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TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR STUDY ON THE STRENGTH
CAPABILITIES AND STRATEGIC INTENTIONS OF
THE VIETNAMESE COMMUNISTS

May 66

THE PROBLEM

Taking the DRV, the PAVN and the Viet Cong movement in South Vietnam as component parts of a single whole directed and controlled by the Politburo of the Lao Dong Party in Hanoi, and within this conceptual framework:

(1) To assess the Vietnamese Communists' total military and political strength;

(2) To assess their capabilities for sustaining their campaign of insurgent pressure in South Vietnam against

(a) Present levels of U.S., allied and GVN force commitment;

(b) Increased U.S., allied and GVN force commitments presently planned or programmed;

(3) Assess the Vietnamese Communists' intentions in the broad sense of gauging their will or determination to persevere in their present strategy of armed insurrection involving the extensive application of military force;

(4) To identify those areas of physical vulnerability or attitude--i.e., "pressure points"--which could affect the Vietnamese Communists' overall will or determination to persevere in the struggle.

OBJECT

The purpose of this study is to frame an assessment of the struggle in South Vietnam as it is seen in Communist eyes to serve as the basis for an assessment of the Communist strategic intentions and their degree of confidence in their present strategy. In essence, the study will constitute an effort to compile the best

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possible body of factual evidence and interpretive analysis to clarify the central issue of Communist morale, will and determination at all levels--from all echelons of the PAVN/VC force structure engaged in combat in South Vietnam to the Lao Dong Politburo in Hanoi.

TIME FRAME

This study will focus on Communist intentions and attitudes through the late spring of 1967, i.e., from the present time through one complete campaign cycle.

RELATED WORKS

This study will be complementary to and will draw on the findings of three other works presently in train:

(1) NIE 14.3-66: "North Vietnamese Military Potential for Fighting in South Vietnam," due for USIB consideration by mid-June 1966.

(2) A CIA/ORR analysis of "Enemy Logistics Within South Vietnam" which will be completed in time for its results to be incorporated in this study.

(3) A CIA/ORR analysis of "The Present Functioning and Mobilization Potential of the North Vietnamese Economy," which also will be completed in time for its results to be incorporated in this study.

QUESTIONS BEARING ON THE PROBLEM

Resources and Capabilities

1. What are the total resources (manpower, economic, hardware, etc.) available to the Vietnamese Communists for commitment to their insurgency campaign?

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- a. Resources available within North Vietnam.
 - b. Resources available in Laos.
 - c. Resources available to the Communists within South Vietnam.
 - d. Resources not available within North or South Vietnam but presently supplied by Communist allies (e.g., SAMs, aircraft, 7.62 mm ammunition, etc.).
2. What Communist resources have already been committed to the insurgency campaign?
3. Resource requirement analysis:
- a. Net marginal availability of required resources.
 - b. Net marginal resupply capability (with analysis adjusted to account for stockpiles and caches).
 - c. Net in-country (South Vietnam) resupply and support capability.
4. What are the combat capabilities of Vietnamese Communist forces?
- a. What will be the influence on such capabilities of--or the limits imposed by such capabilities on--variations in the level or intensity of combat?
 - b. How will these capabilities be affected by variations in the size or strength of opposing forces (U. S., allied and GVN)?
5. What are the Communists' capabilities for political subversion in South Vietnam?
- a. Indigenous manpower resources available.

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- b. Potency of Communist propaganda themes.
- c. Effectiveness of the Communist political apparatus.
- d. The extent and nature of Communist influence over the South Vietnamese rural population.
- e. The net political effect of urban ferment and unrest and degree of Communist participation therein.

Other Factors

- 6. What is the influence and net effect of the Soviet and Communist Chinese involvement with the Vietnamese Communists' campaign?
- 7. How do the Vietnamese Communists assess the effect on their plans and capabilities of such factors as the international political climate, U. S. domestic politics, Cambodian attitudes, and the public posture of the National Liberation Front?
- 8. What is the Vietnamese Communists' overall assessment of where they now are in their campaign compared with where (in, say, 1959) they wanted or expected to be in the spring of 1966? How are they influenced by comparisons made with or lessons learned from the Franco-Viet Minh war of 1946-1954?
- 9. What is the Vietnamese Communists' near term political and military strategy? What are their goals and objectives during the remainder of 1966? During the first half of 1967?
- 10. What is the state of Vietnamese Communist morale? How is the course of the war regarded and what strategic or policy differences or frictions exist within the Vietnamese Communist movement at all levels including:

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- a. Viet Cong sympathizers in South Vietnam.
 - b. Viet Cong partisans and irregulars.
 - c. Viet Cong village and district forces.
 - d. Viet Cong provincial forces.
 - e. Viet Cong regional forces.
 - f. PAVN forces in South Vietnam.
 - g. The PRP hierarchy in South Vietnam.
 - h. The NLF hierarchy in South Vietnam.
 - i. The Communists' major tactical headquarters (COSVN--and, perhaps, MRV) in South Vietnam.
 - j. The PAVN in North Vietnam.
 - k. The Lao Dong apparatus, in North Vietnam.
 - l. The North Vietnamese people.
 - m. The Lao Dong Politburo.
11. At what physical or psychological points are the Communists most vulnerable to externally applied pressures? This would include an analysis of the total effect and implications of:
- a. Casualties.
 - b. Desertions.
 - c. Physical damage (e.g., to North Vietnamese industrial installations).
 - d. Stockpiles and weapons losses.
 - e. Denial or interdiction of infiltration/logistic routes.

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12. Taking all factors and available evidence into account, what conclusions can be drawn or estimates made concerning the Vietnamese Communists' strategic intentions, their confidence in victory, and their determination to persevere?

APPENDIX

Attached to the main study and its supporting statistical analyses and tables will be an historical appendix reviewing the Asian (particularly Chinese) Communist attitude and practice on negotiations. This will include an analysis of the fight/talk/fight/talk sequence of the Communists' relations with the Nationalists (KMT) during the 1930's and 1940's and a detailed examination of the Korean experience in 1952 and 1953 and the Vietnamese experience in 1954. The focus of this study will be a quest for indicators: objective elements in a politico/military situation which, in the past, have impelled the Communists to negotiate, and signals emitted when they are on the verge of adopting a negotiating tactic.

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