

19 November 1973

DRAFT MESSAGE FROM DR. KISSINGER TO THE PEOPLE'S
REPUBLIC OF CHINA

1. The United States Government is deeply concerned over what it sees as unmistakable signs of North Vietnamese preparations to resume armed conflict on a large scale in South Vietnam. The United States regards the present situation with the utmost seriousness, and cannot stand idly by if North Vietnam continues its present activities.

2. The following evidence has convinced the United States Government that North Vietnam is in fact preparing to launch a major offensive. (On each point below, the evidence is strong and is fully accepted by us.)

(a) The North Vietnamese have sent more than 22,000 military personnel south since 1 September of this year to strengthen their armed forces in South Vietnam and adjacent border areas. Since 1 January 1973 they have sent a total of over 75,000 troops to the south.

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(b) [REDACTED] the North Vietnamese are planning to send almost an equal number of additional troops into various parts of South Vietnam during the 1973-1974 dry season -- starting

in December 1973. We can see no reason why Hanoi would plan to dispatch these additional troops to South Vietnam, in complete violation of the Paris Agreement and Protocols, except to assemble the manpower and reserves necessary to launch a major military offensive.

(c) The North Vietnamese have moved into South Vietnam and adjacent border areas enough stocks of munitions and military equipment to sustain heavy combat activity for at least eight months. (Some of these stockpiles were already in position when the Paris Agreement was signed last January, but they have been greatly expanded since that time.) They are now preparing -- as the weather improves in southern Laos -- to bring still more munitions and military equipment into South Vietnam.

(d) As of mid-November, North Vietnamese Army units in all of southern Laos were preparing to move large quantities of war materiel further south. Such activity, as well as the very presence of North Vietnamese military units in Laos, is a clear violation of the Paris Agreement.

(e) The North Vietnamese have augmented their logistic forces in northern South Vietnam by some 15,000 men in recent months.

They would not need these logistic forces unless they planned to expand the support to their combat units in this area.

(f) The North Vietnamese are making major improvements on roads in southern Laos, and have nearly completed a parallel road from North Vietnam through western South Vietnam from the DMZ to South Vietnam's Military Region 3. These two road nets have no discernible civilian purpose but they obviously make it much easier for the North Vietnamese to prepare for and support an offensive than was previously the case.

(g) The measures which the North Vietnamese are now taking can be compared with those they took in the months prior to March 1972, when they launched their last offensive. North Vietnam's military capabilities in the south are now at least as great as they were at the end of March 1972, and in some areas they are greater. The South Vietnamese government since that time has also improved its capabilities, and would be in a better position to withstand a North Vietnamese offensive without U. S. air support. Under a heavy North Vietnamese attack, however, U. S. air support might again prove necessary.

(h) It is impossible to read this North Vietnamese buildup as prudential, as a response to South Vietnamese provocations, or indeed as anything but preparation for major North Vietnamese offensive action.

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(i) Finally,

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[REDACTED] the North Vietnamese and the so-called "Provisional Revolutionary Government" plan to begin a major offensive within the next few months.

3. In addition to the evidence above, we have in recent months received repeated reports that new artillery pieces, tanks and other armored vehicles have been observed at various points inside North Vietnam along the major rail lines from China. These reports are of great concern to us because if true they would indicate that North Vietnam is receiving additional military equipment from China and the Soviet Union.

4. [There should probably be a final paragraph indicating or hinting that the U. S. might have to take certain actions in response to the above-listed North Vietnamese activities.]