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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

10 March 1967

MEMORANDUM-FOR: The Honorable Walt W. Rostow  
Special Assistant to the President

SUBJECT : Chinese Influence over North Vietnam

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REFERENCES

- : A. [Redacted]
- : B. [Redacted]
- : C. Item #1, Diplomatic Summary, 9 March 1967

1. In confirmation of the comments on the referenced documents relayed to you by telephone, we do not subscribe to the view that North Vietnam is so economically dependent on China that Hanoi has no independent latitude in determining its policies. We believe that North Vietnam's 1966 rice harvest involved a shortfall of about 300,000 tons. (In recent years, the average harvest has been on the order of 4 and 1/2 million tons.) We believe North Vietnam will attempt to make up this shortfall from various sources, including China, but also including the Soviet Union and the East European Bloc. North Vietnamese imports of foodstuffs from the Soviet Union, China and Rumania in the first quarter of 1967 have almost equaled all foodstuff imports in the calendar year of 1966.

2. Although North Vietnam receives considerable aid from Communist China, we do not believe it is as dependent on Chinese aid as the three referenced reports would suggest. By dollar values, China has provided only 35 percent of the cumulative foreign aid deliveries to North Vietnam; most of the remainder comes from the Soviet Bloc. Vietnamese imports of rice from Communist China during 1966 were less than 1 percent of their domestic production. Hanoi certainly considers Peking's likely reactions to any policy moves it may desire to make but is not, we believe, rigidly constrained by Chinese wishes.

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3. With regard to the   
speculation is interesting but we have no way of telling whether he has solid information on which to base these speculations. We do believe a North Vietnamese delegation went to China approximately twenty-four hours before Kosygin left London, but are not positive that this visit was related to British proposals on opening negotiations.

4. In sum, we do not consider that these three reports offer significant new information influencing our assessment of present North Vietnamese plans and attitudes.

George A. Carver, Jr.  
Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs

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10 Mar 67

The Director

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Rostow Request

Peter Jessup called Colby this afternoon (10 March) saying the White House (Rostow) urgently wanted comments on three pieces of current traffic. Colby passed to me. I convened a quick gathering with OCI, ONE and ORR representation. We reviewed the material and reached unanimous conclusions. I then called Rostow on the green phone. He expressed great thanks and asked for a written note confirming the remarks made over the phone. Said note is attached for your inspection prior to transmittal.

George A. Carver, Jr.

Attachment