence of countries with different social systems and peaceful transition from capitalism to Socialism of Soviet revisionist policy.

One more aspect of the peace negotiations remains to be examined. The United States claimed that freedom was in danger in South Vietnam. It said that south Vietnam was invaded by North Vietnam. The United States asserted time and again that it had intervened in Vietnam in order to restore stability and pursue peaceful and democratic development in Vietnam. But what happened to the U.S. commitments for freedom in South Vietnam after 1968? Why did the United States become a mediator between South Vietnam and North Vietnam? Why did it threaten South Vietnam that it would

cut off economic aid and would sign the Paris peace agreement with North Vietnam, if South Vietnam did not sign the peace agreement? Why did it leave Vietnam, after twenty two years of involvement?

As discussed in the first Chapter, the objective of U.S. intervention in Vietnam was to contain Chinese Communism which was spreading in the South East Asia. The North Vietnamese, most of them, became revisionists from late 1950s onwards, by supporting the Russian counter-revolutionaries and following revisionistic policies in North Vietnam. Since the North Vietnamese leaders were committed no more to communism, the U.S. objective was served considerably by the North Vietnamese themselves; so the U.S. did not bother about danger of freedom, as it claimed, in South Vietnam. The United States, therefore, colluded with the Soviet Union, compromised with the North Vietnamese, imposed the peace agreement on the South Vietnamese, and left the Vietnamese to fight among themselves.

This was the commitment of the United States to freedom. Those who talk of democratic America, point out that any one can criticize the state there. But they forget that in America, on the one hand, there is a heavy concentration of power in the hands of different monopoly groups and on the other, the different monopoly groups themselves are engaged in cut-throat competition for super-profit. It is only this competition among capitalists that is projected as freedom

under American democracy. What are the conditions of the proletariat and other oppressed sections in the US? The workers and oppressed inside the factory do possess the right to criticize the American system to a very limited extent but once they start doing something against the system the big monopoly capitalists and their lackeys will react ferociously. A glaring example of this was the punishment meted out to a number of revolutionary workers and Bob Avakian, Central Committee Chairman of the Revolutionary Communist Party, U.S.A. "Freedom" and the "free-world", the gospel of American imperialism, actually mean freedom to exploit and the free world to be exploited by the big monopoly capitalists of America, to become number one exploiters in the world.

Whether it is American imperialists or soviet Social imperialists, when their interests are at stake, they would go to any extent to collaborate, compromise and betray the allies or enemies to save their interests. In the Vietnam war the two imperialists (the Soviet Union and the United States) and the Soviet protagonists in North Vietnam found fighting for their early perceived interests at one stage, no more necessary so they colluded with each other. The Paris peace treaty on Vietnam was the outcome of their collusion.

Chapter III

KISSINGER: THE DIPLOMAT

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President Richard M. Nixon deputed in 1969 his Assistant for National Security Affairs Henry A. Kissinger to negotiate secretly with the North Vietnamese representatives to end the American involvement in the Vietnam war. Kissinger had come in contact with the Vietnam question for the first time in October 1965, when he visited South Vietnam at the invitation of Henry Cabot Lodge, the then Ambassador in Saigon. He stayed in South Vietnam for more than two weeks, from 15 October to 2 November 1965, and met with all the principal South Vietnamese leaders, including President Nguyen Van Thieu and Nguyen Cao Ky. According to Stephen R. Graubard, one of Kissinger's biographers, "Kissinger came away appreciating the meaninglessness of many of the phrases that American officials habitually used. A 'secure area' was often secure only during daylight hours; a 'pacified region' was sometimes pacified only on the wall map of the American official responsible for the operations". Kissinger reported his findings to Ambassador Lodge. Before his visit to South Vietnam, Kissinger's knowledge on Vietnam was extremely limited.

Kissinger re-visited South Vietnam in July 1966 for two weeks, again at Ambassador Lodge's invitation. He

1. Stephen R. Graubard, Kissinger: Portrait of a Mind (New York, 1973), p. 224.

publicly expressed his views on the Vietnam war for the first time in a guest column in the well-known Look magazine on 9 August 1966. He set forth two principal propositions. One was that the Vietnam war could not be won by military means. And the second was that it had to be settled by negotiations.² He maintained some distance between himself and both the extreme hawks and extreme doves.

After the publication of the Look piece, Kissinger maintained silence on the issue of Vietnam for almost two years. His friendly biographers have had great difficulty in explaining his silence. Stephen Graubard says that Kissinger did not write on Vietnam for a very simple reason that he had nothing to say.³ Surprisingly, Graubard was not aware of Kissinger's Look article of 1966.

In 1967, Kissinger agreed to undertake secret negotiations through the French intermediaries with the North Vietnamese leaders. But he failed. No progress could be made. This has been discussed in detail earlier.

During the presidential election of 1968, as one of the advisers of Nelson A. Rockefeller, one of the several aspirants for nomination as the Republican Presidential

2. Theodore Draper, "Ghosts of Vietnam", Dissent (New York), vol. 26, Winter 1979, p. 31.

3. Graubard, n. 1, p. 225.

candidate, Kissinger developed his views on Vietnam in a larger framework that embraced China and the Soviet Union. Graubard summed up Kissinger's thinking thus:

Indochina had importance ... for each of the two major Communist states: China and the Soviet Union. They were an inseparable part of the Vietnamese puzzle; American relations with both would intimately affect decisions that were reached at the negotiating table. Kissinger did not mean for American policy toward the Communist giants to be determined only by considerations in Vietnam; he did not, however, underestimate the importance each could have in Vietnamese peace talks. (4)

Kissinger emphasised that the Vietnam problem could be settled through Communist China and the Soviet Union.

It was not Nelson Rockefeller but Richard Nixon, who not only won the Republican presidential nomination but also the presidential race. The newly elected president was impressed with Henry Kissinger's knowledge in international affairs that he appointed him as Assistant to President on National Security Affairs. In January 1969, just before Kissinger assumed his White House responsibilities, he published another article on Vietnam in Foreign Affairs. This article repeated the points he had made during Nelson Rockefeller's election campaign.

Kissinger's secret negotiations with Le Duc Tho and Xuan Thuy started on 4 August 1969. He continued the secret

4. Ibid., p. 246.

negotiations with the North Vietnamese till January 1973. Both Kissinger and Le Duc Tho were jointly awarded Nobel Peace Prize in 1973 for their role in concluding an agreement on the Vietnam war. Before going into the details of Kissinger's diplomacy, it would be better to have a brief discussion here on "diplomacy"⁵ so that one can put Kissinger's diplomacy in a proper perspective.

Diplomacy is for Whom?

Harold Nicolson says: "... diplomacy is neither the invention nor the pastime of some particular political system, but is an essential element in any reasonable relation between man and man and between nation and nation"⁶. Nicolson traces the origin of diplomacy to the Greek civilization. As Greek civilization developed, the complexity of the commercial and political relations between city states also increased; therefore it became necessary to raise the standard of rudimentary form of diplomatic service.⁷ According to Nicolson in the developmental process of diplomatic service, it came to be recognized as a profession distinct from that

5. The Oxford English Dictionary gives the meaning of diplomacy as follows: "Diplomacy is the management of international relations by negotiation; the method by which relations are adjusted and managed by ambassadors and envoys; the business of art of the diplomatist".

6. Ibid., p. 4.

7. Ibid., p. 7.

of a statesman or politician. It acquired its own rules, conventions and prescriptions only after the Congress of Vienna in 1815.⁸

Professor R.B. Mowat asserts that Woodrow Wilson, the U.S. President at the time of the Versailles peace conference, inaugurated a new form of diplomacy which Mowat termed as "democratic diplomacy".⁹ Reacting sharply to the secret deals entered into by both the warring sides before the First World War, Woodrow Wilson in his famous "The Fourteen Points Speech"¹⁰ said that there should be an open diplomacy. It was a good point. But, did he follow it? The American President did not even invite any important member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, or any of the leaders of the Republican Party to accompany him to the Peace Conference at Paris in January 1919.¹¹ Henry B. Parkes, an American historian, says: "Convinced of the righteousness of his ideals, he did not wish to be hampered by associates who

8. Ibid., p. 12.

9. Ibid., p. 15.

10. The first point of Woodrow Wilson's "Fourteen-points" was: "Open covenants of peace, openly arrived at, after which there shall be no private international understanding of any kind but diplomacy shall proceed always frankly and in the public view". See Frances Farmer (ed.), The Wilson Reader (New York, 1956), p. 177.

11. Henry B. Parkes, The United States of America: A History (Calcutta, 1976), p. 580.

might disagree with him. He believed that once the treaty had been drafted, the Senate would not dare to refuse ratification".¹²

It seems that Wilson wanted to impose his own ideas and views on the Congress. On the one hand he was advocating open and frank diplomacy, on the other he was deceiving the Congress by practicing secret diplomacy. Since all the U.S. presidents are basically lackeys of monopoly capitalists, President Wilson could not have been an exception. One can say, Wilson's diplomacy and foreign policy also served the interests of the monopoly capitalists.

In any country where exploitation of man by man exists, whether it is an imperialist country or semi-feudal and semi-colonial, its diplomatic apparatus is bound to maintain the status quo and serve the interest of the appropriating few and not the working masses. So the diplomacy of the United States under Woodrow Wilson was also directed against the people. Furthermore, Wilsonian diplomacy was not scientifically accurate and different from the old one.¹³

12. Ibid.

13. K. Anatoliev says that the old diplomacy of Taleyrand and Prince Bismark can not claim to be scientifically accurate since they obliterate the substance of the matter; the social nature of diplomacy. See K. Anatoliev, Modern Diplomacy: Principles, Documents, People (Moscow, 1972), pp. 29-30.

Most of the recruits in the diplomatic service are from the elite groups who represent the interests of certain sections of the nation rather than the country as a whole. According to Nicolson, good orators, men of trained powers of observation and sound judgement were generally employed in the diplomatic service. Such statements imply that people of inborn intelligence should be employed in the diplomatic service, so that the standard of diplomacy can be raised.

The approach of Nicolson and Mowat is typical of petty-bourgeois intellectuals who believe that diplomacy should be dominated by the elite and serve the exploiting minority.

In contrast to this view of diplomacy was the concept of new diplomacy that was outlined for the first time in the history of mankind by V.I. Lenin in the Soviet Union in 1917. It is considered to be scientifically accurate, because it is based on the substance of the matter: the social nature of diplomacy. K. Ivanov says that the old diplomatic service of Tsarist Russia had been recruited exclusively from among the titled aristocracy and the upper crust of the bourgeoisie, which was totally unfit to serve the interests of the working class. It was replaced by a

14. Geoffrey Moorhouse, The Diplomats: The Foreign Office Today (London, 1977), pp. 46-53.

15. Nicolson, n. 5, pp. 12 ff.

Soviet diplomatic apparatus to serve the cause of the workers' and peasants' revolution, the cause of socialism. ¹⁶

Lenin in his speech at the concluding session of the Ninth Congress of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) on 5 April 1920, emphasized the differences between the methods of Socialist and Capitalist diplomacy. He stated:

The point is that in capitalist society everything that particularly interests the citizens - their economic conditions, war and peace - is decided secretly, apart from society itself. The most important questions - war, peace, diplomatic questions - are decided by a handful of capitalists, who deceive not only the masses, but very often parliament itself. (17)

Lenin pointed out that the bourgeois diplomacy was unable to understand the methods employed by the socialists' diplomacy, that of a direct and frank declarations. ¹⁸ The Soviet Government wanted to expose the criminal military designs of the Tsarist Government. The Soviet Government therefore made public past diplomatic correspondence and texts of secret treaties in the archives of the Tsarist Foreign Ministry. ¹⁹

The diplomacy of the Socialists involved the workers and the poor peasants in several ways. The diplomatic

16. K. Inanov, Lenin and USSR Foreign Politics (Geneva, 1970), p. 14.

17. V.I. Lenin, Collected Works (Moscow, 1965), vol. 30, p. 488.

18. Ibid., (Moscow, 1966), vol. 31, p. 275.

19. K. Ivanov, Leninism and Foreign Policy of the USSR (Moscow, ?), p. 13.

documents were addressed to the Government and to the people as well. And the knowledge of this was bound to have an impact on the content of the proposals. The documents under such circumstances would be in the interest of the masses and would ensure correct understanding not by governments alone but also by the people of the country concerned.²⁰

The appeal to the people may be either implied or direct. V.I. Lenin's the "Decree on Peace" was adopted un-animously in 1917 by the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets. It contained a proposal to all the belligerent peoples and their governments, who participated in the First World war, to begin immediate negotiations on a just and democratic peace. It reads:

While addressing this proposal for peace to the governments and peoples of all the belligerent countries, the Provisional Workers' and Peasants' Government of Russia appeals in particular also to the class conscious workers of the three most advanced nations of mankind and the largest states participating in the present war, namely, Great Britain, France and Germany. (21)

Lenin believed that the workers and poor peasants should be conscious of foreign policy and diplomacy, so that the government could work effectively in the interests of the workers and poor peasants.

20. Anatoliev, n. 13, p. 63.

21. V.I. Lenin, Collected Works (Moscow, 1966), vol. 26, p. 251.

Sometimes a socialist country might employ secret diplomacy in the interests of the workers and poor peasants because of certain objective conditions. To judge the nature of diplomacy, one should see the nature of the state and its functions whether it represents the interests of the workers and poor peasants or the capitalists and landlords, even if it employs secret diplomacy.

Chairman Mao Tse-tung, in an opening address at the Eighth National Congress of the Communist Party of China in 1956, spoke about the basis on which diplomatic relations should be established between countries. He said:

To achieve a lasting world peace, we must further develop our friendship and co-operation with the fraternal countries in the socialist camp and strengthen our solidarity with all peace-loving countries. We must endeavour to establish normal diplomatic relations, on the basis of mutual respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty and of equality and mutual benefit, with all countries willing to live together with us in peace. (22)

The diplomacy of the workers and peasants has been under heavy criticism. Nicolson says that as the new diplomacy came up in the Soviet Union in 1917, the old diplomacy's standards, conventions and methods of international negotiations have been discredited.²³ He also says:

22. Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse Tung (Peking, 1977), p. 65.

23. Nicolson, n. 5, p. 137.

The old diplomacy was based upon the creation of confidence, the acquisition of credit. The modern diplomatist must realize that he can no longer rely on the old system of trust; he must accept the fact that his antagonists will not hesitate to falsify facts and that they feel no shame if their duplicity be exposed. (24)

Nicolson forgot that if billions and billions of workers and peasants of the world learn to understand and judge which governments' foreign policy and diplomacy serves their interests, his argument would become meaningless. There are two kinds of diplomacy one for the workers and peasants and another for capitalists and landlords. With this understanding of diplomacy we will analyse Kissinger's diplomacy and raise the issue whether it served the interests of the former or latter.

Kissinger's Diplomacy and the Paris Peace Negotiations
in Relation to Sino-Soviet Conflict

The general opinion among some sections of the elites in the United States and in other countries is that Kissinger helped in reducing tensions among the super powers and used his formidable intelligence to work toward the settlement of dangerous international conflicts. These elements felt that the US Secretary of State by his astute diplomacy has shown how much more can be achieved, apart from what he himself achieved during 1969-76, by traditional diplomacy. To them Kissinger was the only diplomat whose skill and stature were so great and his service to overwhelming

majority was indispensable for the cause of moderation and peace. To come to a proper conclusion regarding Kissinger's diplomacy an objective analysis of the conditions prevailing in the world, especially during the Paris peace negotiations on Vietnam would be necessary.

When Kissinger arrived on the diplomatic scene in 1969, the Sino-Soviet conflict was at its peak; the United States was waiting for the pro-Soviet North Vietnamese (revisionists) to come for a compromise in Paris. The United States which wanted to pull out of Vietnam had the option of either seeking the cooperation of the Soviet Union or China to ensure its way out. The U.S. imperialism was facing many problems. For instance, it had to compete with the Japanese and West European imperialists in the world economy.

Under these circumstances, Kissinger as the National Security Adviser to the President Nixon, served American imperialism. The Soviet Union advocated the policy of peaceful coexistence of countries with different social systems from 1956 onwards to bring about a relaxation in the tension between the two imperialist (Super) powers; with a view to share the division of the world with the United States. Both President Richard Nixon and Kissinger wanted to reduce the tension even more than what had already been

achieved with the Soviet Union. This came to be known as
25
"Detente Diplomacy". At the same time Nixon and Kissinger
26
wanted to use the contradiction between the Soviet social
imperialism and Chinese Communism 27 for ending the Vietnam
war and for other purposes as well. They, probably, thought
of colluding with the Chinese against the Russians or the
other way around depending upon how best the interest of the
United States could be served. This diplomacy came to be
known as "Triangular Diplomacy". Henry Kissinger wrote:

25. On 17 February 1969, President Nixon told Anatoly Dobrinin, Soviet Ambassador to the United States, when the latter went to the White House to pay his first official call that "Both you and I, Mr. Ambassador, recognize the very fundamental differences that exist between us. We may or may not be able to settle them. I hope that we will. But you and I must at least make sure that no differences arise between us because of lack of communication". See Richard M. Nixon, The Memoirs of Richard Nixon (London, 1978), p. 369.
26. Detente means a relaxation of international tension. Henry Kissinger defines detente as follows: "To us, detente is a process of managing relations with a potentially hostile country in order to preserve peace while maintaining our vital interests". See Department of State Bulletin (Washington, D.C.), vol. 70, April 1974, p. 323. According to Professor Coral Bell, "detente is a mode of management of adversary power". See Coral Bell, The Diplomacy of Detente: The Kissinger Era (New Delhi, 1979), p. 1.
27. Kissinger writes in memoirs, The White House Years that, "In 1961, I had written about the possibility of a Sino-Soviet rift. Such a prospect, I argued, 'must not be overlooked' and if it occurred 'we should take advantage of it". See Henry A. Kissinger, The White House Years (London, 1979), p. 164.

... by the end of 1969, America's relationship with the Communist world was slowly becoming triangular. We did not consider our opening to China as inherently anti-Soviet... There was no reason for us to confine our contacts with major Communist countries to the Soviet Union... It was not to collude against the Soviet Union but to give us a balancing position to use for constructive ends... (28)

Kissinger also wanted to take advantage of the two-line struggle which was continuing in the Communist Party of China between the socialist readers²⁹ and the capitalist readers³⁰ during the "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution".

The overture made in 1968 by the Chinese to renew the contacts with the United States should be noted here. On 29 November 1968, the New York Times wrote in an editorial that a more pragmatic leadership in Peking wanted to renew contacts with the United States.³¹ It further added, "China's

28. Ibid., pp. 191-92.

29. Socialist readers, for example, Mao Tse-tung, Chiang Ching, Mao's wife, Chang Chun Chiao, former member of the Politbureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, were trying to consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat. See for details Revolution and Counter-Revolution: The Revisionist Coup in China and the Struggle in the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA (Chicago, III., 1978), pp. 1-xiii.

30. Capitalist readers, for example, Peng Teh-huai, former Minister of National Defense of the People's Republic of China, Liu Shao-chi, former Chairman of the PRC, Chou En-lai, former Premier of the PRC, Teng Hsiao-ping, Vice-Premier of the PRC, were trying to restore capitalism in China. See for details ibid., pp. 1-138. And also see Philip Bridgham, "Mao's Cultural Revolution: Origin and Development", The China Quarterly (London), no. 29, January-March 1967, pp. 2-35.

31. New York Times, 29 November 1968, p. 44.

bid for renewal of the Warsaw talks", in February 1968, "suggests that the re-emergence of a more pragmatic leadership in Peking that may be ready to deal realistically with regional and world problems"³². It indirectly implied that the re-emergence of the capitalist leaders as more pragmatic leaders like Chou En-lai, Teng Hsiao-ping and Liu Shao-chi who had the power to influence to some extent the decision-making in China.

Kissinger writes about pragmatist Chou En-lai:

... Chou En-lai had understood us. He had even grasped by early 1970 what so many domestic critics had failed to acknowledge: that we were on the way out of Vietnam. And he coupled this with an unmistakable hint that China had no intention of entering the Vietnam war or, for that matter, of attacking any other vital American interest. (33)

On the other hand Chairman Mao Tse-tung had consistently been opposing the United States aggression in Vietnam. Even Kissinger notes that Mao declared on 20 May 1979 that "People of the World Unite and Defeat the U.S. Aggressors and All Their Running Dogs!"³⁴ From the American point of view the revisionist like Chou En-lai who wanted to collude with the United States was a more pragmatic leader than a "true" communist like Mao Tse-tung.

32. Ibid.

33. Kissinger, n. 26, p. 689.

34. Ibid., p. 695.

One can say that there is a connection between the overture made in 1968 by the Chinese to renew the contacts with the United States and the Kissinger's visits³⁵ in 1971 and President Nixon and Kissinger's visit in 1972 to China. It seems that Chou En-lai took charge of dealing with the Americans from 1968 onwards.³⁶ It is not contended here that the revisionists alone were responsible for Nixon-Kissinger visit to China and renewal of contacts between China and the United States: because without the approval of the Communist Party of China's Politbureau, of which the socialist leaders also were members, Nixon and Kissinger could not have entered China. What is contended here is that the capitalist leaders in China might have had more influence in inviting the Americans and renewing contacts with them.

Hua Kuo-feng, Chairman of the Communist Party of China, backed Teng Hsiao-ping's "Theory of the Three Worlds" which gives the pro-American line. It says that China and the revolutionaries of world should ally with and rely on

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35. Kissinger visited China twice, before President Nixon's visit, first visit was in July 1971 and second in October 1971. These two visits of Kissinger were undertaken mainly to prepare the ground for Nixon's visit to China in February 1972.
 36. If any one reads Kissinger's and Nixon's chapters which deal with China in their memoirs, one can say, that Chou En-lai played a very major role in the Sino-American relations. See Kissinger, n. 26, pp. 163ff. And also see Nixon, n. 25, pp. 544 ff.

imperialist powers including the United States to fight
against Soviet hegemonism.³⁷ The Revolutionary Communist
Party, USA, in one of its publications states:

It is a line that 'forgets' the difference between oppressed nations and imperialist countries and which seeks to outlaw revolution. They have dubbed this line the great, strategic 'Theory of the Three Worlds' and have had the nerve to try to pawn it off as Mao Tse-tung's theory. This is a lie.

While Mao might perhaps have used the term 'three worlds' in a way to describe certain secondary conflicts in the world, and while Mao was not opposed to revolutionaries making use of contradictions in the camp of the enemy, Mao knew the difference between revolution and reaction, between Marxism and imperialism, and he consistently gave support to revolution. (38)

During Nixon's visit in 1972 the US accepted the Chinese demand and publicly promised that all its forces and installations would be removed from Taiwan. But before the final step would be taken, these forces and installations were to be progressively reduced corresponding with the reduction in tension. The Chinese agreed in return to facilitate bilateral scientific, technological, cultural, sports, journalistic and trade exchanges.³⁹

37. Chairman Mao's Theory of the Differentiation of the Three Worlds is a Major Contribution to Marxism-Leninism (Peking, 1977), pp. 3 ff.

38. Revolution and Counter-Revolution, n. 29, pp. x-xi.

39. See for details, Kissinger, n. 26, pp. 1490-92.

Kissinger wanted to take advantage of the contradictions between the socialist readers and capitalist readers⁴⁰ in China to settle the Vietnam question. Nixon-Kissinger succeeded to some extent in achieving a breakthrough but they did not succeed in colluding with China before 1976. In the context of Vietnam, in a way, this breakthrough helped the Americans to the extent that the Chinese supported the peace negotiations in the late 1960s till the peace agreement was signed.

Kissinger's Diplomacy and Secret Diplomacy

In June 1968 Kissinger savagely criticized America's Vietnam policy at a conference on Vietnam, sponsored by the Adlai Stevenson Institute of International Affairs in Chicago. He criticized the American "concepts" - military concept, traditional liberal concept, balance of power concept, indeed the entire "American philosophy of international relations"⁴¹. However, he himself did not provide any alternative. According to Theodore Draper, "he merely called for a 'prayerful assessment' of the procedures and concepts that had landed us in such a mess"⁴². Since Kissinger

40. There were other interests also involved for the Americans, since the aim of this study is not to go into the details of the American interests in China; we would confine ourselves to the relevant aspect.

41. Draper, n. 2, p. 31.

42. Ibid., p. 32.

believed that the U.S. Vietnam policy was bankrupt, one might imagine that the best thing for him would have been to offer a new concept or policy which would get America out of the war as soon as possible at the least possible cost.

Kissinger wrote in his article on "The Vietnam Negotiations" that, "However we got into Viet Nam, whatever the judgement of our actions, ending the war honorably is essential for the peace of the world"⁴³. What he did not tell us directly is that the war had to be ended "honorably", otherwise the American monopoly bourgeois clique would lose its class interests which would have been unacceptable to it and to him. Moreover an "honourable" settlement of the Vietnam war for the American imperialists meant the preservation of the South Vietnam regime or preventing North Vietnam from gaining victory over South Vietnam. Indirectly, the survival of South Vietnam would have served American interest very well. What Kissinger was saying was that a war which could not be won militarily could be won through diplomatic skill and he alone and no one else could do it.

Kissinger did not succeed in preserving the South Vietnam Government after Paris Peace Agreement was signed. Because the American imperialists did not feel anymore that the so-called "freedom" was in danger in Vietnam. Therefore,

43. Henry A. Kissinger, "The Viet Nam Negotiations", Foreign Affairs (New York), vol. 47, January 1969, p. 234.

the United States signed peace agreement with the North Vietnamese leaving the South Vietnamese alone who were later overrun by North Vietnam.

In the same article Henry Kissinger described the two-track approach. Hanoi and Washington would discuss mutual troop withdrawal and related subjects such as guarantees for the neutrality of Laos and Cambodia. Saigon and the National Liberation Front would discuss the internal structure of South Vietnam.⁴⁴

Kissinger did not support the "Vietnamization of the war" and American troop withdrawals. At the National security Council meeting on 12 September 1969, he took little part in the discussion but explained toward the end: "We need a plan to end the war, not only to withdraw troops".⁴⁵ He was more concerned that the troop withdrawals would become like "salted peanuts" to the American public. The more troops the United States withdrew, the more would be expected, leading eventually to demands for unilateral withdrawal perhaps by 1970 or 1971.

There were two alternatives to Vietnamization of the war, either immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops or the escalation of the war. Kissinger opposed immediate withdrawal and supported a proposal for mining North Vietnamese ports

44. Ibid., p. 232.

45. Kissinger, n. 26, p. 284.

and harbours and destroying targets of military and economic importance in an air attack.

Why he opposed immediate withdrawal? It may be argued that he wanted to increase the pressure on North Vietnamese by keeping U.S. troops in Vietnam, so that the North Vietnamese would negotiate seriously. Kissinger says: "Hanoi would probably wait until we had largely withdrawn before launching an all-out attack"⁴⁶. One can not agree with the above answers. Since Communist China being a neighbouring country to Vietnam, and most of the Vietcongs and some of the North Vietnamese leaders were Communists and considered to be pro-Chinese, Kissinger might have been afraid that the Communists would get entrenched in the entire Vietnam after the withdrawal of US troops from that country. He might have also been afraid that this would facilitate the Communists to consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat in China as well as in Vietnam. It did not happen that way.

Kissinger also states that the immediate withdrawal "would have been a blatant betrayal, precipitating the collapse of our ally, giving him no chance to survive on his own"⁴⁷. He talks of "betrayal" of South Vietnam but it was he who threatened President Thieu with unilateral acceptance of the peace agreement which was concluded secretly between the North

46. Ibid.

47. Ibid., p. 286.

Vietnamese and the United States. He warned Thieu that the United States might cut off all aid to South Vietnam, if it did not sign the agreement. He also indirectly hinted that the United States would sign a separate peace treaty with North Vietnam.⁴⁸ Was this not a betrayal? From the south Vietnamese point of view it certainly was. The critics of the Nixon Administration's Vietnam policy in the United States pressed the Administration hard to announce a final deadline for American troop withdrawal. But Kissinger felt that such a step would lead to collapse. He says: how would we explain to American families why their sons lives should be at risk when a fixed schedule for total withdrawal existed?"⁴⁹ It seems that Kissinger was very much worried about the lives of American soldiers and their parents' concern. As we have already discussed he opposed the immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops in the class interests of the monopoly bourgeoisie, but here he sheds crocodile tears for the soldiers and their families.

48. An Italian journalist Oriana Fallaci had an interview with Kissinger on 4 November 1972 on the Vietnam question. She asked Kissinger: "Dr. Kissinger, do you believe you'll ever be able to win over Thieu? Do you think the United States will be compelled to sign a separate treaty with Hanoi?" Kissinger answered: "All I can tell you is that we will are determined to make peace, and that we will make it within as short a delay as possible, after my next meeting with Le Duc Tho. Thieu may say what he likes. It's his business". See "Kissinger: An Interview with Oriana Fallaci", The New Republic (Washington D.C.), vol. 167, 16 December 1972, p. 18. It seems from Kissinger's statement that the U.S. would have signed a separate peace treaty with North Vietnam, if South Vietnam would have refused to sign it.

49. Kissinger, n. 26, p. 287.

Did the American imperialists consider their soldiers, who were fighting in Vietnam, as human beings? The soldiers were considered by a few big monopoly capitalists and their lackeys as animals. The soldiers have not yet become conscious of this fact, otherwise why 57,000 American soldiers should die, and 303,646 should get wounded in the class interests of the monopoly bourgeoisie who exploit millions and millions of workers and poor peasants of the world. How did it matter for the American soldiers whether Vietnam becomes Communist or maintains the status quo of the rotten exploiting system. Was this not the concern of the monopoly bourgeoisie alone whose interests were threatened by the Communists of the world? Of course, their interests were in danger. Therefore, they made loud noises about the threat of Communism.

Kissinger's conspiracy with the class collaborationists of North Vietnam like Le Duc Tho and Xuan Thuy started on 4 August 1969 in Paris. Kissinger reached Jean Sainteny's apartment secretly to meet Xuan Thuy. He describes in his memoirs how he reached Sainteny's place:

The pretext for my visit to Paris was to brief President Georges Pompidou and Prime Minister Jacques Chaban - Delmas about President Nixon's world trip. Late in the afternoon of August 4, I left the American Embassy on the excuse of going sight-seeing and together with my personal assistant, Anthony Lake, and our military attache in Paris, General Vernon Walters, went to Sainteny's
(contd....)

apartment not far away on the Rue de Rivoli. At that time I was not covered by journalists; reaching Sainteny's apartment unobserved was no great trick. (50)

Kissinger writes about his secret handlings of peace negotiations, as if he was achieving miracles.

Professor Seyom Brown felt that, "Kissinger apparently believed that Hanoi would understand Washington's need to avoid a humiliating exit and therefore could be persuaded to cooperate in choreographing an elaborate finale of mutual concessions"⁵¹. Therefore, Kissinger tried in these secret negotiations to convince the North Vietnamese negotiators to accept the US proposals.

In the secret meetings, when Xuan Thuy sometimes referred to American public protest against the war in Vietnam Kissinger refused to discuss it with him. However, on 11 May 1970, Xuan Thuy did bring it up in a secret meeting with Kissinger. This led to the following sharp exchange between them.

Kissinger: "We'll take care of our public opinion and you of yours".

Xuan Thuy: "Since your public opinion speaks on the situation, therefore we must give an interpretation".

Kissinger: "I won't listen to it at these meetings". (52)

50. Ibid., p. 278.

51. Seyom Brown, The Crisis of Power: An Interpretation of United States Foreign Policy during the Kissinger Years (New York, 1979), p. 51.

52. Kissinger, n. 26, p. 1019.

Kissinger knew that he would be in a weaker position to discuss public protest in the United States with the adversaries. Had he continued the discussion with Xuan Thuy, the latter could have well asked him - who want the Vietnam war to continue when the public themselves do not want? Kissinger would not have been able to answer this question.

Regarding secrecy of the Paris Peace negotiations, Kissinger says:

... I wonder whether we paid too high a price for secrecy. Hanoi wanted secrecy because it sought to deprive the Administration of the possibility of using the negotiations to rally public opinion. We went along because we thought success was more important than publicity (53)

If the U.S. administration would have felt that the secret peace talks in Paris on Vietnam had deprived it from taking advantage of the public opinion to bolster support for itself, we can be sure that it would have made the secret talks public. The United States made it public only in 1972. That means the U.S. was not terribly anxious to get public support and valued success in the negotiations much more. In January 1972 Nixon disclosed the secret peace talks because the private contact reached a point of diminishing returns. So it was hoped that a disclosure of secret talks might force the North Vietnamese to negotiate seriously.

53. Ibid., p. 1020.

James Reston wrote in the New York Times about the secret diplomacy of Kissinger that,

The issue is simply that he defines the question to be answered by the departments, formulates the options and arguments for and against, consults privately with the President at the last stage before decision - and that he is not accountable, as the Secretary of State is, to the Congress ... (54)

Senator J. William Fulbright, Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, and Senator Stuart Symington criticised him for not disclosing any important developments and decisions of the Indo-China policy to the Congress or other officials.⁵⁵ They felt that they have a constitutional obligation to examine the President's foreign policy decisions. But generally, they were neither consulted nor informed about important matters by Kissinger. Since the Senate has the right to advise and consent on critical foreign policy questions, Kissinger - after many complaints - used to meet Chairman William Fulbright and members of Foreign Relations Committee. He did not disclose the U.S. decision to invade Cambodia even to the Foreign Relations Committee.⁵⁶ Chairman William Fulbright therefore rightly felt that the Committee was misled by Kissinger's silence in this regard.

Kissinger did not trust the Congress with secret informations. It shows that in an imperialist country like

54. James Reston, "The Kissinger Role", New York Times, 3 March 1971, p. 43.

55. Ibid.

56. Ibid.

the United States, the most important decisions on foreign policies are taken by a small number of people who largely serve the interest of monopoly capitalists. They conceal their "true" purpose from the people but often either conceal information from the Congress or mislead it deliberately.

On 26 January 1972 Kissinger appealed for public understanding and support of the Administration's peace initiatives in Vietnam.⁵⁷ He never informed the people about the important decisions already taken on Vietnam, but appealed to them only for support for whatever decision had been reached and implemented by the Administration. Nixon disclosed, for instance on 25 January 1972 the existence of the secret peace negotiations between Kissinger and Tho-Thuy conducted since 4 August 1969 in Paris.

Kissinger deceived the South Vietnamese and their government as well. Through most of the negotiating process in 1972, he kept Saigon in the darkness about the U.S. policies and overtures in the secret peace negotiations. Only in October 1972, however, did he acknowledge to President Thieu of South Vietnam that the United States was no longer demanding the departure of Hanoi's forces from the South.⁵⁸ But in April 1972, during a secret visit to Moscow, Kissinger indicated to Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev that the United

57. Ibid., 27 January 1972, p. 1.

58. Ted Szulc, "How Kissinger did it: Behind the Vietnam Cease-fire Agreement", Foreign Policy (New York), no. 15, Summer 1974, p. 23.

States, in effect, no longer demanded the withdrawal of North Vietnamese troops from South Vietnam as a prior condition.⁵⁹ The following month, at the Moscow Summit, Kissinger informed the Russians about a proposal for a tripartite electoral commission in South Vietnam.

Kissinger also deceived President Lon Nol of Cambodia in October 1972 when the former claimed that he had Hanoi's assurances for a simultaneous cease-fire in Cambodia and Vietnam. But what actually happened is disclosed by the secret State department interpretation document. The document reveals that Article 20 of the Paris Agreement was deliberately drafted in such a way as to permit the United States to conduct air operations over Cambodia and Laos until a ceasefire and the withdrawal of all foreign troops had been effected.⁶⁰

On many occasions, Kissinger operated in total secrecy, not only from the American public but often from many of the other principal actors in the Vietnam drama. As long as the proletariat in the United States do not become conscious that they are being exploited and deceived by the monopoly bourgeoisie, whosoever may come to power is going to deceive them. Nixon and Kissinger were no exception. As long as the exploiting system exists the secret diplomacy is bound to exist.

59. Ibid.

60. Ibid.

An Evaluation of Kissinger

There is a "Kissinger myth" projected by Kissinger himself and his biographers like Stephen Graubard, Marvin Kalb, Bernard Kalb, Sagar Ahluwalia and Raj Gill⁶¹ and many of others. They are trying to tell us that Kissinger is an inborn genius who became President Nixon's National Security Adviser in 1969 and was promoted to Secretary of State. There is a general recognition that Kissinger had a new conception of American foreign policy. What is the new conception?

Kissinger's new foreign policy is based on the assumption that the international stability and a peaceful world order can be attained by negotiations among a few powerful and rich states.⁶² It means that imperialist countries like

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61. Marvin Kalb and Bernard Kalb start the biography of Kissinger by saying: "HENRY ALFRED KISSINGER is an extravaganza - all by himself. At fifty one, after only five years in Washington this energetic balancer of power has emerged from the relative obscurity of a Harvard professorship to become the most celebrated ... diplomat of our time. He has come to be recognized as the very portrait of American diplomacy" See Marvin Kalb, and Bernard Kalb, Kissinger (London, 1974), p. 3. The whole book is full of eulogy of Kissinger and his adventures in the diplomatic arena. Stephen Graubard begin his book with: "There has been no one like Henry Kissinger in a high governmental position in the United States at any time in its history". See Graubard, n. 1, p. ix. Graubard in his book "Kissinger: Portrait of a Mind" traces pre-government thinking of Kissinger. Sagar Ahluwalia and Raj Gill wrote: "... Kissinger diplomacy ... has wonderfully worked with the Vietnam settlement, U.S.-China rapprochement, the detente and finally the Arab-Israeli Agreement?" See Sagar Ahluwalia, and Raj Gill, Henry Kissinger: The Miracle Man (New Delhi, 1974), p. 1.
62. Professor of International Law at Princeton University Richard A. Falk traces the background of Kissinger's

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the United States and the Soviet Union and other powerful nations can provide a peaceful world order through collusion. Since the imperialist powers are contending for world hegemony, the contradictions among them is irreconcilable. Their compromise and collusion can only be partial, temporary and relative, while their contention is all embracing, permanent and absolute. So Kissinger's foreign policy implies that statesman like him can only achieve that peaceful imaginary world order.

Kissinger did not know that the peace which he was concluding was not going to last. But the Paris Peace Agreement was no exception. There can not be permanent peace in a world of exploitation of man by man. What happened to the Geneva Peace Agreement signed in 1954? It did not last for one year. What happened to the Paris Peace Agreement, which he himself negotiated and initialed in 1973. It did not last for one year. There were many peace agreements signed on Indo-China question. They were all violated by the imperialists.

The killing of Afghans by the 100,000 Soviet military men and their Afghan neo-colonial agents which began in 1979 still continues; the United States counter-insurgency war

62. (contd...) approach to foreign policy. See for details Richard A. Falk, Statecraft in an Era of World Order, Decay and Renewal (Canberra, 1975), pp. 6-19.

in El Salvador, killing innocent Salvadoran people who are fighting against the military junta led by the U.S. neo-colonial agent Jose Napoleon Duarte at present. The workers who are fighting against the exploitation in Poland are being crushed and repressed by Stanislaw Kania, Polish Party Central Committee leader, a stooge of Soviet social imperialists. Kissinger is correct, if we understand him in the proper way, that the imperialists have been establishing world order, where they can exploit the workers and the landless peasants of the world.

Kissinger sought a solution to the Vietnam problem not by dealing with the situation on a regional basis but by attempting to involve the Soviet super power in aiding Washington to reach "an elegant bug-out".⁶³ The theory of "linkage" was thus forcefully applied by Kissinger in the settlement of the Indo-china conflict. "Linkage" means that virtually all problems between America and Russia could be linked with other problems to generate leverage in solving them.⁶⁴ And so, in the case of Vietnam America would hold out

63. James Chase, "A Gravely Flawed Foreign Policy: The Kissinger Years", The New Republic (Washington, D.C.), vol. 171, 9 November 1974, p. 32.

64. Ibid.

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the "reward" of trade in return for Soviet pressure on Hanoi.

The American Secretary of State applied the linkage theory to the solution of the Vietnam question by linking it with US-Soviet relations. President Nixon and Kissinger had a breakthrough in the United States relations with China. Those who support Henry Kissinger's line say that the credit for it should go to the brilliant diplomat. One should ask such people whether it would have been possible to reduce tension or have collusion with the Soviet Union, had the latter been really a socialist country? Would it have been possible for Kissinger and Nixon to achieve a breakthrough with China, had it not been attacked by the Soviet Union in 1969 and threaten it with dire consequences thereafter?

As far as the first question is concerned, since revisionist Nikita Khrushchev came to power in Russia, the principle of inevitable confrontation between the socialist countries and the capitalist countries has been replaced with the counter-revolutionary principle of peaceful co-existence of countries with different social systems.

65. In 1972 Kissinger thought that he could get a Soviet "linkage" to a Vietnam settlement through the grain deal, which gave hundreds of millions of dollars worth of American wheat to Russia at bargain prices at the expense of the American consumer, a price that Kissinger argued "was well worth a Vietnam settlement". See Draper, n. 1, p. 32.

This was the main reason for the schism in Sino-Soviet relations. If the Soviet Union would not have become a revisionist country after Joseph V. Stalin's death in 1953, there would never have been a border clash in 1969 over the Ussuri River⁶⁶ or ideological struggle between the Soviet Union and Communist China for the simple reason that there can not be a contradiction within the socialist countries. If any country claims that it is a socialist country, such a claim cannot be taken as valid, unless it can be shown that it practices Marxist-Leninist principles.

This gave ample chances for the United States to take advantage of the contradictions between revisionist Russia and Communist China. Kissinger joined the Nixon Administration in 1969 at a time when this contradiction was reaching its sharpest point. It is contended here that what Kissinger was able to achieve was much more due to the objective conditions which prevailed rather than his personal virtues.

Professor Richard Falk says that Kissinger acknowledged that the prospects for world peace could be improved because of the apparent rationality of the Communist side, at least with respect to avoiding all-out mutually destructive nuclear

66. In the remotest reaches of northeast Asia, a brief sketch of 4,000 mile border between the Soviet Union and China is demarcated by the Ussuri River. If one drew a straight line from Vladivostok north-northeast to Khabrovsk, the Ussuri would run along most of its length. See Kissinger, n. 26, p. 171.

67
war. For the above reason Kissinger believed, for instance, that if "the free world gains in purpose, cohesion, and safety", then it may be possible to negotiate seriously with Communist leaders on "how to reduce the tensions inherent in an unchecked arms race"⁶⁸. Though we do not agree with Richard Falk and Kissinger's approach regarding communist world they accept the fact that only objective conditions would provide the basis for reducing tension, not because of individual.

Here Falk and Kissinger deliberately include the Soviet Union and its satellites in the communist side. For them, a Soviet Union turning away from socialism to revisionism and its attack on China, for which the revisionists in China wanted to counter-balance the former by colluding with the United States, are signs of an apparent rationality of the Communist side. Actually, the material conditions⁶⁹ prevailing in the Soviet Union from 1917 to 1953 provided the basis for the revisionism to crop up and to restore capitalism.

67. Falk, n. 62, p. 12.

68. Henry A. Kissinger, The Necessity for Choice: Prospects of American Foreign Policy (New York, 1961), p. 7.

69. The new Soviet socialist society from 1917 onwards was not much different from the old society, especially as regards inequality among the people, the mental/manual contradiction, worker-peasant differences, differences in rank and pay, etc. This provided the basis for capitalist relations and bourgeois elements representing them to constantly emerge. With a revisionist group usurping power and a revisionist line in the leading position, tremendous social forces can be easily unleashed for capitalist restoration.

The same is the case with China. Revisionists like Chou En-lai and Teng Hsiao-ping wanted to collude with the United States. That was why they influenced the foreign policy decision-makers to invite President Nixon and Kissinger.

Professor Richard Falk argues that in regard to improvement in relations with China and the Soviet Union that:

In both instances, there had been receptivity on the Sino-Soviet side that could be traced back to pre-Nixon years, and it was Nixon who decided to respond affirmatively. Kissinger mainly facilitated ... these geopolitical movements, but does not deserve credit for either conceiving of such opportunities or even of altering American policy so that such opportunities might become active ingredients of policy. (70)

Did Kissinger deserve the Nobel peace prize in 1973 for his role in the Paris peace negotiations on Vietnam as a peace maker. The Nobel peace prize was awarded jointly both to Kissinger and Le Duc Tho. Tho refused it, but Kissinger received it.

The concept of Nobel peace prize is a bourgeois concept, because it believes that peace can be achieved while maintaining the status quo of the capitalist society. The Nobel peace committee thinks that if any war comes to an end means peace is achieved. No one dialectically approaches

70. Falk, n. 62, p. 7.

this question and see that the countries involved in the Vietnam war have been fighting with other countries. For example, the United States is fighting in El Salvador by giving arms and troops aid to the military junta. Spokesman for the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) guerrilla command claimed to have identified 300 U.S. and 400 Israeli troops participating in combat operations in El Salvador.⁷¹

Vietnam attacked Cambodia and in turn was attacked by China in late 1970s. There is no end to the wars so long as the Capitalist society exists. To urge the capitalist governments to ensure peace, wrote Lenin years ago, "is like the good village priest urging the landlords and the merchants to 'walk in the way of God', to love their neighbours and to turn the other cheek. The landlords and merchants listen to these sermons, continue to oppress and rob the people and praise the priest for his ability to console and pacify the 'muziks'".⁷²

Kissinger does not deserve the Nobel peace prize even within the bourgeois framework. As Richard Falk has argued:

Kissinger received a Nobel Peace Prize for negotiating the Paris Peace Agreement of 1973, which allowed (perhaps encouraged) Saigon to circumvent in numerous ways even before the ink was dry. In addition, Kissinger has led the Administration's political battle to sustain high levels of American military and economic aid for the Thieu regime;
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71. "El Salvador: U.S. Tries to Hook Opposition with Moderate Junta' Bait", Revolutionary Worker (Chicago, Ill.) no. 99, 3 April 1981, p. 2.
72. V.I. Lenin, Letters from Afar (Moscow, 1977), p. 49.

he shares some responsibility for the various covert means being used by the United States to avoid the obligations solemnly assumed by the nation at Paris. (73)

Generally people project some individuals as if the history is the life stories of some great men. They forget that the real history is made by masses of men and not by individuals. Men who have been capable of exerting a tangible influence on society and culture have always been those who concentrated great power and material strength in their hands, or individuals attaining new heights in the fields of knowledge, artistic work etc. Some have treated these as absolutes to produce theories about great men, towering over the mass of ordinary mortals, being the only source of subjective creative activity in history.⁷⁴

Kissinger's diplomacy basically was a secret diplomacy as far as the Paris peace negotiations were concerned. The nature of his role in the peace negotiations was deceiving the masses. Overall, he was a loyal servant of the American monopoly bourgeoisie.

73. Falk, n. 62, p. 5.

74. V. Kelle, and M. Kovalson, Historical Materialism: An Outline of Marxist Theory of Society (Moscow, 1973), pp. 145-46.

CONCLUSIONS

CONCLUSIONS

The foregoing study mainly focuses on three points:

- (a) peace initiatives and responses by the warring nations, and the various factors that led the United States and North Vietnam to the Paris peace negotiating table;
- (b) various shifts that took place in the North Vietnamese peace proposals in the course of open and secret negotiations and the influence of Soviet Union in the peace negotiations;
- and, finally (c) Henry Kissinger's role in the secret peace negotiations.

While the Vietnam war was going on, nearly seventy five peace efforts were made, of which the last one was successful. That was when President Lyndon Johnson ordered suspension of bombing on 31 March 1968 over most of North Vietnam and expressed the hope that this would lead to peace talks. On 3 April 1968, the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam indicated its readiness to participate in the peace negotiations. Both the United States and North Vietnam agreed on 3 May 1968 to start the formal talks on 10 May 1968 in Paris.

There were many factors that led the warring countries to start the peace negotiations in Paris. The important factors were as follows: the Vietcong's strong resistance to the American imperialists' aggression in South Vietnam;

the neo-colonial regime in South Vietnam had no domestic social base; the general trend of national liberation movements all over the third world countries worked against exploitation and domination of imperialist powers; the strong public opinion in America as well as throughout the world against the U.S. aggression and genocide in Vietnam; the severe economic crisis the U.S. had to face in the 1960s restrained it from pouring increasingly large resources, both human and financial, in the jungles of Vietnam and, above all, the rift within the Vietnam workers' party.

The rift was largely between the supporters of the Soviet revisionist line and the "true" communists who supported Mao Tse-tung's revolutionary line. About revisionism in the Communist movement, the Chinese Communists said,

What does the history of the development of the international communist movement demonstrate?

First, it demonstrates that like everything else, the international working-class movement tends to divide itself in two. The class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie is inevitably reflected in the communist ranks. It is inevitable that opportunism of one kind or another should arise in the course of the development of the Communist movement, that opportunists should engage in anti-Marxist-Leninist splitting activities and that Marxist-Leninists should wage struggles against opportunism and splittism. It is precisely through the struggle of opposites that Marxism-Leninism and the international

(contd....)

working-class movement have developed. And it is also through this struggle that the international working-class movement has strengthened and consolidated its unity on the basis of Marxism-Leninism. (1)

So in the case of the Vietnam Workers' Party the emergence of revisionism was not an exception. The revisionists won the struggle against the communists in Vietnam. The leader of revisionists, Premier Pham Van Dong, and his pro-Soviet clique won the struggle against the communists who were led by Truong Chinh, former secretary-General of the Vietnam Workers' Party, and surrendered Vietnam to the Soviet social imperialists. It became possible because out of twelve members of the polit.bureau seven members were pro-Soviet and only three Communist members were pro-Chinese in the late 1950s. The rest two including President Ho Chi Minh were taking the middle path. Ho Chi Minh was mediating between the two factions, which was the greatest blunder Ho Chi Minh could have ever committed. This confused the rank and file of the Vietnam Workers' Party. The rift within the Communist movement played a decisive role in North Vietnam's acceptance of the peace offer in 1968 and concluding of the Paris Peace Agreement in 1973.

While the negotiations were going on, there were various shifts in their peace proposals. For instance, they

1. "The Leaders of the CPSU are the Greatest Splitters of our Times", (Peking, ?), p. 11.

rephrased the "third-point" of their four points. They had accepted the participation of the Government of the Republic of Vietnam in the Paris peace negotiations. They accepted President Nguyen Van Thieu, whom they wanted to overthrow, in the coalition government of South Vietnam, in the Paris Peace Agreement.²

These shifts in the North Vietnamese position took place because of the Soviet influence in the Paris peace negotiations which was exercised through the pro-Soviet faction in North Vietnam. One may well ask why did the Soviet Union influence the peace negotiations? The main purpose of the Soviet Union's support to North Vietnam was to make it their own satellite. Since it was assured by the pro-Soviet Vietnamese in practice, the Soviet Union had to end the war by any means at any cost. Moreover, the Soviet Union did not like to spend more money and provide more arms to the Vietnamese liberation movement. It never wanted North Vietnam to move away out of its orbit.

As the Soviet social imperialists desperately wanted to collude, though partially, with the U.S. imperialists in relation to Strategic Arms Limitation Talks, trade, credits, etc. it put enormous pressure on North Vietnam.

2. See Chapter II.

The Communist China had no influence on the Paris peace negotiations. The Chinese opposed the peace negotiations till late 1960s because of their conviction that imperialism, which is full of antagonistic social contradictions, never stands for peace. But the Chinese started supporting peace negotiations after 1969; partly, perhaps, as a tactics to drive out American armed forces so that the North Vietnamese could overthrow the neo-colonial regime in South Vietnam and unite with the latter. They also hoped that the North Vietnamese who, to some extent, had moved away from China should not move very far. As far as the latter part of the argument is concerned, the present writer is of the opinion that the Chinese retreated from the principle of continuous struggle till liberation is achieved by taking this position.

Xuan Thuy, a pro-Soviet man, and Le Duc Tho, a nationalist and supporter of Soviet line, were obviously looking forward and taking advise more from the Soviet Union than from China. The Chinese never openly showed their dissatisfaction with it, though they must have had their own reservations.

When the border clash took place between the Soviet Union and China over the Ussuri River in March 1969, it was also reflected in the attitude of the Vietnam Workers' party and in the Paris delegations of North Vietnam and the National Liberation Front.

³
3. See Chapter II.

While the secret negotiations were on in Paris from August 1969 between Henry Kissinger and Tho-Thuy, the former always tried to get the Soviets to pressurize the North Vietnamese to conclude a speedy settlement. When Kissinger became the National Security Adviser to President Nixon in 1969, the Soviet Union and China were at logger-heads. He thought that he would be able to exploit that situation, to end the U.S. intervention in the Vietnam war. He wanted to improve relations with the Soviet Union for which he entered into a grain deal with it. He gave millions of dollars worth of wheat to the Soviet Union at bargain prices. He conceived a plan to settle the Vietnam issue honourably by means of a US-Soviet-China "subtle triangle".

The concept of a pentangular power structure consisting of the US, USSR, China, Japan, and Western Europe was central to Kissinger's approach to international relations. The world order could be established and lasting peace ensured by mutual accommodation and adjustment among them. But he was also aware that the Western Europe and Japan were America's competitors. He had to make a breakthrough somewhere and Kissinger decided that the point was China. He succeeded in achieving this mainly because of the capitalist roaders such as Chou En-lai and Teng Hsiao-ping, who were to shake hands and collude with the American imperialists on the pretext of counter-balancing the Soviet hegemonists.

As far as the negotiations with Vietnam were concerned, Kissinger outlined a two-track approach in an article "The Vietnam Negotiations" published in the Foreign Affairs in January 1969. According to this plan the United States and North Vietnam would discuss mutual troop withdrawal and related matters, whereas the National Liberation Front and the Republic of Vietnam would discuss the internal structure of South Vietnam.

The secret negotiations started on 4 August 1969 between Kissinger and the North Vietnamese representatives in Paris. In the first meeting they exchanged well-known positions. The North Vietnamese insisted mainly on the withdrawal of U.S. troops and the removal of the Thieu regime in many secret meetings with Kissinger. The meeting on 13 May 1971 was important because the United States indicated for the first time a willingness to withdraw unilaterally without insisting on mutual withdrawal of troops. On 26 June 1971 the North Vietnamese agreed that their U.S. prisoners would be released simultaneously with the U.S. withdrawals.

Kissinger and Le Duc Tho made progress on 12 July 1971 on most important points like total U.S. withdrawal, release of prisoners of war, and internationally supervised cease-fire. There was a feeling that agreement was within reach. But on 16 August 1971 Kissinger offered the North

Vietnamese a modified proposal which emphasized that the United States could withdraw its troops only nine months after an overall settlement had been reached. The North Vietnamese refused to accept this proposal saying that withdrawal date was too distant.

The North Vietnamese started compromising more with the American imperialists especially after July 1972 than before. This was confirmed by Kissinger himself when he met them on 1 August 1972. The North Vietnamese dropped the demand of unconditional deadline for the withdrawal of U.S. troops. They modified their political demand as well. Le Duc Tho suggested to Kissinger on 8 October 1972 to separate the military issues from political.

Kissinger and Xuan Thuy met on 17 October 1972. They improved the political provisions. Kissinger went to Saigon on the same day after this meeting to convince Thieu to the agreed deal with the North Vietnamese. He convinced the South Vietnamese on all but six points. After he returned from Saigon to Washington, he announced before the newsmen on 26 October 1972 that the "peace is at hand".

After this, Kissinger and Tho met during November and December 1972. The former was disappointed with the North Vietnamese. He consulted Nixon regarding further programme.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

On 17 December 1972 Nixon ordered the American airbombardment north of 20th parallel. Bombing continued till 30 December 1972. The talks on the protocols were resumed on 2 January 1973. Kissinger and Tho started negotiating from 8 to 13 January 1973 till the draft agreement was complete. On 23 January 1973, Kissinger, Tho, and Thuy met and settled the last few details.

As far as Kissinger's dealings with Le Duc Tho and Xuan Thuy were concerned, since the latter two were class collaborationists the former did not face much trouble. Had Tho and Thuy been communists, Kissinger would have had a tough time. That way Kissinger was fortunate enough to deal with them for more than three years without much difficulties.

Kissinger's secret diplomacy was totally deceptive in nature. He hoodwinked the American people, the Congress, the Thieu regime and Cambodian President Lon Nol. Kissinger's each and every move was in the interests of the big monopoly bourgeoisie and he loyally served the U.S. imperialism.

The Soviet Union helped the United States to the maximum in concluding the Paris Peace Agreement. We should recall that the leaders of the Soviet social imperialism were the greatest betrayers of the North Vietnamese liberation struggle against the American imperialism. The pro-Soviet

6. See Chapter III.

leaders in the Vietnam Workers' Party loyally followed the Soviet instructions. The Paris Peace Agreement was a logical outcome of Khrushchev's revisionist policy of peaceful coexistence of countries with different social systems, and peaceful transition from capitalism to socialism. The Paris Peace Agreement was concluded mainly due to the collusion among the Soviet social imperialists, American imperialists and pro-Soviet revisionist leaders in North Vietnam.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Apart from the peace initiatives mentioned in the first Chapter, rest of the important peace initiatives and responses from America and North Vietnam are given below.

| Initiative | Response |
|---|---|
| <u>1964</u> August 7 | |
| The United Nations Security Council invited North Vietnam and South Vietnam for discussion on the Vietnam problem. | Hanoi had strong reservations about UN and declared that any "wrongful decision" by the Security Council would be "null and void" |
| September | |
| Hanoi conveyed the message to U Thant that it wanted to talk to an American emissary. U Thant relayed Hanoi's willingness to Ambassador Adlai Stevenson. | The United States rejected the offer saying that Hanoi was not seriously interested in peace talks |
| <u>1965</u> February 20 | |
| The British Government proposed to the Soviet Union that they undertake, as Geneva Co-Chairman to seek a possible settlement. | The Soviet Union rejected the proposal. |
| February 27 | |
| The U.S. government wrote to the Security Council declaring its readiness to withdraw military units from Vietnam if there was a prompt and assured cessation of aggression from the North. | No response. |
| March 4-8 | |
| Ayub Khan, President of Pakistan, visited Peking and urged Chinese leaders to accept a negotiated settlement. | He made no progress |

Initiative

Response

March 8

North

U Thant proposed that the United States, the Soviet Union, Great Britain, France, Communist China, and South Vietnam participate in a preliminary conference on Vietnam.

The United States rejected it. The National Liberation Front rejected a negotiated settlement as long as U.S. forces remained in Vietnam.

April 1

Seventeen non-aligned nations appealed for peace and called for negotiations without pre-conditions.

The United States made no response, because the call condemned foreign military intervention in Vietnam.

April 7

U Thant proposed to visit Hanoi and other capitals to discuss prospects for peace

Premier Pham Van Dong said UN intervention was inappropriate.

April 24

Indian President S. Radhakrishnan called for an end to the fighting and policing of the arrangement by an Afro-Asian force.

Hanoi said the proposal was "at complete variance with the spirit and basic principles" of the Geneva Agreements.

April 14-May 4

Former U.K. Foreign Secretary Patrick Gordon-Walker made a fact-finding tour of South East Asia to explore the basis for a settlement in Vietnam.

Hanoi refused to admit him.

May 12-17

The U.S. halted the bombing of Vietnam and Secretary of State Dean Rusk sent a message demanding that the Vietcong should lay down its arms as the price for a permanent cessation of American bombing of the North.

Hanoi called the pause a "trick".

June 17

British Commonwealth Prime Ministers proposed a special mission headed by Prime Minister Harold Wilson to visit capitals of

Initiative

Response

all involved in Vietnam to explore chances for a peace conference.

Hanoi accounced that it would not receive the Wilson mission.

June 25

President Johnson called upon members of the UN to bring to the table those who seemed determined to make war.

The New China News Agency commented that the U.S. was trying to use the UN as a "tool".

July 9-13

Harold Davies, a minister of the British government, visited Hanoi to encourage acceptance of the Commonwealth Ministers proposal.

There was no progress.

July 28

President Johnson wrote to U Thant asking him to continue efforts to promote peace.

Hanoi said that the UN had no role in Vietnam.

July 30

U.S. Ambassador Arthur Goldberg wrote to the President of the UN Security Council saying that the U.S. would search for peace in South East Asia.

Hanoi gave the same above answer.

August 1

Indian Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri and President Josib Broz Tito of Yugoslavia called for a conference of parties concerned with Vietnam and urged an end to the bombing of North Vietnam.

Since the U.S. did not stop the bombing of North Vietnam, Hanoi denounced the proposal and called the two leaders "advertisers and errand boys" for U.S. "maneuveres".

Initiative

Response

August 12

U Thant proposed cessation of all military hostilities and discussions involving those who are actually fighting, including the National Liberation Front.

There was no proper response because the United States and South Vietnam did not recognize the National Liberation Front.

December 2

The United Kingdom issued a twelve-nation appeal for an end to the fighting and negotiated peace.

Hanoi rejected all British plans and proposals made under the pretense of peace.

1966

March 8-11 and June 14-18

Canadian diplomat Chester A. Ronning visited Hanoi to discuss possibilities of peace.

Hanoi insisted on its four points.

April 19

President Johnson endorsed a proposal by Senator Mike Mansfield for a "direct confrontation across the peace table."

The North Vietnamese Foreign Ministry described the proposals as "hypocritical and designed to sidetrack the attention of world opinion."

August 30

French President Charles de Gaulle, in Phnom Penh, called for a U.S. pledge to withdraw its forces within a "fixed and suitable" period to promote a settlement

The United States did not respond to the call. North Vietnam endorsed the demand for a U.S. withdrawal.

September 19

Pope Paul VI issued an encyclical containing a plea for peace.

North Vietnam said that certain religious circles, which have always chanted the U.S. imperialists' peace song, have recently made pathetic appeals for peace in Vietnam.

Initiative

Response

October 6

British Foreign Secretary George Brown proposed a six-point plan for peace, including a peace conference, and an end to bombing of North Vietnam.

The United States was unresponsive. Hanoi called it a "rehash" of U.S. proposals.

November 9

Canadian Secretary of External Affairs Paul Martin began talks with Soviet leaders in Moscow on steps that could be taken toward a political settlement.

China described Martin's visit to Soviet Union as part of the Soviet plot for "peace talks fraud".

December 8

Pope Paul VI, referred to the holiday cease-fire, expressed hope that "this truce becomes an armistice and that the armistice be the occasion for sincere negotiations... which will lead to peace."

China commented that the Pope has "always served U.S. imperialism in its peace talk swindles."

1967

January-February

A U.S. representative made contact with the North Vietnamese representative in Moscow. The U.S. offered to stop the bombing if North Vietnam would give assurances of a reciprocal reduction of hostilities.

No response.

February 8-13

A six-day pause in the bombing of North Vietnam was observed in conjunction with Johnson's letter to President Ho Chi Minh and the Wilson-Kosygin talks in London.

North Vietnam called the pause another "trick".

Initiative

Response

June 23-25

At Glassboro Kosygin told Johnson that Hanoi would talk to the U.S. if the bombing stopped.

The U.S. did not stop bombing of North Vietnam. No progress was made.

1968

January 16

President Johnson said in his State of the Union message that he believed peace talks should be based on the San Antonio formula.

North Vietnam said that the U.S. had no right to demand reciprocity.

See for details Lyndon B. Johnson, The Vantage Point Perspectives of the Presidency 1963-1969 (New York, 1971), pp. 579-89. See also David Kraslow and Stuart H. Loory, The Secret Search for Peace in Vietnam (New York, 1968), pp. 3ff. And also see George MCT. Kahin, and Joh W. Lewis, The United States in Vietnam (New York, 1967), pp. 207 ff.

APPENDIX 2

Highlights of the "Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam"

Chapter I

THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE'S FUNDAMENTAL NATIONAL RIGHTS

Article 1

The United States and all other countries respect the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Vietnam as recognised by the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Vietnam.

Chapter II

CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES - WITHDRAWAL OF TROOPS

Article 2

A cease-fire shall be observed throughout South Vietnam as of 2400 hours G.M.T., on January 27, 1973.

At the same hour, the United States will stop all its military activities against the territory of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam by ground, air and naval forces, wherever they may be based, and end the mining of the territorial waters, ports, harbours, and waterways of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. The United States will remove, permanently deactivate or destroy all the mines in the territorial waters, ports, harbours, and waterways of North Vietnam as soon as this Agreement goes into effect.

The complete cessation of hostilities mentioned in the Article shall be durable and without limit of time.

Chapter III

THE RETURN OF CAPTURED MILITARY PERSONNEL AND
FOREIGN CIVILIANS, AND CAPTURED AND DETAINED
VIETNAMESE CIVILIAN PERSONNEL

Article 8

The return of captured military personnel and foreign civilians of the parties shall be carried out simultaneously with and completed not later than the same day as the troop withdrawal takes place. The parties shall exchange complete lists of the above mentioned captured military personnel and foreign civilians on the day of the signing of this Agreement.

Chapter V

THE REUNIFICATION OF VIETNAM AND THE RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH VIETNAM

Article 15

The reunification of Vietnam shall be carried out step by step through peaceful means on the basis of discussions and agreements between North and South Vietnam, without coercion or annexation by either party, and without foreign interference. The time for reunification will be agreed upon by North and South Vietnam.

Chapter VI

THE JOINT MILITARY COMMISSIONS, THE INTERNATIONAL
COMMISSION OF CONTROL AND SUPERVISION,
THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

Article 16

(a) The parties participating in the Paris Conference on Vietnam shall immediately designate representatives to form

a Four-Party Joint Military Commission with the task of ensuring joint action by the parties in implementing the provisions of this agreement.

Chapter VII

REGARDING CAMBODIA AND LAOS

Article 20

(a) The Parties participating in the Paris Conference on Vietnam shall strictly respect the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Cambodia and the 1962 Geneva Agreements on Laos, which recognized the Cambodian and the Laos People's fundamental national rights, i.e., the independence, sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity of these countries. The parties shall respect the neutrality of Cambodia and Laos.

(b) Foreign countries shall put an end to all military activities in Cambodia and Laos, totally withdraw from and refrain from reintroducing into these two countries troops, military advisers and military personnel, armaments, munitions and war material.

See for details Department of State Bulletin (Washington, D.C.), vol. 68, 12 February 1973, pp. 169-188.

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