This is an abridged version of the article “Strategy of US Imperialism and the Cause of the Anti-imperialist Forces in the Present Phase of the International Situation”.

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The detente of the ‘seventies is a new aspect of relations between the USSR and the USA, characterised by signing of the Agreement on the Prevention of Nuclear War, the re-opening of diplomatic relations between the USA and China, the conclusion of treaties between the Soviet Union and West Germany, and between Poland and West Germany, as well as improved relations between East and West Germany and the progress of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. January 1973 saw the conclusion of the Paris Agreement and in February 1973 an Agreement on Laos was reached.

Some sections of the anti-imperialist forces at home and abroad believe that US imperialism has completely changed its policy from “cold war” to peaceful co-existence and “international detente”.

But it is undeniable that the ferocity of Nixon’s war of aggression in Vietnam far surpassed anything Hitler did. It is undeniable that Nixon engineered the counter-revolutionary military coup in Chile and that he is now
engaged in new aggression in the Middle East. It will not be Nixon who brings peace to the world, but the unremitting struggle of the three great revolutionary forces – the socialist camp, the national liberation struggle and the struggle of the working class and working people in the capitalist world. Alone, none of these forces can control the course of world development. Each has its own historic mission to fulfil but, integrated in one body, it is they who can guide the process of development in the direction of peace, national independence and social progress.

It is in this context that the “detente between East and West” must be examined in order to correctly understand Nixon’s policy towards the socialist great powers in connection with his world strategy.

When he handed over the presidency to Nixon in 1969, Lyndon B. Johnson left the legacy of an unwinnable war in Vietnam. By then, the heroic struggle of the Vietnamese people had made it clear that victory for the US was impossible. Thus Nixon had to devise some means of saving the “honour and prestige” of the United States without abandoning Indochina altogether. The war had already cost $350,000 million ($164,000 million in the Korean War) and this enormous expense added to a dollar crisis and the prestige of the US was at a low ebb. At the same time a broad anti-war movement was developing in America.

He was quick to take maximum advantage of the disunity of the anti-imperialist forces, particularly the dispute between the Soviet Union and China which had been growing more openly intense since the beginning of the sixties, in order to avoid outright defeat in Indochina and to grab what he could for an “honourable withdrawal”.

Our Party has defined basic US strategy since Kennedy as a dual policy of negotiations and a continuation of aggression which wears the mask of “peace” and a policy of total defeat of one small socialist country after another and the national liberation movements, too, while promoting “rapprochement” with greater socialist nations. Not only did the Nixon-Kissinger administration approach the Soviet Union, it also made secret overtures to China and at the same time demanded that its partners and allies share the US burden. During all this there was a sharp build-up of the intensity of the bombing in Indochina to the stage that in four years of the Nixon administration, 8.64 million tons of bombs (1.4 times as much as in the whole of World War II) had been dropped on Vietnam. It was while this was taking place that Nixon visited China and the Soviet Union.

He took advantage of the dispute between the Soviet Union and China and their suspicion and abuse of each other to restrain both of them. In their support and assistance to the anti-imperialist forces throughout the world, each tries not to adversely affect their relations with the United States.

Kissinger states, in his news conference of December 27, 1973 – “The breakdown in the unity of the Communist Bloc, with all that implies for the shift of energies and resources to purposes other than a single-minded challenge to the United States and its friends, and for a higher priority in at least some Communist countries to the pursuit of national interests rather than their subordination to the requirements of world revolution.” (Foreign Policy Report 1972).

Nixon’s visit to China and to the Soviet Union showed the development of his strategy in its most naked form. In both countries he was received as if he were an “apostle of peace” while concurrently there was taking place the unprecedentedly ferocious and indiscriminate bombing of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the mining and blockade of Haiphong Harbour.

The peoples of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia greeted this Nixon strategy with a resolute counter-attack, and the serious significance of this struggle has a special place in the history of the international liberation struggle in the post-war period. Though the Paris Agreement on Vietnam and the Agreement on Laos won in January and February last year marked an important victory in the liberation struggle of the peoples of Indochina, it was not a final victory. US imperialism still has a foothold in Indochina from which to launch further aggression.

In his 1973 Annual Report, the US Secretary of Defence frankly states: “The three principles of strength, partnership and a willingness to negotiate are inextricably intertwined, and no one of them should be pursued at the expense of the others.”

The so-called rapprochement of the US with the Soviet Union and China is a con-
crete example of the "negotiation" aspect of Nixon’s strategy, but there is also the repression of the peoples’ struggle for peace, national independence and social progress.

Since the end of World War II, US imperialism has consistently adhered to the position of strength and has carried out a policy of war and aggression in various parts of the world. With 560,000 troops stationed abroad, the US still has many aggressive military alliances and a network of some 3,000 military bases, all of which directly confront the socialist countries including the Soviet Union and China, and the national liberation movements throughout the world.

From all this it is clear that the US government has made no change in foreign policy towards peaceful co-existence, rather that its intention is to maintain its own hegemony and to try to defeat its enemies one by one when the opportunity arises.

What the US really wants is to carry forward the “detente” established in Indochina in other spheres of influence. This is the real aim of US imperialism.

To quote Kissinger at the “Pacem in Terris” Conference held in Washington in October 1973:

“Co-existence to us continues to have a very precise meaning:

-- We will oppose the attempt by any country to achieve a position of predominance either globally or regionally.

-- We will resist any attempt to exploit a policy of detente to weaken our alliances.

-- We will react if relaxation of tensions is used as a cover to exacerbate conflicts in international trouble spots.

The Soviet Union cannot disregard these principles in any area of the world without imperilling its entire relationship with the United States."

To US imperialism, the status quo is the maintenance of aggression, rule and influence throughout the world as well as the network of military bases, in direct confrontation with the socialist countries and the anti-imperialist forces. And, at the same time, it includes naked aggression when and where the opportunity arises. This is what the Nixon-Kissinger policy of detente means.

Thus, it is very superficial to regard the US government’s policy of detente towards the Soviet Union and China as an important realignment in the world. Such an estimation would be dangerous to the entire anti-imperialist forces throughout the world and could only bring aid and comfort to Nixon and Kissinger.

CONTINUED US IMPERIALIST “POLICY OF STRENGTH” AND THE IMPERIALIST CAMP

In the period since the signing of the Paris Agreement, the Nixon Administration has made much of Brezhnev’s visit to the United States and the signing of the “Agreement on Prevention of Nuclear War”, while at the same time fostering detente with China by the establishment of liaison offices in Peking and Washington and by Kissinger’s visit to China. And, against a background of increased tension between the Soviet Union and China, the US has not only pursued its aims in Indochina, but has manoeuvred further for two Koreas, instigated the overthrow of the popular government in Chile, and helped Israeli aggression in the Fourth Middle East War, while extending its control of the Arab countries in the role of mediator. This is all nothing more than the machinations of the “position of strength”. And throughout all this, acting on the “Kissinger plan”, the US has reorganised and strengthened the imperialist camp by drawing Japan into the “western world”, taking advantage of the oil crisis to strengthen the power of the dollar.

If we ignore these manoeuvres of US imperialism and underestimate the importance of the Indochinese peoples’ struggle for final victory, under the miasma of “relaxation of tension” between East and West, we abandon the thesis that it is the development of the struggles of the three great progressive forces which will change the world situation.

In Latin America, in spite of the US imperialist-dominated Organisation of American States, countries such as Argentina, Peru and Panama have given virtual or open recognition to Cuba, and admitted the “diversity of ideology in Latin America”, and it was in this atmosphere that the Chilean Popular Government was established in 1970.

But the recent military coup d’etat in Chile, sponsored by US imperialism, was but
another example of the US policy of taking advantage of the tension between the USSR and China, while under the cloak of “relaxation of tension”, while striking at yet another democratic force, the US minimises its guilt in the eyes of the world as much as possible.

The situation in the Middle East war also manifests the US “position of strength” policy. Without the support of the Israeli reactionaries by US imperialism, the present situation would not exist. At the same time, US imperialism is making every effort to continue its control of the oil reserves in the Arab countries.

Since the conclusion of the Vietnam peace agreement, US imperialism has been trying to keep the imperialist camp together but this has only heightened its own declining role. During the Indochina war, the leaders of not only France and Sweden, but those of Great Britain and West Germany have been critical of the US in the concluding stage of the war. The “Kissinger plan” of April 1973 is intended not only to re-establish the leadership of US imperialism but also to combine the NATO countries with Japan, to make these countries share responsibility, and once more to consolidate the imperialist partnership.

“RELAXATION OF TENSION” FOR STATUS QUO AND GENUINE PEACE

When Nixon and Kissinger speak of the fundamental turn from the “cold war” to the “relaxation of tension” they have in mind particularly the Nuclear War Prevention Agreement and two other agreements on Strategic Arms Limitations concluded between the USSR and the US, a series of treaties concerning the German question and the progress of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe.

The Nuclear War Prevention Agreement states that the parties agree that they will act in such a manner as to exclude the outbreak of nuclear war between them and between either of the parties and other countries.

Today in the situation of what is said to be balanced nuclear forces, it is true that even the United States cannot easily undertake nuclear war. The Agreement is a statement of this fact and nothing more.

For a period after World War II, US imperialism, holding a monopoly of nuclear weapons, established a system of aggression against the socialist camp by keeping these weapons poised, but the USSR’s development of nuclear weapons checked this threat. It became clear, especially during the 1962 Cuban events that a confrontation with nuclear weapons was by no means easy for US imperialism. Nevertheless, US imperialism continues to develop nuclear weapons and so does the USSR -- so the stalemate continues.

The Agreement on the Prevention of Nuclear War does not bind the hand of US imperialism and does not promise the complete prohibition of nuclear weapons sought by the world’s peoples. US imperialism has formed unilateral and bilateral military alliances, it has deployed its nuclear weapons in other countries and sends its nuclear submarines throughout the world. None of these actions is prohibited by the Agreement.

How then should we understand the content of the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-ballistic Missiles (ABM) and the Interim Agreement on the Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms concluded in May 1972, during Nixon’s visit to the USSR?

While the ABM treaty sets an upper limit of two hundred of these weapons to be held by each side, at the time the treaty was concluded, the US possessed none of them and the USSR had only sixty-four, so in fact this treaty allows both sides to expand their armament.

The Interim Agreement on Strategic Offensive Arms is intended only to freeze the number of inter-continental ballistic missiles (ICBM) and submarine ballistic missiles (SLMB).

In fact, these agreements do not nullify US imperialism’s development of new weapons and its policy of nuclear war.

Needless to say US strategic arms are aimed first of all against the Soviet Union. This, in itself, despite the agreements, shows what the reality is concerning “relaxation of tension”.

More than a quarter of a century has passed since the world raised its voice for complete prohibition of nuclear weapons. Meanwhile, the Partial Nuclear Ban Treaty
and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty have been concluded and each time they have been called “an important step” toward complete prohibition of nuclear weapons or “progress” toward world peace. But they have never prevented US imperialism from developing nuclear weapons. As an example, the US has conducted more than two hundred and fifty underground nuclear tests in the ten years following the conclusion of the Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty.

Thus it becomes ever clearer that an attempt to realize the prevention of nuclear war and prohibition of nuclear weapons which does not rely chiefly on international public opinion and the broad mass movement but relies mainly on diplomatic negotiations in the long run will be forced to stay within the limit imposed by US imperialism.

In this situation, our Party pointed out last July that it was necessary to return to the starting point of the world peace movement after World War II, and call for complete prohibition of nuclear weapons. We asked the communist and workers’ parties to develop this struggle.

Another manifestation of “relaxation of tension” is the current negotiations on the mutual reduction of forces of East and West in Europe. The phenomenon of “relaxation of tension” in Europe by no means has a clear content at least at present. What is clear is the confirmation of the status quo. Of course, this has a certain importance in checking aggression, but it is wrong to overestimate it as a “realisation of peaceful coexistence”.

At present, although they welcome the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, many European communist parties hold that they should develop the struggle of their peoples for the simultaneous dissolution of NATO and the Warsaw Treaty Organisation, the withdrawal of foreign troops and evacuation of military bases on foreign territory, the overthrow of US imperialism domination in Europe and the establishment of a completely free Europe, in order to establish genuine peace and security in Europe. The development of this struggle will open the way to establish genuine collective security in Europe.

In connection with the progress of the Conference in Europe, there is increasing emphasis on the need for a so-called “Asian Collective Security System” based on the ten Bandung Principles.

In present specific conditions, if collective security in Asia envisages creation of a system of collective security and co-operation in the whole of Asia along the lines proposed by the US imperialists in Europe, where would it lead us? What would result from this except the “recognition of the status quo” of colonialist and neo-colonialist rule over Asian countries including the “divided states” by US imperialism and confirmation of a humiliating “peace” with the content of “legalisation”?

The working class and the broad masses of working people in Japan who, since 1960, have developed a great historic struggle to abolish the US-Japan military alliance, cannot accept the idea of first convening a “Conference on Collective Security and Co-operation in Asia” and then gradually dissolving the military bloc, confirming the “status quo” of Asia.

PRETTIFYING US IMPERIALISM AND SINO-SOVET RIVALRY

A new theory of prettifying US imperialism has emerged in a situation in which it promotes a strategy for “strength, partnership and negotiation” notable for its “detente” diplomacy, while certain sectors of the anti-imperialist camp hail the Nixon administration’s alleged switch from the “cold war” to “peaceful co-existence”. Accompanying this new theory there is a serious development, namely the aggravation of Sino-Soviet rivalry.

According to the new theory, there has appeared in the USA a group of politicians who, on the basis of their alleged “realism” and “reasonableness”, seek to accommodate themselves to the changed balance of forces in the world and bring into being the relaxation of tension. It is said that these politicians should be respected. Furthermore, there is supposed to exist in US ruling circles another group, a reactionary clique, which comprises “the top echelon of the military-industrial complex, ultra-right elements, Zionists, and counter-revolutionary immigrants from socialist countries”.

This new theory which repeatedly arises, does so inevitably because US imperialism is analysed from the standpoint of justifying the alleged decisive role of one’s own “det-
ente” diplomacy, rather than from the standpoint of the struggle of the three great international revolutionary forces, with their aims of independence, peace, democracy and social progress. It arises from failure to take a comprehensive look at the characteristic features of US imperialism which remains the ring-leader of world reaction, the international gendarme and the main force of war and aggression. The fundamental error of the theory of alleged bi-polarisation of US ruling circles lies, more than in anything else, in its failure to take cognisance of the dual policy of imperialism.

It is self-evident that Nixon and Kissinger cannot be respected as men of reason in view of their current activities in Asia, Latin America, the Middle East, Europe and particularly in Indochina. That the Nixon administration represents the upper strata of the military-industrial complex is substantiated by facts.

As for the so-called change in the form of manifestation of US imperialism, it is nothing but Nixon’s “detente” diplomacy or the Nixon-Kissinger doctrine that represents such a change. Although admittedly worked out in consideration of Soviet military power, it is a strategy of extricating the US from the quagmire in Indochina by taking advantage of Sino-Soviet rivalry, to reinforce alliance partnerships and to continue the policy of defeating its enemies one by one in given conditions.

Certain people who previously criticised the unprincipled line of collaboration with the USA now say “personages such as President Nixon are preferable to social-democrats or revisionists who, when in power, take entirely different actions”. They allege that the greatest danger now confronting the world is “social imperialism”; they approve of the US-Japan military alliance under the pretext of countering it and even say it would be unavoidable for Japan to place itself under the US “nuclear umbrella”.

The argument that President Nixon is preferable to “revisionists” in power and the argument that Japan must shelter under the US nuclear umbrella -- which is a complete about-face from their earlier position of unequivocally opposing the US-Japan military alliance -- are both traceable to the theory of prettifying US imperialism to which they subscribe, alleging that the main enemy is the Soviet Union.

People representing this trend likewise have come to approve of NATO from a similar viewpoint.

The rivalry between China and the Soviet Union which began as a political and ideological rivalry has today become a grave state rivalry in which both sides deploy huge armed forces.

LESSONS TO BE DRAWN FROM THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE’S STRUGGLE

The first lesson is that the Vietnamese Workers’ Party, the South Vietnam National Front for Liberation and the Vietnamese people, without harbouring any illusions about the aggressive character of US imperialism, looked squarely at its philosophy, barbarity and reaction and also took due note of its weaknesses.

The Vietnamese made their correct evaluation of US imperialism, of the balance of forces between friends and foes, and of the people’s determination to fight and thus carried on the struggle in an undaunted, wise manner. This, indeed, was the prerequisite for their triumph.

The second lesson to be drawn from the Vietnam people’s struggle is that the peoples of various countries should preserve the autonomy of the movements in their countries to the utmost, relying on their own strength more than on anything else. Had the Vietnamese people paid insufficient attention to their own autonomous judgment, had they failed to preserve their autonomy to the end, and had they given in to the views of one or other of the great socialist countries, what would the outcome of their historic struggle have been? There is no room for doubt about the answer to this question.

It is necessary to say this because there is a current opinion which describes the Paris Agreement won by the Vietnamese people as if it reflected the “detente” diplomacy that the Nixon-Kissinger team adopts vis-a-vis the socialist great powers.

The third lesson is that the socialist camp, the international communist movement and the world’s anti-imperialist forces can be successful if they unite against their common enemy no matter what other differences or disunity may exist in their ranks.
The Soviet Union and China, despite their rivalry, have continued to provide the Vietnamese people with useful material assistance. This, together with the activities of all anti-imperialist forces, indicates that if there is a will to struggle together, they are capable of attaining a certain success no matter what their differences. This, too, is a very important lesson to be drawn from the struggle of the past decade or so. However, there is reason to believe that if all anti-imperialist forces had grasped the truth of US imperialism’s dual policies and united their will to do their utmost in assisting the Viet­nam people’s struggle, then the Vietnamese people could have achieved a greater victory much sooner and at smaller sacrifice. It is necessary to emphasis this self-evident fact anew because some activities that could im­pair the unity of anti-imperialist forces are again evident.

US imperialism now intends to translate the concept of a “new Atlantic Charter” into reality with a view to reorganising and reinforcing the imperialist camp through link­ing the NATO countries and Japan.

It is of great importance that the workers of Japan, Italy, France, Britain and other countries should unite in struggles to wreck these plans as well as for the dismantling of the US-Japan military alliance and NATO.

An issue that cannot be left ambiguous is whether to give priority to the develop­ment of anti-imperialist struggle by the peopoe of each country or to the support of a particular socialist country’s diplomacy vis-a-vis imperialist countries, as the main task of anti-imperialist struggle.

Our Party supports the peaceful co-exist­ence diplomacy of socialist countries. As its program notes: “The Party fights for world peace and for peaceful co-existence of states with different social systems.” From this point of view, our Party supports the normalisation of our country’s diplomatic rela­tions with socialist countries as well as developing relations with these countries in eco­nomic, technological, cultural and other fields. We do not deny the possibility that a socialist country may have to make diplomatic concessions to capitalist countries. But whatever the circumstances, the socialist countries’ diplomacy vis-a-vis imperialist countries should not run counter to the interests of national liberation struggles or of revolu­tionary struggles in capitalist countries; nor should support for such diplomacy be im­posed on the struggles of the peoples. This is because the socialist countries’ diplomatic policies, even if correct, cannot replace the national liberation struggles or the struggles of the working class in capitalist countries. It is only when they are correctly related to the development of these struggles that the socialist countries can force a retreat by imperialism.

Important as the unity of the internation­al communist movement is for the democratic forces to develop their struggles in a correct direction, it cannot be overlooked that in some sections of the international communist movement there have appeared some moves running counter to this unity. Such moves derive from insistence on loyalty to a certain party as “the touchstone of proletarian international­ism and marxism-leninism”, and may be seen in attempts to compel the internation­al communist movement and democratic mov­ements to express unalloyed admiration for the so-called “detente” diplomacy, to carry out “ideological unification” in this direc­tion and to brand parties refusing to follow suit as “left and right opportunist”, “revisionist”, “isolationist” and “regionalist”.

There is no need for a “vanguard” party or a “guiding centre”. Each party has the whole responsibility for the revolutionary movement in its own country and struggles to develop the movement autonomously. Mutual support for each other’s endeavours is required. These are the fundamental con­ditions of existence of the present internat­ional communist movement.

New attempts to undermine this stand­point may ruin not only the autonomous development of the struggles of the world’s peoples but also proletarian international­ism in the form of the people’s co-ordinated action. No matter how big a socialist country is and no matter what role it plays objective­ly in international politics, a single country cannot have a decisive influence on the course of the entire development of the world.

To oppose the anachronistic idea of attempt­ing to revive a “vanguard” or “guiding centre”, to wage resolute struggle in the rev­olutionary movement of one’s own country autonomously, to unite in the common strug­gle against US imperialism and to stand in the van of the international encirclement of US imperialism – this is the task of the internat­ional communist movement.