

NSC 9 Jul

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6 July 1969

DDCI BRIEFING FOR  
7 July NSC MEETING

NORTH VIETNAM

I. [ ] One of the better intelligence indicators of North Vietnamese intentions for the near term is the rate at which North Vietnamese manpower is started down the infiltration pipeline from North Vietnam toward the combat areas in the south.]

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- A. Our continuing study of all of the available evidence <sup>indicates</sup> ~~shows~~ that there has <sup>probably</sup> been an almost complete stand-down in the dispatch of replacement groups since late March.
- B. When the North Vietnamese are engaged in substantial infiltration, we can detect battalion-sized groups of replacements as they enter the pipeline.
1. No such groups were detected in April, only two were observed in May, and there has been no evidence of any regular infiltration groups since then.
- C. Enemy main force strength has been maintained this year at about the same level as the end

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of 1968, although Communist losses in the first half of the year have been roughly comparable to the high casualty rate of 1968. This is because many of the 80,000 to 100,000 men placed into the infiltration pipeline in late 1968 and early 1969 are only now reaching the combat areas in South Vietnam, generally offsetting current enemy losses.

- D. Our evidence on the stand-down since March, however, means that the arrival of North Vietnamese replacements will dry up some time around mid-summer.
  - 1. It follows that if the enemy remains in the field and continues to take the level of casualties he has suffered so far this year, his main force strength will decline rapidly during the third quarter of 1969.
- (E. I should add that your intelligence community has looked closely and carefully for any indication that the North Vietnamese have somehow masked a continuing flow of infiltration from our collection procedures, and we find

no solid evidence that Hanoi is engaged in deception or suppression of the evidence we have obtained in the past.)

ENEMY  
OPTIONS  
II.

There are a variety of possible explanations for the infiltration stand-down.

- A. We do not believe that a manpower squeeze is by itself an adequate explanation. Our estimate of Communist casualties last year is considerably in excess of the annual class of 18-year-old draft eligibles, but Hanoi still has a large manpower pool from which it can draw more troops if necessary.
- B. There are some other explanations which are more substantial, but they are not wholly satisfactory because they are based on the premise that the Communists are making their present moves almost exclusively for military purposes.
1. For example, the stand-down could reflect a tactical decision to switch to a much lower level of activity--possibly limited to shelling, sapper attacks, and guerrilla harassment--in order to conserve manpower for a protracted war.

2. We believe that the Hanoi Politburo probably considers, however, that to return indefinitely to a much lower level of combat would be to admit defeat, and to abandon any hope of obtaining major concessions from the United States at an early date.

3. Similarly, Hanoi could intend to change the focus of its attacks, or undertake some basic redeployment. Instead of past infiltration methods, the North Vietnamese could deploy additional divisions across the DMZ into I Corps, and then move the divisions which are now in I Corps farther south.

*OR: all out attack.*

4. At present, however, indications of Communist intentions in the DMZ area are mixed, and do not present a clear pattern which would support the hypothesis I have just outlined.

III. Looking at such political evidence and other intelligence [redacted] along with the infiltration stand-down, we believe that the most likely interpretation is that the Hanoi

Politburo has decided on a period during which they will emphasize the "talk" phase of their over-all "fight-talk-fight" strategy, instead of the fighting.

A. We believe that some time this summer, the Communists will enter a period of reduced military activity that will be prolonged for some months.

1. Hanoi may calculate that a hiatus in offensive activity could yield both military and political advantages. Communist military units would have a period of rest, while Hanoi's negotiators in Paris could try to obtain allied political concessions and a reduction in allied military operations.
2. There was a prolonged military lull of this type in 1968. Between August and late November, there was little infiltration, and more than half of the enemy main force units were pulled back into out-of-country sanctuaries.
3. At the same time, the Paris talks moved into the stages that eventually produced the bombing halt.

- [REDACTED]
- B. The Communists would still retain the option of mounting another round of offensive activity early next year, if the extended lull did not produce either movement in Paris or reduced allied activity in South Vietnam.
    - 1. They could start troops down the pipeline as late as September or October, and be ready for another offensive in early 1970.
  - C. As an alternative, the Communists might try to turn the lull into a more permanent scaling-down of the combat level, by instigating a call for a cease-fire.
    - 1. Hanoi would prefer a cease-fire to follow agreement on political issues, and it would certainly prefer--to avoid any ostensible sign of weakness--that the call should be made by a third power, rather than by the Communists.
    - 2. It is a matter of record, however, that virtually every substantial reduction in Communist military activity has been followed by suggestions--in third countries and even from elements in this



country--that the time is ripe for a  
cease-fire.

3. As for the timing of political concessions ensuring the viability of the Communist apparatus in the south, if the Communists saw no prospect of getting such a deal before the cease-fire, they would certainly arrange for the cease-fire proposal to constitute a package deal with some political gambit.
4. This "cease-fire plus" would be calculated to offer an end to the fighting which the United States would find politically difficult to reject, combined with a political "plus" which the Government of South Vietnam would find very difficult to accept.

IV. We have examined the political developments of recent months along with the infiltration stand-down and other current military developments, and they point back to the period from February 21--when Politburo member Le Duc Tho arrived in Hanoi from Paris--and April 28, when he left again.

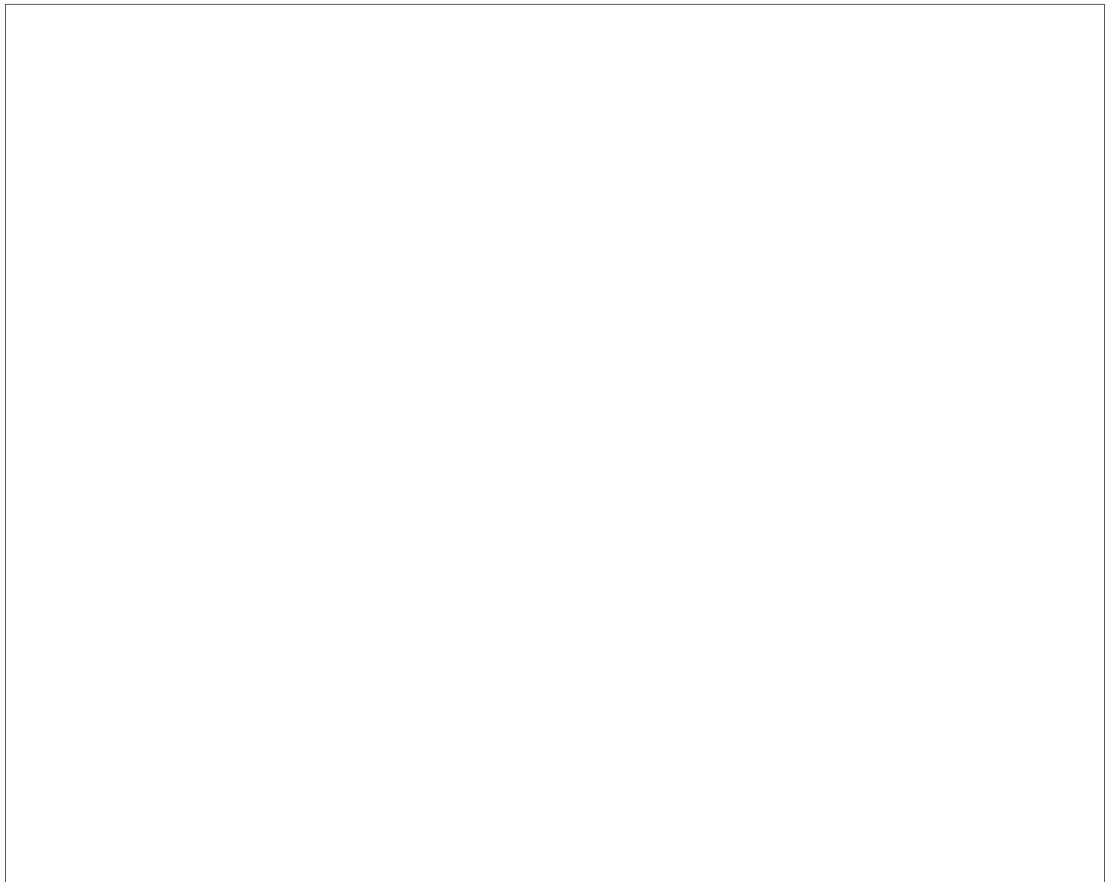
A. At some time during that period, there were North Vietnamese strategy sessions which produced the decisions to cut back infiltration, to issue the 10-point program attributed to the National Liberation Front in early May, and to announce the so-called "Provisional Revolutionary Government" in early June.

B. Taken together, these developments lead us to conclude that North Vietnam is doing something more than simply digging in for the long haul, and as I said earlier, we believe that the most likely explanation is that Hanoi has decided to de-emphasize the fighting in favor of negotiating.

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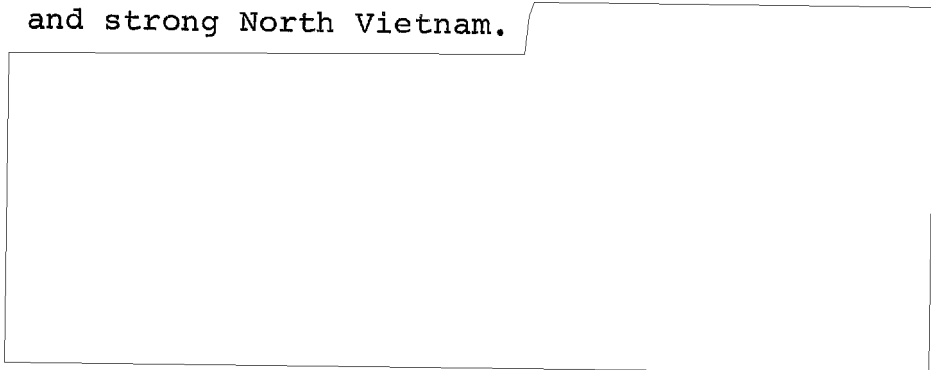
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E. There has been a controversy over whether North Vietnamese resources should be expended in the first instance to take control of South Vietnam by force, or to develop a stable and strong North Vietnam.

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[Redacted]



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V. [Redacted] we do not suggest that anyone within 25X1  
the Hanoi Politburo is advocating a cut-and-run  
policy toward the war in the south, or that the  
North Vietnamese will be forced to scale down their  
war effort significantly in the foreseeable future,  
or that they may be ready to compromise what we  
have considered to be their minimum demands--the

[Redacted]

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complete withdrawal of allied forces, and a workable political status for the Communists in South Vietnam.

- A. They have, in fact, been giving their people in South Vietnam briefings and directives which reflect high expectations in Hanoi that within a reasonably short time-frame, the United States will be forced by domestic sentiment to move in directions favorable to Communist goals in South Vietnam.
- B. Against this background, we believe that the leadership in Hanoi has opted for a substantial reduction in military pressure for the short term, in the expectation that this can be made to yield both military and political advantages for the Communists.

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C. There are good intelligence indicators that before the fighting is damped down, Hanoi plans at least one more surge, or high point, of combat. The flurry of the past week-end may be the beginning of this surge.

1. We expect it to include a major attempt to penetrate some urban center such as Tay Ninh in northwestern III Corps, and an effort to increase terrorism in Saigon.
2. Furthermore, even if the Communists thereafter do cut back the level of combat activity, the recent speech by General Giap--along with other intelligence--suggests that there will be an increased emphasis on small-unit terrorism and on classic guerrilla operations during any period of military lull.

D. The direct evidence which can be derived from the mechanics of the North Vietnamese infiltration system is that Hanoi does not expect its forces in South Vietnam to require substantial replacements during the third quarter of 1969, and that a resumption of infiltration in the fourth quarter would permit the Communists to resume a higher level of combat early in 1970 if Hanoi does not achieve the progress it may expect over the next several months.

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LAOS/CAMBODIA

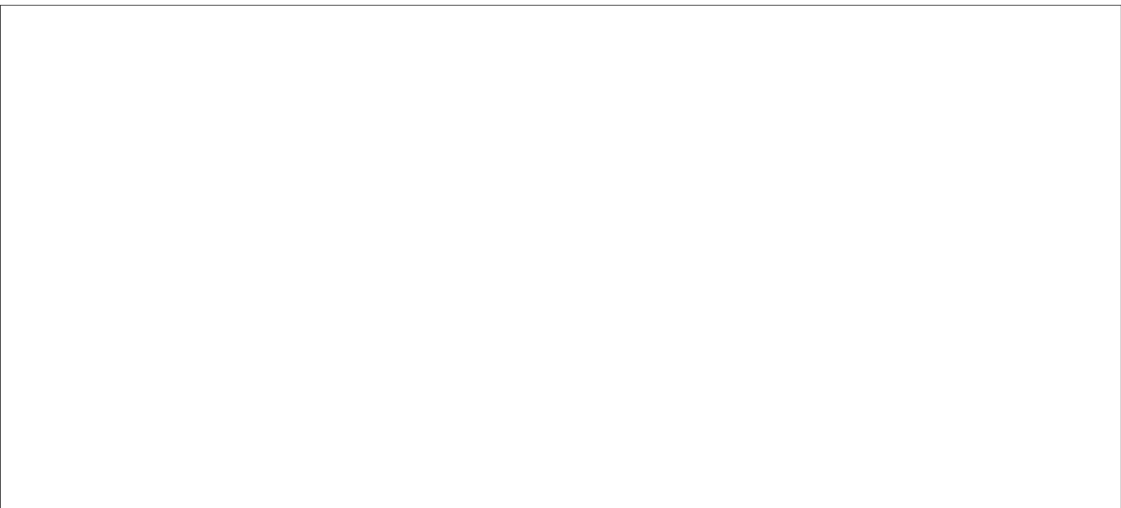
7 July 1969

BACKSTOP FOR  
7 July NSC MEETING

RESUPPLY THROUGH CAMBODIA AND LAOS

I. There is a dispute in the intelligence community  
over the relative roles of Cambodia and Laos in  
the re-supply of Communist forces in South Vietnam.

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II. It is agreed that Cambodia is an important source  
of supplies--particularly food--for the Viet Cong.

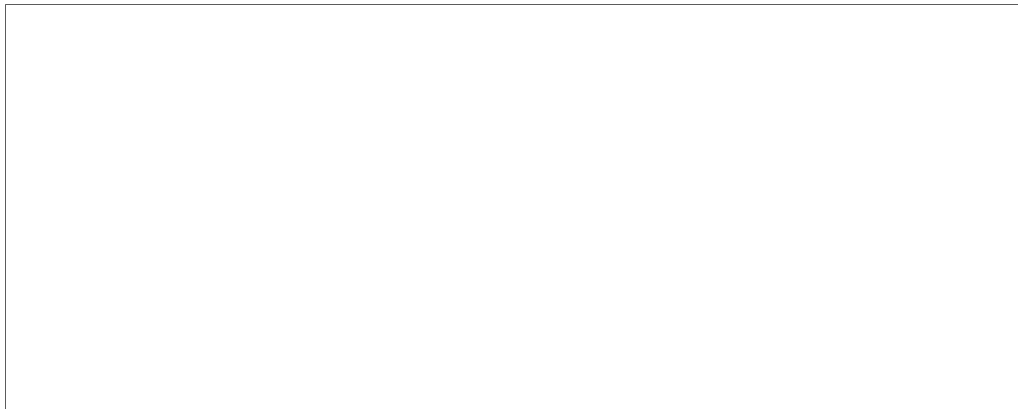
A. We also know that some arms and ammunition  
arriving at the Cambodian port of Sihanoukville  
are transshipped to VC and NVA forces in the  
III and IV Corps areas of South Vietnam.

1. We do not know if these transshipments in  
Cambodia result from a formal agreement  
on the part of Sihanouk with Peking and Hanoi,  
or reflect diversion from Cambodian army stocks.

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B. We do know that the volume of traffic moving into Laos and available for movement into South Vietnam is more than adequate to cover all of the enemy's requirements for external supplies that come from North Vietnam.

C. Evidence is limited on the actual forwarding of arms and ammunition southward from the tri-border area toward III Corps, but we know that the trail network is being used, is adequate to handle the volume required, and is constantly being improved.



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COMMIE AID

7 July 1969

BACKSTOP FOR  
7 JULY NSC MEETING

COMMUNIST AID TO NORTH VIETNAM

- I. North Vietnam over the past 15 years has received more than \$4.1 billion in military and economic aid from other Communist countries--primarily from the Soviet Union and Communist China.
  - A. Economic aid has totaled more than \$2.2 billion, with just over \$1 billion coming from the Soviet Union. Peking has provided \$760 million in economic aid, and the East Europeans \$435 million.
  - B. Military aid--most of it in the past four years--has amounted to almost \$2 billion, calculated in what we call Soviet foreign trade prices. (In other words, these are the prices the Soviet Union charges nations like Egypt or India for military equipment; expressed in terms of what the same material would cost to produce in the United States, the figure would be slightly higher.)
    1. Of the \$1 billion 910 million total, the Soviet Union has provided \$1 billion, 435 million. China has provided \$470 million in military aid, and there has been a token contribution amounting to about \$5 million from East Europe.

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- C. The peak year in terms of the value of aid provided was 1967, when North Vietnam received more than \$1 billion in assistance---\$650 million in military aid, and \$380 million for economic purposes.
- D. Military aid dropped sharply in 1968 because deliveries were cut back as the U.S. bombing program was restricted in March and then halted in October. In contrast to the \$650 million in 1967, North Vietnam got \$395 million in military materiel in 1968.
  - 1. Economic aid rose from \$380 million in 1967 to \$480 million in 1968, largely because of increases in food and petroleum shipments.

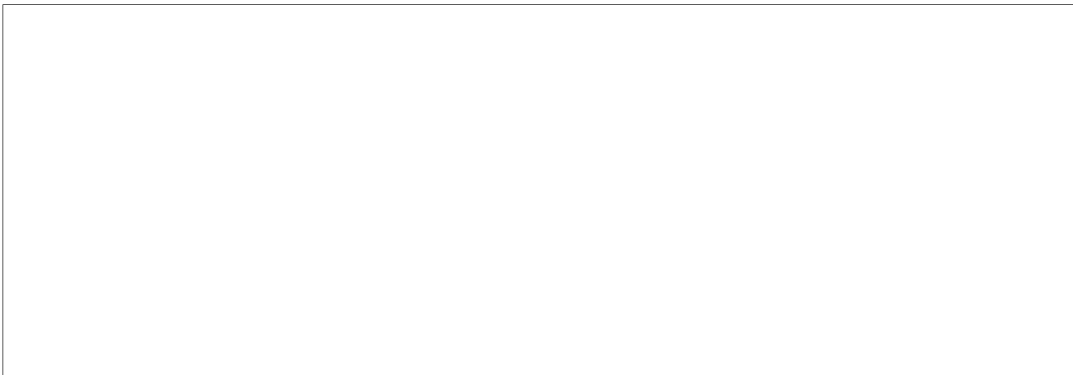
II. Military aid from the Soviet Union and from Communist China tends to divide along lines reflecting the respective capabilities of the donors.

- A. The Russians have concentrated on the more sophisticated and heavier equipment, such as air defense equipment--particularly surface-to-air missiles--tanks, and artillery.
- B. The Chinese have been the main suppliers of ground forces weapons and naval craft.
- C. Both the Soviet Union and Communist China have military personnel in North Vietnam.
  - 1. The number of Chinese support troops--mainly

construction engineering units--is now no more than 23,000. At its peak in 1968, when it included four Chinese anti-aircraft divisions, the total was about 50,000.

2. We estimate that there are about 2,000 Soviet military technicians in North Vietnam, working on surface-to-air missile systems, jet fighters, communications, and logistic support.

III.



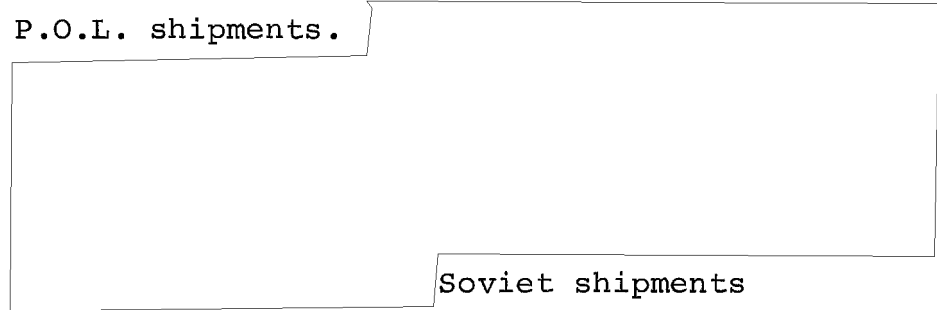
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- A. We still have no evidence that any purely military cargo has been shipped from the Soviet Union to North Vietnam by sea.
  1. The Soviets do, of course, ship into Haiphong substantial quantities of material for both civilian and military use--for example, trucks, and P.O.L. supplies.
  2. Under this heading, there have been at least two shipments of explosives, and several shipments of helicopters, including the big MI-6 HOOK helicopters.



B. For the past several months, the Soviets have apparently been resisting Hanoi's requests for a substantial increase in P.O.L. shipments.

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Soviet shipments

continue at approximately the levels established after bombing of northern North Vietnam stopped in March of 1968.

(CHART of Communist aid attached)

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Estimated Communist Aid to North Vietnam  
1954-68

	Million US \$					
	<u>1954-64</u>	<u>1965</u>	<u>1966</u>	<u>1967</u>	<u>1968</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Economic Aid</u>	950	150	275	380	480	2,235
USSR	365	85	150	200	240	1,040
Communist China	455	50	75	80	100	760
East Europe	130	15	50	100	140	435
<u>Military Aid</u>	140	270	455	650	395	1,910
USSR	70	210	360	505	290	1,435
Communist China	70	60	95	145	100	470
East Europe	Negl.	Negl.	Negl.	Negl.	5	5
<u>Total Aid</u>	<u>1,090</u>	<u>420</u>	<u>730</u>	<u>1,030</u>	<u>875</u>	<u>4,145</u>
USSR	435	295	510	705	530	2,475
Communist China	525	110	170	225	200	1,230
East Europe	130	15	50	100	145	440

CIA/OER  
23 June 1969



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7 July 1969

BACKSTOP FOR  
7 JULY NSC MEETING

SOUTH VIETNAM POLITICAL SITUATION

- I. By nearly all accounts, President Thieu returned to Saigon from Midway feeling relatively optimistic and pleased with the results of his talks with President Nixon.
  - A. When it comes down to following up the June talks by preparing new proposals designed to move the Paris negotiations forward, however, Thieu apparently fears that he will ultimately be asked to make all the concessions while the Communists stand pat.
    1. Thieu's basic concern continues to be that there will be mounting public pressure in the United States to accelerate the withdrawal of U.S. combat forces and diminish support for Thieu's government in Saigon.
    2. His concern has been heightened, offsetting his Midway optimism, by the Communist proclamation of a "provisional revolutionary government," and by new speculation in the United States over target dates for troops withdrawals.
  - B. Thieu still hopes that his government can buy

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more time--by military gains and by political and social progress--to strengthen itself for post-war competition with the Communists.

1. He is apparently prepared to see up to 50,000 U.S. troops replaced by the end of 1969, but he hopes to stretch out the schedule for withdrawal as much as possible, and meanwhile to avoid committing himself to any political concessions which would give the Communists a strong position in South Vietnam after hostilities cease.

II. Thieu's concern is not limited to the Communist challenge.

He is beset by domestic rivals waiting to exploit any mis-steps on his part for their own ends, and eager for any indications that U.S. support for Thieu is weakening.

- A. Thieu probably does not fear coup plotting at the present time, but he has not hesitated in the past to take protective steps against such a threat.
- B. He remains wary of giving rivals of any political description a chance to undermine him, and this has hampered his efforts to permit the establishment of a "loyal opposition" in South Vietnam.

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