

9 September 1964

I. QUESTION: Probable Communist Reactions to Specific U. S. Courses of Action

ANSWER: The NVN Communists, backed by the Chinese Communists, appear ready to accept considerable risk of damage to themselves rather than back down and lose the initiative in Southeast Asia. The Communists will not consider a temporary halt to VC military and political activity unless convinced that continuation would result in sustained and severe air attacks on North Vietnam.

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II. QUESTION: Moderate step-up in 34A actions.

ANSWER: We believe that either moderate or heavy step-up in 34A actions would do no serious damage to NVN and would cause Hanoi to react vigorously with its own forces, raise a propaganda attack against the U. S., but would not call for Chinese intervention. 34A operations would probably not cause DRV aerial retaliation against South Vietnam and would not affect DRV support of SVN and Laos insurgency activity.

III. QUESTION: Renewed DE SOTO Patrols.

ANSWER: We believe the DRV would very probably not attack DE SOTO patrols outside the 12-mile limit. It is an open question however whether the 12-mile limit is regulated by the Island chains or by the mainland coastline.

If the DE SOTO patrols proceed close to the shoreline, the DRV will probably attack. Also, if the patrols are related to 34A operations, DRV would attack as they did in early August.

IV. QUESTION: Air attack against Laotian infiltration targets in the Corridor.

ANSWER: We doubt such bombing and strafing would hamper VC infiltration. We would expect DRV to move in AAA armament at key points but we would not expect the DRV to commit combat aircraft to defend the Laotian Corridor.

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V. QUESTION: U.S. or ARVN air attacks on DRV Targets of Opportunity

ANSWER: DRV would use their air defense capabilities both day and night (the latter very limited) and would call for ChiCom assistance and more combat aircraft and anti-aircraft equipment and crews. Reprisals attacks against SVN are a possibility. An intense propaganda campaign will be generated by Hanoi and Peiping. We would not expect Chinese Communists to move in ground forces nor would we expect Hanoi to call off the VC support in SVN.

VI. QUESTION: A stepped-up U.S. military presence in South Vietnam.

ANSWER: Increase in advisory activities would probably accelerate DRV support of the VC through the infiltration of men and material. Introduction of large-scale U.S. combat forces into South Vietnam would possibly result in the introduction of Chinese ground forces into NVN and redeployment of NVN ground forces into strategic locations. The VC would continue their guerrilla war of harrassment against both U.S. combat forces and the SVN.

VII. QUESTION: Systematic air attacks against military-related DRV targets.

ANSWER: Hanoi and Peiping, if convinced that the attacks would result in the destruction of much of NVN, would make every effort to convoke an international conference in order to halt U.S. assaults. Concurrently they would probably position DRV and ChiCom troops and make open preparations for a major war.

If the assaults were sustained thereafter, Hanoi might halt VC and PL activities temporarily but would not dismantle the apparatus. Alternatively, if the political situation in SVN was unstable, the Communists would be tempted to move overtly to unseat the Saigon Government and possibly the government of Laos as well.

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