

Hungarian Embassy to North Vietnam, Report, 1 September 1965.
[Summary]

This report was based on a recent conversation between Minister of Internal Affairs Ung Van Khiem [previously Foreign Minister; replaced by pro-Chinese Xuan Thuy in 1963] and Hungarian Ambassador Imre Pehr. The situation was extremely serious in both North and South Vietnam, Khiem emphasized. The systematic bombing of the DRV seriously damaged the fledging industrial sector, but agricultural development was also negatively affected. The majority of factories operated with a reduced workforce, and it was mainly the women who worked in the agricultural sector. Khiem stressed that if there had not been a rift in the socialist camp, the situation would not have become so grave. The Soviet Union and the Communist countries should have protested immediately against the sending of US troops to South Vietnam as they had done in 1956 when Egypt was invaded. The inter-party conflicts continued to pose problems for the DRV. In his view, Khiem said, it was crystal clear that the leading force of the socialist camp could be no one else but the Soviet Union. The whole theory of "modern revisionism" was a big lie, for no revisionist would have given such a support to the revolutionary struggle of a socialist country as the Soviet Union did. Since it was the Ministry of Internal Affairs that dealt with social problems, Khiem was well-informed of such problems. He said that there were some 100,000 war invalids in the DRV (a part of them were of southern origin), of whom 70% was incapable of any work. The authorities had no place for them in the cities; therefore, they were sent to the villages where the local population took care of them. This was not a perfect solution, however, for the villagers became demoralized due to the presence of the invalids, and they could not feed them adequately either. The Hungarian Ambassador noted in his report that Khiem was widely known for his pro-Soviet views, and for expressing his opinion with a similar frankness in intra-party circles. He maintained good contacts with the Ambassadors of the European Communist countries, but the Soviet Ambassador told his colleagues that Khiem should not be invited alone so as not to put him into an uncomfortable situation. It did not matter whether he was accompanied by other Vietnamese or not, he did not mince his words, the Soviet Ambassador said. [However, one must add that the conversation described above was a dialogue between Khiem and Pehr with no third person present, and Khiem was always cautious enough not to use the word "China".]

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