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Saturday, October 14, 1967
9:40 a.m.

Mr. President:

Herewith a Soviet evaluation of
our position and intentions in Vietnam.

Pres. file

W. W. Rostow

[REDACTED]

6 October 1967

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(6)(4)

SANITIZED

E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4

NY 94-420

By 1-8, NARA, Date 10-26-95

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INFORMATION REPORT INFORMATION REPORT

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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SFA

COUNTRY USSR/Vietnam

REPORT NO. [REDACTED]

1.3(a)

SUBJECT Current Soviet Evaluation of the War in Vietnam

DATE DISTR. 6

October 1967

SANITIZED

E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4

NLJ 94-419

NO. PAGES 4

REFERENCES

By [REDACTED], NARA, Date 7-27-95

DATE OF INFO.

Up to 10 September 1967

PLACE & DATE ACQ.

FIELD REPORT NO.

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SOURCE:

[REDACTED] The following is a translation of a Soviet document published in Moscow in September 1967 [REDACTED]

1.3(a)(4)

SUMMARY:

This document appears to be based on overt information on the Vietnam situation which has been published from July to early September 1967. It interprets current events with a Soviet bias, and concludes with the assertions that outside help will continue to sustain North Vietnam, while the U.S. escalates the air war to convince North Vietnam that the price of continuing the war is too great. The document predicts that the U.S. will expand the war into Laos and Cambodia.

1. The elections for president and vice-president which were held in South Vietnam on 3 September of this year, in accordance with the new constitution of the country adopted in April of this year, did not solve the basic problem of South Vietnam -- the transfer of power to a civilian government and elimination of the dictatorship of the military junta. This is particularly evident from the distribution of votes at the elections. Thus, less than 40 percent of all votes were given for the candidates of the military junta, Thieu and Ky. The civilian candidate -- the lawyer, Dzu -- came in second place after them; he advocated peaceful aims.

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2. The struggle between the military and the civilian factions has become more acute, especially in connection with the elections of members to the Lower House of Parliament to be held in October of this year. The rivalry within the ruling military junta has also become more intense, including that between the elected President Thieu and Vice-President Ky, since each of them tries to concentrate the whole power in his hands.
3. All this indicates that the Americans will not be able to stabilize the political situation in South Vietnam so that they may concentrate all their efforts on the solution of military problems.
4. The instability of the puppet regime, the lack of decisive military successes in the struggle against troops of the National Liberation Front (NLF) on the territory of South Vietnam, and the vain attempts to achieve a major reduction in the movement of troops and materiel from North Vietnam to South Vietnam by delivering regular air attacks against important objectives and communications are a matter of great concern for U.S. leaders.
5. The continuing increase in the armed forces in Vietnam has resulted in increased losses of personnel and combat equipment, and in growing costs of the war, but it has not provided any prospects for the successful termination of the conflict in the near future.
6. Many political and military leaders of the U.S. who are in favor of a political settlement of the war have understood this. However, the Johnson administration, the majority of members of Congress, and the leaders of both parties continue to follow the course of achieving military-political aims by further escalation of the war.
7. After the visit of U.S. Defense Secretary McNamara to South Vietnam (5-11 July 67) for the purpose of studying the course of the war at first hand, President Johnson held a number of conferences, during which plans for the further escalation of the war in Vietnam were discussed and approved.
8. These plans were based on suggestions from U.S. armed forces commanders in the Pacific and South Vietnam and from the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and they provided for an increase in American forces, an expansion of the scale of combat actions against NLF forces, and an escalation of the air war against North Vietnam.
9. In accordance with these plans the U.S. command is planning to transfer to South Vietnam in the near future up to 45,000 to 50,000 men, and to bring the total strength of its troops up to 500,000 by the end

10. In addition, U.S. leaders have made an attempt to increase the participation of its allies in the war. For this purpose special emissaries of President Johnson -- General Taylor, as consultant on military questions, and Clifford, chairman of the Advisory Council on Foreign Intelligence Matters -- visited Thailand, the Philippines, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand at the end of July of this year. According to preliminary data, the Taylor-Clifford mission has not produced the desired results.
11. The main efforts of U.S. leaders have recently been concentrated on expanding the scale of the war against North Vietnam in accordance with the so-called "special plan", which is based on the concept that the war in Indochina can be won only by carrying out decisive operations against North Vietnam. Therefore, the "special war plan" provides for the destruction of important military-economic and hydrotechnical objectives and installations by American planes, the mining of North Vietnamese ports, including Haiphong, and the establishment of a tight blockade in the Tonkin Bay by forces of the 7th Fleet.
12. According to American data, out of 5,000 major targets on the territory of North Vietnam, 3,500 have by this time been subjected to air attacks; this includes 50 barracks, 50 missile launch installations (SAM), 50 large bridges, 35 supply and equipment bases, 10 electric power stations, 10 fuel depots, 5 ports and 5 airfields.
13. In August of this year President Johnson made the decision to expand the list of targets for air attacks by 300 additional objectives, including those in the areas of Hanoi, Haiphong, and the zone bordering on China.
14. In making such a decision, the President and his close advisers assume that their selection of targets for air attacks will make it possible to increase military pressure on North Vietnam without serious risk of an expansion of the conflict.
15. Johnson's decision concerning the latest, extremely dangerous degree of escalation of the air war against North Vietnam has been fully supported by Republican Party leaders and by U.S. military leaders. In particular, in the speeches made in the Senate Subcommittee on Preparedness of the U.S. Armed Forces, which discussed the air war against North Vietnam in August of this year, all members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Commander of U.S. Armed Forces in the Pacific, Admiral Sharpe, insisted on an escalation of aggression against North Vietnam, stating that it is an essential means of maintaining and consolidating military superiority and initiative in South Vietnam. In its recommendation to President Johnson, the Sub-

to military actions which would have a direct or indirect influence on the determination and capability of North Vietnam to continue the struggle. Specifically, the Subcommittee recommended, above all, isolating the port of Haiphong, disrupting completely the transport lines between North Vietnam and China, isolating the area of Hanoi from the rest of the country, and destroying or putting out of commission all objectives which play an important role in the military efforts of North Vietnam.

16. During August of this year, targets in Hanoi and its surroundings were subjected to the most severe bombing attacks (11, 12, 21, 22 and 23 August), as a result of which the only railroad and motor vehicle bridge across the Red River, large fuel depots, a knitwear factory and residential sections of the city were destroyed. The municipal power plant was seriously damaged. Strikes were also delivered against objectives in Haiphong and against a railroad line connecting Hanoi with China.
17. The delivery of regular attacks against objectives in Hanoi and Haiphong, as well as against major installations on railroad lines connecting Hanoi with China and with the port of Haiphong, was intended by the U.S. command as a means to limit the movement of military equipment and other materials delivered by the Soviet Union and China to North Vietnam. In addition, it was planned to create additional economic difficulties in North Vietnam by incapacitating the major enterprises of the country, located in the area of the capital, as well as to produce a moral effect on the population.
18. It should be noted, however, that the U.S. military leaders, especially Defense Secretary McNamara, understand that even after the destruction of all important objectives, including ports and airfields, North Vietnam will still be able to receive help from outside and, consequently, the determination to continue the armed struggle will be retained. In the opinion of the U.S. command, North Vietnam may discontinue its help to South Vietnam only in the event it should consider the struggle as hopeless, or should find it too costly to continue rendering such aid.
19. The latest escalation of the air war, according to this plan, must be regarded as an attempt of the U.S. to suggest to North Vietnamese leaders that North Vietnam will have to pay a very high price for rendering aid to the South Vietnamese patriots.
20. With the beginning of the dry season (September-October) one should expect a further expansion of the air war against North Vietnam and an intensification of combat actions against NLF troops on the territory of South Vietnam. It should be kept in mind that the U.S. government and U.S. command may decide to expand the area of combat actions and spread the war to the areas of Cambodia and Laos bordering on South Vietnam, for the purpose of achieving their aims.