unprecedented dissent from an entire SNIE in September 1965, on the grounds that the North's position was uncompromising and intransigent, made a major contribution to estimative intelligence regarding North Vietnamese patterns of behavior.

The Military Effects of Bombing. Both the Bureau and CIA held fast during 1965-67 to the argument that no bombing, however intense, if it remained below the level required to smash the country's economic or physical integrity, would appreciably inhibit the Communist effort in the South. This effort, both agencies accurately predicted, could not only be supported at existing levels but even be raised substantially, despite the air assaults. On one particular occasion, the Bureau and the Army jointly dissented from a SNIE of June 1965, in which the majority held that a continuing curtailment of POL and other supplies would lead the North to consider negotiations because it would be unable to sustain an increase in its own troops and in large-scale Viet Cong operations. The dissenters correctly predicted that the enemy's LOC's, even if constrained, could support a considerably higher level of warfare in the South than then prevailed. By the end of 1965, the Intelligence Community came round to estimating that the enemy could double his forces in the South and still supply this larger army sufficiently to enable it to carry on a manifold increase in operations, despite a heavy assault on infiltration routes. In retrospect, this judgment was more correct than misleading, though the bombing did restrict the enemy's capacity for sustained

intensive operations somewhat more than this analysis implied. It was a reflection of the Bureau's views on large-scale bombing that, when asked to comment on targeting, from 1966 onward, it stressed its preference for concentrating on infiltration routes rather than targets related to the economy and capable of causing civilian damages.

The Political Effect of the Bombing. The entire Intelligence Community agreed in 1964-65 that a bombing attack that failed to bring adequate results would have a deleterious effect on the morale of allied and friendly states in Asia. This judgment contrasted sharply with some policy makers' opinion that even an unsuccessful campaign would demonstrate our willingness to make an effort and so increase confidence in the US among Asian countries at one remove from the front line. By showing that the US had done all it could and had challenged the principle of sanctuary, Washington planners hoped further to strengthen the resolve of these target states to stand firm. From the perspective of 1969 it is still difficult to judge which view was more accurate. Certainly the Intelligence Community had strong ground for the fear it expressed in the draft of an Estimate but dropped from the final version, that the worst possible effect on world public opinion--including morale in important segments of Asia--would ensue if the US conducted extensive actions against the North but failed to establish a viable regime in Saigon. On the other hand, the bombing did whittle away enemy strength in the South to some extent even if it could not stop the flow of men, and it did discredit the notion of sanctuary. It also ultimately played a role in the horse-trading that

got negotiations started despite Hanoi's early adamant stand, well reported by INR in 1965-67, against any semblance of reciprocity.

Regarding Northern morale, INR argued not only that the population's morale would hold up but that the attacks would afford the regime a better opportunity to exercise control and mobilize a truly national effort. These anticipations were born out and were, interestingly enough, further substantiated by the many difficulties which the North encountered in control and morale once the bombing stopped; popular commitment waned, especially as the Northerners saw the fighting in the South continue after "their war," as they thought of it, had ended.

More generally, the costs to the economy were relatively minimal and, with foreign aid, the North was quite able to sustain the war in the South. Still the cost of the effort mounted, dietary problems grew, and in particular a manpower shortage, partly responsible for the low level of rice production, may have caused greater strain than the Bureau anticipated. INR did, however, note these problems in 1967-68 and in fact was in the forefront of those who criticized certain manpower studies which asserted that the North had no shortage problems at all. Finally, as Northern insistence on a bombing halt came to the fore of exchanges over negotiation in 1967, the Bureau noted that cumulatively the bombing was taking a toll, though it did not affect the enemy's combat performance, and so could be a factor in Hanoi's decision to modify its negotiating position.

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Hanoi's View of China. The Bureau along with other members of the Intelligence Community played a salutary role in erasing or at least reducing a variety of misconceptions about Hanoi's relationship with China. Among them was the impression that North Vietnam was more or less a puppet of the Chinese at least insofar as Peking could call the tune for continuing a war policy. Another theory, which INR sought to refute, was that fear of Chinese domination would deter the North Vietnamese from seeking as much assistance from Peking as would be necessary to sustain their war effort. INR held, correctly as it turned out, that observers in general exaggerated Hanoi's fear of Chinese domination; in the Bureau's estimation, Hanoi would not hesitate to admit a strong Chinese military presence to the country if it should be needed to meet an intensified American war effort.

The Bureau also felt that the North Vietnamese, however ideologically and materially indebted to China in a general sense, would develop their own doctrine of combat and follow their own judgment on how to deal with the Americans. That is, the Bureau held throughout that Peking's influence in Hanoi was strictly limited./could be seen in the way the North Vietnamese adhered to their Soviet connection, refused to be swayed by China's implicit criticism of their strategy, and showed themselves willing to negotiate for a halt in the bombing. Although the Bureau recognized that proximity to China set some limits to Hanoi's freedom of action, it put primary emphasis on the overwhelming desire of the North Vietnamese to maintain their ability to do what they considered best for

North Vietnam in the light of their own assessment of the changing wartime situation. INR did also hold the view, which there is no way of validating, that in the end if US attacks became so intense that the North Vietnamese regime could not survive without massive Chinese involvement, it would, rather than yield, accept this regardless of the restriction on its own freedom of action which the move would imply.

To a great degree, the Bureau noted, Hanoi could play off the Russians and Chinese to its own advantage, but INR was also aware that the struggle between the two giants caused considerable concern in Hanoi. In fact, the Bureau was probably correct in estimating that the intensification of the Sino-Soviet split and the transportation difficulties that flowed from the excesses of the Cultural Revolution contributed to Hanoi's shift of position on negotiations during 1967-68.

B. The Role of China

General Assessment. The Bureau consistently highlighted the problem of China's role in the war in discussions of future US action, thus prudently gaining for the issue of Peking's involvement as a combatant more attention than it might otherwise have received. It was also consistently accurate in evaluating the nature, timing, and relatively high reliability of the material assistance that the Chinese would give to Hanoi in support of the war effort even though the North Vietnamese might be conducting the struggle not strictly in accordance with Maoist principles. The Bureau was also consistent in its belief that the Chinese would become as deeply involved as would be necessary to enable Hanoi to

sustain its war effort in the South and to avert a collapse at home. Most significantly, it never altered its judgment that the Chinese would accept the risk of a direct conflict with the US that was clearly implied in this policy, though at what point and in what manner a wider war might evolve was admittedly more difficult to pin down.

Where the Bureau miscalculated was in its overestimation of Peking's preparedness and readiness to participate overtly and actively in the war. Although most members of the Intelligence Community held that some degree of Chinese air and ground intervention was likely at the upper stages of the bombing program, INR as a rule held that the intervention would probably come at an earlier stage in the bombing and would be of greater magnitude. As it turned out, neither INR nor the rest of the Community were right.

As the bombing program was extended without eliciting overt Chinese reaction, the Bureau modified its earlier judgment and, after mid-1966, estimated that attacks against targets in the upper range of the prog - would not provoke open Chinese involvement or a full dress air encounter. Noting, however, the extensive Chinese aid to the North in essential materiel and manpower, the Bureau continued to posit that China had the will to go all the way in sustaining the physical integrity of the North against a far more intensive bombing program--even if in so doing China had to put its own security on the line.

The Danger of Chinese Involvement. The Bureau played a major and constructive role in alerting policy makers to the danger of Chinese involvement in the war, doing so at a time when there was a general tendency to give to this momentous question much less attention than it deserved. Early in 1964 the Bureau was quick to pick up China's defiant propaganda responses when the US threatened to intensify the war, and it tracked the escalating verbal dual between the two powers, observing all the time that the threats, though suggestive, were somewhat vague. In so doing it began to depart, tentatively, from the standard Community position, held since 1961, that China would not confront the US unless North Vietnam was invaded and combat occurred within Northern frontiers. The question that actually had to be answered was what Chinese reaction would be, not to a ground assault, but to a moderately intensive and, as it turned out, gradually escalated aerial attack against the North. Here the Intelligence Community was also on record, in 1961 and 1962, to the effect that the Chinese (and in the first Estimate the Russians also) would commit their air power, albeit disguised as North Vietnamese planes.

The Estimate on Chinese Intervention 1964-65. INR continued to put forward the thesis that China would intervene in the war, especially in the air in response to US air attacks on the North, and that this intervention could develop rather suddenly into a wider military confrontation between China and the US. The Bureau reasoned from three basic premises. First, it thought that the threatening verbal position adopted

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by Peking was not mere bluff but reflected at least a general undertaking to intervene in North Vietnam upon request. Secondly, it judged that China had strong political-ideological and security reasons for intervening to protect a country that was committed to a people's war and that lay so close to China's own vulnerable frontiers. Third, it saw considerable military evidence that China was actively developing the combat capability needed for effective intervention; this build-up included primarily extensive air reinforcements and preparations for air defense in South China, especially construction of airfields, and joint air defense planning with Hanoi.

In late 1964 and early 1965, before the US bombing program was approved, the Intelligence Community repeatedly agreed on estimates that intensive application of the Rolling Thunder program to critical targets probably would precipitate a Chinese air response from bases in China. INR went further and held that even lesser attacks would bring about this action; it even judged, after the US began bombing, that the Communists would not negotiate until they had redressed the balance and that this purpose would probably be one motive of a likely Chinese air intervention. When the Community also agreed that ground forces would be despatched, INR differed in degree, arguing that the probability was stronger, the force would be larger, and the threshold of response to US action lower than the others thought. The Bureau considered that Peking was implying, in its repeated promises of aid during 1964-65, that it would directly involve its own forces and commit its prestige in a new

vigorous response to future escalation. INR especially emphasized this view when Peking issued the strong war warnings of late 1965 and early 1966.

In analyzing why this interpretation was wrong we should argue that the Chinese were more cautious than was assumed at the time and that they correctly estimated that the North, with Chinese help in repair and construction, could neutralize the effects of the Rolling Thunder program, thus obviating the need for them to intervene with combat forces. This view actually fits neatly into the Maoist doctrine that protracted war should be carried out by indigenous forces, with China, to its own security advantage, acting literally as a reliable rear that does not become directly involved unless absolutely necessary. In this context, the assistance rendered by Peking becomes of crucial importance and here INR proved repeatedly to be directly on target in estimating and reporting the extent of this Chinese activity. Thus in the wake of the Tonkin incident, it correctly predicted that China would transfer jets, ship anti-aircraft weapons, and send advisers. It was wrong only in believing that the Chinese would do these things overtly, to deter the US. Later INR and CIA repeatedly reported on the substantial Chinese forces of anti-aircraft, rail and road engineer, and other technical personnel, as well as on the substantial shipments through China of weapons and materiel from the USSR and from China directly. All of this effectively neutralized the strategic effects of the bombing and enabled Hanoi to stay on its chosen course.

The Bureau was also correct in its judgment that when the chips were down China would have to let Russian military aid come through because of the insistence of North Vietnam.

An additional explanation for the Bureau's mistake lies in its interpretation of intelligence on Chinese preparations for air defense and on growing Sino-Vietnamese coordination in this field, as evidence that China was committed to engage US aircraft over North Vietnam. Actually this activity appears in retrospect to have been a contingency preparation, and one which also fitted in with a high priority, longer-range program of developing airfields all along the periphery of China.

The Continued Chinese Commitment. China's demonstrated caution as Rolling Thunder moved into high gear, and the onset of the Cultural Revolution, sharply reduced the prospect of an immediate confrontation between China and the US, as the Bureau noted after the middle of 1966. But INR adhered to the position it had held since the start of the decade that China would intervene, even at frightful risk to itself, if the North were threatened with invasion or the regime faced the danger of being destroyed. Hence there was consistency in the Bureau's position on that key issue throughout the period under consideration. Specifically, when a bombing program far more ambitious than Rolling Thunder was discussed in the spring of 1967, the Bureau held that the Chinese, committed to keeping the North viable and capable of prosecuting the war, would intervene to the extent necessary to fulfill these commitments. Since China would directly confront a vastly intensified US effort to bring

North Vietnam to heel, INR rated quite high the chances that the confrontation would gradually slip into a Sino-American conflict. If conditions for the North were less trying but still somewhat strained, the Bureau predicted that China might broaden its help to the North, as for example with more sophisticated weapons or by making airfields within China available for North Vietnamese planes to use as direct operational bases. As events developed the Chinese did not extend even these more limited forms of advanced and riskier assistance. And with the President's decision in 1967-68 to level off and then to de-escalate the war, the ultimate premise in the INR position was not put to the test.

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IV. NEGOTIATIONS

Methodological Note.

The Bureau's role in this aspect of the Vietnam struggle was smaller in comparison to its part in the three previous major areas. Much of the information crucial for timely analysis lay in reports on the current diplomacy of the US in its negotiations with Hanoi either directly or through third parties, and the vast body of these reports was held to a highly restricted circle of officials that in almost every instance did not include the senior officers of the Bureau. Even after the termination of a particular effort, knowledge was often withheld, made known on a limited basis, or restricted to the Bureau Director and to the Office Director of REA. Of course, the Bureau did scrutinize most closely whatever information was available about Hanoi's position on negotiations, frequently at the request of senior officials in the Department, and it produced a considerable quantity of papers both informational and analytical. It was most often operating in the blind, so to speak, since it lacked knowledge of crucial aspects of Hanoi's position that were well known to the officials to whom it was reporting. At times, when the Bureau did either immediately or after the fact get access to principal sources, as it did on the South Vietnamese view of the "our side your side" formula, it evolved an interpretation that differed somewhat from the views of some policy-makers about the position of Saigon or Hanoi on a certain point, or about their likely reaction to an American position. However, given the gaps in the Bureau's knowledge and the fact that it

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frequently had to analyze the actual record, to the extent the material was made available at all, essentially from hindsight, it seems unwise to incorporate these occasional and specialized evaluations into the body of this critique. For the most part then, what follows is an appraisal of the Bureau's day-to-day work on the subject of negotiations and its handling of the material that was normally accessible, with full awareness that these restrictions entailed sharp limitations.

General Assessment. The Bureau was able to perform a most useful function in dissecting the convoluted and at times seemingly contradictory North Vietnamese orientation toward negotiations, primarily from 1964 onward. Over a five-year period it produced a series of sensitive and on the whole very perceptive papers that not only clearly identified the components in Hanoi's essential position but also provided timely analysis as to how they were interrelated. This overall effort as well as the Bureau's interpretation of the North's attitude on certain specific issues, like US reconnaissance and a cease-fire, proved to have considerable operational value.

Among the fundamentals of Hanoi's position which the Bureau detailed with remarkable consistency were these points: that the North was adhering firmly to fairly extreme objectives; that Hanoi was insisting it had sole monopoly of moral right in the war; that there were ambiguities in its negotiating position; and that it was in considerable measure uncertain regarding the US position. The last two points led INR repeatedly to hold that it was useful for the US to probe despite the enemy's hard line.

INR was very much aware that the North was deeply committed to victory and that it had considerable assets in the field, but the Bureau also developed a realistic understanding of the limitations on the options open to Hanoi, of the political and diplomatic pressures operating on it, and of the military difficulties it faced. The Bureau estimated that Hanoi itself was at times uncertain what tactical course to follow and that negotiating efforts could therefore achieve some results, even if these were relatively limited and, further, subject to repeated attempts by the North Vietnamese to reverse the effects of concessions or turn them to advantage. This mixed picture, pointing up both the potential value of negotiations and the danger and severe difficulties that beset what had to be a protracted effort, compared favorably with other interpretations that took too optimistic a view of the allied military position, or conversely held that the enemy considered himself to be in a nigh-on-invincible position and so considered most of his gambits as "nothing new" or as maximal negotiating points.

The Bureau did make errors in judgment. For example, in 1964-65 it probably overestimated the enemy's interest in negotiations. At times, it inadequately linked Hanoi's strategies on the battlefield and in negotiations. In addition, it miscalculated on some specific points, like Hanoi's willingness late in 1968 to have the GVN appear at the bargaining table. However, for the most part, the Bureau presented a well-balanced appraisal of the enemy's general position and the attitude he was likely to take on the long series of specific issues that arose as negotiations evolved.

The Tough Hanoi Position . . . As indicated in the discussion of Hanoi's adamant stand against yielding to US military pressure during the middle of the decade, INR from the beginning rightly stressed the North's hard line on negotiations as well as its unwillingness for a long period of time to trade off any political concessions for a relaxation in American military pressure. Thus INR judged that the seeming Communist interest during 1962-63 in neutralizing the South was not a serious one and Hanoi dropped it in 1964. However, the Bureau estimated that Hanoi might push the scheme in its quest for a full take-over, treating it as a way-station that would enable the US to give way gracefully. The idea related, INR argued, to significant differences between China and North Vietnam, in that Hanoi was not seeking to humiliate the US and was not opposed to negotiations, but kept its eye on a fixed objective which it desired to attain with the least possible amount of difficulty. Although both desired a Communist victory in the South, the more pragmatic quality of the North Vietnamese approach was to have considerable significance, once circumstances arose that made some compromise appear desirable to all but the most doctrinaire advocates of a Maoist position.

Nonetheless, INR saw during 1964-66 that Hanoi was so committed to complete victory on its own terms and so certain of prevailing that it was not anxious for negotiations and would certainly not make significant concessions for them. Moreover, as INR often noted, optimistic as Hanoi was about the future, it did not yet feel sufficiently strong to gain anything in talks. Hence, the Bureau estimated in 1965-66 that, after the

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bombing started, Hanoi would not negotiate to prolong a pause if to do so required it to make political concessions or deal on the basis of reciprocity; INR so reported in May 1965 and January 1966, after studying Hanoi's behavior during two bombing pauses. The Bureau felt that the North was most anxious to avoid the appearance of capitulating, and that it also had to consider the serious effect on Viet Cong morale of any conciliatory steps it might take under pressure. Its lofty moral stand against reciprocity, its suspicion of US intentions, and its belief in its own capacity to survive attacks and win a better settlement were all attitudes which the Bureau discerned, and which Hanoi's behavior verified during this period. Well into 1966, the Bureau correctly understood that Hanoi would not move toward an agreement in line with US terms but would pursue its own tough diplomatic course.

. . . Combined with Some Flexibility? Yet right along with this major emphasis on Hanoi's fixed determination, INR sounded a secondary theme that reflected a degree of vagueness in Hanoi, possibly auguring some flexibility there. Thus in its analyses of 1965-66, the Bureau found Hanoi's line tough, to be sure, but also somewhat vague, as though the North Vietnamese wished to keep the door open to limited concessions that might get the US to accept their more basic terms, and so inferentially allowing room for maneuver. The Bureau stressed this possibility during these years even though in its broader ramifications the theme, at times, ran counter to the major line of toughness.

In 1964 the Bureau made several references to the possibility that the Communists had real interest in a conference, perhaps because it overemphasized the willingness of Peking and Hanoi to apply to Vietnam the experience of the Laos conference, and because INR figured that this tactic offered Hanoi a cheap method of forestalling US plans of bombing. It is fair to say that this view was prevalent throughout the US government, generally associated with the premise that this course would be disastrous for the allied cause and with the conclusion that it would therefore presumably be favored by Hanoi. INR concurred with the Intelligence Community in an appraisal of May 1964 that bombing would bring a conference but later rejected the position in October before the Rolling Thunder program actually began. Moreover, the Bureau pointed out on several occasions before the escalation that hints of interest in talks may have been designed to ward off bombing at practically no cost. Even after the bombing began in February 1965, INR felt that the Communists, while they would not negotiate from what looked like weakness, would be more interested in talking once they redressed the military balance. In considerable measure INR qualified these observations, noting in 1964-65 that while the Communists--including the Chinese--might agree to a conference they would not make substantive concessions, either to get one under way or during the meeting.

Later in 1965, the Bureau argued that a bombing pause that was unannounced and did not contain demands for reciprocal behavior might

get a response after a while. The long pause of December 1965-January 1966 did not test INR's thesis that Hanoi might respond, because it differed from INR's model by calling for the unacceptable reciprocity.

Tracking Hanoi's two paths of toughness and flexibility occasionally led the Bureau into odd judgments. It is difficult to see how INR could have been persuasive when it argued in mid-1965 that Hanoi would be more receptive to counterproposals as the bombing intensified but did not reach its full extent, or that Hanoi had not yet made up its mind on negotiations at the end of the long pause of January 1966 and should therefore be approached with further clarifying probes. As the Bureau itself noted shortly thereafter, the Ho letter of January 28, 1966, was a defensive justification for Hanoi's failure to respond to what had already been an extensive US overture.

The Tactics of Negotiation. For the longer run, the Bureau was on a sound track when it interpreted North Vietnamese demonstrations of substantive vagueness or indications of procedural adjustments to mean that important changes in Hanoi's position could come to pass. If these changes were far slower to materialize than the Bureau anticipated, they did occur in 1967 -- though as the most limited steps possible and at a maddeningly slow pace. INR had recognized Hanoi's Four Points of April 1965 for what they were -- a statement of position that was extreme but nevertheless the beginning of a negotiatory process. Throughout the following two and a half years it analyzed in detail all North Vietnamese public statements on the Four Points, concentrating on certain variables: what flexibility was there in the Four Points, how fully and on what schedule did Hanoi demand that the US recognize the Points, what role did Hanoi intend for the NLF. The Bureau carefully

reported all shades of change that it discerned, but it was cautious not to over-react to shifts in detail--stressing that the change in Hanoi's stand shown on the record up to 1967 was slight indeed.

Yet INR never lost sight of the prospect for change and accurately reported the first major shift when it occurred in January 1967, when Hanoi set as a condition for talks that the US halt bombing rather than that it accept the Four Points. Up till then, Hanoi had insisted on an unconditional halt of bombing and some form of prior US recognition of the Four Points, with INR observing that Hanoi had left room for compromise on this latter demand. Thus, when Hanoi reversed its public position at the start of 1967, the Bureau perceived a major shift and clarification in the Salisbury-Dong interview and the Trinh statement. INR further stressed the distinction between "contacts," for which Hanoi demanded the halt in bombing, and "negotiations" during which it would demand acceptance of the Four Points as the basis for a settlement. This gruel may have been thin but it had some substance.

Although the Bureau recognized that the enemy's position remained on dead center for almost the rest of 1967, it argued, as it had in 1965 and 1966, that the situation could be improved by continuous US probing. Although the environment that then prevailed in Hanoi seemed hostile, this judgment turned out to be accurate. For one thing, the Bureau felt that this approach would enable Washington repeatedly to test the atmosphere and clarify a variety of specifics on which Hanoi had been ambiguous. It also put the enemy under some diplomatic pressure, a factor that became increasingly

important over the years. Further, these moves could clarify the US position for Hanoi and prevent the misunderstandings which could easily flourish without constant contact. Finally, the US would reveal itself to be a serious negotiator which was reasonable according to its own lights, and at the same time not allow the enemy--through an unfortunate combination of excessive suspicion and optimism--to interpret American silence after a particular North Vietnamese diplomatic gambit as indicating that the US considered that verbal gesture to be an adequate response by the North. For example, when Trinh made his famous substitution in December 1967 of "would" for "could" in discussing the prospects for talks if the bombing were halted, the Bureau urged that the US present Hanoi with a set of queries in order to demonstrate that this clarification was hardly enough to merit another Tet pause.

The Military-Diplomatic Linkage. A short time before the much-for-little gambit in late December 1967, INR estimated that Hanoi believed it needed a military spectacular, on the model of Dien Bien Phu, before it would move forward. On this and other occasions, therefore, INR saw in Hanoi's desire to keep its diplomatic options open not only a sign that there might be movement on negotiation but also possibly the precursor of vigorous military activity. Still the Bureau did not anticipate the Tet offensive that followed by one month the second Trinh clarification.

Although INR recognized that Hanoi closely linked the military and diplomatic fields in its immediate tactics, as well as for the long haul, the Bureau did not always follow through fully in appraising the effect of specific military events on the next phase of negotiations. It did not,

for example, grapple with the question of what Hanoi would do if it did not win the clear military triumph in January 1968 that it achieved in 1954. Later, during negotiations, INR stressed the close and reinforcing ties of Hanoi's efforts in combat and diplomacy, which aimed to keep up the pressure for a favorable settlement without so raising the level that retaliation would ensue. While this basic interpretation proved essentially valid, the Bureau did not adequately consider what would happen if this approach failed to achieve results, whether completely or soon enough. Consequently INR did not consider whether by renewing escalation Hanoi might not have gained rich dividends in US public reaction at acceptable military costs. Conversely it did not anticipate or explain what actually did happen--an actual withdrawal, without replacement, of many of the NVA regular units in the South, and without any tradeoff that would bring political benefits from this de-escalatory act.

The North's Negotiating Position 1967-68. On the whole, the pros and cons that affected Hanoi's attitude toward negotiations were well described by the Bureau, and its observation that the North was afflicted by uncertainty and conflicting views in making up its mind on the correct line to follow was probably accurate. INR clearly depicted the North's maximum position in 1967; it was willing to open contacts in return for a halt in bombing, and would then require the US to discuss the South's political future--and perhaps deal with the NLF--before contacts would develop into negotiations. The Bureau also noted the elements that were inducing Hanoi to stand firm--its powerful assets in place and intact in the South, its secure control in

the North, its belief in ultimate success, its deep distrust of conferences and of the US, and finally persistent Chinese pressure. On the other hand, INR perceived, and credited more than did others, the important factors that were inducing Hanoi to give some ground--an improving political situation in the South, continued turmoil in China, the harmful effects of the bombing, and the frightful cumulative losses in manpower in the South. The Bureau also discussed a possible Hanoi worry that if US pressure for concessions on preliminary points should succeed early in the protracted negotiations, and a momentum for settlement were to be generated by excessive Communist flexibility, Hanoi might find itself compelled to make compromises it desired to avoid. Hence INR concluded early in 1968 that Hanoi would be pressed to move forward and would make some concessions, but that these compromises would be as limited as possible and would take place in a context of extensive negotiation and continued protracted war. In this basic "middle" view, INR proved correct.

INR also had a fairly respectable--though by no means perfect--record in estimating on what specific points the Communists would give ground during 1968 and where they would be unyielding. Having long judged that the enemy was opposed to reciprocity, the Bureau detected shifts in this position once talks got under way and correctly predicted that there would be some give on this most difficult matter. In May the Bureau asserted that the enemy would not give ground on the DMZ, at least as long as the issue was couched in terms of restoring the zone's original status; INR reasoned that the zone was too important logistically and that to resurrect