

be decisive in altering the international balance of power in favour of socialism.⁴⁸

The author goes on to say that from 1975 the Soviet Union began to provide the Communist Party of Vietnam with the means to take over the South and assigned a variety of roles to a reunified Vietnam. Noteworthy among these was the task of counteracting China's influence in Southeast Asia and of being a naval staging base for the Soviet Union in Asia and the Pacific. Vietnam was also expected to act as an "outpost of socialism in Southeast Asia."⁴⁹

On 3 November 1978, the Treaty of Friendship between Vietnam and the Soviet Union put into effect decisions taken earlier that year — particularly Vietnam's decision, made during the course of a "controversial meeting of the Politburo in June," to cast its lot unequivocally with the Soviet Union.⁵⁰ Observers were soon aware of what seemed to be a genuine military alliance. Article VI of this treaty laid down that "the two contracting parties will consult with each other about all important international problems which affect the interests of their two countries. In the event of one of the two being attacked or threatened both parties will consult each other immediately in order to eliminate the threat and to take what appropriate and effective measures are needed to ensure the peace and security of both countries."⁵¹ The treaty may also have had a secret protocol authorizing the Soviet Union to intervene with its troops automatically in the event the Vietnamese government was overthrown by either a non-communist regime or one that was pro-Chinese.⁵²

Whether or not any such protocol existed, Vietnam henceforth acted

⁴⁸ Thai Quang Trung, "Hanoi-Moscou: un couple inséparable", *La Nouvelle Asie*, F. Joyaux et P. Wajzman, Paris: Hachette, 1984, page 194.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, page 195.

⁵⁰ Thai Quang Trung, "The Moscow-Hanoi Axis and the Soviet Military Build-up in Southeast Asia," *Indochina Report*, no. 8, Singapore, October 1986, page 9.

⁵¹ "Traité d'amitié et de coopération soviéto-vietnamien (3 novembre 1978)," reproduced as an appendix in *La Nouvelle Asie*, *op.cit.*, pages 436-439.

⁵² Douglas Pike, *Vietnam and the Soviet Union. Anatomy of an Alliance*, Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1987, page 186.