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### Vietnam Courier in 1966: An instrument of propaganda

Carl Arthur Gidlund

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Finally, I wish to thank my wife, who contributed far more than she realizes.

FOREWORD

The United States was committed heavily--in terms of men, equipment and policy--to the Vietnam War in 1966. The war was being fought not only with bullets but also with words. Each side was trying to influence public opinion both at home and abroad.

The North Vietnamese said:

In the opinion of the world's peoples, Ngo Dinh Diem and the Saigon rulers such as Thieu and Ky are but U.S. creatures whose part it is to serve its aggressive moves. Their illegal character is so obvious that it is simply impossible to legalize them even with the cloak of "constitutional" or "democratic" regimes as the U.S. is in the habit of giving other countries. The reason is that these rulers have refused to implement the Geneva Agreements. Wirepulled by the United States, they have sabotaged the most fundamental provisions of this international instrument which is the nation-wide elections to reunify Vietnam.<sup>1</sup>

The United States had outlined the nature of its commitment in a State Department pamphlet published in 1963. The pamphlet explained:

With a majority of the population in their half of the country, the Communists no doubt had hoped to take over South Viet-Nam by means of the nationwide elections in 1956. President Diem refused to hold such elections, however, taking the position that, since his government had not signed the Geneva Agreements, it was not bound to participate in elections in which the Communists, through their police state methods, were guaranteed an automatic victory.

.....  
Since the Viet Cong opened their all-out attack on Viet-Nam, the United States has stepped up both military and economic assistance to help the Vietnamese people defend themselves.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 51, March 24, 1966, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup>U.S., Department of State, Fact Sheet Viet-Nam, Department of State Publication No. 7469, Far Eastern Series No. 116, April, 1963, pp. 10, 16.

Here, obviously, is a difference of opinion about the nature of the conflict.

Most Americans are familiar primarily with the arguments for or against the war as reported in American newspapers. This thesis is a study of the arguments presented in 12 issues of the Vietnam Courier, a weekly English-language newspaper published in Hanoi in 1966. It is a qualitative study of North Vietnam's propaganda appeals relative to the war and the propagandists' conformance to basic principles of the art as formulated by sociologists, psychologists and communications researchers.

The Vietnam Courier was one of Hanoi's weapons in the war of words. Since Vietnam is not an English-speaking country, the newspaper clearly was intended for foreign distribution. Therefore, it did not necessarily contain the exact messages to which the North Vietnamese were exposed. It did, however, contain messages that the government of North Vietnam wanted foreign audiences to consider.

As an instrument of the North Vietnam government,<sup>3</sup> the Courier's messages constituted an official view of the war by the Hanoi regime. They presented a view of the war different from that normally available to the American reader.

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<sup>3</sup>Letter from John J. Helble, Viet-Nam Working Group, U.S. Department of State, Washington, D.C., April 7, 1967. Helble explains that the newspaper in 1966 was published by the North Vietnam Ministry of Information.

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## CHAPTER I

### AN INSTRUMENT OF PROPAGANDA

#### Description of the Newspaper

The Vietnam Courier in 1966 was an English-language newspaper published by the North Vietnam Government's Ministry of Information.<sup>1</sup> Its offices were at 18 Ton Dan, Hanoi, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam).<sup>2</sup> The newspaper was founded in 1963 and, until February 10, 1966, it was published every two weeks.<sup>3</sup> After that date, it was published weekly. It was directed at the English-reading audience outside North Vietnam.<sup>4</sup>

Circulation figures for the newspaper were not available in the United States in 1967;<sup>5</sup> however, it must be presumed that the Vietnam Courier's audience in the United States was small.

While it was not illegal to correspond with residents or agencies of North Vietnam in 1966, there was no direct postal service between that

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<sup>1</sup>Helble, letter of April 7, 1967.

<sup>2</sup>The information is furnished on the masthead of every issue of the Vietnam Courier.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Helble, letter of April 7, 1967.

<sup>5</sup>Letters from Helble; Cecil Hobbs, head of the South Asia Section, Orientalia Division, U.S. Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., April 21, 1967, and John J. Mahan, intelligence analyst, U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency, Washington, D.C., July 3, 1967.

country and the United States. Mail between North Vietnam and the United States was routed through the British Crown Colony of Hong Kong. Since United States postal regulations prohibited sending currency or negotiable items to North Vietnam, it would have been difficult to subscribe to the Vietnam Courier.<sup>6</sup> The Defense Intelligence Agency received its copies from the State Department Acquisition Service, which, in turn, received them from the United States Embassy in Moscow.<sup>7</sup> The U.S. Library of Congress received its copies from a newspaper dealer in Hong Kong.<sup>8</sup>

Owing to such mailing and subscription difficulties, of which the North Vietnamese Government presumably was aware, it must be surmised that the Vietnam Courier was not published primarily for residents of the United States. However, an analysis of the newspaper's contents shows that many messages were intended for United States citizens. It must be conjectured that the North Vietnam Ministry of Information hoped that, despite the difficulties, some copies would reach the United States and that some would be read by U.S. citizens abroad.

English and Canadian regulations regarding postal service with North Vietnam were not as restrictive as those of the United States. In addition, Courier writers used British, rather than American, spelling wherever possible. While that style may have been the product of English-language education in North Vietnam, it is possible that such spellings

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<sup>6</sup>Mahan, letter of July 3, 1967.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Hobbs, letter of April 21, 1967.

were intended to establish identification with British-educated, rather than American-educated, people. A photograph of an anti-Vietnam War demonstration in Hyde Park, London, was credited to an English reader.<sup>9</sup>

Owing to those factors it is probable that the Courier was circulated primarily in English-reading countries other than the United States.

The Courier's appearance was arresting. Ten or more type faces were used on a page, and red headlines and kickers were used over stories considered important by the editors. The display type faces included Bold Gothic, Ultra Bodoni, Twentieth Century and others similar to Spartan and Lydian type. Excelsior was the most frequently used body type.

The newspaper was a tabloid, 11 inches by 15 inches, and it usually contained eight pages. Most body copy was in eight point type on an eight point body, commonly referred to as eight point solid. Column width generally was 10 picas with a one-pica gutter. Most pages were five columns wide. Photographic reproduction often was poor; a coarse 60-line screen was used.<sup>10</sup>

The Courier was printed on nine-pound paper; that is, 500 sheets measuring 17 inches by 22 inches weighed nine pounds. In the United States, the paper is known as "Bible paper," which generally is used for airmail editions of domestic newspapers. The paper might have been reclaimed stock and it was manufactured in Europe or Asia.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 59, May 19, 1966, p. 5.

<sup>10</sup>Interview with Arthur J. Jette, artist, University of Montana Printing Services, Missoula, Montana, June 27, 1967. Jette provided a technical description of the newspaper.

<sup>11</sup>Interview with Claud E. Lord, Director of the Printing Plant, University of Montana, June 26, 1967. Lord provided a technical description of the paper on which the newspaper was printed.

The Vietnam Courier in 1966 was printed on a sheet-fed flatbed press.<sup>12</sup>

One side--that is, four pages of the usual eight-page issue--had red ink as well as black. The other side was printed only in black.

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid.



# WHOLE SOCIALIST CAMP SUPPORTS AND HELPS VIETNAM



From the 1950s to the 1960s, the whole socialist camp has supported the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) against the aggression of the U.S. Government and the South Vietnamese puppet regime. The U.S. Government and the South Vietnamese puppet regime have been the main aggressors against the DRV. The U.S. Government has been the main aggressor against the DRV since the beginning of the Vietnam War. The U.S. Government has been the main aggressor against the DRV since the beginning of the Vietnam War. The U.S. Government has been the main aggressor against the DRV since the beginning of the Vietnam War.

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Typical Inside Page  
Vietnam Courier, No. 45, February 10, 1966, p. 7

### The Nature of Propaganda

Despite its current unfavorable connotations, the word "propaganda" has origins far from sinister. It first was used as part of the title of the Roman Catholic Congregation for Propagation of the Faith (de Propaganda Fide)--frequently called simply "propaganda."<sup>13</sup>

That department of the Holy See has, for more than three centuries, been "charged with the spread of Catholicism and the regulation of the ecclesiastical affairs in non-Catholic countries."<sup>14</sup>

Webster's New International Dictionary defines propaganda as "any organized or concerted group, effort or movement to spread a particular doctrine or system of doctrines or principles. . . ." <sup>15</sup>

The term fell into popular disrepute during World War I when unfavorable news and enemy opinions were brushed aside as "enemy propaganda."<sup>16</sup>

Public distrust of propaganda became more prevalent after World War I when propagandists on both sides exaggerated their wartime achievements. Those reports helped create the "aura of secret power" that ever since has surrounded the propagandist. Propaganda had become a "bad name," an influence that the common man was told to resist.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Umberto Benigni, "Propaganda, Sacred Congregation of," Catholic Encyclopedia, (New York: Appleton Company, 1911), Vol. XII, p. 456.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Webster's New International Dictionary, (Second edition; Springfield, Mass.: G&C Merriam Company, 1956), p. 1983.

<sup>16</sup>Alfred McClung Lee, How to Understand Propaganda, (New York; Rinehart & Company, 1952), p. 7.

<sup>17</sup>Ernst Kris and Nathan Leites, "Trends in Twentieth Century Propaganda," Reader in Public Opinion and Communication, eds. Bernard Berelson and Morris Janowitz, (Second edition; New York: The Free Press, 1966), p. 271, quoting Ernst Kris, "The Danger of Propaganda," American Imago, II, 1943, pp. 381-399.



In recent years, many definitions of the word have been put forth by sociologists, newsmen, psychologists and propagandists. Robert T. Holt and Robert W. van de Velde write there are almost as many definitions as there are writers on the subject.<sup>18</sup> They identify it as "the attempt to influence behavior . . . by affecting, through the use of mass media of communications, the manner in which a mass audience perceives and ascribes meaning to the material world."

While authorities do not agree that the use of the mass media is essential in propaganda, Holt and van de Velde have an ally in Harold D. Lasswell. He defines psychological warfare as using "the means of mass communication in order to destroy the enemy's will to fight."<sup>19</sup>

Lee provides a definition that includes nearly all the elements cited by most propaganda authorities and omits reference only to the use of mass media. Lee writes that propaganda is

the use of symbols to forward or oppose something to a public. The symbols have an omnibus character and are tied to common patternings of thought, emotion and action. They may be words, pictures, ideas, events, personalities or whatever. The "something" forwarded or opposed may be an interest, cause, project, institution, commodity, doctrine, class, caste group, party or person.

Propaganda is thus the expression of a contention overtly set forth or covertly implied in order to influence the attitudes and, through the attitudes, the opinions and actions of a public.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>Frederick Barghoorn, "Soviet Doctrine on the Role of Propaganda," Reader in Public Opinion and Communication, eds. Bernard Berelson and Morris Janowitz, (Second edition; New York: The Free Press, 1966), p. 363, quoting Robert T. Holt and Robert W. van de Velde.

<sup>19</sup>Harold D. Lasswell, "Political and Psychological Warfare," Propaganda in War and Crisis, ed. Daniel Lerner, (New York: Cornwall Press, 1951), p. 262.

<sup>20</sup>Lee, p. 18.

The term "propaganda," as used in this thesis, includes attempts by government agencies to influence publics at home and abroad. While it is recognized that the government agencies call such attempts a cataloging of facts, if disseminated overseas to influence public opinion, they will be considered propaganda.

Who is the propagandist? Ordinarily, the term "refers only to an intentional propagandist whose efforts, when they are known, represent an attempt to influence people and their society."<sup>21</sup> His methods have been described this way:

Rational deliberation is scorned by the propagandist. Dramatic illustrations are glibly presented. Lurid emotional appeals are substituted for logic. Only favorable "facts" are admitted, the unfavorable slyly concealed. Bright banners and glittering decorations bedeck the propagandist's platform, but his opponent's rostrum is fouled with rotten fruit--name calling, innuendos and malicious slander.<sup>22</sup>

While American and English definitions of propaganda and propagandists tend to utilize general terms, Communists define the word "propaganda" far more specifically and, in the process, describe their concept of the propagandists' mission:

Propaganda is an interpretation of ideas, teachings, political opinions and knowledge, component parts of the work of the communist and workers' parties in the ideological training of the party masses and the toilers.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Leonard W. Doob, Public Opinion and Propaganda, (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1948), p. 246.

<sup>22</sup>Lincoln D. Harter and John Sullivan, Propaganda Handbook, (Philadelphia: Twentieth Century Publishing Company, 1953), p. 6.

<sup>23</sup>John C. Clews, Communist Propaganda Techniques, (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1964), p. 4, quoting a standard Soviet dictionary-encyclopedia.

Propaganda is to the Communist, therefore, an essential element of his system of government.

By any definition, the Vietnam Courier was a medium for the transmission of propaganda, and the writers who "use symbols to forward or oppose something to a public" clearly attempted to "influence people and their society." Through a medium of mass communication, they attempted to affect "the manner in which a mass audience perceives and ascribes meaning to the material world." Through their interpretations, they tried to influence the readers' opinions of the Vietnam War.

#### Goals of the North Vietnamese Propagandist

The behavior of groups shows that public opinion is not a mere metaphor but is a pervading force, often more efficient in securing results than are physical forces. It determines the attitude and the behavior of individuals functioning in group life, brings conformity out of confusion and imparts purpose where previously there was none, focusing divergent opinions upon a posited accomplishment.<sup>24</sup>

To influence the behavior of groups not under control of the Hanoi Government was the goal of the Courier's propagandists. War propaganda has been used throughout history with varying success,<sup>25</sup> but propaganda's wartime mission has been expanded by the Communists. In 1917, Lenin described its role—a role fulfilled in the mid-1960s by the Hanoi regime:

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<sup>24</sup>Paul H. Landis, Social Control, (Revised edition; Chicago: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1956), p. 315, quoting Wilson D. Wallis, An Introduction to Sociology, pp. 193-194.

<sup>25</sup>For an interesting, though incomplete, history of propaganda in wartime, see James M. Read, Atrocity Propaganda, 1914-1919, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1941), Chapter I.

There is one, and only one, kind of internationalism in deed, working wholeheartedly for the development of the revolutionary movement in one's own country, and supporting (by propaganda, sympathy and material aid) such, and only such a line in every country without exception.<sup>26</sup>

While no unclassified missions for North Vietnamese propagandists are extant in the United States, many of the missions can be inferred from an analysis of the Courier's contents and reference to the writings of other Communists who have prescribed tasks for their propagandists. The Courier's columns reflected not only the teachings of Lenin, as cited above, but also the teachings of Chinese Communist theoreticians. According to a Chinese booklet,

in order to gain the victory in political struggle, we have to unite with all the people that can be united around us, to win over the neutrals so that they will not help the enemies and thus to disintegrate the enemy camp. Only in this manner can we strengthen ourselves, put the enemies in an isolated, hopeless position and concentrate our power to fire the vital blows to our enemies. After the enemies are eliminated, we can push our movement one step further. Following such fundamental principles of strategy and tactics, the Communist Party will never commit mistakes in the political struggle.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>Vladimir Ilich Lenin, "The Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution," Selected Works of Lenin, ed. J. Fineberg, translated by Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute, Moscow, (12 volumes; New York: International Publishers, 1935), Vol. VI, p. 63.

<sup>27</sup>Frederick T.C. Yu, Strategy and Tactics of Chinese Communist Propaganda as of 1952, U.S. Air Force, Personnel and Training Research Center, Series II, No. 3 of "Studies in Chinese Communism," (Lackland A.F.B., Texas: Air Research and Development Command, 1955), p. 4, quoting Hu Sheng, Yu Kuang-yuan and Wang Hui-teh, "Strategy and Tactics of the Communist Party," Series No. 27 of the Lectures on the Fundamental Knowledge of Social Sciences, in Hsueh Hsi, No. 1, 1952, February 10, 1952, p. 41.

Lenin's dictates and the goals prescribed for propagandists by the Chinese Government are included in a description of the mission of propaganda by social scientist Hans Speir. According to Speir, propaganda has a threefold objective: To strengthen the martial spirit at home, influence public opinion abroad and demoralize the enemy.<sup>28</sup>

Speir also points out that the techniques of modern war have created an interdependence of soldier and civilian, army and nation, as established by the production of war materials. The North Vietnamese propagandists realized that, in the highly technical United States, the strength of the armed forces depends to a much greater extent on the productive resources and organizational skill of the nation than it does in less industrialized societies. Speir says: "No modern army can wage a war without the persistent support of the whole country. Political conflicts at home, sabotage in the factories and offices or mere malaise among the citizens may incapacitate the best armies. . . . When the body, the economic and social system, is sick, the arm cannot strike."<sup>29</sup>

An example of North Vietnam's attempts to hinder the defense industry in the United States was in the April 28, 1966, issue of the Courier:

President Hoang Quoc Viet [of the Vietnam Federation of Trade Unions] urgently called on . . . the American workers and people to further intensify and develop activities against the dirty aggressive war of the Johnson Administration in Vietnam, to resolutely prevent their sons from being enlisted and sent to Vietnam; to refuse producing and transporting arms and war material bound for Vietnam. . . .<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>Hans Speir, "Morale and Propaganda," Propaganda in War and Crisis, ed. Daniel Lerner, (New York: Cornwall Press, 1951), p. 5.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid. pp. 5-6.

<sup>30</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 56, April 28, 1966, p. 10.

Propaganda has five "natural aims": submission, subversion, cooperation, privatization and panic.<sup>31</sup>

To prompt subversion, the audience must be convinced that the actions of their leaders are immoral. After they are convinced, the confidence of the audience must be increased until its members believe that their own powers are greater than their leaders'.<sup>32</sup> The Vietnam Courier attempted to encourage subversion in that fashion.

The techniques and messages that the Courier's writers employed to accomplish those ends will be examined later in this thesis.<sup>33</sup>

The North Vietnamese propagandist also wanted his audience to believe that if the United States continued to pursue the Vietnam War, it might become embroiled in a larger war with Communist nations. Thus, the propagandists attempted to freeze the war's escalation through appeals to fear. If the United States was to remain at peace with the Communist giants, said the Courier's writers, it must withdraw from Vietnam. That goal of Communist propaganda was explained to the Chinese by Moscow Radio in 1962:

Under conditions of peaceful coexistence, people engaged in the national liberation struggle are safe from being invaded by former colonists. This is of special significance during the first stage of the national liberation struggle.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>Daniel Lerner, "Effective Propaganda: Conditions and Evaluation," Propaganda in War and Crisis, ed. Daniel Lerner, pp. 349-350, quoting Hans Speir.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid. p. 350.

<sup>33</sup>See Chapter III, "Appeals for Action."

<sup>34</sup>Clews, p. 65, quoting a Moscow Radio broadcast.

In other words, the Communist doctrine of peaceful coexistence, if applied successfully, would effectively disarm the West and prevent attempts to deal with uprisings--like Vietnam--which have the Communists' support.

Propaganda always has some policy; however, the policy probably will not be made by propagandists and probably will not remain the same:

Since policy is the sequence of governing decisions in any body politic, it is likely to fluctuate through time as changing conditions alter issues and modify alternatives. Although its policy may shift, however, the purpose of propaganda remains constant: to serve that policy with maximum effectiveness.<sup>35</sup>

Since the government of North Vietnam in 1966 was an instrument of the Communist party, the party's policies were presented in the Courier. Lenin had described the relationship of newspapers to Communist governments:

The periodical and non-periodical press and all publishing enterprises must be entirely subordinated to the Central Committee of the Party, irrespective of whether the Party as a whole is legal or illegal at the given moment; publishing enterprises must not be permitted to abuse their autonomy by pursuing a policy that is not entirely the Party policy.<sup>36</sup>

The following intentions of the Communist party of North Vietnam seemed to emerge from an analysis of the propaganda messages:

First, the party wished to maintain its control of North Vietnam and establish control, under President Ho Chi Minh, over South Vietnam.

If the North Vietnamese Government was to accomplish that mission, the United States must cease prosecuting the war and must leave South Vietnam.

Second, maximum production should be encouraged in friendly areas. Appeals for increased production and recognition of outstanding groups and

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<sup>35</sup>Lerner, p. 344.

<sup>36</sup>Lenin, Vol. X, p. 204.

persons who excelled in increasing output were central themes in nearly every newspaper studied.

Third, the United States' war-making potential must be hindered through disruption of war industry and shipping and lowering of morale.

Those general objectives, as reflected in the pages of the Courier, have been chosen somewhat arbitrarily; however, they do seem to be the central issues as seen by the North Vietnamese.

To accomplish those objectives, the North Vietnamese relied, in part, on their propagandists. As sociologist Frederick J. Teggart says, adjustments between men must be in terms of persuasion or constraint. He adds:

Thus persuasion takes the form of activities leading to a harmony of ideas, and seeks to create a bond of common understanding and belief; while constraint sets up authority and endeavors to secure conformity to its precriptions.<sup>37</sup>

#### "Tone" of the Newspaper

A study of North Vietnamese propaganda in the columns of the Vietnam Courier shows little subtlety or finesse. Positive and negative cliches are repeated endlessly: The Americans always are "aggressors" or "imperialists"; the government of South Vietnam invariably is the "puppet" regime; the allied nations fighting in South Vietnam are, of course, American "satellites," and the Viet Cong make up the "People's Army."

In the constant repetition of messages, the Courier's writers seemed to be heeding advice by Hitler, who wrote in Mein Kampf: "The great masses' receptive ability is very limited, their understanding is small, but their forgetfulness is great. As a consequence of those facts, all effective

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<sup>37</sup>Landis, p. 301, quoting Frederick J. Teggart, "The Circumstance or the Substance of History," American Historical Review, Vol. XV, No. 4, July, 1910, pp. 709-710.



propaganda has to limit itself only to a very few points and to use them like slogans until even the very last man is able to imagine what is intended by such a word."<sup>38</sup>

However, constant repetition invites boredom and can weaken the desired effect of the message.<sup>39</sup> The technique of repetition, therefore, is a weakness as well as a strength of propaganda.

In addition to the repetition, striking contrasts of the "virtue" of the Communist side and the "vice" of the "imperialist" side were reported without moderation or delicate shading.

The North Vietnamese propagandists ceaselessly hunted for themes: The happy land of the North was contrasted with the oppressive and unhappy South; Americans were murdering women and children; the South Vietnamese Government was operating at the whim of the Americans; production in South Vietnam was decreasing, while it was increasing in North Vietnam; inflation was rampant in the South as profiteers increased their riches at the expense of the people; suffering and hardship were the lot of the South Vietnamese people as the United States pursued its "criminal" war.

The style of North Vietnam's propaganda messages, as they appeared in the Vietnam Courier, resemble the messages of World War I more than those of World War II. The language usually was emotionally charged, a characteristic generally not present in the propaganda messages of World War II.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>Adolph Hitler, Mein Kampf, (New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1940), p. 234.

<sup>39</sup>Yu, Strategy and Tactics, p. xii.

<sup>40</sup>Kris and Leites, p. 270.

In emphasizing enemy "atrocities," the North Vietnamese propagandist again employed a style reminiscent more of World War I than of World War II. In the latter war, the atrocity story generally was played down, while during World War I, allied and enemy propagandists, like the North Vietnamese propagandists of 1966, did not refrain from telling of atrocities.<sup>41</sup>

The Vietnam Courier's reports were abrim with Communist concepts and nomenclature, including cartoons presumable meant for domestic consumption and words such as "bankruptcy," "lackeys" and "cliques." The North Vietnamese apparently had not learned a lesson that became clear to the Soviets in their battles with the Germans: Such terms do not gain friends and, in fact, the use of such Communist concepts did the Communists immeasurable harm in the earlier war.<sup>42</sup>

The language is reminiscent of that usually used by Communists in penetrating a new region. Most of the traditional doctrines are of demonstrated effectiveness in appealing to the disaffected: ". . . Marxist doctrine has provided a secular substitute for the universality of aim, of cosmic outlook, and of personal identification of aim which were part of earlier systems."<sup>43</sup>

Yet it is an axiom of all written propaganda that the language used must be truly that of the recipient and that strange phraseology severely detracts from the effectiveness of the message.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>ibid.

<sup>42</sup>Martin F. Herz, "Some Psychological Lessons from Leaflet Propaganda," Propaganda in War and Crisis, ed. Daniel Lerner, (New York: Cornwall Press, 1951), pp. 424-425.

<sup>43</sup>Harold D. Lasswell, "The Strategy of Soviet Propaganda," Propaganda in War and Crisis, ed. Daniel Lerner, (New York: Cornwall Press, 1951), p. 33.

<sup>44</sup>Herz, p. 425.

The tone of the messages in the columns of the Vietnam Courier were-- in a word--boring for all but Communist readers or those utterly opposed to U.S. involvement in Vietnam.

### The Propagandist's Techniques

The North Vietnamese propagandists writing in the Vietnam Courier sought to affect not only foreign opinion about the war but also the more basic attitudes that influence formation of opinion.

Attitudes are an integral part of all humans, constituting a " . . . mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's responses to all objects and situations to which it is related."<sup>45</sup>

The aims of propaganda always include audience reactions that alter the distribution of power in ways advantageous to the policy of the propagandist. The propagandist's intention is to "modify expectations." It is the means by which propaganda accomplishes its ultimate aim of influencing behavior.<sup>46</sup>

Individuals and groups in the propagandist's audience, however, differ markedly. From childhood through maturation, individuals have acquired habits of associating attitudes and actions that predispose them to act favorably, unfavorably or indifferently to experiences. They can grasp some new ideas but not others. Their empathy can be developed in some areas but will remain dormant in others.

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<sup>45</sup>Joseph H. Rousek, Social Control, (Second edition; Princeton: Van Nostrand Company, 1956), p. 41, quoting G.W. Allport, "Attitudes," A Handbook of Social Psychology.

<sup>46</sup>Lerner, p. 348.

The effective propagandist anticipates the areas in which his appeals will be effective:

Propaganda exploits the individual's background, his tendency to believe or disbelieve certain ideas, his views on various subjects. Sentiments, passions, prejudices, loyalties, desires and fears all are played upon by the propagandist. He identifies his cause with favorable reactions and his opponents with unfavorable ones.<sup>47</sup>

The appeals of propaganda in wartime are based on emotional associations of words with attitudes that have resulted from the audiences' socialization processes. The propagandist presumably is familiar with the stimuli that will arouse the audience in his country, but he has great difficulty making effective appeals to audiences with which he does not have a personal and cultural identity.<sup>48</sup>

How, then, did the North Vietnamese propagandist, presumably unfamiliar with foreign audiences, attempt to influence attitudes?

He directed his appeals to concepts that are basic to nearly all societies. These are "traditional conceptions concerning the thought and behavior of man-as-he-should-be and concerning the nature of . . . institutions-as-they-should-be. Morals are generalities concerning right, wrong, duties, rights and taboos on matters regarded as important to society as a whole":<sup>49</sup>

Usually certain attitudes are "accredited" by the community as virtuous and certain habits are condemned as evil. . . . Standard virtues in the thinking of the normal American community include . . . hard work, regular family life, thrift . . . loyalty to fatherland, and consideration for the rights of others.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>47</sup>Harter and Sullivan, p. 9.

<sup>48</sup>Lee, p. 186.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid.

<sup>50</sup>Harter and Sullivan, p. 9.

In appeals to affect attitudes, the North Vietnamese propagandist attempted, by using assorted stimuli, to achieve a consensus of feeling, for

leaders in both totalitarian and democratic societies claim that decisions ultimately rest upon the common man's consent and that the information supplied to him fully enables him to evaluate the situation.

Totalitarian propaganda tries to sway the audience into participation; its preferred setting is the leader talking to the masses; it is modeled after the relations between hypnotist and medium.<sup>51</sup>

A principal function of the Vietnam Courier seemed to be to stimulate attitudes that would result in actions detrimental to the enemy's capability to fight. The home front "will to fight" is the civilian's will to work in a nation at war.<sup>52</sup> Several general classes of civilians are important. They are, first, those who hold political power; the propagandist tries to cast doubt on their ability to govern, hence their foreign policy decisions. The second and largest group is the working population, which must have the "will to work" and a desire to obey the laws of the country. The loss of highly skilled workers through disaffection and disloyalty can gravely affect the conduct of the war. That is a probable cause for the many strong appeals to educated persons in the Courier.

The non-combatant population also includes people whose education, health, age or position makes them useless to the war effort. Those people can be exploited to cry, sing or protest and thus affect the feelings and actions of people who care for them.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup>Kris and Leites, pp. 273-274.

<sup>52</sup>Hans Speir, "Psychological Warfare Reconsidered," Propaganda in War and Crisis, ed. Daniel Lerner, (New York: Cornwall Press, 1951), pp. 467-470.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., pp. 469-470.

Writers for the Vietnam Courier were aware of several principles in the foreign policy of most nations, including rejection of war as a normal means of conducting foreign policy and, instead, a preference for diplomacy in settling international disputes. In addition, spokesmen of all nations profess adherence to the sanctity of treaties and, in 1966, the foreign policy of nearly every nation was committed to the proposition that the sovereignty of one country should not be transgressed by another. In essence, the Courier's attitude was that every nation should be free to pursue its policies unimpeded by dictates by foreign powers.

The North Vietnamese propagandists realized their case would have to conform to those principles. That was evident from the nature of many appeals in the Vietnam Courier.

Appeals to affect attitudes are perhaps the most important weapons in the propagandist's arsenal. The Courier used them to encourage actions of all kinds--protests, breaking of political and military alliances, a cessation of hostilities--and to win friends for North Vietnam and the National Front for Liberation.

## CHAPTER II

### PRIMARY AND POLITICAL ARGUMENTS

Propagandists cannot change the simple meaning of immediate facts but they can influence the interpretation of remote facts by manipulating the symbolic relevant of concrete experiences. War is a remote fact for most who are not committed physically to its prosecution.<sup>1</sup>

The Vietnam Courier in 1966 attempted to manipulate interpretations of the Vietnam War, in part, by selecting materials that could if presented in a certain context, reflect adversely on the enemy.

The analysis of messages in the Courier begins with basic arguments-- who started the war, the reasons for it and the belligerents' intentions-- and arguments designed to project and perpetuate the image of the United States as the guilty party.

#### Who Started the War?

By 1966, the Vietnam Courier's audience presumably was well acquainted with the principal issues. The question of "Who started the war?" generally was regarded by the North Vietnamese propagandists as a moot question with a predictable answer: "The United States started the war."

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<sup>1</sup>Speir, "Morale and Propaganda," p. 13.

The question was referred to only in passing:

Why should those who did their best to sabotage the Geneva Conference in 1954 and cynically declared that they were "not bound" by the Geneva Agreements to [then] undermine it systematically by their intervention and blatant aggression over the past 10 years, now ring the changes about a return to the accords?<sup>2</sup>

In the same issue of the Courier, a propagandist again referred to the basic issue, this time clarifying it for his audience:

U.S. imperialist aggression is the deep root and the immediate cause of the serious situation now prevailing in Vietnam. With the ending of this aggression peace will be immediately restored in this country.<sup>3</sup>

It should be noted that those newspapers studied did not allude to one concrete act by which the United States allegedly precipitated the war.

One writer hinted at the method by which the United States started the war:

Why should those who formerly incited their placeman Ngo Dinh Diem to reject the proposals for a consultative conference between the two zones (North and South Vietnam) to organize a general election in order to reunify Vietnam now harp on "discussion" and "reunification" of Vietnam through elections?<sup>4</sup>

Although the audience presumably was acquainted with the issues underlying the war, the tone of the newspaper indicates the North Vietnamese propagandists still were engaged in the first phase of the Communist propaganda pattern. That phase has been described as "attention attraction,"<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 43, January 13, 1966, p. 7.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 7. "Placeman" is a British word meaning a person who holds an office, especially one appointed to a government office as a reward for political support of an elected officer.

<sup>5</sup>Yu, Strategy and Tactics, p. 17.



the main objective being to acquaint the audience with the campaign. The people to be mobilized by the North Vietnamese had to be made to understand the issues involved, the necessity of carrying out the campaign--in this instance, opposition to American policies--and the friends or allies to be won over. In addition, the audience must be acquainted with the gains to be expected by their efforts. "The general principle to be followed by all propagandists in this stage is to carry out the campaign 'with fanfare,' which means 'in the open, with banners and drums.'"<sup>6</sup>

As will be noted, the Courier's writers followed that principle.

The United States' alleged violation of the territorial sovereignty of Vietnam was a chief argument presented in the Courier.

The U.S. savage war of aggression now being stepped up in South Vietnam and the schemes and deeds to expand it have thoroughly unmasked the U.S. imperialists as most ruthless warmongers; at the same time, they have exposed President Johnson's "search for peace" as a hoax.<sup>7</sup>

Significantly, the writer used words such as "savage war," "aggression," "schemes" and "imperialism."

The use of such words is a handy means of smearing people or causes and bypassing valid evidence of guilt.<sup>8</sup> To those who do not favor the United States' involvement in Vietnam, the word "aggressor," in itself, condemns those to whom it is applied. The term obviously was used to arouse general prejudice and antagonisms--ahead of specific evidence.

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 45, February 10, 1966, p. 6, quoting a D.R.V. Foreign Ministry memorandum issued February 3, 1966.

<sup>8</sup>Charles A. Siepmann, "Propaganda Techniques," Voice of the People, eds. Reo M. Christenson and Robert O. McWilliams, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962), p. 337.

The word "aggressor" appears in virtually every news story concerning American involvement in Indo-China. The frequent use of the term is one example of the propaganda technique of stereotyping, which is

establishing a thought pattern which the public adopts and applies to things, people or ideas which seem to deserve a common name. It is one of the handiest tools of the propagandist in molding public opinion.

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Stereotyped thinking is a shortcut, a means of avoiding painstaking reasoning. The propagandist uses it effectively in name calling. He simply fits an opponent into a bad category with a distinctive label, and popular prejudice does the rest.<sup>9</sup>

Rejection of force in settling international controversies is a professed political policy of most nations. The Vietnam Courier emphasized that the United States had, indeed, resorted to force:

Why does the U.S. government refuse to stop unconditionally and permanently its bombings and all other war activities against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam? What right does it have to arrogate itself to undertake "temporarily" stop and "continue" those bombings as it likes? The most impudent Yankee warmongers have never dared to claim that the Vietnamese people threaten the security of the United States of America. The security of U.S. troops in South Vietnam should on no account be alleged since the question is not to "protect" but purely and simply repatriate these troops which are waging an aggressive war against the Vietnamese people.<sup>10</sup>

Moreover, the United States was described as the aggressor in all parts of Indo-China:

The root cause of the tension in Laos as in other Indo-Chinese countries is the U.S. imperialists' aggressive policy. Once again our people show their determination to strengthen their solidarity with the people of Laos and Cambodia and consolidate the front of the Indo-Chinese

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<sup>9</sup>Harter and Sullivan, p. 25.

<sup>10</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 45, February 10, 1966, p. 3.

peoples against the American imperialists with a view to ousting the United States aggressors and reconquering national independence and peace.<sup>11</sup>

Dates occasionally were used in attempts to provide authenticity to alleged American aggressions:

On May 2, the Neo Lao Haksat [Laotian Communist Party] Central Committee issued a statement denouncing the U.S. imperialists' and their henchmen's repeated attacks on Cambodian territory on April 15, 18 and 30.<sup>12</sup>

More subtle references to the United States as the aggressor sometimes were employed:

The guerrillas have been making the most of the advantages of a defensive war, using rudimentary weapons in an increasingly efficacious manner, and they have become most tenacious and efficient fighters.<sup>13</sup>

International diplomacy is conducted on the premise nations can trust one another. Contracts and treaties generally are regarded as inviolable bonds, and their violation results in condemnation by the injured party and by all those with sentiments of fairness and decency.

The Vietnam Courier appealed to those sentiments when it discussed the nature of the United States' involvement in Vietnam:

July 20, 1966: Twelve years have elapsed since the signing of the Geneva Agreements, but Vietnam has not been reunified, the deep and legitimate aspirations of the people of South Vietnam have not yet been realized as provided by the Geneva Agreements. On the contrary, the Agreements have been violated and sabotaged in an increasingly serious and brazen manner by the Americans and the puppet administration installed by them in South Vietnam.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 67, July 24, 1966, p. 6.

<sup>12</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 59, May 19, 1966, p. 5.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>14</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 64, June 23, 1966, p. 3.

That argument was used repeatedly. The Courier contended that: The U.S. supported the "puppet" regime of South Vietnam; the U.S. was the only obstacle between the South Vietnamese people in their wretched colonial state and the true South Vietnam, a land of independence and freedom; the cause of the war was violation of the Geneva accords by the enemy. The newspaper seldom alluded to North Vietnamese violations alleged by the United States and the South Vietnamese government.

Over the past 11 years, U.S. support to the Saigon puppet administration has been the only obstacle to the reunification of Vietnam. So long as the United States stubbornly maintains this anti-national administration and refuses to withdraw its troops from South Vietnam, all its talks about Vietnam's reunification remain a sheer hoax.

The reactionary position taken by the U.S. on the main points of the Geneva Agreements and what it has done to sabotage the said agreements have clearly shown that the U.S. does not respect at all the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Vietnam. This also explains why the U.S. has refused to recognize the four-point [peace proposal] stand of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, which is the most faithful expression of the main provisions of the said agreements.<sup>15</sup>

The Courier said the United States was intent on occupying Vietnam in defiance of all conventions of international jurisprudence. The newspaper implied that the United States' stand on the Vietnam issue was identical to the stand of any imperialistic nation.

No sooner had they signed than the 1954 Geneva Agreements were grossly, seriously and systematically violated by the U.S. imperialists and their flunkies. Of the countless violations committed by the Americans since 1954, the most impudent and gravest which implies all others was certainly the creation of the separate South Vietnam state with U.S. dollars and bayonets to repudiate the 1954 Geneva Agreements more easily and

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<sup>15</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 45, February 10, 1966, p. 5, quoting a D.R.V. Foreign Ministry memorandum issued February 3, 1966.

use it as a tool for American neo-colonialist policy. The separate state is out and out illegal in virtue of the 1954 Geneva Agreements as well as of modern international law based on the right to self-determination of the people.

Reversely, the liberation struggle in South Vietnam directed against U.S. imperialists and the puppets who oppress, exploit and massacre the people, thoroughly conforms to the Geneva legislation as well as to the principles of modern international law regarding the last resort against the oppression and self-determination of the peoples has been written down in fundamental doctrines such as the Preamble of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights issued on December 10, 1948, the Joint Declaration of the 1955 Bandung Conference, the Resolution of the Fifteenth General Assembly of the United Nations Organization on the necessity to put an end to colonialism in all its forms in 1960, the Declaration of the Committee of 24 to enforce the above Resolution in June, 1965.<sup>16</sup>

The Courier argued, with some justification, that the United States had blocked the national elections for reunification that were prescribed by the Geneva Agreements. The Saigon government had scheduled for September, 1966, elections for a national assembly. That tactic was designed only to perpetuate the divided state of Vietnam, according to the Courier. It was an attempt to link the "phony" elections to the elections for reunification prescribed by the Geneva Accords on Indo-China:

Meanwhile, the U.S. aggressors have been trying to make people misunderstand the said elections with every means. According to the Associated Press on June 6, 1966, facing the opposition at the United Nations, A. Goldberg said the U.S. was prepared to abide by the results of reunification elections contemplated by the 1954 Geneva Agreements "whatever those results might be."

What a blatant trick! The U.S. aggressors thought that they could make people believe that their planned elections would be under the terms of the Geneva Agreements which they have been sabotaging for 11 years now.

In fact, the elections provided for by the Geneva Agreements should have been held in 1956 and throughout Vietnam (from North to South) to lay a basis for the

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<sup>16</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 45, February 10, 1966, p. 8.

resettlement of the reunification of Vietnam. However, wirepulled by the U.S., Ngo Dinh Diem nipped the elections in the bud.<sup>17</sup>

The Geneva Agreements were not the only international treaties violated by the United States, according to the Courier. The nation that dropped the first atomic bomb had committed other infamous crimes in defiance of international accords on the conduct of war. War crimes might have been expected by the propagandist to elicit cries of protest from humanitarians.

They [the United States' forces in Vietnam] have trampled upon the 1922 and 1925 international conventions banning the use of toxic chemicals, poison gas and similar substances in war. The inhuman massacres constitute a challenge to the entire Vietnamese people and the peace and justice-loving people in the world. . . .<sup>18</sup>

The Courier asserted the U.S. had engaged in bacteriological warfare during the Korean War. The appeal that follows obviously was intended to show the special heinousness of the American mentality, implying Americans were capable of committing war crimes in Vietnam.

The fact that U.S. aircraft sprayed toxics over Japanese-occupied New Guinea and thus committed a war crime, characterized though unpunished [sic]. The atom-bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki was another atrocious war crime. In North Korea, the Americans deliberately disseminated flies and other insects artificially infested with germs and also used toxic gases and other chemical bombs, as confirmed by the conclusions of a report by an eight-nation Commission of Jurists dispatched to Korea by the International Association of Democratic Lawyers for an on-the-spot-investigation from March 3 to 9, 1952.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 64, June 23, 1966, p. 11.

<sup>18</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 51, March 24, 1966, p. 2.

<sup>19</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 59, May 19, 1966, p. 3. The "International Association of Democratic Lawyers" was identified as a Communist front organization by the British Government. See Claws, p. 288.

The Courier was attempting to ascribe to the Americans the status of an international criminal that should be condemned and punished. In demanding "fair play" for the people of Vietnam, it appealed to a sense of justice. Propagandists long have argued that "they" are wrong and that "we" have been forced to defend our rights.<sup>20</sup>

The Courier commented on the justice and legality of the war for two reasons: to stiffen the will to resist at home and to influence favorably public opinion abroad.

Many Courier stories were reprints from domestic publications. The reason for including in those publications arguments regarding justice and legality of a government position has been explained by a communications researcher:

Either a founded conviction or a manipulated belief that the war is waged in order to fight injustice strengthens the will to resistance, not only because the nation is in danger but also because in struggling for interests and rights, the whole people imagines itself to be defending something general and sublime, the law itself, the moral order of life. The actions of everyone thus rise to a status of extraordinary moral significance.<sup>21</sup>

The Courier appealed to a sense of justice in its overseas audience. The writers realized, as one researcher put it, that "alteration of human institutions must . . . always and everywhere depend upon the beliefs or feelings, or, in other words, upon the opinion of the society in which such institutions flourish."<sup>22</sup> The propagandists were attempting to evoke a sense of outrage in every nation where justice flourished.

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<sup>20</sup>Speir, "Morale and Propaganda," pp. 15-16.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>22</sup>A. V. Dicey, "The Relation Between Law and Public Opinion," Reader in Public Opinion and Communication, eds. Bernard Berelson and Morris Janowitz, (New York: The Free Press, 1966), p. 121.

Utilizing the "bandwagon" technique, a propagandist commented about the "illegality" of the United States' basic commitments to Vietnam:

Everyone is aware--D. Eisenhower himself has publicly admitted--that if the elections for the reunification of Vietnam could not take place in 1956, it is because Washington perfectly realised that the Saigon puppets would be wiped out. Since then, the U.S. has been actively trying to perpetuate the partition of our country by setting up a puppet state in South Vietnam in flagrant contradiction with the Geneva Agreements that it now professes to respect. Goldberg himself wants to get this manoeuvre endorsed when he describes the two parts of Vietnam as two different political entities. By paying and arming its Saigon lackeys that cannot stand on their own two feet for a single day without its backing, Washington thinks it can put a legal face on its will to remain in South Vietnam at any cost.<sup>23</sup>

Referring to the Geneva Agreements, the Courier contended the United States flouted international accords. The Courier used "color words" to excite public opinion:

Though the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Indo-China (embracing Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia) clearly stipulate that the participating countries must refrain from joining any military alliance or allowing other countries to set up military bases on their territory, the U.S. has wirepulled the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization bloc to openly place South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia under its "protective umbrella."<sup>24</sup>

Why had the United States sought to pull those nations under its "protective umbrella"? The writer did not say.

Statements about the bombing of North Vietnam usually included arguments concerning the legality of U.S. actions. The propagandists assumed--perhaps correctly--that messages containing charges of violations of territorial sovereignty would strike responsive chords. The Second

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<sup>23</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 80, October 17, 1966, p. 2.

<sup>24</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 51, March 24, 1966, p. 3.



World War began, at least in part, over the issue of violated sovereignty. If public opinion was against aggression then, it also should oppose what was termed aggression today:

What is particularly serious, on July 7, U.S. aircraft again bombed densely populated areas and economic establishments in Haiphong City, directly menacing many foreign merchant ships then at anchor in the port.

. . . . . The U.S. authorities try to justify themselves by claiming they are not "escalating" the war, that these are "precision attacks." It is obvious that they have deliberately struck at densely populated areas, public utilities, the fruits of labour of the people of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. They have openly trampled underfoot the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Vietnam and all norms of international law. No matter what deceitful allegations they resort to, the U.S. aggressors cannot possibly conceal their monstrous crimes before public opinion and history.<sup>25</sup>

The North Vietnamese also charged the United States and its allies transgressed the territorial sovereignty of neighboring states. In a statement deploring enemy activities in Cambodia, the Courier reported that enemy forces had engaged in guerrilla tactics:

On the same day [June 15, 1966], Cambodia's Minister of Information, Chia Xan, led representatives and press attaches of foreign embassies in Phnom Penh and foreign correspondents to the spot where henchmen of the U.S. had laid mines on the Poipet Battambang Railway, 1.5 kilometres from the Thailand border. A locomotive had been destroyed and two carriages overturned.

The visitors remarked [sic] a fragment of mine among the exhibits. They were informed that since the beginning of the year, lackeys of U.S. imperialism had infiltrated 15 times into the Poipet area for provocations and sabotage activities.<sup>26</sup>

Meanwhile, the newspaper bragged about the success of Communist troops employing the same tactics in South Vietnam. There was no mention of alleged

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<sup>25</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 67, July 14, 1966, p. 2.

<sup>26</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 64, June 23, 1966, p. 9.

violation by North Vietnam of the territorial integrity of neighboring states.

Punishment of the United States for "violations of international law" was predicted by the Courier. Seeking to arouse public sentiment in favor of an international tribunal, a Vietnamese lawyer described the "legality" and "justice" of North Vietnam's stand and presented a solution to those whose sense of justice had been outraged by the United States' "crimes."

When will they be punished. . . ? The British philosopher Bertrand Russell answered this question raised by distressed mankind when suggesting the setting up of an international court for war crimes to try Lyndon Johnson, McNamara, Dean Rusk and their gang.

From the judicial point of view, such initiative absolutely conforms to contemporain [contemporary] international law. The punishment of war crimes has become a principle of positive law ever since the Nuremburg and Tokyo international military courts penalized the criminal misadventures of the Nazis in Europe and the Japanese fascists in Asia.

.....  
Besides its supreme war crime, i.e. the aggressive war against the Vietnamese people, U.S. imperialism has committed and has daily been repeating on a large scale tens, hundreds of other war crimes violating the laws and customs of war, such as deliberate wholesale massacres of the civilian population, the looting of properties, the deliberate destruction of cities and villages, the use of prohibited weapons including noxious chemicals, napalm, war gases.

.....  
The Statute of Nuremburg is unequivocal about this matter. According to its Article 8, the fact that the accused has acted with the orders of his government or his hierarichal superiors does not clear him of his responsibility.

.....  
The case of U.S. pilots captured in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam is left in no doubt since most of them are educated men. They cannot be unaware that they have participated in an unjust war, a war of aggression in violation of the 1954 Geneva Agreements which the U.S. administration has undertaken to "refrain from the threat or the use of force to disturb." They cannot either ignore that they have struck at schools, hospitals, markets and hydraulic works. Speaking on

October 9, 1965 to a delegation of the International Association of Democratic Lawyers, the pilot Daughtrey (born on Oct. 5, 1933 at Eagle Pass, Texas; U.S.A.F. Captain and instructor . . .), admitted that it was perfectly possible from a plane to distinguish military targets from non-military ones.

. . . . .  
It is unquestionable that U.S. pilots captured in Vietnam fall within the cognizance of Vietnamese courts. The juridicial capacity of the country victim of a crime was recognized by the stature of the Nuremburg International Court as well as by the Convention of December 9, 1948 on genocide. On the other hand, U.S. pilots have no right to benefit by the Geneva Convention of August 12, 1949 on P.O.W.'s because they are not prisoners of war but actually criminals.

. . . . .  
We may venture the opinion that American pilots could be tried under and condemned under the same decree which includes penalties from 10 years imprisonment and capital punishment.<sup>27</sup>

The Courier told overseas readers that American policy and action violated international law and accepted canons of justice. In focusing attention on "illegal" acts by the United States, it was attempting to divert attention from Communist actions termed illegal by the United States. In announcing the Russell Tribunal, the propagandists gave their audience a target. Readers dissatisfied with the United States' conduct of the war now could demand that the "international criminals" be punished in a "court of law." Thus, Vietnam claimed to uphold the highest ideals of justice.

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<sup>27</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 67, July 14, 1966, p. 3. The article was signed by Do Xuan Sang who identified himself as "Deputy Secretary of the Vietnamese Lawyer's Association." The International Association of Democratic Lawyers has been identified as a Communist-front organization by the British Government. It was formed in Paris in 1946, expelled from that city in 1950 and has since maintained its headquarters in Brussels.

Reasons for the War

Following Peking's policy of armed opposition to the West, rather than Moscow's pronounced "peaceful coexistence" line, the Vietnamese Communists justified the war in terms of current Asian Communist thinking. Describing their policy in an open letter published in 1963, the Chinese Communist regime explained that

according to the Leninist viewpoint, world peace can only be won by the struggle of the peoples in all countries and not by begging the imperialists for it. World peace can only be defended effectively by relying on the development of the forces of the socialist camp, on the revolutionary struggles of all peace-loving people and countries. Such is the Leninist policy. Any policy to the contrary definitely will not lead to world peace but will only encourage the ambitions of the imperialists and increase the danger of world war.<sup>28</sup>

"Peaceful coexistence," according to the Peking letter, "cannot replace the revolutionary struggles of the people. The transition from capitalism to socialism in any country can only be brought about through the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat in that country."<sup>29</sup>

Hi Chi Minh, president of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam), followed that line of reasoning. As quoted by the Courier, the president said:

Our people are deeply attached to peace, independence and national unity. The U.S. has sabotaged the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Vietnam which have formally recognized our national rights. It has been waging a war of aggression against South Vietnam and over the past two years has been

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<sup>28</sup>Clews, pp. 66-67, quoting "A Proposal Concerning the General Line of the International Communist Movement," June 16, 1963.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

launching savage air attacks on North Vietnam. In face of those attacks, the entire Vietnamese people have stood up to fight to a finish in defense of their fatherlands.<sup>30</sup>

The North Vietnamese Premier, Pham Van Dong, alluded to much the same line when he noted:

The war of resistance against U.S. aggression for national salvation has blown a fresh wind into the cultural and social activities in North Vietnam, gives rise to urgent requirements and opened up broad vistas for educational, cultural, medical and sport activities.<sup>31</sup>

So it was for "peace" and "national salvation" that the North Vietnamese fought. The theme is common to most propagandists:

Only to a superficial observer will it appear paradoxical that the "just war" is universally felt to be the war that is ultimately waged for peace. . . . In our time even the dictators have so far paid homage to the goddess of peace, regardless of the fact that their overt life-philosophies and their actual policies are irreconcilable with their popular enunciations of how much they cherish the pacification of international relations. There has not been one modern war . . . that has been justified as an evil which one is entitled to commit. Peace is good, the breach of peace is evil. Thus wars are justified as a means toward peace.<sup>32</sup>

Wall Street also was behind the American's prosecution of the war, according to the Courier. The U.S. was forced into the war to protect its economic interests:

There are indications of an anti-government struggle in a broadcast over Radio Hue on April 19. It said: ". . . The foreigners (i.e. the Americans) are very perfidious. They will not hesitate to use bribes to undermine our ranks

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<sup>30</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 83, November 7, 1966, quoting Ho Chi Minh in an interview granted to Emmanuel d'Astier de la Vigerie for the French magazine Evenement.

<sup>31</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 56, April 28, 1966, p. 6, quoting an address by Premier Pham Van Dong to the third session of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam National Assembly, April, 1966.

<sup>32</sup>Speir, "Morale and Propaganda," p. 16.

because if a true national assembly is formed and national sovereignty respected, international compradore capitalists' interests would be impaired."<sup>33</sup>

According to the Courier's propagandists, the United States was becoming frustrated in the pursuit of the war; the longer America fought, the more it would suffer defeats and the more it would, in turn, step up its repressions of the Vietnamese people. One propagandist told his audience that:

Guerrilla warfare in particular, and the present people's war in general have developed from the revolutionary struggle through violence of the masses. These have sprung from political actions, using political violence to demand the realisation of national and democratic rights. As they were terrorized and suppressed, the revolutionary forces organized themselves for self-defence; in face of ever-increasing terror, they had to take on the character of armed struggle and eventually turned into partial [insurrectionists] throughout the countryside. Confronted with setbacks in coping with the revolutionary government, the enemy stepped up armed repression and reinforced his expeditionary force. The all round people's war against aggression has then emerged in full and never ceased to forge ahead. The people have come to use both armed and political violence to defeat their opponent.<sup>34</sup>

While never denying categorically U.S. charges that North Vietnam was supporting the Viet Cong in the South, the Courier said U.S. statements to that effect were lies:

Since the U.S. imperialists used their air force and navy to bomb and strafe North Vietnam, violated the sovereignty of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, their action has been strongly condemned by the world opinion. They have attacked North Vietnam in the hope of retrieving their disastrous situation in South Vietnam. They have attacked North Vietnam with a view to negating the struggle for liberation in South Vietnam with the "aggression by the North on the South" myth. They continue to attack North

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<sup>33</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 56, April 28, 1966, pp. 11-12. "Compradore" is a word meaning business agent for a company with its headquarters in another location.

<sup>34</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 87, December 5, 1966, p. 3.

Vietnam with a view to expanding the war in Indo-China as a whole, which constitutes a grave danger.<sup>35</sup>

The Vietnamese propagandist seemed to attribute to the Americans an Oriental-like concern for "face," perhaps with reason. An argument often propounded by advocates of continued U.S. involvement in the war was based on the "falling domino" theory which stated that if Vietnam fell, other friendly countries threatened by Communism soon would follow. The North Vietnamese Government was aware of that argument, of course, and--strangely--used its reasoning as one explanation for the United States' escalation. To influence public opinion abroad, most Communist parties have pictured their "wars of liberation" as isolated and internal conflicts that would not effect other nations. However, the Courier explained that,

at present, U.S. imperialism is getting bogged down and trounced. But it does not make up its mind to complete failure because a failure in Vietnam this time will trigger off bigger failures in the world which will be the fiasco of U.S. global strategy. Hence, it has still a lot of perfidious schemes in store. It is making frantic attempts to step up the aggressive war in the whole of our country.<sup>36</sup>

There were no shades of grey in the North Vietnamese arguments. The United States patently was the aggressor, according to the Courier, and the North was fighting for self-preservation while the South was fighting for independence and freedom.

#### Peace Efforts

"Peace" is one of three "watchwords in the international propaganda war." The others are "independence" and "freedom."<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 56, April 28, 1966, p. 9.

<sup>36</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 71, August 11, 1966, quoting Le Duan, First Secretary of the Vietnam Workers' Party Central Committee.

<sup>37</sup>Harter and Sullivan, p. 153.

According to some researchers, the word "peace" has become important to most Americans because this nation has had so little of it.<sup>38</sup> That statement might be amended to read that, peace seems to be a key word in the thinking of all peoples for, in recent years, the world has experienced little of it.

"Peace in Vietnam" was a frequent topic in the Vietnam Courier. If the United States could be pictured as the provocateur, world opinion might oppose America's military activities.

The Courier faced a difficult task. From the beginning of 1966--when the highest ranking U.S. diplomats and statesmen were deployed around the world on a "peace offensive"--through the end of the year when the U.S. still was attempting, in vain, to bring the Vietnam issue before the United Nations, the U.S. seemed to be trying to bring peace to Vietnam. Conversely, the North Vietnamese and "National Front for Liberation" delegates (from South Vietnam) had not advanced new proposals or made new moves to end the war.

If public opinion was to favor the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong in the South, the propagandist had to debunk peace efforts of the U.S. and its allies.

Early in 1966, a Courier writer noted:

The present U.S. "peace efforts" are also a mere attempt to appease public opinion at home and abroad, which is strongly opposing the U.S. policy of aggression in Vietnam. The U.S. wants to turn to account the people's legitimate aspirations for peace in an attempt to call

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 158.



black white, to pose as a peace-lover, to slander the Vietnamese people, and thus to create a pretext for making new steps in implementation of its schemes to intensify and expand the war.<sup>39</sup>

The tone of that statement is similar to the tone used throughout the year. The message also was much the same: No matter what the United States did in an attempt to bring peace to Vietnam, the effort was described as an imperialistic trick "to fool public opinion."

In order to deceive more effectively, the U.S. resorted to the trick of a "pause in the bombing of North Vietnam." This was an attempt to fool public opinion, to slanderously accuse the Vietnamese people of "not wanting peace" and to use it as a pretext to intensify the war.<sup>40</sup>

The Courier used strong language to condemn U.S. actions. To those persons whose attitudes were governed by emotions more than by reason, it said:

The Johnson Administration's hastily backing Senator Mansfield's proposal for convening of a "peace conference" to be attended by "the U.S.A., North Vietnam, China and essential elements of South Vietnam," is aimed at covering up its intensified air attacks on the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, its inhuman acts, its stepping up the war of aggression in Vietnam and at concealing the utter rottenness of the Saigon puppet regime. . . .<sup>41</sup>

The United States even was willing to use the United Nations to further its "imperialistic schemes," according to the Courier. It said the action clearly was out of line, for the United Nations did not have jurisdiction in Vietnam. Spokesmen for North Vietnam and the National Front for Liberation commented on a February 2, 1966, attempt by the U.S.

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<sup>39</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 43, January 13, 1966, p. 8.

<sup>40</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 45, February 10, 1966, p. 6.

<sup>41</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 56, April 28, 1966, p. 11.

to bring the question before the United Nations Security Council. A North Vietnamese Foreign Ministry official was quoted as follows:

As on previous occasions, this time the U.S. is seeking to use the U.N.O. [United Nations Organization] to cover up its expansion of its war of aggression in Vietnam and to force on the Vietnamese people a settlement of the Vietnam question on U.S. terms.<sup>42</sup>

A spokesman explained the Viet Cong attitude in terms of the legality of the action. Again, the U.S. was accused of having covert designs on Vietnam.

The South Vietnam National Front for Liberation resolutely exposes before public opinion the perfidious attempts by the U.S. imperialists to hide under the U.N. banner to intensify their war of aggression against the South Vietnamese and sabotage the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

The South Vietnam National Front for Liberation solemnly declares that the U.N. has no right at all to take any decisions regarding the problems of the South Vietnamese people. The Front will consider all decisions of the U.N. Security Council null and void and as an act of encroachment on the principles of independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Vietnam which have been guaranteed by the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Vietnam.<sup>43</sup>

Later in the year, British Foreign Secretary George Brown presented a peace plan to the annual congress of England's Labor Party. According to the Courier, England was a satellite of the United States and was dancing to the tunes of the U.S. imperialist band. It did not explain why England had adopted that posture, but it did say that for several years Britain had been

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<sup>42</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 45, February 10, 1966, p. 3.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid.

deliberately aiding and abetting the United States in many international issues. In the Vietnam question in particular, Britain's servile attitude is even more obvious. No lesser personage than British Prime Minister Harold Wilson has, on many occasions, voiced support for the aggressive moves taken by the U.S. against Vietnam.<sup>44</sup>

Public opinion was not "fooled" by the perfidious scheming of the imperialist powers, according to the Courier. Perceptive people, it said, knew peace efforts were a sham:

As in the South Vietnam and North Vietnam theatres, on the international front the Johnson clique has been sustaining heavy failures during the past period. Its "peace campaign" hoax and "unconditional discussions" fraud have deceived nobody, neither the American people nor the peoples of other countries in the world.<sup>45</sup>

One aim of the Soviet "peace offensive" of 1950 was to bring the pressure of public opinion against the "criminal" who had used the atomic bomb.<sup>46</sup> That goal still was being pursued by the Communists of North Vietnam in 1966. In their descriptions of U.S. peace efforts, Courier writers implied that the nation that had used the atom bomb at Hiroshima and Nagasaki was capable of using it in Vietnam:

The American imperialist hawk is holding out an olive branch in its beak but in its claws there is a miniature A- or H-Bomb, or a device containing lethal gases or bacteria. It is advisable to show this image of the Johnson humanitarian to those who still believe in the good will for peace and so-called unconditional discussions of the big-wigs in the White House and Pentagon.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 80, October 17, 1966, pp. 1-2.

<sup>45</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 56, April 28, 1966, p. 8, quoting an address by North Vietnamese Premier Pham Van Dong to the third session of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam National Assembly, April, 1966.

<sup>46</sup>Harter and Sullivan, p.317.

<sup>47</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 59, May 19, 1966, p. 3.

The Courier continued through 1966 to brand U.S. peace efforts a hoax. The sound and equitable solution to the war, according to the newspaper, was described by President Ho Chi Minh:

Each time they climb a fresh rung in their war escalation, the Americans raise a ballyhoo about the so-called "peace negotiations." That is only a smokescreen.

Yet, some people of good will, who, deceived by U.S. propaganda, have advised us to negotiate peace with the aggressors at any cost. They have forgotten that to end this war, the U.S. only needs to undertake to withdraw. That is the only honourable solution for it.<sup>48</sup>

Just as the argument "justice is on our side" is designed to boost friendly morale, rejection of enemy peace offers, for whatever reason, provides renewed proof of a foe's viciousness.<sup>49</sup>

Our government has made clear its four-point stand. The South Vietnam National Front for Liberation has issued an unequivocal five-point statement. The sensible and reasonable stands of our government and of the South Vietnam N.F.L. have been enjoying ever growing sympathy and support from the world peoples, including the American people. But, turning a deaf ear to them and intensifying the criminal aggressive war in Vietnam, the Johnson Administration keeps repeating that they have "got no sign from Hanoi."<sup>50</sup>

The "Sole Representative of the People of South Vietnam" and the "Puppet" Administration

Nationalism might be defined as a sentiment or a state of mind. It can be used to promote many projects, including building and destroying countries. The National Front for Liberation in Vietnam in 1966 was

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<sup>48</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 83, November 7, 1966, p. 4, quoting Ho Chi Minh during an interview granted Emmanuel d'Astier de la Vigerie of the French magazine Evenement.

<sup>49</sup>Speir, "Morale and Propaganda," p. 16.

<sup>50</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 56, April 28, 1966, p. 9.

"riding on the coat tails" of nationalism and the concept was drawing strength from a nearly universal desire for national independence.

The National Front for Liberation was the Communist term for the Viet Cong. It was regarded by the North Vietnamese and the South Vietnamese Communists as "the sole genuine representative of the people of Vietnam" and the party with which the allied nations would have to negotiate for peace.<sup>51</sup>

The "national liberation" concept was formulated by Russia in 1964 during its abortive attempt to establish a Communist state in Iran.<sup>52</sup> The term had been adopted by the world-wide Communist movement,<sup>53</sup> and, by 1966, virtually every war fought by Communist forces had been termed a "war for national liberation."

The term "national liberation" implies a struggle for freedom against foreign aggression. That was the intent when the name was selected and that is the idea that the Communists wished to convey.<sup>54</sup>

The Courier attempted to establish the legality of claims by the National Front for Liberation to be the "sole genuine representative of the Vietnamese people":

The National Front for Liberation unquestionably has a juridicial status in the eye of international law, for it controls a vast territory (four-fifths of the South

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<sup>51</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 45, February 10, 1966, p. 5, quoting from a D.R.V. Foreign Ministry Memorandum dated February 3, 1966.

<sup>52</sup>Clews, p. 39.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid.

<sup>54</sup>The term "Viet Cong" is a shortened form for "Viet Nam Cong San" or the Vietnamese Communist party.

Vietnam area), a numerous population (more than three-fourths of the South Vietnamese) and in fact discharges all its internationalist obligations. At present, world public opinion has recognized the N.F.L., international organizations numbering hundreds of millions of members have elected N.F.L. representatives to their executive committees, many countries in Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America have granted diplomatic status to N.F.L. permanent representatives in their capitals and Cuba has just raised permanent representation in Havana to ambassadorial level. In fact, the N.F.L. exercises its power as a sovereign state over four-fifths of the South Vietnam area and in its increasingly extended international relations.<sup>55</sup>

The Courier repeated endlessly that Washington must negotiate with the National Front for Liberation if it hoped to end the war. It was attempting to convince readers that the South Vietnamese Communists were, indeed, the "sole genuine representative" of the people. The Saigon "puppet" administration seldom was referred to in stories about the "Front," as if mere mention of the South Vietnamese Government would remind readers that perhaps there was another "genuine representative" government.

"If the political thinking of the elite is utopian, the propaganda effort will be missionary; against recalcitrant opponents who refuse to become converted it will turn fanatical."<sup>56</sup>

In telling about North Vietnam and in visualizing South Vietnam under Communist domination, the Courier described a utopian land embodying perfection in law, politics and freedom. Except for the Americans, it said, all that prevented war-torn Vietnam from becoming the land-that-would-be was the "puppet" administration of South Vietnam.

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<sup>55</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 45, February 10, 1966. The article was signed by Do Xuan San who identified himself as "Doctor of Laws, ex barrister-at-law in Saigon."

<sup>56</sup>Speir, "Psychological Warfare Reconsidered," p. 482.

The North Vietnamese propagandists were vitriolic in their abuse of the South Vietnamese Government. Their campaign was calculated to produce hate and loathing for the "Saigon lackeys."

The contrast with the "sole genuine representative of the South Vietnamese people"--the National Front for Liberation--was apparent. Plainly, the Saigon administration was an illegal one:

Earlier, the American valets--the puppet administration and army--were able to use to some extent the "national independence" hoax to deceive a certain number of people. Now it has become evident to everybody that the masters in Saigon, those who wield real power there, are but the Americans and their military and political bodies.<sup>57</sup>

The "crimes" of the South Vietnam administration were presented through the technique of "card stacking"--the selection of alleged facts to give the worst possible case for the opposition.<sup>58</sup>

In the eyes of the Vietnamese people and in particular of our compatriots in the South, they [the South Vietnamese Government] are criminals who have shamelessly sold their country to the Americans and committed many crimes against the country and their people. Who have welcomed the G.I.'s to South Vietnam? Who have allowed the Americans to set up military bases in South Vietnam? Who have asked the Americans to use barbarous war means and methods there?<sup>59</sup>

The Courier said that the South Vietnamese Government cooperated fully with the United States in attempts to perpetuate the divided Vietnam:

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<sup>57</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 56, April 28, 1966, p. 6, quoting an address by Premier Pham Van Dong to the third session of the D.R.V. National Assembly, April, 1966.

<sup>58</sup>Doob, p. 286, quoting Alfred McClung Lee, The Fine Art of Propaganda, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company and the Institute for Propaganda Analysis, 1939).

<sup>59</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 56, April 28, 1966, p. 8, quoting an address by Premier Pham Van Dong to the third session of the D.R.V. National Assembly, April, 1966.

They [South Vietnamese Government leaders] have schemed to make partition of this country permanent and turn its southern half into a U.S. military base, repress all the finest aspirations of the Vietnamese people, and finally have opened widely the doors to the U.S. expeditionary troops to carry out the most brutal aggressive war ever.<sup>60</sup>

As a war continues, the collective exaltation that prevails at the beginning tends to diminish. The regularities of life must prevail and the wise propagandist attempts to exploit enemy imperfections. Injustice by the enemy's rulers destroys the enemy's morale and is ridiculed by other parties.<sup>61</sup> A favorite target for the propagandist is profiteering.

In a situation of extreme stress, such as comes to prevail in war, any difference in the conditions of life may give occasions for disappointment and indignation. . . . Profiteering strikes a particularly tender nerve, because though everybody is constantly urged not to profit, there are perhaps many who would like to if they had a chance and were sure of not being caught.<sup>62</sup>

To strike that "tender nerve," the Vietnam Courier said:

Since 1954, everyone knows, the successive "administrations" in Saigon have been nothing else than a handful of traitors hated by the people and despised by world public opinion, who feel no other concern than to get wealthy and, in return, execute Washington's plans for intervention and aggression in Vietnam. Any of Washington's commitments towards Saigon is sheer stage-setting, a deal between bosses and stooges and, as such, has neither juridical [sic] nor political validity.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>60</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 51, March 24, 1966, p. 3.

<sup>61</sup>Speir, "Morale and Propaganda," pp. 17-18.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid.

<sup>63</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 80, October 17, 1966, p. 3.



By identifying the United States with the British and Japanese brands of imperialism, Chinese Communists manipulate their internal propaganda to transfer the traditional national hatred of Japan and dislike of Britain to hatred of the United States.<sup>64</sup>

Many propaganda messages in the Vietnam Courier were designed for internal consumption. This one appears to represent an attempt at "transfer," much like that ascribed to the Chinese propagandists:

Once again, the Saigon puppets have cut one another's throat. General Ky got rid of his rival, General Thi. We shall not dwell on their "merits," both of them being of the same kidney, and belonging to the same set, that of adventurers who were in the pay first of the French colonialists, then of the Yankees.<sup>65</sup>

Descriptions of South Vietnam government leaders were calculated to create a striking contrast between the National Front for Liberation and the "puppets." The Viet Cong leaders were said to be of the people and for the people; they were attempting to free the country from foreign rulers. The message, repeated often, played on the universal desire for independence and freedom. The same predispositions would be of consequence in condemning the "puppets," for who would side with mercenaries when the alternative was "the sole genuine representative of the Vietnamese people"?

#### The Goals of Vietnam

Owing to the complexity of the Vietnam War in 1966, there were many opportunities to use slogans that appealed to emotions.

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<sup>64</sup>Yu, Strategy and Tactics, p. 7.

<sup>65</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 51, March 24, 1966, p. 1.

Each issue of the Courier said the Vietnamese were fighting for independence and freedom and against outside interference:

Our people have gone through thousands of years of struggle against foreign aggression in order to survive and develop, have won glorious victories over aggressors from the mightiest countries in the world. Our people are deeply attached to national independence and have a valiant and indomitable spirit. Every time the fatherland is threatened, the call to save the country and the people supplies our people with a tremendous force to defend their native land.

The history of our people is a fund of experiences in resisting foreign aggression. While the previous war of resistance against the French colonialists was the continuation and crystallization, in the light of Marxist military thought, of our people's tradition of fighting foreign aggression, the present war of resistance against the U.S. imperialists is the continuation of the tradition and an application of this firm experience at a higher level. Our people are firmly determined to fight the U.S. imperialists and save the country, are greatly enhancing their heroic spirit and fighting abilities in order to defeat all military adventures of the enemy. Having to face such a people, the U.S. imperialists will inevitably be defeated.<sup>66</sup>

It is usually deleterious to the cause of the propagandist to identify himself with the enemy.<sup>67</sup> However, the desire for independence and freedom was considered by the North Vietnamese Government to be an almost universal sentiment; as such, it was a common ground on which the propagandists could base their arguments. President Ho Chi Minh, apparently attempting to influence public opinion in the United States, spoke of the war as a parallel to America's early struggles:

The Vietnamese people highly value friendship with the great American people who are continuing Washington's and Lincoln's traditions of struggle for national independence and democracy.

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<sup>66</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 64, June 23, 1966, p. 5, quoting an article by Truong Son published in Quan Doi Nhan Dan (The People's Army), June 13, 1966.

<sup>67</sup>Herz, p. 427.

I warmly hail and sincerely thank the American people for their struggle to compel the U.S. government to end the war of aggression against Vietnam. By doing so they also help prevent the lives of many young Americans from being senselessly sacrificed in an unjust war against Vietnamese thousands of miles away from America.<sup>68</sup>

Occasionally, the Courier used a whole series of words to convey lofty sentiments:

The National Front for Liberation political programme aimed at uniting the entire people to struggle for such common goals as independence, democracy, peace and neutrality with a view to the gradual reunification of Vietnam; entirely conforms to the Geneva legislation as well as to the principle of self-determination of international law.<sup>69</sup>

Emotional associations were used to influence public opinion, even when the message appeared as reasoned argument or historical allegory with an almost legal phraseology. Color words were employed to convey an impression of American perfidy:

Vietnam is some 10,000 miles from the United States. The Vietnamese people have never done any harm whatsoever to the U.S. It was the U.S. imperialists who intervened in Vietnam and helped the French colonialists carry out a war of aggression in this country. Marking the victorious end of the first Resistance War waged by the Vietnamese people, the 1954 Geneva Agreements recognized the Vietnamese peoples' national rights: independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity. But the U.S. imperialists kept grossly interfering in the internal affairs of the Vietnamese people; they created a fascist

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<sup>68</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 43, January 13, 1966, p. 4, quoting President Ho Chi Minh.

<sup>69</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 45, February 10, 1966, p. 8. The author of the article was identified as "Do Xuan Sang, Doctor of Laws, ex barrister-at-law in Saigon."

dictatorial puppet administration in Saigon and launched a "special war" against the patriotic movement of the people of South Vietnam.<sup>70</sup>

Most of the messages implied that the tenor of world opinion opposed the United States--that it was in the common interest for the United States to withdraw from the war. The Courier advocated looking beyond the realities of the war and toward a peace and prosperity earned by the Vietnamese people by resistance to aggression:

Our people's just struggle has found clear and truthful expression in the correct stands of our government and the South Vietnam National Front for Liberation. This struggle and this stand have focused the attention of international opinion on our people's basic and urgent demands: a real independence closely linked to a genuine peace. These legitimate demands have been ever more largely and resolutely approved and supported by the world people.<sup>71</sup>

The Courier's writers realized that if universal peace sentiments could be manipulated to picture the enemy as the aggressor, the United States would be left with an inadequate defense against charges it instigated world dissension.

#### The Goals of the United States

The North Vietnamese propagandist realized that his audience had been educated to look beyond immediate causes of conflict to the larger, underlying causes of antagonism. He alluded to history to back up his case.

Vietnam's history is the story of a succession of foreign invasions. To win favorable public opinion in the nations that a few

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<sup>70</sup>Ibid., p. 5, quoting from a Democratic Republic of Vietnam Foreign Ministry memorandum issued February 3, 1966.

<sup>71</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 56, April 28, 1966, p. 9.

years before had transgressed Vietnam's sovereignty--nations like Japan and France--it obviously was necessary for the Vietnamese propagandist to treat that history gingerly, if he treated it at all. Therefore, his story of former depredations was lacking in essential details, such as identification of former aggressors. However, he used the terminology of a man that has known foreign rulers:

Politically, the presence of the expeditionary force lays bare the nature of the U.S. aggressive war, which is that of a war of conquest, of a colonial war: it plays the role of an army of occupation in many places and, at the same time, serves as the core of the enemy force confronting the Liberation Army Front.<sup>72</sup>

In the absence of a public statement by the Johnson Administration of U.S. intent to remain in Vietnam, the North Vietnamese propagandist drew on his country's previous experience as a colony. The U.S. intentions must be the same as the intentions of Vietnam's former rulers, he said, adding:

It is crystal clear that by refusing to recognise the National Liberation Front and stubbornly upholding the decaying Saigon regime, the Johnson Administration does not mean to abide by the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Vietnam and maintains its initial position: to perpetuate Vietnam's partition and to lay hold of South Vietnam to make it a U.S. new-type colony and base in South-East Asia. Hence the Saigon puppet regime is most indispensable to the American imperialists.<sup>73</sup>

The courier's writers incessantly repeated the same message: The U.S. intended to keep Vietnam as a military base and a "new-type" colony.

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<sup>72</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 56, April 28, 1966, p. 6, quoting from an address by Premier Pham Van Dong to the third session of the D.R.V. National Assembly, April, 1966.

<sup>73</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 45, February 10, 1966, p. 8. The story was signed by Do Xuan Sang who identified himself as "Doctor of Laws, ex-Saigon barrister-at-law."

It seemed an application of the Nazi's big lie technique--the bigger the often repeated lie, the better it would register. The propagandist tries to convince his audience that the facts he presents are commonly asserted.

Were the U.S. intentions commonly asserted? The Courier provided the answer:

On August 4, Agence France-Presse reported from Washington that President Johnson had contemplated to step up military activities and the psychowar in Vietnam to serve his purposes in the forthcoming elections in the U.S.A. The same agency disclosed that this new escalation had a double aim: to browbeat North Vietnam and humour a certain number of voters who were for "tough" measures to end the Vietnam war unleashed by Washington.

Everybody knows that this was but a trick serving immediate purposes as the escalation started two years ago, had not been able to stave off U.S. failures in South Vietnam, the American war maniacs embarked on the path of war acceleration and expansion in Vietnam.<sup>74</sup>

The North Vietnamese contended the United States was unreasonable and unrealistic in its "savage determination" to hold South Vietnam:

They [the U.S. Government's leaders] have opposed point three of North Vietnam's four-point peace plan because they have not given up their aggressive policy in South Vietnam, which they are occupying and want to turn into a new-type colony and a military base.<sup>75</sup>

The Hanoi Government was convinced, if the Courier reflected the official view, that the U.S. would not confine its aggressive policies to Vietnam. U.S. moves in that country were pictured as part of a larger plan to take over all of Southeast Asia;

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<sup>74</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 71, August 11, 1966, p. 2.

<sup>75</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 56, April 28, 1966, p. 9. The four-point peace proposal of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam was explained in the Vietnam Courier, in a special edition (unnumbered) issued January 31, 1966. According to Premier Pham Van Dong, "It is the unswerving stand of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam to strictly respect

the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Vietnam and to correctly implement their basic provisions as concretely expressed in the following points:

"1) Reaffirmation of the basic national rights of the Vietnamese people: peace, independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity. In accordance with the Geneva Agreements, the U.S. Government must withdraw all U.S. troops, military personnel and weapons of all kinds from South Vietnam, dismantle all U.S. military bases there, cancel its 'military alliance' with South Vietnam. The U.S. Government must end its policy of intervention and aggression in South Vietnam. In accordance with the Geneva Agreements, the U.S. Government must stop its act of war against North Vietnam, cease all encroachments on the territory and sovereignty of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

"2) Pending the peaceful reunification of Vietnam, while Vietnam is temporarily divided into two zones, the military provisions of the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Vietnam must be strictly respected: the two zones must refrain from joining any military alliance with foreign countries, and there must be no foreign military bases, troops and military personnel on their respective territory.

"3) The internal affairs of the South Vietnamese must be settled by the people of South Vietnam themselves, in accordance with the programme of the South Vietnam N.F.L. without any foreign interference.

"4) The peaceful reunification of Vietnam is to be settled by the Vietnamese people in both zones, without any foreign interference."

The five-point statement of the National Front for Liberation was explained in the Vietnam Courier, No. 87, December 5, 1966, p. 8. It had been issued March 22, 1965.

"1) The United States imperialists are the saboteurs of the Geneva Agreements, the most brazen warmongers and aggressors and the sworn enemy of the Vietnamese people.

"2) The heroic South Vietnamese people are resolved to drive out the U.S. imperialists in order to liberate South Vietnam, achieve an independent, democratic, peaceful and neutral South Vietnam with a view to national reunification.

"3) The valiant South Vietnamese people and the South Vietnamese liberation army are resolved to fulfill their sacred duty to drive out U.S. imperialists so as to liberate South Vietnam and defend North Vietnam.

"4) The South Vietnamese people express their profound gratitude for the wholehearted support of the peace- and justice-loving people all over the world and declare their readiness to receive all assistance including weapons and all other war materials from their friends in the five continents.

"5) To unite the whole people, to arm the whole people, to continue to march forward heroically and be resolved to fight the U.S. aggressors and the Vietnamese traitors."

The United States asserts that it "wants no U.S. bases in South-East Asia" and that it respects the will of the South-East Asian countries to be neutral and non-aligned if that be their option. But at the same time, it says that it has to keep its commitments to the South-East Asia Treaty Organization. It is common knowledge that SEATO is an aggressive military bloc set up by the U.S. to oppose the Geneva Agreements on Indo-China. The U.S. has impudently put South Vietnam, the Kingdom of Laos and the Kingdom of Cambodia under its "protective umbrella," and violated their sovereignty. It is obvious that the U.S. still pursues its schemes to include the Indo-Chinese and South-East Asian countries into its network of military bases with a view to checking the national liberation movement in this part of the world.<sup>76</sup>

Some reasons reported by the Courier to explain U.S. policies in Vietnam appear far-fetched. The Courier quoted banners and leaflets distributed by South Vietnamese Buddhists and leaflets distributed by them during the April, 1966, uprising against the Saigon Government. According to one leaflet, American leaders intended South Vietnam to be a part of the United States:

Even after the visit to the former imperial city of Hue by the so-called "mediation delegation" headed by Buddhist leader Thich Tri Quang to seek compromises in Central Vietnam, the people there still remained adamant. At a meeting on April 18, banners such as "Down with U.S. blind support to Thieu and Ky!" "Down with the political congress--C.I.A.'s tool!" were displayed by students and other people who distributed a great quantity of leaflets to protest against U.S. President Johnson's and McNamara's policy, and against manoeuvres to turn South Vietnam into U.S. 51st or 52nd state.<sup>77</sup>

The Courier stressed the "illegality" of the presence of United States' troops and of U.S. actions:

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<sup>76</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 45, February 10, 1966, p. 5, quoting from a D.R.V. Foreign Ministry memorandum issued February 3, 1966.

<sup>77</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 56, April 28, 1966, p. 12.



... But the fundamental principles as well as the important political and military provisions of the 1954 Geneva Agreements were not to the liking of the American ruling circles, for they run counter to their policy of intervention and aggression and thwart their aggressive designs on Vietnam and Indo-China.<sup>78</sup>

In describing U.S. intentions vis-a-vis the other nations of Indo-China, the Courier told its audience how the U.S. allegedly was attempting to accomplish its aims:

Over the past four years the situation has been seriously deteriorating and the anti-U.S. patriotic struggle of the Laos people has become more fierce and arduous than ever. The American imperialists have regarded the establishment of the National Union Government as a temporary compromise. They have not given up their dream to use armed forces to stamp out the revolutionary forces, nibble at the liberated areas and turn Laos into a U.S. new-type colony and base for aggression. On the other hand, through bribery, subversion and sabotage they have been paralysing the activities of the National Union Government. They have made the Vientiane authorities a tool serving U.S. policies, have been intensifying their "special war" of aggression against Laos while stepping up their "escalation" war against Vietnam and provocations against Cambodia.<sup>79</sup>

Stressing again the "illegal character" of the United States' strategy, the Courier hinted that the U.S. might be "rigging" South Vietnam's general elections. In any event, it asserted, the elections were meaningless--merely another "trick" to accomplish U.S. goals:

Over recent days, in Washington as well as at the United Nations, the responsible men of the U.S. Government have been raising a ballihoo [sic] about the elections scheduled by the Saigon puppet authorities for September, 1966.

.....  
The U.S. aggressors like to kill two birds with one stone: on the one hand they want to fool public

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<sup>78</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 64, June 23, 1966, p. 3.

<sup>79</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 67, July 14, 1966, p. 6.

opinion and mislead the mass struggle and sow bewilderment among the opposition forces; on the other hand, they try to toll up [sic] their Thieu-Ky agents now on the verge of collapse by describing them as "popular," "winning people's support," and claiming that there is "freedom and democracy" under their rotten regime.<sup>80</sup>

The United States was the embodiment of evil, according to the Courier. Not content merely to conquer and occupy all of Indo-China, including Vietnam, the U.S. was attempting to exterminate the Vietnamese as a people. The message was emotional with no careful attempt to lay fact upon fact in building the appeal:

The bombings of the suburbs of Hanoi and Haiphong prove quite clearly that the U.S. aggressors no longer balk at any crime to satisfy their feelings of hatred and frustration and their desire for world hegemony. The question is no longer to destroy military targets as claimed by the hypocritical strategists of the Pentagon, but as a matter of fact, to carry out a policy of genocide against all that is Vietnamese. Women, children, old people, hospitals, schools, bridges, leper houses, or even vegetation become U.S. targets.<sup>81</sup>

The tenor of that message suggests the possibility that the Courier reporter was threatened by the bombing.

The killing was done for several purposes, the propagandists said. In describing those purposes, the messages were more reasonable than emotional and probably were not written under the immediate threat of bombs:

Killing children with a view to frightening the parents, the U.S. imperialists nurture the hope of demoralizing the North Vietnamese people and forcing them to accept absurd conditions and give up their inalienable

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<sup>80</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 64, June 23, 1966, p. 11.

<sup>81</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 67, July 14, 1966, p. 6.

national rights, "sovereignty, independence, reunification and territorial integrity" as stipulated by the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Vietnam.<sup>82</sup>

As a final gambit, the Courier hinted that Americans were planning a nuclear war. Clearly, the message was intended to inspire opposition to the tactics the "imperialists" were using.

Following the news on [Robert] McNamara's October 9 to October 16 visit to Saigon, the American circles disclosed that the U.S. had introduced into South Vietnam 155mm and 204mm guns firing nuclear warhead shells. . . . They also revealed that shells for this kind of guns [sic] would be brought to Vietnam in the days to come.<sup>83</sup>

The Courier seemed intent in 1966 on emphasizing basic arguments: The U.S. started the illegal war to subjugate and destroy the people of Vietnam; the U.S. wanted to occupy all of Southeast Asia; the land would be used for U.S. military bases and the countries of Indo-China would be "new-type colonies;" the U.S. was willing to pursue tactics universally regarded as criminal and to back an illegal government.

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<sup>82</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 59, May 19, 1966, p. 4.

<sup>83</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 80, October 17, 1966, p. 8.

## CHAPTER III

### "THE WHOLE WORLD IS ON OUR SIDE"

The goal of Communist political warfare--as summarized by the Chinese--was "to unite with all the people which can be united around us, to win over the neutrals so that they will not help the enemies, to make use of the conflicts among enemies and thus to disintegrate the enemy camp."<sup>1</sup>

The Courier stories about support for North Vietnam and Communist forces in the South strongly implied--and in some cases stated--that people of other nations should rally to the cause:

International protest against this "escalation" danger comes from various strata of the population, from people from different social classes and from very widespread political tendencies. The anti-Vietnam War movement is growing ever more strongly.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to expressions of support from Communist countries, the North Vietnamese cited many instances of support from "enemy" countries. They formed "word alliances" with any nation, no matter how much its policy clashed with Communist interests, if such alliances would help them. The

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<sup>1</sup>Frederick T.C. Yu, Mass Persuasion in Communist China, (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1964), p. 19, quoting Hu Sheng, Yu Kuan-yuan and Wang Hui-teh, "Strategy and Tactics of the Communist Party," Series No. 27 of "Lectures on the Fundamental Knowledge of Social Sciences," Hsueh Hsi, No. 1, 1952, (February 10, 1952), p. 41.

<sup>2</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 56, April 28, 1966, p. 9.

The "alliances" were, of course, temporary, and they apparently were rationalized in terms similar to those employed by Chinese Communists:

There are now large-scale, powerful peace campaigns in capitalist countries. Those participating in these campaigns represent all kinds of people, including petty bourgeoisie and even capitalist elements. Although such campaigns are not socialistic in nature, they are against imperialism, the deadly enemy of the working class. Therefore, the Communist Party must participate in and lead such peace campaigns.<sup>3</sup>

#### Public Opinion

The Vietnam Courier in 1966 portrayed the United States as the "criminal" element in the Vietnam War and the object of scorn of all peoples:

A wave of struggle, the strongest and fiercest ever, is mounting in all countries including the United States, to oppose energetically the U.S. imperialists "escalating" the war and perpetrating new crimes against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

The Government of the D.R.V. and the Vietnamese people express their heartfelt thanks to the fraternal socialist countries and the governments and peoples of all peace- and justice-loving countries which have given warm support to the just cause of the Vietnamese people and sternly condemn the U.S. aggressors.<sup>4</sup>

The messages attempted to influence attitudes, form opinions and encourage action. The propagandists wanted to persuade their audience to help lessen or even end support for the United States in the Vietnam War. The nature of similar attempts has been described:

Low participation may manifest itself in two ways: first, participation may be shifted partly or totally from one group to another. In this case, one may speak of a split in participation. Second, low

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<sup>3</sup>Frederick T.C. Yu, Strategy and Tactics, p. 8, quoting Hsueh Hsi, No. 1, 1952, (February 10, 1952), p. 42.

<sup>4</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 67, July 14, 1966, p. 2.

participation may manifest itself as a withdrawal of individuals from the political sphere; in this case we speak of privatization.<sup>5</sup>

That "split in participation" was becoming a fact, according to the Courier. Americans, who normally would uphold the rules of their country, now were voicing support for their country's "enemy":

Of course, the American people would raise their righteous voices to stop this dirty war, which otherwise would drag on and squander American lives and property and would never be ended by Johnson's trick in accordance with White House ambitions.<sup>6</sup>

The dynamics of privatization are complex. "Withdrawal of cathexes from the group of its objectives leads to a process identical with narcissistic regression. Concern with the self becomes dominant."<sup>7</sup>

The Courier alleged that privatization was taking place in the enemy ranks and implied that it would continue:

Well aware that the U.S. imperialists are the criminal warmongers and ruthless enemy, a movement has been rising ever more vigorously among the people in the U.S. and a number of U.S. satellites against the aggressive policies of the U.S. imperialists and for the just struggle of the Vietnamese people for independence and freedom. In South Vietnam even U.S. and satellite soldiers and officers are taking part in increasing numbers and more and more actively in the movement to oppose the aggressive war of the U.S. imperialists in Vietnam to demand peace in Vietnam and repatriation.<sup>8</sup>

"Privatization is, among other things, a result of the hostility between the individual and the leadership of the group. . . . In order

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<sup>5</sup>Kris and Leites, p. 268.

<sup>6</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 71, August 11, 1966, p. 2.

<sup>7</sup>Kris and Leites, p. 268.

<sup>8</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 87, December 5, 1966, pp. 1, 6.

to maintain this attitude . . . projective distrust is set into operation. Scepticism becomes the guarantor of privatization."<sup>9</sup>

Still utilizing the "band wagon" technique, the Courier sought to engender that distrust and scepticism and thus guarantee privatization:

No honest people give credence to the U.S. "collective war" theory, and, in everybody's eyes, Johnson remains, as the world press has described him, "the god of plague and war," "the most strongly opposed president in U.S. history."<sup>10</sup>

The Vietnam Courier accounts of protests against United States policies and actions in Vietnam generally were written in clear, simplified form. They were complemented by detailed directives in a curious kind of Communist code; the "indicative-imperative."<sup>11</sup> The technique is simple. By using Party jargon with words that have specialized meanings, instructions are given in the indicative form. Instead of writing "Friends of North Vietnam and the National Liberation Front must protest U.S. actions." the Courier said "Friends of the National Front for Liberation and North Vietnam are protesting U.S. actions." For example:

The peace-loving people in the world who strongly oppose the perfidious United States' talks about "peace negotiations" and "unconditional discussions" are determined not to let the U.S. Government's "search for peace" dupe them.

Many governments, international democratic organizations and personalities, and world public opinion, including progressive opinion in the United States, have pointed out that the U.S. "search for peace" is only "a prelude to an ever more atrocious war of aggression."<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Kris and Leites, p. 273.

<sup>10</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 83, November 7, 1966, p. 2.

<sup>11</sup>Clews, p. 76.

<sup>12</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 45, February 10, 1966, p. 6.

Translating the message into the imperative, Communist party members were directed as follows:

Communists are to intensify their protests against United States' actions in Vietnam. The agitation program is to be carried out by means of the "peace" campaign and U.S. perfidy is to be used as the central theme to justify whatever local communist interest demands. All communist agencies, particularly in the mother countries, are to join in the agitation which will be made to appear as part of the struggle against U.S. imperialism. Liberal minded people of all parties and in all countries are to lend their support as well.

The technique has two advantages: First, its superficial message is meaningless to the casual reader. As such, it is dismissed merely as a news story; but its real meaning is clear to the Communist activists for whom it is primarily intended. Thus the message can be distributed openly. Second, by avoiding the imperative form with its obvious instructions and demands, the propagandist reduces the risk of causing public alarm.<sup>13</sup>

Such indirect appeals were used simultaneously with frank and open calls for action.

The Courier said public opinion opposed the bombing of North Vietnam because the act was a violation of law:

The Democratic Republic of Vietnam is a sovereign state. By bombing our country, the United States has violated the most elementary principles of international law. The U.S. must stop at once for good and unconditionally its bombing raids on our country as demanded by all people of good will in the world.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Clews, p. 76.

<sup>14</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 80, October 17, 1966, p. 2.



The propagandists said that public opinion demanded that the United States be punished for its acts. They sometimes merged the "band wagon" and "testimonial" techniques. The latter has been defined as having some respected or hated person say that a given idea, program, product or person is good or bad.<sup>15</sup>

In one case, the Courier quoted Bertrand Russell in an attempt to rally support for the Communist cause. Despite his other accomplishments, Russell was not an authority on international law, a fact that propagandists failed to mention:

In its August 1966 issue, the magazine Liberation carried a message from Lord Bertrand Russell to the American people, condemning the barbarous war waged by the U.S. imperialists in Vietnam and calling on the American people to take part in the establishment of the International Tribunal to try soon such war criminals as Johnson, McNamara, Rusk, Lodge, and Westmoreland.

Lord Bertrand Russell pointed out: "(The South Vietnamese) Liberation Front has the most ardent support of the people and only the wilfully blind fail to see this!"

All over the world there has been increasing realization that the American rulers are tyrants acting in conformity with their private interests and seeking to suppress any people who dare courageously to struggle against their cynical expression.<sup>16</sup>

To recruit advocates for the Communist position in Vietnam, the Courier quoted several "authorities" regardless of their credentials concerning the war or international law. The implication was that if learned men "got on the band wagon," their cause must have merit:

The declaration of world mathematicians on Vietnam sent on November 14 [1966] by Laurent Schwartz to Paris newspapers, bearing the first 1,444 signatures of well

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<sup>15</sup>Doob, p. 286, quoting The Fine Art of Propaganda.

<sup>16</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 80, October 17, 1966, p. 7.

known mathematicians in France, Japan, Canada and the signatures of 62 American mathematicians, condemned U.S. bombings of Vietnamese towns and villages and the use of napalm and gases banned by international law.<sup>17</sup>

The exigencies of war, like those of politics, result in strange bedfellows. The North Vietnamese were willing to accept material aid or moral support from any nation, even from one whose national policies were inimical to Communist interests. Such a policy coincided with advice by Lenin, who said:

The strictest loyalty to the ideas of Communism must be combined with the ability to make all the necessary compromises, to "tack," to make agreements, zigzags, retreats and so on, in order to accelerate the rise to power of the Communists.<sup>18</sup>

While the propagandists did not indicate their government had been forced to submit to agreements with capitalist countries, they were grateful for the support they received. Under the headline "West Europeans Support Vietnam," the June 23, 1966, issue of the Courier reported support for the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese from France, Belgium, West Germany, Britain, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, The Netherlands, Switzerland and Greece. A typical story:

The railway workers of West Berlin collected 700 West German marks for Vietnam.

On the occasion of the International Childrens' Day, young pioneers collected 5,000 West German marks as the proceeds from a sale of Vietnamese photos and donated them to the Vietnamese people.

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<sup>17</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 87, December 5, 1966, p. 5, 7. The article was signed by Nguyen Xien who identified himself as "Chairman of the Committee of Action Against the U.S. Imperialists' and Their Henchmen's Policy of Terror Against South Vietnamese Intellectuals."

<sup>18</sup>Clews, pp. 88-89, quoting Lenin.

In a letter sent to the Permanent Representative of the South Vietnam National Front for Liberation, P. Franz wrote: "With the Vietnamese pictures, I have been doing propaganda against the U.S. among my schoolmates. I wish to send to the N.F.L. this sum of 10 marks. I cannot send more because I am only a school pupil not earning my living yet.<sup>19</sup>

Such stories were illustrated with pictures of anti-Vietnam War demonstrations in Vancouver, Canada, and in Paris.

The propagandists, by citing alleged world-wide support of the Communist cause, attempted to influence a basic attitude: No one likes to back a losing candidate in an election or bet on a sure loser in a horse race; by attempting to show that world public opinion opposed U.S. policies, they implied that the U.S. eventually would be forced to defer to that opinion and withdraw from Vietnam.

#### Support in the United States

The Courier's propagandists repeatedly called attention to anti-war demonstrations in the United States, apparently under orders similar to those issued to Chinese Communists.<sup>20</sup>

Thus, to exploit the demonstrations, the Courier said:

We are particularly moved by the ever growing and coordinated actions of the intellectuals and students in the U.S. against the dirty war in Vietnam: from the open letter of 16 American personalities and intellectuals to J. Kennedy in 1962 to the meetings and teach-ins held in

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<sup>19</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 64, June 23, 1966, p. 10.

<sup>20</sup>Chinese Communist propagandists had been reminded that, "Although such campaigns are not socialistic in nature, they are against imperialism, the deadly enemy of the working class. The development of such campaigns is undoubtedly helpful to the liberation cause." Yu, Mass Persuasion, pp. 24-25, quoting Hsueh Hsi, No. 1, 1952 (February 10, 1952), p. 42.

American universities and recent demonstrations by thousands of intellectuals from various branches of social and natural science. The Vietnamese people will never forget the self-immolation by fire of Helga Hertz, Norman Morrison, Roger Laporte, Helen Jankowsky, who did not flinch from sacrificing their happiness and lives to enlighten the American people on Vietnam.<sup>21</sup>

"Proper substantiation of an argument," Aristotle wrote, "requires the citing of evidence, the appeal to authority. Improper substantiation aids and abets an indiscriminating and credulous subservience, tractable massmindedness, not an exacting, critical and individual awareness."<sup>22</sup>

The North Vietnamese propagandists obviously examined United States publications and those of other enemy or neutral countries for "authorities" who supported their views. They found them:

According to Sorengen [sic] (U.S. ex-President Kennedy's adviser), the overwhelming majority of the United States population oppose the U.S. Government's aggressive policy in Vietnam, and 90 per cent of American people demand that this dirty war be ended.<sup>23</sup>

U.S. Senator Fulbright ridiculed the Manila meeting [of October, 1966 between Johnson and leaders of the South Vietnamese Government] as a conference with "a cozy little group of our boys."<sup>24</sup>

It is fortunate that the [U.S.] peoples themselves nurture no illusions that the D.R.V. would negotiate [without permanent cessation of bombing by the U.S.] and many are those Americans who, like the American negro leader Bill Epton and the courageous war-resister David

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<sup>21</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 87, December 5, 1966, p. 5. The article was signed by Nguyen Xien who identified himself as "Engineer, Chairman of the Committee of Action Against the U.S. Imperialists' and their henchmen's Policy of Terror Against South Vietnamese Intellectuals."

<sup>22</sup>Siepmann, p. 335, quoting Aristotle.

<sup>23</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 59, May 19, 1966, p. 6.

<sup>24</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 83, November 7, 1966, p. 2.

Mitchell, have demanded that Johnson and company be handed over to an international court for trial and punishment as war criminals.<sup>25</sup>

The Courier occasionally used the "plain folks" device, a propaganda technique in which the writer "attempts to convince his audience that he and his ideas are good because they are 'of the people,' the 'plain folks.'"<sup>26</sup> Thus, a North Vietnamese propagandist quoted several "plain folks" of the United States:

I am sickened [about the war] "says Mrs. Susan Pressly, a housewife. "This is a lousy, stinking war. It's dirty and immoral," says Mr. Henry Rubin, a restaurant owner. "We're using--killing--the Vietnamese people for our own purposes. We're not rescuing or protecting them." [Quoting Rubin]. "This is a terrible war, a barbarous war," says Mr. G. Wade Savage, a Los Angeles professor."<sup>27</sup>

The Courier writers seemed to believe that the opinions of American teachers counted heavily in the formation of attitudes. Several stories told about student strikes and demonstrations led or abetted by university professors:

Professors and students in the U.S.A. went on strikes, [against the resumption of bombing in North Vietnam after a one-month pause in January, 1966] namely at the Stanford and Philadelphia universities. From February 2, 100 students started a hunger strike which will last 8 or 14 days.<sup>28</sup>

1,500 American teachers sent an open letter to Johnson demanding: 1. An immediate cessation of raids on North and South Vietnam. 2. Direct negotiations with all parties involved in the conflict, including the

<sup>25</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 59, May 19, 1966, p. 3.

<sup>26</sup>Doob, p. 286, quoting The Fine Art of Propaganda.

<sup>27</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 59, May 19, 1966, p. 2.

<sup>28</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 45, February 10, 1966, p. 7.

South Vietnam National Front for Liberation. . 3. An immediate cessation of hostilities. . 4. Free elections throughout Vietnam as stipulated by the Geneva Agreements.<sup>29</sup>

In external propaganda, the Communists, whose ideology is militantly atheistic, make systematic use of religious organizations and personalities to support their international campaigns, particularly those concerned with peace. Their references seem to constitute an attempt to influence the attitudes of their audience, which presumably respects its religious leaders and thus will follow their example.<sup>30</sup> The Courier occasionally referred to activities by religious organizations:

The Quakers' Association has decided to hold meetings shortly in Washington and such other large cities as New York, Berkeley, Philadelphia to collect funds and medicines for the Vietnamese people in both parts of the country.

A spokesman of the Association, Ross Flanagan, stated that its members would undertake every action to support the Vietnamese people, regardless of the U.S. ruling circles' threat to punish anyone who has any "connection" with the enemy--the Vietnamese people. It is to recall that the Johnson Administration has prevented by every means the Quakers' Association from sending medicaments and medical instruments to Vietnam.<sup>31</sup>

Another example:

1,000 Catholic priests, Protestant pastors and rabbis and many other personalities of the International Committee of the Conscience in Vietnam issued a manifesto condemning the U.S. raids in North Vietnam as unjustifiable by any moral or political consideration and urging withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 45, February 10, 1966, p. 9.

<sup>30</sup>Clews, p. 173.

<sup>31</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 80, October 17, 1966, p. 7.

<sup>32</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 45, February 10, 1966, p. 9.

In North Vietnam, as in North Korea during the Korean War, "confessions" of captured pilots were cited as "evidence" against the United States.

We are printing below some excerpts from confessions by captured U.S. air pirates to help our readers see the truth.

—DAVID B. HATCHER, born in 1934 in California, Captain, U.S. Air Force, flying an F-105 from Taklee Airbase in Thailand, captured shortly after he bailed out of his plane shot down by the armed forces and people in Yen Bai Province on May 30, 1966: "Since my capture, I have realized that the war which is waged by the U.S. Government against Vietnam is dirty and bad because it is against the will of the Vietnamese people, and makes it impossible for them to have their independence, their freedom, territorial integrity and their national reunification. It is an unpopular war because it is not approved by many U.S. people. It violates the Geneva Agreements of 1954 on Vietnam, the U.N. charter and others. In addition, the U.S. aircraft have bombed, under orders of the U.S. Government, various targets in North Vietnam resulting in the damage to dykes, schools, hospitals, churches and innocent people. I have to be responsible for these crimes also . . . . I wish to repent and ask you to forgive me. I am sure that you will agree, for I know that you are a generous people. This I have found in the humane treatment you have given me. . . .<sup>33</sup>

Communist Chinese prisons and the rationale for "confessions" of the sort given by the United States pilots in North Vietnam have been described:

We must not imagine that the pariahs can fulminate against the system within their cell walls or under the sun of the Gobi desert. The pressure on them is so great, we have learned, . . . that the

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<sup>33</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 67, July 14, 1966, pp. 3, 7. The article contained several similar "confessions." The August 11, 1966, issue also carried several "confessions" from captured airmen.

prisoners are zealous to bow to the warders [wardens], accusing themselves of all manners of crimes and thanking the People's Republic which has transformed their way of thinking.<sup>34</sup>

In privatization, "Concern with the self becomes dominant. Since the striving for individual indulgence is maximized, the individual becomes exceedingly vulnerable to deprivation."<sup>35</sup>

In some stories about U.S. soldiers who refused to support the Vietnam War, the Courier seemed to encourage privatization. The reasons are obvious: There would be fewer U.S. soldiers who wanted to fight and the American public would become more concerned about the justice and legality of the war. A typical story appeared in the December 5, 1966,

Courier:

A source of replenishment of U.S. forces in South Vietnam is the draft-age youths in the States. There are no more volunteers for very few people volunteer to go and die in this dirty war. Draftees are only sufficient to plug the loopholes caused by the casualties suffered on the battlefield and to relieve servicemen waiting for repatriation. Draft-age youths leave no stone unturned to dodge enlistment so as not to commit crimes and to die a shameful death. Thousands of them have gone to Canada for the same purpose. Many of them have burnt their draft cards and declared straight out that they would prefer prison to being sent to Vietnam.

.....  
 . . . And even to shun military service is a just and honourable action.<sup>36</sup>

Each Courier examined contained at least brief mention of dissension in the enemy's camp.

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<sup>34</sup>R. Guillain, 600 Million Chinese, translated by Mervyn Savill, (New York: Criterion Books, 1957), pp. 288-289.

<sup>35</sup>Kris and Leites, p. 268.

<sup>36</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 87, December 5, 1966, p. 2.



Were the protest movements in the United States aiding the Communist cause? Ho Chi Minh said:

We hold that the protest movement in the United States against the "dirty war" gives an active support to our cause. Despite the government's persecution, the movement has not ceased to develop.<sup>37</sup>

The United Front of Socialist Countries

Principal aims of Communist propaganda are to help consolidate the "united front" and to defeat decisively the enemies of the party.<sup>38</sup>

The goal of uniting the Communist countries and parties against "imperialism" was set forth succinctly in the Manifesto published by the Warsaw Conference of 1948:

The communist parties should place themselves in the vanguard of the opposition against the imperialist plans of expansion and aggression in all its manifestations, whether in the sphere of State administration, politics, economics or ideology and at the same time they should unite and co-ordinate their efforts on the basis of a common anti-imperialist and democratic platform as well as gather around themselves all democratic forces in their respective nations.<sup>39</sup>

During a war, there is a special necessity for a "united front"; Ho Chi Minh described North Vietnam's need for such unity this way:

The United States has a big economic and military potential. To defeat such an enemy, we must first of all rely on our own strength, and at the same time strive to secure the most effective international assistance.

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<sup>37</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 83, November 7, 1966, p. 4, quoting Ho Chi Minh from an interview granted to Emmanuel d' Astier de la Vigerie of the French magazine Evenement.

<sup>38</sup>Yu, Strategy and Tactics, p. 8.

<sup>39</sup>Clews, p. 44, quoting the Warsaw Manifesto of 1948.

The assistance and support given us by the brotherly socialist countries are particularly valuable. Hundreds of thousands of volunteers from the socialist countries have declared their readiness to fight the U.S. imperialists by our side. We warmly thank them for their militant solidarity with us. When necessary, we shall ask them.<sup>40</sup>

The Courier's frequent mention of support from Communist countries and Communist parties seems to have had two objectives: To remind the "brotherly" socialists that their support was needed and to warn those who might side with the South Vietnamese Government and the United States.

The countries most frequently mentioned by the Courier were Russia and China. In terms of men and material, those nations could aid the Vietnamese much more than could the small Communist nations. A typical reference to Russia and China was in the January 13 Courier:

Another victory of our people lies in the increasingly powerful development of the world-wide front against United States-led imperialist aggressors, the keynote of which is the ever more tremendous, concrete and realistic support of mankind for the Vietnamese people's struggle.

What is particularly significant is that the imperialists, when launching attacks against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, have failed to foresee that the socialist countries, first of all the Soviet Union and China, will give every necessary assistance to the Vietnamese people in countering their war of destruction.<sup>41</sup>

The Courier said the Soviet Union was supporting Vietnam; yet, reports from Russia concerning support played down promises of material

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<sup>40</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 83, November 7, 1966, p. 4, quoting Ho Chi Minh from an interview conducted by Emmanuel d' Astier de la Vigerie of the French magazine Evenement.

<sup>41</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 43, January 13, 1966, p. 4.

aid. The principal assistance mentioned was moral in nature. Perhaps the Russians wanted to maintain options in their commitment to the Communist cause in Vietnam. That seemed to be the case when a visiting Soviet dignitary was quoted in the Courier in January:

. . . Comrade A.N. Shelepin stressed that this visit is to "express to the Vietnamese people the iron-like solidarity and determination of the Soviet people who are fighting valiantly against U.S. interventionists."<sup>42</sup>

As the year progressed, the Soviet Union's promises of aid still were not emphasized. As reported in the Courier, they mainly were expressions of moral backing. The Soviet Union's expressions of aid and comfort often consisted of repeated support of the basic stands taken by the Hanoi Government and the National Front for Liberation:

The Supreme Soviet once again reaffirms that it unreservedly supports the four-point stand of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the five-point statement of the South Vietnam National Front for Liberation and the statement of Comrade Ho Chi Minh, president of the D.R.V., which constitute a sound basis for the political settlement of the Vietnam problem.

The Supreme Soviet resolutely demands that an end be put to U.S. aggression in Vietnam. The U.S. Government must strictly respect the Geneva Agreements on Indo-China, stop immediately, permanently and unconditionally its bombings on the territory of the D.R.V., put an end to its armed intervention in South Vietnam, withdraw all its satellite troops from South Vietnam, dismantle all U.S. military bases there, and recognize the South Vietnam National Front for Liberation as the only genuine representative of the South Vietnamese people and recognize the right of the Vietnamese people to decide their own destiny without foreign interference and to settle themselves the problem of peaceful negotiation.

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 3, quoting a January 9, 1966, speech in Hanoi by A.N. Shelepin, a member of the Russian Presidium and secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Union will do all in its power to assist the heroic Vietnamese people in their fight for independence and liberty.<sup>43</sup>

From Peking also came expressions of moral support and vague promise of aid if needed. There was no mention of the ideological differences then threatening a split in the "Communist Monolith," for nothing must distract from expression of the solidarity of the "United Front." The reports of support from China generally were on this order, as reported to the Courier from a Vietnamese visitor to Peking:

I have arrived in Peking. I have seen only a few people and have been to only a few places, but whoever I met and whatever places I went to, have brought home to me that our Chinese friends have done, are doing and will do everything in their power to help our people.<sup>44</sup>

There was, of course, no mention of the fact that for thousands of years the Vietnamese had regarded the Chinese as the aggressors to be feared most.

The Communists had allies throughout Asia, according to the Courier. Wherever the U.S. was involved in warfare, the "people" (i.e., the Communist parties) were united against the "imperialists." Lest the Laotian people forget their commitments to the "United Front," the Courier published this letter from the North Vietnamese vice-premier and foreign minister, Nguyen Duy Trinh, addressed to Laotian Prince Souphanouvong:

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<sup>43</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 71, August 11, 1966, p. 5, quoting from a statement in the First Session (Seventh Legislature) of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R.

<sup>44</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 43, January 13, 1966, p. 6, quoting a letter from Huynh Van Ly, a member of the N.F.L.

The Vietnamese people are firmly confident that the militant solidarity of the Indo-Chinese people strongly supported by the world people will certainly frustrate the manoeuvres of United States imperialism aimed at stepping up and expanding its aggressive war. The just and patriotic struggle of the Lao people is bound to win.<sup>45</sup>

All over the world, the Courier said, the "United Front" sided with the "just" and "legal" stand of the Communists in Vietnam. The militantly anti-American government of Cuba, while expressing moral support for the North Vietnamese and National Front for Liberation, also promised "volunteers" to aid in the fighting:

The Cuban Party and government delegation expressed full support for the four-point stand of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the five-point statement of the South Vietnam National Front for Liberation, the sole genuine representative of the South Vietnamese people.

.....  
The Cuban delegation made clear that it is the unswerving policy of the Communist Party, government and people of Cuba to extend to the fraternal Vietnamese people resolute support and assistance in all forms till the total victory of their anti-U.S. resistance. It reiterated the Cuban Government's readiness to send--when requested by the fraternal Vietnamese people--Cuban volunteers to fight side by side with them against the common enemy--the U.S. imperialist aggressors.<sup>46</sup>

In stories that combined reports of material aid and moral support from Communist countries, Russia and Chinese offers took precedence. Presumably, the propagandists thought comments from Communist giants would most impress their readers. An example of a "roundup" story

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<sup>45</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 64, June 23, 1966, p. 9.

<sup>46</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 83, November 7, 1966, p. 5, quoting a joint communique issued by the D.R.V. and a Cuban mission to North Vietnam headed by President Osvaldo Dorticos Torrado. According to the Courier, the mission arrived in Hanoi November 11, 1966. No date was given for the communique.

follows; the headline, "The Heads of State of Brother Countries Reaffirm Their Support to the Just Struggle of the Vietnamese People," is typical:

Following are quotes from letters sent in reply to a January 24 plea by Ho Chi Minh who requested material and moral support from various communist countries: From Liu Shao-chi, Chairman of the People's Republic of China: "To whatever extent U.S. imperialism must expand its war and whatever may be the price we have to pay, we 650 million Chinese will stand by the fraternal Vietnamese people in a joint struggle to thoroughly defeat the U.S. aggressors."

From Nikolai Podgorny, President of the Presidium of the U.S.S.R. Supreme Soviet: ". . . Discharging its internationalist duty, the Soviet Union will continue to help the brotherly Democratic Republic of Vietnam strengthen her defence potentials and repel aggression and to give staunch support to the heroic South Vietnamese people who are waging a courageous fight under the leadership of the South Vietnam National Front for Liberation."

From Choi Yong Kun, President of the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly of the Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea: "In the future too, as in the past, the Government of the Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea and the entire Korean people will do everything in their power to give active support and aid to the brotherly Vietnamese people who are fighting against the U.S. imperialists' aggression and for freedom and independence of the country."

From A. Novotny, President of the Socialist Republic of Czechoslovakia: ". . . As in the past, we firmly support the D.R.V. Government's stand as laid down in the four-point declaration issued in April 1965 and the stand of the South Vietnam National Front for Liberation which is regarded as the genuine representative of the South Vietnamese people."

From Hadji Leshi, President of the Presidium of the National Assembly of the Peoples' Republic of Albania: ". . . The People, Workers' Party, National Assembly and the Government of the People's Republic of Albania will unite closely with the Vietnamese people till the latter win an inevitable and well-deserved victory in their struggle against U.S. imperialist aggression which is doomed to ignominious failure."<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>47</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 45, February 10, 1966, pp. 1-2.

The Warsaw Manifesto not only directed a "united front" of Communist countries but also stressed that the Communist parties should unite in "opposition against the imperialist plans of expansion and aggression in all its manifestations. . . ."48 At times it appeared as if the Courier had referred to the Manifesto for the wording used in citing support from Communist parties. A report of support by the Communist party of Japan is typical of several others:

Together with the high tide of struggle of the Japanese people against United States imperialism and Japanese monopolies, for national independence, peace, democracy, neutrality and improvement of the living standard, the widespread movement of support to the Vietnamese people has been mounting everywhere in Japan under all forms, with the participation of broad sections of the people, mass organizations, and political parties.

The Communist Party, the Socialist Party, the Japan-Vietnam Friendship Association and all other democratic forces in Japan have organized days of struggle against the U.S. aggression in Vietnam throughout the country. . . .

By various methods, the Japanese people translated their wholehearted support for Vietnam into deeds. Millions of signatures were affixed to a petition of protest against U.S. aggression in Vietnam. The collection of signatures was organized by Sohyo, the Japanese Council of Struggle Against A- and H-Bombs and even by the Association of Religious Believers for Peace, which held demonstrations near U.S. military bases. . . .

The Vietnamese people are deeply grateful to the Japanese people for their wholehearted support. Like the Japanese people who would shout "Gamboro" (Let us strive together), every time they meet, peoples of Vietnam and Japan will, by stepping up their militant solidarity, certainly drive the U.S. imperialists out of their countries and regain national independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity.49

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<sup>48</sup>Clews, p. 44, quoting the Warsaw Manifesto of 1948.

<sup>49</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 74, September 5, 1966, pp. 5-6.

The propagandists did not mention the "imperialist" policies of the Japanese during World War II, nor did they refer to the Japanese occupation of Vietnam during the war years.

The frequent mention of Communist support for North Vietnam and the National Front for Liberation constitutes an appeal to the human desire for conformity. "Because we are all in a degree lonely and diffident and also uncertain of our purpose, the temptation is great to save ourselves the effort of individual decision and go with the crowd."<sup>50</sup>

#### Appeals to Fear

Appeals to fear--the elementary self-interest in survival--sometimes are effective but they must be used judiciously. That is especially true when the employment of weapons or the threat of weapons intensifies fear of violent death among the people for whom the message is intended.<sup>51</sup>

The North Vietnamese told the United States that if the war continued, other Communist countries probably would intervene. The messages were attempts to "force one course of action upon the enemy by threatening severe reprisals if another course of action is followed. The political interest of the foreign propagandist in disabling the enemy's power to govern a well organized population is reconciled with the interest of the warned people in its own self-preservation."<sup>52</sup>

China was the most vociferous of the large "brotherly socialist" states in promising aid to Vietnam:

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<sup>50</sup>Siepmann, p. 338.

<sup>51</sup>Speir, "Psychological Warfare Reconsidered," pp. 477-478.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., p. 478.



After condemning the U.S. Government's hostile policy towards the People's Republic of China, such as invading Taiwan, a part of China's territory, preventing the restoration of China to her legitimate position at the United Nations, violating China's territorial waters and airspace, the [North Vietnamese Government] spokesman fully supported the stern warning and correct position of the Chinese Government and concluded: "Should the U.S. imperialists obdurately pursue their aggressive war against Vietnam and recklessly violate China's airspace, the Vietnamese people, shoulder to shoulder with the fraternal Chinese people, would fight resolutely against them and would certainly deal them death counter-blows."<sup>53</sup>

The newspaper reported that many more Communist nations had pledged support during the Warsaw Conference of July, 1966:

The Conference of the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Treaty Organization countries held in Bucharest at the beginning of this month adopted a statement which is a stern condemnation of U.S. aggression in Vietnam and an official warning to the U.S. imperialists. The statement reads in part: ". . . Having discussed the situation in Vietnam, arising from the expansion of hostilities by the United States, the parties to the Warsaw Treaty: 1. Warn the government of the United States most resolutely about the responsibility it assumes before mankind by continuing and expanding the war, for all the unforeseeable consequences that may arise from this for the U.S. itself, among others.

"2. Are rendering and will go on giving the Democratic Republic of Vietnam ever increasing moral-political support and every kind of assistance with means of defence, materials, equipment and specialists, needed to repulse the American aggression victoriously with due account for the requirements of the new phase of war in Vietnam.

"3. Declare their readiness, if the government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam requests, to allow their volunteers to go to Vietnam in order to help the Vietnamese people in their struggle against the American aggressors."<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 59, May 19, 1966, p. 5.

<sup>54</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 67, July 14, 1966, p. 5.

The words were strong but such appeals are dangerous. One researcher says threats of force are effective only if immediately followed by force--that nothing is more damning than an empty propaganda threat.<sup>55</sup>

#### Appeals for Action

Propagandists cannot be content merely to influence attitudes. Their responsibility is greater. "In the conduct of psychological warfare, sight must never be lost of the fact that a change in attitudes and private opinions amounts to little if it fails to result in deviant, politically relevant behavior."<sup>56</sup>

The propagandists of North Vietnam were aware of that aspect of their mission. To ensure that the "whole world" was, indeed, on their side, the Courier's propagandists attempted to persuade readers to engage in behavior "politically relevant" to the Communist cause.

Internal Appeals. In 1901, Lenin described the mission of newspapers in Communist countries:

The role of the paper is not confined solely to the spreading of ideas, to political education, and to attracting political allies. A paper is not merely a collective propagandist and collective agitator. It is also a collective organizer.<sup>57</sup>

That organization is accomplished, at least in part, by combining general slogans with actual tasks. Communist party slogans must be made

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<sup>55</sup>Herz, p. 431.

<sup>56</sup>Speir, "Psychological Warfare Reconsidered," p. 474.

<sup>57</sup>Lenin, "Where to Begin?" Selected Works, Vol. II, p. 21.

understandable and meaningful to the people through their own experience and work:

In Communist China it is not enough for people to shout such general slogans as "hate America, condemn America and despise America. . . ." The Communist propagandists are told to make the people understand why they should hate America. They are also urged to show what they can actually do to "oppose America's aggression," and this generally means increase of economic production, improvement of work, or donation of money to buy airplanes and artillery.<sup>58</sup>

The Vietnamese Communists realized the importance of such appeals and Viet Cong propagandists were told to use techniques similar to those used by the Chinese to urge increased production. Since Vietnam was at war, however, some messages urged the Vietnamese to express their hatred of Americans by fighting as well as by producing. The November 7, 1966, Courier published this appeal by the National Front for Liberation to "the South Vietnamese people":

Compatriots, cadres and fighters! The U.S. imperialists are reactionary, stupid and boastful. They have not yet understood the invincible strength of such heroic and indomitable peoples as ours, endowed with iron-like determination and rich fighting experiences. All right! They may not understand it now, but we will make them understand it in five, ten, twenty years or longer. . . . Let's translate our deep hatred into thundering blows at the U.S. aggressors and their henchmen. Let's translate the glorious tradition of South Vietnam, the brass wall of the fatherland, into bright exploits.

. . . . .  
Guerrillas and militiamen and women! Fight the enemy wherever he is, using all the means and all weapons available, cut all communication lines, infiltrate deep into the enemy's rear and hit hard at his stores and airbases, tighten the noose on U.S. posts and military bases, snipe at him day and night and give him no respite.

Regional armymen! Make deep thrusts, muster your strength then fan out in the enemy-temporarily-occupied

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<sup>58</sup>Yu, Strategy and Tactics, p. 13.

areas, help our compatriots in town and countryside struggle against the enemy, annihilate the ruffians, rise up to break the enemy's grip and win back the right to be masters of their land.

Regular army units! Deal deadly blows at the U.S. mobile units and puppet troops, don't let them raise their heads!

Compatriots in the liberated areas! Plough in one hand and rifle in the other, take an active part in armed and political struggle and propaganda work among enemy soldiers, stick to your fields and villages, increase production, actively serve the Front and give efficient support to the struggle of our compatriots still under the enemy's grip!

Officers and soldiers of the puppet army and officials of the puppet administration! Check the U.S. aggressors' acts of cruelty, arrogance and insolence which are of daily occurrence. How can you remain indifferent to the danger being faced by the nation? How can you choose the path of ignominious death with the aggressors and traitors instead of finding a way to come over to the side of the people and struggle together with them against the enemy in order to serve the fatherland?

Interpreters in the service of the U.S. imperialists! Actively help in propaganda work to stir up anti-war feelings among the G.I.'s so that they demand peace and repatriation. Find all opportunities to help our compatriots in their struggle against the shelling, rape, plunder and massacre by the enemy.

Compatriots, cadres and fighters. . . ! Be resolute to fight and win, however long and hard the struggle may be, for nothing is more precious than independence and freedom.<sup>59</sup>

In more general terms, government leaders called on the people of North Vietnam to defeat the enemy. The Courier quoted Premier Pham Van Dong in a speech before the Democratic Republic of Vietnam National Assembly:

Compatriots and comrades! Under the victorious banner of the Party headed by President Ho Chi Minh and armed with invincible Marxism-Leninism, let our people

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<sup>59</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 83, November 7, 1966, p. 4.

and fighters steadily march forward! More glorious victories are awaiting us, the victors.<sup>60</sup>

The Courier had mixed domestic and external messages, a procedure termed ineffective by propaganda experts.

External Appeals. According to the Courier,

the Bureau [of the International Conference for Solidarity with the People of Vietnam, against U.S. Imperialist Aggression, for the Defence of Peace] has sternly condemned the U.S. imperialists' war crimes in North and South Vietnam and exposed the "peace negotiation" hoax of Washington.

The appeal writes [sic] in part: "On the occasion of the 12th anniversary of the signing of the 1954 Geneva Agreements, we earnestly call on the peoples of the U.S.A. and the world over, as well as international organizations for peace and democracy to energetically condemn U.S. aggression and crimes in Vietnam, step up further the movement of solidarity with the Vietnamese people in their struggle against U.S. imperialist aggressors, give them unstinted support and wholehearted assistance, especially back the just stand of the D.R.V. Government and the March 22, 1965, statement of the N.F.L.

We hope that by their mass struggle, and various activities such as raising funds for material aid to the Vietnamese people, demonstrations in front of U.S. embassies, strong opposition to enlistment for the war of aggression in Vietnam, boycotting the shipment of arms, war material and U.S. satellite troops to South Vietnam, the world's people will launch, on the occasion of the July 20th anniversary, a huge and widespread movement in support of Vietnam so as to stay the bloody hands of the U.S. aggressors. . . .

With the ever increasing encouragement and support of the forces of socialism, national independence, peace and democracy in the U.S.A. and the world over, the Vietnamese people will secure final victory. The U.S. aggressors and their agent will certainly be defeated.<sup>61</sup>

The Courier appeared to be following a propaganda line promulgated by Russia. In 1952, a Soviet Union spokesman described several purposes of anti-western propaganda:

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<sup>60</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 56, April 28, 1966, p. 9.

<sup>61</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 67, July 14, 1966, p. 2.

. . . to rally the mighty anti-war democratic front for the purpose of strengthening the peace; strengthen the ties of friendship and solidarity with peace supporters the world over; persistently to expose all preparations for a new war and all the designs and intrigues of the warmongers.<sup>62</sup>

The Courier called on its readers to expose the "designs and intrigues of the warmongers":

The National Assembly of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam calls on the peace- and justice-loving people in the world to increase further their actions in support of the Vietnamese people's struggle against the U.S. imperialist aggressors, and to promote further the movement of solidarity with, and assistance in all fields to the Vietnamese people. It calls on the world peoples to give stronger support to the stand of the Government of the D.R.V. and that of the South Vietnam National Front for Liberation, to sternly lay bare the "peaceful negotiation" double talk of the U.S. Government, to severely condemn the U.S. aggressors and take necessary actions to stay their hands and prevent them from using toxic chemicals and poison gas to massacre the South Vietnamese people, and strategic planes to bomb Vietnam and Laos.<sup>63</sup>

A Courier writer asked fellow journalists to help expose the American "aggression." He addressed his appeal, in part, to the Afro-Asian Journalists Association, which has been identified as a "Peking-oriented" organization:<sup>64</sup>

We urgently call on members of the Afro-Asian Journalists Association and the progressive and democratic colleagues in the whole world to make full use of all media of information--journals, magazines, radio, TV,

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<sup>62</sup>Clews, p. 50, quoting Georgi Malenkov's closing speech at the 19th congress of the Soviet Union's Communist Party.

<sup>63</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 56, March 28, 1966, p. 4.

<sup>64</sup>Clews, p. 166. The Association was formed in Djarkarta in April 1963, organized by the Indonesians with strong Chinese support. By 1964, it had affiliates in 48 countries.

photographs, documentary films, etc.,--to expose the brutal crimes of aggression of U.S. imperialism, smash its fallacies and make known to the world the heroic struggles, brilliant victories and the only correct stand of the people of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and of the South Vietnam National Front for Liberation.<sup>65</sup>

According to researchers, propagandists should direct their appeals to certain groups:

Instead of attempting to induce deviant behavior in the enemy population at large--a practice predicated on the absurd assumption that whole populations are imbued with the spirit of heroism and self-sacrifice--psychological warfare can concentrate on selected groups whose self-interest, predispositions and organization are conducive to deviation. Work with and through existing cells of resistance and disaffected parts of the population is likely to be more effective and will boomerang less easily than indiscriminate agitation.<sup>66</sup>

Although most appeals were diffuse, Vietnamese propagandists occasionally addressed messages to selected "self-interest" groups. One was directed by Viet Cong propagandists to the men fighting in Vietnam and their families:

On this occasion [the Viet Cong-declared Christmas and New Year's truce in 1966] the South Vietnam National Front for Liberation calls on the American people and the peoples in the U.S. satellites, the families of army men in these countries and the army men who are members of the U.S. aggressive army in Vietnam to show their determination in their struggle to compel the U.S. imperialists not to extend their military service nor to prolong their service in Vietnam. Only by taking such resolute actions in close coordination with the Vietnamese people against U.S. aggression and for national salvation, is it possible to bring to an end all the mourning and sufferings caused by the U.S. imperialists to the American people and the peoples of the U.S. satellites, to restore genuine peace and freedom

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<sup>65</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 64, June 23, 1966, p. 9.

<sup>66</sup>Speir, "Psychological Warfare Reconsidered," p. 477.

to the Vietnamese people, honour Christ and welcome the New Year in the happy atmosphere of family reunion. As immediate steps, it is necessary to struggle to demand that your commanders correctly observe the suspension of military attacks issued by the South Vietnam National Front for Liberation in order to enjoy the freedom granted you by the N.F.L.<sup>67</sup>

An article directed to educators was signed by the "teachers of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam" to establish identification with fellow educators who read the Courier:

Educational and cultural workers of all countries! You are undoubtedly aware of what a painstaking task it is to train a man, educate a child, and foster in him the love of men's finest virtues and of the truth. You certainly share our feelings at the sight of the classrooms ruined, of our school children murdered, mutilated and napalmed.

Raise your voices! Protest and act to stop such barbarous bombings! Denounce and condemn relentlessly U.S. aggression and crimes against Vietnam, as long as U.S. planes go on pouring bombs and bullets around the clock on our country, as long as the U.S. aggressors remain on our soil.

We hope and are convinced that however different our political tendencies or the colours of our skin may be, we always are of one mind in the defence of our children and educational work.

The people of Vietnam, the children of Vietnam will feel for you an undying gratitude.<sup>68</sup>

Accompanying the article was a picture of a boy being carried by another youngster. The caption read, "Nguyen Huu Cuong, a 13-year-old blind [boy], had a leg cut by an American bomb on January 31, 1966. He is now carried to the classroom by his mates."<sup>69</sup>

The Courier cited "enemy" sources who urged action favorable to the Communists:

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<sup>67</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 87, December 5, 1966, pp. 6-7.

<sup>68</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 83, November 7, 1966, p. 3.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid.



"Terroristic or indiscriminate bombing must involve the death of non-combatant men, women and children, and merits the general condemnation of humanity," says Mark O. Hatfield, Republican governor of Oregon.<sup>70</sup>

Psychologists say serious internal strains and disturbances may result if a person is compelled to try to perform an act of which he is incapable. Unreasonable demands may culminate in hostility toward the person who is making the demands.<sup>71</sup> Courier writers were at least unconsciously aware of that principle. They did not demand that their readers "overthrow President Johnson;" instead, they exhorted them to perform tasks of which they were easily capable, such as protesting the war.

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<sup>70</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 59, May 19, 1966, p. 2.

<sup>71</sup>Herz, p. 424.

## CHAPTER IV

### "THE FAILURE OF UNITED STATES POLICY"

The Courier contended the United States was losing the war: The bombing of North Vietnam was hardening the resolve of its people, while in South Vietnam, the allied armies were losing battle after battle and campaign after campaign. Because of continued setbacks, morale was crumbling among the allied forces and conflicts were developing between the "imperialists" and the "puppets." In striking contrast was the Courier's description of life in North Vietnam. Progress was reported there in education, agriculture and industry.

That black-and-white portrayal was an attempt to convince English-reading peoples to support the winning side. But in presenting its case, the Courier ignored the advice of communications researchers who have asserted that domestic and internal propaganda should not be mixed. Exceptional loathing and hatred of the enemy are not effective in propaganda directed at an audience committed to the enemy's side. Messages gleefully pointing out enemy weaknesses and exulting over his discomfiture and travails have proved unsuccessful.<sup>1</sup>

While the Courier's audience was not necessarily committed to the United States and to South Vietnamese policies, the newspaper's reports were intended to affect attitudes and thereby to influence opinions about the war.

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<sup>1</sup>Herz, p. 425.

It must be presumed, however, that some of the Courier's statements were aimed, at least in part, at a portion of the population committed to the enemy's posture. If the principles learned by earlier propagandists can be applied to the selections that follow, those messages must be considered failures in attempts to persuade the enemy that his stand was futile. For example, the selections are filled with exultations over the failures of every phase of United States' policy.

A North Vietnamese spokesman traced the history of U.S. failures in Vietnam:

In 1954, the long-term and heroic resistance of our people ended successfully. Peace was restored in Indo-China, North Vietnam entirely liberated. That great victory meant a failure not only for the French colonialist but also for the U.S. imperialists who had come thrice to their rescue. Dien Bien Phu was a disaster both for the French colonialists and the American imperialists. Thus the U.S. was defeated for the first time.

But U.S. imperialism did not reconcile itself to failure. During the years following the signing of the Geneva Agreement, it set up the dictatorial Ngo Dinh Diem regime and drowned the South Vietnamese revolution in blood in the hope of subduing our people and putting them under the yoke of neo-colonialism. But our compatriots in the South rose up and struggled resolutely against the U.S.-Ngo Dinh Diem clique. The Ngo Dinh Diem regime collapsed. That was the second defeat the U.S. suffered at our hands.

U.S. imperialism unleashed an undeclared war, and waged what they called a "special war" against the liberation of our people in the hope of conquering the South of our country. But our compatriots rose up as one man and combining political with armed struggle, frustrated the U.S. "special warfare" tactics in the main. It was the third failure inflicted by us on the U.S.

Facing total bankruptcy, since the middle of 1965, U.S. imperialism has been sending massive expeditionary forces to South Vietnam with a view to preventing the collapse of the puppet army and administration, wiping out revolutionary forces, regaining control of some lost areas,

thus hoping to turn the tide of the war and bring a favourable change to the situation. The 1965-1966 "dry season counteroffensive" strategy which inaugurated this perfidious scheme was foiled by the South Vietnamese Army and people. Thus was the fourth U.S. reverse in its dash with us.

Along with the stepping up of the aggressive war in the South of our country, U.S. imperialism has been waging an air and naval war of destruction in the North, hoping to undermine our socialist construction work, interdict the assistance of the North to the South and demoralize our people. The army and the people of North Vietnam have been returning telling blows, downing over 1,000 U.S. planes, sinking tens of U.S. commando boats, and thwarting the fundamental plans of the war of destruction. That was the fifth U.S. setback in the war against us.<sup>2</sup>

The Courier alleged that the United States' most serious failures were on the military front, but its setbacks in other phases of the war were just as serious. Even the October, 1966, Manila Conference, which the United States claimed was to determine future strategy, was regarded by the Courier as a signal of defeat for the "imperialists":

Along with its military setbacks, its political failure is no less heavy. The U.S. scheme to turn its aggressive war in Vietnam into "Asia's Collective War" was designed to alleviate its isolation. Cambodia's Head of State Norodom Sihanouk put it more plainly: "It is a meeting of imperialists, colonialists and Asian renegades." This U.S. scheme has gone bankrupt. Because of opposition from Pakistan and France, the military blocs set up the U.S. previously are of no use in the Vietnam War. U.S. allies in this war as well as at the Manila Conference are merely its henchmen and satellites. They have either invited U.S. troops to occupy their own countries, like South Korea, the Philippines and Thailand, or are tied up to the U.S. military alliance pacts, like Australia and New Zealand.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 71, August 11, 1966, p. 4.

<sup>3</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 83, November 7, 1966, p. 2.

Thus, the propagandists implied that the United States' allies were motivated by "imperialistic" designs on Vietnam or were unwilling partners forced to side with the Americans and the South Vietnamese Government in this "dirty war." No explanation was offered of how Pakistan and France evaded commitment to the war, while Australia and New Zealand could not.

#### Military Failures of the Allies

"A propagandist speaking for the side that retreats, has lost a battle or is militarily weak, must fight uphill."<sup>4</sup> Therefore, the propagandist utilizes every conceivable opportunity to point out successes of the friendly side and setbacks of the enemy. The North Vietnamese propagandists often resorted to outrageous claims of enemy losses.

Many stories in the Courier in 1966 were translations of articles that had appeared in internal propaganda media. Their original intent seems to have been to raise morale on the home front, since success in war prompts high morale, thus the agencies that control the news will be inclined to at least exaggerate victory to cover up or deny retreat:

It is not a habitual indifference to truth which makes the reports of high military and civil authorities in times of war an almost continuous narrative of successes. Rather, the inability of the average citizen to penetrate into the darkness of remote facts induces propagandists to maintain as long as possible their stolid optimism; in attempting to spread this attitude, they have justification in the fact that confidence is a prerequisite of sustained effort and future success.<sup>5</sup>

The "United front" concept is regarded by Asian Communists as essential in efforts to solicit support from other Communist nations and

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<sup>4</sup>Speir, "Psychological Warfare Reconsidered," p. 474.

<sup>5</sup>Speir, "Morale and Propaganda," p. 14.

to rally support in the home country. Mao Tse-tung has called the "united front" the "most basic political platform of the People's Liberation Army as well as of the Chinese Communist Party."<sup>6</sup> According to one researcher, the "united front" is of great importance in the study of Communist propaganda.<sup>7</sup>

The Communists' reliance on armed struggle reflects the importance of military power in Asian politics. It also reflects the needs of a prolonged revolutionary struggle in which rural areas were gradually "liberated" prior to control of the urban centers. In this type of warfare, everyone must play a part. Some bear arms, some grow produce, some support the front-line fighters in maintenance and supply of equipment. For the "liberation movement" to succeed, it must be, in truth, a "people's war."<sup>8</sup>

Chinese Communist Party Chairman Mao Tse-tung, commenting on the "people's war" in his country, said:

Conceiving of themselves as existing in an environment dominated by violence and as struggling against enemies who seek to maintain their control by military means, the People's Liberation Parties have gradually turned to the task of creating their own military forces.

Confronted with such enemies, it is inevitable for the Chinese revolution to take on a protracted and ruthless nature. . . . Confronted with such enemies, the method and principal form of the Chinese revolution must necessarily be militant and not peaceful. . . .

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<sup>6</sup>Yu, Strategy and Tactics, p. 5, quoting Mao Tse-tung, Turning Point in China, (New York: New Century Publishers, 1948), p. 19.

<sup>7</sup>Yu, Strategy and Tactics, p. 5.

<sup>8</sup>L.W. Pye, Guerrilla Communism in Malaya, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1956), p. 27.

It is absolutely correct for Stalin to say, "One characteristic peculiar to the Chinese revolution is opposition against the armed counter-revolutionaries by the armed revolutionaries."<sup>9</sup>

In reporting sacrifices and achievements of the Vietnamese in their fight against "foreign oppression," the Courier sought to convince readers that all Vietnamese people supported the "people's war." In other words, if everyone is doing it, it must be right. The Vietnamese--North and South--were said to be united in spirit against a common foe:

If, owing to historical circumstances, revolutionary tasks have become different for the North and South, the unity of hearts and minds remains unshakable. This unity is now at a much higher level than in 1946, for in the course of the past 20 years, the Vietnamese people have gained unequalled political and military successes.<sup>10</sup>

The strength of the armed forces was the strength of the people, North Vietnamese spokesmen said. The present people's war was merely an extension of the prolonged battle against foreign domination:

Our enemy only rely on their weapons and have failed because we command better weapons than theirs: people's war and people's armed forces. These extremely sharp weapons were tempered in the Resistance War against French colonialism and have been tempered in many years' struggle against American aggressors. Now that the U.S. expeditionary troops have been brought into South Vietnam, the people's war and people's armed forces have grown more powerful, more seasoned and strong enough to defeat the enemy.<sup>11</sup>

In describing the war, the propagandists sometimes supplied highly improbable details:

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 29, quoting Mao Tse-tung.

<sup>10</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 56, April 28, 1966, p. 2.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 7, quoting an address by North Vietnamese Premier Pham Van Dong to the third session of the D.R.V. National Assembly, April, 1966.

In mid-1956, while the U.S.-Diem clique sabotaged the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Vietnam by refusing to hold general elections throughout the country for national reunification and brazenly launching many atrocity raids and campaigns of terror, a few youths out of hatred went into a forest and set up a revolutionary group. Faced with the enemy's encirclement and persecution, they had to work very hard, keeping strictly to their "Five No's": No footprint when moving, no smoke when cooking, no noise when speaking, no noise when coughing, and no offensive smell when relieving nature. . . .<sup>12</sup>

The War in the North. According to the Courier, the bombing of North Vietnam was a failure: Rather than lessen enemy infiltration, it had stiffened the resolve of the North Vietnamese people. Damaged military capabilities were repaired quickly, and the only serious effect was the suffering of civilians. The Courier indicated that because the bombing was not achieving the desired military effects, it should be stopped:

Transport and communications, like other branches of activity in the country [North Vietnam] were expanding when at the beginning of 1965, the U.S. aggressors, in their attempt to get out of their stalemate and put an end to even heavier defeats in South Vietnam, extended their war to North Vietnam.

Their aircraft bombed and strafed economic, cultural and national defence establishments, populated areas and chiefly the transport and communications system with a view to paralysing communications in North Vietnam.

.....  
All over North Vietnam, on the major lines which have been either often, rarely or not yet attacked, efficient counter-measures are being applied such as anti-air raid protection of roads and bridges, prompt filling up of bomb craters on the roads, various methods of crossing rivers, building of temporary bridges and roads, roundabouts, deviations, etc. In the main, the communication lines remain open despite fierce bombings and strafings by U.S. aircraft.

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<sup>12</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 45, February 10, 1966, p. 9.



Not only has the communication network been maintained but also strongly expanded.<sup>13</sup>

The Courier often reported the "people's war" in feature-story style, apparently because the subject of the story could be portrayed as a "common man." Stories attributed to the subject emotions with which the audience could identify and a "dedication to the cause" meant to inspire admiration:

The day was just dawning. There was a true bustle at the airfield. Chief mechanic Hong checked "his" engines for the last time. He stopped a long time by the planes on duty, minutely watching each of their "organs." He was glad that his unit had got everything ready for the sorties of the days. Everybody here harboured a deep hatred for the U.S. pirates who had been massacring [sic] his kith and kin in North and South Vietnam.

Mechanics and fighters marking runways could not directly defy the enemy in the sky but each of their acts was permeated with an eager desire to defeat the U.S. aggressors. Everything was done to the best to secure victory for our pilots.

The sun soon shone warm and bright.

All of a sudden, the C.P. called us: "Enemy planes sighted. Take off!" The aircraft of H.'s formation shot off toward the sky. The enemy was on the left, the C.P. announced. Our pilots spotted four U.S. planes headed for Hanoi. "Those who attack our country's heart shall pay for their offence," this pledge of the men of H.'s formation resounded in their hearts. Our planes dashed forward, cutting the formation of Thunderchiefs into sections.

Attacked by surprise, U.S. air pirates lost their self-control, the more so as our A.A. batteries wove a close fire network before them. They hesitatingly turned back. B. kept a close watch on one of them and fired. Hit by the burst, the Thunderchief with its wounded white-helmeted pilot staggered and crashed to the ground. B. looked back and saw his comrade T. firing at a second Thunderchief. He had no chance to intervene since T., a pilot of much experience, scored a direct hit at the head of the enemy craft. The other Thunderchiefs hurried away. Our planes banked to greet the new exploit while on the ground, the dyke and the river rang with applause and shouts of joy.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 74, September 5, 1966, p. 4.

<sup>14</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 67, July 14, 1966, p. 4.

Although obviously written by a writer whose native language was not English, that story did attempt to use English expressions, such as "kith and kin." The writer was trying to tell about the emotions of the common man in Vietnam in a language and using emotions with which the common man in an English-speaking country could identify.

Use of first-person plural may have been an attempt to make the story more interesting or, more likely, merely the result of poor writing or translation.

Failure to use the names of the pilots could have been prompted by a fear their "exploits" would be used against them if they were captured. Or, the writer might have wanted to convey that impression.

Another improbable story concerned a North Vietnamese engineer platoon whose members supported several trucks with their arms and heads. While the story was designed to encourage admiration for the exploits of the soldiers, it invites disbelief:

American planes has just struck at bridge Z. in a mountainous area of North Vietnam. Engineering Platoon X. was immediately given marching orders and instructed to repair it at all costs for lorries to pass before 6 p.m.

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As it was obviously impossible to restore the bridge to its former position in time, the engineers decided to build a stone bridge, as they said, across the ravine, some 500 metres away.

No sooner had the bulk of the platoon jumped into the water than it rained cats and dogs. Thunder rolled and lightning streaked the grey sky. Lorries rushed to and fro without letup, loaded with stone and timber that were passed from hand to hand in a line down to the bed of the ravine. Voices, laughter and songs rose about the rattling of rain drops and the rustle of the wind. Now and then someone fell on the slippery ground, causing loud laughter. The downpour became heavier still as nightfall approached. Time flew away quickly without anyone noticing it. The cook brought food to the spot;

he shouted at the top of his voice and announced that dinner was ready but none stopped work, everyone being anxious to finish it as soon as possible.

Five p.m. The "bridge" was ready except for a gap of five or six metres in length. All of a sudden a convoy drew up and sounded the alarm. To keep it waiting would mean danger and delay. The drivers and engineers shared the same concern. In a rapid exchange of views, somebody put forth a bold plan: a "human bridge" should be improvised. All agreed.

The members of the platoon rushed to the unfinished portion and stood close to each other in two rows on each side. Bundles of thick firewood, then planks were laid on their heads. With their feet in the mud and chest deep in water, they kept silent. Waving a flag to give the starting signal, the platoon commander opened the traffic. The first lorry, very slowly, cautiously moved on the planks. Without breathing, the men lifted the span of the "bridge" with all the strength of the heads and hands. Their faces and their arms were taut with the effort.

When the last lorry had crossed over, all shouted for joy. The drivers came back to this side of the ravine and hugged the engineers.

The platoon hastily resumed its work to make up for the "lost" time. At 6 p.m. that day the building of the "stone bridge" was complete.<sup>15</sup>

A danger in reporting instances of that kind is the strong possibility they will be dismissed as preposterous by the reader, thus discrediting the propagandist's effort. Propaganda experts in World War II suppressed true messages that might be regarded by the enemy as fabrications.<sup>16</sup>

In attempts to win by political means a cessation of the bombing of North Vietnam, the Courier again keyed the message to the common man. It reported incidents with which the readers could identify and attempted to show that the bombing was stiffening the peoples' resolve:

On June 28, 1966, U.S. planes had bombarded Hoa Loan at midday, when everyone in the village was taking

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<sup>15</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 80, October 17, 1966, p. 5.

<sup>16</sup>Herz, p. 417.

a little rest. Twenty old women and children had been killed, fifty persons, most of them women and children, wounded.

It was then transplanting time. Young women trans-planters full of hatred had stuck rice plants into the rice-field which soon looked like a large area bristled with small bayonets. These plants had grown up in the fire of hatred.

On the night of June 28, 1966—a mournful day for Hoa Loan, 160 youth of the village had volunteered for the army. Until then, most of them had been unpatiently waiting for drafting. I met on the drying floor a young man holding in his hand a screw driver. I asked him: "Did you enter your name on the volunteers list that day?"

"Yes," he answered.

"Why are you not leaving? Do you intend to get married before joining the army?"

"No, I don't," he replied. "I am awaiting my turn. Half an hour after being called up, I shall leave. I am ready to join the army."

The same answer, "I am ready," spontaneously came from Bau, a reserve N.C.O.; Mai, a 17-year-old girl working in the stock farm and many others. . . . After the bombing she had thought to herself: "We must avenge our dead. It is good to produce much rice and meat for the front. But it's better to face the Yanks directly!"<sup>17</sup>

The Courier noted that in a small nation like Vietnam, all citizens, even women, must be mobilized to fight a larger power:

"When the aggressors come, even the women fight them," says the proverb. That's what they are doing. They have been aroused by bitter hatred against the American invaders. They have been spending almost all their leisure time in learning how to handle anti-aircraft guns and sometimes they forgot about their meals. They are determined to master A-A gunnery and make a direct contribution to the destroying of U.S. bombers. Luu Ai Van even sent the self-defence command a petition requesting the setting up of a women-manned A-A battery. On June 29, 1966, though she was not on duty, this girl, who was just out of her teens, volunteered to carry shells in the thick of a fight against U.S. air pirates. Each time, she carried on her shoulders the two shell cases which weighed some 70 kilograms.

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<sup>17</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 87, December 5, 1966, p. 4.

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 Now recognized reserve anti-aircraft gunners, the four girls kept asking for permission to fight U.S. planes. At last, on August 2, 1966, they were allowed to do so. They themselves managed an A-A gun and fired with surprising accuracy. U.S. aircraft were howling over their heads, diving on them and spitting rockets around their battery. But they calmly and resolutely fought on. On that day, they contributed to the common victory in a worthy manner. The armed forces of Haiphong, to which their unit belonged, downed five U.S. craft and drove the others away.

As soon as the engagement ended, they immediately resumed work in the shipyard. Spurred by their own fighting achievements, they did their utmost to raise their labour efficiency. All of them have recently fulfilled their plans ahead of schedule.<sup>18</sup>

The North Vietnamese seemed to regard the youth of the nation as the most important single class of contributors to the war effort. That group must be the most ideologically motivated to withstand the physical and psychological stresses of warfare. In addition to actual fighting, the youth in North Vietnam were being mentally conditioned in 1966 to take over the government and the war. The importance of youth to the government and to the Communist party of North Vietnam was underscored by Le Duan, identified by the Courier as "First Secretary of the Vietnamese Workers' Party Central Committee." He wrote:

It is obvious that our successes are not accidental. What is at the bottom is the fighting solidarity of our entire people in general and of our youth in particular. It is safe to say that our nation, our youth, are very strong. Only when the youth are strong is the nation strong. What is the source of our youth's prodigious strength? Is it not the revolutionary ideal instilled in them and fostered in them by the Party for tens of years?

The youth are enthusiastic, energetic and craving for an ideal to fight for. Consequently, an accurate

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<sup>18</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 74, September 5, 1966, p. 4.

definition of their ideal is the aim of the revolutionary struggle. Without an aim, the revolutionary struggle will lose its bearings.<sup>19</sup>

The Courier ascribed such aims to the youth of North Vietnam.

Outstanding contributors to the war effort were cited in an attempt to prompt emulation:

Thirteen-year-old Nguyen Cong Tien of the sixth-form (Cam Binh School in Ha Tinh Province) has been chosen as a good pupil and a good producer: he sold to the state 52 kilograms of fowls and his "anti-U.S. poultry" still includes 43 birds.<sup>20</sup>

The Courier continually discussed subjects with which the audience could identify. For instance, the "sacrificing mother" image was perpetuated, showing overseas readers that North Vietnamese mothers were contributing to the common effort just as mothers elsewhere would or did contribute to their country in wartime:

In many localities of Hanoi suburbs, the Fighter-Sponsoring Mothers' Association has addressed itself to the task of giving assistance to the families of arymen and militiamen by doing such work as minding or adopting their children. These mothers have also supplied boiled water to the soldiers in the course of drilling and growing fruit trees for them. Of late, the fighter-sponsoring mothers have collected 10 tons of cast-off cloth for the soldiers to clean their firearms and thousands of bamboo poles and trusses of hay to camouflage their fortifications.<sup>21</sup>

The importance of the people's effort in the war in North Vietnam was cited by Premier Pham Van Dong in an attempt to bolster the image of the "united front":

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<sup>19</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 71, August 11, 1966, p. 4.

<sup>20</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 59, May 19, 1966, p. 4.

<sup>21</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 80, October 17, 1966, p. 6.

The population take part in shooting at U.S. aircraft, help the army build their fortifications, carry ammunition, prepare meals for the fighters, maintain communications, ensure transport and capture pilots and in many cases even replace gunners. In this heroic collective endeavour, the ordinary people have become valiant fighters, the difficulties seem smaller than they actually are; how heroic and enthusiastic indeed is life in the hard fighting!<sup>22</sup>

The War in the South. Astounding successes were attributed by the Courier to the "people's army" in South Vietnam. The claims again seemed designed to boost morale on the home front and to persuade the enemy that prosecution of the war would be futile.

In describing the friendly forces, the propagandists told about brave soldiers battling overwhelming odds but emerging triumphant owing to their almost super-human skill and tactics. In contrast, the allies were losing because of the nature of their strategy and commitment. Again, the Courier offered a black-and-white picture--the good guys defeating the bad guys. For instance:

It is crystal clear that the strategy and tactics of people's war are skillful, invincible, flexible and resourceful, while those of the enemy grow from bad to worse and are beset by unending crisis.

The military setback of the U.S. imperialists in the dry season was the initial failure of the "local war" strategy, the third strategical mistake of the Americans, the first strategical mistake being their attempt to achieve neo-colonialism through the Ngo Dinh Diem regime and the second strategical mistake being the launching of the "special war." It is clear the second mistake was bigger than the first one. The more the U.S. imperialists rely

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<sup>22</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 56, April 28, 1966, p. 5, quoting an address by Premier Pham Van Dong to the third session of the D.R.V. National Assembly, April, 1966.

on their material strength and technique, the bigger is their mistake and the more bitter their failure.<sup>23</sup>

The war in South Vietnam also was explained in terms that could be understood by the "common man." The Courier said all persons in South Vietnam except those in the pay of the "imperialists" were fighting against foreign oppression:

A most remarkable fact in the guerrilla movement in South Vietnam in these days is the participation of the population in the fighting under various forms. Feeling a deep hatred for the aggressors and proud of the people's glorious traditions, the inhabitants are most eager to fight against the U.S. imperialists and serve the country, realizing the mottoes "When the enemy come, even women and children will fight," "Seek out and attack U.S. troops and puppet troops."

At Cu Chi, an old man who deeply hated the cruel U.S. aggressors insisently asked for a hand mine, learned to use it, then succeeded in blowing up an M-113 armoured car and wiping out nearly half a U.S. squad.<sup>24</sup>

The technique was an old one: "The movement is good because it is a movement of the people, the plain folks."<sup>25</sup>

The propagandist tried to show that resistance to the movement was prolonging the war and delaying the inevitable. The Courier said that the more the imperialists fought, the more the populace would rally to the people's cause:

Responding to the appeal by the South Vietnam National Front for Liberation Central Committee to resolutely fight and defeat the American aggressors,

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<sup>23</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 64, June 23, 1966, p. 8, quoting Truong Son, "Causes and Reasons of Liberation Army Front Big Victory in 1965-1966 Dry Season," Quan Doi Nhan Dan (The People's Army), June 13, 1966.

<sup>24</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 59, May 19, 1966, p. 7.

<sup>25</sup>Doob, p. 286, quoting The Fine Art of Propaganda.



youths throughout South Vietnam have asked to join the army in great numbers. Many of them have been enlisted.

In P.T. Village, Son Tinh District, Quang Ngai Province, during the first drive, 200 youths have applied but only 97 have been drafted by the army and volunteer youth brigades.

When seeing them off, their families and co-villagers said to them: "Do your best in the fight against the American aggressors and try to achieve many exploits, protect the people, wrest back freedom, independence and national reunification. As for us who stay behind, we'll satisfactorily discharge all our duties."<sup>26</sup>

According to the Courier, the war "of the people" was achieving notable successes owing to its very nature:

The guerrillas make their strong offensive position felt in contended and occupied areas, transform the enemy's rear into our front line, consolidate and extend the liberated areas, and are ensuring protection for the population; they coordinate their activities with large-scale offensives mounted by the regular army and widen the scope of action of big units of the Liberation Army Front.<sup>27</sup>

What conventional force could hope to win a war fought by "all the people?"

The War in Laos. Not only were the United States and its "puppet" allies losing the war in both Vietnams, said the Courier, but the "people's army" in Laos was winning its battles with "imperialist" forces. The messages implied that prosecution of the war, against determined opposition "by the people," was futile--a waste of men and equipment.

During the past four months, with their valiant spirit and clever fighting, the Lao people and army who closely united with the Neo Leo Haksat [Laotian Communist party] have repeatedly repelled enemy assaults on all battlefields in Upper, Central and Lower Laos. According

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<sup>26</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 80, October 17, 1966, p. 8.

<sup>27</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 87, December 5, 1966, p. 3.

to still incomplete figures, from early December [1965] to the end of March of this year, they wiped out more than 5,000 enemy soldiers, shot down 134 U.S. aircraft and seized thousands of tons of arms and ammunition and other military equipment. The number of enemy troops wiped out in the past four months equalled the 1965 figures.<sup>28</sup>

The stated alternative for the United States was to withdraw from Indo-China. There was no middle ground for diplomatic compromise.

The South Vietnamese conflict, according to the North Vietnamese Government, was part of a larger struggle being pursued by the people throughout Indo-China against "imperialism." As in North and South Vietnam, the conflict had produced many fighters worthy of admiration. Descriptions of them usually stressed the hardships they had to overcome; the characters that emerged were Asian "Horatio Algiers." The Courier did not indicate the source of this typical story which had the headline, "The Rose of Xieng Khuang":

A native of southern Xieng Khuang, Ba Lia lost her mother when still a child. Her father had been engaged in the revolutionary activities ever since 1959 when the Pathet Lao Second Battalion broke through the encirclement of the rightist faction's forces in the Plain of Jars; he regained his base and trusted his daughter to his [sic] care. The little Lao Sung girl, less than 13 years of age, began her life as a combatant.

Intelligent and keen on study, Ba Lia soon mastered the three "R's" and was sent to a nurse training course set up by the military sector. As soon as the course ended, she was assigned to an army unit; she went through several others, taking part in many engagements, and was credited with brilliant achievements.

.....

In newly liberated Th. the inhabitants, who refused to follow the fleeing troops, were under the influence of the enemy's propaganda. Ba Lia's unit commanders decided that there should be cadres to propagate the Neo Leo Haksat [Laotian Communist Party] policies, win over the population and stabilize production. Ba Lia was fully "qualified" to

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<sup>28</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 56, April 28, 1966, p. 10.

get in touch with the adversary's people, without being noticed by the adversary's agents. So she got the assignment. She left the unit in her best green uniform that she used to put on only on festive days of the army and population. Noticing this her comrades asked her why she was dressed this way. She said: "Anyone who wants to mingle with the people must overcome prejudices created by the enemy's deceitful propaganda. I've chosen to put on my uniform to show to the Lao Sung that a girl of their nationality can become a cadre, fight against the dong dua Amelica (U.S. imperialists--ed.) and serve their compatriots as a nurse. Once he has won the confidence of the people, he enjoys their protection against the enemy.

Ba Lia went to a hamlet. Sighting her the inhabitants fled away. "Compatriots," she shouted, "we all are Lao Sung." Recognizing from her voice that the young girl was one of their own people, some, then many, stopped running and then came to her. They surrounded her, listening to each of her words and looking at her from head to foot. Ba Lia spoke and her listeners were literally spellbound. Finally, she opened her leather bag, took out anti-malaria and anti-enteritis pills and, showing them when and how to use them, distributed them to the hamlet folks. An old woman affectionately stroked her face and smoothed down her hair saying, "A Lao Sung girl all over!"

. . . . .  
The following days, the inhabitants began returning to liberated Th., first a few old women and little girls, then men and youth. The unit had to detail more cadres to help Ba Lia. Within a week, her group succeeded in talking almost all people of the hamlet into coming back to their homes.

The Lao Sung population at Th. highly praised Ba Lia who fully deserves her name. Ba Lia, which means rose in their language, is a fragrant flower found in Xieng Khuang forests.

Ba Lia, the nurse, the fighter and the agitator, was awarded a Liberation medal by the Neo Leo Haksat Central Committee in late 1965.<sup>29</sup>

In reporting such stories of individual and collective accomplishments "by the people," the Courier hoped to convince readers that the Communists had achieved a consensus in Southeast Asia--a "united front." Therefore, all who valued democratic processes should rally to the Communist side to

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<sup>29</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 74, September 5, 1966, p. 6.

oppose the "imperialistic" designs of the United States, for who would frustrate a movement "of the people," a movement backed by "the whole world"?

#### Morale

The Courier claimed the morale of enemy troops was declining, but it was rising among the Communist forces.

Stories utilized a basic technique of psychological warfare: "The propagandist tries to shape expectations by interpreting the events as tokens of the future. . . . Moving from ideology to the concrete and specific concerns of people he talks to, he descends, to use a phrase of Karl Marx, from language to life."<sup>30</sup>

If the intent of the messages was to engender a further drop in morale, there is doubt about the effectiveness of the propagandists' attempts. Communications researchers found that, during World War II, attacks on the American soldier's fighting abilities made him want to vent his feelings on the enemy.<sup>31</sup>

A typical story:

American troops are boxers not only half-blinded but lacking combatitiveness too. They are forced to wage an unjust and utterly savage war on a terrain and in conditions with which they are entirely unfamiliar and which offer them so many difficulties to overcome. They do not understand for what purpose they have to sacrifice their lives on this harsh battlefield! That is why they have no heart and fear everything: they fear our fighters, our people, our climate, nature. . . .<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>Speir, "Psychological Warfare Reconsidered," p. 482.

<sup>31</sup>Herz, p. 429.

<sup>32</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 56, April 28, 1966, p. 7, quoting Premier Pham Van Dong in a speech to the third session of the D.R.V. National Assembly, April, 1966.

South Vietnamese troops also reportedly were experiencing a drop in morale. According to the Courier,

the puppet army which had just experienced a bitter military defeat was beset with political crises and was crumbling morally and organizationally. Therefore, though its effectives remained numerous, its fighting capacity was in practice negligible. Neither could it be a reliable force to be used in the "pacification" job.

As for the U.S. troops, they were fighting without a goal and ideal. Therefore their morale was low and became lower in the process of the fighting. They had been organized and trained in a way but were forced to fight in another way, therefore they found themselves in a very awkward position. Had they continued to fight in the American way, their defeat would have been even more disastrous.<sup>33</sup>

In time of war, each combatant tries to lower the morale of the opponent, and numerous methods are used in those attempts.<sup>34</sup> The Courier said the bombing of North Vietnam constituted such an attempt, but the effort was reported to be a failure:

The U.S. aggressors dream of shaking with bombs the morale of the Vietnamese people. They hope to get out of the military and political quagmire they have been driven into following the heavy defeats of the U.S. expeditionary corps in South Vietnam, particularly during the last dry season.<sup>35</sup>

The North Vietnamese, using the printed word, also tried to lower morale. In an apparent attempt to create dissension between Puerto-Ricans, a nationality well-represented in the U.S. armed forces, and other Americans, the Courier published this story:

For three days running from June 12 last, thousands of Porto-Rican nationals in Chicago staged anti-U.S. demonstrations and courageously opposed barbaric repressive

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<sup>33</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 64, June 23, 1966, p. 4, quoting Quan Doi, Nhan Dan, (The People's Army), June 13, 1966.

<sup>34</sup>Speir, "Morale and Propaganda," p. 4.

<sup>35</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 67, July 14, 1966, p. 2.

measures of the local authorities. In this connection, the daily Thoi Moi in its June 18 issue, carried an article by Nguyen Xuan Tram, Secretary of the Vietnam Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee, dealing with the crimes committed by the American occupants of Porto Rico and its peoples' heroic and indomitable struggle.

The paper pointed out, "It has been calculated that from the very moment he was born, every inhabitant of Porto Rico owes \$328 to the U.S.A.! The number of impoverished and jobless people is on the increase, so that within the past 30 years, of a population of less than three million, about one million people have had to emigrate and earn their living in the U.S. The American rulers press-ganged tens of thousands of Porto-Ricans to serve as cannon-fodder in Korea, Dominica and Vietnam."<sup>36</sup>

#### South Vietnamese Protests Against U.S. Policies

The Courier described South Vietnam as a land and a people controlled by the "enemy"--the "puppet" administration which, in turn, was controlled by the Americans. The messages, in tone and in content, serve as examples of a well-established propaganda dictum--when addressing a message to an enemy-occupied country, the audience's identification with the propagandist's side must be taken for granted. It must be assumed citizens of occupied countries will greet the propagandist's forces as liberators.<sup>37</sup>

While the Courier was not written for the South Vietnamese people, its writers assumed the readers would identify with those "oppressed peoples;" hence, the audience would regard the North Vietnamese Communists as liberators of the South.

Until they were liberated, however, the people of the South were arising in protest against U.S. policies:

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<sup>36</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 64, June 23, 1966, p. 9, quoting from the June 18, 1966, issue of Thoi Moi.

<sup>37</sup>Herz, p. 428.

In South Vietnam, while the Liberation Army Front [Viet Cong] attacks in different directions leave the U.S. command perplexed and guerrilla activities bleed the U.S. and puppet forces white without respite during the week, the struggle of the urban population has entered upon a more crucial stage. In Saigon where the police have been given orders to shoot at demonstrators, youngsters have been cut down by bullets without the crowd being cowed. They have met police violence with force: a thug has been found dead and during the week, eight vehicles of the U.S. forces have been set on fire. Strikes have been held, trees felled and barricades erected across the streets. In Hue, the opposition forces have also put up a stiff resistance to the oppression: eight Saigon troops killed and 12 military vehicles destroyed on June 18. It is further reported that 1,500 men of the First Division, armed, are still in rebellion against the Thieu-Ky puppet clique. Quang Tri and other provinces still ignore orders from Saigon.<sup>38</sup>

While the essential details in that account were much the same as those reported in U.S. newspapers, the implications were different. The Courier described those civil disorders as uprisings against U.S. "rule" of South Vietnam.

A series of directives to South Vietnamese Communist propagandists was broadcast in April, 1967, by the Viet Cong's Liberation Radio. The broadcast was intercepted by allied radio monitors and the message was published in a bulletin of the U.S. Foreign Broadcast Information Service. These directives indicate the nature of the instructions used as guidelines in the editorial offices of the Courier in 1966.

At present, as a result of the U.S. aggressors' aggressive policies and the fascist and cruel policy of the puppet administration, the life of the southern workers, laboring people and other strata of the people is very miserable. The only way out of this deadlock lies in the need for the workers and laboring people to resolutely rise up and, together with all the people, use revolutionary violence to defeat the U.S. aggressors' war of aggression,

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<sup>38</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 64, June 23, 1966, p. 2.

topple the puppet administration, restore power to the hands of the people, achieve independence, democracy, peace and neutrality, and advance toward reunification of the fatherland. To foil all the insidious schemes of the Americans and the puppets, the immediate tasks of the southern workers and laboring people are to insure close unity, resolutely take the lead in the movement of struggle of various strata of the urban people for the right to a decent livelihood, democracy, peace and national independence, expose the deceitful political and economic tricks and deceitful peace arguments, smash the enemy's bonds of all types, boycott the farce of holding false elections of the puppet administration at all levels, and , in coordination with the armed and political movement in the rural areas, completely defeat the strategic dry season counteroffensive of the Americans and puppets.<sup>39</sup>

Using virtually the same language and tone, a North Vietnamese government official a year earlier had encouraged his countrymen with reports of uprisings such as those described above:

The sight of their [South Vietnam] country placed under foreign occupation, their native villages subject to devastation, their fellow-countrymen made victims of massacres, the nation as a whole held in contempt, their fine national traditions trampled underfoot and their feelings utterly outraged, has been fanning up all their fatherland and national pride and inciting them to rise up against the aggressor. Such changes are taking place even in the ranks of the puppet troops and in the puppet administration and will develop with every passing day.<sup>40</sup>

The propaganda "line" for the South Vietnamese Communists was the same one used by the North Vietnamese. The Courier "news" stories from South Vietnam reported the success of the "struggles against oppression"

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<sup>39</sup>U.S., Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Foreign Broadcast Report, April 24, 1967, quoting a Liberation Radio (South Vietnam) broadcast intercepted at 1100 G.M.T., April 19, 1967.

<sup>40</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 56, April 28, 1966, p. 6, quoting an address by North Vietnamese Premier Pham Van Dong to the third session of the D.R.V. National Assembly in April, 1966.



--protests possibly instigated by Viet Cong following directives similar to those intercepted by the Foreign Broadcast Information Service. For example:

On April 10, 3,000 country people marched on the Go Cong Provincial capital and 5,000 others marched on the My Tho Province capital to demand that the U.S. aggressors and other henchmen put an end to persecution, raids and massacres and claim reparations for the losses caused to the people.

On April 23, over 1,000 people demonstrated in Hong Ngu District (Chau Doc Province) and succeeded in forcing the authorities to admit their crimes and pay compensation for the losses caused to the people.

The stubborn struggle of 3,000 demonstrators in the provincial capital of Vinh Long also ended in success.

According to Liberation Press Agency, early this month, 73 cultural and art workers, professors and lawyers in Saigon issued a statement condemning the U.S.-influenced depraved culture imposed on the South Vietnamese people by the Thieu-Ky clique, and demanding freedom of literary and artistic creation, performance and publication.

On April 9, the Vietnamese jurists Union in Saigon took position against the dictatorial character of the activities of the special court set up since the Ngo Dinh Diem regime.<sup>41</sup>

The self interests of "groups and individuals in the enemy population which can be exploited . . . . comprise a wide range of possibilities."<sup>42</sup> One "self interest" the Courier considered exploitable was an alleged difference in goals of the allied armies:

What is more, the master [U.S.] and servant's armies were at cross purposes with each other, did not trust each other, and were unable to achieve close coordination. . . .<sup>43</sup>

According to the Courier, the different self-interests sometimes resulted in violence:

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<sup>41</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 59, May 19, 1966, p. 7.

<sup>42</sup>Herz, p. 429.

<sup>43</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 64, June 23, 1966, p. 4.

At the same time, the U.S. command attempted to send planes to evacuate the G.I.'s from A Sau [a U.S. Special Forces outpost under Viet Cong attack], abandoning the puppet troops to their fate. When an aircraft managed to land, Americans and puppets scrambled for seats on board. The former kicked and hit the latter and finally shot dead seven of them.<sup>44</sup>

The Courier said weakening bonds between the Americans and the South Vietnamese were caused by the nature of the war, which was being pursued by the Americans against the will of the South Vietnamese people. The South Vietnamese merely were tools of imperialism. The North Vietnamese were calling for sympathy for the "oppressed" people of South Vietnam and for increased pressure against the Americans.

#### Continued Progress in North Vietnam

Despite the war, the North Vietnamese economy was continuing to progress, the Courier said. There were numerous news stories and feature articles about production activities and economic gains. The sizeable number of such stories suggests that the Hanoi Government considered important the country's development despite the "aggressors'" policies. The following story is typical:

Quang Binh, Vinh Linh, Ha Tinh, Nghe An and Thanh Hoa [provinces in North Vietnam] are daily facing up to the enemy's ferocious bombing and strafing. Yet, in these provinces agriculture and industrial production, fishing and salt production keep on developing, the communication and transport arteries remain operative, the people's life remains stable and hundreds of U.S. planes have been brought down.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>45</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 56, April 28, 1966, p. 2.

Propaganda confined solely to criticism and debunking arouses violent reactions against the propagandist. Ideally, the propagandist's aims should be conversion rather than destruction of the personal loyalty structure.<sup>46</sup>

In its stories of continued progress, the Courier sought to convince its audience that the country could prosper only under North Vietnam's leadership.

The Vietnamese were continually reminded of their direct relationship to their leader. "Uncle Ho" was virtually a member of the North Vietnamese family, according to the Courier. The peasants and workers were urged to demonstrate their loyalty, gratitude and nationalism by increased production.

Morale incentives were employed to spur North Vietnam's citizens to greater efforts. Good students were called "Uncle Ho's good nieces and nephews."<sup>47</sup> Increased production despite hardships was rewarded by recognition in the newspaper--recognition similar to that accorded soldiers. The blessings of life, from good harvests to a stable economy, were attributed to the wise leadership of the state.

Communist ideology stresses the unity of theory and action; this results in continuous pressure for active support and in the propagandist's projections of the regime's successes as the result of Communist theory.<sup>48</sup> Marxists always have insisted that theory and action are one: "A theory of

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<sup>46</sup>Speir, "Morale and Propaganda," p. 19.

<sup>47</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 67, July 24, 1966, p. 7.

<sup>48</sup>Edgar H. Schein, "The Passion for Unanimity," Reader in Public Opinion and Communications, eds. Bernard Berelson and Morris Janowitz, (Second edition; New York: The Free Press, 1966), p. 593.

which the truth is not confirmed by action is sterile, while action which is divorced from theory is purposeless. Marx teaches that . . . sensations which were held to give us faithful images of the external world did not provide immediate knowledge but only stimuli of knowledge which completed itself in action. . . ."49

The Courier insisted the people of North Vietnam actually were producing goods and progressing, thanks to Communism:

People in the village often say to my sister and me: "Nobody is happier than you two. . . ." They are right. How could I speak of all the benefits we have received from the revolution!

My sister and I--father and mother had but two daughters--have been orphans since early childhood. Father died when I was three years old and my sister three months. When I was six mother died. So our life began with sufferings.

We hired ourselves out to a landlord's family. In all weathers, from dawn to dark, I had to graze a buffalo in the fields. My sister looked after the landlord's children, did the cooking and ran errands. With every passing year our work grew harder, insults and blows increased. Like other servants, we never ate our fill and could not go to school.

Our village was situated in the French-occupied area which made our fate still gloomier. At the point of the aggressors' bayonet, our fellow-villagers had to carry bamboo and bricks to build blockhouses. Arson, looting, rape and massacre were common occurrences. We were too young to know that somewhere, in the liberated zone, our people were living a free and enthusiastic life, the life of free citizens struggling for the country's independence and freedom.

Only when North Vietnam was entirely liberated did our village enjoy freedom. Thanks to the land reform carried out by the Party, we embarked on our new life, landlordism having been abolished. We were given a home and a job.

Under the people's regime, led and educated by the Party, we actively worked and learned and contributed our shares to the building of the co-op. I was elected

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<sup>49</sup>R.N.C. Hunt, The Theory and Practice of Communism, (New York: Macmillan Company, 1957), pp. 34-35.

assistant-manager of the co-op and head of the scientific and technical team. My sister did farming work and taught in the literacy class. The co-op members' standards of living rose with the growing of the co-op. We had blankets, mosquito nets, furniture, household utensils like other families in the village.

. . . We are deeply grateful for the revolution and the Party for this wonderful change.

Everyday, my heart aches and seethes with hatred when I learn of U.S. massacres in South Vietnam and U.S. bombings of North Vietnam. In the North, the U.S. aggressors have bombed dykes, dams and other water conservancy works to destroy our agriculture. In the South, together with their henchmen, they have taken advantage of floods to step up their massacres. In both the North and the South, they have perpetrated enormous crimes. Their crimes unforgivable on earth and in heaven are aimed at cowing us into submission. I now understand better than ever President Ho Chi Minh's words: "Nothing is more precious than independence and freedom!"

. . . I pledge myself to struggle against U.S. aggression, for the independence and freedom of the whole country. As a young country woman, I am resolved to stand firm on my combat post to produce well and fight well. My target is six tons per hectare [100 acres]. I'll do my share in defeating the American aggressors.<sup>50</sup>

One goal of wartime propaganda is to encourage production:

Under whatever conditions, the objectives of propaganda in wartime are to maximize social participation among members of their own group and to minimize participation among members of the enemy group. Social participation is characterized by concern for the objectives of the group, the sharing of its activities, and the preparedness to accept deprivations on its behalf. High "participation" is therefore identical with high "morale." Its psychological dynamics are mutual indentifications among group members, and identification of individual members with leaders or leading ideals of the group, strong cathexis of the goal set by the group, and decreased cathexis of self; processes that at least in part are preconscious and unconscious.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 80, October 17, 1966, pp. 5-6. The article was signed by Nguyen Thi Canh who identified herself as "Assistant Manager Head of the Scientific and Technical Team of the H. Co-operative, Ha Tay Province."

<sup>51</sup>Kris and Leites, p. 268.

The achievement of maximum social participation was a task assigned to Communist propagandists in Vietnam. The mission was explained to South Vietnamese propagandists in a radio message to members of the National Front for Liberation. It told the South Vietnamese Communists to:

Emphasize the important role of the working and labor forces in the revolutionary struggle movement, in general, and in the urban people's struggle against the Americans and the puppets, in particular. It is necessary to make the workers and laboring people clearly understand that all material products on which society lives have been produced by them and that it is due to the efforts of the laboring people that society exists and becomes more civilized and progressive.<sup>52</sup>

Many Courier stories appeared to follow identical guidelines:

In spite of the U.S. air raids, the First Five-Year State Plan (1961-1965), the 1965 Plan in particular, was in the main fulfilled. The people in the North have enthusiastically started the Two-Year State Plan (1966-1967). With determination to defeat the U.S. aggressors, the army and people in the North are engaging in the patriotic emulation movement to develop production and fulfill the State Plan while recording military achievements in annihilating the enemy.<sup>53</sup>

Another article noted that production was increasing on all fronts and the economy was being strengthened:

Washington wishfully thought that its war of destruction would disastrously affect the life of the people and bring them to their knees. Over the past year market prices have remained stable. The government has on many occasions reduced the price of a number of items of goods. On the whole, the people's living conditions have been maintained at their usual level and even continue to improve.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup>Foreign Broadcast Information Report, April 24, 1967, p. 9.

<sup>53</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 56, April 28, 1966, p. 3.

<sup>54</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 43, January 13, 1966, p. 4.

Again, the implication was that American forces had been ordered to use tactics that could result only in failure. One story attributed North Vietnam's accomplishments in production to those tactics:

Yet, after a year and a half of bombing, traffic gets heavier than ever along Quang Binh's [provincial] roads. Destroyed bridges have been quickly replaced by ferries or pontoon bridges. Economic and cultural life goes on unabated. Quang Binh has given itself the pleasure of being one of the vanguard provinces of North Vietnam, not only with regard to the number of planes shot down, but also concerning the progress made in agriculture and education. Now handicraft and small industry undertakings have seen the light of day.

It is precisely the American bombings which have accounted for this upsurge: in agriculture co-operatives, people have been striving to improve management, working techniques and farm implements in order to remedy the shortage of manpower due to enlistments in the army; to bring in the harvest in the shortest delay under the bombings, and to increase output, whereas workers and handicraftsmen have been emulating each other in the production of new commodities.<sup>55</sup>

Reports of increased production gave the Courier an opportunity to describe a unity of theory and action at a level that could be understood easily. Communist ideology in practice could be illustrated through feature stories:

The American aircraft had been driven away. The guns were now silent. The siren sounded the all-clear. Leaving his gun, Tong went back to his drilling machine.

In those days of July, the tempo of the Duyen Hai mechanical engineering factory was in a high gear. . . . The sun was blazing: the fields thirsted for water. The workers were urged on by sacred feelings which spurred them to work with the greatest speed and care possible, even for the least important parts. Patriotism, love for socialism, hatred for the American aggressors--all this was expressed in precise boring, speedy and careful assembling, so that the products of the factory might soon serve production and fighting efficiently. . . .

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<sup>55</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 64, June 23, 1966, p. 2.

The alert sounded on five occasions on July 22, 1966: yet when the morning shift was over, Ty had finished his third pump, increasing output by 50 per cent.

"You've got to act up to your promise to Uncle Ho!", that's what a young worker, Tuyen, said to himself. In those days of July, he exerted himself to the utmost. In the first days of the American escalation to the North, Tuyen had been a cutter's apprentice. Young and impulsive, he had been rather particular as to what kind of job he would like to tackle. But gradually, and especially since Uncle Ho made his appeal, he realised that his personal considerations were wrong. Now he was a cutter, second class. The time for cutting a pump valve was one hour and thirty minutes. Tuyen thought to himself: "Uncle Ho has said that in order to defeat the Americans, each of us must redouble his efforts. So each of us must think of a way of doubling his output." Tuyen devised an improvement on the clamping device and a new wrench which speeded up the milling process and doubled his output.

It is precisely patriotism, love for socialism and hatred of the American aggressors which explains why Tong, on hearing Uncle Ho's appeal and in spite of the fact that he was on leave, immediately returned to his workshop to give a hand to his fellow workers in finishing a 4,000 cubic metres per hour pump to serve the Autumn cultivation season; and why he volunteered to work another shift to finish an item of goods to be delivered immediately.

Each production team, each workshop, has its own features but the feature common to all is sacred zeal sprung from everybody's determination to respond to Uncle Ho's sacred call for national salvation with concrete deeds.

This is the course of the new strength which has turned the Duyen Hai factory into a steel fortress whenever American aircraft turn up, and an efficient production unit after they have been driven away, so as to serve production and the fighting. For every one of its workers is determined to fight and defeat the American aggressors.<sup>56</sup>

Many stories about continued progress appear to have been translations of articles that appeared in domestic publications. They originally were intended to spur production by encouraging emulation of successful producers. Their publication in the Courier was an attempt to convince readers further bombing of North Vietnam was futile.

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<sup>56</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 74, September 5, 1966, p. 4.



## CHAPTER V

### APPEALS TO SOCIAL ATTITUDES

The Courier consistently tried to influence attitudes so that responses based on them would favor causes espoused by North Vietnam.

A human being's elementary social and political attitudes are not separate entities; the socialization and maturation processes have caused them to be intertwined in the "matrix of being."<sup>1</sup> The propagandist would find it difficult, if not impossible, to direct his messages to a specific attitude or set of attitudes. Therefore, propaganda appeals are generally diffuse. The Courier assumed that certain social attitudes were shared by its readers. Those attitudes include sympathy for the underdog, compassion, and empathy for humans in distress.

#### "North Vietnamese--The Underdogs"

The Courier frequently described the North Vietnamese as a small, poor people fighting the colossal United States. It assumed a universal sympathy for the oppressed and that most people were "poor and simple" like the Vietnamese. The Courier was attempting to establish identification with its readers. As adults, we are hardly persuaded by a stranger but

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<sup>1</sup>Daniel Katz, "The Functional Approach to the Study of Attitudes," Reader in Public Opinion and Communication, eds. Bernard Berelson and Morris Janowitz, (Second edition; New York: The Free Press, 1966), pp. 55-56.

"we are easily impressed by those with whom we are familiar and with whom we feel closely identified."<sup>2</sup>

This message appears to have been written to develop empathy between the North Vietnamese and similiar peoples:

How can a small people, with poor material resources and technical means, victoriously resist the U.S.A., this industrial "superpower"? In what way can scientific workers, artists and professors contribute to this great and decisive struggle?<sup>3</sup>

The Courier said that, just as David defeated Goliath, the Vietnamese people were overcoming obstacles and defeating the aggressors:

The fighters of the missile units, the people's air force, the army and services which have the most up-to-date techniques have begun this way: finishing elementary education and not very strong physically, they, however, struck terror into their enemy's hearts and filled their friends the world over with admiration after a short training course. Indeed, our fighters are extremely clever, resourceful and able. For our youth has been brought up in accordance with Uncle Ho's teaching:

"Nothing is difficult  
Suffice it to be patient  
And we can level mountains flat  
Or fill up seas with a will."

Today we are no longer toilers with empty hands as we were 20 years ago. We have become a labouring people, masters of a socialist state endowed with a sizeable material basis. This is as clear as broad daylight.

However, there is a more important thing, one which has a decisive character: our new regime has been able to create a generation to serve it. Those socialist citizens fight to defend the independence and unity of the fatherland, preserve the gains of the revolution and clearly understand the significance of their struggle as regards their nation as well as all other oppressed nations, and the liberation of the labouring people.

We know of personalities of great intelligence or of great virtue in history but we are not in a position to realize the highest potentialities of a great community, of a nation.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Siepmann, p. 333.

<sup>3</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 43, January 13, 1966, p. 2.

<sup>4</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 71, August 11, 1966, pp. 5, 7.

In that appeal, the propagandist described a "sizeable material basis" in North Vietnam quite different from the North Vietnam described in the preceding example, in which the country was portrayed as being poor in material resources.

Researchers say effective propaganda appeals do not result from messages describing weaknesses of friendly forces: "A message written from the strength of one's position cannot be hedged or qualified or couched in defensive tones."<sup>5</sup> A Courier writer may have diluted his appeal when he wrote:

For a country of modest size, for a people having but limited technical means, for such a nation as the Democratic Republic of Vietnam which has engaged for only a few years in an arduous and complex process of transformation of fundamental structures and of building a new economy and society, an aggression of such magnitude [by the United States] poses the very question of its existence, of its survival.<sup>6</sup>

The negative overtones of that appeal, however, were countered by the frequent portrayal of Vietnam as the target of aggression by the United States.

#### Compassion

In Courier arguments for a case for the Communists, the North Vietnamese Government and the National Front for Liberation represented the highest ideals of humanity and compassion, even beyond the requirements of justice. The appeals were designed to marshal public opinion against the United States and its allies in South Vietnam.

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<sup>5</sup>Herz, p. 431.

<sup>6</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 56, March 28, 1966, p. 2.

Under the headline "A Humanitarian Measure--A Warning to the U.S. Aggressors," the Courier reported the contents of the Viet Cong's Christmas truce message to the Americans:

To show the deep understanding and warm feelings of the South Vietnamese people towards the struggle of the American people and the peoples of the U.S. satellites, towards the struggle of U.S. and satellite troops and officers' families and their own struggle against the aggressive war of the U.S. imperialists in Vietnam, and taking into consideration the legitimate aspirations of many Catholic puppet army men and their families as well as many personnel of the puppet administration, the Presidium of the Central Committee of the South Vietnam National Front for Liberation has decided to: 1. Suspend military attacks for 48 hours on the occasion of Christmas. . . . 2. Suspend military attacks for 48 hours on the occasion of New Year's Day. . . .

. . . . . This decision has been taken in accordance with the humanitarian policy of the South Vietnam National Front for Liberation to allow American troops and troops of U.S. satellites as well as puppet troops and personnel of the South Vietnam puppet administration freely to attend masses and New Year celebrations and at the same time to provide them with an opportunity to visit their families and relatives.

As they did in the past and will do in the future, the South Vietnamese people always show profound humane feelings because their goal of struggle is nothing other than to secure decent life and fight for themselves and their descendents to live as human beings.<sup>7</sup>

As usual, the contrast was great between the "humanitarian" policies of the Communists and the "murderous" policies of the Americans. The Courier told about suffering caused by the bombing of North Vietnam:

In North Vietnam, the wrath against U.S. aggressors--agents of death and destruction--is thundering like rolling waves. Hundreds of meetings have been held during which U.S.

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<sup>7</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 87, December 5, 1966, p. 6.

crimes have been denounced by widows, orphans, mothers and husbands in mourning whom American bombs have bereaved of their family support and dear ones.<sup>8</sup>

American tactics in the South were no less cruel. President Ho Chi Minh told delegates to North Vietnam's National Legislature that America's "inhuman" policies violated prescribed methods of waging war:

They [the United States and its allies] have been launching large scale terrorist operations. Wherever they go they carry out the "burn all, kill and and destroy all" policy. They have been using napalm bombs, poison gas and toxic chemicals to massacre our compatriots and ravage our villages. They are mistaken in thinking that the barbarous power of weapons can bring our compatriots in South Vietnam to their knees.<sup>9</sup>

America had chosen to fight with weapons produced by its advanced technology--weapons that were, for the most part, those of mass destruction. In contrast, the Viet Cong generally relied on weapons of individual combat, such as the rifle and the knife. They could be more selective of their victims. However, it was not American weapons that the Courier railed against: It was the tactics of the men who controlled those weapons. The propagandists said the Americans were emulating murderous policies pursued by the Nazis during the Second World War.

#### "Fascist U.S. Policies"

According to the Vietnam Courier:

The crimes of the United States in South and North Vietnam--the use of gases, spraying of toxical products, destruction of hospitals and schools--have been the object

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<sup>8</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 64, June 23, 1966, p. 1.

<sup>9</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 56, March 28, 1966, p. 4, quoting Ho Chi Minh's speech to delegates to the third session of the D.R.V. National Assembly, April, 1966.

of precise and detailed accounts by physicians, chemists and jurists: indignation and hatred boil in everybody's heart on hearing of these crimes. Hitler's name has been frequently mentioned. Johnson's hypocrisy on his goodwill for peace and offer of negotiation have been crudely exposed.<sup>10</sup>

The literary term personification consists of using a person as the symbol of an idea. In the story above, mention of Hitler was intended to evoke images of cruelty and barbarism. Personification can be used as a shorthand propaganda device that "facilitates perception and understanding."<sup>11</sup>

In its frequent condemnation of U.S. policies by linking them to Nazi policies, the Courier used the psychological principle of transference-- "displacement of emotional reaction from one idea or object to another."<sup>12</sup>

The Courier contended Americans exhibited a heinousness similar to that displayed by Hitler when he ordered the destruction of towns and their inhabitants:

The U.S. aggressors are precisely the most abhorred enemy of independence and peace, and of the South Vietnamese people, of human rights, justice and science. They have brazenly trampled upon the South Vietnamese people's right to live, schemed to turn South Vietnam into another Lidice or Oradour which brought ignominy to the Hitlerite fascists in World War II.<sup>13</sup>

The Courier charged that the U.S. bombing of North Vietnam was a callous act against a small nation that bravely was facing the onslaught of fascist hordes:

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<sup>10</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 43, January 13, 1966, p. 2.

<sup>11</sup>Harter and Sullivan, p. 24.

<sup>12</sup>Roucek, p. 418.

<sup>13</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 51, March 24, 1966, p. 2.

That ordinary peasants armed with mere rifles, dare face ultramodern aircraft, and this everywhere in the country--that fact is highly significant. The Vietnamese people have not let themselves be intimidated, and the North Vietnamese regime firmly rests on its new socialist bases. To annex Czechoslovakia, Hitler had only to brandish his 500 planes in order to obtain the capitulation of his adversary. Lyndon Johnson has done one better: He had the D.R.V. bombed by an aerial fleet, compared with which Hitler's planes would be mere toys, then offered to negotiate.<sup>14</sup>

The Courier implied that the "American criminals" might have to account for their actions before an international court, just as Nazi leaders were tried at Nuremburg:

On October 1 [1966], in commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the Nuremburg Tribunal's verdict, the government of the German Democratic Republic [East Germany] issued a declaration warning against any attempt to repeat the crimes of Hitlerite fascists. Dealing with the American aggressive war in Vietnam, the declaration read: "Twenty years after the Nuremburg verdict was made public, the U.S. ruling circles are treading on the criminal path of Hitlerite Germany, grossly trampling on the principles of international law clearly stated therein concerning punishment to be meted out against wars of aggression. . . ." The declaration demanded an immediate end to the barbarous war of aggression waged by the U.S. and its allies against the Vietnamese people, and due punishment for those responsible for this aggression.<sup>15</sup>

#### Atrocities

As wars continue and as their origins lose news value, the propagandists' emphasis historically has shifted from denunciation of the enemy's breach of peace and to what is termed cruel and atrocious conduct:

The charge of villainy is thus perpetuated and reinforced, but this must be done in terms that are simple enough to be understood regardless of religion, age, party

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<sup>14</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 45, February 10, 1966, p. 4.

<sup>15</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 80, October 17, 1966, p. 7.

or race. Causal chains of events are difficult to understand; fairness may have its repercussions by correcting the desired allotment of right and wrong in the conflict; a decent silence might promote fatigue; besides, modern wars have to be noisy--the propagandists have it that everybody is thrilled by cruelty. . . . Distortions of moral judgment are indigenous to the war climate.<sup>16</sup>

Atrocity stories, therefore, are appeals to compassion and emotion. Their effectiveness may be gauged by the empathy they arouse. Descriptions of the whine of falling bombs, the panic of peasants darting from burning buildings or clouds of noxious gas and the leveling of churches, homes and schools are used to stimulate the reader's imagination. The horror of such scenes is accentuated by the words used to describe them. "Massacre," "Crime" and "burned alive" are examples of terms used to turn the reader's sympathy for the victims to hatred of the killers.

The United States was accused of major war crimes and "crimes against humanity":

In North Vietnam, at a press conference held in Hanoi on October 31, the Commission for the Investigation of U.S. Imperialists' War Crimes in Vietnam made public two important documents. . . . Witnesses and victims coming from all corners of Vietnam, North and South Vietnam, photos on atrocities perpetrated by the American G.I.'s and their "allies" etc., were presented to journalists and press correspondents. In a declaration, which was an implacable indictment, the Commission concluded that the U.S. Government is guilty of the crime of aggression, an international crime; of the crime against peace; of the most repugnant war crimes; of crimes against humanity; and that the Washington rulers are the greatest war criminals of our times. The Commission called on the peoples and governments of the socialist countries, of peace- and justice-loving countries, on men and women of conscience all over the world, on the American people with their tradition of democracy. . . . to severely condemn the unforgiveable crimes of American imperialism in Vietnam and energetically support the just stand of the Vietnamese people.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Speir, "Morale and Propaganda," p. 17.

<sup>17</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 83, November 7, 1966, p. 2.



The "atrocities" that most aroused the Courier writers was the American bombings of North Vietnam. The propagandists often implied that the American pilots deliberately sought undefended civilian targets. Stories of the slaughter of innocent children might have been expected to evoke a particular horror and loathing for the pilots and their leaders:

They are small yellow bombs with six vanes, looking like pineapples. . . . This kind of anti-personnel fragmentation bombs were dropped for the first time on North Vietnam on February 8, 1965 (on a populated area of Le Thuy District, Quang Binh Province). Since then, they have been used on a larger scale together with demolition bombs and other bombs in air raids on schools, hospitals, factories and populated areas.

. . . . .  
The use of fragmentation bombs to kill and injure civilians building and defending their country is one more undeniable count to the indictment of the U.S. aggressors in Vietnam. It provides one more reason for every man of conscience in the world to raise his voice and stop the hands of the Washington murderers and their pilots who daily sow destruction and death all over Vietnam.<sup>18</sup>

The article was illustrated with pictures of wounded and dead civilians. One photograph of a wounded child had the outline, "This kid whose back is riddled with steel balls is miraculously saved after many weeks of treatment." A picture of a dead child was captioned, "Children on their playing-ground are the most hit by these lethal weapons."<sup>19</sup>

The atrocity story gave the propagandist another opportunity to present his case in feature-story format. Specific names and examples permitted the reader to identify with the sufferers:

Vinh Tu is a village in the Vinh Linh area, about 10 kilometers north of the Ben Hai River. A very picturesque

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<sup>18</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 74, September 5, 1966, pp. 2-3.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 2.

village of Central Vietnam, with its white dunes glittering in the sun and its evergreen filao-trees whispering in the sea wind.

It was 9 p.m. on a Saturday evening when the children were fast asleep. U.S. planes appeared all of a sudden, bombed and strafed Vinh Tu. After raiding the village from end to end, they dropped fragmentation bombs on every section of it, blocking it by rocketing and shelling its periphery. They then used explosive bombs and finally napalm bombs to burn it. While a formation of aircraft flew at low altitude to do the bombing, the other flew at higher altitude, strafing and discharging fragmentation bombs on burning roofs.

.....  
 Le Thi Diep, an old woman, had been seriously ill. When carried to the infirmary, the assistant doctor and nurses had saved her. She said to her daughter: "Thanks to them, I am living. I won't die." A few hours later, American pilots came, strafed the infirmary and killed her.

.....  
 The maternity home had been destroyed. A table was broken and an enema shattered by a bomb splinter. A bomb falling on an anti-aircraft shelter had buried Le Thi Nhan of My Tu Hamlet still with her baby. When dug up, she was dead and still clasping her child in her arms.

Little Tram Phong of My Tu Hamlet, hit by a ball from a fragmentation bomb in his head, died in his bed. In his pocket there was an unfinished poem entitled "my school." American pirates had burnt down his school, put an end to his life and left his poem unfinished.<sup>20</sup>

A principal aim of North Vietnam's atrocity charges seemed to be to build an image of an xenophobic G.I. crashing across Asia. That was also a goal of anti-American propaganda during the Korean War.<sup>21</sup> To perpetuate that image, the Courier reported:

For the past few weeks, together with the despatch of U.S. expeditionary troops and their satellite mercenaries to South Vietnam, actively supplying the "killing all, burning all" policy, the U.S. imperialists have been openly using toxic chemicals and poison gas on a large scale against many densely populated provinces of South Vietnam.

This is a deliberate murder which is part of the "extermination war" policy of the U.S. which is attempting

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<sup>20</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 80, October 17, 1966, p. 4.

<sup>21</sup>Clews, p. 183.

to win a "position of strength" and make good its failure in South Vietnam. This is also an extremely inhuman and barbarous act of the U.S. aggressors who are testing on the 14 million South Vietnamese people chemical weapons to be used in repressing national liberation movements in the world.<sup>22</sup>

The United States' allies were not exempted from atrocity charges by the Courier. In fact, for details supplied to evoke images of horror, a story describing a South Korean raid on a South Vietnamese village was the most vituperative of those examined.

Breaking into 11 hamlets of the village, the raiders fired napalm shells and tossed hand grenades into anti-air raid shelters, killing on the spot many persons and blinding several others. They used bayonets to drive many people back into their houses and burned them alive by setting the houses on fire. They seized children by their legs, tore them to pieces and threw them into the fire. The raiders also bayoneted many pregnant women. The devils also tied 10 or 15 persons together then fired at them.<sup>23</sup>

Atrocity propaganda during World War I "aroused two of the strongest emotions: hate and fear. Through them the public was to be convinced of the utter monstrosity of the enemy."<sup>24</sup> Atrocity propaganda in domestic publications traditionally has had definite objectives: To stiffen the fighting spirit, help raise war loans, encourage enlistments and justify breaches of international law. The atrocity story has had additional objectives when disseminated to foreign audiences: It has "proved useful in rationalizing the rejection of 'premature' peace proposals, in imposing severe terms of peace, and in influencing neutrals."<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 51, March 24, 1966, p. 1.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>24</sup>Read, p. viii.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 5.

Atrocity propaganda in the Courier may have been intended to justify imposition of severe peace terms. It also may have been the intention of the North Vietnamese Government to use the stories as a basis for exacting reparations. Perhaps the most important function of the atrocity story is its ability to influence emotions. That may have been the principal reason for such stories in the Courier.

#### Social Problems

The Courier sought to affect attitudes not only by examples of individual and collective suffering but also by describing a wider spectrum of social misery. Individual victims merely were examples of an entire populace.

A writer hinted at the suffering caused by American bombing of North Vietnam:

Over 30 medical establishments of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, including sanatoriums for TB and leprosy, provincial and district hospitals, first aid stations, rural maternity homes and a sanatorium for old-aged persons . . . over 130 schools . . . many irrigation works . . . more than 30 observatories and meteorological stations, many economic centres and densely populated areas were also hit by U.S. aircraft.<sup>26</sup>

It may be inferred that Courier writers were following directives similar to one sent to Viet Cong propagandists in 1967. The clandestine Liberation Radio transmitter in South Vietnam broadcast this directive to "propaganda and training committees at all echelons" concerning the contents of propaganda:

On the basis of the urgent problems arising from daily life, intensively incite and generate hatred for the

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<sup>26</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 51, March 24, 1966, p. III (of a special insert).

Americans and the puppets among the workers and various strata of the laboring people. It is necessary to make the workers and laboring people see clearly the perils and hardships caused by domination of the U.S. aggressors, house ejection, land grabbing, concentration of the people, disruption of production, devaluation of the piastre, instability of the market, soaring of the cost of living, lay-off of employees, unemployment, scarcity of jobs, low wages as compared with the cost of living, the people's lives being constantly threatened, man's dignity and honor being trampled on, and the people's culture, education and customs and habits being on the decline.<sup>27</sup>

The Courier often printed stories about hardships caused by America's mere presence in South Vietnam. For instance, one article noted that Premier Pham Van Dong had told delegates to the North Vietnam National Assembly that:

Economically, the introduction of the American expeditionary force into South Vietnam has caused a danger extremely serious in many respects, the consequences of which cannot be foreseen yet. More than 230,000 U.S. troops and a concomitant colossal war machine is wrecking the crippled economy of South Vietnam. It is undermining production, construction, communications and transport, by exhausting the economic capacities of the South in the service of the U.S. expeditionary force and war apparatus. It is often alleged that the U.S. has been spending here billions of dollars, but these have just been enriching the most influential business firms of the U.S.A., of some of its satellites as well as a few South Vietnamese compradore capitalists. . . . The life of the Vietnamese, especially in the places under American occupation, is seriously disturbed and hardest deprivations are imposed on them.<sup>28</sup>

According to the Courier, the Vietnamese were not the only people suffering because of the war. To persuade Americans that pursuit of the war was too costly, the newspaper again quoted Premier Pham Van Dong:

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<sup>27</sup>Foreign Broadcast Report, April 24, 1967, p. 9.

<sup>28</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 56, April 28, 1966, p. 9, quoting an address by Premier Pham Van Dong to the third session of the D.R.V. National Assembly, April, 1966.

The aggressive war in Vietnam has exerted a direct influence on the American people's life. More and more youths have been drafted and sent to their futile deaths in Vietnam. The effect of the huge military expenditures in Vietnam has begun to be felt in the economy: inflation and cuts in education, public health, and social welfare budgets. This cruel war smears the U.S. honour. The American people are fully aware that their struggle against it falls in with the struggle for democratic liberties, for the improvement of living conditions, and the abolishment of racial segregation. The struggle against the aggressive war in Vietnam has become a major preoccupation of American public opinion and conscience.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

All over the world in 1966 and 1967--on campuses, in speeches, in private conversations--the United States was being excoriated for its Vietnam policies. In addition, attempts were being made by United States citizens to hinder war production and discourage enlistment in the U.S. armed forces. Such protests and actions were typical of the type sought by the Vietnam Courier.

It is impossible to call those protests and actions responses to the newspaper's appeals. Too many variables besides the propaganda effort influence responses.<sup>1</sup> It is additionally difficult to postulate the effects of the newspaper since circulation figures are not available. However, it is plausible that at least some Courier readers were acting in response to messages in its columns. It is possible to examine those messages and the propagandists' efforts to prompt certain actions.

#### Summary of Messages

According to the Courier, the United States took over the war from the defeated French and were attempting to subjugate or exterminate the Vietnamese and other Indo-Chinese to establish a "new-type" colony and a military base in Southeast Asia. The Vietnamese, in contrast, were fighting for independence and freedom.

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<sup>1</sup>Lerner, p. 351.

To accomplish its goals, the United States was backing an "illegal" government against the will of the South Vietnamese, the majority of whom backed the South Vietnam National Front for Liberation, according to the newspaper.

United States attempts to bring peace to Vietnam were regarded as tricks "to fool public opinion." People were not deceived by the perfidy of the United States, however; all over the world, "peace- and justice-loving" individuals were protesting U.S. actions. According to the newspaper, public opinion in the United States was opposed to U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War. The Courier reported that fellow Communist countries were providing moral and political support to the North Vietnam and Viet Cong efforts and "volunteers" might be sent if the United States pursued its "schemes." The Courier pleaded for additional support from its readers.

The United States' efforts in Southeast Asia were reported to be failing; allied forces were being defeated on the battlefields of North and South Vietnam and Laos, and the South Vietnamese "puppet" government was wracked by dissension and was crumbling. The Courier said that the United States, in its desperation, was engaging in cruel and barbaric conduct, bringing suffering even to the innocent people of Vietnam.

#### The Newspaper's Techniques

The Sunday supplement American Weekly once listed 12 "basic human interests" on which its editorial policy was based. Among those assumedly



universal common denominators were tragedy, culture, achievement, self-improvement, heroism, security and faith.<sup>2</sup>

The Vietnam Courier used all those interests to obtain mass appeal: The Vietnamese people were suffering; Vietnamese schools, hospitals and the economy were attacked; despite the hardships, the country was progressing; the conflict had produced outstanding individuals; the Vietnamese were fighting only for independence and freedom, and they looked to a better tomorrow.

The material chosen to support the Communists' contentions was chosen with reasonable care:

Selection of material is one of the oldest, simplest and most deceptive propaganda tricks. It means choosing only the "facts" which help the argument and, naturally, omitting those "facts" which help the "enemy." . . . Results are pre-determined by an unfair arrangement of "assets" and "liabilities."<sup>3</sup>

The Courier generally anticipated sensitive spots in the arguments of the enemy, the dangers inherent in the enemy's tactics, and presented material to encourage responses favorable to the Communist cause. Thus the United States' altruistic explanations of its involvement in Vietnam were impugned and the Courier said America was fighting only for its self-interests. The South Vietnamese government was declared illegitimate and the National Front for Liberation was said to be the "sole genuine representative of the people of South Vietnam." The newspaper exploited those who did not favor U.S. involvement in Vietnam. It also called

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<sup>2</sup>Harter and Sullivan, p. 234, quoting the Philadelphia Inquirer, March 15, 1952. The other human interests listed by the American Weekly were health, romance, science, mystery and recreation.

<sup>3</sup>Harter and Sullivan, p. 35.

attention to the casualties inflicted by the American's weapons of mass destruction and attempted to draw a parallel between the tactics used by the United States and the Nazis. Despite all the hardships, the Communists were building a country, according to the Courier, and the United States should cease prosecution of the war.

The Courier presented its case through reiteration, constantly reinforcing the messages and attempting to ensure they would be remembered.

The North Vietnam Ministry of Information had established an arresting newspaper for the transmission of propaganda. Its appearance was bright. The variety of type faces and sizes, the use of red ink and the white paper on which it was printed contributed to a pleasing appearance.

#### A Personal Evaluation

While the arguments and "facts" presented by the Courier were not necessarily false, it is evident that in attempting to persuade their audience, the North Vietnamese, like many propagandists, resorted to falsehood when it suited their purposes. An instance: In a review of the previous year's activities by the Viet Cong in South Vietnam, the newspaper noted that on February 10, 1965, Communist forces accomplished the "destruction of an American Command Post at Qui Nhon: 107 G.I.'s and 36 puppet troops killed."<sup>4</sup>

The author of this thesis, as an Army intelligence officer, assisted in the investigation of the incident. Actually, the "Command Post" referred to was the Viet Cuong Hotel, an enlisted men's billet. Killed in the dynamiting attack were 21 Americans and five civilian Vietnamese.

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<sup>4</sup>Vietnam Courier, No. 43, Supplement No. 43, January 13, 1966, p. 1.

That is not to imply that the entire editorial content of the Courier was a lie or exaggeration. Instead, the incident serves as a reminder that the North Vietnamese propagandist in 1966 was capable of misrepresentation to accomplish his mission of persuasion.

The Courier obviously was a newspaper of a totalitarian government:

The very idea of a self-contained system from which all evil and unhappiness have been exorcised is totalitarian. The assumption that such a scheme of things is feasible and indeed inevitable is an invitation to a regime to proclaim that it embodies this perfection, to exact from its citizens recognition and submission and to brand opposition as vice or perversion.<sup>5</sup>

The disadvantages of writing for a totalitarian regime are obvious: There can be no shades of grey in the arguments and no hint of failure caused by the governmental system. According to the Courier, the Americans were wrong in their policies, aims and tactics, while all phases of the Communist war effort were correct. The newspaper's sterile and one-sided treatment induced boredom; most people realize that answers to complicated questions seldom are clearly defined.

Repetition of the same messages also proved wearisome. It would have been sufficient to establish the United States as the aggressor and bent on imperialistic policies. The Courier presented a surfeit of those epithets.

The newspaper's frequent disparaging remarks about Americans' fighting abilities were offensive to an ex-soldier and probably would be offensive to any American. The tactic was a poor one for, on the one hand, Americans were insulted, and on the other, exhorted to aid the

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<sup>5</sup>J.L. Talmon, The Rise of Totalitarian Democracy, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1952), p. 35.

Communist cause. It is difficult to grasp in friendship a hand that has just slapped one's face.

The Courier frequently called attention to America's efforts to achieve peace in Vietnam--calling them "tricks to fool public opinion." Instead, the many references to those attempts served as a reminder that the United States was, indeed, trying to bring the belligerents to the conference table. The frequent mention gave currency to the idea that the United States was seeking a cessation of hostilities.

If the intent of the Courier was to persuade the disaffected that the Communist arguments were valid, or if the newspaper's messages were intended to provide verbal ammunition for those opposed to U.S. involvement in the war, the newspaper might have been effective. However, if the North Vietnamese Government intended the Courier to win to the Communist side those utterly opposed to North Vietnamese and Viet Cong concepts, it is unlikely that the newspaper accomplished its purpose. Propaganda has its limitations; no matter how cleverly it is designed and how vigorously it is executed, it "does not change conditions, but only beliefs about conditions, and it cannot force the people to change their beliefs but can only persuade them to do so."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Lerner, p. 346.

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#### C. PUBLIC DOCUMENTS

U.S. Department of State. Fact Sheet Viet-Nam. Department of State Publication No. 7469. Far Eastern Series No. 116. April, 1963.

A brief summary of the United States' basic commitments to Vietnam.

U.S. Foreign Broadcast Information Service. Foreign Broadcast Report, April 24, 1967.

Includes directives to Viet Cong propagandists broadcast from a clandestine transmitter in South Vietnam April 19, 1967. The North Vietnamese propaganda "line" was similar to that followed by the Viet Cong.

Yu, Frederick T.C. Strategy and Tactics of Chinese Communist Propaganda as of 1952. U.S. Air Force. Personnel and Training Research Center. Series II, No. 3 of "Studies in Chinese Communism." Lackland Air Force Base, Texas: Air Research and Development Command, 1955.

A detailed study of Chinese Communist propaganda methods including government directives to propagandists, the structure of the Chinese propaganda "machine," an impressionistic methodology of propaganda analysis and case studies of several campaigns. Useful for methodology and content.

#### D. OTHER SOURCES

\_\_\_\_\_. Personal interview with Arthur J. Jette, artist, University of Montana Printing Services, Missoula, Montana. June 27, 1967.

Jette provided a technical description of the newspaper, including the type faces used.

\_\_\_\_\_. Personal interview with Claud E. Lord, director of the printing plant, University of Montana, Missoula, Montana, June 26, 1967.

Lord described the type of paper on which the Vietnam Courier was printed and deduced the type of press used.

U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency. Letter from John J. Mahan, intelligence analyst, U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency, Washington, D.C., July 3, 1967.

An explanation of the difficulties involved in exchanging mail with North Vietnam. Mahan explains that the Defense Intelligence Agency received the Courier from the State Department Acquisitions Service which, in turn, received it from the U.S. embassy in Moscow.

U.S. Department of State. Letter from John J. Helble, Viet-Nam Working Group, U.S. Department of State, Washington, D.C., April 7, 1967.

Helble explains that the Vietnam Courier is a publication of the North Vietnam Ministry of Information and is designed for overseas distribution.

U.S. Library of Congress. Letter from Cecil Hobbs, head of the South Asia Section, Orientalia Division, U.S. Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., April 21, 1967.

Hobbs explains that no unclassified information about the Courier is available in the United States and that the Library of Congress received the newspaper from a commercial dealer in Hong Kong.