

~~TOP SECRET~~



APPROVED FOR RELEASE
DATE: JUL 2001

25 January 1966

SC No. 02677/6
Copy No. 48

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

SEA SHIPMENT OF SOVIET MILITARY CARGOES: THE VIETNAMESE CASE

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

Office of Research and Reports

~~THIS DOCUMENT CONTAINS CODE WORD MATERIAL~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

GROUP 1
Excluded from automatic
downgrading and
declassification

SC No. 02677/66

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Office of Research and Reports
25 January 1966

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

Sea Shipment of Soviet Military Cargoes:
The Vietnamese Case

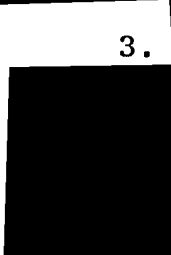
1. There is no firm evidence that the USSR has shipped military materiel to North Vietnam by sea. Some items useful to military consumers--for instance, trucks, certain oil products and drugs--have been sent there by sea, but no weapons are known to have arrived.

2.



EO 12958
3.4(b)(1)>25Yrs
(S)

3.



EO 12958
3.4(b)(1)>25Yrs
(S)

4.



EO 12958
3.4(b)(1)>25Yrs
(S)

5.

EO 12958
3.4(b)(1)>25Yrs
(S)

6.

EO 12958
3.4(b)(1)>25Yrs
(S)

7. The large-hatch ship, developed to ease cargo handling, is a permanent and growing fixture of the Soviet merchant fleet. These ships have special implications for the arms trade as they enable large pieces of equipment, at one time limited to shipment on deck, to be stowed in the hold. The USSR, apparently to reduce cargo handling problems in ports of recipient countries, in most cases continues to place large military crates on deck. It is known, however, to have stored MIG aircraft crates below deck, for example in mid-1964 on a delivery to Cuba. At that time it was evident the ship carried a military cargo, but its composition was not determined until after arrival.

8. Large-hatch ships have been regularly employed in the Vietnamese trade. In both 1964 and 1965 such ships comprised 25 percent of the Soviet ships serving North Vietnam. In 1965, fifteen large-hatch ships called at Haiphong in voyages fairly evenly dispersed throughout the year.

9. Currently four large-hatch ships are en route to North Vietnam. None has the characteristics of an arms carrier. Two are scheduled to unload cargoes in nonbloc countries en route to North Vietnam. These ships are carrying construction equipment, vehicles, fertilizer, and foodstuffs for Haiphong.

10. The third, the Belgorod Dnestrovskij, on its maiden voyage, [REDACTED] loaded in Novorossisk [REDACTED]

EO 12958
3.4(b)(1)>25Yrs
(S)

[REDACTED] Ob-
servation of the ship in the Suez Canal showed that it had about 60 trucks on deck. [REDACTED]

EO 12958
3.4(b)(1)>25Yrs
(S)

11. The fourth large-hatch ship, the Bratslav, declared at the Turkish Straits 2,096 tons of cargo for North Vietnam, also a light load. [REDACTED]

EO 12958
3.4(b)(1)>25Yrs
(S)

[REDACTED] Otherwise, its behavior to date is not in the pattern of an arms carrier. Additional information can be expected because its arrival in Haiphong will not occur much before 10 February.

12. The USSR has already displayed sensitivity to US observation of its shipping to North Vietnam. Soviet experience in the Cuban affair, when the USSR found it necessary to turn back its arms carriers, may be one reason why military deliveries to North Vietnam have been restricted to overland routes. Should the USSR decide to initiate military deliveries by sea to North Vietnam, it is likely the ship movement will be direct between a Soviet port and Haiphong, avoiding any possible observation of cargo in nonbloc ports. Currently about half the Soviet dry-cargo vessels traveling to North Vietnam also deliver cargo to other ports before calling at Haiphong.