

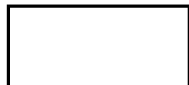
60-5172

17 August 1964

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. Peter Jessup

Please see that McGeorge Bundy sees
attached.



**Walter Elder
Executive Assistant**

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Attachment

WE:MMW

Orig - Addressee w/a

cc - DCI w/a

DCI w/a

ER w/a

~~WE w/a~~

ER/pt

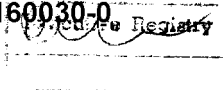
White House

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4 August 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

**SUBJECT: Probable North Vietnamese and Chinese Communist
Reactions to Certain US Reprisals Against North Vietnam**

1. The proposed US reprisals would evoke sharp DRV military reactions, as we estimate below, but we do not consider that such enemy actions would represent a deliberate decision to provoke or accept a major escalation of the Vietnam war. The attacks on the U. S. S. Maddox were almost certainly prompted primarily by considerations of defense and honor, growing out of what DRV authorities evidently believed was a US or US-sponsored attack against North Vietnamese territory. Also present, however, are probably these motives: (a) to signal to the US that the DRV is prepared to match US determination and is not about to accede to earlier US entreaties to reduce the war effort against South Vietnam; and (b) to show the US that any raising of the ante on its side will involve the US in major hostilities in the area.

2. Enemy Reactions.

a. Military Reactions. We believe that probable reactions within this frame include:

(1) Introduction of combat aircraft (MIG 17's and IL 28's into North Vietnam, with Vietnamese pilots or possibly Chinese pilots as "volunteers."

(2) Unconcealed (possibly announced) deployment and maneuvering of Chinese Communist ground and air forces in China's southern border regions.

(3) A further step-up of VC action in South Vietnam accompanied by a terror campaign against American personnel.

(4) Communist aircraft will possibly attack the US destroyers and may also bomb Saigon.

(5) We believe it unlikely that the Communists would march across the 17th parallel or introduce major Chinese ground forces into Indochina at this state.

b. Political

The main thrust of the Communist response will probably be in the fields of propaganda, political action and diplomatic maneuvering.

3. Hanoi -- and Peiping -- will probably endeavor to be as menacing as possible and make it appear that the whole Indochina area is rapidly approaching the brink of all out war. The principal object of such maneuvering, however, will be the political one of raising the international temperature and heightening world pressure for a conference.

cc forwarded to Mr. Bromley Smith

per Elder - 8/6/64

*Received for
DCI files 22 Apr 66*

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