

12 December 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Honorable Henry Kissinger
SUBJECT : Enemy Strength in Vietnam

1. The "official" figures on Communist troop strength in South Vietnam are as follows:

Combat Forces

Viet Cong/North Vietnamese Army Main & Local Forces	
North Vietnamese Army	97,809 - 100,809
Viet Cong	<u>37,450 - 40,450</u>

TOTAL MAIN FORCE	138,259
Administrative Services	35,225
Guerrillas	<u>77,971</u>
TOTAL	251,455

2. We have not included them on the chart because they are under intensive review by DIA, MACV, and ourselves at the present time. So far, all we have agreed is that North Vietnamese Army strength in the South is in the range of 130,000 - 140,000, considerably higher than the 97,809 - 100,809 previously estimated. The CIA position is that the other figures in the table above should be raised similarly. This difference is now under negotiation between Washington and Saigon.

3. If you use any of these figures and they were to leak out, you would inevitably be faced with yet another controversy over the Vietnamese numbers game. I recommend strongly that instead you speak in terms of Communist regiments. There are 60 Communist regiments in the South; the usual figure used for these regiments is between 2,000 - 3,000.

R. J. SMITH
Deputy Director for Intelligence

P. S. I would be happy to discuss this matter with you over the phone if you want more background.

RJS:y d

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STATINTL

US ABM Program

The US ABM program currently involves the deployment of the Sentinel System. This ABM system has a projected force level of 480 Spartan long-range missiles and 192 Spring short-range missiles. The first missiles of the system are planned to be operational about 1972; the total force is scheduled to be operational by the end of 1976. An ABM force level of this size is intended to defend the continental US, Alaska, and Hawaii against a light ballistic missile attack from Communist China.

S E C R E T

25X1A

12 December 1968

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Questions Posed Last Night By Mr. Eagleberger
For Mr. Kissinger's Briefing

1. Strategic Balance

- a. Are the Soviets trying to get ahead of the US
in strategic weapons or is Moscow seeking parity?
(Answer: Moscow would like to get ahead in cer-
tain areas but a lot depends on US attitude; if
we agree to limitations Soviets might be more
interested in parity.)
- b. Comparison of strategic strike force capabili-
ties for USSR/US in October 1962, June 1967.
(Answer: Bruce Clarke gave rough order of magni-
tude for IRBMs, bombers, and sub-based missiles.)
- c. Are Minuteman III and Poseidons MIRVs?
(Answer: Yes.)
- d. How many subs do Soviets have with Polaris-type
missiles?
(Answer: Irrelevant question because Sovs have

S E C R E T

11 December 1968

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MEMORANDUM FOR: [REDACTED]

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SUBJECT : Information Requested by [REDACTED]

1. Significant Soviet general purpose (i.e., conventional) forces include 1.3 million men in 70 combat-ready divisions plus another 83 divisions at lesser levels of readiness. In addition, the Soviets have 3,500 fighter and light bomber aircraft in tactical aviation. The Soviet navy has about 300 torpedo attack and cruise missile submarines, over half of them medium- and short-range diesel types of limited usefulness.

2. The East European countries have about 40 combat-ready divisions and about 2,600 tactical combat aircraft.

3. NATO and Warsaw Pact M-Day forces are roughly equal in numbers of men available on each side. The Soviet stance vis-a-vis NATO has improved over pre-intervention days as the result of the movement of four divisions forward from the USSR into Czechoslovakia and beefing up their logistic forces.

BRUCE C. CLARKE, Jr.
Director
Strategic Research

SECRET