

Dave Van Arnam continues to miss various fangatherings around the nation while he recuperates from finishing his LOST IN SPACE novelization and getting it into Pyramid, and starts in on his next batch of outlines.

FIRST DRAFT #166

Vol. 28, No. 4

19 May 67

Dave Van Arnam also continues a letter from TED PAULS which has been running for three issues with this, and may well run into next week also.
TED continues:

STEVE STILES: GOOD TAFFMAN!!

But, except in Tibet, Communist China has not engaged in this sort of expansion, <<Like Russia's after WW II>> save for the brief war on the Indian frontier. And although Peking is certainly doing everything it can to foment revolutions in the countries bordering China, there is a very important distinction to be made between this and military conquest. Had it not been for the action of the Red Army, there would have been (except in Yugoslavia) no Communist "revolutions" in Eastern Europe. <<And very possibly none in China that couldn't be defeated with the proper application of will and force. All of this today could have been nipped in the bud; any chance of getting you to see that?>> But no responsible spokesman has suggested that China's "fomenting" of trouble has been the decisive factor in Vietnam or Laos or Thailand. <<I'll damn well claim it for Thailand -- the whole thing has been set up from China and the Chinese admit it in statements quoted in great and loving detail in the New York Times (vide many, many issues). Without China's direct efforts, there wd be no effective "National Liberation Front" terrorizing outlying portions of Thailand. And yes, I think we shd do all we can to force the Thailand government to hasten the basic reforms which, I agree, are in the long run the only true alternative to the communist conflagration burning away most that is of value in this world. -- dgv>> The upheavals in those countries represent something more than merely an attempt at Chinese expansion.

This is an important point. It is not merely a tactical difference, a question of substituting "wars of national liberation" for outright military conquest. North Vietnam is not a Chinese satellite <<No, dammit, but it's a communist satellite, which, practically speaking, is no practical improvement. Ask the political prisoners in Yugoslavia.>>, though our pressure may eventually force it into this position; Hanoi is not carrying out some devious masterplan hatched by Mao Tse-tung. The North Vietnamese -- and the Viet Cong in the South -- are fighting for their own reasons, and would be fighting if China ceased to exist tomorrow. <<And if China vanished, we could win rather quickly, I shd imagine... -- dgv>> The Viet Cong is not an arm of Chinese policy, as the Red Army was obviously an arm of Soviet policy. We are fighting Vietnamese, not Chinese, and those Vietnamese have not the slightest interest in promoting the interests of Red China, except insofar as these are their own interests as well. <<Which is to say that communists will work together for the most part, in order to bring communism to other people -- by force and violence and calculated terrorism. Snooky's just about finding this out. Soon no doubt it will be Malaysia's turn. -- dgv>>

As a matter of fact -- and this is an irony that most of the advocates of realpolitik fully recognize -- a strong, unified Vietnam under Ho

Chi Minh would be the greatest barrier to Chinese expansion in Asia. The Vietnamese, after all, fought the Chinese for 1000 years, and they would fight them today with every bit as much courage and determination as they fight the United States. In fact, I look forward to a situation, eventually, when a unified Democratic Republic of Vietnam, with ties to the Soviet Union and even, perhaps, the United States, stands as a barrier to Chinese ambitions in this corner of Asia. <<This idyllic vision takes nowhere into account the shooting wars now being instigated all over the Far East -- in Laos, in Thailand, in Cambodia, in the Philippines, plus hints of it in Malaysia and Korea -- by communists. Dammit, man, it's not Chinese expansionism by means of force and violence I'm saying we must oppose -- it's communist expansionism. And that takes two paths -- military (the Red Army) and revolutionary (the would-be "Wars of National Liberation". Possible independence of one or another of these movements in the problematical future is of virtually no importance whatsoever; what the hell good is it going to do us if everybody else is communist? -- dgv>>

Be that as it may, the important thing to keep in mind is that, should Vietnam be overrun by Vietnamese who happened to be Communists, this would not constitute a "conquest" for China, like the German takeover of Norway or the Russian occupation of Poland. <<The net result would be the same, however -- repressive dictatorship, no freedom of speech, no freedom of action, and you're shot in the back by your own people if you try to leave. Vide East Berlin, the borders of nearly all communist states, hell, I don't have to spell it out, do I?>>

I also perceive in your commentary some foggy acceptance of the related argument that it is the expansion of Communism, as a philosophy and system of government, which the US must resist, and that America must take its stand in Vietnam in order to avoid fighting closer to home later. Thus we have the "domino theory" and the "stop them now before they reach our borders" theory. Both of these theories say that if we do not fight and win here in Vietnam, we shall have to fight elsewhere later, because there will be more "wars of national liberation" in other -- and more important -- countries. These ideas are dangerous, not because the conclusion is wrong (I think there probably will be many more such wars), but because the implication that if we do fight here, there won't be more such wars, is totally wrong.

Such an idea is perfectly reasonable when you are talking about outright military conquest. Certainly if the democratic powers had fought Hitler to a standstill in Czechoslovakia, he never would have invaded Poland or France or Belgium or North Africa. Certainly if the United States had stopped the Soviet Union in Poland or Rumania, there would never have been a Communist takeover of Czechoslovakia. Certainly if the United States and other powers had prevented the Chinese takeover of Tibet, there would never have been a border war with India. All that is fine. But in Southeast Asia we are talking about revolutions, and no matter how much material aid and encouragement a revolution may receive from outside, it is still basically an indigenous affair. Revolution occurs where the conditions for it are ripe, and cannot occur where those conditions do not exist. This rule remains true no matter what military action big powers choose to take. China cannot begin revolutions by pushing a button, and revolutions won't stop because the United States chooses to fight in one country. <<Is Ted Pauls right? Will Dave Van Arnam be unable to answer this line of argument? Tune in next week, when Null-Q Press brings you the answer, hoping you are the sane... -- dgv>>