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Following draft, dissemed 5-DDI, 5-DOCI, 2

[redacted]

2 [redacted] runs:

War in Vietnam	6:15 minutes
Chinese Attitude	2:45
Hong Kong	1:00
Middle East	<u>4:45</u>

15 minutes+/-

Only limited surgery was performed on draft contributions, [redacted]

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[redacted] and in any event it is difficult at this point, with the way things are moving, to determine which phase should give up its pound of flesh.

Hopefully, pieces are organized so that the bulk of the detailed current reporting can be inserted at the breaks on pages 2 and 11, x avoiding major rewrite and total reproduction of the remainder.

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cbc

[redacted] will handle further processing for you)

State Department review(s) completed.

23 May 1967

DRAFT WHITE HOUSE
BRIEFING FOR DCITHE STATE OF THE WAR IN VIETNAM

- I. The increasing Communist commitment to a major confrontation along the D.M.Z. in Vietnam appears to me to be the keystone of a new Communist strategy designed to cope with our present military posture in South Vietnam.
 - A. When the major search-and-destroy operations began reaching new peaks of effectiveness, you will recall that there were indications that the enemy was considering a reversion to classic guerrilla warfare, avoiding contact with major troop units as much as possible.
 - B. As of this morning, however, we know of elements of five North Vietnamese divisions in and around the DMZ--and they do not appear to be evading contact at the expense of important positions.
 1. The incoming rocket, mortar, and artillery fire is increasing in frequency, intensity, and weight, coming from larger weapons not used by the enemy before this year.

2. At the same time that we have a major operation in progress in the Demilitarized Zone, the enemy is continuing his efforts to build up the pressure against the Marine base at Con Thien.

NB: Intent of this arrangement is to facilitate putting fresh and updating material into the foregoing paragraphs, in hopes that the basic argument which follows will stand.

- II. This apparent paradox in enemy strategy, we believe, reflects a Communist attempt to play for a stalemate.
- A. The new DMZ "front," according to captured enemy documents, is intended to draw in enough allied reaction forces so that the Communists will be able to regain some initiative in the highlands, the central coastal lowlands, and in the III Corps area, where they have suffered a number of substantial defeats since U.S. forces were introduced.
- B. There is plentiful evidence of every type that the enemy plans major offensives in each of these areas during the summer months. These will have a number of objectives:
1. They will try to re-establish control or influence over areas they have lost. This will make a particular target of pacification efforts.
 2. They will be looking for psychological victories which might shake public faith, both in Vietnam and the United States, in the allied ability to win.
 3. And above all, the Communists will be trying to inflict heavy casualties, even at heavy cost to themselves, in anticipation of an erosive effect on domestic resolve in the United States.

- III. As we analyze the enemy idea of a stalemate, it is a situation in which allied military and civil efforts at present levels can no longer make clearcut or significant progress.
- A. In such a situation, the United States would either have to go all out in Vietnam, or drastically modify its policies on the war.
1. We think that Hanoi probably believes it would be very difficult for us to decide on going all out, because we could not be sure that even the increased effort would produce victory.
- IV. It thus looks like a long, hot summer in the ground war in South Vietnam, with the Communists standing a good chance of gaining at least some of their objectives, and recovering some of their lost momentum.
- A. We see no signs that enemy manpower, morale, or supply problems in South Vietnam are serious enough to make the Communists abandon the war if their upcoming summer offensive fails.
- B. They are using their augmented firepower throughout South Vietnam to try to force some friendly units from offense to defense.
- C. They are also using a better mix of conventional and guerrilla tactics.

1. Small main force elements frequently operate with the guerrillas in the growing number of attacks against pacification teams and installations.
- V. We believe that the Communists in their current strategy draw considerable comfort from their demonstrated ability to support the war in the South despite the air attacks on North Vietnam.
- A. In the past few months, the stepped-up raids on the North have made life considerably more grim for the populace, but [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- that morale--in terms of discipline, confidence, and willingness to endure hardship--is still sound, both among the leaders and among the people.
- B. According to our present information, damage to recent targets in the Hanoi area has not yet knocked any of them out permanently.
 1. The Hanoi thermal power plant was apparently off line briefly after the attack on May 21st, but now seems to be operating again at reduced capacity. Some lights are in the southern part of Hanoi.
 - C. Recent attacks on Hanoi have run into the stiffest anti-aircraft defense yet, and the North Vietnamese appear to have ample supplies of armament and ammunition, including SAMs.

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D. This reinforces other indications that the supply of material from the Bloc countries has increased. It seems to be flowing smoothly to North Vietnam through China.

1. We have no reason to expect any decrease in Bloc aid, and we believe that the Communist countries can adequately replace bomb losses in everything from food to war materiel.

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VI. On the other hand, we have no firm indications that Hanoi's allies have sent or plan to send more sophisticated new weapons systems to North Vietnam.

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Chinese Attitude

VII. As for Peking's attitude, we believe that the Chinese Communists consider things are going reasonably well in Vietnam from their point of view.

- A. As they see it, Hanoi remains steadfast, and Communists forces in South Vietnam continue fighting, at a comparatively modest cost to China.
- B. The Chinese have repeatedly asserted, and probably still believe, that time is on the Communist side.
- C. Their idea is that if the war can be kept going long enough, the political pressures in the United States and on the United States will become insupportable.

VII. With this estimate of the situation, Peking also would agree on the immediate objective of a military stalemate, costly to the United States and to the Vietnamese but not to the Chinese.

- A. To achieve this, the Chinese will continue to give the Vietnamese Communists war material, food, and "technical assistance" [redacted]

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- 1. We think they would increase the level of such support if Hanoi asks for it.

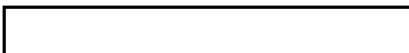
- IX. Peking would take another long, hard look at the cards, however, if a change in the overall situation required a more direct Chinese involvement and greater risk of war to keep the Vietnamese fighting.
- A. The Chinese all along have tried to hold down the danger of a military confrontation with the United States, for all their uncompromising public stance and periodic pledges of support for Hanoi.
1. If anything, they are now less disposed to intervene directly than they were in 1965.
- B. Peking's caution has increased in direct proportion to the level of the U.S. effort in Vietnam. Chinese propaganda has decreased steadily in volume and vehemence since the spring of 1966.
- C. Chinese Communist spokesmen have indicated privately for two years that China would come into the war if U.S. aircraft attacked targets in China, or if there were a major U.S. invasion of North Vietnam.
1. These conditions probably still hold in general today, although it is unlikely that Peking's response to either situation would be automatic.
 2. The Chinese might also move to establish a buffer zone outside the Chinese frontier if North Vietnamese collapse looked imminent.

D. There are no indications, however, that Peking thinks any of these contingencies are likely in the near future--as a result of either U.S. or Chinese initiative.



HONG KONG

- X. To take a brief look at Hong Kong, the Chinese Communists are clearly out to undercut the position of the British government in the colony, and at the same time expand their own base of public support.
- A. The success Peking had last winter in humiliating the Portuguese in Macao may have encouraged the Chinese to challenge the British when labor troubles in Hong Kong created the opportunity early in May.
- B. The firm stand taken by London and the tough tactics of the Hong Kong police appear to have given Peking second thoughts.
- C. I doubt that the Chinese are ready to jeopardize the \$550 million in foreign exchange which they obtained through Hong Kong last year.



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1. There is, of course, room for misjudgment, and the Chinese may feel they can still put considerably more pressure on the British without serious risk to Peking's economic stake in a British Hong Kong.

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THE MIDDLE EAST

- I. The situation in the Middle East took a very serious turn last night, although there is no evidence that either Israel or the Arab nations really want a war.
- A. The trouble is that--except for the smaller nations like Jordan and Lebanon--neither do they want peace very badly.
- B. Now Nasir, who is not prepared for war with Israel, has announced that he is closing the Gulf of Aqaba to Israeli shipping, and he must know that to the Israelis, this ranks as a casus belli.

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II. The crisis has arisen from the persistent raids by Palestinian terrorists, [redacted] into Israel.

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A. The Israelis trounced the Syrians in an air battle on April 7. There have been 14 terrorist incidents since then. The Israelis, concerned because the raids are showing growing capabilities, have renewed their standard warnings of retaliation.

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B.

C.

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III. Now the Egyptians have about 50,000 men, 71 aircraft, and 500 tanks in Sinai on or near the Israeli border.

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[Redacted]

twice as many tanks, three times the air strength, and 20,000 more men than Egypt has normally had there.

IV. The Israelis in turn are convinced that they are facing a new situation, with UAR forces beefed up and the UNEF safety mechanism withdrawn. They have carried out at least 30 to 40 percent mobilization as a protective measure, and are re-assessing their security requirements.

A. As I remarked earlier, we have considered that the Israelis probably rate any attempt to interfere with shipping to their southern port of Eilat as a cause for war.

B. They have also been quite firm in the warning that any new terrorism involving Israeli loss of life will bring some form of retaliation against the Arabs.

C. We believe Tel Aviv will not accept any attempt to impose a U.N. presence or controls on Israel.

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IV. The Soviet attitude is of the utmost importance to the Arabs at present [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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- B. The Soviets face real difficulties; they don't want a full-blown war, particularly one which could well bring U.S. commitments into play, and yet they would rather stay "on the side of the Arabs" than come down unequivocally on the side of peace. Unrest and tension are and have been exceptionally useful to the Soviets in their attempt to erode Western influence in the Middle East.
- C. The private Soviet line was probably given to Ambassador Thompson in Moscow last Friday when Thompson told Dobrynin he hoped that the Soviets were exerting as much pressure in Syria as we were in Israel. Dobrynin answered:
- "I think we can match you."
- V. Even with restraining Soviet pressures, the danger lies in the fact that the leaders on each side are being moved by the chain of events, rather than controlling those events at this point.
- A. The Israelis, for example, feel that they must now patrol by land and air into Sinai, and there is a hint of fatalism in the Arab

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moves which is clearly expressed in Nasir's aggressive announcement about the Gulf of Aqaba.

- B. Under the circumstances, war can now come from accident, incident, or miscalculation.

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