The Chinese Threat in the Vietnam War

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A central critique of the US conduct of the Vietnam War is that gradual escalation of the war against North Vietnam and limitation of US ground operations to South Vietnam condemned the United States to fight a war of attrition on Hanoi's terms. Various scholars have proposed that massive and quick application of US military power against North Vietnam could have overwhelmed that small country's defenses, while extension of US ground operations into the southern Laotian or North Vietnamese panhandles could have choked off the North Vietnamese infiltration which fed the insurgency in the South. In this way, North Vietnam's ability to prosecute the war would have been largely and quickly destroyed, while the Viet Cong insurgency, deprived of Northern cadre and arms, could have been handled by the Saigon government.

In advancing these propositions, their proponents acknowledge that it was primarily American decisionmakers' fears of direct Chinese entry into the war that precluded such options. Guenter Lewy, for example, acknowledged that "in the final analysis . . . Chinese deterrence was the main impediment to a more effective air campaign against North Vietnam. . . . The decision for 'gradualism' was . . . made primarily because of fear of Chinese intervention, and whether the likelihood of such an intervention was overrated will never be known."[1] General Bruce Palmer concluded that "one cannot quarrel with the decision not to invade North Vietnam because it was too close to China; our experience in misjudging the Chinese intervention in Korea was still fresh in our memory."[2] Yet Palmer, like Lewy, rejected the strategy of gradual escalation and limitation of ground operations to South Vietnam. One of the most influential of the critics of gradual escalation, retired Colonel Harry G. Summers, goes the furthest in discounting the Chinese threat. In his

book *On Strategy*, Summers quotes approvingly Dave Palmer's appraisal of the US failure to launch a strategic offensive against North Vietnam at the end of 1965 after the US 1st Cavalry Division defeated three regiments of the North Vietnamese army in a head-on battle in the Ia Drang Valley:

> The Johnson Administration had already barricaded the one sure route to victory—to take the strategic offensive against the source of the war. Memories of Mao Tse-tung's reaction when North Korea was overrun by United Nations troops in 1950 haunted the White House. America's fear of war with Red China protected North Vietnam from invasion more surely than any instrument of war Hanoi could have fielded.[3]

Summers does not directly say that such fears of Chinese intervention were ill-founded. He strongly implies this, however. The United States, Summers says, "allowed [itself] to be bluffed by China throughout most of the war. . . . Our error was not that we were fearful of the dangers of nuclear war and of Chinese or Russian intervention in Vietnam. . . . The error was that we took counsel of these fears and in so doing paralyzed our strategic thinking." The closest Summers comes to addressing the question squarely is in a note in which he says that "whether the Soviets or the Chinese ever intended intervention is a matter of conjecture." Even here, however, the two events he cites (Mao's rejection of Moscow's 1965 proposal for united Sino-Soviet action in support of Hanoi, and Mao's suspicions that Moscow was trying to maneuver China into a war with the United States) both point toward the conclusion that Mao was already more afraid of the Soviet Union than of the United States and, by implication, that he was not serious about China's threats to intervene on behalf of Hanoi.[4]

Summers and similar critics are quite correct in concluding that fear of Chinese intervention was a principal factor underlying the US strategy of graduated escalation. A basic purpose of that strategy was to prevent Chinese intervention by keeping the level of violence directed against North Vietnam controlled, precise, and below the threshold that would spark full-scale Chinese intervention. There is also no question that the China-induced US strategy of

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gradual escalation was an immense boon to North Vietnam. It allowed Hanoi time to adjust to US pressure and to finds ways to circumvent US moves. By helping to induce Washington to adopt this particular strategy, Beijing contributed substantially to Hanoi's eventual victory over the United States. The question, however, is this: Were Washington's fears of possible Chinese intervention well-founded?

For us to accept Summers' thesis, the question of the seriousness of China's threats to go to war with the United States in Indochina in the mid-1960s must be squarely addressed. If the strategy advocated by Summers had been implemented, would China have sent armies to fight against the United States in Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, and Vietnam? Would the Vietnam War have escalated into a Sino-American war? It is, of course, impossible to definitively answer such questions regarding the "what ifs" of history. It is sometimes important to try, however, since humans learn and mislearn so much from history.

China's Stake in Hanoi

During the early 1960s North Vietnam was one of Beijing's closest political and military allies. As the Sino-Soviet polemic escalated, and as the Soviet Union under Khrushchev inched toward disengagement from the mounting Indochina conflict, Hanoi increasingly lined up behind Beijing. With respect to the bifurcated international communist movement of early 1964, Hanoi was virtually in China's camp.[5] Hanoi moved back to a more balanced position after Khrushchev's fall and Moscow's adoption of a more interventionist policy under Kosygin and Brezhnev, but Hanoi-Beijing relations remained quite close. According to Vietnamese defector Hoang Van Hoan, until 1968 Hanoi always consulted with Beijing prior to deciding on any major move.[6] In short, the United States was making war on one of China's closest allies.

Beijing's alliance with North Vietnam served important national security and ideological objectives. From the standpoint of national security, China's support for Hanoi was Mao's way of rolling back US containment in Asia. The "liberation" of South Vietnam would be a significant blow to the South East Asian Treaty Organization and other US-fostered anti-Chinese containment schemes in Asia. Conversely, were American control over South Vietnam consolidated, the American imperialists might be tempted to move even closer to China's borders. Ideologically, victory for North Vietnam's war of national liberation with the support of the socialist camp would prove the political correctness of Mao Zedong's more militant strategy for dealing with US imperialism and the incorrectness of Khrushchev's apostate acceptance of peaceful coexistence. Once the correctness of Mao's line was demonstrated, the general direction of the international communist movement might be rectified and reoriented toward more militant struggle against US imperialism.[7]

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The gravity of Chinese interests in North Vietnam was reflected in the magnitude of Chinese support for Hanoi during its wars. According to Beijing, between 1950 and 1978 China provided over $20 billion worth of materiel to Vietnam. This included weapons, ammunition, and supplies sufficient to equip two million soldiers. In 1962 alone, China supplied 90,000 machine guns and rifles to the Viet Cong, substantially upgrading the latter's ability to counter US-Saigon counterinsurgency efforts. As the US-North Vietnam war unfolded, China provided vital support for Hanoi's logistical effort, supplying more than 30,000 trucks and two million tons of gasoline, and repairing 900 kilometers of railways. China also provided Hanoi with a large quantity of railway rails, locomotives, and wagons, fully equipped several hundred North Vietnamese factories, and provided 300 million square meters of cloth and five million tons of grain, along with large quantities of items needed by North Vietnam's populace for daily living. China also gave Hanoi several hundred million dollars in hard currency.[8]

As important as China's material support was its diplomatic-military support. One critical manifestation of this support came during the Laotian crisis and Geneva convention of 1961-62. At Geneva the United States eventually accepted a "neutralization" of Laos which tacitly allowed Hanoi to continue using the supply lines running through Pathet Lao-controlled areas of the Laotian panhandle.[9] Hanoi had begun using and expanding these Laotian supply lines in 1959 when it decided to renew armed struggle in the South. As the war escalated those lines became increasingly vital to Hanoi's war effort. Summers and kindred critics of US strategy have assigned a large portion of responsibility for the US defeat in Vietnam to Washington's acceptance of the particular type of "neutralization" of Laos agreed on at Geneva in 1962 and the limitation of the ground war to South Vietnam which followed from that decision.

Chinese threats to intervene in Laos figured prominently in the US decision in May 1962 to "neutralize" Laos. One of the key reasons why US leaders ruled out the use of US troops to occupy the Laotian panhandle (this was the military alternative to the political solution of neutralization) was a belief that North Vietnam and China would strongly resist such a move. On 19

May 1962, for example, *Renmin ribao* (*People's Daily*, a newspaper published by the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party) had warned:

> US aggressive moves in Southeast Asia are a serious threat to the security of China. The Chinese people cannot remain indifferent to this. . . . The Chinese people firmly oppose US imperialist armed intervention in Laos, and absolutely cannot tolerate the establishment by US imperialism in areas close to China of any new military bridgeheads directed against this country. . . . We must serve a fresh warning to the Kennedy Administration that it shall be held fully responsible for all grave consequences arising from its policy of playing with fire.[10]

These were strong words. Not as hard or as blunt as those used by Beijing in the final weeks before its entry into the Korean conflict, but strong enough to convey Beijing's belief that China's own security was involved and that China might consider war to deal with these threats. Just as important, Beijing's verbal warnings were backed up by a concentration of Chinese military forces in southern China adjacent to Laos.[11]

Confronted by the possibility of waging a land war with China in the interior of the Indochina peninsula, Washington retreated to the neutralization alternative. In the face of possible Chinese counter-intervention, the military option in Laos was simply unacceptable. According to Roger Hilsman, director of the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research during the Laotian crisis, "What the United States would do if the Chinese Communists intervened was not spelled out, but the general impression was that the recommendation would be to retaliate on the mainland with nuclear weapons."[12]

Again in 1965-67 China provided Hanoi with political-military support—support which, as Summers correctly points out, figured prominently in shaping Washington's strategy of graduated escalation. In essence Beijing threatened to enter the war on Hanoi's side if the United States carried the war too far. Its purpose was to deter, limit, and defeat American attacks against its North Vietnamese ally.

There were five prominent dimensions to China's deterrent support for Hanoi in the mid-1960s.[13] First, it was sizable. By the spring of 1966, nearly 50,000 Chinese soldiers were in North Vietnam manning anti-aircraft defenses, carrying out logistic work, and repairing bomb damage. According to official Chinese statistics, between October 1965 and March 1968 (when Chinese forces were withdrawn) a total of 320,000 Chinese troops served in North Vietnam, with the annual maximum reaching 170,000.[14] North Vietnam's air force also operated out of bases in south China. An integrated radar grid, including stations in south China and covering all of North Vietnam, was established to provide intelligence about US air operations to North Vietnam's air defense system. China's own air defenses in south China were also strengthened.

Second, Chinese deployments were conducted in a way that made their presence plain for the world to see. To avoid locking itself into a situation that might escalate into a direct confrontation with the United States, Beijing did not officially acknowledge its military presence in North Vietnam. But Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) units deployed to North Vietnam retained their normal unit designations, wore regular uniforms, and used nonsecure methods of communications. This insured that Washington knew of China's moves and the seriousness of its intentions.

Third, PLA units in North Vietnam did not remain in a passive, reserve role but actively engaged US forces in combat. PLA aircraft based in China scrambled on occasion and engaged US aircraft that penetrated Chinese airspace during combat operations against North Vietnam. Beijing claimed to have shot down nine US aircraft and damaged two others in these engagements. Information regarding the number of US aircraft shot down by Chinese warplanes, or Chinese-piloted North Vietnamese warplanes, over North Vietnam's airspace is unavailable, but it is quite possible that this occurred. In any case, Chinese forces serving in North Vietnam suffered heavy casualties from US bombing—20,000 dead and wounded according to later Chinese reports.

Fourth, Chinese units constructed a large, heavily fortified complex at Yen Bai, some 140 kilometers northwest of Hanoi on the rail line running from Kunming to Hanoi along the Red River. This complex, with a large runway and replete with anti-aircraft guns placed in caves and mounted on railway tracks, seems to have been designed to serve either as a North Vietnamese redoubt in the event that a US-South Vietnamese invasion overran Hanoi, or to serve as a base for the PLA in the event of Chinese intervention.

The first four aspects of Chinese support for Hanoi were intended to convey to Washington the seriousness of China's intent to stand firm behind North Vietnam. The fifth characteristic of China's support for Hanoi was careful maneuvering to avoid an unnecessary war with the United States. While warning Washington not to go too far, Beijing also signaled that it hoped to avoid a Sino-American war.

As US bombing of North Vietnam escalated in 1965-66, the Chinese and US Ambassadors to Poland discussed the Vietnam situation. (Ambassadorial talks in Warsaw begun in 1955 and continuing through 1971 were the main conduit for Sino-American communication during that period.) At those talks US representatives assured China that American aims were limited to compelling Hanoi to forgo the conquest of South Vietnam and did not seek the destruction of the North Vietnamese regime. It is widely believed that by November 1965 the two sides had reached a tacit understanding that, as long as US forces did not invade North Vietnam or attack China, China would not directly enter the war.[15] Even if such an understanding was reached, however, it could have been undone by events. As long as China and the United States

remained at swords' points, leaders of both countries moved cautiously to avoid a second Sino-US war. Both sides sought to avoid a war by misperception and miscalculation as had happened in Korea.

China's Preparations for War with the United States

Another indication of the seriousness of Beijing's threats to intervene on Hanoi's side was a massive crash program to construct a large, self-sufficient industrial base deep in China's interior.[16] Begun in August 1964 as the United States initiated air attacks against North Vietnam in spite of Chinese warnings, this industrial base had as its purpose the sustainment of a war effort against the United States. The program was called the Third Front. Under it, key industrial facilities from the coastal areas were completely or partially dismantled and moved to the provinces of Sichuan, Guizhou, western Hubei, Yunnan, Qinghai, and Hunan. In addition to relocation of existing factories, a large portion of budgetary investment in new industry—perhaps as much as two thirds—was concentrated in the Third Front region between 1965 and 1971. In 1965 the proportion of China's total industrial investment going to Sichuan and Guizhou provinces tripled. Within a few years, hundreds of new mining, metallurgical, energy, chemical, and military industries appeared in the Third Front region. Rail lines were built to connect these plants, along with dams to provide electricity. In some cases, existing rail lines were torn up to provide rails for new lines into interior regions. The objective was to develop an integrated, comprehensive defense industrial base in China's interior.

To minimize their vulnerability to air attack, Third Front industrial plants were widely dispersed, typically situated away from major urban areas, and often located in deep, narrow canyons or caves. This particular spatial arrangement was costly, entailing much greater infrastructural spending to sustain operations. Often new towns, roads, and rail lines had to be built for the workers. Transport costs were greatly increased by having to move components long distances.

The Third Front program was premised on the assumption that in the event of war with the United States, China's established industrial centers along the coasts would be destroyed or occupied in the early stages of the conflict. The Third Front was rushed forward under top secrecy and with little regard to costs or proper planning. The disruption it imposed on China's economic development was immense. It was also immensely costly. Twenty-five years later China's economic planners were still grappling with the costs of the program and struggling to recoup some of the capital invested in it. The decision to undertake this program can only be interpreted as an expression of serious intent to wage a war, if necessary, with the United States. The Third Front is powerful evidence of the seriousness of Beijing's warnings to the United States. These were not minor moves to signal messages to Washington.

They were serious efforts to prepare China for a major war with America. Significantly, not until 1969 was the Third Front reconfigured to deal with a possible Soviet attack. Until that point, American was the hypothetical enemy.

Even if the Third Front is taken as convincing evidence that China's leaders seriously contemplated war with the United States, it does not necessarily follow that they would have committed China to war had the United States completely devastated North Vietnam, as Summers and similar critics suggest should have been done. Indeed, during 1965-67 Chinese leaders made statements indicating that they believed that the United States would *attack China*. Premier Zhou Enlai elaborated Chinese perceptions in a December 1965 rally celebrating the fifth anniversary of the founding of the National Liberation Front. If US imperialism failed to achieve its aim of repressing the Vietnamese people's war of national liberation, Zhou warned, "It is possible that in accordance with the objective laws governing the development of aggressive wars, US imperialism will go a step further and extend its war of aggression to the whole of Indochina and to China."[17] These words imply that as long as the United States limited its attacks to North Vietnam's territory, China would have remained on the sidelines.

On the other hand, Zhou made these comments a month *after* the US Ambassador to Warsaw had made it clear to his Chinese counterpart that the United States had no intention of invading China or of crushing North Vietnam.[18] The fact that China declared its intention to remain nonbelligerent *after* the United States adopted its policy of graduated escalation cannot logically be taken as evidence that China would have followed the same policy had the United States adopted a very different policy. Indeed, the contrary is suggested by comments made by Zhou Enlai to Algerian leader Ahmed Ben Bella and Cambodian leader Norodom Sihanouk in April 1965 to the effect that China would not intervene in the Vietnam conflict unless there was a US invasion north of the 17th parallel.[19]

Most probably China's policy toward the Vietnam War was not governed by hard and fast principles, but evolved in response to US actions and other international developments. It may well be that China's leaders had not themselves decided precisely what circumstances short of US attack on China itself would lead to Chinese entry in the war on Hanoi's side. There is abundant evidence, however, that Beijing was deeply committed to Hanoi. There is also evidence indicating the seriousness of Chinese warnings to the United States. Taken together these argue strongly in favor of the prudence of Washington's policy of limiting the conflict with Hanoi to avoid a broader war with China.

1972 Was Not 1965

Implicit in the go-for-broke criticism of US strategy is the notion that because China did not react strongly to the American naval blockade and heavy

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bombing of North Vietnam in 1972, it would have reacted in an equally tolerant fashion to comparable US moves in 1965. Similarly, it is often implied that because Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai concluded in 1972 that China's interests would be best served by a several-year suspension of Hanoi's military campaign to conquer South Vietnam, the two Chinese leaders were not strongly committed to Hanoi in 1965.[20] These propositions are non sequiturs. In 1965, the world was very different from what it was in 1972. Chinese policy was very different. Chinese views of the world were very different.

In the mid-1960s, Chinese global strategy was focused on thwarting US containment. There were, of course, sharp disagreements between Moscow and Beijing, but the primary origin of those disagreements had to do with how to deal with US imperialism. As noted earlier, Mao Zedong favored a much more militant, confrontational approach, while Khrushchev and Brezhnev generally favored avoidance of confrontation with the United States.

Virtually all of the studies of Sino-American rapprochement focus on the 1968-69 period. The militarization of the Sino-Soviet border began in 1963 and threats of Soviet intervention in China were grave by 1967, but it was the 1968 Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia and the 1969 Sino-Soviet border confrontation which boosted the Soviet threat over the American threat in the minds of China's leaders. Just as the Soviet threat was mounting, the United States was fundamentally altering its policies toward China. By the time of Henry Kissinger's secret July 1971 visit to Beijing, it was clear that Washington was willing to modify substantially the policy of isolating China which it had pursued since 1950. It was also clear that it intended to withdraw militarily from Indochina.[21]

By 1972-73 Beijing was quite concerned with the danger of Soviet attack or encirclement, and saw the United States as a partner in dealing with the Soviet threat. It is extremely wrong-headed, however, to read those views back to 1965-66.

Another non sequitur is the proposition that Mao Zedong's determination to launch the Cultural Revolution and his purge of PLA Chief of Staff Lo Ruiqing in late 1965 indicate that Mao was primarily concerned with the internal purification of China's revolution and not prepared to undertake a war with the United States. I will concede that Mao gave defeat of China's

revisionists priority over the anti-imperialist struggle against the United States—as long as US imperialism did not encroach on China's borders. But this latter caveat is important. Had US forces directly threatened China, for instance by moving into Laos or waging an all-out war against North Vietnam, Mao might have reordered his priorities.

Nor can we conclude that Mao believed his domestic anti-revisionist struggle was contrary to preparation for war with the United States. Indeed, from Mao's perspective, the opposite may well have been the case. To Mao, Moscow was Washington's lackey while China's revisionists fawned over Moscow. The authoritative November 1965 statement rejecting Moscow's proposal of "united action" in support of Hanoi, for example, charged that "the US imperialists urgently need to extinguish the roaring flames of the Vietnamese people's revolution. And so do the Khrushchev revisionists because they want to carry out their line of Soviet-US collaboration for world domination."[22] If Moscow was set on a course of collusion with Washington, purge of China's revisionists who had illusions about Moscow could well be necessary preparation for a final, cataclysmic struggle with the United States. Just as Stalin believed that elimination of internal opposition dovetailed with the forced industrialization of the Five Year Plans to prepare the Soviet Union for war, Mao may well have believed that the purge of revisionists from China's leadership prepared China for battle. Mao, like Stalin, may have been mistaken about the military efficacy of his purges. That, however, is another matter. We are concerned here with whether Mao's initiation of purges can be taken as evidence of expectation that war could or would be avoided. It seems to me that they cannot.

But surely Mao would not have thrown China into the chaos associated with the Red Guard rebellion had he anticipated war with America. This statement may well be accurate. But again, it cannot be taken as evidence that Mao was unprepared to undertake war with the United States had Washington waged a much more violent and expanded conflict in Southeast Asia. First, Mao may well have underestimated the turmoil which would result when he helped create the Red Guards. Second, Mao did not unleash the Red Guards until after China and the United States had come to the tacit understanding at Warsaw in November 1965. Mao's critical moves supporting the nascent Red Guards came only in mid-1966, well after the Sino-American understanding at Warsaw.[23] Mao did not cross the Rubicon with the Cultural Revolution until October 1966.[24] In sum, Mao's support for the Red Guard upheaval may well have been premised on the Sino-American understanding at Warsaw. That support cannot, therefore, be taken as evidence that Mao was averse to pursuing war with the United States had such an understanding failed to develop.

Nor did the chaos of the Cultural Revolution necessarily diminish the danger of Chinese intervention. The weakening of central command and

control might have combined with radical Red Guard influence in certain military units to produce provocative moves or more forceful reactions to American moves. There was tremendous frustration in China over the Vietnam War by 1967. Washington had twice ignored China's warnings not to attack North Vietnam, once in August 1964 and again in 1965. From the Chinese perspective, the arrogant American imperialists were humiliating China and ravaging China's fraternal ally. The inflammatory nature of such emotions were probably kept in check by central organs of power. But American decisionmakers could not assume the effectiveness of central command and control once the Cultural Revolution gained steam. Even with the advantage of hindsight we have no way of knowing whether Beijing could have maintained control had US escalation gone much further and faster, fanning emotional fervor and factional debate in China. Could Chinese frustration have combined with the turmoil of the Cultural Revolution to produce tougher responses to American moves? Had greater assertiveness on the Chinese side been combined with a less cautious approach on the American side, an escalating spiral of response and counter-response might have made it difficult for either side to back down.

Even with effective central direction, there was no diminution of Chinese risk-taking in support of Hanoi at the height of the Cultural Revolution in 1967. In that year the United States waged the most unrestricted war against North Vietnam of any year up to 1972. All North Vietnamese air bases were destroyed, forcing North Vietnamese planes to operate out of bases in China. Select targets within Hanoi and Haiphong were bombed. By late 1967 the buffer along the Sino-Vietnamese border off-limits to US pilots was pared down to only five kilometers. In response to this expanded US bombing, China increased the number of Chinese anti-aircraft divisions in North Vietnam from two to three.[25]

The Consequences of a Sino-American War

Since Summers' critique is basically historical "what-if-ism" on a grand scale, it is perhaps fair that we engage in a comparable exercise and ask what might have been the consequences if American leaders had waged the war as Summers suggests and China had entered the war on Hanoi's side?

To stop and roll back a Chinese invasion of Southeast Asia, the United States would probably have used nuclear weapons, either against Chinese forces in Southeast Asia or against military and industrial centers in China itself. Even if we assume that this would have been militarily effective and that US bombing could have preempted Chinese nuclear retaliation against US bases or allies in Asia (China tested an A-bomb in 1964 and an H-bomb in 1967), the political costs would have been heavy. What would have been the effect of this resort to nuclear arms on public opinion in Japan and

West European countries about their alliance with America? As it was, America's war in Vietnam seriously tarnished the United States' moral reputation in many eyes. The political costs of a general Sino-American war involving nuclear weapons would have been far more grievous. Conceivably, the Atlantic alliance or the Japan-US alliance would have crumbled under the impact of a general Sino-American war.

A Sino-American war fought on the Southeast Asian peninsula would probably have facilitated the growth of communist power in Thailand, Burma, the Philippines, and Malaysia. China would have spared no efforts to outflank the United States by supporting insurgencies elsewhere in Southeast Asia. As it was, Foreign Minister Chen Yi warned Bangkok not to allow the United States to use its bases in Thailand to support the war in Indochina, or face greater opposition within Thailand.[26] When Bangkok failed to heed Beijing's warning, Chen's prediction came true. In 1965 full-scale guerrilla war erupted in northeastern Thailand. Thai communists began broadcasts from a radio station located in south China or North Vietnam. Two new Thai revolutionary organizations emerged, rapidly received Beijing's endorsement, and then merged with the older Thai Communist Party-dominated revolutionary front.[27] By the late 1960s the insurgency led by this group was a serious threat. That threat would have become far more serious if China and America had gone to war and China's support for the Thai Communist Party and other Southeast Asian revolutionary movements had been magnified.

We should not take the developmental success of most of the ASEAN countries for granted. The successful economic and political development of Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia might well have been aborted by war. A Sino-American war in the mid-1960s would also have greatly strengthened the Soviet global position. Moscow could have tilted toward either Washington or Beijing. If it had tilted toward Washington, Moscow would have been in a good position to demand various concessions from the United States. American efforts to contain the Soviet Union might have been seriously relaxed as a result. If Moscow had tilted toward China by acceding to Chinese requests for assistance under the 1950 mutual security treaty (which was not abrogated by Beijing until August 1978), the Sino-Soviet alliance might have been restored. This would have represented the collapse of the US strategy of "driving a wedge" between Moscow and Beijing that informed US policy since the 1950s.[28] Soviet support for China, combined with the Chinese fear and hatred for America which would certainly have issued from a Sino-American war in the 1960s, could have revitalized the Sino-Soviet alliance and sustained it well into the 1970s. If Sino-Soviet rapprochement had occurred in the 1960s instead of Sino-American rapprochement in the 1970s, Moscow's global expansionist drive of the 1970s might have had Chinese support rather than opposition.

In sum, the world could well have been a much darker place if the strategies advocated by Summers had been tried and resulted in a Sino-American war.

NOTES

1. Guenter Lewy, *America in Vietnam* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1978), p. 393.
2. Bruce Palmer, Jr., *The 25-Year War: America's Military Role in Vietnam* (Lexington: Univ. of Kentucky Press, 1984), p. 177.
3. Dave Richard Palmer, *Summons of the Trumpet: U.S.-Vietnam in Perspective* (San Rafael, Calif.: Presidio Press, 1978), p. 110. Cited in Harry G. Summers, *On Strategy, A Critical Analysis of the Vietnam War* (New York: Dell, 1984), p., 127.
4. Summers, pp. 94, 96.
5. Brian Shaw, "China and North Vietnam: Two Revolutionary Paths," *Current Scene* (Hong Kong), Part I, 7 November 1971, Part II, 7 December 1971.
6. Hoang Van Hoan, "Yue Zhong youyi yu Le Duan de beipan," (Le Duan's betrayal of Vietnamese-Chinese friendship) (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1982), p. 15.
7. See "Peaceful Coexistence—Two diametrically Opposed Policies," in *The Polemic on the General Line of the International Communist Movement* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1965), pp. 259-302.
8. Hoan Van Hoan, "Yue Zhong zhancheng youyi de shishi bu rong waichu" (It is impermissible to distort the facts of wartime Vietnamese-Chinese friendship), *Renmin ribao*, 27 November 1979, pp. 1, 5.
9. Roger Hilsman provides a succinct analysis of the US decision to "neutralize" Laos in *To Move A Nation* (New York: Delta, 1964), pp. 105-55.
10. *Peking Review*, 25 May 1962, p. 3.
11. Regarding Chinese policy see Lee Chae Jin, *Chinese Communist Policy in Laos 1954-1965*, Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1966.
12. Hilsman, p. 147.
13. Unless otherwise indicated, this discussion of China's deterrent support for Hanoi in the mid-1960s is from Allen S. Whiting, *The Chinese Calculus of Deterrence* (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1975), pp. 170-95.
14. *Renmin ribao*, 21 November 1979, p. 4.
15. Kenneth T. Young, *Negotiating with the Chinese Communists: The United States Experience, 1953-1967* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1968), pp. 268-75.
16. Barry Naughton, "The Third Front: Defense Industrialization in the Chinese Interior," *China Quarterly*, no. 115, (September 1988), 351-86.
17. *Peking Review*, 24 December 1965.
18. Young, p. 270.
19. CIA Intelligence Information Cables, 10 and 29 April 1965, in *CIA Research Reports, China 1946-76*, Reel II, frame 0245 and 0251, University Publications of America, 1982.
20. Regarding China's 1971-72 efforts to pressure Hanoi to compromise with the United States and grant the latter a face-saving withdrawal, see John W. Garver, "Sino-Vietnamese Conflict and Sino-American Rapprochement," *Political Science Quarterly*, 96 (Fall 1981), 445-64.
21. Richard M. Nixon, *The Memoirs of Richard Nixon* (New York: Warner Books, 1978), II, 3-23.
22. Editorial departments of *Renmin ribao* and *Hong Qi* (Red flag), 11 November 1965, in William E. Griffith, *Sino-Soviet Relations, 1964-1965* (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1967), p. 460.
23. The first Red Guard poster was broadcast nationwide, on Mao's personal decision, on 1 June 1966. The CCP Work Teams were withdrawn from universities on 24 July 1966. Mao publicly accepted an arm band from the Red Guards on 31 August 1966.
24. Jean Daubier, *A History of the Chinese Cultural Revolution* (New York: Vintage, 1974), pp. 91-99. The title of Daubier's chapter dealing with the October-December 1966 period is "The Point of No Return . . . The Rubicon is Crossed." Also, Jean Esmein, *The Chinese Cultural Revolution* (New York: Anchor, 1973), pp. 96-106.
25. Allen S. Whiting, correspondence with the author, 9 April 1991.
26. Ibid.
27. Peter Van Ness, *Revolution and Chinese Foreign Policy* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1971), pp. 137-38.
28. See David A. Mayers, *Cracking the Monolith: U.S. Policy Against the Sino-Soviet Alliance, 1949-1955* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1986).