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HANOI AND BEIJING: AMBIGUITIES OF A STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

Abstract. This paper investigates the ambiguities of the Vietnam-China relations. The history of the relations between the two neighboring countries, two sister-countries since the official recognition of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) by the Soviet Union in January 1950, has always been marked by a mixture of mistrust and usefulness among the Vietnamese elites. This article shows that the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV) continues to play a balanced diplomacy between the major powers in the interest of its elites concerned with maintaining their power. China and Vietnam are aware that the renewal of their security partnership will not avoid their disputes in the South China Sea. The modernization of the Vietnamese People's Army (VPA) is intended to demonstrate to the Chinese its ability to inflict damage on the People's Liberation Army (PLA). But in the event of a conflict, Hanoi would only seek to push Beijing back to the status quo as quickly as possible. The SRV does not see itself as the flagship of a future anti-Chinese protest in Southeast Asia, regardless of the expectations of Tokyo or Washington. The Vietnam's leaders know that they are limited in their actions, it is in this ambiguous area that the complexity of the Sino-Vietnamese relations is found since the normalization of relations between the two states in 1991. However, with its multidirectional diplomacy (state, provinces, communities), China is omnipresent in Vietnam, at all levels of its apparatus, and in all sectors. At this stage, alienating China, and its ASEAN partners, would represent a dangerous political choice that Vietnam is not ready to make. The SRV opts for dialogue and long time to manage the future of its relations with China.

Keywords: China, Vietnam, CPC, CPV, global strategic partnerships, security cooperation, White paper, elite.

Introduction

It is difficult to grasp the complexity of the relations between China and Vietnam without accepting the idea of a lack of clearly defined objectives. During their long common history, the Vietnamese and the Chinese have never imagined that their bilateral relations would be perfect. The two states nourish the relations shaped by the successive cycles of their tensions and reunions. Faced with China, one of the features of Vietnamese strategic thinking, developed in the fifteenth century by the scholar Nguyễn Trãi, is the relations made alternately of cooperation and confrontation (*vừa*

hợp tác, vừa đấu tranh). In Vietnam, popular culture is nourished by a double principle of attraction and rejection of China, the country cannot hide the Chinese model in its national construction. China is the Other, it is the invader, but it is also very similar to Vietnam. Even as the Socialist Republic of Vietnam pragmatically sealed in 1991 the normalization of its relations with Beijing after a decade of violence inaugurated by the deadly conflict of 1979, its leaders chose a new approach of “cooperation-fighting” to frame the relations with its large neighbor. For nearly three decades, Vietnam has chosen to use its history to temper the constraints of the current “great pragmatism” that is taking place between China and Southeast Asia. But how can the Vietnamese regime reconcile, on the one hand, a desire to remain in power without much reform and to integrate into global economic network, and, on the other hand, the maintenance of an almost dependent relations with China? This is a quest for a balance that is likely to complicate relations between two neighboring regimes with antagonisms rooted in their popular identities for a long time to come.

Literature review

The research focuses on the numerous factors shaping Vietnam-China relations. Vietnam has always been condemned to a “tyranny of geography” [Thayer 2011], within its relations with China. The “China threat” rhetoric is now common in the literature on international relations [Yee and Storey 2002] but Vietnam’s political discourses have always been uncomfortable to deal with the Chinese, even in the best period of the “communist brotherhood friendship” in the 1950s [de Tréglodé 2012]. The great disparity of size and power between the two countries has always been a factor for the Vietnamese to develop a “rhetoric of the obsession”, and it is almost everywhere in the Vietnamese political discourses since the very first years of the DRV political regime [Womack 2006, Le Hong Hiệp 2017]. Chinese constancy in Vietnam has been understood as the major influence of Chinese culture on Vietnamese culture, as Vietnamese culture was largely based on cultural resources of Chinese origin [Le Huu Khoa 2014: 37]. As a result, the Vietnamese elite as well as their researchers have consistently carried out a supersensitive image of China in order to hide many aspects of the regime. Research on Vietnam—China relations includes historical classics as of Woodside (1971), Chen (1987), and Carl Thayer on the strategic balance between the two states (1994, 2002, 2008, 2011, etc.) or Le Hong Hiep (2017). Besides these works, some researchers, rarer, point out the ambiguous situation in Vietnam today, with the CPV that owes its ideological survival to the CPC and whose elites no longer hesitate to generalize the use of double discourse, one word for Beijing, another for its people, in order to consolidate as a matter of priority its power weakened by opening the country to the world.

This article focuses on the ambiguity of the relations between the two neighboring countries, a grey area to be taken into account in understanding the wide gap between the words of the government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the revival of anti-Chinese patriotism in the population.

Vietnam and the Chinese cultural model

In 1918, the reformist intellectual Phạm Quỳnh (1892—1945) explained in the newspaper *Nam Phong* (Wind from the South) that in the past China was not considered in Vietnam as a country but as a “world” comprising a whole series of distinguished peoples. And thus, for the Vietnamese, language and Chinese culture were more value-based than part of the Chinese political identity. According to Phạm Quỳnh, the universality of this world culture explains why Vietnamese have long felt free to make intellectual, linguistic, and cultural borrowings without fear of losing political

identity. In 1949, Mao Zedong's rise to power in China was a breakthrough in that it challenged the universality of Chinese culture in favour of a nation-centered political definition. Vietnam's systematic and uninterrupted political and cultural borrowing from China over the centuries was paradoxically slowed down by the new internationalist solidarity between the two sister countries. Through their highly centralized functioning, we see that the relations between the Chinese and Vietnamese communist parties have participated in strengthening the already existing nation states. Throughout its history, Vietnam has lived with the specter of Chinese interference. In the spring of 1950, despite the victory represented by the diplomatic recognition of the DRV by the socialist bloc in the wake of the Soviet Union, Ho Chi Minh feared that the Chinese advisors sent to his land by Mao Zedong, on Stalin's order, would take on too much importance in the affairs of the DRV. Ho did not accept the Soviet decision to grant Mao Zedong's China the right to represent the interests of the DRV diplomatically from the China's embassy in Moscow, the case lasted until 1952, despite protests from Vietnamese communists. In 1954, the presence of Chinese military advisors alongside General Võ Nguyên Giáp during the siege of Điện Biên Phủ had long been a state secret. From 1955 to 1975, the management of the "border of friendship", the Sino-Vietnamese overland border, gave rise to many upheavals between the two communist allies. During the Cold War, the Vietnamese communists had a narrow margin of maneuver with Beijing, despite internationalist solidarity.

Since the early 1950s, what has brought the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) together has clearly exceeded their membership of a single ideological movement. Belonging to the communist camp did not prevent tensions (in the 1960s) and wars (in the 1970s and 1980s) during the Cold War. After the border collision of February 1979, the war between the two neighboring states continued until the end of the 1980s. By normalizing their diplomatic relations in 1991, the two states officially wished to turn the page of a painful chapter in their relations. While France and the United States are officially the enemies of its two patriotic wars in the 20th century, the SRV chose not to mention China's role in its February-March 1979 war. On its monuments to the dead, the mention chosen for its martyrs fallen in this conflict is: "battles of the borders" (*Chiến tranh biên giới*). However, a change is taking place. Located in the province of Hà Giang, the cemetery of Vĩ Xuyên occupies a special and growing place in the memory policy of the SRV [Grossheim 2017]. The cemetery gives place to rituals of commemoration organized by the local authorities (town, district, province) but also at the level of the state apparatus¹. Since 2017, while the country's main newspapers, notably the *Nhân dân* (organ of the CPV) continued to remain silent on the anniversary of the February 1979 conflict, the Vietnamese authorities allowed a number of its media (*Tuổi Trẻ*, *Thanh Niên*, *VietnamNet* and *VnExpress*) to commemorate the event. The leaders of the propaganda department (*Ban Tuyên giáo Trung ương*) of the CPV aim for a two-pronged approach as the regime still needs more nationalism to strengthen the state apparatus and the Party's legitimacy in a society opening to the world economy.

China remains a multidimensional challenge for the Vietnamese, a source of ideology, political and strategic ties, an illustration of economic modernity, and a cultural reference. What binds China and Vietnam is a shared vision of power management issues and especially the future of their political institutions. The SRV and the People's Republic of China (PRC) are marked by the same gap between people and leaders. This duality has dominated Vietnamese history from the restoration of independence in the 10th century to the establishment of the communist state in the 20th century. Political elites seek to preserve their monopoly on public affairs; for peoples belonging to both a local and a national communities have always created a distinction between the local and the "higher community" ("the state", according to Karl Marx's formula). These cultural reflexes explain

¹ Interview by the author, Vĩ Xuyên (Hà Giang province), Spring 2018.

why the SRV and the PRC succeed in preserving a certain continuity among their elites [de Tréglodé 2018]. The regular phases of rewriting national history have allowed the political space to deal with the constraints of the time and to strengthen the interests of the nation and its political elites. Conversely, and this is one of the great differences between the two communist regimes, Hanoi and Beijing have never maintained the same relations with the rest of the world. Vietnam identifies itself through its integration on the international scene to better defend itself against China, while the latter continues to play its central role. The Vietnamese do not have the illusion of self-sufficiency, which distinguishes them from the Chinese in this respect.

A global strategic partnership

In 1991, with the disintegration of the Soviet Union and COMECON (the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance or *CЭБ* in Russian), Vietnam, on the occasion of the 7th Congress of the CPV, chose “the diversification and multilateralization of its economic relations with the world (...) so as to become the friend of all countries in the international community” [Nguyen Dy Niên 1995: 32]. By normalizing its relations with China, the SRV knew that the country was choosing a rapid integration on the international arena to avoid depending too much in the short term on its relations with Beijing. To do this, SRV has developed three distinct categories of partnerships: full partnerships (*đối tác toàn diện*); strategic partnerships (*đối tác chiến lược*) and, at the highest level, global strategic partnerships (*đối tác chiến lược toàn diện*). The SRV has signed this type of agreement with only three states: China, Russia, and India. China was the first state to conclude a global strategic partnership with Vietnam (2008) followed by Russia (2012), and India (2016). In the text signed between Beijing and Hanoi on June 1, 2008, the two parties agreed to strengthen, as a matter of priority, their cooperation “in the field of foreign affairs, defense, and national and regional security”. The agreement provides for an acceleration of economic, scientific, technological, cultural, educational relations between the two countries and the promotion of exchanges of youth and social organizations, and their civil societies. In the field of security and defense, the global partnership involves the holding of an annual bilateral defense dialogue and the establishment of sectoral cooperation. The text provides for a dialogue on conflict resolution, particularly in the event of tensions in the South China Sea.

In February 2010, the presentation of the SRV’s Defense White Paper tempered the partnership’s voluntarism. For the first time since the normalization of its relations with Beijing, the SRV explicitly noted in this public document the presence of “a cumbersome neighbor”. China will demand that given the changes in the political and economic environment between the two countries, Vietnam quickly reviews this document. The publication of the new SRV White Paper was initially scheduled for the 12th CPV Congress in January 2016. Nothing has been done and, since that date, the new text has been constantly postponed. At this stage, the leadership team formed around CPV Secretary General Nguyễn Phú Trọng would like to delete this reference. However, the regime should proceed continuously not to give the impression to the population that the RSVN is too close to Beijing. The political system of the SRV and the PRC are very similar, including the way they operate, and the profile of their elites (political and economic). When Vietnam organizes its CPV congresses, the leaders get into the habit of consulting the CPC. When a decision is difficult for the authorities to make, as was the case in November 2017 with the arrest of the Politburo member Đinh La Thăng, the SRV turns to Beijing. Each new institutional reform in China is carefully studied by the Vietnamese who reflect on how to adapt these texts. For example, the draft law on associations presented to the Vietnamese National Assembly in 2016 was an almost literal translation of a Chinese decree on the same subject. Similarly, the reform of the PLA is the subject of an in-depth study

in Vietnamese headquarters [Genevaz, 2016]. Despite regular tensions in the South China Sea, leaders show that the country is ready to turn to China, especially when it comes to anticorruption campaigns and state reform. Vietnam claims its filiation with the Chinese model in terms of political and economic transition. Beijing's economic successes are envied by Hanoi for having enabled "the Chinese population to have access to modern mass production and consumption" [Vu Doan Kêt, Salomon 2006: 244]. The country, they say, is no longer in a position to oppose the CPC directly, Vietnam must now deal with the renewal of Chinese centrality while "avoiding at all costs falling into a situation of conflict, isolation or dependence" vis-à-vis Beijing.

China and Vietnamese political elites

While the question of relations between the Chinese and Vietnamese communist parties is not new, from the ideological exchanges of the 1930s between the two communist parties to the organizational overhaul of the DRV by the PRC at the turn of the 1950s, these channels of exchange are essential to understanding their relations today. In both Vietnam and China, foreign ministries occupy a secondary position. Traditionally, the SRV has a stronger penchant for the track approach in its exchanges with Beijing, more informal and faster than diplomatic channels. In the early 1950s, the CPC and the CPV established an international liaison department within the CPC and the Labor Party (name of the CPV from 1951 to 1976). Under the aegis of the Central Committee of the two parties, the structure was responsible for its external relations, and more particularly, relations with the Soviet Union and sister party disputes.

Seventy years later, intraparty dialogue still predominates when it comes to managing relations with what remains of the former sister countries (Vietnam, China, North Korea, Cuba). The international liaison departments of the two parties are organized around geographical directorates (Europe, Asia, America, etc.) made up of teams of "diplomat-researchers" who are asked to think "with complete independence of mind and to produce policy papers devoid of any wooden language"¹. In practice since the 1950s, the bilateral relations between China and Vietnam have been dealt with mainly at this level [Gitter-Kania 2017]. The management of states' foreign affairs is also a matter of political apparatus and bureaucratic organization. The forms of Vietnamese communism organization have been characterized from the beginning by their flexibility, pragmatism, and discontinuities. Party technocrats, rather than diplomats, manage the bilateral relations with the Chinese authorities in a more flexible way and organizational specificity that continues to define the ties between the two states.

Since the 12th CPV Congress (January 2016), Vietnam's political leadership has wished to reassess its partnership with China. Beijing did not hide its satisfaction when it saw the end of the era of the former Prime Minister Nguyễn Tấn Dũng with whom relations had been strained at the end of his second term (2011—2016). In Vietnam, no leader is firmly "pro-China" or "pro-U.S.", but there are notable differences in the strategies to be adopted to balance relations with China and the United States. These appear as the main dividing line in the factional divisions structuring the political and administrative apparatus. The most conservative leaders tend to believe that the primacy of relations with China can help defuse crises. Nguyễn Tấn Dũng had been very critical of China and had seen the TPP (Transpacific Partnership Agreement) as a strategic tool to keep the U.S. engaged in the region and not just as a trade agreement (However, it has been estimated that the TPP would have boosted Vietnam's GDP by 11 %, or nearly 36 billion dollars, and increased exports by 28 % over the next decade [IRASEC 2019: 104]. But more ideologically close to Beijing, Nguyễn Phú Trọng preferred to emphasize a common history and socialist solidarity. In 2017, political realism and the we-

¹ Interview by the author, Beijing (China), Winter 2017.

ight of geographical factors finally led the Vietnamese authorities to join the China's new One Belt, One Road project (OBOR) [Aoyama 2016] while formalizing with the Guangxi and Yunnan authorities its development triangle Hai Phong Nanning and Lao Cai [Do Tien Sam, Ha Thi Hong Van 2009]. With the success of its economic policy and international integration over the past thirty years, SRV diplomacy has become more confident. The "Chinese threat" still exists for the Vietnamese, but it now reinforces their desire to get closer to China. SRV believes that waiting longer would mean negotiating with an even stronger country. In Beijing, the political power is determined to accompany the economic development of the Vietnamese as long as the regime does not go beyond the red line that would represent too great a political liberalization of the Hanoi regime. To avoid a "color revolution" on its southern border, Beijing is ready to play the economic weapon. Vietnamese have already lived through several boycotts of their products (usually trucks full of perishable goods blocked at the border) to punish them for political disagreement with China.

Sino-Vietnamese Security Cooperation

The resumption of political dialogue was naturally accompanied in the 1990s by strengthening of trade ties and a rapprochement of the diplomatic positions of the two countries on the international arena. At this stage, Xi Jinping's China is focusing on reviving its defense cooperation with Southeast Asia [Suehiro 2017]. While for the Vietnamese leaders the "Chinese threat" has not disappeared from their minds [Storey & Yee 2002], we must ask ourselves why China is seeking at all costs to improve its defense relations with the SRV? And yet if one positions oneself on the side of Vietnam, from the victory of Bạch Đằng in 1288 against the Mongols led by the general Trần Hưng Đạo to the 1979 border offensive, the myth of the beautiful hours of Asymmetrical Wars against China has lasted a long time. But the recent modernization of China People's Liberation Army is, however, weakening this myth. In the event of an open conflict, the Vietnamese general staff admits that the VPAN would no longer be able to resist the Chinese army. Based on this observation, Vietnam's leadership considers it preferable not to provoke the anger of Beijing. Several factors explain this paradigm shift. The SRV no longer believes in the intervention of a third country (i.e. the United States) in the South China Sea to counter Chinese advances. In the end, Vietnam will have to reach an agreement with China to find a solution, and that will take time [Vuving 2006]. Faced with such uncertainties, Vietnam's leaders have chosen to modernize the army and its defense budget has increased — according to estimates, from 1,287 billion in 2006 to 5,017 billion in 2016, an increase of 390 %, the official budget is secret [Noget 2018: 107].

A plurality of factors explains the revival of security cooperation between China and Vietnam since the Chinese oil extraction platform crisis (May-June 2014). As the first step, Hanoi needs to increase security cooperation on its northern borders as rapidly growing Chinese smuggling represents a danger to its economy. In January 2017, the two defense ministers (Generals Ngô Xuân Lịch and Chang Wanquan) signed in Beijing a joint vision statement on defense cooperation until 2025 in the presence of Nguyễn Phú Trọng and Xi Jinping. This type of document is primarily of political value. The VPA and the PLAC have 66 hotlines to exchange and manage their disputes. From an operational point of view, the results are more modest. Cooperation has indeed been established between the units of the two armies, but for the moment, mainly in the shared waters of the Gulf of Tonkin [de Tréglodé 2016]. On their overland border, Hanoi and Beijing organized their 4th joint counterterrorism exercise in 2017 in Lai Châu province (Vietnamese side) and Yunnan (Chinese side). But the security dimension of the exercise explains why its command was attributed to the police forces; the armies were only involved in support with two specialized units of their special operations forces. The cooperation sought by the PRC in counterterrorism is first and foremost

part of the Chinese law enforcement apparatus deployed by the PRC around the world to combat its “Uighur terrorism” [Abuza 2017]. In 2015—2016, Vietnamese police arrested and sent back to China between 10 and 20 Uighurs. This cooperative dynamic is more applicable in the multilateral field. Within ADMM+ (ASEAN Enlarged Defense Ministers Conference) in particular, China invites Vietnam to participate in several working groups focusing on nontraditional security issues, such as climate change (tsunamis, typhoons, and floods), defense of the marine environment, or transnational crime (piracy, human trafficking, etc.).

But while such cooperation is increasing, it is showing its limits, as Chinese and Vietnamese representatives continue to face problems of trust (confidence-building). Security convergence between China and Vietnam is developing for reasons of internal policies that are leading both states for more strict control of their populations. Security in cyberspace and the control of popular dissent is a new area of bilateral cooperation. The CPC and the CPV believe that skilfully orchestrated nationalism strengthens the political system. In Vietnam, the authorities allow a group of ultranationalists (the Red Flag movement), very active in the provinces of Nghệ An and Hà Tĩnh, to act and attack violently antisystem opponents (Catholics, political dissidents, activists) [de Tréglodé 2018: 115]. Like Xi Jinping, Vietnam’s leaders believe that society 2.0 is “a challenge to the sovereignty and security of countries,” and that this requires more political control. In December 2017, the SRV created Force 47, a new structure of 10,000 VPA soldiers to monitor deviant content on the Internet [Nguyễn Thụy Phương: 10.01.2018]. This new force is in addition to the A42 unit of the Ministry of Public Security in charge of controlling telecommunications resources in collaboration with the GD2 (General Directorate II), the intelligence service of the Ministry of Defense. At the present stage, China is pleased to have a strong regime on its southern border, generally in favour of its cause, and capable of supervising its population.

The Arms Procurement Factor; the United States, China, and Vietnam

Like the other countries of Southeast Asia, Vietnam has difficulty positioning itself during the two first years of Donald Trump’s presidency. One of the features of Vietnam’s diplomacy is to react little and wait to see how others position themselves. Vietnam has long maintained an emotional relationship with the United States, before the economic and then strategic dimensions dominated the bilateral relations. China’s affirmation on the international arena inevitably led Hanoi to move closer to Washington. Nevertheless, in keeping with its policy of balancing the major powers, Vietnam is still assessing the United States’ position in Asia-Pacific Region in terms of the future of its relations with Beijing. Faced with China, with whom Vietnam has a constrained and complicated historical relations, Hanoi maintains a policy of balance; there is no question of choosing. The SRV systematically keeps China informed of the progress in its relations with Washington in order to prevent its “Great Neighbor to the North” from giving a strategic interpretation to this normalization¹. China is not really worried that Vietnam will rebalance its relations with the United States. Thus, when Washington announced in May 2016, the lifting of its arms embargo with Vietnam, Beijing did not bother to comment on the event. It is of course not certain that the Chinese government will have the same appreciation if the VPA buys large war materiel from the Americans (combat aircraft, tanks, missile defense systems, etc.), but Hanoi does not seem ready to take such a political risk; the SRV prefers to maintain its military partnership with the Russians, which does not hinder the Chinese. However, some will argue that Beijing’s lack of official reaction is primarily linked to its new objectives in the field of defense cooperation with Vietnam, within the framework of its

¹ Interview by the author, Singapore, Spring 2019.

overall strategic partnership. Despite their maritime differences, China understands Vietnam's need to modernize its military apparatus. In China's military circles the issue of the sale of arms and military hardware to Vietnam is no longer just a taboo issue, but also appears to be a new objective for the PRC in its relations with Southeast Asian countries [Laksmana 2018: 110]. This approach is intended to demonstrate the degree of confidence that characterizes China's ambitious new security architecture project. China has so far sold few weapons to its neighbors, but the trend is reversing, as shown by China's recent contracts with Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines. The arms market is mainly in Russian hands in Vietnam, but Beijing, convinced of the growing quality of its products, and of its advantages in terms of price, interoperability and above all its political noninterference (as long as China's interests are not directly at stake), has begun to discuss it with Hanoi, and the issue no longer seems to bother the SRV Ministry of Defense. But in case of the possible turmoil surrounding the issue, China considers this preparatory round of discussion to be an element included in the global framework of its policy of rebalancing its strategic relations in the region. The first question for Hanoi is, therefore, whether Beijing's ambitions could be successful in the South China Sea, if the United States were to gradually withdraw from the region¹.

Conclusion

In Vietnam, the leaders prefer to believe that Beijing does not want to weaken their regime, the interest is first of all to preserve a sustainable and reliable Vietnam. The Chinese and Vietnamese do not hide that what they share is for the moment superior to their differences. In practice, the SRV is obliged to follow China's progress while preserving its national interests as much as possible. No one can predict how the strategic partnership between the two countries will evolve. China's policy toward the South China Sea has not changed, but it is the strategy of China evolving. The approach is now more collaborative. But by displaying a "diplomacy of cooperation", Beijing does not lose sight of its national interests. The Chinese and Vietnamese are aware that the renewal of their defense and security exchanges will not resolve their maritime disputes in the near future. But we can already see that the SRV is trying to avoid taking a direct lead in opposition to China. The Vietnamese do not see themselves as flag-bearers of a future anti-Chinese protest in the South China Sea, whatever the expectations of Tokyo or Washington. The Vietnamese know they are limited in their actions. With its diplomacy at several levels (state, province, community), China is omnipresent in the country, at all levels of its apparatus, and in all sectors. At this stage, the risk of offending the Chinese, and other regional partners, is a dangerous political step that the Vietnamese are not prepared to take. The SRV opts for dialogue and a long period of time to manage the future of its relations with China.

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¹ A survey published in January 2019 shows that "Southeast Asia has major doubts about US reliability in the region. More than 68 % of those canvassed lack confidence in the US as a "strategic partner and provider of regional security. But there is also the recognition of Beijing as the unstoppable force it has become, amid an increasing realization that resistance is futile" [Mc Dermid: 7.01.2019].

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ХАНОЙ И ПЕКИН: НЕОПРЕДЕЛЕННОСТИ СТРАТЕГИЧЕСКОГО ПАРТНЁРСТВА

Аннотация. В этой статье рассмотрены неясности вьетнамско-китайских отношений. История отношений между двумя соседними «братскими странами» с момента официального признания Советским Союзом в январе 1950 г. Демократической Республики Вьетнам (ДРВ) всегда была отмечена смесью недоверия к Китаю вьетнамских элит и осознания пользы этих отношений. Автор статьи заявляет, что Социалистическая Республика Вьетнам (СРВ) продолжает в интересах своих элит, пекущихся о сохранении власти, вести дипломатическую игру в целях соблюдения баланса между великими державами. Китай и Вьетнам знают, что возобновление партнерства в области безопасности не решит их споров о Южно-Китайском море. Модернизация Вьетнамской народной армии призвана продемонстрировать китайцам способность нанести ущерб Народно-освободительной армии Китая. Но в случае конфликта Ханой будет стремиться как можно быстрее вернуть Пекин в статус-кво. СРВ не считает себя флагманом будущего антикитайского сопротивления в Юго-Восточной Азии, невзирая на ожидания Токио или Вашингтона. Вьетнамские лидеры знают, что они ограничены в своих действиях, и именно в этой неоднозначности заключается сложность китайско-вьетнамских отношений с момента их нормализации в 1991 г. Однако со своей многоуровневой дипломатией (на уровне государства, провинций, общин) Китай вездесущ во Вьетнаме, он присутствует на всех этапах его аппарата и во всех секторах. На данном этапе отчуждение партнеров по АСЕАН от КНР представляло бы собой опасный политический выбор, который Вьетнам не готов сделать. СРВ на долгое время своих отношений с Китаем выбирает диалог.

Ключевые слова: Китай, Вьетнам, КПК, КПВ, глобальные стратегические партнерства, сотрудничество в сфере безопасности, Белая книга, элиты.

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