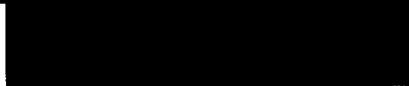
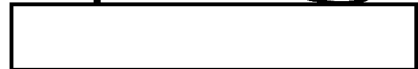


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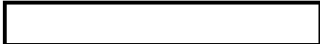
Intelligence Memorandum

CHINESE COMMUNIST FORCES IN NORTH VIETNAM

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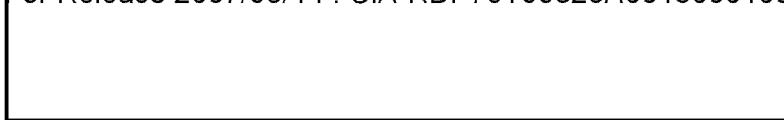
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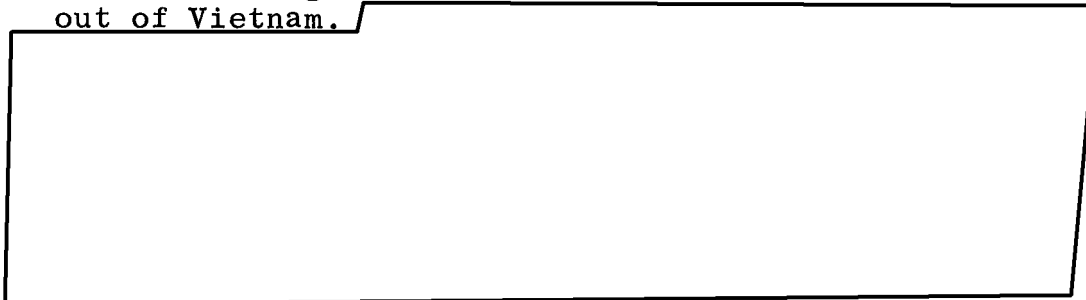
INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

Chinese Communist Forces in North Vietnam

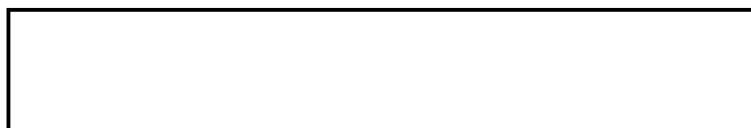
Summary

The general composition and force level of the Chinese Communist military support units in North Vietnam have remained basically unchanged in recent months although a number of units have moved in and out of Vietnam.

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NOTE: This memorandum was prepared by the Office of Current Intelligence. It has been coordinated with the Office of Research and Reports and the Office of National Estimates. The estimated total troop strength of the Chinese forces presently in North Vietnam specified in the memorandum has been coordinated with the Defense Intelligence Agency. This estimate is based on the limited evidence available and is, of course, subject to change as more information is acquired or as analysis continues. DIA does not believe that the evidence is sufficient to support the force structure projected in this memorandum.



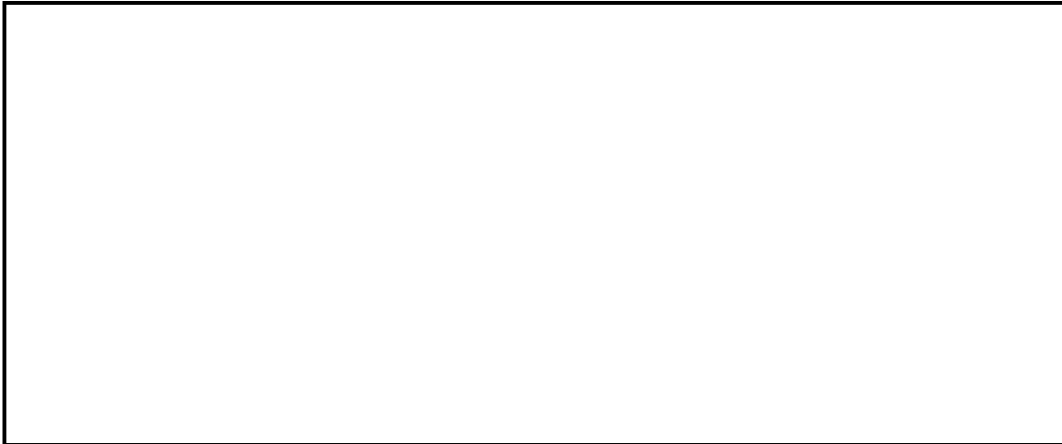
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This is the first actual augmentation since August 1965, when the Chinese AAA units initially deployed into northern North Vietnam. The addition of a confirmed third AAA division raises the estimated number of Chinese military personnel in North Vietnam to a range of 26,000-48,000. If the suspect CCA AAA unit also proves to be of division size, it would raise the upper range to about 50,000.

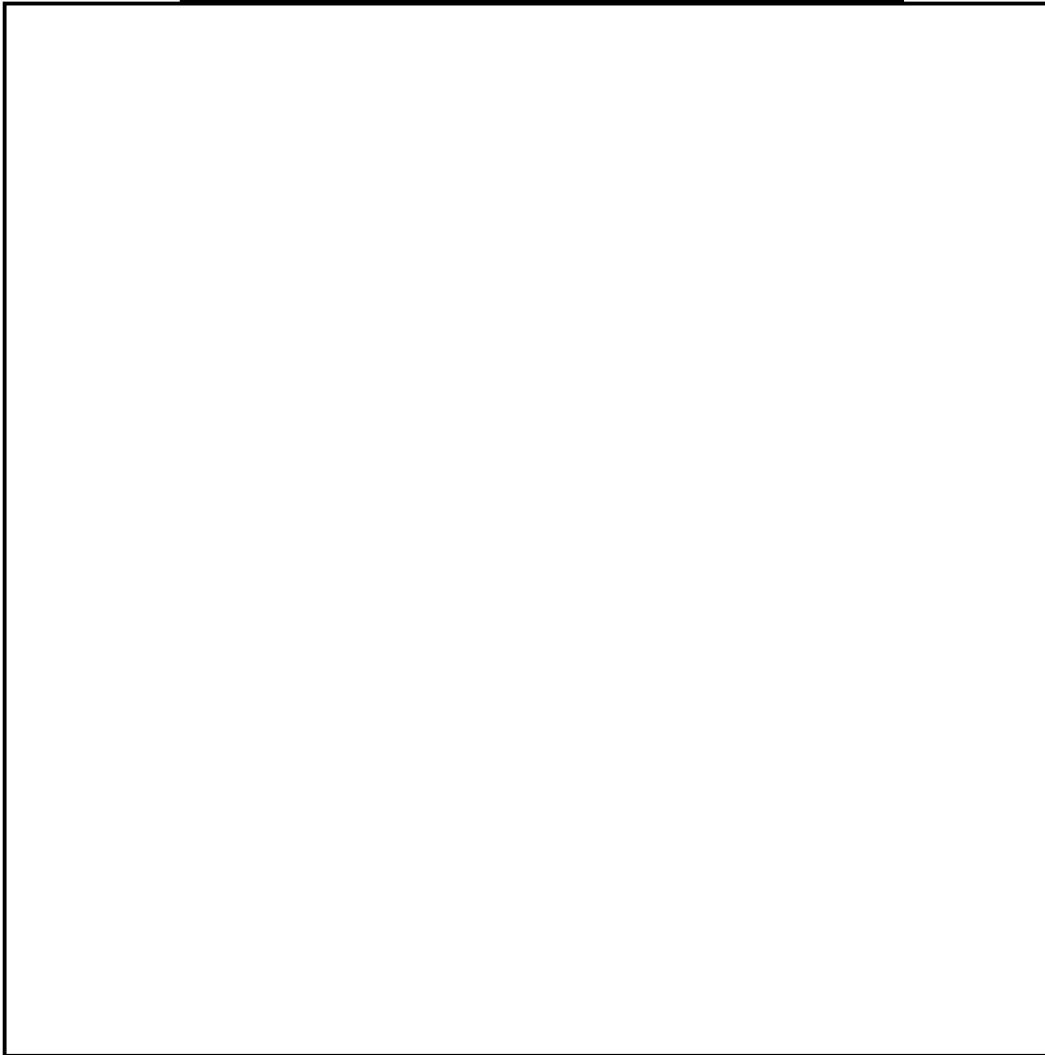
The increase in Chinese AAA strength may be related to the recent geographical expansion of Chinese construction activities. A major Chinese engineer unit was recently deployed to the Hanoi area, the first time that any major Chinese unit has been detected this far south. The move coincides with photographic evidence which indicates that a dual gauge rail line is probably completed between the Chinese border and Kep and apparently will be extended southward into the Hanoi area.

Other major Chinese engineering projects in northern North Vietnam include apparently completed coastal defense sites in the northeast, a large airfield being constructed at Yen Bai in the northwest, rail and road construction and improvement, and the construction of dispersed military camps and storage facilities in the mountain regions near the Chinese border. Most of these projects are long-term endeavors designed to upgrade North Vietnam's overall defensive capabilities. The improvements in land transportation routes between China and North Vietnam also enhance Peking's capability to increase its support for the Hanoi regime.



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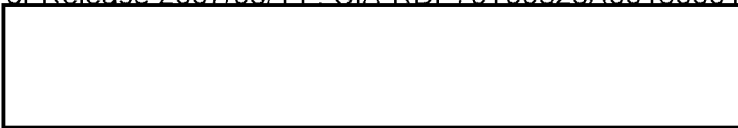


8. Prior to the entry of the [redacted] AAA Division, the strength of the Chinese forces in North Vietnam was estimated in the range of 25,000 to 45,000. If the [redacted] AAA Division is up to normal strength--and there is no reason to suppose that it is not--then the upper limit of the troop strength figure should be raised by about 3,000. Leaving open the possibility that it entered North Vietnam at reduced strength, however, the lower limit is increased by a correspondingly smaller amount. Thus the new estimate of Chinese military personnel in North Vietnam is the range of 26,000 to 48,000. Confirmation of a division-level status for the suspect CCA AAA unit in northeast DRV would raise these figures by another 1,000 and 3,000 respectively.

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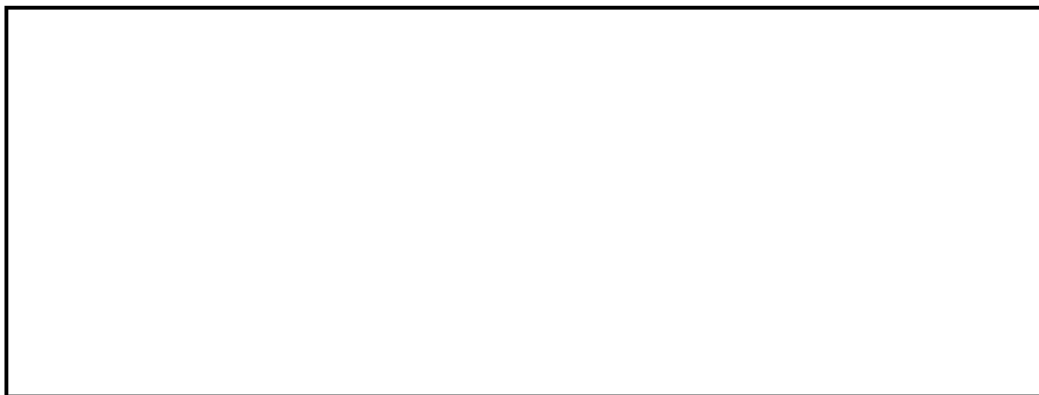


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Chinese Construction Activity in North Vietnam

9. There is growing evidence that most of the major construction projects (see map) in the northern third of North Vietnam are being undertaken largely by Chinese army engineers. Many of the skilled North Vietnamese construction crews were apparently transferred to southern North Vietnam in 1965 to concentrate on the repair of transportation routes damaged by US air strikes.



Rail Construction

11. One of the chief Chinese projects is the reconstruction of the rail line leading northeast from Hanoi to the Chinese border. The northern half of this narrow gauge line has apparently been converted to a dual meter and standard gauge line by the addition of a third rail from Ping-hsiang to Kep. Although photography has confirmed the presence of a third rail only on the southern portion of this segment, the recent appearance of standard-gauge rolling stock in the Kep area strongly suggests that the third rail runs all the way to Ping-hsiang.

12. Recent photography suggests that the dual gauge line will be extended southward to at least the important Yen Vien rail classification yard north of Hanoi. These signs include the appearance of oversize rail ties south of Kep and the construction of a turning wye with a large radius of curvature at the Yen Vien yard. Because of the difficult






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terrain in the area south of Kep, it is expected that this portion of the project will probably not be complete before mid-1967.

13. Analysis of photography indicates that the new standard gauge line between Kep and the large but still incomplete iron and steel complex at Thai Nguyen was finished by late November. Completion of this line and the dual gauge line between Kep and China will permit standard gauge rolling stock to move directly from China. This line, which is about 30 miles long, has 11 major bridges and tunnels, and was completed in about ten months.

14. Other recent photography indicates that the Chinese are giving increased attention to the rail line leading northwest from Hanoi to the border town of Lao Cai. Preliminary work on the re-alignment and improvement of this narrow gauge line has been noted at several points in the Yen Bai area since early November. Although this line historically has been of only secondary importance, its overall strategic value will increase as the Chinese push forward with their own ambitious rail construction projects in Yunnan.

Road Construction

15. There is also evidence that the Chinese may be putting in a major effort on road construction in the northern border area (see map). This activity, which apparently extends on both sides of the border, is much harder to detect because of the lack of high resolution photography along the Sino-North Vietnamese frontier.

16. However, there have been a number of high altitude reconnaissance missions over one section of the border in the Lai Chau area. Detailed analysis of this photography has revealed extensive construction activity along the major road net from the Chinese border to the Lai Chau area. If this area is representative of the kind of work going on along the entire Sino-North Vietnamese border, the Chinese are investing considerable time and effort in this endeavor.

17. The activity detected between the border and the town of Lai Chau falls into two basic categories: road construction and the construction of dispersed military camps and storage facilities. The road construction consists of roadbed improvements, realignment, and new road development. Some of this work was begun in early 1965, mainly in the immediate vicinity of the border. It is being carried out at a moderate but sustained rate. A similarity in the layout of the workcamps along the construction sites of those in Yunnan, plus the general southward development of this network, suggests active participation by Chinese construction crews.

18. The photography also reveals that since early 1966 some 35 dispersed storage facilities and military camps have been built along the improved road system in the Lai Chau area. Over 300 small storage buildings with a capacity of 10,000 to 20,000 tons have been detected thus far. Some of these installations are protected by automatic weapons positions and personnel trenches. There does not appear to be any deliberate attempt to camouflage the buildings or other structures.

19. The purpose of these facilities remains undetermined. Their appearance in conjunction with the southward development of the road and telecommunications system from China suggests that they may be related to Chinese military contingency needs. There can be little question but that these facilities will provide the Chinese with improved access to North Vietnam and northern Laos.

Airfield Construction

20. The Chinese airfield construction project at Yen Bai has made little progress in the past few months. The field was flooded by heavy rains last fall. Available information indicates that Chinese engineer troops are still in the process of leveling and filling the runway base. Even with a maximum effort, it is doubtful that the airfield can be made serviceable before late this year.

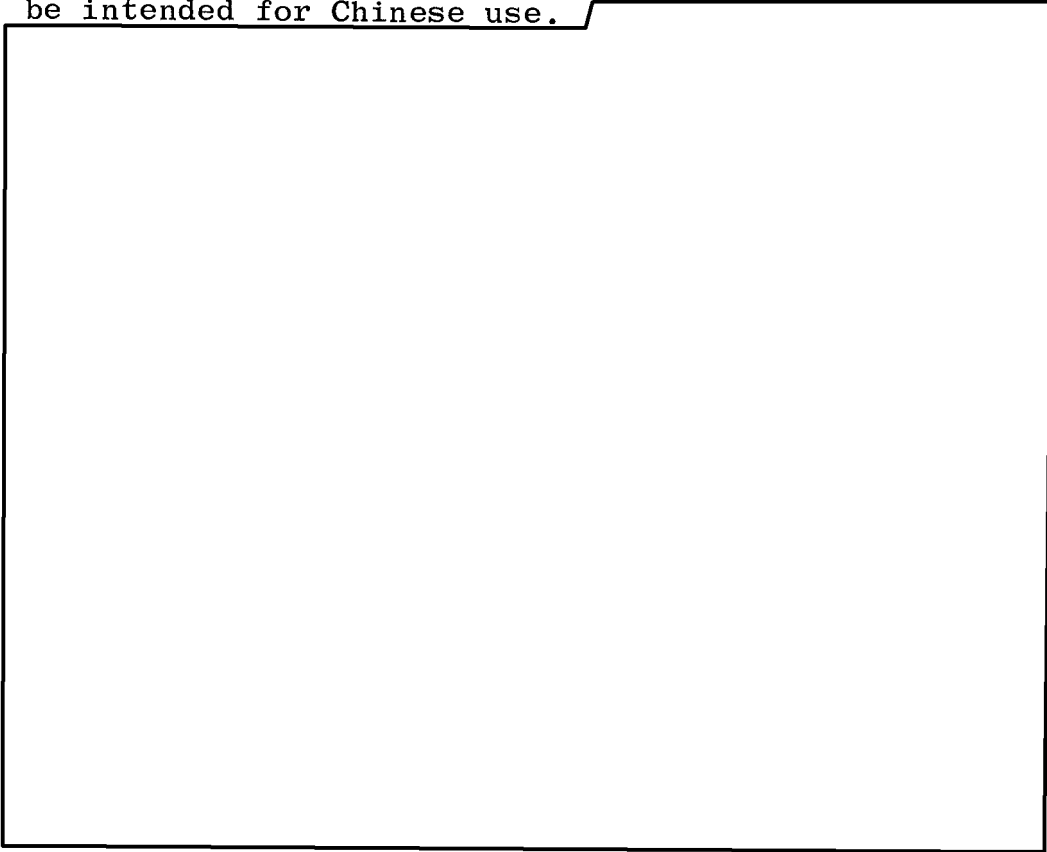
21. The timing of the airfield completion may take on added significance in the months ahead. There

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are some indications that the airbase ultimately may be intended for Chinese use.

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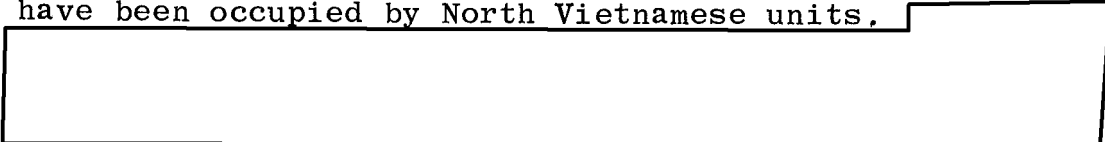


Coastal Defense Installations

24. When Chinese engineers were dispatched to North Vietnam in the summer of 1965, the first units were put to work on improving the coastal defense positions, suggesting that Hanoi's and Peking's first concern was the threat of an allied invasion of the northeast coast. The area's proximity to the China border makes it of special concern to Peking.

25. The troops that accomplished this task returned to China in October 1966, the first noted withdrawal of a major Chinese unit from North Vietnam. The new coastal defense installations apparently have been occupied by North Vietnamese units.

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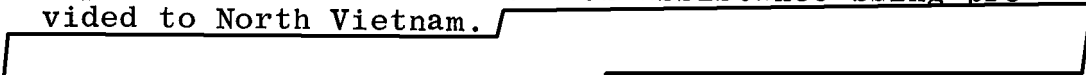
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Outlook

26. Peking's official expressions of support for North Vietnam continue to be stated in formulations vague enough to cover a wide range of activities. Our evidence indicates that the Chinese are limiting their efforts to logistical backup of Hanoi--in keeping with Peking's repeated assertion that China is the "great rear area" of the North Vietnamese.

27. There is no evidence thus far that the current political turmoil in China is having any direct impact on the kind or level of assistance being provided to North Vietnam.

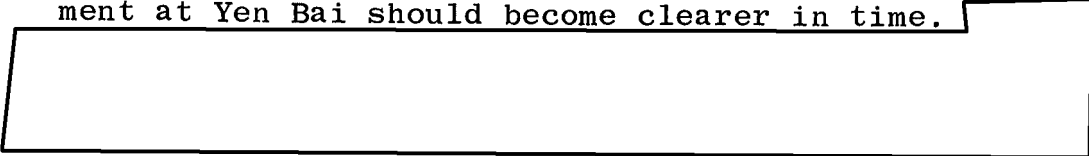


Unless something like a civil war situation develops in China it seems likely that there will be no major cutbacks in aid, although disruption of rail transport inside China could slow up delivery schedules.

28. Regular Chinese engineer and AAA units have now been operating in North Vietnam for 18 months. Until the major construction-related unit arrived in the Hanoi area in late December, the Chinese had been scrupulously avoiding the densely populated Red River delta area. Most of the Chinese units have remained in the remote mountain regions near the Chinese border. This probably explains why so few eye-witness reports have been received concerning the presence of major Chinese units in North Vietnam.

29. For the short term, it seems likely that the major Chinese engineer units will remain in North Vietnam and may extend their activities farther south as they complete their assignments. It is also reasonable to assume that under these circumstances Chinese AAA units would deploy southward to provide local protection for the engineer troops.

30. The extent and purpose of Chinese involvement at Yen Bai should become clearer in time.





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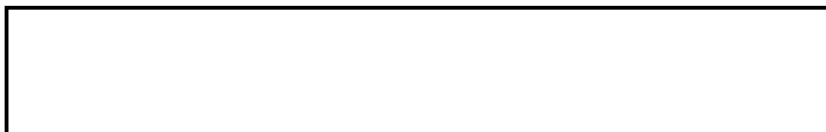


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31. A steady buildup of air defense and naval forces has been underway in south China for many years. There has, however, been no movement of ground force units in China which would signal a decision to alter the present pattern of cautious Chinese involvement. The Chinese have not moved a single major combat unit closer to the Vietnamese border, and all important army formations have remained essentially in the same areas they have occupied for years.



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Talking Paper on "Chinese Communist Forces in North Vietnam"

1. This is the sixth memorandum published on this subject. Secretary of Defense McNamara has expressed a desire for periodic reviews of this situation. The last memorandum was published on 23 September.

2. The memorandum's main conclusions:

a. The general composition and force level of the Chinese Communist military forces in North Vietnam have remained basically unchanged, although there has been a recent augmentation of Chinese AAA units in northeast North Vietnam.

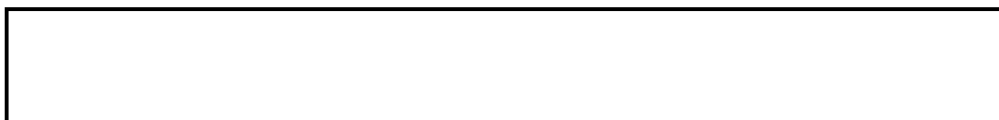
b. There are presently nine major Chinese units in North Vietnam--five engineer units and three, possibly four, anti-aircraft divisions.

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3. Routine internal and external dissemination is recommended.



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