

November 8, 1977

Consultation between a Delegation of the Ministry of the Interior of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and Representatives of the XVIII and XX Divisions and of the Ministry of State Security, 18 October 1977 to 7 November 1977

Citation:

"Consultation between a Delegation of the Ministry of the Interior of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and Representatives of the XVIII and XX Divisions and of the Ministry of State Security, 18 October 1977 to 7 November 1977", November 8, 1977, Wilson Center Digital Archive, BtSU MfS Abt X 340, 158-166. Obtained for CWIHP by Martin Grossheim and translated for CWIHP by Sean O'Grady.
<https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/120725>

Summary:

The North Vietnamese delegate summarizes the situation in Vietnam, noting issues with seed importation, unemployment, unknown numbers of militiamen still in hiding, embedded stay-behind CIA units, and widespread counterfeiting. The document outlines other Vietnamese requests for the transfer of information related to the interaction between the East German Ministry of State Security and economic management institutions, the institution of public outreach programs within the Ministry of State Security, and the creation of 5-year plans.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Leon Levy Foundation

Original Language:

German

Contents:

Translation - English

Main Department XVIII
Berlin, 8 November 1977

Consultation between a delegation of the Ministry of the Interior [Mdl] of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and representatives of the XVIII [protection of the national economy] and XX [state institutions, culture, church, underground] divisions and of the Ministry of State Security [MfS] - 18 October 1977 to 7 November 1977

The delegation of Ministry of the Interior the Socialist Republic of Vietnam [SRV] is under the direction of the acting head of the main department of the defense economy, Comrade Colonel Trinh Lan. In the delegation are senior comrades who are active in the field of securing industry; banking, financial, and trading institutions (domestic and foreign trade); agriculture, culture, education, and youth.

As directed, the content and sequence of the agenda was designed to convey the knowledge and experience of the Ministry of State Security in accordance with the historical development of the GDR in the period of anti-fascist democratic order, the founding of the GDR, and the following years of class struggle with imperialism. Of main concern was the clear representation of the central role of the Soviet Union and the Soviet Army as the historical starting point for the existence and development of the GDR.

The presentation of the director of the main department XVIII at the opening of the consultations was matched to this basic requirement and provided information on the leadership of the working class and the handled stages under the leadership of the working class and the SED.

- 1945-1949 - economy, education reform, the and struggle against revisionary forces in all areas of society, land reform, formation of state power to the founding of the GDR

- Two-and five-year plan periods to create the material and technical foundations for the establishment of socialism with the help of the USSR under the conditions of espionage, sabotage, terrorism--on many occasions--and attempts of the imperialism of the FRG and the USA to liquidate the GDR through violent military intervention.(Focal point: 17 June 1953, the role of the party and the Ministry of State Security in the struggle against counterrevolutionary elements, the development of socialist state power, the arming of the working class into battle groups, and the socialist transformation of agriculture.)

- Experience and methods of the protection and security institutions in securing the development of socialism--development of the public outreach of the Ministry of State Security as the basis of the formation of trusting cooperation with the population and the leading forces of the state and economy for the design of precautionary defense work for safety and order.

The reaction and questions of the Vietnamese comrades confirmed this approach in principle; Comrade Colonel Trinh Lan summarized the situation in the SRV:

The SRV is a backwards agrarian country and, being based on the decisions of the Fourth Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam, seeks to restore the national economy, systematically industrialize, mechanize production, and increase agricultural yields.

A major area of interest is the import of complete industrial and manufacturing systems for the exploration and extraction of raw materials in the country.

Main import lines are the import of agricultural machinery and seeds.

The problem of seeds is of importance, as the existing types of rice seed are no longer being diversified and imports from Cuba, which in turn originate from the United States, show an inferior diversity and the Vietnamese comrades are of the view that these seeds from the USA were selected for the Asian region to in order to secure dependence.

The main problems lie in the south of the country and are characterized by:

- About 3 million unemployed, 3 million former members of the Saigon clique in the administration, production, culture, education, the re-education of which is still to be addressed, as well as the widespread phenomena of corruption, black market commerce, and prostitution.

- About 40,000 armed operating former soldiers / officers of the Saigon army still in the jungle, who are in alliance with reactionary terrorist elements to commit terror, acts of violence, and murders in urban centers.

- It is assumed that about 1 million citizens in the south are still in the possession of weapons.

- Operational and validation work [that states] around 200,000 agents of the CIA and the former Saigon intelligence service still exist in the south, some of which have penetrated into the ranks of the Communist Party of Vietnam.

(Recently in a firm in Saigon, the entire party cell--12 members--were exposed as agents of the CIA and rendered harmless)

- Large problems in the food supply (reduction of the monthly rice ration of 15kg to 13kg per capita and to 0.4 kg of meat) due to the failure of the harvest 1976/77.

- South Vietnam has no significant industrial base. The manufacturing sector is ancillary to agriculture as strongly marked by the establishment of the service industry. Manufacturing enterprises exist to a limited extent, for example in the field of consumer electronic goods mass assembly was implemented using delivered individual components from the French firm "National" and from the Japanese "Sanyo Group".

(For the economic development plan, the SRV intends to maintain this form of industrial production and to expand it.)

- Significant safety and fiscal problems are caused by the widespread reprinting/copying of currency (circulation of counterfeit currency). There exists a high general level of criminality in finance in the form of fraud and embezzlement by employees of financial institutions due to the disorganization of the money supply.

The information given by Comrade Colonel Trinh Lan in individual presentations also characterizes the questions by the Vietnamese comrades regarding the organization of the political and operational defense work.

- How does the Ministry of State Security organize the external protection of economic objects? What forces are deployed? Relationship between formal and informal work - Jurisdiction of the Ministry of State Security and the police;

- Under which groups and categories of person does the Ministry of State Security

manage unofficial collaborators?

Forms of the production of cooperation:

- Forms and methods of the design of the interaction between the security institutions with the state and economic management institutions at the level of manufacturing enterprises; principles of focused training and standards that are set for the mission of operational forces of the Ministry of State Security

- Forms and methods of information flow, information extraction at the [different] levels of the economy and the resulting interaction between the service units and divisions of the Ministry of State Security (realization of the division and territorial principles);

- Forms and methods of defense work for securing imports of machinery from non-socialist economic areas and licensing of [materials] from non-socialist economic areas.

In this context, the desire was expressed to consider to what extent the security institutions of the GDR have information about the people and firms of non-socialist economic areas, which come into the question as trading and contracting partners for the SRV for machinery imports.

(Naming of these firms was formulated as a prerequisite by the Vietnamese side.)

Methods of selection, verification, confirmation, and operational security of foreign cadres (travel cadres, people's economy, foreign students, etc.);

Experiences in the fight against the influence of the imperialist enemy by mass media and the specific, practical methods of the MfS - relationship of wider, with party coordinated ideological work -, inclusion of social forces in the formulation of Unofficial Collaborator work in this area.

Methods to secure the mass media of the GDR

- Criminal policy in the fight against the effects of PID [Political-Ideological Diversion] among cultural workers, students, doctors, and applied forms of punishment respective of the methods for the suppression of enemy influences;[1]

- Handling of delinquent youths and the relevant interaction with state organs and other institutions - principles of work in the area of youth support / residential education - principles of reintegration policy for delinquents.

Methods of acquiring unofficial collaborators among intellectuals and cultural workers - experience of the impact of diplomatic and accredited privileged persons from NW-agencies in these circles.

- Role of churches in the social life of the GDR - influence on the process of education, on entertainment, on private schools, and on educational institutions in the GDR;

- How to detect, deter, and fight the formation of negative or subversive groups in general, especially among youth circles?

Interest in the qualification process of the cadres in the MfS was in the following question areas:

- What training is required in principle?
- Ratio of Chekist and scientific-technical, economic training of staff?
- Where and in what conditions does the MfS search for and win its cadres?

In essence, the Chekist training was emphasized in the response.

Regarding this complex, Comrade Colonel Trinh Lan explained that about 50% of his jurisdiction, and also in other areas of the MDI of the SRV, work in college and technical training on the subjects of natural science, technical fields, and scientific fields. The Chekist training follows at a university of the MDI as well as at a specialized school of the MDI in Hanoi and in the level of every province as part of a school for further qualification.

The vast majority of employees have fought directly in the ranks of the Liberation Front until 1975.

The relevant questions regarding almost all sectors of industry, construction, agriculture, forestry and food industry, domestic and foreign trade, transport, public education, culture, youth, health issues were answered in principle and in essence by the commissioned leaders of the levels of the head department XVIII, XIX, and XX, without detailed information regarding operating structures and forces.

Information on the structural design of the political and operational defense work was procured by Comrade Colonel Trinh Lan to that effect, that in the MDI of the SRV there exists:

- HA Defense of Industry
- HA Defense of Agriculture
- HA Defense of Trade and Finance
- HA Interior Defense - Social Realm
- HA Counterintelligence

This structure is analogous with the provincial administrations, where in the districts of the SRV exclusively the agriculture and forestry [departments] shall be preserved.

The emerging security policy focus in the provinces and districts will be processed and disbursed with the help and support of headquarters.

From the total resulting problem and question complexes, the Vietnamese side expressed a desire for the handover of the following documentation:

1. Structure of a VEB [Peoples' Owned Enterprise] with the representation and function of the security policy effective devices, such as security officers, department of safety and order, fire, labor and operational safety.

The provisions in force in the GDR in the field of occupational health and safety, fire safety arrangements, arrangements for ensuring the secure handling of poisons, along with other harmful substances.

2. The laws of the GDR regarding foreign trade.

3. Penal Code and Code of Criminal Procedure of the GDR.

4. Official procedures for all areas connected with visitor regulations for travelers coming from the NSW [Non-Socialist Economic Area] and further specifically enacted regulations on different topics. State regulations in the field of outbound commercial traffic.

5. State regulations in the field of securing state secrets.

6. Youth Protection Act / Regulations on the protection of the youth of the GDR.

7. Decisions of the Party and derived decisions and orders of the Council of Ministers on the work of the security forces and the resulting orders and directives of the Minister of State Security regarding the organization of political and operational defense work.

These requests were cautiously received and a check for a decision of the Comrade Minister pledged these [requests], with the restriction that documents developed specifically for the situation in the GDR would only be useful in part or not at all for the DRV.

The working consultations were held in an open-minded and friendly atmosphere, and it was clear that the held attitude of the USSR from the Vietnamese side was basically positive and viewed approvingly as seen through the representatives of the MfS through their presentations and the selected excursions

In individual interviews Colonel Trinh Lan was clear on many occasions that he would like it known that the Vietnamese side should not be regarded as students, but rather as equal partners in the Chekist fight.

The conveyed experience would be interesting and instructive, but in forms and methods not relevant or applicable in every case to the national conditions of Vietnam.

The fight against the main imperialist enemy - the United States - would be thought of as a Chekist competition to deal powerful blows and their results would be of the scale possible [only] through the work of both brother institutions.

[1] The term "political-ideological diversion" was first coined by the GDR Ministry of State Security in 1958. The Stasi understood "political-ideological diversion" as a sophisticated and mainly peaceful strategy of the West to destabilize the Communist world. See definition in Roger Engelmann et al. (eds.). *Das MfS-Lexikon. Begriffe, Personen und Strukturen*, Berlin: Ch. Links, 2012: 72; and Siegfried Suckut (ed.). *Das Wörterbuch der Staatssicherheit. Definitionen zur „politisch-operativen Arbeit“*, Berlin: Ch. Links, 1996: 303-304. The Vietnamese equivalent to this concept is the theory of "peaceful evolution" (diễn biến hòa bình),