

April 21, 1969

**From the Journal of I.S. Shcherbakov, 'Record of
Conversation with with Hoang Van Tien, Deputy DRV
Minister of Foreign Affairs, 2 April 1969'**

Citation:

"From the Journal of I.S. Shcherbakov, 'Record of Conversation with with Hoang Van Tien, Deputy DRV Minister of Foreign Affairs, 2 April 1969'", April 21, 1969, Wilson Center Digital Archive, RGANI, f. 5, op. 61, d.454, ll. 36-38. Contributed by Sergey Radchenko and translated by Gary Goldberg.

<https://wilson-center.drivingcreative.com/document/209168>

Summary:

Soviet ambassador's notes from conversations on Chinese border provocations.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Carnegie Corporation of New York (CCNY)

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

FROM THE JOURNAL
OF I. S. SHCHERBAKOV

[stamp: Vietnam][faded stamp: 14690]

Secret Copy № 2
21 April 1969
Outgoing № 226

RECORD OF A CONVERSATION
with Hoang Van Tien, Deputy DRV Minister of Foreign Affairs

2 April 1969

At my request I was received by Hoang Van Tien.

I informed Hoang Van Tien that yesterday our Embassy was surrounded by a large number of police. We were warned so that we also adopt precautionary measures. I expressed the assumption that the Chinese were attempting to conduct some kind of provocations.

[Translator's note: the first three sentences of the following paragraph were highlighted in the left margin]. Hoang Van Tien replied that a group of specialists had come to the Chinese Embassy obviously to obtain information about the work of the 9th CPC Congress which has opened. Therefore the Vietnamese comrades decided to increase the security of the Soviet Embassy. The Ministry of State Security has a plan in the event of Chinese provocations. Hoang Van Tien added that the danger of the appearance of negative phenomena is deepened by the presence of a large number of Chinese emigrants to the DRV. Per an agreement between the DRV and the PRC the Chinese emigrants have all the rights and bear all the responsibility of Vietnamese citizens. Up to now the Chinese emigrants have observed this established procedure. Nevertheless, the schoolchildren of the Chinese emigrants have gathered and tried to hold a demonstration around the Soviet Embassy; however, state security officials took urgent measures.

I thanked Hoang Van Tien for the measures taken. I asked whether a VWP delegation was at the 9th CPC Congress.

[Translator's note: the following paragraph was highlighted in the left margin]. Hoang Van Tien replied that a VWP delegation was not sent to the Chinese Congress since the Vietnamese comrades did not receive invitations. The interlocutor expressed the supposition that the 9th CPC Congress was held as "a domestic event", without the participation of foreign delegations.

[stamp at the bottom of the first page]:
The material is informative
the CPSU CC Department has been familiarized [with it]
[illegible signature]
Sector chief [illegible] (B. [Kumik])
15D/5.19 [illegible] May 1969
[illegible signature]

For my part I said that if the Chinese did not invite foreign delegations to their

Congress then it again demonstrates what isolation the CPC is in right now. In addition, obviously domestic reasons also did not allow foreigners to be invited to the Congress. The Chinese have nothing to tell Communists from other countries about their achievements, for they have none. Even the small experience of building Communism in China was trampled underfoot and discredited by the group of Mao Zedong.

Then, at the instructions of Moscow [Tsentr] I passed Hoang Van Tien a 29 March statement of the Soviet government about the Chinese provocations on the border with the USSR. I noted that the Soviet government had proposed continuing the 1964 consultations about border questions in spite of the provocations and casualties among our border guards. However, if this manifestation of good will is not accepted and the provocations continue the Soviet people will give a rebuff without vacillating.

I stressed that these border incidents bring only benefit to the imperialists.

I reported that it was relatively quiet on the Soviet-Chinese border since 15 March, but we are not sure that this calm means the end of the provocations.

Noting that the Chinese provocations on the Soviet border preceded the opening of the CPC Congress, I said that now there is no doubt of what goal the group of Mao Zedong had when committing these acts.

[Translator's note: the following two paragraphs were highlighted in the left margin]. Hoang Van Tien, noting that the domestic situation in China is insufficiently clear, he expressed confidence that "the rich revolutionary traditions of the CPC and the Chinese people will lead to the most correct conclusion; truth and a just cause will triumph, and everything that does accord with our ideals will not last long".

Then Hoang Van Tien declared that the Vietnamese people are really pained by the events on the Soviet-Chinese border which are occurring behind the back of the DRV right at the moment when the Vietnamese people are waging a war with American imperialism.

As regards the DRV, said Hoang Van Tien, then here neither the Chinese nor the Soviet material about this question will be published.

Hoang Van Tien expressed the hope that the Soviet-Chinese border conflict will be settled by friendly means and that the Soviet-Chinese border will be a border of friendship. The interlocutor declared that border questions can be favorably decided only on condition of a restrained and calm attitude of both sides.

For my part I stressed that the Soviet side has always displayed restraint and calm in response to the Chinese provocations which have been going on for more than a year.

[Translator's note: the following paragraph was highlighted in the left margin]. Replying to my question, does the DRV have border questions with China, Hoang Van Tien said there are no such disputes, that a procedure has been established between the DRV and PRC for crossing by the border population; in particular people having relatives on the other side of the border can freely cross with the agreement of the border guards.

I informed Hoang Van Tien about information [we] have regarding the recent trip of US Defense Secretary M. Laird to South Vietnam and the report of Secretary of State Rogers in a conversation with the Soviet Ambassador about several questions

touching on US policy in Vietnam.

Hoang Van Tien thanked me for the information.

Then in [my] capacity of doyen of the diplomatic corps I expressed some wishes of the ambassadors of the socialist countries to Hoang Van Tien, in particular: concerning the improvement of information about South Vietnam, the progress of the Paris [peace] talks, the trips of diplomats around the country, servicing of the diplomatic corps, etc.

Hoang Van Tien thanked [me] for the wishes expressed in a comradely spirit, and asked me to pass to the ambassadors that the MFA would regard the solution of these problems with proper attention.

[Dyk Lan], desk officer of the Department of the Soviet Union and Countries of Eastern Europe, and L. Kleymenov, Embassy interpreter, were present at the conversation.

SOVIET AMBASSADOR IN THE DRV

[signature]

(I. SHCHERBAKOV)

One copy printed

- 1 - OYuVA [Department of Southeast Asia]
- 2 - the CPSU CC Department
- 3 - to file

MP N° 501

20 April 1969

tb

[handwritten: 464-ls]