

Executive Registry

TS#185880

30 July 1965

Noted by [Signature] DCB 25X1



MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Review of SNIE 10-9-65, "Communist and Free World Reactions to a Possible US Course of Action"

1. We have reviewed SNIE 10-9-65 in the light of the differences between the US actions assumed for the estimate and the actual decisions announced by the President on 28 July.

2. As far as the DRV and Chinese reaction are concerned we had estimated, in general, that the assumed US actions would not cause any major changes in strategy or tactics. We believe that both the DRV and China will interpret the Presidential announcements as foreshadowing additional steps, such as the call up of reserves, additional defense appropriations, and further increase in US force strength in Vietnam beyond 125,000. Accordingly, we think these judgments in the estimate are still valid.

3. Much of the estimate dealt with the effects of and reactions to an expansion of US bombings in the DRV.

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Though the President's announcement did not mention any proposed expansion of bombing, we believe that the Communists will assume that these are in prospect, and will react along the lines we estimated. The recent retaliation against the SAM sites may lead the Communists to conclude that the SAM ring around Hanoi will not deter the US from attacking the area. We continue to believe that the USSR will replace destroyed equipment and continue a build-up of air defense for the DRV.

4. As for the Soviets, we estimated that announcements of an increase in total US force strength, reserve call-ups, and higher defense spending would put pressure on them for corresponding countermoves. These pressures may have been somewhat relieved by the tone and form of the President's announcement. Although the Soviets probably also estimate some additional US steps will be taken later, they may now feel they have an opportunity to react in a less strident fashion. US handling of the SAM incident, particularly the "presumption" that the sites are manned by the DRV, may be a further incentive for the Soviets to adopt a more moderate tone.

5. Quite independent of the President's action, however, an increased Soviet defense effort, as a result of the general

Vietnamese crisis, may have already been agreed to in Moscow in connection with the new five year economic plan (1966-70).

FOR THE BOARD OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES:



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Approved For Release 2007/03/06 : CIA-RDP79R00904A001200010020-8

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