

The Effects of the Imposition of
a Quarantine on North Vietnam
July 1969

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*The Effects of the Imposition
of a Quarantine on North Vietnam*

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MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: The Effects of the Imposition of a Quarantine on North Vietnam

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I. SCOPE, WORKING ASSUMPTIONS, AND GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. This memorandum constitutes our reply to the request that we assess the probable effects of imposing a quarantine on North Vietnam. In the preparation of this memorandum, a "quarantine" was construed to mean closing the port of Haiphong by mining and/or blockade. In preparing this reply, we have made the working assumption that whatever the means employed, access to the port is denied to both ocean-going and coastal shipping. We have also made the working assumption that this quarantine is carried out without any effort to interdict the key land lines of communication connecting North Vietnam and Communist China, i.e., the roads, air routes and two major rail lines.

2. This memorandum analyzes the probable impact of such a quarantine on North Vietnam and the probable reactions to its imposition on the part of the North Vietnamese, the Chinese Communists, the Soviets, the South Vietnamese, other Asians, the British and other West Europeans. As indicated in the outline above, the analysis begins with an examination of North Vietnam's dependence on imports, its current reserves and its present stockpiles of goods not domestically manufactured. We then examine the logistical alternatives to seaborne imports open to North Vietnam and countermeasures it would be physically possible for Hanoi to initiate to offset the impact of a quarantine. Since the major logistical alternatives to seaborne imports require extensive Chinese Communist assistance and support, we analyze in some detail the potential burden to China and the potential economic costs a quarantine would impose on North Vietnam.

3. After examining what might be called the physical impact and consequences of the imposition of a quarantine, the memorandum attempts to assess the probable political reactions of the North Vietnamese, the Soviets, the Chinese Communists, the South Vietnamese, other Asians, and non-bloc Western Europeans.

4. Given the many complexities and interacting elements of the problem we were asked to address, it

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is hard to set forth any summary conclusions that do not have the ring of ex cathedra judgments. Our data and evidence make it quite clear that a closure of the port of Haiphong would disrupt North Vietnam's seaborne trade and force an extensive revamping of normal transport arrangements. The evidence available also demonstrates that the disruption to North Vietnam's import patterns would be severe. Nonetheless, as explained in detail in the body of this memorandum, the evidence also indicates that if the Chinese Communists provide the necessary cooperation and support--at levels well within China's present physical capabilities--North Vietnam could make the adjustments necessary to sustain its war-making potential within two or three months. The maintenance of necessary import levels without the current seaborne routes would be more costly than are present arrangements, but the evidence shows that the necessary added effort would, of itself, not be likely to become a major burden to Hanoi or its Communist allies.

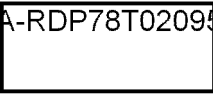
5. As outlined in detail in section III below, North Vietnam's reserves of vital economic and military goods appear more than adequate to weather the necessary readjustment period. Enough transport equipment seems available so that by utilizing alternate railroad and water connections with Communist China, Hanoi has a capacity to handle import traffic levels almost three times greater than current requirements. In short--to compress a lot of detailed evidence and analysis into one summary sentence--the closing of Haiphong would not be likely to have a major impact on Hanoi's material capabilities to carry on the war unless China decided to deny its overland routes to supplies destined for North Vietnam, including supplies from Eastern Europe and the USSR.

6. The political reactions of the various parties that would be affected by, involved in or concerned with the imposition of a quarantine are even more complex and difficult to analyze than the quarantine's physical impact. To avoid the distortion inherent in conclusions divorced from their supporting evidence and analysis, we will not attempt to set forth summary judgments on these questions of probable reactions but, instead, refer the reader to the full discussion set forth in this memorandum's Section VII.

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II. North Vietnamese Dependence on Imports

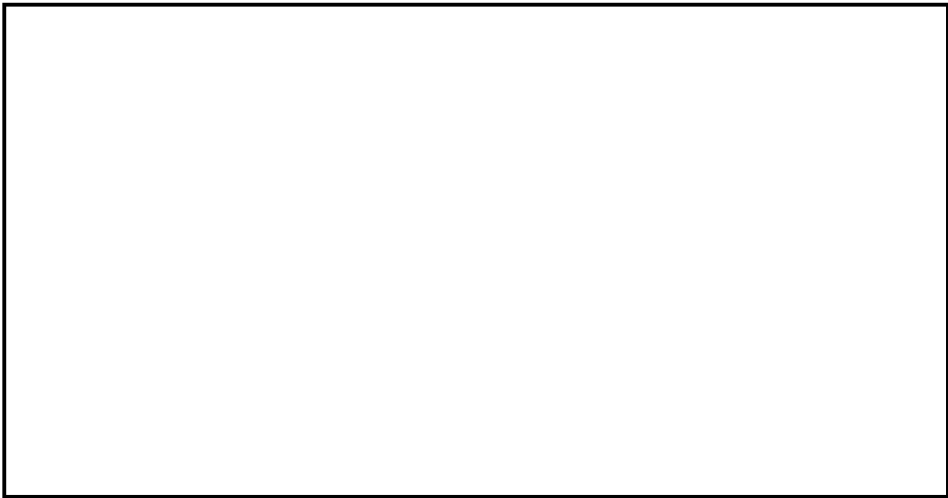
7. The limited size of its modern economy and the fact that it has always been a food-deficit country have made North Vietnam highly dependent on imports. This dependence has increased greatly during the war because North Vietnam has had to rely almost completely on external sources for combat materiel and has had to divert large amounts of manpower to nonproductive, war-related activities.

Import Burden

Level of Imports

8. North Vietnamese imports during the 12 months ending in June 1969 totaled 2.2 million tons. Most of this traffic -- about 85 percent of total imports -- was brought in through the port of Haiphong. Although rail imports amounted to only a small share of the total, rail transport is of particular significance as the principal channel for the import of combat materiel.

9. Estimated seaborne imports for the period 1 July 1968 - 30 June 1969 are shown in the following tabulation:



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10. Estimates of rail imports by North Vietnam are much more tenuous than those for seaborne imports. On the basis of rather limited evidence, we estimate that rail imports ~~for the period~~ *in 1971 omitted to rough* 1 July 1968 - 30 June 1969 were on the order of ~~300,000~~ *275,000* tons, of which only about ~~50,000~~ *55,000 (?)* tons were combat materiel. The information that is available indicates that rail imports,

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particularly of military goods, have declined since April 1968. The decline is due in part to the reduced requirements for military aid after the US bombing program was restricted in March 1968 and finally halted in October. More recently we have also seen indications that some goods previously shipped from the USSR by rail are now being shipped by sea.

11. More than 97 percent of North Vietnam's imports are from Communist countries. The USSR provides the greater share -- 44 percent -- of these imports. The Soviets provide about one-third of North Vietnam's imports of foodstuffs, almost all of its imports of petroleum, and about one-half of its imports of fertilizers. The USSR also provided about 40 percent of North Vietnam's imports of general cargoes such as construction materials, industrial machinery, metal products, and transportation equipment. Communist China accounts for almost 40 percent of North Vietnam's imports. China's trade with North Vietnam is dominated by foodstuffs which accounted for almost three-fourths of the volume of seaborne imports from China. China also provides substantial imports of industrial machinery, construction materials, and transport equipment. North Vietnamese economic imports from Free World countries are dominated by fertilizer imports -- mostly from Japan -- and by timber imports from Cambodia.

12. North Vietnamese seaborne imports have reached record totals because of sharp increases in imports of foodstuffs and petroleum. During the past 12 months, for example, imports of petroleum were about 2.5 times their 1965 level. Imports of foodstuffs show an even greater increase, being some seven times greater than they were in 1965.

Foodstuffs

13. North Vietnam's domestic output of rice has declined steadily from 3.0 million tons of polished rice in 1965 to 2.5 million tons in 1968. Output in 1969 should be somewhat higher, barring unforeseen circumstances, but a dramatic increase is not expected. Although an effort has been made to increase the production of subsidiary foodstuffs, it is doubtful that a significant increase was

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achieved, because many of the same factors that adversely affected rice production would have affected subsidiary crops.

14. While domestic rice production has fallen since 1965 by about 15 percent, the North Vietnamese population has increased by about 5 percent. In addition, the war effort has required more and harder work -- thus requiring a greater intake of calories. To fill the widening gap, North Vietnam has been forced to increase imports of foodstuffs substantially. Imports of foodstuffs by sea increased from about 120,000 tons and 80,000 tons in 1965 and 1966, respectively, to about 460,000 tons in 1967 and to more than 890,000 tons for the year ending June 1969. Imported foodstuffs now supply one-fifth of the estimated total calories consumed by the North Vietnamese. With per capita food consumption at close to minimum levels, the continued accessibility to food imports is essential for the maintenance of the population's health and productive capacity.

Petroleum

15. Seaborne imports of petroleum during the past year totaled about 333,000 tons. Almost 85 percent of the petroleum imports originated in the USSR and 95 percent were delivered by sea. The high level of consumption of petroleum during the past year reflects the intensity of military activity and the greater use of trucks, construction equipment, and marine craft.

Military Imports

16. There is little hard evidence with which to quantify precisely the current level of North Vietnam's imports of military goods. Historically, however, there has been sufficient information [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] to permit estimates of the volume of military imports, and these estimates have proved to be compatible with other intelligence occasionally obtained from collateral sources. In addition, the intelligence community estimates that all of North Vietnam's imports of combat materiel and major items of military hardware are

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delivered by rail rather than by sea. Large amounts of war-supporting materiel such as trucks and petroleum do, however, enter North Vietnam through the port of Haiphong.

17. Imports of combat materiel, ammunition, and missiles during the past twelve months have decreased from previous levels because of the reduced requirements for military goods needed for defense of North Vietnam against US bombing attacks.

18. By the end of 1968, adjustments to the cessation of the US bombing of North Vietnam had probably been completed, and imports of military equipment are now estimated to be at relatively constant levels, although well below the level of the first half of 1968. The high level of attacks flown by US aircraft in the Panhandle of North Vietnam between 1 April and 31 October and the continued attacks against Laos after the 1 November bombing halt indicate a relatively constant North Vietnamese requirement, so that imports of military goods such as ammunition have probably remained fairly stable during 1969. With the limited evidence on hand we estimate that in volume terms deliveries of military goods have probably leveled off at an annual rate of some 50,000 tons.

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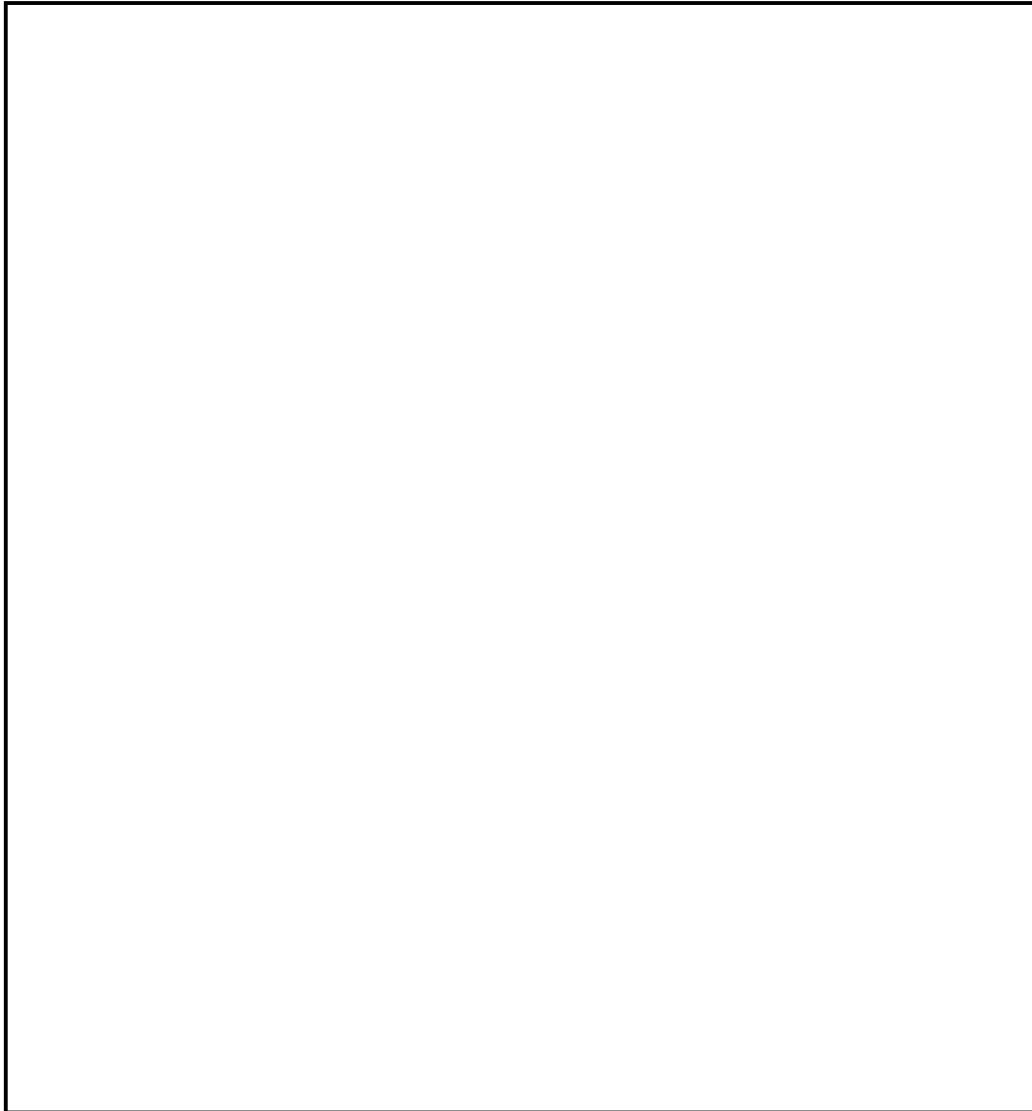
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III. Reserves and Stockpiles

19. There is little direct intelligence to permit any precise quantification of North Vietnam's reserves of essential economic goods or its stockpiles of military goods. The information that is available [however] supports a general conclusion that [with but few exceptions] the supplies of economic and military goods are adequate to satisfy requirements for a period of at least several months.

Economic Goods



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of Haiphong and replaced by incoming construction materials. Turnover of foodstuffs since November 1968 has been high, and turnover of most of the other cargo [redacted] has been at a relatively higher pace than before the 1 November bombing cessation.

22. With the principal exception of construction materials, we estimate that North Vietnam has adequate stockpiles of economic goods. Food supplies are currently at a high level because of the recent harvest of the fifth-month rice crop. The industrial equipment needed for restoring and/or maintaining industrial output has been imported during 1969 in increasing amounts, and [redacted] in May 1969 [redacted] a variety of industrial equipment and materials on hand. A high level of petroleum imports and a well developed dispersed storage system also point to the availability of adequate supplies of petroleum.

Supplies of Foodstuffs

23. There is no direct intelligence on the stockpiles of foodstuffs in North Vietnam. It is apparent, however, that supplies of rice are usually abundant immediately after the two rice harvests in May-June and October-November. Moreover, some subsidiary crops that are harvested between the rice harvests help to take up the slack as rice supplies are depleted. With no measurable carryover of foodstuffs before the 1968 tenth-month rice harvest, a food balance, based on estimated production, imports, and consumption, shows the following changes in food reserves during 1969:

	Thousand Tons						
	1969						
	Dec 1968	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Carried over	1,900	1,640	1,355	1,065	795	505	225
Production	--	--	--	--	--	--	1,600 a/
Imports	100	75	70	90	70	80	90
Available	2,000	1,715	1,425	1,155	865	585	1,915
Consumption	360	360	360	360	360	360	360
Balance	1,640	1,355	1,065	795	505	225	1,555

a. Including both rice and subsidiary food crops.

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24. Although the levels of any reserve supplies based on this estimated balance are subject to a considerable margin of error, the trend indicated would appear to be valid.

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support the estimate that food supplies were low before the rice harvest in May 1969. Before the harvests, food supplies are at low levels -- possibly as little as one month's supply. Between harvests the import of foodstuffs offsets to some extent the rate of the drawdown of total stocks. If the import of food were cut off, the stocks on hand would be more quickly drawn down and supplies could reach dangerously low levels a few months before the harvest. The denial of food imports would be more critical during the first half of the year because of the longer growing season required by the fifth-month rice crop because of less favorable weather conditions.

25. North Vietnam has consistently been an importer of foodstuffs, the amount varying annually depending primarily on the fortunes of the rice harvest. Thus, good or normal harvests in 1965 permitted a reduction of imports in 1966, and subsequent poor crops called for heavy increases in import levels, as shown in the following tabulation:

	Thousand Tons				
	1965	1966	1967	1968	Jan-May 1969
Imports (foods)	120	80	460	790	385
Production (milled rice)	3,000	2,800	2,700	2,500	800

26. Estimates of rice production are admittedly tenuous. North Vietnam has not published production data on food crops since 1963. Although much of the discussion on agriculture in official publications and in periodicals refers to yields and goals for crop output, there are no published data concerning the acreage under cultivation to specific food crops. Therefore, the two annual rice crops are

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estimated relative to an average and relative to the crop of the previous year from statements by representatives of the regime concerning the progress of the crops and of the harvest as well as relative to weather conditions as we know them to have been. These estimates have generally been confirmed subsequently by levels of food imports.

27. Consumption of foodstuffs in North Vietnam has been closely rationed since the Communists took over. The basic ration for rice has remained relatively constant over the years, but the amount of rice available has varied and the percentage of substitutes has increased since 1965. Any shortfall in annual production of food and in the volume of imports therefore becomes rather critical within a few months because relatively little further belt-tightening can be done.

Supplies of Petroleum

28. On the basis of North Vietnam's imports of petroleum during the past year and estimates of consumption patterns, we estimate that the stocks of petroleum currently on hand total about 100,000 tons, equal to about 100 days of supply at the estimated 1968 consumption rate.

29. To keep stockpiles at these levels the North Vietnamese have maintained a highly diversified system of dispersed storage sites. This system includes more than 150 storage sites with an estimated capacity of at least 60,000 tons. In addition, an estimated 400,000 petroleum drums are now dispersed throughout North Vietnam. Finally, the North Vietnamese have recently begun to restore some of these bulk petroleum storage tanks in Hanoi and Haiphong. By June 1969 these restored facilities had an estimated storage capacity of 37,000 tons.

Industrial Supplies and Equipment

30. Scattered references to stockpiling of industrial equipment and supplies indicate that sufficient levels are on hand to meet North Vietnam's requirements for several months. Although current consumption requirements are difficult to gauge, the large amount of such goods in known storage and

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distribution areas and the North Vietnamese ability to adapt quickly to local shortages caused by the distribution system indicate sufficient stockpiling throughout the country. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] There has been no appreciable change in the amount of goods known to be stored during 1969.

Construction Supplies and Equipment

31. Most supplies for use in construction appear to be inadequate, although stockpiles of construction equipment and structural steel appear sufficient. Numerous articles critical of the progress of the construction industry have appeared in the North Vietnamese press since the beginning of the year. Domestic production of building materials such as bricks, tiles, and cement has not kept up with increased construction requirements resulting from the bombing years. Cement production, for example, is estimated to have been only about 100,000 tons for the first five months of 1969, and observed seaborne imports have added only 10,000 tons. Consumption of cement for a comparable period in 1965 and 1966 was equal to about 230,000 tons.

32. The shortage of construction materials may account, in part, for the slow pace in reconstruction activity since the bombing halt. Large amounts of construction equipment, such as cranes, bulldozers, graders, rollers, and compressors, however, have been consistently noted at Haiphong and other major storage areas. Some of this equipment has remained in the areas up to six months before being distributed. A rallier also reported seeing large amounts of structural steel in areas between Hanoi and Phu Ly in late 1968, much of which had lain unprotected for a sufficient time to become badly rusted.

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Military Goods

33. Since the bombing halt, the Communists have undertaken a major supply movement into the Southern Panhandle of North Vietnam using available rail lines, truck routes, waterways, and coastal shipping. This has produced a substantial military supply buildup [redacted]

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[redacted] we feel certain that stocks available are more than adequate to support the war in South Vietnam without further imports into North Vietnam for several months.

34. Large volumes of supplies are stored in the open throughout the Southern Panhandle of North Vietnam, reflecting an apparent confidence that there will be no resumption of the bombing. At the same time, there is evidence that the North Vietnamese continue to disperse supplies and to build revetments around storage areas as insurance against any resumption of the air war. The increased volume of supplies moved into the southern part of North Vietnam has been accompanied by a substantial increase in throughput into southern Laos. An estimated 220 tons a day were moved into southern Laos during the past dry season (October 1968 - May 1969) compared with some 180 tons a day during the 1967-68 dry season.

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Logistical
 IV. Alternatives *to Seaborne Imports*

Introduction

47. A quarantine of the port of Haiphong and the minor ports of Hon Gai and Cam Pha would force the North Vietnamese to depend primarily on the overland routes from China for the continued import of vital war-supporting materiel and economic goods. The North Vietnamese would not, however, have to depend entirely on the rail, road, and waterway connections with China. There are several other potential countermeasures that could be rapidly improvised by the North Vietnamese -- the use of lighters, the transshipment of goods in small craft from ports in South China, and/or the use of air transport for high-priority goods. These countermeasures are well within the capabilities of the North Vietnamese as long as they have the cooperation of the Chinese or unless the terms of the quarantine permitted US naval or air force to interdict the countermeasures.

48. Enemy countermeasures to new weapons and tactics introduced by the US during the more than three years of the air war over North Vietnam showed the North Vietnamese to be shrewd improvisors with a frequent ability to anticipate US actions. In view of the numerous press reports since 1965 of discussions within the US Government of the possibility of closing the port of Haiphong, it must be assumed that the North Vietnamese have prepared contingency plans to insure against such a possibility. It is probable that the North Vietnamese would not depend on any single countermeasure but would employ a number of alternatives. It would be difficult, for example, to move heavy machinery in small craft from ports in South China and lighter it over the beaches into North Vietnam. However, bulk food and fertilizer imports could be handled in this manner with relative ease.

49. At this time the major unknown in estimating North Vietnam's ability to counter a quarantine of normal seaborne imports is the degree of cooperation that would exist between the USSR and China in countering the quarantine. With the same limited cooperation as has existed in recent years, even a long-term closing of the ports would have little

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impact on the viability of the North Vietnamese economy or the ability of the North Vietnamese to continue the war in the South or maintain a strong air defense and military posture in the North.

50. At this particular juncture in Sino-Soviet relations it can not be assumed, however, that the Chinese would permit the required amounts of POL, trucks, machinery, and other imports that North Vietnam normally imports by sea from the USSR to transit Chinese territory. For this reason, this report considers a "worst-case" -- one in which Soviet military and economic aid to North Vietnam is cut off and China picks up the tab for also supplying the equivalent Soviet military and economic aid as well as the aid China has supplied in the past. Thus Peking would have to supply not only the logistical support for alternative movements of goods to North Vietnam, which it would have to do even if greatly increased volumes of Soviet goods were allowed to transit China, but China would also have to supply the POL, trucks, food, and other supplies from indigenous sources or imports.

North Vietnamese Logistical System

51. North Vietnam's total rail and seaborne imports during the most recent 12-month period amounted to an average of about 6,000 tons a day. This volume of goods is equivalent to what can be carried by about 200 standard-gauge freight cars or about 1,800 trucks a day.

52. Even if the total volume of seaborne imports were shifted to the overland route with no belt-tightening with respect to food or reduction in fertilizer imports and no lightering across the beaches, the diversion of imports would not severely tax the capacity of the overland routes. In contrast to the total input of 6,000 tons a day, the combined capacity of the railroad, road, and water routes from China to the Hanoi area of North Vietnam totals almost 16,000 tons per day during the dry season and 13,000 tons per day during the wet season. As shown in the tabulation below, the capacity of North Vietnam's rail connections with China are alone one-third greater than the volume of goods that must

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be imported. The roads and waterways provide an additional cushion that can be used to avoid bottle-necks and to establish additional routes for moving goods from various areas of South China into North Vietnam.

	<u>Tons per Day</u>
Daily average <i>Imports</i>	6,000
Route capacities	
Railroads	9,000
Roads	5,400 (2,300) <u>a/</u>
Red River	1,500
Total surface	15,900 (12,800) <u>a/</u>

a. The capacity of the roads declines during the wet season, which extends from June through September in the northern areas of North Vietnam.

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53. The capacities given above are conservative estimates based on a wide variety of factors including the extent and conditions of facilities, the availability of equipment, and the employment of a normal labor force. Improvisation can enable theoretical rail system capacities to be temporarily exceeded for considerable periods of time when the demand is great or the regime assigns a high priority to moving supplies over the system. Furthermore, the permanent capacities could be expanded by relatively simple additional construction and quickly installed expedients such as the construction of passing tracks at more frequent intervals. The capacities of the roads could be increased by improved grading or the more intensive use of manpower to repair road segments that got washed out during the rainy season. Furthermore, during the bombing of North Vietnam, up to 600,000 full-time and part-time employees were engaged in air defense or bomb damage repair. If even a small fraction of this labor force was mobilized to maintain and improve the main lines of communication with China, there is no doubt that the capacity of these lines could be rapidly expanded.

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Railroads

54. The North Vietnamese railroad system between China and Hanoi consists of the Hanoi-Dong Dang line and its alternate route, the Kep-Thai Nguyen-Yen Vien line and the Hanoi-Lao Cai line. The Dong Dang line is dual gauged, 111 miles long, with an estimated capacity of 5,400 tons each way per day (EWPD).* The Communists are engaged in a major realignment of about 15 miles of this line south of Lang Son. The new rail segment will upgrade the line's capabilities by removing several sharp turns and a long steep grade. It is by far the most important route for overland imports via China. Its alternate corridor via Kep-Thai Nguyen-Yen Vien is 71 miles long and has an estimated capacity of 4,300 tons EWPD. The Lao Cai line currently is of minor importance for overland imports but it does provide access to the northwestern regions and China's Yunnan Province and would assume increased importance if the port of Haiphong were closed. This line is 170 miles long and has an estimated capacity of 3,400 tons EWPD.

55. Soon after the 31 March 1968 bombing restriction north of the 19th Parallel, the North Vietnamese took full advantage of the standdown to restore the rail system to its original status and in some cases actually to increase the capability of the system. The North Vietnamese have also increased their overall tractive inventory in the last few months by importing about 20 small diesel locomotives from the Soviet Union.

56. In late 1968 the North Vietnamese accelerated their construction efforts on the 57-mile Kep-Hon Gai meter-gauge rail line. By June 1969 the Communists had laid track on all but 19 miles of this line and had prepared the rail bed on most of the remaining alignment. There were only a few small bridges and culverts to be completed. Work has continued on the largest bridge on the line, a major one 340 to 400 feet long over the Song Nhat Duc.

* *The term dual-gauge refers to the use of three or four rails on the same roadbed, making possible the use of both meter-gauge and standard-gauge rolling stock. It is not to be confused with "double tracking" -- two separate tracks on two roadbeds with a total of four rails.*

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57. Since October the eastern half of the line has been in service from the mining areas around Nhue Ho to the vicinity of the ferry slips under construction across the bay from Hon Gai. It will probably take no more than two to three months to complete the bridge over the Song Nhat Duc and permit through traffic from the Hanoi-Dong Dang rail line to Hon Gai.

Highways

58. There are five major and several secondary transborder roads connecting the Hanoi-Haiphong area with the South China provinces of Kwangsi and Yunnan. Together, this roadnet has an estimated minimum capacity of about 5,400 tons EWPD during the dry season (October-May), decreasing to approximately 2,300 tons EWPD during the rainy season. From one-half to two-thirds of this total cross-border capacity is associated with the northeastern routes leading from the large storage depots of Nanning and P'ing-hsiang.

Inventory of Railroad Rolling Stock,
and Motor Vehicles

59. North Vietnam's inventory of railroad rolling stock currently is estimated at 115-130 locomotives and 2,000-2,300 meter-gauge freight cars. The country's railroad system consists of dual, standard, and meter-gauge lines. The main rail link between China and Hanoi -- the dual-gauged Dong Dang line could be operated by drawing from China's inventory of standard-gauge rolling stock which is estimated (end of 1968) at 6,000 locomotives and 160,300 freight cars. An alternate route from the border to Hanoi via Kep and Thai Nguyen also could use Chinese standard-gauge equipment.

60. As of mid-1969 the estimated North Vietnamese motor vehicle inventory ranged between 6,500 and 11,500. The wide range stems mainly from a lack of import data, particularly overland shipments, and the uncertainties associated with confirming the large number of vehicles reportedly destroyed by air-strikes in Laos.

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[REDACTED] North Vietnam suggests that a firm vehicle inventory probably would tend toward the upper limits of the estimated range.

China's Logistical Capabilities

Introduction

61. In the event of a cessation of normal sea-borne imports, North Vietnam's most serious problem would be to establish an alternative flow of about 30,000 tons a month of POL from China. Stockpiles of POL in North Vietnam are presently estimated to be equivalent to about 100 days of supply at current consumption rates. The probable increased use of trucks to haul supplies from China would increase consumption rates, and shortages of gasoline or diesel fuels would probably occur in the northeast areas of North Vietnam in less than 60 days if overland imports were not greatly increased. We would expect, therefore, that the North Vietnamese and Chinese would give priority to establishing an overland POL artery. The dimensions of the problem in terms of distance, tank cars, and locomotives is discussed below. Next, it is assumed that all normal seaborne imports are shifted to the Chinese transport system to determine the magnitude of this additional burden on China's transportation system.

POL by Rail from China

62. POL supplied from within China would come from one or a combination of three major refineries at Shanghai, Lan-chou, or Ta-ching. The Chinese railroad authorities would probably have to institute a shuttle system by which a given number of tank cars and locomotives would be assigned to this movement and would not engage in any other operation. Such a shuttle would operate from the refineries to Hanoi via P'ing-hsiang, which is across the border from the Hanoi-Dong Dang rail line.

63. The extreme case would require that all 30,000 tons a month move from Ta-ching in Manchuria to P'ing-hsiang, a distance of about 2,500 miles, or 5,000 miles a round trip. At 350 miles a day, about 15 days travel time would be required. One day for loading and one day for unloading at each end of

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the haul would result in a turnaround time of 17 days. Thus, at an average load of 50 tons per tank car, about 350 cars would be required. This number of cars represents slightly more than 1 percent of the estimated 28,500 tank cars in China's inventory. About 25 locomotives would be needed, less than 0.5 percent of the estimated 6,000 locomotives in China's total inventory. The burden on China's rail system would be even less if these shipments were to originate entirely or in part from Shanghai and/or Lan-chou.

64. The rail line capacity from any of the refineries in China is more than adequate to handle this traffic in addition to the traffic currently moving over these routes. In terms of logistic capability alone -- holding the question of the availability of POL until later -- the Chinese could have a regular flow of POL moving toward North Vietnam well before any shortages would develop because of a cessation of seaborne shipments.*

Logistical Impact of all Supplies Coming from China

65. If all remaining Soviet, East European, and Chinese seaborne imports of food, fertilizer, machinery, and equipment were to come from North China and Manchuria, the average length of haul would be at a maximum about 4,800 miles per round trip.** At an average daily haul of 350 miles a day and allowing two days for loading and unloading, the turnaround time would be 16 days. Thus, with an average load per freight car of 40 metric tons,

* The following example shows how the logistical problem of moving POL to North Vietnam would be greatly eased if Soviet, Romanian, or other foreign tankers unloaded POL for North Vietnam at Fort Bayard. China would probably organize the same shuttle service but the round trip distance would be only about 570 miles and the turnaround time would be four days. Only 80 freight cars and 6 locomotives would be able to carry the monthly requirements of 30,000 tons.

** Again, an extreme case because imported food-stuffs which averaged almost 75,000 tons a month during the past 12 months would not have to come from North China or Manchuria.

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about 1,700 freight cars would be required in constant operation to carry the monthly shipments of 130,000 tons. This number of cars represents only about 1 percent of the freight cars in China's inventory.*

* *In addition, China would have to continue to transport the estimated monthly 25,000 tons of military and economic goods that presently enter North Vietnam by rail.*

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V. Other CountermeasuresIntroduction

66. In the event that oceangoing shipping is denied access to the ports of Haiphong, Hon Gai, and Cam Pha, a number of other measures could be introduced to counter the effects of the quarantine. The North Vietnamese could employ offshore lightering operations and use various shallow-water approaches to the ports and inland waterways or engage in over-the-beach operations. In addition to the use of the overland routes discussed above, diverted cargo could be transshipped in Chinese Communist ports into small craft for movement to North Vietnam, or funnelled through Chinese ports for shipment on the Chinese railroad system to North Vietnam. An airlift operated by the USSR with Chinese cooperation could also move a large volume of imports. An airlift operated exclusively by the Chinese and North Vietnamese, however, would be able to make only a small contribution without completely disrupting air transport operations in China. The capabilities of all of these additional alternatives, nevertheless, provide the North Vietnamese with a flexible system with which to continue the receipt of imports.

Lightering

67. If oceangoing ships were denied access to Haiphong, Hon Gai, and Cam Pha, they could still be offloaded in offshore areas by using the ships' gear and lighters.

68. We estimate that North Vietnam has more than 30,000 watercraft of all types. This inventory consists largely of junks and sampans although many modern lightering craft (obtained from other Communist countries) have been added in recent years, including 60 Chinese steel-hulled coastal vessels and 30 Soviet-built 35-40 ton capacity mechanized landing craft which are ideally suited for over-the-beach operations.

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[REDACTED] In addition to lightering craft, North Vietnam has nine merchant coastal ships with the largest having a capacity of 4,000 tons. Assuming normal

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conditions, we estimate approximately sixty 100-ton lighters would be required to offload the 5,200 tons of seaborne imports North Vietnam receives daily.

69. Adverse weather conditions and the likelihood that port facilities with cranes would be denied to lighters could both pose difficulties for the Communists. Most bulky supply items requiring cranes probably would move into North Vietnam by rail. Bulk POL could be lightered from tankers offshore. In fact, this is the normal way in which POL is unloaded in Haiphong harbor. Also, calm seas normally prevail in the northern section of the Gulf of Tonkin some 60-70 percent of the time throughout the year except for October when it is calm only about 50 percent of the time.

70. The waterway network in the delta (principally the Red River, the Song Thai Binh, and two connecting canals) provides a flexible system for the movement of lightered goods inland. There are ten entrances to the network from the Gulf and, although several are very shallow at low water, the depth over the bar increases to five to eight feet during high water in nearly all cases. If this network was denied to the enemy by mining, the lightering would be forced to the use of an over-the-beach operation which could be highly inefficient, particularly if suitable cranes were not available.

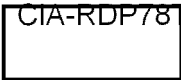
71. Oceangoing ships could anchor off the southern coast and offload into lighters which could then move to southern ports (including Ben Thuy, Quang Khe, and Dong Hoi), estuaries, and beaches. Anchorages in this area are less protected, but landing areas for lighters along the coast are more numerous than further north near Haiphong. Much of the cargo offloaded here, however, would have to be moved overland north some 100 miles to the major consuming areas.

72. Ports in South China such as Fort Bayard and Canton could also be used to transship from oceangoing ships to small craft for movement close in-shore along the coast south to North Vietnam. There are ample small craft available in China and North Vietnam for such an operation.

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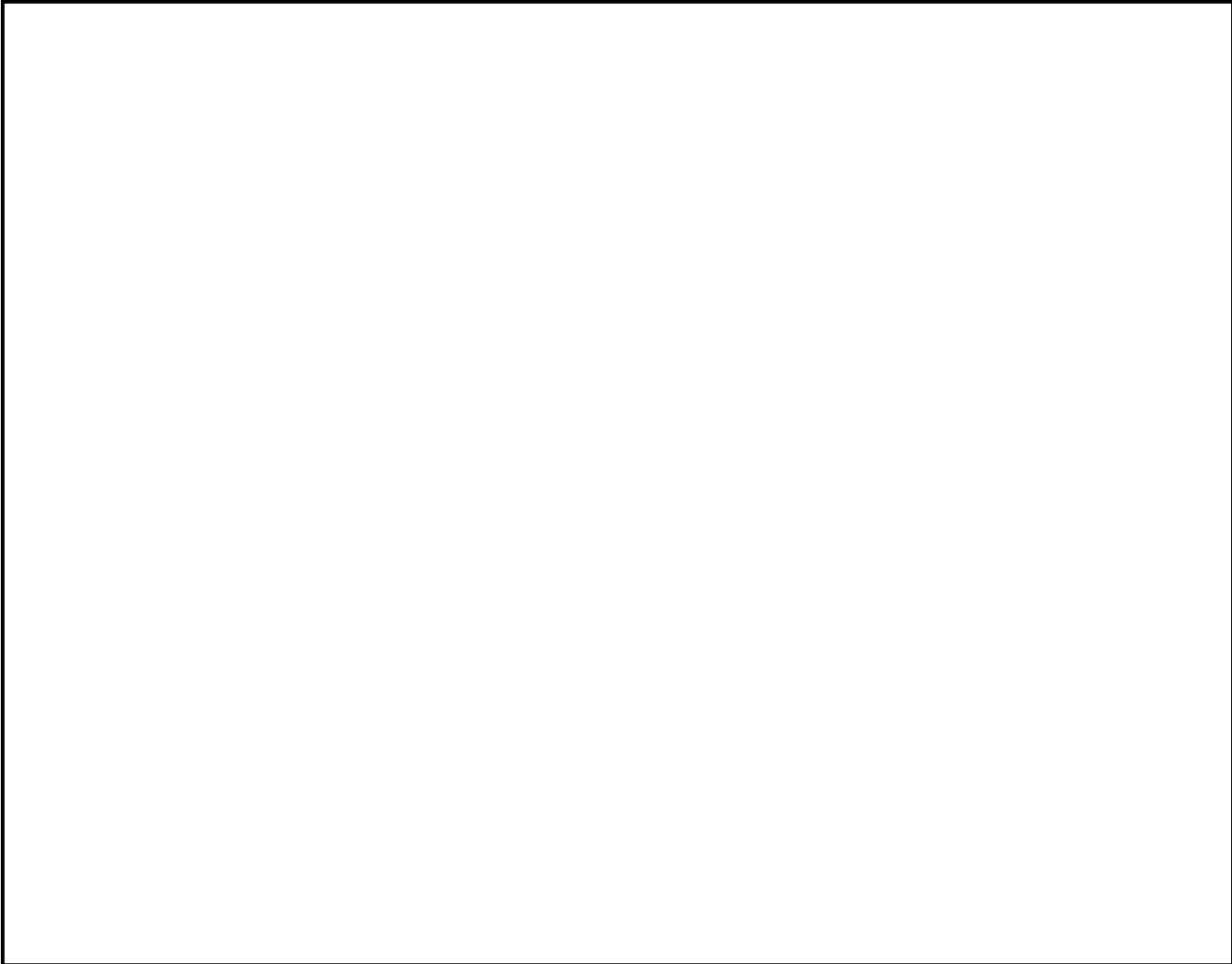


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Air Transport

73. A sustained airlift could be organized to maintain a flow of high-priority goods to North Vietnam. There are 16 airfields in South China and six in North Vietnam (five in the Hanoi-Haiphong area and one at Kep) which could be used. All are near rail lines, major roads, or seaports. The short distance between the Chinese airfields and those in North Vietnam requires little flying time and makes this alternative reasonably economical in the requirement for aircraft. For example, airfields at Ning-ming and Nan-ning in China (which probably would be the fields most extensively used) both have runways of over 6,000 feet and are less than 30 minutes by air from Hanoi.

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SECRET VI. Burden to China and Costs to North VietnamEconomic Goods

76. During the past 12 months the Communist countries have supplied about 96 percent of North Vietnam's seaborne imports; about 44 percent came from the USSR, 36 percent from China, and 16 percent from the East European countries, North Korea, and Cuba. If China were also to assume the Soviet aid burden it would have to provide an additional 900,000 tons of goods, including large amounts of petroleum, foodstuffs, transport equipment, and industrial products.

77. In the event that a quarantine of ports prevented the USSR from supplying North Vietnam's POL requirements and China refused to permit Soviet POL to transit Chinese territory, the evidence clearly suggests that the great bulk of North Vietnam's requirements could be supplied from China. North Vietnam's imports of POL during the past 12 months totaled about one-third of a million tons, less than 3 percent of China's domestic production. However, China would have difficulty in supplying specific products such as aviation fuel and special lubricants that are in short supply in China. These and other products, if not available in Communist China, would have to be supplied by the East European countries or from non-Communist countries and transshipped to North Vietnam. The total cost of North Vietnam's imports of POL in 1968 was less than \$15 million. Thus the foreign exchange costs to China for petroleum products not domestically available would be minor.

78. During the past year, North Vietnam received about 47 percent of its total imports of about 110,000 tons of chemical fertilizer from the USSR, about 20 percent from North Korea, and about 24 percent from Japan. China is not known to have shipped any fertilizer to North Vietnam by sea.

79. China produced about 5 million tons of chemical fertilizer in 1968, but this output does not satisfy domestic requirements, and another 2 million

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tons of fertilizer were imported from Japan. In the event Soviet shipments of fertilizer were cut off the Chinese would be faced with the following alternatives: (1) ship to North Vietnam domestically produced fertilizer at the expense of China's agricultural production, (2) increase imports from either North Korea or Japan and transship these imports to North Vietnam, or (3) substitute increased shipments of food for fertilizer. About \$4 million of foreign exchange would be the cost to China to replace Soviet fertilizer shipments to North Vietnam if purchased abroad. Furthermore, while North Vietnam's agricultural output has been lagging there is no reason to believe that even a total ban on fertilizer imports would result in an immediate deterioration in North Vietnam's agricultural output.

80. North Vietnam's imports of foodstuffs have been almost evenly divided between the USSR and Communist China, with the USSR supplying mostly wheat flour. Communist China could easily increase exports of foodstuffs -- either rice or wheat flour -- to North Vietnam with only minor internal adjustments. Total grain production in China during 1968 was estimated at 185-195 million tons, while total foodstuffs imported by North Vietnam during the past 12 months amounted to less than 900,000 tons of which the USSR provided some 300,000 tons. Wheat is imported by Communist China, and the export of wheat flour to North Vietnam in place of that from the USSR would cost China the foreign exchange paid for such imports, approximately \$15 million. On the other hand, Communist China could replace Soviet supplies of wheat flour with rice or corn at no direct foreign exchange costs, but an indirect cost represented by the loss of potential earnings from rice exports to Free World consumers.

81. The data on the number of trucks imported by North Vietnam are incomplete because trucks arrive both by sea and overland by rail and there is little firm information on the extent of overland deliveries. The USSR, East European countries, and China have all been major suppliers of trucks to North Vietnam. China, currently producing at an annual rate of roughly 60,000 trucks a year, would be hard pressed to supply all of North Vietnam's requirements. China would find it especially difficult to supply large numbers of four-ton cross-country trucks.

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82. On balance, if China were to prevent Soviet trucks from moving by rail overland across China the North Vietnamese would have to solicit additional trucks from the East European countries or from China. China in the short run could draw on its inventory of about 350,000 trucks or cut into its current production to meet North Vietnam's needs. Under any circumstances there would be no immediate shortage of trucks in North Vietnam. The present rainy season in Laos reduces North Vietnam's truck losses due to air attacks. Further-

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Foreign Exchange Implications

83. For China to supply North Vietnam with the economic goods presently being imported from the USSR would probably involve some expenditure of foreign exchange, as noted above. However, the most important foreign exchange implication for China would be the presumed loss of potential hard currency earnings as a result of increased shipments to North Vietnam of food and textiles. The direct foreign exchange cost for Communist China to replace North Vietnam's supplies of wheat flour would be approximately \$15 million at the levels supplied in 1968. This would be in addition to the present cost of the possible forgone sales of 225,000 tons (1968 levels) of rice on the world market that would have brought China an estimated \$37 million.

84. Amounts of textiles shipped by China in 1968 were not significant. However, if China were to supply the amounts that came from the USSR in 1968, the loss in potential foreign exchange earnings might reach an estimated \$10 million.

Military Goods

85. In itself a quarantine of North Vietnam's ports would have no effect on the volume of either Soviet or Chinese munitions being shipped to North Vietnam. Although war-supporting goods -- trucks and bulldozers and occasionally helicopters -- arrive by sea, an analysis of all available evidence

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suggests strongly that the great bulk of munitions have entered North Vietnam by rail. However, it is possible that the Chinese might use the quarantine of North Vietnam's ports as a pretext for cutting off all Soviet military aid to North Vietnam. The Chinese might seek to embarrass the USSR and force a Soviet-US confrontation.

86. However, at the current level of hostilities, a cutoff of Soviet military aid would have little immediate impact on North Vietnam's military capabilities. Communist China continues to be the principal supplier of infantry weapons to Communist forces in both North and South Vietnam. Moreover, China could provide substitutes for every item of equipment in North Vietnam's military inventories, although many of these, particularly technical equipment for air defense, would be of lower quality or less advanced design. Over a period of time some of North Vietnam's military capabilities would be eroded. China's capacity to supply equipment for air defense systems probably is limited to the extent that for many types of air defense weapons only spare parts for maintenance and replacements for normal attrition could be supplied.

87. Deliveries of equipment for North Vietnam's surface-to-air missile and antiaircraft artillery defenses have declined markedly since mid-1968 to little more than that necessary for repair and replacement -- a level of requirements that Communist China probably could meet adequately. China could provide spare parts necessary to keep North Vietnam's MIG-19s and MIG-15/17s -- numbering about 40 and 115, respectively -- in combat-ready condition, but the effectiveness of the approximate 65 MIG-21s undoubtedly would deteriorate if the supply of spare parts from the USSR were cut off. The period of time for such deterioration would depend on the supply of spare parts on hand and the rates of use of the aircraft. Replacements for early warning and ground controlled intercept radar probably could be supplied by China, but limited productive capacity would preclude China's meeting any more than a minimum external demand for fire control and missile control radars.

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88. As North Vietnam's Soviet equipment wears out or is destroyed in combat, many of the replacements provided by China as substitutes would be of poorer quality and less advanced technical design. For example, as North Vietnam's MIG-21s became non-operational for lack of spare parts, China could substitute the less advanced MIG-19. China's production of MIG-19s, would be adequate to permit the total replacement of North Vietnam's MIG-21 inventory. Much of China's radar production consists of copies of earlier, less efficient Soviet designs, and the eventual resupply with such equipment might degrade somewhat the effectiveness of anti-aircraft artillery and of the air warning system. Types of air defense equipment and probable Chinese replacements are given in the attached table.

89. In the event the US bombing of North Vietnam were resumed and North Vietnam's requirements reached the levels of 1967 or early 1968, Communist China undoubtedly would not be able to meet North Vietnam's requirements for surface-to-air missiles and anti-aircraft artillery ammunition. Production of SA-2 missiles by China is believed to be little more than enough to meet the basic load requirements for China's [REDACTED] SAM battalions, only a fraction of the nearly 4,000 SA-2s fired by North Vietnam in 1967. No firm estimate of capacity for artillery ammunition production is available, but it is believed that China would have great difficulty supplying anti-aircraft artillery ammunition at the high 1967 expenditure rate in North Vietnam.

90. A halt in Soviet munitions shipments to North Vietnam would not diminish the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese army military capability in South Vietnam or produce a significant change in the character of the ground war. A halt in Soviet munitions shipments would require the Communists to substitute Chinese Communist 107-mm rockets and the RPG-2 antitank grenade launcher for Soviet 122-mm and 140-mm rockets and the more advanced Soviet RPG-7. China would also be required to increase its shipments of anti-aircraft artillery up to 57-mm and howitzer and field gun munitions, most of which have been supplied by the USSR. Although the Soviet conventional field guns and anti-aircraft guns have

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predominated in South Vietnam, their Chinese counterparts are similar in design and performance and could be used without reducing firepower.

91. The Communists would not be forced to change their battlefield tactics in South Vietnam which currently emphasize standoff attacks by fire. The acquisition of more Chinese Communist 107-mm rockets, in addition to the large number of heavy weapons currently in use and in stockpiles, would enable the Communists to continue to use economy of force tactics and would provide them with added mobility at a small cost in firepower. The Soviet 122-mm rocket and RPG-7 antitank grenade launchers have greater range and destructive power than the Chinese 107-mm rocket and RPG-2, but the Chinese weapons have the advantage of being lighter and easier to transport.

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VII. PROBABLE POLITICAL REACTIONS

Additional Working Assumption

92. The political reactions of all parties affected by, concerned with or interested in the imposition of a quarantine on North Vietnam would be materially influenced by the general situation prevailing at the time the quarantine was imposed. One set of reactions would be produced if, for example, the postulated quarantine was imposed soon after (and in apparent retaliation for) some blatantly provocative Communist military and/or terrorist action--e.g., a frontal, multi-divisional assault across the DMZ, the public execution of a large number of American prisoners in North Vietnam, widespread attacks on South Vietnamese cities and civilian population centers, or systematic, coordinated attacks on American and Vietnamese hospitals throughout South Vietnam. Quite a different set of reactions would almost certainly be produced if the imposition of the quarantine closely followed, and appeared to be the US response to, some major, superficially sincere and forthcoming North Vietnamese peace initiative--e.g., an unconditional acceptance of President Thieu's election proposals. Ringing the changes on all possible permutations of prior circumstances would require a memorandum of inordinate length. To simplify the analysis and assessment of probable reactions, we have therefore made the additional working assumption that the quarantine is imposed under circumstances essentially similar to those now prevailing, i.e., that North Vietnam's propaganda, political, military and negotiating posture remains essentially what it is in mid-July 1969.

Probable Chinese Communist Reactions

93. The primary object of the reaction analysis portion of this memorandum is to assess Hanoi's probable response to the imposition of a quarantine. Hanoi's range of options will be so heavily affected, however, by the responses of Peking and, to a slightly lesser extent, Moscow that the probable view from Hanoi can be seen in considerably clearer

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perspective if we first look at the probable reactions of the Chinese Communists and the Soviets.

94. As outlined above, the evidence available shows that China has the physical resources and capabilities to provide North Vietnam with the assistance necessary to overcome the physical impact of a quarantine imposed under the conditions assumed in this memorandum's opening section. Since physical constraints would not appear to inhibit or limit its policy choices, Peking's political options would range from shutting off virtually all of North Vietnam's imports to providing Hanoi with all assistance possible. For a time, at least, Peking would be very much in the driver's seat; for all bulk, war-essential supplies reaching North Vietnam--including arms, ammunition, POL, trucks and some foodstuffs--would have to come overland via Chinese territory.* Without overland imports from China, once North Vietnam's reserves and stockpiles were depleted, Hanoi could no longer wage war; for the contribution of her own industrial plant to North Vietnam's war making potential is negligible.**

**If the quarantine involved only mining Haiphong and not a complete naval blockade some goods and supplies might be lightered ashore from Soviet vessels at minor ports such as Camphu. Such action would partially attenuate Hanoi's near-total dependence on Chinese assistance, but unless the quarantine were of very short duration, the basic picture would be essentially that just described in the text above.*

***A Soviet support effort effected by sea lift through Cambodia might perhaps provide enough war materiel for Communist forces in South Vietnam to continue the military struggle at present levels, but the evolution of such a support system would require Sihanouk's open assistance (or replacement of his regime with a Communist-dominated Cambodian government). Even under such circumstances, without overland imports from China, North Vietnam would have severe and mounting internal economic problems. Our memorandum hence does not further address the theoretical alternative of a "Cambodian solution" to the problems that would be created by the imposition of a quarantine of North Vietnam.*

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95. Despite her current dispute and border problems with the Soviet Union and despite the fact that the situation here postulated would afford Peking a tempting opportunity to impale Moscow on the horns of an intriguing dilemma--let Hanoi founder or risk a direct military confrontation with the United States by forcing the US blockade--shutting off North Vietnam's essential supplies and driving Hanoi to the wall would probably not be viewed in Peking as a politically profitable course of action. Even more importantly, Peking would probably view such a course of action as unacceptable ("incorrect") on doctrinal grounds. The economic follies of the "Great Leap Forward" (e.g., backyard steel mills) and the record of the "Cultural Revolution"--show that some of Peking's major policy decisions are influenced by doctrinal considerations or what might really be called theological considerations.

96. For years, Peking has urged Hanoi to follow the doctrinally pure ("correct") policy of unrelenting struggle against the imperialist enemy and to forswear the revisionist Soviets' cowardly heresy of premature resort to negotiations. Under the situation postulated at the outset of this memorandum, Peking could not refuse to aid North Vietnam without thereby virtually forcing Hanoi to adopt a policy Peking has always unremittingly opposed. Conversely, by coming to Hanoi's rescue, Peking would lend tangible support to its doctrinal arguments and, at the same time, greatly increase Chinese influence over North Vietnam. Thus Peking would probably see the quarantine as a golden opportunity to improve its standing in Hanoi, at Moscow's expense, and hence would provide the aid that would make it possible for North Vietnam to cope with the physical problems created by the quarantine. In the propaganda field, Peking would almost certainly attack the quarantine as the latest "proof" of US wickedness, would accuse the Soviets of being too cowardly to contest it, and would take the general line that North Vietnam and other "fraternal" parties could now clearly know who was the real stalwart in the "socialist" camp.

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97. Chinese foreign policy in recent years has displayed a number of not always consistent attributes. Doctrinally-inspired bombast is clearly one. Pragmatic prudence, however, is usually another. Keeping the supply lines open to North Vietnam and providing Hanoi with all possible material assistance would almost certainly strike Peking as a politically profitable course of action involving minimal risks. Peking would also certainly mount a high decibel propaganda campaign against the US, possibly one interlaced with "warnings" or threats. Taking actual physical action against US forces imposing the quarantine, however, would be an entirely different matter. A time of burgeoning tension along the Soviet border would hardly be an opportune moment to run the risk of any sort of armed conflict with the United States. The record of Chinese responses to air space intrusions indicates that Communist China would probably fire on any US ships or planes that encroached on Chinese territory and China would probably aid North Vietnam to some extent in mine-clearing operations, but Communist China is unlikely to dispatch its own warships or aircraft to contest US naval operations off the coast of North Vietnam.

Probable Soviet Reactions

98. In responding to the imposition of a quarantine on North Vietnam, Moscow would have to select a course of action from a range of options that would extend from urging Hanoi to abandon the struggle and seek the earliest possible settlement in Paris to using military force to break the quarantine and, perhaps, threatening armed retaliation in other areas (e.g., Berlin) if the quarantine were not promptly lifted. Moscow's choice of the optimum Soviet response, however, would not be determined exclusively by the specific issues or considerations directly related to the quarantine. Instead, Moscow's choice would be made within the total context of the Soviet Union's Far Eastern

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policy, relations with North Vietnam, posture toward China and toward the United States.

99. It seems increasingly clear that the reassertion of Soviet interests in Vietnam, signalled by Kosygin's visit to Hanoi in February 1965, was not prompted by a simple, opportunistic desire to join what then appeared as a Vietnamese Communist effort on the verge of success. Rather, this reassertion of Vietnam interests was part of a broad new Soviet policy to "encircle" and contain Communist China. This consideration has become increasingly apparent in Soviet policies throughout South and Southeast Asia and in the Soviet military buildup on the Chinese border, which also began in 1965. [REDACTED]

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containment of China has become the priority Soviet foreign policy objective.

100. This policy of containing China, however, does not automatically lead to collaboration with the US. In particular it does not necessarily lead to Soviet pressures on Hanoi to end the Vietnam war. While the war in Vietnam does present some obstacles to US-Soviet collaboration in areas of interest to the USSR, ever since the talks first began in Paris (and particularly since the 31 October 1968 bombing halt), the Soviets have not chosen to regard the Vietnam struggle as an impediment to doing business with the US on important matters such as the Middle East or arms limitation talks. Moreover, it is important to the USSR, in the context of its anti-Chinese policy, not to offend Hanoi and to maintain a Soviet presence in North Vietnam. Hanoi is a prickly pear, jealous of its autonomy within the Communist world, and demonstrably capable of playing the Chinese against the Soviets in order to defend and advance its own interests. Moscow appears well aware of Hanoi's sensitivities and to our knowledge has never pressured Hanoi to adopt positions which the Vietnamese Communists might consider prejudicial to their interests.

99. Furthermore, Moscow probably sees some positive benefits in the prolongation of the war in Vietnam. The war is distracting to the US, it serves to erode US influence in Europe and in other

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areas of interest to the USSR, and Moscow can only take comfort from the internal strains within the US which the world attributes, in part at least, to the war.

102. For these reasons, if none other, we believe that the Soviet response to the closure of Haiphong would be conditioned primarily by a desire to keep in step with Hanoi. Added to this, however, would be the question of Soviet "face" as a great power. Its ships are the principal users of the port and Soviet prestige would be directly involved in any mining or blockade. Because Hanoi would almost certainly request it, and because face required it, the Soviets would feel compelled to provide assistance--with equipment and personnel, probably in a semi-overt role--for mine-sweeping operations and other countermeasures (e.g., by having Soviet pilots fly North Vietnamese aircraft.)

103. A blockade would confront the USSR with the most difficult decisions, decisions which might well produce severe strains within the Soviet leadership. Unless it challenged the blockade with its own escorted convoys, the USSR would open itself to propaganda attack from Peking charging that the Soviets were chicken-hearted or secretly working in collusion with the US. Nevertheless, the Soviet leaders would recognize that the USSR does not have naval forces capable of challenging a US blockade in that area effectively, and that the attempt to do this would provoke an unprecedented, direct confrontation with the US under very disadvantageous circumstances. During the past five years the Soviets have never given any indication that they consider the issues involved in Vietnam worth the risk of such a confrontation with the United States. (For example, the Soviets have never made an issue of, or even mentioned, casualties suffered by Soviet personnel manning SAM sites or assisting in the defense of North Vietnam during the bombing). Thus a review of all evidence available weights the odds heavily against the Soviet's offering a direct physical challenge to a US quarantine or even a US blockade. Nonetheless, the USSR would almost certainly issue grave warnings and attempt to create the impression that a major world crisis could soon result if the US quarantine were not speedily lifted.

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104. To give point to these warnings, the USSR would probably assert that the US quarantine had generated very severe obstacles to US-Soviet collaboration in any area, thus reversing Moscow's current stance that circumstances are presently favorable for attempting to resolve a variety of difficult issues through negotiation. Following this new tack, the Soviets might alter, or at least perceptibly chill, their attitude toward exchanges which have been taking place on such matters as the Middle East, Vietnam negotiations, and arms control. They might go further and say that they perceived a radical turn toward aggressiveness in US policy, with the implied threat that if this continued, critical situations would inevitably be generated at points of confrontation in other areas. While moves to provoke counter crises elsewhere can never be entirely excluded, it seems more likely that in the circumstances postulated, the Soviets would see more advantage in demonstrating that the US move could not bring Hanoi to its knees and in stimulating political pressures in the US and elsewhere to impel the US Government to desist.

Probable North Vietnamese Reactions

105. If the analysis outlined above is correct, soon after the imposition of a quarantine Hanoi would have reason to be confident of securing enough additional Chinese, and Soviet, assistance to be able to minimize the quarantine's physical impact. Thus Hanoi's decision on how to react could be made primarily on political grounds and would probably not be dictated by physical constraints.

106. In making its decision, Hanoi would have a fairly broad range of options to choose from. For example, it could move swiftly to seek a negotiated settlement in Paris. Or it could develop and mount a general, last-gasp type military offensive in South Vietnam. Or Hanoi could protest loudly in the propaganda field, but basically sit tight in the action arenas--both in Paris and on the battlefield in South Vietnam--continuing present policies and programs while waiting to see how the quarantine affected the over-all political climate and, particularly, the political mood in the United States.

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107. There is abundant evidence indicating that Hanoi follows the course of political developments in the United States with careful and detailed attention. The evidence available does not show just how much weight Hanoi attaches in making basic policy decisions to its calculations of US domestic political factors, but the broad outlines of the frame of reference within which Hanoi views such matters are fairly clear.

108. For almost 25 years the Vietnamese Communist leadership has consistently displayed a seemingly ineradicable penchant for repeating strategic or tactical gambits that have proved successful in the past. The writings of the Vietnamese Communists' leaders--Ho Chi Minh, Truong Chinh, and General Giap--all indicate strongly that the Vietnamese politburo believes the Franco - Viet Minh war was lost by the French in Paris as much as it was won by the Vietnamese on the battlefields in Indochina. In essence, the present Hanoi leadership seems convinced that one of their most successful strategies during the 1946-1954 struggle against the French was the utilization of politico-military pressure as political abrasive burring on the will of the French people and the French Government, a strategy which eventually made continuation of the struggle a politically unsaleable commodity in Paris. When this point was reached, the French Government then in power opted out with hasty dispatch. (Mendes-France took office in the summer of 1954 with a public pledge to end the war within a month or resign.) Despite occasional disclaimers or remarks about the difference in the two situations, the writings and statements of the Hanoi leadership over the past few years demonstrates a strong and continuing inclination on Hanoi's part to see (and look for) parallels between the mood in France in the early 1950s and that developing in the United States in the late 1960s.

109. We know from captured notebooks, internal party directives, and reports of cadre indoctrination sessions that the Vietnamese Communist Party is spreading within its own ranks the thesis that

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Communist actions in Vietnam have produced a climate in the United States which "toppled" (or, sometimes, "defeated") Secretary McNamara, General Westmoreland, and President Johnson. In propaganda pronouncements, cadre indoctrinations, party directives, and even in statements in public and private negotiating sessions in Paris, the Vietnamese Communists quote US newspaper articles and editorials and Congressional speeches critical of the Vietnam war, constantly playing the theme that the "liberation struggle" is receiving a rising tide of support from "progressive elements" within the United States. The available evidence is not conclusive, but a very strong case can be made for the thesis that Hanoi has a lot of political chips riding on a calculation that if North Vietnam sits tight and more or less stonewalls on its present political posture (buttressed by its present levels of military activity), within a finite time frame (measured in months) rising political pressures within the United States will force the US Government to make major concessionary gestures to Hanoi or accept North Vietnamese demands that involve major allied concessions.

110. It is within the context just outlined that Hanoi views the developments of the past 18 months: Secretary McNamara's resignation, the 1968 Tet offensive, General Westmoreland's recall from Vietnam, the 31 March partial bombing halt accompanied by President Johnson's call for negotiations and personal withdrawal from the electoral arena, the opening of talks in Paris, the full bombing halt on 31 October, the lack of US military response to Hanoi's fudging on the "understandings" with respect to the DMZ and shelling South Vietnam's major cities, Governor Harriman's public criticisms of the Saigon Government and the US negotiating rigidity, the US Government's frequent public endorsements of the concept of negotiated settlement, Mr. Clifford's article, the initial withdrawal of US troops, current public debate over how fast US forces in South Vietnam can or should be withdrawn. Given Hanoi's attitudes and perspective, there are ample grounds for making the strong presumptive inference that Hanoi believes the US is moving steadily down a road of de-escalation and disengagement and, further,

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probably considers it unlikely that the US Government would be politically able to initiate any significant "re-escalation" of the struggle.

111. Under present circumstances, therefore, and in the absence of any major new provocation from Hanoi of a type discussed above in paragraph 90, Hanoi would almost certainly be surprised at the imposition of a quarantine. Furthermore, Hanoi would almost certainly calculate that the quarantine's imposition would swiftly become a topic of acrimonious debate within the United States and would prompt a widespread series of public attacks on the Vietnam policy of the US Government.

112. Since Hanoi could probably withstand or minimize the physical impact of the quarantine (if China and the USSR were willing to provide the necessary aid), Hanoi would probably wait to see how events unfolded and the political climate developed before making any definitive decisions on North Vietnam's optimum response. Hanoi would not want to rush to settlement in Paris, for this course of action would make Hanoi lose face, appear to be acting out of weakness, and probably involve Communist political concessions Hanoi would not want to make unless unfolding events proved that such concessions were unavoidable. On the other hand, Hanoi would probably see little advantage in immediately launching heightened offensive activity in South Vietnam--a course of action that, in any event, would take some time to organize and prepare.

113. In sum, Hanoi's initial reaction would probably be to gamble that the US would not be politically able to sustain the quarantine for any appreciable length of time. Such a gamble would involve relatively few risks for Hanoi and would be reinforced by the calculation that if the US lifted the quarantine without obtaining any major concessions from North Vietnam, Hanoi's political image, prestige, and position would be materially enhanced at Washington's expense. The Soviets would probably counsel Hanoi to take such a gamble and, in this instance, Hanoi would find Soviet advice attractively congenial.

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114. While waiting for events to ripen before deciding on its final course of action, Hanoi would certainly mount a strident propaganda campaign shrilly attacking the US quarantine as an act of "aggression" and proof positive of America's "neo-colonialist," "imperialist" perfidy. Hanoi's propaganda chorus would be energetically joined by Communist China, the Soviets and Communist governments and parties throughout the world. Hanoi would also probably suspend--or at least temporarily walk out of--the Paris talks, partly because "face" would require some response and partly because this action would fan worldwide apprehension that peace prospects had been dashed.

115. If the US Government turned what appeared to be a deaf ear to the criticisms the quarantine would inevitably provoke at home and abroad and persisted in the quarantine through a period of weeks stretching into months, the arguments within the Hanoi politburo would become increasingly nervous and sharp. These arguments would not revolve around the physical impact of the quarantine but around the extent to which its continuation called into increasing question certain fundamental calculations about the political staying power of the US Government on which Hanoi's present strategy is largely based. Contingency plans for prolonged struggle unquestionably exist in Hanoi, but despite a public posture of implacable determination to fight on forever until total victory (e.g., General Giap's recent speech), the abundant evidence of mounting stresses and strains within North Vietnam and within the Communist movement in South Vietnam makes it debatable (at least) whether Hanoi really is prepared to carry on the struggle for a time span measured in years without scaling down its present minimal political demands in order to achieve an earlier settlement. Imposition of a quarantine would almost certainly not induce Hanoi to opt promptly for a negotiated settlement. Persistence in the quarantine over a period of months would--at a minimum--almost certainly compel Hanoi to review its basic strategy and the political calculations on which that strategy is based. Any final decisions on strategic options made after such a review, however, would not hinge on the quarantine alone but would reflect Hanoi's net analysis

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of all relevant factors--including levels of Chinese and Soviet aid, the course of events in South Vietnam, trends in the fortunes of the Communists' southern organization, manpower loss rates, the world political climate and Hanoi's assessment of the political temper within the United States.

Probable South Vietnamese Reactions

116. President Thieu and his associates are clearly convinced that domestic US opinion is a major factor in determining the course and pace of US policy in Vietnam. Thieu believed last year that the decision to end the bombing of North Vietnam was a move the Johnson administration felt it had to take for domestic political reasons. Thieu has also stated in private to his advisers that he understands the need for President Nixon's administration to withdraw some American troops this year in order to assuage public opinion in this country.

117. This view of domestic US political considerations helped Thieu take calmly what he saw as the failure of the US to retaliate when the Communists violated the "understandings" which led to the bombing halt. He appears to have reconciled himself to the likelihood that the US will not resume the bombing of North Vietnam or escalate the war by attacking North Vietnam in any fashion.

118. Thieu's estimate of the political constraints under which he believes the US Government is operating seems to be generally shared by his associates and, for that matter, by most politically conscious South Vietnamese. Thus the imposition of a quarantine against North Vietnam (without some prior Communist provocation or other major change in existing circumstances) would come as a surprise to Thieu, his associates, and most of his fellow countrymen. The initial reaction of non-Communist South Vietnamese would probably be one of exultant delight. There would be a lift in confidence about the future and about the willingness of the US Government to stay the course (two concepts most Vietnamese view as inextricably intertwined). This lift would certainly improve South Vietnamese morale and would probably have a beneficial effect on South

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Vietnamese performance in some areas. On the other hand, the fact of the quarantine might somewhat diminish South Vietnamese interest in seeking accommodation with the enemy or lessen the sense of urgency with which they viewed the need to set their own house in order to gird for a period of political competition.

119. The longer term impact of the quarantine on South Vietnamese attitudes, policies and performance would hinge on the course of events. If the quarantine should eventually prompt significant political concessions from Hanoi, these concessions (more than the quarantine itself) would enhance non-Communist political prospects in South Vietnam. On the other hand, if the quarantine should be imposed and then lifted without any obvious reciprocal gesture from Hanoi, virtually all politically concerned South Vietnamese would read this course of events as a major US political defeat which greatly enhanced the Vietnamese Communists' prospects of success.

Probable Reactions of Other East Asian Countries

120. Virtually all informed East Asians would see the postulated action as a certain sign that prospects for an early negotiated end to the war had faded. Few would expect the US move to affect decisively Hanoi's will to continue the war, or, at least in the short term, its ability to do so.

121. The more hawkish US allies in East Asia, Thailand and South Korea, would welcome the US action as an earnest of its intention to persist in seeking a favorable outcome of the war. In the other countries reactions would be somewhat ambivalent. While there is clearly a general desire to see the Communists stopped in South Vietnam, most governments want to see an end to the war and its attendant perils. The increased possibility of a US-Soviet military confrontation in the region would be particularly unnerving to them. Thus, support of the US action would be at best lukewarm. Leftist and anti-US elements, of course, would react vociferously wherever possible.

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Probable UK and Other Western European Reactions

124. The dominant reaction in the UK, in official circles as well as among the populace at large, would be grave concern and disappointment over what would be generally viewed as a distinct setback to hopes for any early peace in Vietnam. The most hostile criticism would be focused on the challenge being posed to the USSR and its implications for European security (e.g., Berlin), nuclear

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disarmament negotiations, and the East-West detente in general. Violent large-scale leftist demonstrations would once again plague the authorities. The fact that a number of British-flag dry-cargo vessels (based in Hong Kong) call regularly at Haiphong would probably not be a major factor in the UK reaction to the US move, because these vessels for the most part are owned or leased by firms controlled by the Chinese Communists.

125. Elsewhere in Western Europe, reactions would be about the same as in the UK, with the degree of antagonism toward the US probably greatest in the Scandinavian countries. In France, however, the reaction might lead to a reversal of the warming trend in Franco-American relations since the advent of new governments in both countries.

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