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Southeast Asia
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No 4, April 1991

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Vietnam: TAP CHI CONG SAN

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27 September 1991

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Youth Mobilization in the New Situation

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[Article by Vu Oanh, secretary of the Central Committee of the CPV; published in FBIS-EAS-91-114, 13 Jun 91 pp 52-57]

The Forward Tendency of History and Today's Land Ownership Problem

00000000 Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No 4, Apr 91 pp 6-8

[Article by Vu Hung; not translated]

More on the Principle of Democratic Centralism

913E0015A Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese No 4, Apr 91 pp 9-10

[Article by Nguyen Van Ton, M.A. in economics]

[Text] In building the communist party and managing a socialist state, we have heard and talked a lot about the principle of democratic centralism. Recently, various explanations about democratic centralism have again appeared in various theoretical and political forums. However, looking at these explanations and comparing them to actual practice, I don't think that they have clarified anything, and some things are even more difficult to understand. This is without mentioning the contents and use of the principle of democratic centralism in the party and in state management. What things are similar, and what is different?

I hope that the proceedings of the Seventh Party Congress will better clarify the principle of democratic centralism. Here, I would like to give my understanding of the basic contents of this principle and its use in the party.

As for definitions, in the phrase "democratic centralism," "centralism" is a noun, and "democracy" is an adjective. Both the noun and its adjective have very broad meanings. Democratic centralism means a democratic form of centralism or centralism that is based on democracy.

In the Vietnamese language, the adjective follows the noun (because the Vietnamese language does not have a case structure). Thus, it is important to look at the word order in a sentence. If the words in this phrase are reversed to read centralized democracy instead of democratic centralism, the meaning is very different.

Only when the principle of democratic centralism is put into actual practice, or to be more accurate, only when the principle of democratic centralism is in accord with reality will the two elements, centralism and democracy, come into existence. Only then will they be activated and show both unity and mutual struggle. If I understand this

principle correctly, the theme of this principle is that the parts yield to the whole and the minority yield to the majority.

In the world today, a number of parties that call themselves communist parties have announced that they are abandoning the class struggle, the dictatorship of the proletariat, and the principle of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The tendency to exaggerate democracy, independence, and autonomy is on the rise again. It seems that only democracy is good and that centralism and discipline are bad. When talking about this principle, a number of people have reduced its solidity and rigidity. When defining a principle, people shouldn't try to "make it flexible," because that principle will decline in strength or not have any strength at all. Engels said that with respect to science, definitions have little value (see "Anti-Duhring"). There must be a scientific basis when putting forth a concept or explaining a principle, particularly with respect to principles that have a great influence on the revolution of the working class. We are living in a historical age in which there are many currents of information that could easily turn the world upside down or create great confusion. Thus, explaining this principle and holding firmly to this principle in both thought and action is a pressing requirement today.

During the first years of the 20th Century, Lenin waged a resolute struggle against the Mensheviks and opportunists on the issue of party organization. He actively put forth the organizational principles of the proletarian party. Even though the adjective "democracy" was missing, the principle of centralism had the same basic theme as today: the parts yield to the whole and the minority yield to the majority. In order to bring about centralized leadership, Lenin waged a fierce struggle in a democratic environment (including in public publications). At that time, the principle of centralism was in reality a "rigid principle." It was so rigid that the representatives of opportunism and capitalism called it "an enslavement" and "a martial law state" within the party. They said that this "has turned party members into cogs and gears" and "political corpses." But real communists did not fear those charges. Nor were they afraid of the discipline of large-scale industrial production. In "One Step Forward, Two Steps Back," Lenin wrote: "I have never feared the terrible statements about 'martial law in the party' or about 'special laws against a number of groups or a number of people.' As for those elements that vacillate and waiver, we must create a 'martial law situation.' All of the party's statutes and the entire system of centralization have been approved by the congress. These things are just a 'martial law situation' in order to deal with many sources of political vagueness." (Footnote 1) (Lenin, "Collected Works," Progress Publishing House, Moscow, 1978, volume 8, page 369)

Adding the word "democracy" as an adjective to provide a full description does not turn the principle of democratic centralism into a "soft" principle. Based on its class nature, the communist party is not a "liberal" or

"democratic" party. Because of this, it is very difficult to say that "democratic centralism is a democratic system within the party." And it should not be said that democratic centralism is the "system of every person." With respect to parties whose form of activities is similar to that of clubs and with regard to a number of mass organizations such as the Elders' Association and the Landscaping Association, there is no need to have "democratic centralism regulations."

The Communist Party, the vanguard of the working class, has very great tasks in the final class struggle in order to liberate laborers from oppression and injustice and build a new and civilized society having higher labor productivity than capitalist society.

The struggle to seize power and build a regime in conditions in which the social production forces are weak is a very intense and difficult struggle. The phrase "who will defeat whom" in the present economic and social crisis requires that we think about the profound meaning of this.

As the powerholder, the communist party must confirm that it is a strong force that is unified with respect to will power and action. This means that the party must maintain strict discipline. The party cannot allow itself to lose its prestige as the political leader.

Once the principle of "elements must yield to the whole and the minority must submit to the majority" has been accepted, within the party, the decisive ideas must be those of the majority or higher echelons and not of the minority or lower echelons. Naturally, the best decisions with the best prospects are those that integrate the desires of the people and the character of the age, that have sought a wide range of opinions, and that have been approved by the majority of the people. However, this does not mean that these decisive ideas must "reflect all the hopes and ideas of every person" or that they must

"include new ideas and ideas that are contrary to those with which people are familiar." Perhaps this is just an abstract desire for a civilized society of the future once bureaucratic centralism and reverence for the individual have been completely eliminated, once mature elements have similar high educational standards, a practical understanding, and logical reasoning, and, in particular, once the economic relationships of the elements in society are really fair. Reality shows that the principle of democratic centralism can lead to a search for relative truths. In a society in which there are great differences between the elements with respect to material, cultural, and spiritual standards of living, the so-called "truth" can only be found based on the usual practice: "the strong win, the weak lose." Even in the sciences (particularly the social sciences), many times people want to determine the truth by vote: the majority defeat the minority.

Compared with a rational society in the far future, many of the things that happened in the past and that are happening today are irrational. The truths are simple and concrete, but understanding them is very difficult. Sometimes it is the minority or just a few scholars who know the truth, with the majority not understanding or not accepting the truth. For thousands of years, the social history of mankind has developed along winding paths. Science has many times had to pay a high price for its successes. As for true scholars, science demands from them great sacrifices, including individual interests (if necessary), and great bravery.

As we know, there are few scholars in society. Furthermore, in many cases, determining who is a "scholar" (particularly in the social and political spheres) is very difficult. Therefore, the new must be supplemented with "collective scholars" using democratic forms. And because a fierce class struggle (including both old and new forms) is taking place and for many other reasons as well, the principle of democratic centralism is still essential.

Contributing To Formulating the Program and Strategy

Subjects That Need To Be Discussed Again

913E0015B Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN
in Vietnamese No 4, Apr 91 pp 11-12

[Article by the Editorial Staff]

[Text] Respecting ideological freedom, in its March 1991 issue, TAP CHI CONG SAN printed a number of the ideas expressed at a conference on the Draft Program and Draft Strategy that had been organized by the Economics Section of TAP CHI CONG SAN. We feel that a number of the ideas expressed by Hong Ha and Phan Dinh Dieu concerning Marxism-Leninism were inaccurate. Dieu acknowledged that "Marxism is great." "We must accept what is great about Marxism. This includes dialectical materialism. This great tool of understanding must be used in studying the country's process of economic and social development." But he posed the question: "Should Marxism-Leninism be regarded as the only theoretical foundation for our Program as has been the case up to now?" Hong Ha was even more specific: "Perhaps we should view Marxism-Leninism just as a source of understanding." "I think that Marxism-Leninism is just a source of knowledge."

We feel that the ideological system—the theoretical foundation—of the party should be distinguished from mankind's sources of knowledge. There are many sources of knowledge that supplement each other. That source that distills the essence of other sources and respects the world's objective laws of development will approach the truth of the age. Marxism-Leninism has done that. Marxism-Leninism came into being above all to serve the revolutionary movement of the working class. Thus, it is the only ideological system of the Communist Party, the vanguard unit of the working class. The only ideological system of the Communist Party is Marxism-Leninism. But this does not mean that those who follow Marxism-Leninism can't accept the essence of the ideas of nations and mankind past and present, that is, other sources of knowledge. This is a dialectical law of development. In order to further clarify the creativity in applying Marxism-Leninism in our country's situation, the party's Draft Program has added the ideas of Ho Chi Minh to the party's ideological foundation, that is, the party's ideological system. It's true that every theory, no matter how general, such as Marxism-Leninism must obey a general law of development: There are certain historical limitations. It must be supplemented and developed. Thus, Leninism supplemented Marxism to form Marxism-Leninism. And in the present age, in accord with the evolution of man and amidst the explosion of science and technology, in the social struggle for a better future for mankind, Marxism-Leninism is being supplemented, developed, and renovated. We must know how to apply Marxist-Leninist principles to specific situations and how to eliminate those things that are outmoded and constantly focus on

reality and the future. A very high price has had to be paid for rigid dogmas. Marx and Lenin were not gods. They, too, made mistakes. In order to guard against dogmatism, the founders of Marxism-Leninism encouraged people not to transform their ideas into rigid dogmas but to regard these ideas as a compass for action. Dialectical materialism is Marx' greatest contribution to mankind. But Marxism is not just a methodology. It is also scientific socialism. It is an economic and political science that has made great contributions to world knowledge and civilization.

In his statements, Hong Ha said: "Marx was wrong in regarding public ownership as the target of building the new society." It's true that in the Communist Manifesto, Marx wrote: "Communists summarize their theory in a single statement: abolish the system of private ownership." But that statement must be viewed in context. Marx was concentrating on criticizing the capitalist system of private ownership, a production relationship that had become outmoded because the production forces had reached a very high level of socialization. Many of Marx' ideas are no longer appropriate today, but his ideas on public and private ownership were right. We must examine communism by looking at all the arguments of Marx when he analyzed and criticized capitalism in his works, particularly in *Das Kapital*.

Is ownership the target or the means? This question must be answered in the dialectical relationship between targets and means. In social phenomena, there are unchangeable targets and means and things that are both targets and means. There are targets that, once they have been hit, become means for hitting higher targets. This mutation between targets and means must be examined in each specific circumstance and not in a mechanical way, immutably fixing what is a means and what is a target. The ownership problem is an important theoretical and practical problem in our country today that will be discussed on many other occasions.

We made mistakes in the past because we did not carefully study the questions raised by Marx or the historical conditions of Marxist ideas. We viewed the ownership problem in a formal manner and separated this problem from the development of the production forces and from production relations. In that, we showed our immaturity.

The Socialist Revolution in the Ideological and Cultural Spheres

913E0015C Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN
in Vietnamese No 4, Apr 91 pp 12-14

[Article by Nguyen Dinh Luan, M.A. in philosophy]

[Text] In order to resolve the basic conflicts in our society in the transitional period to socialism, the Draft Program on Socialist Construction in the Transitional Period mentions six basic principles that must be adhered to. One of these principles is: "Carry on the socialist revolution in the ideological and cultural

spheres, and enable Marxism-Leninism and the ideological and moral values and behavior of Ho Chi Minh to hold a guiding position in the spiritual life of society. Build a moral and civilized society for the interests and dignity of man with ever higher cultural standards. Oppose bourgeois ideas, neocolonialist influences, and the pernicious effects of feudal ideas and petty bourgeois psychology." Reading this principle carefully, I think that there are new and correct points. But at the same time, there are some points that need to be discussed further.

A new point that is quite obvious is that this time, we have written "the socialist revolution in the ideological and cultural spheres" instead of "the ideological and cultural revolution" as in the past. The present phrase is more rational, because the revolution that we are carrying on is a socialist revolution with varied and complex contents that include many different spheres of social life. In this, the cultural and spiritual form just one sphere that is organically related to the other spheres. Carrying on the socialist revolution in this sphere requires that this be closely related to the revolutionary movements in the socioeconomic spheres. Only in such a unified body can the socialist revolution gradually hit the targets set. The realities of past years have given us a more correct view of this problem and enabled us to see the metaphysical nature of this when separating things and carrying out the "three revolutions," with the consequence being that this can be seen only on paper and in words and not in social life.

The target of the socialist revolution in the ideological and cultural spheres is to enable Marxism-Leninism and the ideological and moral values and behavior of Ho Chi Minh to hold a guiding role in the spiritual life of society. This is correct, but it is not enough. This is because Marxism-Leninism is a science, and it cannot develop off mankind's path of civilization.

Great changes have taken place in all spheres of world social life in recent decades. This has forced true Marxists who don't want to lose their name to continue to generalize practices in order to further develop Marxist theory. It was not by accident that Lenin said: "Continuing the course set by Hegel and Marx requires an historical dialectical development of the ideas of man and of science and technology." (Footnote 1) (Lenin, "Collected Works," Progress Publishing House, Moscow, 1981, volume 29, page 156)

Because of this, in my view, the target of carrying on the socialist revolution in the ideological and cultural spheres is to enable Marxism-Leninism, the ideological and moral values and behavior of Ho Chi Minh, and the intellectual essence of man to hold a guiding position in the spiritual life of society.

We must be very clear about this, because if we don't add "the intellectual essence of mankind," we will sever the vital organic tie between the spiritual life of the nation and the rich and constantly developing civilization of the

world. That would unintentionally limit the spiritual development of the nation and the self-development of Marxist theory. Today, unless we accept the intellectual essence of mankind in the various spheres of social life, we will not be able to fulfill the dream of President Ho Chi Minh, which was to enable every Vietnamese to have a job and enjoy a prosperous and happy life.

Moreover, in order to adhere to Marxism-Leninism and accept the ideological and moral values of Ho Chi Minh, there must be specific cultural standards concerning the natural and social sciences. Lenin said that one of the greatest and most damaging mistakes that a Marxist can make is to think that the masses can escape from the dark circle only by the direct path of pure Marxist education.

Adding "the intellectual essence of mankind" to the targets of carrying on the revolution in the ideological and cultural spheres is aimed at preserving the unified nature of the spiritual life of the Vietnamese people within the ideological value system of man.

As for position, is putting this principle in fourth place rational?

When talking about the role and function of concepts and ideas, Lenin stressed that the concept of man not only reflects but also creates the objective world.

There are basic reasons for the shortcomings exhibited by our party during the past period. But above all, these stem from ideological understanding and theoretical insufficiencies.

We have talked a lot about building a state of the people, by the people, and for the people. But how can we build such a state? As Lenin pointed out, the cause of bureaucratic centralism is a lack of culture. Lack of culture comes from two directions: those who control and those who are controlled. People who hold state management functions but who lack culture will have communist arrogance and will certainly bureaucratize things. Those who are managed, who lack culture, and who are controlled by feudal ideas of rank will tend to obey orders unconditionally. They will tend to rely on others and not have the standards to understand the problems. This is a favorable environment for the growth of bureaucratic centralism. Raising the cultural standards of the people (including political culture) is one of the necessary conditions for building a state of the people, by the people, and for the people in our country.

On the other hand, we will not be able to build an effective state apparatus unless we adhere to the scientific knowledge accumulated by mankind and make plans for building the state (which must include knowledge concerning control and information). How can the functions of the legislative, administrative, and judicial organizations be clearly determined? This question can't be answered just by experience or a classless viewpoint. There must also be modern, multi-sector scientific knowledge.

The Draft Program mentions "the exceptional advances of science and technology that mark a new high point in the development of man's knowledge and that have a profound effect on the speed of historical development and the lives of the people."

"Peace, economic internationalization, technological transfers, cultural exchanges, and exchanges of information have become a common tendency, and these are favorable conditions for the developing countries."

In my view, this is not only a favorable condition but also a great challenge for our country. How can we join this general tendency when our starting point is an agricultural civilization? In order to expand the production forces, there must be technology and skilled laborers. Only by expanding our outlook through the culture of the age can we join the world economy, an intellectual economy. Looking at the experiences of the countries around us that have a developed economy (such as Japan), it can be seen that the economic development strategy must be tied to the educational and the scientific and technical development strategies. According to Marx, accumulation is important, and most basic is accumulation of knowledge and skills. This is particularly important to countries such as Vietnam in the present development conditions of the scientific and technical revolution. Without knowledge and skills, we will not be able to attract investment capital. And even if we do attract capital, the use of this capital may not achieve good results. In order to obtain knowledge, we must study and invest suitable amounts in culture and education.

When discussing production relationships, we cannot ignore the management problem, which is an integral element of this. The practices of the past 15 years, particularly in recent years, have clearly shown the price that we must pay for the lessons on management. The socialist system of ownership and the principle of distribution according to labor cannot motivate laborers to produce without a suitable management apparatus and mechanism and suitable management measures. Management is both a science and an art. Thus, in order to manage things excellently, we must adhere to modern scientific knowledge concerning management if the management themes are to transform Vietnam's economy into an integral factor of the world economic system. Relying on experience alone (particularly the experiences of deficit production) is not enough. As Engels said, relying on experience, people say that the sun will come up tomorrow. But the fact is, the day will come when the sun won't come up. Thus, the task of gradually forming socialist production relations must be based on a specific cultural foundation. In my view, culture, viewed from an historical perspective, must be understood to mean a certain level of development of society and of the creative capabilities and strength of people as manifested in the formulas for organizing the lives and activities of people and in the material and spiritual values created by people. In Lenin's new view on

socialism, the center of the revolution is "peaceful cultural organization." With a thorough understanding of Lenin's concept, in building socialism, President Ho Chi Minh gave great attention to expanding the scientific knowledge of the party and to cultivating revolutionary morals. He said: "Today, the party needs cadres and party members who are skilled not only in political matters but also in technical matters. We cannot lead things in a general way." (Footnote 2) (Ho Chi Minh, "On Ideology," Su That Publishing House) "To be worthy of their role as masters, people must study." (Footnote 3) (Ibid.)

With such an understanding of the role, position, and functions of ideology and culture, I think that we can and must move the fourth principle to a leading position with the additions discussed above.

The Worker-Peasant-Intellectual Alliance

00000000 Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No 4, Apr 91 pp 15-17

[Article by Do Khanh Tang; not translated]

The Need for More Scientific Knowledge About Modern Capitalism

913E0015D Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN
in Vietnamese No 4, Apr 91 pp 18-20

[Article by Vu Hien]

[Text] In the Draft Program on Socialist Construction in the Transitional Period, the section on capitalism discusses a number of important points. However, some of those points are not really scientific or accurate and they do not correctly evaluate the situation in today's capitalist countries. In this short article, I would like to discuss a number of aspects.

1. Capitalist Must Be Examined Within the Context of Our Age

Marx and Engels made a number of very persuasive predictions about the momentary nature of capitalism when it was still young and vigorous. Lenin made some new discoveries during the bourgeois period that showed the first cracks and signs of decay. Lenin predicted the "birth pains" of a new society and arrived at an important conclusion: "Capitalism has reached its zenith, and the dawn of socialism is approaching." His prediction was correct. The world has changed completely.

But capitalism on the threshold of the 21st Century has shown new aspects that are not in accord with our old ways of looking at it. Capitalism has proven that it still has vital energy. Worldwide crises such as those that sapped the strength of capitalism during the period 1929-1933 have not reoccurred. The internal conflicts of capitalism have not been strong enough to lead to revolution. In the face of this situation, a number of people have tied this to the erroneous nature of Marxism-Leninism. They have said that the predictions on the

demise of capitalism were too early and that the explanations concerning its destruction were wrong. Others view the changes of socialism and the changes of modern capitalism as a sudden historical shift.

Actually, looking at the lessons of history and the things taking place today, every manifestation of modern capitalism can be explained. Capitalism continues to survive. This is easy to understand. We consider the starting point of capitalism to be the stage of handicraft work sites around the middle of the 16th Century, and so capitalism has been in existence for about 350 years. That is not very long when compared with the length of time that feudalism existed. And prior to that there was the slave system. Thus, the expectation that capitalism will soon vanish lacks a historical basis.

There is another point to which we must give attention. We have never really evaluated the elasticity of the capitalism economic structure or the flexibility of bourgeois businessmen, who know how to twist and turn and still maintain their position. Modern capitalism has gone very far in the process of internationalizing social production and unifying the economy. The regulation of private capital with respect to economic processes is closely tied to the regulation of the bourgeois state using quite varied legal, administrative, economic, and social tools. A super-national mechanism that has the function of regulating the political and economic conflicts of capitalism has been formed. Even though this mechanism has not been perfected, it has still contributed to solving a number of problems of capitalism.

Thus, when evaluating modern capitalism, two things must be considered. On one hand, capitalism still has defects, conflicts, and dregs. But on the other hand, it still has great development capabilities, it is capable of self-reform, and its capabilities are suited to the new conditions.

2. The Reasons for the Changes by Capitalism

A section in the Draft Program states that "after the Second World War, colonialism collapsed and the scope of rule of capitalism narrowed. In the face of this situation, capitalism has looked for ways to make adjustments in order to survive." This passage contains a number of inaccuracies.

First, it cannot be affirmed that the scope of rule of capitalism has narrowed. Following the Second World War, because of the international, political, and economic changes, and, in particular, because many colonial and dependent countries gained their political independence, the old colonial system collapsed. But the imperialist countries implemented a neocolonialist policy. On the surface, it seemed as if these former colonies had gained political independence. But actually, the imperialists used stratagems to maintain indirect economic and political control over these countries. Commodity and capital exports, loans, aid, and so on, those were the important tricks that the imperialists used to penetrate the developing countries. The scope of

control of capitalism has not declined but has even grown, especially since the changes in Eastern Europe. Naturally, the control and rule exerted by capitalism today is much different than in the past.

Second, the adjustments made by capitalism to survive were not made just because of or even mainly because of the collapse of colonialism. Actually, this adjustment, the heart of which was economic regulation, meant interference by the bourgeois countries in socioeconomic processes in order to facilitate the expansion of the production forces and the suitability of the production relations. This adjustment began with the capitalist system itself. Capitalism had to strive to resolve certain conflicts between the production forces and the production relations and its defects in bourgeois society.

Naturally, capitalism also had to make changes because of external factors and the changed international conditions. This included the appearance and constant expansion of socialism and the rapid collapse of colonialism.

The source and form of the adjustment made by capitalism were closely related to the special characteristics of the scientific and technical revolution during the present stage. The bourgeois class and the bourgeois governments had to strive to solve a number of key economic problems posed by the scientific and technical revolution. These included increasing the competitive strength of the products, increasing production results, organizing broad state sectors in order to expand the competitive environment, reducing social expenditures, including essential expenditures, and helping capitalist principles to operate effectively.

The change in the adjustment patterns in the capitalist countries reflected the suitable tendencies of world capitalism in the new situation. However, this does not mean that a controlling form of capitalism had appeared. In certain cases, the difficult problems of capitalism were solved by taking money from the poor people in the country or from undeveloped countries. That, too, is a law of capitalism.

3. On the Basic Conflicts of Capitalism

One of Marx' important contributions was pointing out the basic conflict of capitalism: the conflict between private capitalist ownership and the high socialization of production. It's true that capitalism has many serious conflicts and that society has many serious antagonisms. But to date, it cannot be affirmed that these things have been constant or that they have been on the rise. There have been changes concerning both aspects of the above basic conflict.

Changing the form of ownership: The growth of private ownership since the time of free competition has gradually been replaced by an economic system having notable planning factors. Modern capitalism must be viewed as a body within which the production forces have been developed and within which traditional forms of production relationships interwoven with state monopoly forms

have come into being as a result of the production socialization process. This is a complex unity between regulation and markets and between integrated economic management systems.

In the process of nationalizing the economy and during the time that the bourgeois states have sought measures to regulate the economy, the capitalist form of ownership with respect to the means of production has undergone notable changes. Production relations in the capitalist countries have been more socialized. Because of this, to a certain degree, they are better suited to the growth of the production forces. Today, the conflict between the social nature of production and private capitalist ownership does not have clear traces or a clear boundary as in the past. In modern capitalism, the bourgeois state owns and distributes 30-60 percent of the national income. This is no longer just private ownership. A certain portion has a social nature.

Changes from the standpoint of the laborers: Unlike at the end of the 19th Century and the beginning of this

century, today, most members of the working class in the developed capitalist countries are paid a wage based on the value of their labor. This is because the bourgeoisie can use part of its high profits to bribe people, because the worker movement has been organized to form a strong force to counter the bourgeoisie, and because in order to expand production, capitalism has had to increase demand by the population and increase the scale of individual consumption. These things have led to notable changes in the lives of the laborers in the developed capitalist countries. There is still poverty, but it is not widespread among people who have jobs. Because of this, still prevalent in the minds of those who work for a wage is what Lenin referred to as "labor unionism." They do not directly perceive the oppression of the capitalist system.

From the above analysis, in my view, the party's Program should not state: the basic conflict of capitalism is "becoming more and more" serious. Instead, to be more accurate, the words "becoming more and more" should be replaced by the word "still."

The Party's Leadership Role With Regard to the Political System

913E0015E Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN
in Vietnamese No 4, Apr 91 pp 21-24

[Article by Dau The Bieu, instructor at the Nguyen Ai Quoc Institute]

[Text] Our country's political system includes the party, the state, the fatherland front, and various mass organizations. This system has been organized and operates in accord with a mechanism to fully guarantee the rights of the people under the leadership of the party. Every organization has its own separate functions, tasks, contents, and operating formulas, because these must all be of the people, by the people, and for the people. These are definitely not rights that a particular group or one individual has imposed on the people. Evaluating the quality and effectiveness of the renovation of the political system must be based on whether the people have greater mastery and on whether socialist democracy has been built and implemented.

A political system is a unified body. The party is an element of the political system. But the party is the political vanguard unit. It is the political leadership nucleus of the entire system. Because of this, to hit the targets of renovating the political system, the key problem is to maintain and elevate the leadership role of the party with respect to the political system. If the party loses its leadership role, renovation of the political system will become meaningless.

Above all, the scientific basis of the leadership position and role of the Communist Party in the socialist revolution must be clarified.

Some people say that the natural historical process of development should be allowed to determine the fate of mankind and determine whether man moves toward socialism or capitalism and that there is no need to have a Communist Party to lead things. Actually, this idea has turned its back on history. History develops according to objective laws. It does not, however, develop spontaneously but is created by people. In the class struggle in society, once classes have developed to a certain degree and things have reached the stage of political struggle, parties will come into being. Today, corresponding to the two basic classes and two opposing ideologies are two parties: the party of the working class and the party of the bourgeois class. These two parties with opposing ideologies are political leaders. The only difference is that one is the party of the working class, whose goal is to hit the political targets of the dictatorship of the proletariat (which exists in many forms), and the other is the party of the bourgeois class, whose goal is to hit the political targets of the bourgeois dictatorship. Because of its class nature, socialism must be led by the Communist Party. The leadership position of the Communist Party in the process of moving toward socialism is an objective requirement of the class struggle between the working class and the bourgeois class on a worldwide scale.

But when stressing the position of the Communist Party in the socialist revolution, it must be affirmed that this is the position of a political vanguard unit and not the position of a power organization that stands above the other organizations in society. In conditions in which the party leads the administration, this position is particularly important, because the party has become the political vanguard unit of all of society. This means that the party represents the interests not only of the working class but also of the laboring people and all the people. This is a fundamental change in the position of the Communist Party. This change points out that the responsibilities of the party have not declined but have even increased as compared with before. The political system must be reformed and renovated in order to strengthen the leadership position and role of the party having the credentials of a political vanguard unit. Naturally, this must be based on the viewpoint that the strength of the party is closely related to the strength of the entire political system and, in particular, to that of the socialist state.

Trying to reform and renovate the political system while attacking the party's leadership and weakening its leadership role is a great political mistake.

The problem is to study and review the practices in order to gradually clarify the functions of the party within the political system. A mistake that has been common for several decades now is that the party has replaced the state. The party has made all the decisions and seriously violated socialist democracy. In many countries, the party has become a centralized and bureaucratic power that has dominated all aspects of social life. In undertaking political reform, new mistakes have been made, such as wanting to reduce the leadership role of the party, wanting to have many leadership centers, and saying that the National Assembly is higher than the party.

As the political vanguard unit of all of society, the party must put forth programs, lines, and major policies for all spheres of social life. These are viewpoints, principles, and guiding ideas that the state and other organizations in the political system can rely on and use creatively in accord with their functions in order to complete the political tasks. Once there is an administration, these are the political viewpoints regarding economics, culture, society, security, national defense, diplomacy, and so on aimed at achieving independence, freedom, prosperity, happiness, democracy, and social fairness for the people. The party cannot make decisions on issues that are within the scope of the functions of the state, the fatherland front, the mass organizations, or the social organizations. The party must respect the independence of these organizations.

A new and difficult question for the party in power is how to ensure that the people are the real political, economic, and social masters and that they participate directly in managing the state, the economy, and society instead of remaining just passive subjects. If the people

do not become masters, material and spiritual life in society will encounter difficulties. If society lacks democracy and fairness, it will be difficult for the people to accept the party's leadership. This is an important lesson that has been learned from the defeats suffered by many socialist countries in the past period.

The party leads politics in terms of the organizational aspect. But the party must not define or interfere in the organizational tasks of the other organizations in the political system. The party must put forth viewpoints, principles, and guiding ideas on the construction and the organizational activities of the state and of the entire political system. For example, on what principles must the state be founded and operate? Can we implement "three divisions of powers" and "local rule?" How should we distinguish between economic management functions and production and business functions?

Within the party, understanding concerning the party's leadership role is still simple. The party has not "invested" intelligence and talent in this sphere. This has led to conservatism and sluggishness concerning organization, even since the sixth congress. Thus, in order to actually implement the program and strategy on building and developing the economy and society, the party, particularly at the strategic levels, must give particular attention to strengthening leadership with respect to the organizational sphere.

As for cadre work, the party must put forth comprehensive viewpoints on training and employing the cadres. At the same time, it must formulate the major policies on cadres. For example, the party must put forth viewpoints on talented people under socialism, guiding viewpoints, and cadres policies in order to soon have talented people to serve the country. The party can directly stipulate the cadre problem only for party organizations. As for state agencies and other organizations, the party can only recommend party members and cadres outside the party who have adequate standards. It is then up to those agencies and organizations to choose and decide.

Leadership is tied to control. Without control, there cannot be leadership. The party must control the political system. The party must see if its viewpoints, principles, and guiding ideas are being carried out by the other organizations in the political system. Control does not mean that the party must have the leadership boards of those organizations submit reports on the situation. The party must inspect things through the ranks of its party members working in those organizations. Through inspections, the party must summarize things in order to constantly supplement and perfect its viewpoints, principles, and guiding ideas in political leadership. At the same time, the party is the one who must organize and coordinate the inspections of the party, state, and people (through the activities of the other organizations in the political system) in order to hit the targets in the lines, positions, and policies of the party in each revolutionary period.

In order to maintain and elevate its leadership role with respect to the political system, the party must concentrate on solving a number of pressing and basic problems:

First, theoretical standards in the party must be improved in order to develop and perfect the renovation viewpoint and line of the sixth congress.

In the history of revolutionary activities, it can be said that never before has the party had to answer so many theoretical questions in both the domestic and foreign spheres as it must today. The fierce struggle between Marxism-Leninism and modern opportunism on basic questions (such as the age, mankind, and classes, peace and war, the historical mission of the working class, the role of the Communist Party, the transitional period to socialism, and the dictatorship of the proletariat) requires that the party develop on the theoretical front with high quality in order to contribute to protecting and developing Marxism-Leninism in the new historical conditions. Socialism is passing through a theoretical crisis. Unlike what those who oppose communism and socialism claim, this crisis does not stem from the fact that Marxism-Leninism is outmoded. Instead, it stems from the fact that many communist parties have misunderstood Marxism-Leninism, become mired in subjectivism and voluntarism, and made serious mistakes in applying Marxism-Leninism. Added to that, world development has posed many practical questions that require new theoretical answers. But Marxism-Leninism cannot yet answer these questions. Many of these questions are closely related to the development of our country's revolution, and so there must be clear conclusions concerning both theory and viewpoints.

It must be emphasized that the tasks during the final years of this century require that the leadership and combat strength of the party reach new heights in terms of quality. The vanguard nature of the party has to do above all with theory. Because of this, the root problem is to actively improve standards concerning Marxist-Leninism theory in order to review practices and formulate correct programs, strategies, lines, and policies. Naturally, the theoretical standards of the entire party must be raised, but the immediate thing is to raise the theoretical standards of the leading cadres at the strategic echelons.

Carrying out the task of renovating thinking as put forth by the sixth congress, the party has matured theoretically. But it is also clear that the party must quickly overcome backwardness concerning theory in terms of contents, methods, forms, mechanisms, and policies. Dogmatism and voluntaristic subjectivism can be overcome only by adhering to the revolutionary and scientific nature of Marxism-Leninism and making creative use of this to review the revolutionary practices of the country. A correct theory is related to practice. Only by having a theory to lead the way will it be possible to review the practices. Empiricism cannot be used to overcome dogmatism or voluntaristic subjectivism.

Second, the principle of democratic centralism must be strictly implemented in the party. Democracy must be practiced in the party first, and bureaucratic centralism must be overcome in the party first. In order to implement the principle of democratic centralism, there are many problems that must be solved, but the first thing is to concentrate on solving the following problems:

Along with strengthening education, particular attention must be given to mechanizing the principle of democratic centralism in party leadership and building the party internally. The party leads the administration. But when party members hold positions of power, because of individual positions and rights and individual ambitions, the principle of democratic centralism is often violated. For this reason, this principle must be mechanized in order to force each party member, regardless of his position, to adhere to this. In the party, there cannot be any party members who are "exceptions." Only by mechanizing this will it be possible to determine which party members are carrying out the party statutes. For example, only by mechanizing the principle of the collective leading and the individual serving will it be possible to overcome special privileges, individual authoritarianism, and irresponsibility.

Like mechanization, education must give attention to implementing democracy in connection with maintaining discipline. Bureaucratic centralism is centralism that has been separated from democracy. Only by having real democracy will it be possible to have correct centralism. Only by having real democracy will it be possible to eliminate special privileges and authoritarianism, which limit democracy, and avoid undisciplined freedom, localism, and individualism.

Third, particular attention must be given to building solidarity and unity in the party, particularly in the party committee echelons.

Our party is facing new and very complex challenges. The historical experiences of the party have proven many times that solidarity and unity are the sources of the party's strength. Solidarity and unity in the party must be based on the programs, lines, policies, and principle of democratic centralism. Along with democracy and based on democracy, there must be synchronized, strong, and clear-cut policies and measures concerning organization in order to deal with the negative aspects and party members who lack sufficient qualifications. Party and state discipline must be resolute and prompt, above all from the higher echelons. A stop must be put to the situation in which things are dealt with severely at lower echelons but lightly at higher echelons, and corruption must be eliminated. At the party committee echelons and in each party organization, localism and undisciplined freedom must be criticized along with criticizing and overcoming bureaucratic centralism, which is still quite prevalent.

Fourth, cadre work must be renovated, and a number of problems must be solved:

A system of basic viewpoints on organization must soon be formed. The position, functions, tasks, operating

formulas, and organizational and operating principles of each organization in the apparatus must be clarified. Based on this, each member organization must be standardized in order to streamline things and improve quality and results.

Based on the requirements of the new political and organizational tasks, the existing viewpoints must be perfected, the new viewpoints must be supplemented, and a system of viewpoints on cadres in the transitional period must be formed. Based on this, cadre standardization must be carried on effectively.

Perfecting cadre standardization must be continued, particularly for leading and key management cadres at the echelons and in the sectors. Standardizing the cadres is the basis for effectively democratizing cadre work. Only by standardizing things will it be possible to maintain quality in examining and reassigning cadres, perfecting cadre planning, and preparing personnel for the various echelon congresses.

The leadership capabilities of the party committee echelons depend on the quality of both the leading cadres and the staff cadres. Thus, along with standardizing the leading cadres, a good job must be done in standardizing the various types of staff cadres in order to evaluate, select, and reassign cadres, particularly at the strategic echelons.

To renovate cadre work, the cadre policies must be renovated based on encouraging and giving important positions to talented people and eliminating special rights and privileges. Above all, the wage system must be handled well. The wages of each type of cadre must be paid in cash and made public, the principle of distribution according to labor must be adhered to, and social fairness must be implemented.

Fifth, active steps must be taken to improve the quality of the party members, and those people who lack the qualifications needed by party members must resolutely be expelled from the party.

Improving the leadership capabilities and prestige of the party must be tied very closely to improving the quality of the party members. This problem was recognized many years ago, but to date, the results have been very poor. In order to change the situation, the party committee echelons must have centralized and continuous guidance. Politically, ideologically, and morally degenerate cadres must be expelled from the party immediately.

Besides expelling members, many other forms must be used, such as crossing off names, in order to remove party members who no longer have leadership capabilities, whose combat will power has declined, who are not in agreement with the party, who ignore party member tasks, who are not trusted by the masses, or who have been educated many times but have failed to make progress.

On the Motive Force of Social Development

00000000 Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
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[Article by Nhat Tan; not translated]

The Family in Socialism

00000000 Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No 4, Apr 91 pp 29-32

[Article by Le Quang Duc; not translated]

The National Language Policy

00000000 Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No 4, Apr 91 pp 33-36

[Article by Nguyen Nhu Y; not translated]

Cultural and Spiritual Life in a Number of Districts in the Central Region

913E0015F Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN
in Vietnamese No 4, Apr 91 pp 37-39

Article by Nguyen Hong Son and Nguyen Van Nam,
Nguyen Ai Quoc School, Zone 3 (Danang)]

[Text] Since the country was unified, building the culture in general and building a cultural and spiritual life in particular has scored great achievements in the scientific and technical, educational, arts and letters, and moral spheres and in the sphere of organizing the new cultural life. The appearance of spiritual life in the cities and rural areas of the central region has changed constantly. Cultural values have gradually become assets of the people and begun to create specific conditions to enable the people to create cultural values.

However, looking at the root of things in building culture based on the spirit of renovation, there are still many problems that must be studied and reviewed, and correct tasks must be set in accord with the actual socioeconomic situation in each stage of development. At a time when the world is undergoing complex changes, the socialist countries are in a serious and prolonged crisis, and our economy, with a multifaceted mechanism, is shifting from a centralized planning mechanism to a market mechanism controlled by the state, it will be difficult to avoid setbacks and declines in building culture in general and in building a cultural and spiritual life in the districts in particular.

From having conducted studies on the construction of a cultural and spiritual life in districts in a number of central provinces, we would like to make a number of observations, which can be viewed as lessons:

1. Cultural and educational development must be related to and synchronized with economic development. Cultural renovation cannot be separated from or be independent of economic renovation.

During the first years of the 1980s, we strove to create cultural mechanisms and to perfect the model of the new socialist man. Today, some comrades say that it isn't necessary to wait until the economy has expanded before developing culture. How should we evaluate this idea?

Reality in many central districts shows that if the economy has expanded somewhere, cultural and spiritual life there will usually be better. But in places where the economy has expanded slowly, cultural and spiritual life will usually be inferior. Because the economy expanded, in just a short period of time, Krong Pak District in Dac Lak Province was able to build a district

cultural center and 18 village cultural centers valued at more than 1 billion dong and 12 open-air movie theaters and maintain three 35-mm film units and 26 video terminals, an orchestra worth 10 million dong, 10 arts and letters units, a rank of nonprofessional writers and composers composed of 20 people, six poets, 10 photography shops, and 11 broadcasting stations with 1,000 large and small loudspeakers. Without economic potential, how could this district put tile roofs on almost all of its schools and expand public health to the point where complex operations can be performed in the district?

Ea Tun Village in C'Mgar provides vivid proof, too. If the state farm here had not expanded, Ea Tun would not be a settled farming and settled life village. It would not be the renovated village that it is today. Clearly, if the economy grows, culture will be bright, too.

However, reality also shows that culture is relatively independent of the economy. In certain periods, stages, and places, cultural development has not accompanied or has not corresponded to economic development. For example, the E De village of Zvang in Wang (the former CPV [Communist Party of Vietnam] Committee base of Autonomous Region V) is presently the poorest village in C'Mgar District, but it has accumulated much knowledge and is the cradle for the rise of a bright national culture. And in Chu Pon in Krong Pak District, the economy is bad and the material living conditions are poor, but gong arts are the most advanced in the province.

Thus, in general, economic and cultural development take place simultaneously, but in isolated cases, they do move at uneven rates. If the economy expands greatly, it doesn't automatically mean that cultural life will develop. And conversely, if the economy expands slowly, it doesn't mean that the culture will be backward.

When implementing the Contract 10, in the rural areas, there was strong economic development. Amidst the economic brightness, many comrades thought that because the economy was improving, there would automatically be cultural and spiritual development. Many places have become overly engrossed in economic matters and have not given attention to building cultural and spiritual life at a time when the state's expenditures for these activities have declined greatly. Thus, crop yields have been good, but culture has suffered. A number of comrades have mistakenly blamed Resolution 10 for this, but actually, this stems from failing to grasp the dialectical relationship between economics and culture.

2. Building the new culture in general and building a cultural and spiritual life in particular in conditions in which the economy has many elements and we are switching from a bureaucratic centralism mechanism to an economic accounting mechanism does not mean we are transforming culture into a business based on simple "commercialization." Within moderation, we must continue to allocate funds for specific essential activities.

Switching from a self-sufficient economy based on a bureaucratic centralism and state subsidies mechanism to commodity production based on a market mechanism and using production and business as the main elements is a completely correct policy and a problem with the nature of a law in the renovation process. But this does not mean that the economy has a decisive effect on culture. For example, some people think that if the economy is in a particular state, culture will be in the same state, and if the economy has become involved in economic accounting, culture should become involved in economic accounting, too. They don't think that there should be any more state subsidies for culture but that culture should "be self-supporting" and survive through its own activities.

Reality shows that because the present policies do not give "favorable treatment" to culture, in Ninh Hoa, 11,000 students (of whom 5,000 are children) have had to drop out of school, and tens of thousands of people in the mountainous and rural areas are illiterate. Because they must engage in commercial activities in order to survive, the cultural organizations in many places have "commercialized" culture and sell pornographic films and books. Because the state no longer allocates funds for culture, the ranks of non-professional writers and artists in the districts have disbanded, and the mass arts and letters units in the cooperatives no longer exist.

Of course, not all the blame should be put on policy. Material and spiritual cultural values should not be understood superficially. Not all cultural values can be sold. Morals, the way of life, and the spirit of the people are not commodities that can be sold. Thus, even though our country is poor, there are certain sectors of culture that the state must continue to "subsidize." Everywhere and at all times "state subsidies" in the cultural and educational spheres manifest the superiority of the political system and show the concern of the state with respect to building people.

In order to solve the problems mentioned above and satisfy the minimum needs concerning cultural and spiritual life in the districts, I think that attention must be given to three sources of funds: the investment budget funds of the state, funds contributed by the people, and the commercial activities in the cultural sphere. Reality shows that if the state gives a blank check to the cultural sector and the people do not participate or contribute, it will not be possible to build a good cultural and spiritual life. Conversely, if the cultural sector does not renovate itself and just waits for funds from high echelons as it did in the past, there cannot be cultural movements. "State subsidies" does not mean prohibiting commercial activities in the cultural sector. And conversely, carrying on commercial activities in the cultural sphere does not mean that culture is being "commercialized." This is a lesson that cannot be forgotten when building the cultural and spiritual life in today's conditions.

3. Investments in culture in general and in education in particular are the most effective and beneficial investments. This is a lesson of both immediate and long-term strategic significance.

As we all know, because of the correct strategic ideas of Lenin on investing in culture, science, and education, not long after the October Revolution, the Soviet Union became one of the strongest countries in the world, surpassing the United States in many spheres. But later on, because of mistakes in views and errors in organizing things, the Soviet Union declined in strength. The United States was perhaps the first to understand the lessons of the successes and defeats of the Soviet Union. The United States reserves almost 7 percent of GNP, or almost 30 percent of its national budget, for education (\$1 billion a year is invested in the University of Maryland alone).

The experiences of Vietnam in general and of the central provinces in particular show the same thing. Because we have been overly engrossed with the economy and heavy industry, we have failed to invest a suitable amount in culture and education. We are experiencing the social consequences of this, consequences that will not be overcome by the end of this century. A truth that can't be denied is that because cultural standards are generally low and because educational and moral standards have declined, negative social phenomena such as corruption and lack of culture are increasing. Among the 150,000 party members who have been disciplined since the Sixth CPV Congress, almost all are people who lack cultural standards.

Investments in culture are actually investments in people. Such investments means that attention is being given to people. But giving attention to people is not manifested just in making nice announcements or implementing the policies in the resolutions. The problem is to make real investments in building cultural mechanisms. There must be suitable budget funds for preserving and creating cultural values to educate people, eliminate illiteracy, and provide assistance to the families of war invalids and war heroes, families who lack manpower, the ranks of teachers, and those engaged in cultural work. It can be said that the decisive thing for the cultural movement is the rank of cultural, scientific, and educational cadres. Actual experience has shown that if only 3 percent of GNP is reserved for education, it will not be possible to solve a number of the immediate pressing problems, to say nothing of long-term strategy. With such expenditure sources, it probably won't be possible to eliminate illiteracy among the masses or train many people of talent for the country. And it probably won't be possible to soon free people from superstition.

Investments in culture and education are the most effective investments. Common experiences are the most valuable experiences.

4. Building a cultural life in the districts is a task that requires the active participation of all party members

and people in the districts and the direct leadership of the district secretaries and chairmen.

The realities of the past several decades in the central districts show that in places where the party organizations, above all the district secretaries and chairmen, view cultural work as the work of the entire party and all the people and where they view building the new culture and the new man as work that will solidify and increase the strength of the party, in those places, the cultural movement will constantly expand and cultural life will improve. Conversely, in places where the party committee echelons view culture simply as a means of supporting holidays (gongs, trumpets, banners, lamps, and drums) and don't understand the real meaning of culture, in those places the cultural and arts and letters movements will fail to develop, and education, public order and security, and confidence in the party committee echelons will decline. It can be said that the prestige of the party committee echelons is solidified not only by the effects of economic leadership but also by the cultural achievements. Life has shown that in places where many people are illiterate and unemployed and do not have homes or enough food, where there are not enough textbooks, where there is not enough oil, where the roads are muddy, and where the schools are in disrepair, in those places people will lose confidence in the party, the relationship between the party organizations and the masses will deteriorate, and the solidarity of the people will decline.

It doesn't surprise us to see a model such as that of Ea Phe Village in Krong Pak. That is a village in the Central Highlands that has built a town that is just as clean as any in the lowlands. It has a civilized market, a cultural

building, and a magnificent cultural zone. Almost all of the schools have new tile. Moreover, the village has invested more than 1 billion dong to bring in electricity to change the face of spiritual life. The fact that such bright spots exist is due to the correct viewpoints of the party organization, particularly the party organization secretary and Ea Phe Village chairman. They have concentrated the efforts of the party committee echelon and authorities on cultural and educational tasks. This also means that without the all-round leadership of the party, from building the material base, infrastructure, and cultural mechanism to building the ranks of cadres in the cultural and educational spheres, there can be no talk about transforming cultural values into assets of the people or creating the conditions to enable the people to create cultural values.

So that cultural work becomes the work of the people, by the people, and for the people and so that the people manifest their ownership rights, the leadership role of the party must be discussed. The all-round leadership of the party committee echelons, from promulgating to implementing resolutions and from investing in building ranks of cultural and educational cadres to investing in building the necessary material bases, is the decisive factor that will determine success or failure in socialist cultural and spiritual construction. Rejecting or abandoning the leadership of the party in the cultural sphere is a destructive tendency with respect to building the cultural and spiritual life of the people. Only by adhering to the development laws of culture, strengthening the leadership of the party, and increasing real investment in people and the necessary material bases can we solve the problems in order to achieve success in building the new culture in general and building a cultural and spiritual life in the districts in particular.

Conference on Science and Reality

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[Article by Le Huy Ngo; not translated]

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[Article by Tran The Trach; not translated]

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[Article by Ngan Vu; not translated]

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[Article by Vo Thu Phuong; published in FBIS-
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[Article by Tran Trong Thin; published in FBIS-
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