

**SECRET**

DDI-2190-6-1

19 May 1966

MEMORANDUM FOR: R.J. Smith

SUBJECT : Fragility of Political Situation  
in Vietnam

1. In estimates and memoranda of the last year or two we have obviously taken official note of what we referred to as the "fragility" of the political situation in Vietnam. In some of our documents we have pointed out a range of possible happenings in Vietnam which could cause the fragility of the political base virtually to disintegrate. The one of these possibilities which has come most insistently to mind in the last few days has been the one we dubbed a major military reverse.

2. Given the turmoil in ARVN forces in the northernmost provinces of South Vietnam (I Corps), it seems to me that we should all be extremely alert to the possibility of some major military action by VC and PAVN forces adjoining the area. For example, might this not be an auspicious moment for the DRV to try to push the demilitarized zone 50 miles to the south?

3. This is the sort of thing I had in mind when I mentioned my apprehensions at the morning meeting.

[Redacted Signature]

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Sherman Kent

*Sending a copy to [Redacted] distrib. to your judgment.*

[Redacted]

*otherwise leave further* 25X1

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