

China escalates, discounts Soviets

The invading Chinese armies have widened their attack upon Vietnam with a massive buildup and assault on Vietnamese positions all along the border and a Chinese troop concentration on the Laotian border. The fighting at several key points, particularly the strategic city of Lang Son which controls a major highway intersection, is fierce, with intense artillery fire from both sides. The latest reports indicate that the Chinese forces are now ready, after days of reinforcement of their troops and continuous pressure on Vietnamese positions, to launch the next major wave of attack, surpassing in scale the initial assaults.

The Vietnamese Ambassador in Japan told newsmen there Feb. 28 that, according to their intelligence reports, the Chinese are preparing another "large aggression." He warned that the Chinese would face a

Teng says Carter is afraid of the Soviets

According to reports carried in the New York Times, Chinese Premier Teng Hsiao-ping told American reporters accompanying visiting Treasury Secretary Blumenthal that the difference between himself and the American leadership is that he and other Chinese leaders are not afraid of the Soviet Union.

Reporters had asked Mr. Teng about the risks of Soviet intervention and the concern expressed by the Carter Administration and other Western governments. "Both the Cuba of the Orient (Vietnam) and the Cuba of the West," said Teng, "seem to be emboldened by the so-called tremendous backing force behind them. Now, some people in the world are afraid of offending them. Even if they do something terrible, these people wouldn't dare to take action against them. It's a question of being afraid of them."

Teng continued: "We estimate that the Soviet Union will not take too big an action. If they should really come, there is nothing we can do about it. We are prepared against them...."

"total military counterstrike" in response to such an attack. The Vietnamese leadership emerged from a special meeting yesterday in Hanoi and declared once again that Chinese offers to "negotiate" after having occupied large sections of Vietnamese territory were completely rejected — they told Peking that there would be no "negotiations" so long as one single Chinese soldier remained on Vietnamese soil and that every last Chinese would be driven out.

Defying world opinion and the continued warnings of the Soviet Union to withdraw their invaders "before it is too late," Chinese Vice-Premier Teng Hsiao-ping told American reporters accompanying Treasury Secretary Blumenthal in China that Peking is not afraid of the Soviet Union and made it clear that he thinks the U.S. is. Teng said: "Both the Cuba of the Orient (referring to Vietnam) and the Cuba of the West seem to be emboldened by the so-called tremendous backing force behind them. Now some people in the world are afraid of offending them (i.e., the Soviet Union). Even if they do something terrible, these people wouldn't dare to take action against them. It's a question of being afraid of them."

Teng dared the Soviet Union to act in defense of its allies in Vietnam while trying to encourage American illusions that the war in Indochina will be "limited." Teng again told reporters when asked about Soviet military intervention: "We estimate that the Soviet Union will not take too big an action. If they should really come, there is nothing we can do about it. We are prepared against them. I think our action is limited, and it will not give rise to a very big event."

Teng's remarks have been depicted as a response to a note from President Carter to the Chinese urging them to have restraint in their invasion and to withdraw. This does not reflect any change in the U.S. backing for China's "punishment" of Vietnam; the official stand of the U.S. remains a "neutrality" which justifies Chinese action as a response to Vietnamese actions in helping to topple the Chinese client regime in Cambodia. Rather it indicates a growing fear in Washington that Chinese assurances of a "limited" war that would not run the risk of Soviet military action may not be trustworthy and that Washington has gone too far in openly provoking the Soviet Union by their alliance with Peking.

The Soviet Union warns again

The Soviet Union, for its part, again made it clear that Washington's soft words in Teng's ear do not change anything — the fact remains that, in the Soviet view, the U.S. and Britain have been totally in Peking, and have put the Soviet Union in a position where defense of the very existence of the Soviet Union in face of a NATO-Peking "encirclement" is the issue before the world. In a 2,000-official TASS statement

printed Feb. 27 in the Soviet party daily *Pravda*, the Soviets declared that China has refused to listen to "the voice of reason" and must now withdraw its troops from Vietnam "quickly."

The target of the Soviet statement, however, was not Peking so much as Washington and London. The statement compares the present actions of these powers today in arming Peking to their 1930s backing for Japanese aggression against China, and to Nazi Germany's intervention into Spain in support of the fascists. The statement makes it clear that this time, the Soviet Union will not wait for an invasion of Soviet territory.

The Soviets warn: "Those who today hope to warm themselves by its flames (referring to the China-Vietnam war) rashly risk being the next victim of the aggressor and his adventuristic policy." The Soviet finger is then pointed in the appropriate direction: "The ambivalent stand taken by the U.S. ruling circles in the face of China's open threats against Vietnam has, as a matter of fact, contributed to Peking's openly taking the warpath."

U. S. warships on the prowl in Asia

Soviet warnings come as the Carter Administration, with public backing from British Prime Minister Callaghan, deploys its forces in a clear threat to Vietnam and the Soviets. U.S. warships have been dispatched into the region, with the carrier *Constellation* leaving its base in the Philippines to join a U.S. squadron already off the coast of Vietnam in the South China Sea. U.S. ships are provocatively shadowing Soviet naval vessels in the same area. At the same time, the U.S. carrier

Midway has left its base in Japan to participate in military exercises, "Team Spirit 79" being conducted in South Korea with the South Korean armed forces. U.S. reconnaissance planes have been making overflights of the battle zone in Vietnam as well.

On the ground in Vietnam the Chinese have hit hard in several areas, with some 300,000 Chinese troops already inside Vietnam and more pouring into staging areas just across the border. Already there are more Chinese combat soldiers engaged against Vietnam than at any single point during the height of the U.S. war against Vietnam. The Chinese have pointed their attacks at Lang Son, now evacuated of all civilians by the Vietnamese, with an obvious Chinese attempt to place maximum manpower and firepower on that point to break through Vietnamese defense lines. Other Chinese assaults have been mounted on the provincial capital of Cao Bang to the northwest, in the Lao Cai region farther west (the capital of Lao Cai is already captured), and in the coastal province of Qua Ninh. There has also been a movement of Chinese troops through Laos in the west into northwest Vietnam in the area of the province of Lai Chau, which includes the famous valley of Dien Bien Phu.

The Vietnamese have been fighting toughly at all points, inflicting Chinese casualties of 20,000 killed or wounded, and 300 tanks and armoured vehicles put out of action. Vietnamese diplomatic sources have stressed that something big is the offing, saying "remember Dien Bien Phu."

—Daniel Snider

China is ready for the IMF and war

In an interview with the President of Japan's Kyodo news service Feb. 27, Chinese Vice-Premier Teng Hsiao-ping declared China's immediate willingness to join the International Monetary Fund, and refused to discount war with the Soviet Union as a short-term outcome of his nation's invasion of Vietnam. Excerpts of Teng's remarks follow.

There will be no hitch on China's part in joining the IMF, if the Taiwan issue is settled....

Foreign governments possess basic data about China's economy (in accord with IMF requirements; China does not make data public — ed.). They have calculated our output of grains and our population ... (Their calculations are) not far wrong....

We wholeheartedly welcome the proposal made at the UN Security Council by the United States, Japan and two other nations calling for a pullout of China's troops from Vietnam and Vietnam's from

Cambodia.... We believe that our punitive action against Vietnam will come to an end in less than the 33 days required to settle the Sino-India border trouble...

We had considered certain risks in making the decision (to take military action against Vietnam) and had made sufficient preparations...

I expect these risks (Soviet intervention — ed.) will be averted, although they cannot completely be discounted...

We would not mind military achievements. But our objective is a limited one...

(Soviet forces) in the north are perhaps 1 million men, but the Russian deployment is rather sparse along the 7,000 kilometer border...

If we are afraid of that, other people would think we are soft. When we made up our mind, we kind of thought, "Let's see for ourselves if the Chinese had a nervous breakdown..."