Political and theoretical problems of

The China crisis

By SAM MARCY

JUNE 20—A central theoretical and political problem confronts the international working class and oppressed people as a result of the truly incredible developments stemming from Chinese foreign policy.

How is one to explain how a great socialist country would go so far as to actually send a naval task force to defend the Mobutu regime, a regime that even the bourgeois press admits is a corrupt tool of the imperialists, particularly France, Belgium, West Germany, and the U.S? Certainly China's vessels could not possibly reach the waters of Zaire unless the imperialists had agreed to it in the first place, and allowed the People's Republic of China to defend Mobutu on their behalf. And what is there in it for China or even for the narrow interests of its current leaders?

How is it possible for the Chinese leaders to embark on such a violent campaign of vilification against a small socialist neighbor, one which fought imperialism under circumstances which made it a shining light in the struggle against imperialism? How is it possible for China to **unilaterally** decide to send its ships to Vietnamese ports to pick up Chinese nationals (called in Vietnam the Hoa people)?

How can China, which has long crusaded against "hegemonism," so belligerently intensify its hostile campaign against Vietnam as to order the closing of three Vietnamese consulates and the departure of their staffs "in the shortest time"?

Isn't this in the worst tradition of the old colonialist gun-boat diplomacy? Has China not itself been subjected to just such types of practices by the foreign imperialists?

Why the sudden concern for corrupt compradore elements of Chinese descent in Vietnam, when China herself has carried on a valiant struggle against such bourgeois elements in its own socialist revolution?

Why is Foreign Minister Huang Hua roaming all over the globe passing on Washington's message, "The Russians are coming, the Cubans are coming," in such hysterical terms as to make his frantic approach utterly incomprehensible to progressives all over the world, the advanced workers and oppressed peoples in particular?

Why are so many rabid militarists from the West finding such a warm welcome in Peking? And why—but what is the use, the list is already too long.

It has become more and more obvious since the Brzezinski visit to Peking and the U.S.-NATO intervention in Zaire that the Chinese leaders have taken a headlong gallop into the embrace of Pentagon-NATO imperialism. Unquestionably an alliance between Western imperialism and the PRC leaders is rapidly taking shape. The great question confronting the international working class movement and the oppressed people is whether it is too late to be reversed or whether there are sufficient grounds for believing that new progressive social forces on a wide scale can assert themselves from among the workers and peasants to reverse the tragic course pursued by the current PRC leaders.

In analyzing the situation in China, it is tempting to go way back into the historical antecedents of Chinese development, to go over the long and tortuous road the Chinese Revolution had to take in order to achieve the monumental victory which occurred almost thirty years ago. It is best, however, to first examine the contemporary reality that is China today.

DANGER OF TENG GROUP UNDERESTIMATED IN COMMUNIST MOVEMENT

A great mistake was made in the Communist movement and in some of the socialist countries in assessing the significance of the ouster of Chiang Ching, Chang Chun-chiao, Wang Hung-wen, and Yao Wen-yuan. In general it was viewed as a "positive" development; the character of the new leadership was completely underestimated. Sad to say, the imperialist bourgeoisie more quickly and more accurately sensed the significance of the events which overturned the so-called "gang of four" and brought Teng Hsiao-ping back to positions of great authority.

The view in the international communist movement was that a small group of ultra-left Maoists was turned out and that a new, more reasonable grouping, one which conceivably might be anti-Maoist, was taking over; that this increased the possibility for collaboration between the Soviet Union and China and that it would even be possible to restore party-to-party relations and of course to solve the Sino-Soviet border dispute.

> No new progressive social system arises from the old without bearing birthmarks—characteristics of the old system from which it issued. Nor will the new social system yield to destructive, reactionary forces unless its potentialities for taking up the torch of progress have become exhausted.

But this was a mistaken view. The mistake was not so much in analyzing the Chiang grouping as ultra-left—yes, there were excesses in the Cultural Revolution and ultra-left errors. But that's not the basic element in the analysis of what had happened. The basic error was in not realizing the **depth** of the right-wing swing of the historical pendulum which had taken place on the social landscape of this great socialist country.

This is the crux of the error. The bourgeois press also saw the Chiang grouping as "extremists," but was quick to realize that the "moderates," the "pragmatists" would be far more amenable and far more accommodating towards imperialism than were their predecessors. Communists, however, tended to view the significance of the "pragmatic" trend as merely a relief from ultra-leftism and the opening of a more reasonable approach towards relationships with other socialist countries which could lead to an abandonment of hostility to the USSR and a renewal of the Sino-Soviet Friendship Treaty.

Certainly this possibility was always there and still is there as long as the socialist foundations and the class character of the Chinese regime remain. But the depth of the political reaction that has ensued on the heels of the ouster of the Chiang grouping is so deep and pervasive that it will take much more than even the best diplomatic and political tactics and strategy at the disposal of the leadership in the other socialist countries to reverse the situation. But it does not depend on them alone.

A RIGHTIST RESOLUTION OF MAO'S CONTRADICTION

Under Mao there was a deep contradiction between his struggle to continue the process of reforming China's social and political institutions on a revolutionary basis, and his reactionary foreign policy in relation to the USSR and other socialist countries which was expressed as a false thesis on the class character of the USSR. What is not fully understood about present-day China is that the current leaders are bent on "harmonizing" the domestic situation with their foreign policy, but their resolution of this truly fundamental contradiction is a reactionary one; that is they are attacking the revolutionary domestic achievements of the Mao era.

The new leadership, or perhaps it would be more accurate to say the Teng leadership, is bent on eliminating and completely dismantling the progressive and revolutionary achievements of not only the Cultural Revolution but of previous revolutionary gains made during the Chinese Revolution after the country was liberated.

The new leaders could be divided into two groupings. There are, in our view, the so-called "old capitalist roaders," many of whom merely had a deep affinity to the Soviet Union and were reluctant to take up the cudgels in the struggle against the Khrushchev regime. By and large they were sympathetic to the trend that Khrushchev brought about in the USSR during the period of his ascendancy. But generally these were really the smaller and less significant elements in the internal struggle in China. They in turn, however, stimulated and brought to life far more powerful and more abiding regressive and anti-revolutionary social elements, many of whom could scarcely be distinguished from the bourgeois dissidents in the USSR about whom the West writes so much.

> It is incumbent upon all progressives to unmask the reactionary character of the Teng-Hua leadership whose alliance with the most unbridled militarist and reactionary imperialist forces in the world poses the greatest danger to the whole working class.

NEW RIGHT AND MAO'S FOREIGN POLICY

The coming to power of Teng and Hua represented the victory of the New Right. And this is what the imperialist bourgeoisie quickly realized. These are the people who are not only eager to dismantle the remains of the Cultural Revolution, but view the Maoist foreign policy quite differently than did Mao himself.

Mao saw in the Nixon visit to Peking and in the Shanghai Communique a tremendous victory that would end the isolation of China, soon win the restoration of Taiwan as a province of China, and bring about the normalization of relations with the U.S.—but without an alliance with U.S.-NATO imperialism. Rather, the view in Peking at that time was that there was a diplomatic and political struggle against the **two** "super-powers," even though the USSR was the "most dangerous one." All of this, however, still remained in the stratosphere of diplomatic maneuvering and within the context of China relying principally upon itself, with peripheral economic and diplomatic contacts with the West. The watchword was "self-reliance."

The New Right has gone much further. It has moved from diplomatic maneuvering to action; since the imperialist intervention in Zaire, it has moved headlong towards a Sino-U.S. alliance.

The New Right is propelled to do so by its assault on the progressive social achievements of the Chinese Revolution and in its haste to achieve military standing in the world arena.

Along with that has come a degeneration into chauvinism. When a great socialist country with more than 900 million people has to open a campaign to win the allegiance of the overseas Chinese on a reactionary basis—this is the real meaning of the struggle with Vietnam over the Hoa people—then it must be admitted that the revolutionary fortunes of the Chinese have sunk to a very, very low point. It would have been inconceivable for Lenin and the Bolshevik Party, during the struggle to defend the USSR against a host of imperialist countries and their stooges, to have first and foremost called upon ethnic Russians as a primary point of support for the October Revolution. On the contrary, it was the deep feeling of the world proletariat and oppressed people that served as the main point of support, after the Russian workers and peasants themselves.

SOCIALIST COUNTRIES AND LENIN'S DEFINITION

China, like the USSR and other socialist countries, is called socialist not because it has achieved a fully developed socialist mode of production where classes have been abolished and where inequality has been substantially reduced between the various strata of the population, but because of the aspirations of the workers and peasants, the perspective of the leaders of the Revolution, and because of the collective ownership of the basic means of production which entails the abolition of private ownership of large means

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China's moves against Vietnam

The government of the People's Republic of China has taken a number of specific steps in recent weeks that have led to a serious deterioration of Sino-Vietnamese relations. Here is a brief outline of what has happened:

• May 12—China unilaterally cancelled 21 aid projects to Vietnam and withdrew a large number of Chinese specialists, thereby cancelling agreements it had made with Vietnam in 1973.

• May 30—China cancelled another 51 projects which pretty much brought to an end all Chinese aid to Vietnam. This aid had been agreed upon in an understanding that Vietnam's struggle against U.S. imperialism was a significant victory for all the oppressed people of the world and that it was the internationalist duty of fraternal socialist countries to help in post-war construction.

• June 2—China announced that it would send ships to Vietnam to "evacuate" ethnic Chinese (Hoa people) who it claimed were being "persecuted and ostracized" by the Vietnamese government. The Vietnamese replied on June 5 that there had been no campaign against the Hoa people, but that many of them had been frightened into wanting to leave Vietnam by rumors that had been spread saying a large-scale war would break out with Kampuchea, that China was supporting Kampuchea in the conflict, and that the Chinese government was calling on overseas Chinese to come back.

Vietnam also pointed out that while most of the Hoa people are workers who have shared in the revolutionary struggle of Vietnam against imperialism, some merchants among them, especially in the south, have been subject to expropriation in the general revolutionary campaign to dissolve capitalist ownership of the means of production. In the Chinese Revolution, they pointed out, similar measures had to be taken in order to convert the economy to socialist ownership—a fact which the present Chinese leaders do not mention.

China had announced it was sending the ships to Vietnamese ports before clearing such a move with the Vietnamese government. Nevertheless, Vietnam on June 5 announced that it would allow the ships to enter specific ports as of June 20, and called on China to send a team to Vietnam to work out the details for the departure of Hoa people who wished to go to China.

On June 13 and 16 Vietnam handed the Chinese Embassy a text containing six concrete points regulating the way in which the ships would be received and would behave while in Vietnamese ports. As of June 19—a day before the first Chinese ships were due to arrive in Vietnam—no reply had been received from the Chinese and no team had arrived to discuss the arrangements.

• June 16—China announced that it was closing three Vietnamese consulates in southern China and demanded that the staffs leave China in the shortest time. In a note to the Chinese Foreign Ministry, the Vietnamese government characterized this move as "another extremely serious act of the Chinese side."